

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1941

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. E. J. Hanson, Buranda) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

PUBLIC DEBT PAYMENTS, 1940-41.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Treasurer—

“What was the cost of the public debt in 1940-41—(a) interest paid internally; (b) external interest; (c) Sinking Fund; and (d) exchange and other payments?”

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay), for **The TREASURER** (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer), replied—

“(a) £2,106,700 2s.; (b) £3,165,965 13s. 4d.; (c) £716,308 12s. 8d.; (d) £942,942 13s. 1d.”

LOAN FUND ACCOUNT, 1940-41.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Treasurer—

“1. What new loan money was obtained in 1940-41, showing sources and amounts, respectively, and the total?

“2. What was the net amount of the State public debt at 30 June last?”

The **PREMIER** (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay), for The **TREASURER** (Hon. F. A. Cooper, Bremer), replied—

“1. State's proportion of Commonwealth loans raised for the States, £2,240,000; domestic issues, £13,000.

“2. £128,797,706 15s. 2d.”

LOGAN BRIDGE FINANCES.

Mr. **NICKLIN** (Murrumba), for Mr. **MULLER** (Fassifern), asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. What was the amount of the toll receipts of the Logan Bridge in 1940-41?

“2. What was the amount of the total receipts (net) to 30 June, 1941?

“3. What was the capital cost of the bridge at 30 June, 1941?”

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

“1. £15,881 gross; £14,084 net.

“2. £136,804. For the information of the hon. member I would like to point out that the total expenditure on the Pacific Highway up to 30 June, 1941, amounted to £667,000, as follows:—

	£
Permanent works	468,000
Maintenance	199,000

It might also be stated that of the above only £21,000 has been charged to local authorities for permanent works, and £30,000 for maintenance works, representing a total charge of less than 8 per cent. to local authorities. Such expenditure has resulted in very considerable improvements being effected to the highway, including also the construction of 32 new long and short span bridges. In addition to the above figures, certain expenditure has also been incurred by the Department of Public Lands on other permanent works.

“3. £27,906.”

“GOLDEN CASKET” COMMISSION RATES.

Mr. **NIMMO** (Oxley) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“1. What rate of commission is paid to the Golden Investment Company on account of sale of tickets—(a) Mammoth caskets; (b) ordinary caskets?

“2. What are the corresponding rates of commission to other agents?”

The **SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND HOME AFFAIRS** (Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Ithaca) replied—

“1. (a) 10 per cent.; (b) 9.09 per cent. These rates apply only to business obtained from outside the State.

“2. (a) 5 per cent.; (b) 4.5 per cent. on full tickets and 13.6 per cent. on tickets sold in one-sixth shares. Approximately 50 per cent. of tickets are sold in shares.”

INCOME (STATE DEVELOPMENT) TAX ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The **SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY** (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Income (State Development) Tax Acts, 1938 to 1939, by making further exemptions from tax in respect of certain incomes, and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE INCOME TAXES FURTHER AGREEMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to approve, ratify, and confirm an agreement made between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Queensland further amending the principal agreement between such parties relating to the assessment and collection of Commonwealth and State income tax by one agency; and for other incidental purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 4 September (see p. 219) on Mr. Devries's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. **JONES** (Charters Towers) (10.45 a.m.): In common with other hon. members who have spoken on this debate, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your having been re-elected to the high and honourable office of Speaker of this Assembly. Those of us who were members of the last Parliament had no doubt that you would again be the unanimous choice of the House, as we knew well your qualifications for the position.

I should like also to congratulate the mover and seconder of this motion. The hon. member for Gregory has been associated with me for over 20 years, and as a result I know his ability and appreciate the knowledge of Western Queensland that he possesses. I am sure that he will be an acquisition to this Parliament.

I should like to make special reference to the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, because he was responsible for removing from this Assembly a person who had gained access to Parliament by an appeal to mankind's lowest and basest impulses—by means of the sectarian issue.

I have listened attentively to the speakers on both sides of this Chamber. When we are passing through such a crisis as the present, one naturally expects to hear references to the war position, with criticism of what we are doing and talk of what we should be doing. I have heard very little reference, however, to the need for post-war planning. Some people seem to believe that it is yet too early to do post-war planning, that at the moment we should concentrate on the successful prosecution of the war, but I believe that every Government in every country should give serious consideration to post-war planning immediately. I believe that the Labour Party has the right basis for such planning—human rights. We claim to have some knowledge of the causes of the present war—over-production, the effects of the machine age, and the application of science to industry. The Labour Party to-day are in good company in that Mr. Churchill, President Roosevelt, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Cardinal Hinsley share the view that there is need for a new order. That is an indication that the present capitalistic system has more or less broken down. The Labour Party have been advocating a new order for years, and we have been called extremists, cranks, reds, and other unpleasant names. We foresaw that with the introduction of machinery and the application of science to industry the present economic system must break down, and that has happened.

In a recent publication I saw an article by Hilaire Belloc on world economies, in which the true position is set out clearly. He says—

“You have the absurd position of men making more goods than they need, and yet having less of those goods available for themselves than they need; the labourer producing, or able to produce, every year enough clothing for 10 years, and yet not being able to afford sufficient for one; the labourer producing or able to produce 10 good overcoats, yet not able to buy one.

“So under capitalism in its last stages you have the abnormal position of millions of men ready to make the necessities of life, of machinery ready to produce those necessities, of raw materials standing ready to be worked up by the machinery if only labourers could be put on, and yet all the machinery standing idle, the wealth not being produced, and the mass who could produce it going hungry and ill-shod and badly clothed. And the more capitalism develops the more that state of things will develop with it.

“Now this gradual lessening of purchasing power on the part of the working masses under capitalism is the destruction of the home market. Low wages make the great masses of English bootmakers unable

to buy all the boots they would. Therefore, the capitalist who owns the boot-making machinery must try to sell his surplus abroad. But the foreign countries, as they grow capitalist, suffer from the same trouble; property being badly distributed and the wage-earners kept as low as possible, their power to buy foreign goods also diminishes. Thus you have gradual destruction of the foreign market. You get in the long run the full working of what we will call the ‘capitalist paradox,’ which is that capitalism is a way of producing wealth which, in the long run, prevents people from obtaining the wealth produced and prevents the owner of the wealth from finding a market.”

In other words, the present system has actually broken down, and it is no good classing as extremists the Labour people or the more advanced thinkers of the community who are saying that something must be done about a new order. Nobody would suggest for one moment that in 1929-32, when we were in the throes of a world depression, there was a shortage of foodstuffs in Australia. Our granaries were full of wheat, we had tons of meat to spare, and a surplus in our dairy products, yet we found ourselves imposing some little levy or other in order to give our unemployed the wherewithal to keep body and soul together. That is absurd and if anybody from the planets above could come down to this earth and watch the system in operation he would justly conclude that we were raving mad. We had the goods with which to feed our people, but we did not have the means of distributing them.

This is indeed a big problem, and I am going to give the House some examples of what the machine has done in the past because they give us an idea of what we have to meet in the future.

For example, it is stated on reliable authority that, if the Lancashire cotton industry works one week on full time, it can supply the whole of the cotton requirements of Great Britain for 12 months.

Similarly, two months' work in the boot factories will supply the whole of the footwear requirements of Great Britain for 12 months.

One man tending 25 machines will produce 3,600 socks a day.

A bricklaying machine used by Arrol and Company of Glasgow will lay 1,500 bricks an hour.

The “Wade mechanical woodman” enables one man to do the work of 30 men.

There is a machine for stripping currants off the bunch, which disemploys 40 women, and does the work in less than half the time.

One man with a machine will turn out tens of thousands of tins per day to can those currants, when made into jam.

The Boston Railroad Company has a freightcar-handling device to take charge of

a million cars a year. One man directs the whole operation, thus saving the labour of 400 men and so reducing labour costs by the wages of the 400 men.

The tube railway in London has in use automatic booking clerks, doing all that is required in the work of issuing tickets. They even give the exact change.

An electrical power plant near Berlin, producing 24,000 kilowatts, employs 200 workmen and 50 clerks. Had it been equipped with less modern machinery, not less than 3,000 workmen and 700 clerks would have been employed.

In the United States there is a huge factory filled with practically a single machine turning out motor-car frames almost untouched by human hands. The output is no less than 9,000 a day, and only 200 men are employed, no less than 45 frames a day being the output per man.

On the East Loddon Estate, Victoria, a youth and a man on the bags harvested 800 acres of wheat in three weeks. In the days of the stripper it would have taken five machines and 15 men to do the same work in the same time. An improved machine does the work in even one-fourth less than this time.

It is a startling fact that a loaf of bread can be produced, from the tilling of the land to the wrapping of the loaf in paper for the consumer, by machines and their operators. Thus agricultural workers, millers, and bakers are disemployed.

In the poultry-farming industry there is in California a hatchery producing 8,000,000 chicks in a season. Some 80 tons of eggs are used. The whole of the incubating system is worked by electricity—touching buttons. One such hatchery in Australia would disemploy nearly every man now engaged in poultry-farming.

At St. Louis, when sewerage work was being carried on, 33 machine operators, aided by 37 labourers, were doing the work of 7,000 pick-and-shovel men.

An automatic mechanism, producing 73,000 electric-light bulbs every 24 hours, disemploys 2,000 hand workers for each machine installed.

Here is a final instance: at Henry Ford's River Rouge works, one may stand on the bridge of the blast furnaces and see the raw material being carried in automatically, and in three days the same material comes out at the other end of the factory as farm tractors, travelling under their own power. Raw material being actually transformed into labour-saving machinery in the miraculous time of three days!

I mention those things to give some idea of the progress that has been made over, say, the past 25 years. It should be obvious to anyone who cares to give the matter a moment's consideration that the old economic order will eventually break down—indeed, it has broken down already. That is

why I say that it is necessary for the Governments in every country to give some consideration to post-war problems and planning. Surely to goodness, no-one will suggest that the young fellows, the cream of the manhood of this country who have gone overseas, should be asked on their return to do exactly the same as they did before they left? Many of these young fellows have enlisted because no other course was open to them—I say that without intending to reflect on them in any way—many of them told me themselves that they were unable to get work and that the only thing left to them was to enlist. When these men return it is our duty to see that they get a "fair go," that at least they are given an opportunity of working in industry and doing something for their wives and families.

After all, the average man does not ask for much. Indeed, he asks for very little more than food for himself, his wife, and his family, with only a little of the things of this world that will make him happy. Therefore, it is our duty as public men, as representatives of the people, to see that consideration is given to post-war problems in the interest of the people as a whole.

Mr. Nimmo: Do you not think we should get together and win the war first?

Mr. JONES: The hon. gentleman suggests that we should get together. Why, his own party at Canberra cannot get together. During the past few weeks we have witnessed one of the most despicable and most disgusting exhibitions of petty bickering that we have ever seen at Canberra. It was not the Labour Party that was harassing the former Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies. The harassing came from Sir Charles Marr and a number of other members of the Federal Government Party who were jealous because they had not been selected for Cabinet rank and so came forth as strong critics of the national Cabinet. The action of the Federal Labour Party throughout was quite correct. Within the past few days the Federal Government Party has unloaded Mr. Menzies to make room for Mr. Fadden as Prime Minister, and, speaking for myself, I say that that smells very badly. I do not think that there is any comparison between Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden. It would be like taking the most insignificant member of this House and substituting him for the present Premier as leader of the Government. For a man to be a successful leader, it is not altogether necessary that he should be a good fellow. Some men may get somewhere in the political arena because they are popular with their mates but that does not make for leadership. I make those remarks without intending any reflection upon the present Prime Minister—in fact, I wish him every success—but I believe that the gentleman he has displaced showed far greater ability as a leader than he is ever likely to do.

When I arrived in Brisbane a few days ago I picked up a week-end newspaper and I read that the "bombshell from Bundaberg" was likely to burst in this Chamber on Tuesday last. I was in this Chamber when the hon. member for Bundaberg spoke and I listened

very attentively to his remarks. I did not want to refer to this matter earlier and I waited for some time so that the hon. member might be present in the Chamber, because I do not like to attack any hon. member in his absence, but I have noticed that of late the hon. member for Bundaberg is very seldom in his place in the Chamber. I must say that I was somewhat surprised at his remarks. He told us, for instance, that he had had 53 court cases. I should assume that a man who had had that number of court cases would at least have some knowledge of how to present his case, and that he would have submitted the most important points of his policy first. When he told us that one of the problems worrying him was the question of matchboxes with square corners, I do not know whether he inferred that legislation should be introduced to make them round. If he did, I suggest to him that instead of putting the State to the expense of legislating on a matter such as that, he should adopt the ordinary common-sense method of getting over the difficulty by carrying the matches loose in his pocket.

The hon. member also claimed some connection with the late Andrew Fisher. I once met a man in a mental institution who claimed to be Napoleon Bonaparte. It is quite possible that the hon. member for Bundaberg believes that there is some connection between him and the late Andrew Fisher. If he does, then we should be tolerant and generous in our attitude towards him, and humour him so that we shall not disturb his happiness.

We heard him, too, rave and rant, and having witnessed the screening of that famous picture, "The Great Dictator," I thought what a wonderful resemblance there was between him and the leading character in that film portrayed by Charlie Chaplin. I thought, too, that if he was given a little black moustache he would, with his wavy black hair, be a good double of that celebrity. Indeed, I suggest to him that he change the name of his party to the Charlie Chaplin Party.

The hon. member's speech did not make the hit with the Bundaberg people that he apparently thought it would, notwithstanding that the Press had previously referred to his coming speech as a bombshell. The "Bundaberg Daily News," in its issue of 4 September last, published a leading article entitled "B for Bunkum," in which it said—

"One cannot help feeling that the most constructive point made by Mr. Barnes, Bundaberg's choice of the kind of representation it wants in the State Parliament, in his nation-shaking address to the House on Tuesday, was his claim that drunks should not be thrown out of hotels. As Mr. Barnes pointed out, the safety of women and children is endangered by these drunks being thrown out of hotels. Mr. Barnes recalled, with an admirable admission of regret, that he had thrown drunks out of hotels himself. That was in the bad old days. It stands to reason that if drunks are thrown out of hotels in sufficient numbers, some hapless woman or child passing along the pavement is bound to be hit. The spectacle of a child being struck

by the inert form of a drunk hurled from the door of an hotel is almost too grim to contemplate. We are with Mr. Barnes to the very limit. Drunks should not be thrown from hotels, but escorted gently to the gutter, given a soft pillow, and made as comfortable as possible pending the arrival of the police. We feel that every drunk will approve of this humane attitude, and at next election Mr. Barnes's majority will be greater than ever in consequence."

In the course of this debate the hon. member for Aubigny made reference to the drift from the country to the cities. That is an important subject, and one that to which consideration must be given, possibly by the Government at a later date. Mr. W. L. Payne, in his report of the Wool Advisory Commission, pointed out that some towns in North-Western Queensland had less population to-day than 10 or 15 years ago. On page 105 of that report he says in paragraph 447—

"Certain towns in Western Queensland, and particularly in the north-west, are not progressing, but slipping back. Small towns like Kynuna are now about one-fourth of their former size, and it is doubtful if even the present population will be maintained."

In paragraph 448 he continues—

"Ten years ago the permanent population of the Winton Shire was 3,300; to-day the estimated population, notwithstanding much increased closer grazing settlement, is 2,800 people. The town of Winton 10 years ago had a permanent population of about 2,000 people; it is now estimated at 1,600 people, or a decrease of 20 per cent. The floating population, consisting of shearers, station workers, &c., is also much less than formerly."

He goes on to say—

"Several factors have operated together in bringing about this state of affairs. The non-prosperity of the grazing industry; the hardship of life in the Western towns; the lack of suitable houses, and of comforts conducive to health; the expense of sending families to the coast for holidays; the general use of motor transport enabling workers to leave their families in comfortable surroundings and travel long distances to work; the cost of bringing goods by rail from the coast; the practice which has grown up amongst graziers of having nearly all shearing done by contract, and the contractor drawing his labour from the Southern States, as well as from Queensland; all these things have contributed to the non-progress or decline of these Central-West and North-Western towns. Many shearers in the off-season live in Southern cities, and each year obtain Queensland engagements from contractors."

The hon. member for Gregory will have some knowledge of this subject. I believe one of the worst offenders in the matter is the United Graziers' Association. When I say that I refer to the contract system of shearing, which is largely responsible for bringing in Southern shearers every year to

the Western towns, so that the local men cannot get employment.

