

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 26 AUGUST 1947**

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**TUESDAY, 26 AUGUST, 1947.**

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

**QUESTIONS.**

**NUMBER AND EFFICIENCY, RAIL MOTORS.**

Mr. PATERSON (Bowen) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. What is the type, class, and horsepower of rail motors in use on (a) the Proserpine-Townsville run, (b) all other runs radiating from Townsville, and (c) all other runs operating in Queensland?”

“2. When were the engines of these rail motors made, and when were they placed in commission?”

“3. Since 1 January of this year, on how many occasions have the rail motors on the Proserpine-Townsville run been out of use owing to breakdowns or other defects in the engines?”

“4. Is it a fact that one of the rail motor engines in use on the Proserpine-Townsville run is an A.E.C. motor built before 1919?”

“5. What steps have been and are being taken by the Railway Department to increase the number of rail motors in use, and to improve their quality?”

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

“1. (a) Owing to the withdrawal of one diesel motor for the Etheridge line due to the diesel locomotive undergoing repairs, the service between Townsville and Proserpine at present is being worked by 102 h.p. diesel motor and a steam train. The regular working is two 102 h.p. diesel motors; (b) other services radiating from Townsville are worked by 45 h.p. rail motors; (c) the balance of rail motor services throughout the State are worked by various types of motors ranging from 45 to 153 h.p.

“2. The dates rail motors were placed in commission and dates when engines now installed were placed in service as new engines are—

Rail Motor No.	Date Rail Motor Placed in Commission.	Date Engine now Installed First Placed in Commission as New Engine.
“(a) Townsville-Proserpine:		
79 102 h.p. Diesel ..	26-9-34	21-3-40
89 102 h.p. Diesel ..	21-3-40	1-7-37
“(b) Services radiating from Townsville:		
19 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-6-27	30-3-31
21 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-6-27	7-3-31
39 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-6-29	5-6-29
44 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	5-9-30	5-9-30
54 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	4-12-30	5-10-27
59 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-3-31	16-9-27
60 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-3-31	1-9-33

Rail Motor No.	Date Rail Motor Placed in Commission.	Date Engine now Installed First Placed in Commission as New Engine.
“(c) Other services throughout the State:		
17 50 h.p. Diesel ..	21-4-27	13-10-37
18 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-6-27	14-12-28
20 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-6-27	30-6-30
22 50 h.p. Diesel ..	30-6-27	27-5-38
23 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	16-9-27	27-9-28
24 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	5-10-27	30-6-30
25 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	24-10-27	30-6-27
26 50 h.p. Diesel ..	22-3-28	15-12-39
27 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	14-5-28	5-9-30
28 50 h.p. Diesel ..	11-5-28	3-12-42
29 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	28-6-28	4-12-30
30 50 h.p. Diesel ..	30-6-28	14-12-37
32 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	16-4-29	22-3-28
33 50 h.p. Diesel ..	27-9-28	15-11-39
34 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	21-2-29	1-9-30
35 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	22-3-29	17-12-30
36 50 h.p. Diesel ..	18-4-29	17-10-42
37 50 h.p. Diesel ..	5-6-29	1-4-40
42 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-6-30	1-7-33
43 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	30-6-30	21-6-29
45 50 h.p. Diesel ..	12-9-30	1-5-40
46 153 h.p. Diesel ..	27-2-31	15-4-42
47 153 h.p. Diesel ..	27-2-31	22-8-41
48 153 h.p. Diesel ..	4-12-30	19-12-41
49 153 h.p. Diesel ..	11-12-30	4-7-41
50 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	22-9-30	14-5-28
51 50 h.p. Diesel ..	25-9-30	19-6-41
52 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	20-10-30	31-3-31
53 100 h.p. A.E.C. ..	1-2-31	6-9-34
55 50 h.p. Diesel ..	18-12-30	5-5-39
56 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	17-12-30	12-9-30
57 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	20-2-31	1-10-31
58 45 h.p. A.E.C. ..	7-3-31	28-6-28
61 50 h.p. Diesel ..	2-4-31	18-9-39
62 50 h.p. Diesel ..	7-10-31	15-8-38
63 50 h.p. Diesel ..	1-10-31	28-2-38
65 100 h.p. A.E.C. ..	6-8-32	26-9-34
66 102 h.p. Diesel ..	