Mr. Macdonald: "Gun" shearers.

Mr. JONES: That is true. The contract system has been responsible for that. I know that 20 years ago, when I shored in the Longreach district, I went back to one station year after year and shored 4,000 or 5,000 sheep. Men who were 50 or 60 years of age still went along, although they were getting too old to follow the game, because the manager, Charlie Seaton, had no objection to a man as long as he could shear 100 or even 80 sheep. Old rouseabouts continued to work there year after year. These men would go into town and probably spend the biggest, or some part, of their cheques there, and in most instances the families of these men lived in the local towns. That happened in hundreds of sheds throughout Western Queensland. The money was spent in the towns amongst local business people, and it had the effect of building up those towns.

I remember a shearing run, part of which is in my electorate, known as the Marathon, Maxwellton, and Eulolo run. Every year those three sheds employed something like 30 shearers and probably 35 or 40 rouseabouts. The total wages taken from each shed would be not less than £2,000, consequently approximately £6,000 would be spent in that area, and the employees and their families resided in adjacent towns. Hon. members can understand what that meant to Winton, Hughenden, and Longreach and other Western towns.

I was in Cunnamulla about three weeks ago and a Mr. Manning—a prominent business man of that town—asked me if I thought it would do good if they formed a chamber of commerce in Cunnamulla from among the business people, with the object of approaching the United Graziers' Association and asking that some sort of preference be given to local men. It is very regrettable that local men in Western towns in Queensland should be unemployed while men are coming from the South. I do not blame the men from the South—they have every right to come—but I do think the time will arrive when the Court will have to do something in that connection.

I have given the question much consideration, as a union official and as a member of Parliament, and I believe that it may be overcome by some system of rotation of employment, if that is agreeable to employer and employee. For instance, there could be an office in, say, Longreach, at which shearers could register, and when a contractor required 10 men he could be required to take the first 10 on the list. If any of those 10 refused, his name would go to the bottom. I believe that system would be to the advantage of everybody concerned.

It is a very live question in the West. Here, in a State that has made much progress over the last 15 or 20 years, it is regrettable to find that the population of our Western towns is dwindling. There is something wrong, undoubtedly. It is a difficult problem.

Mr. Massey: Would you call that progress?

Mr. JONES: The people are in the cities of Australia. They come from the South. They are not living in these areas. From that angle one cannot say that the Western towns have progressed. Certainly, these towns are supplied with good hospitals, including maternity wards. Their social services are much better in every respect than formerly; nevertheless, what I have described goes on. The hon. member may call it progress; I do not. The persons responsible for this state of affairs are the Southern shearing contractors, men with offices in Brisbane and probably Sydney. As a matter of fact, when I followed shearing, I found it easier to get a job by sending a telegram from Sydney or Melbourne than from Longreach. That is remarkable, but it was a fact.

I have a fairly wide knowledge of these matters. Only a fortnight ago three loads of shearers pulled up at a hotel in Cunnamulla about 10 a.m., cashed their shearing cheques at the bank, and had left for Bourke, in New South Wales, by 1 p.m. They had originally come to Queensland from that State. Yet I know that shearers in Cunnamulla who followed the calling with me were unable to get a job. I have also seen in the Press statements by the United Graziers' Association Shearing Company and others, to the effect that there was a scarcity of shearers. This is not so. There is no shortage of shearers in any of the Western towns visited by me recently.

I was somewhat amused to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Maree in this debate. He has apparently taken up the cudgels laid down by Dr. Watson Brown who, as member for Gregory, in this House made an attack on the Australian Workers' Union. The only explanation of these attacks that I can think of is the fact that this organisation wields power. It has officers and officials in every part of the State. It has done a very big job for the workers of Queensland. I was associated with that union for years, and I am prouder of the comparatively few years that I was connected with industrial organisation in Queensland than of any other part of my life. I believe that then I did very real work.

I remember that in my time it was a common practice for domestics to be picked up in employment or registry offices in Queensland and sent to such places as Windorah and the Gulf country, and I have known instances in which a girl had to remain on a station 12 weeks before she could get her fare, which sometimes was £6 each way. I take some credit for what I am about to tell hon. members. I went from station to station and collected the signatures of girls to a claim in the Industrial Court. There was some difficulty in getting enough, as the present hon. member for Gregory will remember, because he was associated with me at the time. As a result of the petition we were able to complete, we were able to get decent wages and conditions for these girls.

There are people who may say that there is no need for that sort of thing. I admit that 90 per cent. of the employers are decent employers and give their employees reasonable treatment, but a percentage are always willing to take advantage of them, to "go round the serum," as the saying is, to "put something over." As secretary of the Australian Workers' Union in the western district of our State, where conditions are not of the best, I played a part in collecting arrears of wages of approximately £1,500 to £2,000.

This organisation, which it has been said has done nothing for the people of Queensland, has, in fact, done more for freedom and democracy than probably any other body in the State. Going back to 1891 and 1892, we find that men who had been gaoled for attempting to obtain for the workers something approximating decent conditions afterwards sat in this Parliament. The organisation sprung from the industrial troubles of those years. I am not an old man, but I can remember that before the passing of the Workers' Accommodation Act 40 of us, 40 shearers and rouseabouts, slept in one room, in tiers of three bunks. There was a fireplace at the end, the cook was up at about 4 o'clock in the morning getting breakfast ready, and when the men got out of bed they just moved over to the dining table, which was in front of their bunks. Then we hear it said that this organisation has done nothing. I should like some of its critics to have lived under the conditions of those days.

When I went out to Winton as a youth I met the local doctor in the street. He said to me, "You are fresh-looking, have you just come from the South?" I said, "Yes, I arrived yesterday." He said, "Come round to me this evening and I will inoculate you against typhoid fever. I can see that you are a virtual incubator for it." I went round and was inoculated, and saw to it that I was inoculated every year. That was essential in those days, because typhoid was the thing that every shearer in the West dreaded above all others. In the cemeteries of Ilfracombe, Longreach, and Winton are the tombstones of many Southern shearers who contracted typhoid fever merely because there was no protection of water supplies. I think it was Kynuna shed that was closed up on one occasion, because 22 cases of typhoid were taken away from it. Upon investigation it was found that the drainage from the shed was running into the men's water supply.

Without the efforts of the Australian Workers' Union these things might never have been rectified. That organisation was largely responsible for the reforms that have taken place. The hon. member for Maree must be fair. There are many organisations that I do not like—perhaps their political opinions differ from mine—but I am willing to admit that the persons connected with them are conscientious, that they are ready to do anything it is possible to do for the welfare of the people in general, and I remind the hon. member for Maree that the Australian Workers' Union does the same. It has done much for the State and its people.

1941—1.

Mr. Luckins: Did the Australian Workers' Union clean out the typhoid from the bore water?

Mr. JONES: That is just the type of inane interjection one might expect from the hon. member.

In common with others who have spoken to this motion, I sincerely trust that before Parliament meets again next year the international situation will have improved and that at least the people of the British Commonwealth of Nations will be able to see some promise of a brighter future.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (Fortitude Valley) (11.13 a.m.): At the outset I desire to offer you, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. member for South Brisbane, my felicitations upon being elected to the offices of Speaker and Chairman of Committees respectively. You have both earned your election to high offices by your many years of devotion and service to a great movement, to honesty of purpose, and to deep appreciation of the problems that have confronted you from time to time. I wish you both continued success.

To both the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply I offer my congratulations. They acquitted themselves very ably and created an impression of sound knowledge and good judgment.

Ever since the last session of Parliament, when most of us sat in this Chamber, the world has lived in the shadow of a great tragedy. The terrible war in which we are now involved has just entered its third year, and the price that is being paid by mankind is appalling. Civilisation appears to be crumbling, and it would seem that only a miracle can save mankind from despair, disaster, and destruction. Let us hope that such a miracle is near at hand.

I come now to a review of the activities of the present Government during the past 12 months. I am impressed by two very important facts, which are the basis of the Government's policy. In the first place, the Government have made every effort to co-operate as far as possible with the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of prosecuting a 100-per-cent. war effort in this State. They made it their duty to do so. But whilst carrying out that splendid side of our policy, the Government have also been alive to the need for protecting the home front, and legislation has been passed and wisely administered to safeguard the welfare of the people, with the result that this State is in a far better position to-day than it was this time last year.

Let me say—and I say this to my friends opposite especially—that there are many people in the community who from time to time criticise the Labour movement and the Labour Government. It seems to be the privilege of a few self-styled super-patriots to accuse the Labour movement of not being patriotic enough to prosecute this war as it should be prosecuted in the interests of democracy and freedom, but their statements have not been borne out by facts. The

Labour movement has more to lose if the British Commonwealth of Nations is defeated in this struggle than any other section in the community. We have at stake the work and achievements of 40 long years in this State. We have, at great sacrifice, built up democratic institutions and a fair standard of living, and we stand to lose them if brutal Nazi-ism and Fascism, which seek to dominate the world and put out the light of civilisation, succeed. To those who would criticise the Labour movement in regard to the war effort, let me say that we stand steadfast and solidly behind the British Commonwealth of Nations; we are in the fight until that coercive and brutal system of Nazi-ism is completely destroyed.

Looking at things nearer home, it is evident that Queensland has progressed during the last 12 months. Living conditions of our people have improved; the basic wage of the State is now at its peak of £4 9s. a week; our people enjoy the shortest working week, and last, but not least of all, the cost of living in this State is the lowest of the Australian States. It is also interesting to note that unemployment has virtually disappeared in Queensland—it has been reduced to a low level of 3.9 per cent. Those facts, I contend on behalf of Queensland, point to a very creditable achievement—all the more creditable when we realise the difficulties under which the Government have operated during the last 12 months. It has been the aim of the Government, through the Department of Agriculture and Stock, presided over by the hon. member for Barcoo, to find a market for our primary commodities, and after having found the market, the department has had the added difficulty of finding ships wherein to transport our produce overseas to those who have bought it from us. The achievement of the Government has been particularly splendid in view of the obstacles in their path; Queensland leads and the other States follow.

I am glad to say after having spent several weeks in the Warrego electorate in the recent by-election campaign that the progress of that outlying district in the last few years has been remarkable. I am convinced that the people made no mistake on election day. They were fully alive to the efforts of the Government, they realised the progress they have brought about, and they have given this Government a mandate to carry on its good work of legislating wisely and well in the interests of the people of the State.

I should now like to refer to the policy of the national Government in the matter of petrol rationing, not with the desire to make political capital or criticise unduly, because if this policy is necessary in the war interests I have no complaint with it, nor has any other loyal citizen in the community. I am, however, bewildered to think that for years past, when it was evident that we were rapidly approaching war, and the men in control of the national Government knew that this problem would face us, nothing was done to meet it.

Those precious golden years were wasted. No effort was made to realise the fact that we might be confronted with a shortage of petrol and that the situation as it exists to-day would develop. I say very emphatically that the public men responsible for the position that now exists will have a great deal to answer for before the question is finally disposed of. It is evident that this lack of foresight on the part of the men who rule the Commonwealth from Canberra has seriously dislocated industry in this city, and it is also evident that primary industries and secondary industries throughout Queensland have been disorganised and that the majority of Western towns have in comparison with their appearance in previous years been converted into ghost towns. If the present policy continues and the national Government do not make any attempt to grapple with the situation, both our secondary and primary industries not only in Brisbane but throughout the Commonwealth will be strangled.

In this country the people have been asked to carry on industry with a limited supply of motor fuel, but it is interesting to note that up to about two months ago approximately 800,000 gallons of petrol left San Francisco monthly for Japan. The same may be said of the export of oil from the Dutch East Indies to Japan. I ask the Federal Government, why have they not adopted the policy giving this country a right to share in those exports so that we may replenish the depleted stocks of petrol that we are told are in this country to-day?

Mr. Nicklin: Who owned the ships that you speak about—Japan?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I should like to remind the hon. gentleman that during the last war this country built or bought a Commonwealth line of ships and that they were given away—sacrificed. Had they been retained they could have been used for the useful purpose of bringing oil to this country. The Federal Government will have to face up to their responsibilities in the matter. The difficulty will have to be solved quickly, otherwise this country will pay very dearly in the near future for their blunders.

I have no desire to labour the question, but I propose to make one or two suggestions that I think may help to solve the problem. First, the Commonwealth Government should speed up the production of oil from shale throughout the Commonwealth, and second, they should encourage all State Governments to produce the maximum possible amount of power alcohol. This applies principally to Queensland, although to some extent to New South Wales. These matters are urgent, and the sooner those in authority at Canberra realise it and formulate such a policy the sooner a solution will be found for a problem that is of vital importance to the whole of Australia.

I have said enough about petrol rationing. I now turn my attention to another phase of Government activity—the shortage of houses, not only in Queensland but throughout the Commonwealth. We have an urgent

housing problem on our hands. I do not forget the magnificent work of the State Advances Corporation in the erection of workers' dwellings with the financial resources at its disposal. It is not enough, however, to meet the needs of the people of Brisbane, or, for that matter, the needs of the people throughout the State. There is a housing shortage throughout the entire Commonwealth, and the problem will have to be faced fairly. To me, it is a national problem, and one that should be regarded in the light of our war-time effort. The homes that are needed will have to be built in the interests of the people of this country, and especially in the interests of the men who return from the fighting fronts. I sincerely suggest that it should take its place alongside other war problems and should be treated from a national point of view, in the hope that a comprehensive national housing scheme covering all States will be undertaken by the Federal Government without delay. The longer it is delayed the greater will become the difficulty, particularly when we are faced with the problems of rebuilding in the aftermath of war.

There are one or two questions to which I desire to make some reference, and to one of them I propose to devote some time—that is, the war position as we find it to-day. Like speakers who have preceded me, I sound the note of national unity. The elected representatives of the people have little to gain by rising in their seats in this Chamber and flogging their political joss or creating disunity. We all realise beyond all doubt that we are engaged in the most desperate struggle that mankind has ever been engaged in; consequently there is the utmost need for unity. When I say that, however, I do not give away my right to indulge in constructive criticism if such criticism is necessary. Consequently, I make one or two pointed references to the war as I see it. During the last year our fortunes have ebbed and flowed. When things looked blackest we, to some extent, were fortunate in securing Russia as an ally. The Russian people and Russian army have without doubt put up a magnificent resistance in defence of their country and the principles which they believe in. No-one will deny that Russia has received some staggering blows. She is faced with the greatest military force the world has ever seen. No-one can foretell the future. During the last few weeks a power not far removed from our own shores has been engaged in prosecuting a policy of aggression. For the moment that aggression is in a south-westerly direction, but we do not know whether a continuance of that policy will mean another move into Eastern Asia, or south-east into the Pacific. I quote the words of one of our most prominent citizens, the Hon. A. Fadden, Prime Minister of Australia. From time to time he has warned the people that the war is coming nearer our shores every day. As a matter of fact, in the course of his broadcast on Sunday night he urged the people to greater sacrifices, because they did not know the time or the hour when we should

be compelled to repel an attack on our own shores.

That leads me to a reference to our local defence measures. Since I discussed this matter 12 months ago, there has been a great improvement in our defence and the equipment of our army. I am also pleased at the remarkable improvements made in the A.R.P. organisation in this State. I am delighted to know that the Brisbane and South Coast Hospital, situated in my electorate, was so well organised that the blackout trial the other night was almost perfect. That is very gratifying, but can we say the same of other branches of defence that should march side by side with our A.R.P. organisation, and in which efficiency is necessary if attack is made upon us? Can we say that the other essential services for the defence of this city are marching in unison with the very fine A.R.P. organisation? I refer particularly, not with any political bias or desire to score politically, to the need for a plentiful supply of anti-aircraft guns, gas masks, and adequate air-raid shelters.

This war has been in progress two years and as we enter the third year it is very important that essential points of defence should be adequate to resist an attack on this city or State. I leave the matter there. I do not desire to indulge in political criticism. I raised this point on behalf of the people in the hope that the matter will be brought under the notice of the responsible authority—the national Government—and that there will be full speed ahead in an effort to make all branches of the defence system of this and every city the equal of our fine A.R.P. system so that the best possible measure of protection will be assured to our people should this country be attacked.

There are other matters on which I wish to say a few words. To-day there is growing up a controversy on the need for assisting our ally—Russia. Personally, I admire the splendid stand made by the Russians and I believe we should render all the aid we can, provided every effort is made to place our own defences on an efficient basis. We must first look after ourselves so that we can best defend ourselves, and after that we can give aid not only to Russia, but to any other country fighting for the principles of democracy, freedom, and tolerance. I believe, too, that any advocacy of aid to Russia that I may make I can make through the channels of the Labour movement, and I can say all I want to say about aid to Russia through the Labour movement, that I have belonged to for so many years. I have no desire to hitch up with the committee that has proclaimed itself to be the official expression of public opinion on this subject in this State. Many of the members of that committee have never been associated with the recognised Labour movement or organised Labour in this State or in any other State. Any union can state the case for Russia through the recognised channels of the Labour movement just as the British Federation of Trade Unions to-day has assured the Russian trade unions that all possible will be done by the British workers

to see that Russia gets the maximum aid in the terrific struggle in which she is engaged. I believe that is the correct procedure. Anything I advocate will be done through the official Labour movement, which can handle this question satisfactorily.

I also wish to make reference to the system now in operation for financing the war. We have been often told by the ex-Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, and we were told the other night by the present Prime Minister, Mr. Fadden, that a supreme effort is necessary, that more sacrifices are called for. Personally, I have no objection to that, provided the sacrifice is made in accordance with the capacity of the individual. Hon. members will probably decide that that principle has not been complied with during the past two years in the financing of this country's war effort. The facts are disquietening. One examines the financial magazines and sees that the financial groups in this country have increased their profits during the last two years, while the lower and middle sections of wage- and salary-earners have been carrying intolerable burdens in direct and indirect taxation. It is the duty of our Federal Parliament to place the burden on the people according to their capacity to pay.

Mr. Nimmo: You will have to wipe out State Parliaments.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: If we wiped the hon. gentleman out in the process we should do this country a great service.

I have taken out a list of companies and their profits from a leading financial journal and they show a fair picture of the state of business in the Commonwealth to-day. The Olympic Tyre and Rubber Company made a profit of £75,000 in 1940 and £87,000 in 1941, paying a dividend of 13½ per cent. The figures for the Bank of Australasia, a representative of the last bulwarks of a system that is nearly worn out, had profits in 1940 of £299,000, and in 1941 of £266,000, and paid a dividend of 8 per cent. The profits of Cash Orders Limited, a company whose customers are wage-earners and others who are to-day battling for a crust, jumped from £86,000 in 1940 to £96,000 in 1941, when the dividend was 15 per cent. Goldsbrough Mort and Company Limited, which controls many pastoral companies not only in Queensland but in Australia, showed profits of £260,000 in 1940 and £262,000 in 1941, the dividend being 7 per cent. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited, that fine old warhorse that has always supported reactionary movements of parties represented by hon. members opposite, made a profit of £1,100,000 in 1940, but it decreased slightly in 1941—probably owing to the watering of stock—to £1,054,000. Woolworths Limited made profits of £272,000 and £282,000 in 1940 and 1941 respectively.

Mr. Nimmo: What about the Australian Workers' Union?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. gentleman knows nothing about the Australian Workers' Union, Mr. Speaker. He will harp on that string, but he never had sufficient personal pride and principle in his life or

was decent enough to take out a ticket in a union.

I am pointing out that in these dark hours when this country is engaged in a titanic struggle, it is still the happy hunting ground for vested interests, friends of hon. members opposite. Men on the basic wage are taxed heavily by indirect taxation. The middle and higher wage-earners are carrying their burdens. They make their sacrifices. I desire to know from the national Government and their supporters whether they are prepared to give a fair deal to the people of Australia without respect of persons.

Another matter that needs consideration is the idea now being toyed with by the Federal Government of placing on the shoulders of the wage-earners a method of financing the war by what is known as compulsory saving. On paper it looks well. It is the idea of the economist, J. M. Keynes, and has been lauded by the Tory and anti-Labour Press in Australia for months. We are led to believe from the lobbies at Canberra that it may be applied when the Budget is brought down in the next few weeks.

Let us see what this scheme really means. It is proposed to take from the wage- and salary-earners part of their earnings as loans for the purpose of financing the war. It is called a compulsory saving. The first thing this compulsory saving will do is to lower the standard of living of those on the basic wage and make them less able to play their part effectively in the prosecution of this war.

Then we are told that these compulsory savings are to be held in reserve until the days of peace shine again, when those who have made these compulsory savings will be able to draw upon them and enjoy benefits. Let us examine that aspect of the proposal. I do not think any hon. member will disagree with me when I say that nobody knows what the cost of the war will be eventually. Nobody can predict with any degree of certainty that the financial system, as we know it, will survive the strain through which it is now passing. It is not right then to take from the poor, those who cannot afford to make the greater sacrifice, a further sum in the form of compulsory savings in the pretence that these savings will be returned when peace is with us again. It is quite possible that the financial system will collapse. The burden of the war may be so heavy that Governments will have great difficulty in carrying on, to say nothing of giving back to the people what has been taken from them.

It is interesting to note from the history of taxation in Australia that almost without exception every tax that has been placed upon the people has remained—I am delighted to be able to say that the only reduction to be effected by any Government has been that made by this Government in Queensland during recent years—and I mention that fact to prove my argument that this policy of applying what is called a system of compulsory saving will amount in the end merely to a reduction of the earning and spending power of the majority of our people. In the mean-time, it will weaken their war effort. Instead

of being an asset to this country during this war period, our wage and salary-earners will become a burden. I hope that organised labour and all intelligent sections of the community will fight this proposal for compulsory loans, because this country cannot stand a policy that is going to make the poor poorer as the days go by.

I desire to refer now to something that is used by hon. members opposite as a football—the story that a new order is to come when this war is over. The prospect of a military victory in this war is giving rise to much talk of the new order of the future. It has to be admitted that the proposed new order is of a rather nebulous character. All hon. members opposite, and their friends who have spoken of it, have done so as vaguely as one would speak of the sun, which is many millions of miles away. One is entitled to ask, therefore, who is going to create this new order. Is it to be created under the leadership of those who have mismanaged and wrecked the old order, the people whom hon. members opposite have supported for years—vested interests? Are they to create the new order in spite of all that they have done in wrecking the old? They threw away the last peace and they will throw away the next peace if the people are not alive to their machinations. Is this new order to be placed in the hands of the armament kings, who helped to throw away the last peace and bring about this war? Is it to be organised by the bankers and vested interests? It is obvious that the groups referred to have inflicted immense injury on civilisation, and, if they have another try at it, civilisation will disappear. I hope that the new order will be such that we shall not have to go on an expedition every 25 years to rescue the British Empire from the condition in which the conservative friends of hon. members opposite have placed it.

Mr. Nimmo: And the MacDonald Labour Party.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I am not forgetting MacDonald. He was a wolf in sheep's clothing as far as Labour is concerned, and at last he showed his true nature.

The creation of a new order must be undertaken by the people themselves. The instrument will be the organised democratic bodies in their respective countries. Organised labour must, and will, play a prominent part in this great task.

In my humble opinion, any new order that is satisfactory must provide for the following:—

- (a) War must be outlawed and international peace maintained;
- (b) The financial and economic control of countries must pass from the hands of a privileged few to those of all the people;
- (c) There must be security for all, followed by the abolition of unemployment, poverty, and hardship;
- (d) The principles of freedom, tolerance, and justice must be established.

When the night of war has passed and the day of peace has dawned there will be a new order. Under it men and women will work and live in peace. There will be an ample standard of living; want and poverty will vanish for ever. Women and children will live in happiness, without the fear of violent death from bombing, and all citizens will be entitled to use their intellects and express their views in safety. Brutality and force will be but unhappy memories. I visualise a system of society in which governments of free men, elected by free people, will legislate wisely, progressively, and well, and that is an ideal for which it is well worth striving. In our own State we began to build this new order of things many years ago. As the hon. member for Charters Towers said this morning, it was that noble band of men and women who fought for freedom in 1890 and 1891 who laid the first corner-stone of a new political order for the people of Queensland in the shape of the right to organise politically and industrially. It was a Labour Government who, in 1915, laid another corner-stone in the edifice. It was a Labour Government who, in 1932, cleaned up the mess of the old order of hon. members opposite and gave the people a new order that has been of benefit to them since the advent of this Government to power. This work has been done well and faithfully, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the Government are planning for the future. As this session progresses, hon. members of this Assembly will be privileged to place more corner-stones in this great edifice of a new order. Let us proceed to our task in unity, with a courage and a foresight worthy of the great trust reposed in us by the people of Queensland.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON (Wide Bay) (11.46 a.m.): I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on again occupying the chair of this House. Many of us have sat under you for a long time, and, in the serious crisis that we are now facing, it is pleasing to know that we have in you a man who, when called upon to fight for his country, has "done his bit," as many of our young men are doing at the present time.

I also wish to congratulate the hon. member for South Brisbane on his promotion to the position of Chairman of Committees.

I congratulate the hon. members for Gregory and Kelvin Grove on the interesting speeches they delivered in this Assembly, and I venture to say that, as time goes on, they will prove themselves able debaters.

Speaking for myself—and I am sure I speak, too, on behalf of every hon. member—I am very pleased to know that the term of office of His Excellency the Governor has been extended; we all hope that he will remain with us for at least another 12 months. Sir Leslie is a gentleman who has proved himself popular with all sections of the community. He has been a splendid representative of His Majesty in Queensland and has travelled the State perhaps more than many hon. members of this Assembly. He has done much fine work in connection with recruiting, and has been of

great assistance to our young men by the inspiring addresses he has delivered from time to time.

Unfortunately, we are going through a very serious crisis in our history, and, in his Opening Speech, His Excellency used these words—

“Parliament has never been opened in such serious circumstances.”

Such a statement, coming from His Majesty's representative, shows us the need to put forth an even greater and more united effort than at present. I know that in this Assembly we are united.

Serious political disturbances occur from time to time, however, in the Federal political arena, and thus the Federal Government are unable to give the people a lead in the united effort that is necessary to help stave off the peril that undoubtedly faces this country if a catastrophe overtakes the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The Secretary for Public Lands: That does not apply to the Labour Party at Canberra.

Mr. CLAYTON: I am glad of that interjection, because it prompts me to remind the hon. gentleman that the Federal Labour Party should follow in the footsteps of their Labour confreres in the old country. Did not Mr. Bevin, Major Attlee, and other members of the Labour Party agree to join the English Cabinet so as to put forth a combined effort on behalf of all sections of the community? What have we in Australia? We have a very different and a very unfortunate state of affairs. If we had a national Government in this country it would give the people a greater feeling of confidence. Young men are enlisting in large numbers to fight for us. On the battlefield each does not inquire from the other whether his political views are those of the Labour Party, the Country Party, or the Nationalist Party—no, they are there to fight for the British Empire. It is disgraceful to think that in this country members of political parties, including the Labour Party, are not willing to join in a united effort. It is to be hoped that before long they will see the light and will agree to work as members of a united body and thus help still further to maintain our excellent system of democracy.

In the course of his Speech, His Excellency said—

“My advisers have also under consideration proposals for employment-placing generally on the basis of the principles contained in the Public Works Organisation and Co-ordination Act, having in view the effect of war on industry and the necessity for the early planning of post-war problems.”

That is a very important and well-considered statement, one to which we should give early and close attention, because in view of our experience in this respect after the last war it is highly desirable that we should do something more this time. It is not altogether a

Commonwealth responsibility; it is the responsibility of all the States as well. I hope that a more satisfactory plan will be adopted on this occasion than that carried out after the last war, when men were placed on inferior land and on areas that were too small to enable them to make a reasonable living. These land settlement schemes were a failure, and they involved the Government in the loss of many thousands of pounds. I should like to see a committee appointed from both sides of this House, to consider the subject of land settlement, and especially to advise as to suitable land for the men who return from overseas. I have no desire to refer to the tragic blunders associated with Beerburrum and other land-settlement schemes that were launched in the interests of returned soldiers after the last war. I am anxious that something better should be done on this occasion and that the schemes should be based on the advice of practical men who have been successful in pastoral and agricultural pursuits. The report of such men would be very helpful, and it would be in striking contrast with the advice received from men of the type engaged to report on such subjects at the conclusion of the last war.

We must also deliberate on the question whether these young men, on returning from the war, will wish to go back to a life on the land or remain in the cities. I am inclined to believe that many will want to remain in the cities, where the conditions will appeal to them after their experiences overseas. Unfortunately, the improved conditions in our cities are largely caused by the expenditure there of loan money. I am looking to the Government to evolve a scheme that will attract these men back to the land. Many of the industries in our cities have a 44-hour week—some less—worked on five days of the week. Conditions in the dairying and pastoral industries cannot compare with such conditions and unless the Government make conditions in the country more attractive many of our soldiers will desire to settle in the cities.

The drift from the country to the cities is a matter that must seriously concern us. The hon. member for Charters Towers spoke of the fall in population in certain western districts. That is the position in the country centres on the coast also. One factor contributing to that drift is the huge expenditure of money in connection with the war effort. Many men are leaving their homes in the country for the cities to share in that large expenditure.

Another factor that tends to harass people in the country is the recent action of the Government in increasing railway freights and fares. When freights and fares are increased the farmer is hit harder than the man in the city, for he is called upon to pay increased costs not only on foodstuffs for his home and machinery for agriculture, but also on the produce of his farm. The railway fares paid by country residents 30 miles from a town or city were thought prohibitive in the past, but the recent increases will make

their position more difficult still. It is because of the collective effect of all these factors that life in the country does not make the appeal it formerly did.

Another reason why life on the land is proving unattractive is the income derived from working the land. People can certainly make a living from the land in a good season, but in dry conditions the position is entirely different.

Another thing that operates against the man on the land in comparison with the man working under an award in the city is the lack of protection for the former, who has to pay an increased price for agricultural machinery, and at the same time depend on world markets for the price he gets for his product. That is one of the main causes of the decline in land settlement.

When our people are determined to remain in the city, and when people are drifting from the land to the city, we should formulate some scheme of providing permanent employment for them. It is no use putting down a stretch of road near the city or building a Story bridge or a public building, which only provides employment for a short space of time, and after that throwing them on the unemployment market again. There is one way to solve that problem—and in this connection I congratulate the hon. member for Hamilton on his remarks—and that is by doing more than we are doing to establish secondary industries. I have spoken on this matter previously in this House. I think the Government should do everything they possibly can to stimulate secondary industry in order to enable our boys and girls to learn trades and obtain permanent employment.

The high taxation imposed on companies by the Government is such that people are shy of investing their capital in this State. The following figures show the position clearly:—

State.	Company rates of taxation.	
Queensland ..	2s. 1d. to 6s. 3d. in the £1	
New South Wales ..	2s. 0d. to 3s. 6d. in the £1	
Victoria ..	2s. 0d. in the £1	
South Australia ..	2s. 0d. in the £1	
Western Australia ..	1s. 5d. in the £1	

You can readily see, Mr. Speaker, that people are not going to invest their capital if the Government continue to treat companies in that way. I am hopeful that the Government will do something to remove the disability under which companies in this State are working. I will quote figures to show how much we are behind other States.

At page 710 of the Official Year Book for 1939 the following interesting figures appear:—

Factories—Employment.

Average number engaged during full year (52 weeks)—

Year.	N.S.W.	Victoria.	Qld.
1933-34 ..	154,061	156,334	40,083

The Attorney-General: That was just after your Government slaughtered them.

Mr. CLAYTON: That was the time we were cleaning up all the State enterprises left by the hon. gentleman's party.

1937-38 ..	224,861	201,793	52,119
Increase for five years ..	70,800	45,459	12,036

We should give every possible encouragement to people to invest their capital here. Queensland has now passed the stage at which she can be solely a primary-producing State, yet that is for practical purposes what she still is. If there must be this drift to the cities then let us provide avenues of employment for our boys and girls.

The Commonwealth Year Book gives the value of production of boot and shoe factories for 1937-38—

	£
New South Wales ..	1,155,000
Victoria	2,044,000
Queensland	166,000

Only a few days ago we were informed that Queensland had a greater number of cattle than any of the other States, but our hides are sent South to be manufactured, and we in Queensland buy boots and shoes made from Queensland hides in the Southern States. I hope that the Government will move to create a better state of things than that.

His Excellency in his Speech said—

“Education in a democracy is so important that it calls for periodic revision if it is to keep abreast of progress.”

We are all agreed that our education system is as far advanced as that of any other State, and that it is essential that we give to our boys and girls the best we can afford. The Government are expending a large sum of money in doing that, as for the past year £1,700,000, in round figures, was expended on education. I do not complain of that. I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that it is so, but I have a complaint to make about the position in the country. I have already mentioned that families are leaving country areas for the cities. What encouragement are they given to remain on the land? Country areas are in a serious position because of the closing of many schools. For the information of hon. members I give a list of schools closed, or called upon to show cause why they should not be closed, in the electorate of Wide Bay. Of the schools closed some have been closed for a long period, namely, Miva, Deborah, Carinyle, and Goomeribong. Three one-teacher schools have been closed for some time. In fairness, I must say that the reopening of the Carinyle school is under consideration.

The Attorney-General: The children have all grown up.

Mr. CLAYTON: It is a pity some people I know ever grew up. The provision of schools is a very important factor in keeping people on the land. Of the schools closed recently in my electorate the one at Greendale has been asked to show cause why it should not be closed, because the average attendance over a period of three months has

dropped to a little below nine. The school at Oakdale is closed. That at Pioneer's Rest has been closed for approximately eight months. The school at Idalia is closed. The institution at Cherbourg is closed, because it is said there is no accommodation, or was none, when I last made representations. Schools at Calgoa and Dunnora are closed. Glenrock and Barambah have to show cause.

It is unfortunate that we should have so many schools closed in one country electorate alone. Of course, it will be said that the average daily attendance of nine must be maintained, but I suggest that while some of the fathers of families and the young men are going from the land to the war the Government might be well advised to reduce the required average daily attendance for three months to eight. If they cannot agree to that, then I suggest that as it costs something over £200 a year to keep a provisional school open in the country, the Government might give consideration to making a small grant for conveying children to a central school. For instance, if there are two families living adjacent to one another, they could take turn about in taking the children to school, the Government to pay them a small subsidy. Of course, I have been told, too, that we have the correspondence classes. That is so, and they have been successful, but at present the man on the land is going through a difficult time, and I hope that the Government will not persist in saying that the children in areas in which schools have been closed must take the correspondence courses. A mother or daughter of a family has not the time to teach the children after she has been in the cowyard 14 times in a week. As the Governor has stated—

“Education in a democracy is so important that it calls for periodic revision.”

I hope that the Government will give some consideration to reducing the required average daily attendance.

Mr. Slessar: If you make the average seven, many of these small schools will be kept open.

Mr. CLAYTON: I am willing to agree to that.

No mention has been made in the Governor's Speech, or by the Government so far during this session, of any proposed reduction in taxation. Of course, I have never known a Labour Government to reduce taxation, but I was hoping that they would make an exception this session. Let us consider the old income (unemployment relief) tax. As that name did not sound very well, the Government altered it to the income (State development) tax. According to the Auditor-General's report, the amount collected by means of that tax and credited to consolidated revenue during the year 1939-40 was £2,255,000. When the Moore Government introduced the unemployment relief tax, they were condemned for levying on the wage-earner to the extent of 3d. or 6d. in the £1, but even then the revenue derived from that tax in its year of introduction was only about £700,000. During the

year 1939-40, the amount expended by the Government from the proceeds of this tax was only £2,030,847 7s. 6d.

I notice that £848,915 from the £2,000,000 odd was spent on special employment works under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act. I wish to give some items of that expenditure. I notice that £316,149 was spent by the Main Roads Commission from the money provided by the imposition of the State development tax. Every year, Mr. Speaker, the Government take £250,000 from the funds of the Main Roads Commission, and put it into consolidated revenue. Looking at the operations of the Sub-Department of Forestry, I notice that the revenue last year from the sales of timber amounted to £392,896, yet according to the Auditor-General's report £177,192 of the State development tax was used for forestry labour.

The Secretary for Public Lands: You should read the whole of the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. CLAYTON: We should have to have an all-night sitting if I attempted to do that. The Public Estate Improvement Branch spent £112,142 of the revenue derived from the State development tax. The Brisbane City Council received £59,798, and other local authorities £2,429. The Brisbane City Council was well looked after in that respect.

I now wish to give hon. members some further information in regard to what the Government have done with the money taken from the people. The “Economic News” shows that the percentage of unemployment at January, 1941, was 3.9, compared with 5 per cent. in 1939-40, yet the report to which I have been referring shows us that £602,952 was spent on ration-relief assistance and special distributions in the shape of Christmas cheer and winter relief. I can remember the Premier at one time saying, “I will paint the clouds with sunshine.” Under the heading of “Social Services—special grants and subsidies on account of clothing, rent, and food relief,” £8,456 was spent. To meet the interest on the cost of the Story Bridge a sum of £80,000 was taken—a bridge that was to be paid for solely by the people of the Greater Brisbane area. I have mentioned these facts, Mr. Speaker, to show you that there is not the slightest chance of the Government's reducing taxation, particularly in view of their many commitments, as shown in the Auditor-General's report.

I hope that the war clouds will soon lift and that ere long we shall be living in a happy, confident, and contented atmosphere.

Mr. SLESSAR (Dalby) (12.20 p.m.): At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I desire to congratulate you on being unanimously re-elected by the House to the high office of Speaker of this Assembly. I am satisfied that your good service in that position in the past years is responsible for your unanimous re-election.

In common with other hon. members, I fully appreciate the serious nature of the international situation to-day, and I know

that it is our duty as good Australians to do everything possible to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion. It is imperative, therefore, that war work must take preference over all other work wherever possible, and so I join with other hon. members in doing my utmost to see that all war works are given preference to enable our war effort to be carried out successfully. However, there are other big problems to face, problems of reconstruction that will present themselves to us very clearly when that war is over. We were faced with similar problems after the last war, but the aftermath of the present war will be far more serious than that of the Great War of 1914-18. The thousands of men who are fighting our battles overseas will have to be provided for much more favourably than the men were after the last war, and so it is the duty of every hon. member here, and every hon. member of the Commonwealth Parliament, to do everything possible for the welfare of the fighting forces and the thousands of munition workers and others associated with war work.

As I have said, the post-war period will present many problems. Men are leaving their farms, their offices, and other places of employment to fight overseas, but it is possible that when they return they will not be able to follow the occupations that they left and so we as a Government should, in conjunction with the Federal Government, do everything possible to cater properly for them. I have included the Federal Government in my suggestion, because I think that the Federal Government should make the necessary funds available to State Governments to carry out post-war schemes. It is our duty as citizens and good Britishers to see that the returned men and war workers generally are properly catered for. I have in mind a programme of works for reconstruction purposes, together with manufactures and land settlement, that I think will be of considerable benefit after the war is over. I intend to deal with some of those problems as the occasion arises when the departmental Estimates are being reviewed. Therefore, I shall not deal with them at any great length to-day. I earnestly hope that during the session every hon. member will give his best consideration to these all-important questions.

In his contribution to this debate the hon. member for Aubigny made reference to how three years ago I won the Dalby seat for the Government, and offered reasons why I had considerably increased my majority at the recent general election. I thank the hon. member for his interest and courtesy. My electorate adjoins his. It has many things in common with his. Therefore he will, whenever it is possible, receive my assistance in any matter that will benefit the electors of both electorates.

Mr. Edwards: Hear, hear! That is the spirit.

Mr. SLESSAR: It is the duty of every hon. member, irrespective of his politics, to see that his constituents are properly catered for. That has been my attitude for the three years I have represented the electors

of Dalby. To that fact, as well as the policy of the Government, I attribute my large majority in the recent election. When nominations were called for a candidate to contest Dalby in the Labour interest, I was unanimously selected by the representatives of all Labour organisations through my large electorate. I did not have to face a plebiscite, and, without being egotistical, I can say that I had the support of 90 per cent. of the Labour organisations in my electorate, and the way in which the electors of Dalby stood solidly behind me in an electorate that had for many years been represented by a Country Party adherent is a tribute to the policy of this Government. The Government have converted a large area in the electorate previously regarded as a wilderness into a reasonably successful farming area. Roads have been constructed and consideration has been given to the requirements of new settlers.

Mr. Edwards: The cactoblastis made that possible.

Mr. SLESSAR: It is true that cactoblastis destroyed the prickly-pear in that area, but cactoblastis did not construct the roads, or make money available for ring-barking, and essential works of that kind.

The hon. member for Aubigny and the hon. member for Carnarvon referred to the difficulty that stockowners experienced in getting stock to New South Wales on account of the tick regulations of that State. I am pleased the subject was mentioned. It has been a very contentious one in my electorate for a considerable time. On many occasions I have endeavoured to have these harsh regulations lifted, and the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock realises the difficulty that the stockowners have experienced, but, unfortunately, the New South Wales Government have refused to lift them. I sincerely hope that the new Government in that State will be more sympathetic towards stockowners in Queensland than their predecessors. The stock industry is a large one in the west of Queensland, in the south-western Downs area, in the Dawson, and also in the northern areas of Queensland, and stockowners are losing thousands of pounds annually as a result of the drastic regulations imposed by the New South Wales Government. I know that our own Department of Agriculture and Stock and the Minister are doing everything they can, and I hope they will be successful in persuading the New South Wales Government to remove what I consider a ridiculous anomaly. We have absolutely clean cattle that have been free of ticks for many years, yet they are debarred from entering New South Wales without at least one or two dippings. Hon. members will realise how much condition the stock lose on account of dipping and the expense incurred by the owner, and the time lost in carrying it out. Queensland producers are losing money as a result of these ridiculous and drastic regulations.

Another matter mentioned by the hon. members for Aubigny and Carnarvon was the desirability of allowing expenditure on

water and fodder conservation as a deduction in calculating income tax. We all realise the importance of fodder and water conservation, and I hope that the Treasurer will give consideration to the suggestion. Such a concession would encourage small farmers, in particular, to go in for water and fodder conservation, which is essential, especially in the drier areas of the State. To-day hundreds of farmers are deriving no income from their farms, because they have no provision for water or fodder conservation on their farms. I realise that it is very expensive to make such provision, but I hope that some scheme will be evolved by the Bureau of Rural Development, under which advances can be made to farmers for fodder conservation. It would help them to become better farmers, and, in turn, production would be increased and, naturally, a bigger producer is a greater contributor to the revenue of the State.

Some three years ago the greater part of the Dalby electorate was more or less a wilderness. Only a very small area was actually developed by means of roads, water facilities, ringbarking, and so forth—the district included thousands of acres of absolutely green country—but to-day, thanks to the Secretary for Public Works and the Main Roads Commission, there is a reasonably good road system in most parts of it. Certainly much road construction remains to be done, but it is now possible to travel through most of the electorate in reasonable comfort. The majority of farmers can now deliver their goods to market by the roads built by not only the Main Roads Commission, but also the Public Estate Improvement Branch of the Department of Public Lands. Three years ago farmers, in what may be described as fairly closely settled areas, had difficulty in getting their cream to market, but to-day, owing to the work of the sub-departments mentioned, and the aid given by the Government to the shire councils, there is a reasonably good road system throughout the electorate. In my opinion, road construction is one of the most important of developmental works to be undertaken in any district. The policy should be to make roads before throwing the land open for settlement. Unfortunately, that has not been the policy in the past, but the Government are now giving more consideration to this all-important matter.

Much hardship is being caused to farmers and graziers by petrol rationing. It is displacing these industries and small businesses in country towns considerably. When one visits the city and sees the hundreds of cars on the streets in and around the city and on the roads leading to the seaside at the weekends, one wonders what is wrong with the scheme that these cars are allowed to be on the road at a time when producers cannot get enough petrol to enable them to transport their goods to market. Many people living 60 or 70 miles from a town cannot get as much petrol as the owner of a private car in the city at present. I have been told that this anomaly will be rectified, and I sincerely hope so. If it is not corrected very soon, many small farmers in the country will have

to stop producing and the Government will lose a considerable revenue. In every small centre dozens of cars will not be re-registered.

I hope that the Federal authorities will give this important question every possible consideration, because I know of cases in which shearing has been held up, of others where dairy farmers have not been able to work satisfactorily through lack of petrol to run their milking machines, and still others in which small farmers have been unable to deliver their produce to market. It is all very fine for a man to sit in an office and say that they can use horse-drawn vehicles, but it must be remembered that many of these small farmers haul their goods from 20 to 40 miles each week to market. Dairymen may have to deliver their products two or three times a week. Surely, it cannot be suggested that these men should be limited to 5 or 6 gallons of petrol whilst travelling salesmen are granted 60 or 70 gallons and pleasure cars are allotted 5 or 6 gallons? I met one man in the city here who told me that he was getting 21 gallons a month for private use.

Mr. Nimmo: Was he getting 21 gallons a month for pleasure only?

Mr. SLESSAR: Yes, for pleasure. He is living in the city.

Mr. Nimmo: That is worth investigating.

Mr. SLESSAR: I know it is. However, I have the assurance of the Liquid Fuel Control Board here that something is being done by the Federal authorities to give graziers and farmers some relief, and I earnestly suggest that this relief be granted, even though it may be found necessary to put pleasure cars off the road altogether. Our producers must be allowed to go on producing. The position is even more acute to-day than it was, in that farmers whose sons have enlisted are faced with additional work and greater responsibility, and it is essential that these men be allowed enough petrol to employ some mechanical aids to production and delivery to markets.

I have mentioned the importance of water and fodder conservation and the consideration of post-war planning; I desire now to elaborate upon the desirability of water conservation in the western areas in particular. Six or seven months ago I saw millions upon millions of gallons of water in the western areas, when creeks were up to half-a-mile wide and rivers from 2 to 3 miles wide. To-day, those same districts are suffering from drought and bush fires. Many dairy farmers are forced to kill their young calves because their pastures are so dry that their cows have not enough milk for the calves. I suggest to the Secretary for Public Lands that, as one item of the post-war programme, he might give serious consideration to the construction of weirs in those semi-dry areas that enjoy heavy rainfalls at one period of the year but suffer months of drought immediately afterwards. I suggest that investigation be made not only of the rivers but also of many of the creeks with a view to embarking upon this work as a post-war reconstruction scheme.

I know that the Condamine River in my electorate has been surveyed, and recommendations are being made to the Department of Public Lands by the Sub-Department of Irrigation with regard to the weiring of that important stream. I realise that this will mean the expenditure of a fairly large sum of money; but it is a post-war problem the solution of which would mean great advantage not only to the particular district concerned but also to Queensland. If we can develop the south-western part of Queensland by weiring our creeks and rivers that area could be made drought-resisting, and many crops could be produced, fodder could be stored, and our producers protected against the ravages of drought.

I understand that there is a proposal to dam the Dee River near Mount Morgan by using wood piles and a mixture of earth and gravel, instead of by a concrete weir, and that the work has been recommended by the department as of a satisfactory class of construction to be carried out by the department. There are many places in my electorate where similar weirs might be constructed. The timber is close at hand, and no haulage or big cartage costs would be involved. The gravel and the sand and clay are also close by. Such weirs could be constructed at considerably less cost than concrete weirs. I trust that the Secretary for Public Lands will give this matter favourable consideration. If he does, I feel sure that his efforts will be rewarded, and he will be able to say that he introduced something that was of benefit to the south-west of Queensland and something that will stand as a monument to his work in years to come.

I have dealt with many problems concerning my electorate in particular and others that confront the Government in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government. I intend during the passage of the Estimates to discuss many other matters, and I think that if my suggestions are adopted great benefit will accrue to our post-war programme that we should be giving thought to now so that our plans will be well prepared to meet the aftermath of the war, and so enable us to place our unemployed on developmental works.

Great difficulty is experienced in Western Queensland in getting fruit and vegetables. As a matter of fact, fruit is only obtainable at a prohibitive price 150 miles from Brisbane to-day, and even then it is of an inferior class, and at times it is impossible to get. In the summer it is almost impossible to carry fruit and vegetables to the West in a fresh condition, and I suggest that the Minister should consider a proposal to run a refrigerated wagon to the West carrying fruit and vegetables. I have seen fruit arrive in the West in the summer-time in cases and I know that it is shrivelled and of no value because of the sweating that takes place. If the Minister would run such a truck once a week or perhaps once a fortnight, considerable relief would be given to the people in

the West, and especially to poor people with large families. We all know the value of fruit, especially in hot, dry climates, for children.

Mr. Nicklin: There are cheap freight rates.

Mr. SLESSAR: Yes. The freight on fruit should be cheap.

There is another matter concerning the railways that I should like to mention. I know that cattle are bruised in transport by rail, but, of course, I am not unmindful of the fact that it would be a costly matter to alter our system of loading and to construct new trucks that would prevent bruising. It is my opinion that if the corners of the trucks were rounded off inside and a suitable padded rail affixed to the insides of trucks a great deal of the bruising would be avoided.

There is also a grave lack of accommodation for the drovers who accompany the cattle trains for long distances. In many instances, they are housed in little bits of boxes at the end of the cattle trucks with no facilities whatever. Recently I examined one of these boxes and I was able to put my fingers through the cracks on the sides and ends of the compartment. Very frequently the drovers have to sleep in these so-called compartments, and their conditions are extremely uncomfortable in cold weather, especially when the trains have to travel between 50 and 60 miles across open plains where the weather is bitterly cold during the winter months. It is no wonder that these men complain about lack of proper accommodation. I am sure that the Minister has not seen many of these trucks that are used in the West. The accommodation is bad, so bad that we could only describe them as like dog boxes, but I hope that when consideration is next given to the subject of constructing new cattle trucks that provision of accommodation for drovers will not be overlooked. In many cases the drovers have to sleep on top of the lavatory box. They simply put a board over the top, put down their bedding, and sleep on that. Those conditions can hardly be described as comfortable or reasonable for long-distance travel.

The Minister will, I am sure, give his earnest consideration to my representations for improvement in the construction of cattle trucks and improved facilities at railway yards for both loading and unloading as a means to reducing the present bruising of cattle. While overseas, the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock investigated these important questions, and I feel certain that the data he collected will be available to and assist the Minister for Transport when this matter is being considered by him.

I will not detain the House any longer. I said at the opening of my remarks that I should defer some representations I have to make until the presentation of departmental Estimates. Naturally, I shall then refer to matters of particular concern to my electorate. I am interested more particularly in my electorate, but I do not desire hon. members to think that I am parochial in my outlook, for I

am interested, also, in the general welfare of Queensland and Australia as a whole. I thank hon. members for their attentive hearing.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. O'Keefe, Cairns) (2.15 p.m.): I join with other hon. members in offering you my congratulations, Mr. Speaker, on your elevation to the honourable office of Speaker of this House; and I share the opinion of hon. members generally that your qualities and ability will enable you to carry out your duties with distinction.

I also wish to offer my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the motion now before the House.

As a member representing the city in our State most remote from the capital, I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the grave concern of the people of Cairns and district at the drift of their population caused by war. The position is keenly felt by the business people of the area I have mentioned, and it will continue to be felt after the war has been won. I remember very well that during the last war that part of our State—especially the mining centres—experienced such a depression at the beginning of hostilities that more than half their population drifted away. That drift was caused by the low price of metals, especially for tin. We miners were offered 30s. worth of food supplies from the stores for 1 cwt. of tin, so it will be seen that we did not actually get value for the 30s. in full. That brought about a cessation of tin-mining. In addition to that, large numbers of young men enlisted from the Herberton and Chillagoe fields—many of whom, I regret to say, never returned—and many of those who did return to Australia, having tasted the pleasures of a roving life, never returned to the mining fields. From that day to this, those fields have not recovered from the effects of that depression.

Mr. Macdonald: You cannot blame the Commonwealth Government for that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If I am given the opportunity, I shall show that the Commonwealth Government have a responsibility for this drift from our mining centres, because they are giving young people the opportunity to go from these Northern areas to the cities in the South to engage in work for war purposes. I maintain that if it is possible for the Commonwealth Government to help that part of the State, it is their bounden duty to do so. I shall endeavour to show that the Commonwealth policy in regard to that part of North Queensland has brought about the depression that exists there, which is of deep concern to the people living there. Are we going to allow our own flesh and blood to abandon those districts and leave them to the aliens who live there?

Anyone who had previously lived for any time in North Queensland, and who returned there in recent months, would be shocked at the feeling of uncertainty that is rife among the people of that part of the State. I realise that it is essential that young men and women should be drawn to certain localities, there to

work in munition factories and at trades organised by the Commonwealth Government to assist to win this war. From my own knowledge, I know that the people of Cairns stand second to none in their loyalty. In proportion to population, the Cairns district has given a greater number of men to the fighting services and a larger sum of money to patriotic funds than any other in Australia. That in itself is of great help to the Commonwealth's effort to win the war. But if the present condition of things is allowed to continue that district will not be able to carry on.

Hon. members on the Opposition benches, speaking to-day and previously on this motion, have referred to the need for a greater number of secondary industries in Queensland. I need refer to only one to make my point. A few years ago, a small meatworks was opened in Cairns. At the time its purpose was more to deal with a trade about which we in Queensland, particularly in that part of the State, knew nothing of. Previously a certain class of stock had to be destroyed by the squatters—old bulls, known as stags, and cows that were worthless. The meatworks was established to slaughter these cattle, and export them as part of what is called the boneless-beef trade. The meatworks paid as high as 30s. a head for these cattle, and, of course, that meant something to the stock-owners, inasmuch as previously they were destroyed. The Railway Department also obtained an amount of revenue from the freight. Approximately 60 men were directly employed at the works. In effect, the opening of the meatworks established a new industry in that district. Since the outbreak of war it has been closed, because the board controlling shipping, regulated by the Commonwealth Government, saw fit to take from the port of Cairns the vessels that at one time carried this cargo from that port.

Mr. Nimmo: You are not saying that the Federal Government have anything to do with that?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Commonwealth Government control shipping and direct our war effort—rightly so. If they had not that power then they should get out of office quickly and let the State Governments shape their own destinies. Of course, I realise that that cannot be, but surely to goodness hon. members opposite should not find fault with any other hon. member who places before them the requirements of the State in order that the Commonwealth Government will have some idea of their obligations to the State. No matter what Government may be in power in the Federal sphere they have an obligation to each and every State of the Commonwealth.

A case was prepared for Cairns immediately. When I was up there a committee of men of note and ability—men who could see what would happen as a result of the closing down of that port and meatworks, and the refusal to give aid for the development of the mining industry—gathered certain data and placed them in my hands. I then communicated with every Federal Senator,

irrespective of the party to which he belonged, and with the Federal members of the northern electorates, and placed the matter before them in order that they might, in their turn, put our case in the hands of the then Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies.

One of the claims made in that case was that North Queensland is, to a considerable extent, dependent on the sugar industry. That is true. It was also suggested that owing to the restrictions in shipping space, the gravest uncertainty prevails in the district, it had become impossible to reach markets and the growers were, therefore, advised to restrict production. It was pointed out that the largest settlement of aliens of enemy origin in Australia existed from Ingham northwards. In order to avoid any possibility of disturbance when war broke out, I, with others, recommended to these enemy aliens that they keep away from the cities and towns as much as possible. The result was that the spending of these people was reduced. The business community, and all other sections in the North, felt that restriction of spending. Whilst many of these aliens of enemy origin are law-abiding citizens, and good workers engaged in farming and other occupations—and we must recognise that they have a right to live and carry on their industries—I say that we owe an obligation to our own people.

It took many years of hard work and endeavour to populate that part of our State with people of our own blood, but it has been done successfully. At Cairns we have one of the finest ports in the Commonwealth. We have from 2,300 to 2,500 feet of reinforced concrete wharves, second to none in Australia—anyone who has seen those wharves will agree. We have an obligation to the State Government running into many thousands of pounds for interest and redemption on loans, and I should not be worth my salt as a representative of the Cairns electorate if I did not put a case before the State on behalf of my electorate in the hope that the Commonwealth authorities will come to hear of it and take steps to rectify the present anomaly. The loss of overseas shipping has been disastrous to the district. The failure of overseas boats to come to Cairns as heretofore has resulted in loss of employment to those immediately and indirectly dependent on shipping. Consequently, there has been what is virtually a migration of waterside workers and their families from northern ports.

Much capital that was expended in the creation of harbour facilities in a port with increasing shipping trade has now been rendered useless. I have met the families of many who were engaged in port work. I instance one widow with a family of one or two sons of working age. The sons were encouraged to drift to the Southern States because of the Commonwealth Government's action in granting more than a fair share of the Commonwealth expenditure to the Southern States.

I do not wish to dictate to the Commonwealth Government as to how they spend money on munition-manufacturing—that is a

matter to be determined by the experts—but I have seen from my own experience in Queensland the dismal failures that experts have proved themselves to be. I well remember the trouble we experienced in the matter of floods. We were told by our experts that it was impossible to construct high-level bridges in certain places but to-day those bridges are established facts. So much for our experts. I shall give hon. members of this Assembly in a few moments the comments of some of them.

Considerable private expenditure has been the feature of investments in the North in the matter of the tourist trade. That trade has had a severe blow, with accompanying loss of revenue to the investors and unemployment for people concerned. The Government's call for men and money has met with a most generous response from the North—I pointed out earlier what we have been doing since the outbreak of war.

I got in touch with certain members of the Federal Parliament and received replies from most of them. This is what Mr. Menzies, the then Prime Minister, had to say in reply to Senator Foll—

“My dear Minister,

“I desire to refer to the letter dated 3 June addressed to you by the Hon. J. O’Keefe, M.L.A., Queensland Attorney-General, in which he refers to the conditions existing in North Queensland and suggests that some relief might be afforded if portion of the money allotted to Queensland in connection with the war effort were expended in northern areas.

“I have noted Mr. O’Keefe’s views regarding the extent to which the war has affected the activities normally carried on in Northern Queensland and can fully appreciate the anxiety which this state of affairs is causing.

“The highest military opinion is definitely averse to establishing munition factories or annexes along the eastern coastline unless such action is absolutely unavoidable. In view of the Government’s duties to push on with munitions production and to plan for as little dislocation as possible under any circumstances I feel sure that you will recognise the force of this opinion.

“There is practically no alternative to the establishment of heavy metal industries on the coastline. I am advised, however, that Cairns is not suitable as a centre for mass production.

“The facilities available in northern areas, including, of course, Cairns centre, are recognised by the Commonwealth Government, and when further plans for production are being examined, I can assure you that the claims of this area as a site for some war-time activity will be fully considered.”

There is very little in that reply of comfort to the people concerned.

Again I say that I do not wish to be a dictator and say what the Commonwealth Government should do in the matter of their war activities, but I do say that it is my duty to put a case for the North of Queensland because very seldom do we find many Commonwealth Senators or Representatives visiting that part of the State.

There are many members in the Federal Parliament who know nothing about the actual conditions in Queensland, because the only knowledge they have of this State is based upon something they have read or heard from time to time. Therefore, there is little likelihood of the Commonwealth's doing any munition-manufacturing in the North, but the Commonwealth has an obligation to that part of the State, and it should make more money available to the State Treasurer so that he may lend it to local authorities for road-making and other purposes, and so help to create employment in the North, and thus arrest the drift of young men and women from that part of the State. I blame the Commonwealth Government for not doing that.

I realise that the Commonwealth have their own experts in war work. We asked the Commonwealth Government through their representative to send an expert to North Queensland, and we had to wait a very long time before that Government would sanction a visit to Cairns and district. That gentleman informed us that it was impossible for him to recommend the establishment of munition works in Cairns or the district. He also told us that if we continued to send our heavy machinery to the workshops in the South for repair he would have to step in and put a stop to it. What did that mean? Our only important industry is the sugar industry, yet this gentleman told us that if we continued to send our heavy machinery to the workshops in the South for repairs—there are no suitable workshops in the North—he would have to step in and stop it. That meant that he was going to have a "blackout" in the industries in the North, that he was going to scrap that part of Queensland.

Mr. Edwards: Why did he say that?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member had better ask him. The information was that so much work for war purposes was being done in the workshops in the South that there was not enough time to attend to the repair of heavy machinery from the North. This gentleman, who is employed by the Commonwealth Government, was really asking the people in the North to starve—because the sugar industry would have to be closed down if his intention was carried out—because he said the workshops in the South were required solely for war work.

Mr. Massey: Do you not think that it is much better to get on with war work?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We must do the war work, but if the workshops in the South are so busily engaged in war work that they cannot attend to the repairing of heavy machinery for an essential industry that was

developed to maintain people in the North, then the Commonwealth Government should provide the money to enable us to build our own workshops so that we may repair the heavy machinery in the North. The Commonwealth Government exercise control over the Loan Council, and the Loan Council should be informed of the position in the North, as I am describing it, so that it will agree to the granting of an additional sum to Queensland, which the State Treasurer may distribute in such a way that it will do a useful work in the Northern parts of the State, where the Commonwealth Government cannot manufacture munitions. That is my point. If this is not done then the young people will continue to drift from the North, where an important industry has been established in furtherance of the policy of a White Australia, which was put into effect to keep out our enemies. Why, we are nearer the door of the enemy in the North than are the people in the South, and we are entitled to something for which we pay.

Mr. Edwards: Population is drifting from every district in Queensland to the cities.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I realise that there is a drift to the cities from every district in Australia. I am putting the same case as members of the Federal Parliament are putting for their constituencies. They find that this problem is affecting them also.

The Secretary for Public Works and Public Instruction: A very large number of them have enlisted.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Cairns Harbour Board in its consultation with the representative of the Commonwealth Government who visited Cairns suggested that a floating dock be constructed at Cairns, with, of course, workshops and the usual annexes. This would enable work to be done for the sugar-mills in the event of a breakdown of their machinery. Expenditure on such a project would be money well spent, as it would keep the people of the North interested in that part of Australia, help them to forget their troubles, and to a very large extent, prevent them from drifting from a part of this continent where they are needed.

Mr. Massey: Would a floating dock pay?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Nothing pays until a start is made.

Mr. Massey: But would it pay?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the hon. member will allow me to develop my point, I will show him how such a work would pay.

Mr. Massey: Then the State should undertake it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not making any distinction between the State and Commonwealth Governments as to who should undertake the work, but I am appealing to the Commonwealth Government to make available additional loan money to enable the State to undertake it. The Director of Munitions suggested that the board's engineer might inspect a dock at present being built at a

town in Queensland, which, for obvious reasons, I cannot name, to give him some idea of the type and the cost. Further, it was suggested that a large, capacious foundry should be established on a co-operative basis by sugar-milling and other interests, the board to guarantee patronage for all its requirements.

A very strong case was made out for all these proposals. There is no floating dock between Sourabaya and Brisbane. Supposing an enemy came to our far Northern waters, that conflict took place between his warships and ours, and some of our boats were disabled, what would be the result? Where could they find dock accommodation for repair purposes? It would be necessary for them to travel right down the coast to Sydney. It is not necessary to have a knowledge of seafaring to understand that any boat in a damaged condition travelling a long distance might go to the bottom of the ocean. If we saved only one boat by having a convenient floating dock, would not the cost be justified? The lack of docking accommodation in the far North compels the Cairns Harbour Board to send its dredge once a year all the way to Brisbane. That costs about £10,000 per annum, inclusive of high insurance costs and over £3,000 to the dock workers in Brisbane. If Cairns had its own floating dock, that money would be distributed among the people in the district, and that would help to settle and retain people in it.

Mr. Edwards: Are you not getting one?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am asking for the construction of a floating dock. I am satisfied that if I stood here all day and appealed to the Commonwealth Government they would not provide the necessary money because they do not understand the position. After all is said and done, the man who lives in such an area and knows its conditions is better able to make a case for such works, and that being so, the hon. member should not be ashamed to hear what he has to say.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Edwards: I am not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am endeavouring to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to the urgency of this work. Again I repeat that if we saved one warship through the establishment of docking facilities in the North, it would be well worth while.

It is also worth while building it for our own trade. We lose over £3,000 a year in wages to the workers in Brisbane. We pay a high rate for insurance. All this is a loss to Cairns. If we had our own dock that saving of £3,000 would go towards paying the interest on the £80,000, which it is estimated a floating dock would cost, at 3½ per cent. That is good business. But somebody must explain that to the people concerned, and I am endeavouring to do it now. I am endeavouring to make a case for that part of the State, irrespective of the fact that it embraces my own electorate.

As a result of the Citizens' Executive Committee meeting at Cairns, a body formed for the purpose of seeing that North Queensland was adequately considered by the Commonwealth Government, I brought the proposal for the erection of a floating dock before my colleague the Treasurer and I received a letter from him, the substance of which was that the erection of a floating dock at Cairns would cost in the vicinity of £80,000 and that the outlay would not be warranted at the present time. Well, I disagree with my colleague the Treasurer, because I think that he has got some expert or would-be expert to get that opinion for him.

It was also stated in the reply that with the shortage of shipping there could be no guarantee of patronage sufficient to make the dock pay. I realise that. Again, I repeat that if we saved only one boat that we otherwise should lose on the way down the coast, that would alone represent the cost of a dock, and the building of it would save many more boats than that.

The Treasurer also points out that the slip at Townsville, which is a very small one controlled by the harbour board, is going to be enlarged so that it will carry the Cairns harbour board's dredge. Townsville is differently situated to my area, inasmuch as hundreds of thousands of pounds of Commonwealth money is being spent for war purposes in that city.

Mr. Massey: Is not that a good place for it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not condemning that, but I am pointing out that if you are not going to be fair to a section of the public in our State then you cannot expect to get the services from those young men who are asked to assist in our war effort. That is what I am asking for—fairness to people living in that area—to those people who have built the city and a port that is second to none in the State. It would be a good thing if they put in a dock at Townsville, but not at the expense of Cairns. We are a separate port. We are able to carry our own costs on the usual loans from the Government. We are paying annually—and sometimes before they are due—the whole of our interest and redemption on our debt to the Treasury; therefore, I maintain they have nothing to fear so long as we are treated properly, as we should be treated, during this period of war.

If we allow our young people to drift to the city they will never return. We had that experience during the last war when the mining districts languished. I lived there for 22 years and I realise what it means. Until the mining companies return to these fields, the industry will never recover.

Mr. Massey interjected.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What does it matter what sort of enterprise it is? Private enterprise has rights—nobody denies it and I am not advocating any interference with them—I am setting forth the conclusion to which my years of experience of the mining

fields have led me. Prior to the last war, depression had overtaken the industry, especially tinmining, but the Commonwealth Government, during those war years, made it possible for us to develop our tungsten, wolfram, and molybdenite deposits. Approximately 60 per cent. of those metals used in the steelworks in Great Britain came from North Queensland. The mines were subsidised not by the actual giving of so much a week to a miner to develop the mine but by subsidising the mine. If hon. members remember, the Commonwealth Government, then under the leadership of Mr. W. M. Hughes, appointed Dalgety and Company Limited as agents for the purchasing of these ores. Notwithstanding that the world is crying out for these metals to-day, these mines in North Queensland are lying idle. The Australian miner has been asked to produce, but, owing to the lower values of to-day, it is less profitable to work them than it was between 1914 and 1918.

What have the Commonwealth Government done? They have appointed three firms in the South to buy these ores from the miners, but these firms have a method all their own, one that is foreign to the people in the North. At one time the procedure was to take a sample of the ore and three copies of the assay. One of these was held by the purchaser, one given to the owner, and the third went to a checker or referee. If the owner and agent differed to any degree, recourse was had to the checker. According to the present procedure, the authorities have the audacity to ask the miners there to hand over their concentrates for despatch to Sydney, where they are mixed with other concentrates. The assay of the sample concentrates has to be taken for granted. The miners object to that, and rightly so. There is no right to take the ore South before it is paid for or the value is determined. That is one of the complaints as to the method of the Commonwealth Government in dealing with the mining industry in the North.

All the mines in the Wolfram Camp area would be working to-day if the authorities gave some small subsidy to the miners. I am not asking them to spend 1d. in helping the miners to develop their mines, but, on behalf of the people of Australia and Britain, I do ask them to give some assistance in the way of market value. If a miner did not produce, he would not gain and the Government would not pay. Is not that a reasonable thing to ask of the Commonwealth Government? Nevertheless, hundreds of tons of metal urgently required by the British Government are to-day lying idle in the mines in the North and the miners drifting away to other districts, not because they want to leave the North, but because circumstances have forced them to go South to get a living. Is this fair to the people there? It is not, and I appeal to hon. members to help these Northern people to get their rights. It is not a matter of politics; it is a matter of Australia. We are told that we are in need of these metals and, therefore, each and every man in this House should be helping me by getting in touch with his representative in the Federal

House in an endeavour to see to it that a little financial aid is forthcoming.

Time will not permit of my developing my argument any further, but I earnestly appeal not only to the Government to which I have the honour to belong, but also to the Commonwealth Government, through this Parliament, to see what can be done.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) (2.56 p.m.): I have listened carefully to the contributions of various hon. members to this debate, and, to my mind, after weighing them up, they fall under four headings—

1. An attack on capitalism.
2. A dissertation on the Australian Workers' Union.
3. A recital of the sins of omission and commission of the national Government.

I shall endeavour to deal with them in that order.

Mr. Taylor: What is the fourth heading? You have given us only three.

Mr. MACDONALD: The fourth heading is, "Do not listen to fools."

Time and again in this Chamber I have heard hon. members opposite, bogged in a morass of generalisation and tangled up with inconsistencies, rave and rant at capital and those who possess it. It would appear to me that Labour seems to regard capital, and the owners of it, as Public Enemy No. 1. They fail to realise that capital did not spring into being suddenly, but was created by the hard work, thrift, and the energy of men who could think far beyond the morrow.

Not only does Labour talk about the evils of capital, but by its legislation and its taxation it strives to deprive the workers of this State of all the benefits that are to be derived from capital. Surely hon. members must realise that all revenue in this country comes from the association of capital and labour? Why, the Greeks have an old saying that, "Surely there is a racehorse amongst the cows." To me there appears in this instance to be only a cuddly, and I think the hon. member for Bremer, he being an authority of Doric, will be able to give hon. members an interpretation of that word.

Why cannot Labour, with its glib loquacity, descend from the altitude of the soapbox, forgo the legacy of bitterness left to it by its predecessors, and realise that capital will only go where it is welcome, and only wait where it is justly treated? I said before, that all forms of revenue come from the association of capital and labour; one is the handmaiden of the other.

In the second place, much has been said here of the Australian Workers' Union. Personally, I should be the last man in the world to run down the Australian Workers' Union. In the long ago I realised what the worker had to undergo. The Secretary for Public Lands, now and again, and much to his delight, flogs me with the memory of my old days.

Let me explain, Mr. Speaker, what happened 30-odd years ago. At that time I was known as a worker; I have always been a worker, but the position was not then as it is now. Wages were very low, indeed. For 12 hours' labour we got 4s. 2d.; Saturday was a short day; we were worked for only 10 hours. On Sundays we had to load sugar and I have known two other fellows and myself load 100 tons of sugar into wagons, sheet them down, and get nothing at all for our job. At that time the cost of feeding us was 9d. per diem. There was no such thing as an Australian Workers' Union then; there was an Australian Workers' Association, and I was paid the great compliment of being asked to be an organiser for the Australian Workers' Association. I realised—and nobody realised better than I, because I had humped my blucy from one end of the State to the other—the disabilities that the worker was under, but I could not help, because their ideas were entirely wrong from my point of view. Perhaps this was due to my early environment. Those were the days when a union was necessary. The Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Act was not as the Workers' Accommodation Act is now. We were stuck in a room like sardines in a tin or herrings on a gridiron.

The hon. member for Nundah declared in this House the other day that all the benefits that had come to the worker had come from a Labour Government. He said—

“One has only to read the statutes to see that prior to 1915 the Tory Governments gave no consideration to the comforts and rights of the people who built up industry.”

That is entirely wrong; in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Let me give a few examples of what was done by Governments other than Labour Governments prior to 1915. The first is the Wages Act of 1870, and the next the Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Act of 1906. There was the legislation introduced for the protection of workers against accidents in the shape of the Mines Regulation Acts of 1881 and 1889, the Mining Act of 1898—

Mr. Collins: What were the wages at that time?

Mr. MACDONALD: I shall deal with them later. There were the Mines Regulation Act of 1910, the Machinery and Scaffolding Act of 1908, and the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1905 to 1908. Trade unions were legalised by the Trade Union Act of 1886. A site for the trades hall was granted in 1893, and the trustees were authorised to borrow for the purpose of erecting a hall by legislation in 1893 and 1912. In the matter of industrial arbitration, wages boards operated under the Wages Board Acts, 1908 to 1912, and the Industrial Arbitration Court was established under the Industrial Peace Act of 1912.

The Workers' Dwellings Act is another benefit that was conferred on the people of this State, not by a Labour Government, but

by what hon. members opposite are pleased to call a Tory Government. Under the Workers' Dwellings Acts, 1909 to 1912, advances up to 15s. in the £1 were authorised—and the cost of houses was less than half the present cost. The Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Acts, 1905 to 1906, were passed.

Mr. Jones: And we know what they were, too.

Mr. MACDONALD: No-one knows better than I do, but the fact remains that this legislation was not introduced by a Labour Government. These benefits occurred in the evolution of time. Then there was the Control of Trade Act of 1914.

Other things that existed prior to 1915 were universal franchise, entrance to the public service by competitive examination, free State education, grammar schools, technical colleges, and the University, public, general, and maternity hospitals, and practically all the institutions financed or assisted by the Government that exist at the present day.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: All those things have had to be remodelled since 1915.

Mr. MACDONALD: Naturally, but I ask the hon. gentleman to bear something in mind, something that he fails to realise, probably for want of intellect. Let me explain it to him. The changes since 1915 have made little material difference, being mainly only proportionate to the decline in the value of money and increase in population. The same changes have occurred in other States under all parties.

Consider any other part of the world. The same process of amelioration of the people's lot has taken place.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: What does the index figure of the standard of living show as between 1915 and to-day?

Mr. MACDONALD: The hon. gentleman should not think that I am so stupid as to waste my time mentally writing down the difference in figures. They are there for us to see, and for him to see if he wants to. There is a reference library here.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: You are quoting a false case.

Mr. MACDONALD: I am not quoting a false case. The hon. gentleman's mere bald assertion does not convince me that what he says is true. It appears to me that to him truth is a matter of expediency, but to me honesty in speech is truth. I am quoting only what I believe to be true.

The hon. member for Nundah also referred to the morass of the depression in Queensland in 1932, and the erection by Labour of an edifice out of a shambles. In 1932 there were three Labour and three non-Labour Governments in Australia—that is, when the present Queensland Labour Government took office. I should like the Secretary for Labour and Industry to listen to what I am about

to say, because it is true, and he can check it up. At that time, Queensland had—

(a) The lowest percentage of unemployment;

(b) The highest basic wage;

(c) The highest effective basic wage in Australia;

(d) The highest average money wage—allowing for both unemployment and part-time employment;

(e) The highest standard of comfort in Australia;

(f) The lowest cost of living, and the lowest house rents in Australia.

The present basic wage of £4 9s. a week is over 1s. a week lower in purchasing power than the basic wage of £3 14s. in 1932, when the present Government took office. The basic wage under the present Government has been lower in purchasing power on the average than in June, 1932. The increase in the basic wage during the period of the present Government has been less in Queensland than in any other State. Now that I have given those particulars, surely hon. members can assess the value of the contribution to this debate of the hon. member for Nundah.

I now wish to deal with the third heading—the sins of omission and commission of the Commonwealth Government. I have no doubt that no Government in the world—in fact, I thoroughly believe it—is free from error and mistake, and the present Federal Government are no exception, but every time hon. members opposite, including Ministers, get up they almost deliberately dodge their responsibilities by trying to throw the blame on to the Commonwealth Government.

The Secretary for Public Works: We are not responsible for the military hospitals.

Mr. MACDONALD: That is so, but evidently the hon. gentleman will not understand. The other day he spoke about South Australia as doing so much, and Queensland so much, and placed the blame on the Commonwealth Government, whereas the whole of the trouble of the shortage of artisans is due to the fact that the present Labour Government in Queensland did not spend wisely the money provided by the Commonwealth Government in 1937-38 and in 1938-39 under the apprenticeship scheme. Not a single skilled apprentice was turned out. You spent the money foolishly.

The Secretary for Public Works: You are talking through your hat.

Mr. MACDONALD: No. This is something you do not like. (Interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MACDONALD: The Youth Employment Commonwealth-States Scheme was initiated by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of providing facilities for youths and young men—19 to 25 years of age—to learn and be employed in skilled trades. The main intention was to give a chance to those who, owing to the depression,

and for other reasons, had not been able to be apprenticed to the various trades.

The Commonwealth Government provided £200,000 in 1937-38 and £200,000 in 1938-39 towards the scheme, the States being expected to supplement these grants. The allocations were—

	£
New South Wales	79,000
Victoria	55,000
Queensland	25,000
South Australia	19,000
Western Australia	14,000
Tasmania	8,000
Total per annum	£200,000

The particulars available of the expenditure for New South Wales and Queensland are as follows:—

	Expenditure to date	Provided by Commonwealth.
	£	£
New South Wales ..	298,484	158,000
Queensland ..	50,041	50,000

I ask hon. members to remember that this scheme was initiated at the beginning of the war. Therefore, this State had two years in which to train apprentices. The main difference between New South Wales and Queensland is the way in which this scheme has been handled. The Queensland scheme was divided into three parts, namely:—

- (1) A course of about 12 months at the Agricultural High School at Gatton.
- (2) A short course of about six weeks to two months' instruction in mining and prospecting. This appears to have been confined to Charters Towers.
- (3) A course of about 12 months' instruction in commercial subjects at technical colleges of Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, and Townsville.

Let me now deal with the relative merits of these different courses as I see them, and am led to believe they were actually put into effect. So far as agriculture is concerned, the spending of 12 months at college is absolutely absurd; a boy will get far more knowledge by practical work. One thing is evident, both in agricultural and engineering education, and that is that the apprentice should get practical knowledge before he tackles the academic stuff. By acquiring practical knowledge he is enabled to sift the grain from the chaff; he is qualified to pick out which method is of value, and which is not. The knowledge gained by the boy going to the college is not as good as the practical knowledge gained from working on the land. I say that in the light of all the experience I have had myself.

The Secretary for Labour and Industry: Would he not gain more knowledge on a scientific basis?

Mr. MACDONALD: No. Let me give the hon. gentleman an instance. In the land where I came from there are many agricultural colleges and they are attended by many pupils. Unlike colleges in Australia, there is

very little land attached to them, and for the purpose of giving instruction in the work of animal husbandry they have what is known as field days and the pupils are taken out to the ordinary tenant farms, for instance. They are not taken to a farm run by a former pupil, but to the farm of a practical farmer, where they are instructed in animal husbandry—cattle, sheep or horses—by the tenant farmer, not by a professor.

Let me give another illustration of what I mean. During my experience I have judged all classes of stock—except chooks and pigeons—in various countries and I have never known a veterinary surgeon appointed as a judge of horses. He is there to vet them, to prove whether they are sound or not—and even then there is a difference of opinion amongst them. For instance, there is the famous case of a horse called Mathius who was sold to Judge Moore, of Chicago, for £1,000. Two trained veterinary surgeons faulted him. One said he was suffering from stringhalt, and the other said it was extravagance of hock action. The horse was returned to his owner, which was fortunate, for he did for the Hackney breed what Baron's Pride did for the Clydesdale. These experts, the veterinarians, were confused, but the practical men knew.

As to mining apprenticeships, I have worked at many jobs throughout Australia, but steadfastly I have refused to work at two: one to work in a sawmill and the other to go down a mine; I always want to be where I can see the birds flying about. During the by-election campaign for Charters Towers, when travelling between Ravenswood and Charters Towers, I had the very good fortune to run into a camp of boys who were out on a mining school. They were with a man who I thought was an ideal instructor. During the conversation I gathered from these youths that most of their time was spent in theoretical work in the School of Mines at Charters Towers, and when they went into the field—I cannot give hon. members the technical language as I am not sufficiently well-versed in mining—they dug holes in the ground and walled them up. One thing that struck me was that it was an

excellent scheme, but it had one fault, which was that these boys were not getting enough time for their practical instruction. They should have spent twice the time at the job and twice the money should have been spent on it. You can imagine that these youths, whose ages ranged from 18 to 20, are the hardest material in the world to handle—they are not very keen on discipline for one thing—but this instructor, who was, I believe, a son of the late Randolph Bedford, was an excellent instructor. All these boys were working and I have never seen boys work so hard. They certainly were well worth the money spent on them.

Instruction is given in commerce, from which boys and girls go into cuff-and-collar jobs. The latest figures given in answer to a question how the Queensland grant was expended are—

—	Received a Course of Training.	Placed in Employment.	Still undergoing Training.
Farming ..	167	60	64
Mining ..	125	75	21
Commercial ..	383	179	158

In that group there was not a single apprentice to a skilled trade, but in New South Wales what do we find? The scheme in New South Wales enables approved juniors from 19 to 25 years to be employed in skilled trades as indentured or trainee apprentices. The usual term is four years. Approved youths, while not in actual employment, are given day training at technical colleges and are paid sustenance allowances—

	Per week.
	£ s. d.
Single men	1 4 0
Married men	1 18 0

Most of the youths, however, are in actual employment as apprentices or trainees, in which case they are subject to awards so far as conditions and wages are concerned. These are the conditions observed in New South Wales—

Commencing Age.	19 Years, per Week.	20 Years, per Week.	21 Years, per Week.	22 Years and over, per Week.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1st year	2 0 0	2 0 0	2 10 0	3 18 0
2nd year	2 17 6	2 17 6	3 18 0	3 18 0
3rd year	3 15 0	3 18 0	3 18 0	3 18 0
4th year	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0

The consequence is that employers take advantage of the scheme. It is recognised that employers could not be expected to pay these rates to untrained youths, so the State subsidises the wages. It is only right that the Government should pay a subsidy, and had this been done in Queensland we should have had skilled artisans now. The boys would have been trained three years ago.

The great Clyde engineering works in Scotland take boys as apprentices as soon as they

pass out of the board schools, that is, at the equivalent of the seventh grade in Queensland—any boy here who can pass the seventh standard in a State school in Queensland has any career in this world open to him. These boys in Queensland should be taken on as apprentices and put at the bench and given a file. Do not send them to technical colleges. In their apprenticeship the Clyde boys learn a trade and can improve themselves as draftsmen by attending technical colleges. No

hon. member in this House will dispute that the Clyde leads the world in engineering, and that is the source of their apprentices.

I will not weary hon. members by giving details of the subsidy scheme in New South Wales, but if the commencing age is 22 years or over, in the first year the subsidy is £2 18s., second year £1 18s., and third year 18s., decreasing proportionately according to the advance in payment by the employer. No subsidy is payable in the fourth year of service. Wage subsidies to date total £205,441, which is £47,441 more than the Commonwealth grant.

One very important feature of this trainee-apprentice scheme in New South Wales is that a youth serves his term of training under several employers, if necessary. He is not limited to the one man and he is given credit for each period of service until the total amounts to four years. It would be idle for me to point out here the benefits accruing to apprentices who can finish their apprenticeship in different shops. Hon. members can well imagine what the position would be in one big firm with several departments if one lad was kept entirely in one department during his apprenticeship. He would not have the catholic knowledge necessary for the profession to which he was apprenticed; he would have only one lung, a knowledge of only one department. Unfortunately, we in Queensland have not seen the wisdom of the system adopted in New South Wales. In New South Wales over 3,100 youths got practical training, whilst in Queensland there were no apprentices at all and only 254 boys were placed in employment.

I have an excellent extract from the report of the employers' delegate to the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations at Geneva in June of the same year, which says—

“It is not merely because of its importance for economic life that vocational training is now receiving increasing general attention. It is considered, also, as a factor in social and educational progress. The mere fact of having a trade which he has thoroughly learned gives the worker a feeling of confidence and dignity. A man who knows his trade well will have a deeper sense of his own value and is, therefore, certain to be a much better citizen than an unskilled worker. The demand for wider education within the framework of vocational training is based on the conviction that education is of value in all circumstances of life and that every citizen should have a possibility of obtaining it. Vocational education, by providing the individual with a fuller understanding of the part he plays in the work of the undertaking and of the economic system as a whole, should help to strengthen his sense of the dignity of labour and his professional pride.”

We had a very pleasing contribution to this debate from the hon. member for Hamilton, in which he showed that he was not speaking in an off-handed manner but had gone into

his subject thoroughly. He showed this Government the error of their ways so far as their methods of taxation are concerned, and that prompts me to show why it is that South Australia is in such an advantageous position compared with Queensland. We have heard hon. members repeat here almost ad nauseam that the system of taxation of companies in this State is irksome and destructive of enterprise. This is, indeed, a big problem, but, when it is all boiled down, the fact remains that some years ago taxation methods in South Australia were somewhat similar to those now obtaining in Queensland. Big industrial companies were going to leave that State and go to Victoria, where there was proper income-tax legislation, but the South Australian Government wisely realised that they must keep those concerns within their own territory, if it was at all possible, and, listening to the advice of their advisers, they got down to a flat rate of taxation irrespective of the capitalisation of the company. The consequence is that a number of companies have sprung up in that State, much to the benefit of South Australia and her citizens.

Mr. WILLIAMS (Port Curtis) (3.30 p.m.): At the outset I desire, in common with other hon. members, to offer you, Mr. Speaker, my felicitations on your re-election to the chair of this Assembly. I also compliment the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I have gone through the ordeal of moving this motion and I know just how the hon. members entrusted with the task must have felt. It can be said to their credit that they came through it with flying colours.

I desire particularly to make reference to the able speech delivered by the new member for Hamilton. One is impressed upon reading it with the fact that he offered us something worth while. It was a pleasure to listen to it and feel the constructive power contained in it. It had more constructive criticism in it than speeches I have heard over the last 9 or 10 years by hon. members representing the Opposition. It has been said that the speech was not acceptable to many members of the Opposition benches, but, Mr. Speaker, I do not know how that could be so. I think that the hon. member for Hamilton said nothing to which objection might be taken by hon. members opposite, but the fact remains that some have gone so far as to indicate that he is proving a thorn in their side.

Mr. Edwards: Who said that?

Mr. WILLIAMS: For my part, I think he is more like a Tobruk in a Libyan waste than a thorn in the side of the Opposition.

I am sorry that the hon. member for Bundaberg is not in the Chamber as I do not like making reference to a member in his absence. He cannot be in Dalby and attending to the needs of his electorate in this House at the same time. I think that the hon. member for Charters Towers in his speech this morning missed a very short and appropriate letter addressed to the editor of

the Bundaberg "Daily News-Mail" in this strain over the non-de-plume of "Sensitive."

"A sense of shame, rather than chuckles of amusement, would have been a more appropriate reaction in Bundaberg to the speech of our representative in the State Parliament. His electors also deserve the ridicule to which he has subjected himself and his electorate."

Perhaps it would have been better not to have made reference to the hon. member for Bundaberg at all. I think his speech was an outburst by a man with a neurotic temperament. That is about the best way I can describe it. It was not even humorous, and was certainly a travesty on democracy. We have had men in this Chamber whose speeches were humorous and gave one something to laugh about, we have had men who have fearlessly flung across the Chamber all forms of malapropisms, but the speech delivered by the hon. member for Bundaberg was neither humorous nor fearless on important subjects in present-day affairs. On the other hand, that delivered by the hon. member for Hamilton was helpful in that it contained constructive criticism.

Several years ago—in 1937—when speaking during a similar debate, I chanced to touch on this matter and this is what I said on that occasion—

"I should like to appeal to new hon. members opposite to adopt a policy of co-operation with the Government as far as they possibly can. I know that they are anxious to do so. We do not object to criticism—we are all subject to it—but there are times when we deplore destructive criticism and would welcome constructive criticism. I do hope that there will be a bigger, brighter, and broader outlook by new hon. members opposite."

At times I wonder if the effort is actually worth while, when one calls to mind the words of Ruskin—

"Every day I am more sure of the mistake made by good people universally in trying to put fallen people up, instead of keeping the yet safe ones from tumbling after them; and always spending their pains on the worst instead of the best material."

I listened very carefully to the speech by the Attorney-General, and although he touched upon matters that gave much food for thought, he did not sufficiently stress the point that the Commonwealth Government were not spending any money worth speaking of in proportion to the population of this State and its value as a unit in the Commonwealth. For instance, in South Australia I understand an immense works for munition-manufacturing, covering an area 6 miles by 4 miles, is being constructed at Salisbury, and South Australia is further removed from a possible enemy attack than Queensland is at the moment.

Some hon. members referred to the drift to the cities and others to various post-war problems. My chief reason in speaking is

born of a desire to recommend the Government to frame legislation, during this and subsequent sessions, to meet the requirements of the present war situation as it affects the people in this country. His Excellency's remarks indicate in no uncertain terms that these things have been considered by his advisers, but it is perhaps necessary to refute statements by irresponsible people, both inside and outside this Chamber, about what Labour is doing. One often hears the remark, for instance, that Labour is not war-conscious. When one travels about, not only in Brisbane but in the country, too, one hears such remarks as these, "Where does Labour stand in this war effort?" "What is the party doing?" "Where is its desire to bring about unity or a desire to help create an all-in war effort?" Such statements are untrue and misleading, to put it mildly. The people who complain, or pretend to complain—which is worse—that Labour is not war-conscious and not eager for an all-in war effort are the last people in the world who should worry whether the Labour Party is or is not war-conscious. The fact of the matter is that Labour, in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia, stands four-square behind the nation's war effort. This statement, which appeared in a sub-leader of the Brisbane "Telegraph" a week or two ago, summarises the position concerning Queensland's part in co-operating with the Commonwealth in the war effort—

"State War Effort."

"The additional assistance given by the State Government to speed the Federal ship-building programme in Brisbane is another earnest of Queensland's policy of backing up the war effort by every means in its power. The Government is helping, also, to lay the foundations for a shipbuilding industry that will serve the country well in peace. The willingness of the State Government to assist seems to suggest that the recent disagreement over tax unity might, in a measure, be resolved by the Federal Government's using the State's resources more on war work within Queensland's borders. Transport co-ordination is probably only one way in which the State and Federal war work might go hand in hand."

In addition, our quotas of enlistments, our contributions to the patriotic funds, and the number of group sales of war-savings certificates show this State to be one of the foremost in the Commonwealth in recognition of its responsibilities and in its loyalty. These figures are a record of which we can justly be proud, and are achieved because the party to which I have the honour to belong encourage such movements to the fullest possible extent. I have often wondered why this adverse talk is uttered and whether it has any relation to the fact that there is not a national Government in the Federal sphere. This should be the last of our worries, or the least of our worries, if we are to remain loyal to the Empire's cause and its needs. Only as recently as this morning was mention made of the fact that there was a national Government in England, but nothing was

said about New Zealand, South Africa, or Canada, where there is no national Government, but, as here, co-operation between parties. The Federal Prime Minister, Mr. Fadden, has said that he could not get any more loyal support to the Commonwealth war effort than has been given by Mr. Curtin and the Labour members of the War Council associated with him. I repeat: is this adverse talk brought about by the fact that there is not a national Government in the Federal sphere?

England was quoted only this morning. Certainly, the Labour Party there is acting in unison with Mr. Churchill, but our party there is not expected, or even asked, to sink its political identity as we are asked to do in the Commonwealth to-day. Labour to-day, as in the past, as I have said on the public platform at recruiting meetings and elsewhere, will continue to regard this regrettable war as something above party politics. We shall continue to assist actively in this country's war effort. Proof of this is to be had by reading the addresses of the Prime Minister in every State of the Commonwealth. He has paid tribute to the co-operation of the Nationalist and Labour Parties in prosecuting the Commonwealth's war effort. This is just what makes the difference, and all the difference, between national and political unity. I have met people who cannot realise that there is a difference—a distinct difference between national unity and political unity. Mr. Fadden's statement this morning—and probably he will say the same thing at the State lunch to-morrow—was that he is perfectly satisfied, and so was his predecessor, Mr. Menzies, with what is being done in the War Council with respect to the co-operative war effort.

The President of the United States of America, Mr. Roosevelt, has aptly said—

“This war cannot be won by some miracle of either strategy or accident, but only by an all-in effort on the part of the peoples of the democracies.”

All hon. members will agree with that statement. This war concerns every freedom-loving citizen of the world, the British Empire in particular. We in Australia recognise that fact to the full, our achievements prove it, and no quantity of political wrangling in Canberra will alter it. Particularly is it true of Australia.

I want to join hands with the Premier, who, during a broadcast appeal for recruits 10 or 12 days ago, said—

“I ask the young men of this country who are physically fit to enter into communion with their own souls. Those who do will realise that there is a world to save and that we in Australia must rely on our own capacity to perform the duties required. The alternative to this is defeat and indefinable disaster.”

Then he went on—

“There is a dangerous tendency to look upon the fighting in Russia as offering the

possibility of escape from our own responsibility of defeating the Nazi and Fascist menace. We have to look beyond what is happening there. The experience of the last two years has taught us that the Axis powers are ever ready to create a startling diversion in some other direction. It is this knowledge that makes the defence of Australia a matter of paramount importance to us.

“Men, money, and equipment are urgently required. Our fighting forces must be adequately reinforced. All the able-bodied must be trained to bear arms in defence of Australia.”

The following morning the Press contained a report of his speech touching on the gravity of the position as the Premier has dealt with it here, and when addressing us in the party room. The Press report reads—

“Up to the present our geographical position has given us comparative immunity from the ravages of modern war, but no Australian can afford to ignore the possibilities that lie in the latest developments. I emphasise the gravity of the position in the hope that I may influence those who have hesitated to grasp the opportunity of serving Australia.

“I urge those who are able to join the A.I.F. while there is yet time, and so help retain the advantages we have inherited from our fathers and keep the title deeds of Australia, both for the present and the future.”

When one speaks as the Premier spoke, and as I have spoken on several occasions from the platform when dealing with recruiting, one is sometimes asked what one is doing apart from merely talking. It is regrettable in a sense that these questions should be directed at us, perhaps not at a public meeting, but afterwards, and I know hon. members will agree, it is very unpleasant to say what one has done, or is doing. Indeed, I only wish this could be kept out of “Hansard,” because I feel diffident about indicating the extent to which my own family is participating, but the facts are that I have a son who has been well over 18 months in camp, I have a daughter who was a clerk-typist for seven years in the Department of Labour and Industry, and who is now a V.A.D. at Redbank preparatory—she hopes—to going overseas. I have one son-in-law in the Air Force, two nephews in camp, and one nephew in Malaya.

I would go further than the Premier and appeal to those who would heed such an appeal as his to guard against putting material and physical safety above moral soundness and beware of a policy that is no more world-shaking in its effect than to get harder and still harder butter on softer and still softer bread; in other words, to shun looking for the easy way out, or the soft job, leaving the harder ones to the other fellow. Instead of making political stability the catch-cry of party politics in such a time there is perhaps need for a greater sense of moral stability or

fibre. As one American writer said the other day—

“Perhaps to-day there is more than at any time in the world's history a very urgent call for men and women whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle is to the poles, and who will stand for the right though they themselves as well as the heavens fall.”

I wish now to refer to the co-operation of the States in the greater war effort. I heartily agree with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and other men of whom the people take notice when they speak from the public platform that the present war position demands the closest co-operation of the States and the Commonwealth, and the seeking of means whereby our resources may be concentrated on a full and complete war effort. Much of the proposed legislation in the coming session moves in that direction.

The Attorney-General showed forcibly in this House just where the Commonwealth Nationalist Government are not willing to help in what we regard, and they should regard, as the most important State in the Commonwealth in defence measures. I contend that there is great need for a revision of policy by some States and the Federal Government. That must not be lost sight of, but we may rest assured that this State will be foremost in any effort in which the Commonwealth Government may ask for assistance.

Much has been said this morning and during the past few days of post-war problems, but as that matter will be debated on private member's day I will not touch on it to any great extent now. Changes in many of our occupations, in our social, political, economic, and probably in our religious life, will be necessary. Indeed, they have already occurred if one is to believe what one observes, and analyses the present trend.

New markets for our products will become a vital necessity, and we must guarantee regular supplies once such markets have been established, as I said two sessions ago, when war broke out. Greater attention will be necessary in the preparation of products than in the past, particularly in packing and labelling in a more attractive manner. This aspect of the marketing of our goods is just as essential as the finding of markets. Its neglect has cost us much in holding and expanding export trade and entering new markets. For many of our products of the soil new uses will have to be evolved, such as the use of surplus wheat and sugar for power alcohol and molasses for road-surfacing as a substitute for prepared bitumen. These are matters that need attention when we speak of post-war problems. If the war continues for any great length of time, or even if it is still in operation next session, the Government will be well advised and I am sure they intend to legislate on lines that will prepare us for meeting our post-war problems from the bottom up.

There is need for a greater development of irrigation and the conservation of water

throughout the State, if we are to have a greater production of cotton, tobacco, and a general intensification of production of primary products. That would help considerably towards attracting a greater number of people to rural occupations and ensure greater stability in our agricultural and grazing industries.

Speaking in Parliament last session, I explained that there was a close relationship between the conservation of water, irrigation, and the conservation of fodder, each being an important link in national progress and prosperity. It may be remembered that I said on that occasion—

“Wisely planned irrigation is essential to national development, and development is the logical way to effective occupation of Australia. Besides which, in creating additional work and increasing settlement, irrigation schemes will or could be made to go a long way towards easing the difficult problem of reabsorbing men of the fighting services into the economic life of the nation, when the present conflict is ended and the question of post-war problems is being considered.”

I said that last year, and I am just as earnest in repeating it on this occasion. I am still concerned—and I know that hon. members opposite as well as hon. members on this side of the Chamber also are concerned—at the shortage of farm labour. I am not concerned so much at the drift to the cities that was referred to by the Attorney-General, because blame for that can be laid at the door of certain persons. Queensland is not getting her share of the expenditure of Commonwealth war money.

Mr. Nimmo: Name one case in which she is not.

Mr. WILLIAMS: I instanced South Australia, but perhaps the hon. gentleman was not present then. I am still much concerned at the shortage of farm labour in general, due in a large measure to war activities and enlistment. During last session I said, as reported on page 516 of “Hansard”—

“I hazard a prophecy, too, that a present-day as well as a post-war problem for us to overcome is that of replacing the labour that has enlisted from our primary-producing industries. It may prove difficult to fill the places of those unfortunate men who lose their lives or return either unfit or unwilling to take their places again in primary production. I suggest to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock that it might be well to look into the matter with a view to formulating some scheme, if that is possible, to meet this depletion in the ranks of farm labour. I desire to point out to the Minister that the allotting of selected unemployed youths from city or town areas would certainly help to overcome the difficulty to a large extent, but only if such youths are given some form of training for periods of either three or six months before being sent out to do farm work, whether to a wheatgrower,

dairyman, canegrower, or fruitgrower. Such training, at one or more of our agricultural colleges, whether for one, three, or six months, or with recognised up-to-date prominent farmers throughout the State, would give the youths some idea of the industry to which they might be sent as offsidiers or assistants."

I do not know whether very much has been done in that direction, but something can still be done. Again, with the aid of the Federal Government, it might be possible to see that our labour resources are so organised and apportioned that no great loss or inconvenience would be suffered by the employer of rural labour. There is something in that suggestion to which both State and Federal Governments might give more than passing thought. Perhaps it is not too late for the Government to set up a committee, representative of the rural industries, to make some kind of survey of the requirements of each and thereafter to take such steps as might be deemed necessary to see that labour was forthcoming for the essential services in primary production.

Several hon. members, those on this side of the House in particular, have for obvious reasons referred to the petrol restrictions. I suggest that this and the other States should urge upon the Federal Government the need for giving greater consideration to the requirements of the primary producer, who has been the hardest hit of petrol consumers. Every hon. member of the Opposition agrees with us on that point. Every day every hon. member of this Assembly receives in his mail many complaints, combined with the request that the writer be given something more with which to carry on his essential rural activities. I know of farmers who have not enough petrol to work their irrigation pumps on more than one day a week. Everyone knows the value of being able to apply water to a crop at the right moment, at the very time when the crop is in most need of it.

Many glaring cases of inequality of consideration in this respect can be quoted, and I think one of their most tragic bumbles has been perpetrated by the Federal Government in petrol rationing. We know there is a shortage of petrol. We know why the petrol we have is required, and that we have to conserve it and must conserve it, but there is just a limit of endurance among the people who require petrol for farming and other essential purposes, not for pleasure at all.

When the people on the land read in the Press statements such as the following I am sure they will not find comfort—

"Ministers Cited in Petrol Waste."

"Canberra, Thursday.

"Examples cited in the latest semi-official review of petrol wastage in Canberra are—

Arrival of 17 Government cars at the Canberra station yesterday to take Ministers and their officers to their hotels.

The last 40-passenger 'bus was only one-third full.

Trip by five Ministers from Sydney to Canberra in four cars.

Use of a Government car to take a member's watch to a watchmaker."

Four farmers in different parts of my electorate have sent me that clipping. There is no wonder there is heart-burning in the community.

Petrol-rationing committees have been suggested. These would know the local conditions. They would know, for instance, the distance each user of a motor vehicle has to travel to his nearest railway station and could advise on each application for an increased ration. I think that would be an admirable thing and would save needless complaints and letter-writing to the Press, and would certainly avoid much unfavourable comment and suspicion in the minds of the people concerning those who are receiving petrol when they were not entitled to it.

Rationing, instead of being based on horse power of the vehicle—I am referring to the rural worker and the owner of any engine or power plant for use on a farm—might be based on the necessary use in the work of primary production. A local committee could be set up comprising such men as the chairman of the shire council, the chairman of the local dairy association, and the policeman or postmaster, gentlemen who would know every individual in the surrounding district and be familiar with distances from his home to railhead or market, and so be qualified to advise the State board on all applications for increases.

As the subject of post-war reconstruction is to be debated later in the session, I shall refrain from making any comments on it now, but I say that it is not too late or too soon to set our house in order. I repeat, for the third time, that I am pleased that the Government in their legislation intend to start now and build up on what we started in the years gone by. We shall have to face our post-war problems. One readily agrees that post-war reconstruction must be regarded as an individual problem as much as a collective one. Reciprocal trade and a policy of removing trade barriers are vital needs of a successful post-war reconstruction scheme between the nations. Poverty and want will have to be abolished, standards of living improved wherever possible, better labour conditions placed on all statute-books, and wealth more equitably distributed. As a writer in New Zealand said—

"It is no use waiting until hostilities cease to be up and doing. Now is the time to organise ourselves into one great body of public opinion coming to a decision as to what the new social order will be and then moulding every unit into a whole. Organised opinion must be ready the moment peace is declared to act with lightning speed to take control and bring into operation the new order based on justice for all, a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of production, and social security for all, irrespective of what the individuals may have. Now is the time to be up and doing.

Let us win a glorious peace and make the world what our gracious Lord meant it to be."

To bring this about it is our joint and several duty to develop a spirit of national co-operation both in outlook and effort. We are endeavouring to do that whether we have a national Government or not—we have the equivalent of it. It is our duty if we as Australians and as part and parcel of the British Commonwealth of Nations taking part in this world struggle for supremacy are to see that the British Empire emerges triumphant in the end.

I feel that I have answered some of the criticisms that are levelled at members of Parliament from time to time both inside and outside the Chamber. We are asked, "What are we doing about the war effort?" "What are we doing to create an all-in effort?" "Where does Labour stand?" "Has it any war conscience?" I have endeavoured to indicate on behalf of the party, but more on behalf of myself, that our effort to-day has been spontaneous and that it has been complete so far as it is possible for us to make it so.

Mr. GAIR (South Brisbane) (4.12 p.m.): It is scarcely necessary for me to say how pleased I was, Mr. Speaker, with your unanimous election to the high and honourable position of Speaker of this Parliament. Hon. members who have been in this Chamber since you were first elected as Speaker are, I believe, unanimous in their opinion that you have carried out your duties impartially and efficiently. I am sure that we can rest assured that you will continue to give that service so long as it is your honour to occupy the exalted position you now hold.

At 4.13 p.m.,

Mr. RIORDAN (Bowen), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. GAIR: During the course of this debate divers matters have been dealt with. We have had speeches dealing with all kinds of things, from the reformed matchbox to fish and other things. As was to be expected, most hon. members dealt with the foremost problem confronting Australia—the war. It can be said with truth that all hon. members were unanimous on the need of pulling our weight and in making a united effort in the prosecution of the war and the preservation of democracy and all that it stands for. Hon. members without exception have demonstrated their unswerving loyalty to Great Britain and her cause, and they have indicated their unanimous resolve to play their part in the terrible and tragic conflict that rages throughout the world to-day.

All men and women cannot serve in the armed forces, but there is not one of us who cannot play some part towards the successful prosecution of the war. The Labour Party in Australia has been inflexible in its support of a constructive war policy, and the adequate defence of Australia in the closest collabora-

tion with Britain. I am sure that Labour to-day thinks as it has done in the past. In fact, Labour has been the great architect of Australian defence. It was a Labour Government who first introduced the first line of defence in Australia. It was a Labour Government, too, under the leadership of the late Andrew Fisher, who established the first Australian army. The same Government later established an Australian fleet, which at the time was received with ridicule and criticism by its opponents. This fleet, made possible by Labour's initiative, foresight, and ambition, was referred to critically as Australia's mosquito fleet, but the critics lived long enough to regret their comment, as during the last war they joined the cheering crowds on the achievement of the cruiser "Sydney" in destroying the German raider "Emden" off Cocos Island as she was on her way to Australia.

Hon. members on this side of the House have without exception indicated their willingness to play their part in the successful prosecution of the war, and their remarks are a true reflex of the attitude of the people of Australia on this all-important issue. There are some people, however, who believe that the sacrifice has not been evenly and fairly distributed. We believe that those who are best able to bear the major portion of the sacrifice have not up to the present, at any rate, been carrying their fair share. The Federal Government should recognise this fact and lay down the principle of a fairer division of sacrifice and effort. I endorse the plan outlined by the Premier in this matter at a recent meeting of the Loan Council, where he unfolded a plan providing that all in excess of a fixed amount earned by an individual should be devoted to the war effort. That was an excellent scheme, and one designed to bring about a more even distribution of the sacrifice that must be made if this war is to be won.

I am not inclined to engage in any unfair criticism of the Federal Government at the present time. I appreciate and recognise—as no doubt all fair-minded people do—that the task of government now is greater than at any time in the history of Australia. At no time in the history of this great country was it so necessary for us to have competent, efficient government than it is at the present time; therefore, I should be loth to criticise that Government unduly. I believe they are endeavouring to play their part to the best of their ability. I wonder sometimes, however, whether they are enjoying the co-operation and co-ordination of all sections of the military forces and the public service of this country. It is important that the Prime Minister and other Ministers of the Crown should be competently advised in the many issues they have to deal with. The obvious evidence of the repeated blundering and omissions during the past two years can only be attributed either to downright neglect to face up to facts or bad advice by those in charge of the departments of State.

I have indicated that in all cases of real necessity all the people of Australia are

willing to play their part for this country; but it must be confessed that the people of Australia have been for a long time waiting for some definite lead from their national leaders, and they are heartily sick of the state of affairs that has existed in our national Parliament for a considerable time. We have the spectacle of bickering, fighting, quarrelling, dissatisfaction, and jealousies existing in the Government parties of our national Parliament at a time of grave emergency when these people should be working in unison and co-operation with an Opposition who have given unrestricted co-operation, and have helped the Government at all times in their effort to put forth a successful war effort.

It is only two years ago, or thereabouts, that Mr. Menzies was hailed through the Press of Australia as a Heaven-sent individual who had come to take charge of this country at a time of grave danger. The "Courier-Mail" of 19 April, 1939, said of Mr. Menzies that he was a man of forceful personality who could be relied upon to be a leader in action as well as in name, that the nation's administration should be invigorated by a man bringing unimpaired energy to his task and with a freer hand than Mr. Lyons had to concentrate its efforts on securing the nation's defence. The Press throughout Australia were highly eulogistic of Mr. Menzies. They conveyed to us the impression that he was a big man physically and mentally, a man with a great Australian outlook, a man seized of the importance of his job, and a man fully qualified to do it.

Early this year, Mr. Menzies, as Prime Minister of Australia, saw fit to visit Northern Africa, England, and America. The Press informed us then that his mission to these countries was highly successful. On his return to Australia he was received with great enthusiasm and given the warmest welcome. The Press and his colleagues told us of the great impression that he had created in the countries visited, and that the Prime Minister of England was anxious that he should return there and take a seat in the War Cabinet of Britain. We were also told through our Press of the great impression that Mr. Menzies had created in America. I am not denying all these things that have been claimed on his behalf, but as an Australian, may I ask a fair question: where is this great Australian to-day? Where is this man who was offered a seat in the War Cabinet of Britain and who, throughout England and America, was acclaimed as a great Australian, as a physical and mental giant and the only man equal to the task of government in Australia? Where is this man? He ceased to be leader of the Commonwealth Government merely because within his parties he had men of small mentality, who, by their collusion and subterranean engineering, brought about his defeat and resignation. In a Press statement he said he was forced to resign his position to bring about stability within his party. That is a definite charge against the opponents of Labour, who constitute the Government in Canberra at present. If Mr. Menzies was all

they said he was, if he still is, why did they sound him from office? Why did they deny Australia the right and the privilege of having such a man at the helm of the ship of State at a time of grave emergency?

The Federal Government are responsible for the suggested appointment of Sir Earle Page to the position of Australian Minister in England. Unhesitatingly I say that the suggested appointment is a grave mistake, as he is neither qualified nor temperamentally fitted for the position.

Mr. Edwards: You would not know that.

Mr. GAIR: He is not qualified to occupy such an important office, if such a Minister is required at all. The question asked by the people of Australia is: what is Mr. Bruce, High Commissioner for Australia, doing in England at the present time? Mr. Bruce is paid a high salary, and as a former Prime Minister of Australia, a man whom the Country Party at Canberra suggested recalling from London to assume the Prime Ministership of Australia on the death of Mr. J. A. Lyons, should be able to represent Australia's interest in England. What is Mr. Bruce doing that necessitates sending another Minister to England?

The hon. member for Nanango questions my statement that Sir Earle Page is not qualified, and not suitable for the position to which he has been appointed. The man who is responsible for his appointment, the present Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. A. W. Fadden, is the same gentleman who said that he would not sit in the Country Party under the leadership of Sir Earle Page, after his attack upon Mr. Menzies on the occasion when Mr. Menzies was appointed Prime Minister of Australia.

Mr. Macdonald: You have altered your mind once or twice in life, have you not?

Mr. GAIR: This is a very important matter. Mr. Fadden, who is Prime Minister of Australia to-day, left the party of which he was a member and refused to sit under the leadership of Sir Earle Page, because he described him as being too small, and because his statement about Mr. Menzies was based on jealousy and animosity. This is the gentleman whom they propose to send to England to represent Australia on the very important question of war.

I say, without hesitation, that Sir Earle Page has been an utter failure in Australian politics. During the term of the Bruce-Page Government he was aptly described as "the tragic Treasurer."

Mr. Edwards: By the Labour Press.

Mr. GAIR: Not by the Labour Press, but by friends of Sir Earle Page, members of the same political party to which the hon. member belongs.

Before this tragic error is made, I suggest to the Federal Government that they should give the matter very careful consideration. In the first place, I do not think there is any

need to send any other Minister to England whilst Mr. Bruce is there. He should know Australia and her requirements. If he does not, he should be recalled.

At 4.28 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. GAIR: I am pleased to note that amongst the proposed Bills for this session of Parliament is one dealing with educational co-ordination and the University. We all agree that the education of our youth is one of the most important tasks of government. Development of the intellect and character of our young people is one of the most important duties for any State. I recommend to the Government that while they are considering the question of educational co-ordination, they might take up the question of fees with the authorities of the Queensland University. I have referred to this matter on previous occasions. In Queensland we have an educational system second to none in Australia, or, for that matter, second to none in the world. Unfortunately, however, when the brilliant son or daughter of the poorer classes of our people reaches the university stage in his or her education, the prohibitive fees stand as a bar to the fulfilment of their desires so far as the major professions are concerned.

Those fees should not be so high. There is no reason in the world why the brilliant son or daughter of a poor person or of a working man should be debarred from pursuing a study in any of the professions he or she may select. The University should cease to be a profit-making machine or body. Who knows that prohibitive fees and cost of books might not be the means of denying the community of a world-renowned surgeon, physician, lawyer, engineer, or specialist in some other profession? I appeal to the Government to give this question their earnest consideration. The minimum fee for sitting for the junior public examination is 30s., and this House does not need me to tell it that the provision of the 30s. is a hardship to many parents.

Mr. Macdonald: And it is not allowed as a deduction for income tax purposes.

Mr. GAIR: I do not know very much about that, but I am stressing the need for the abolition of that fee where the parents are on the basic wage or in poor circumstances. As the Premier has just reminded me, an allowance of £60 a year is made under our taxation laws for each and every child under 16 years of age, and it is the highest concessional deduction of the kind made in the States of the Commonwealth. The point I wish to reiterate is that the payment of the minimum fee of 30s. causes hardship in many cases. No provision exists for a rebate or waiving of that fee. I recommend that the matter be adjusted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as it would appear that I am the last speaker on the Address in Reply debate, I should like to say that I have listened attentively to most of the speeches delivered, and that with perhaps one or two exceptions—they have varied in kind and have

dealt with subjects chosen by the hon. members of the House—have been worthy of consideration and that the standard of the debate has been very high and would compare more than favourably with that of any Parliament in Australia.

I trust that the legislation to be submitted by the Government this session will be of benefit to Queensland and her people. I trust that we shall have a successful session and each and every one of us will contribute in every way towards maintaining the prestige and dignity of the Parliament the people of Queensland revere and cherish so much.

ADOPTION.

Motion—That the Address in Reply be adopted (Mr. Devries)—agreed to.

SUPPLY.

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.”

Motion agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.35 p.m.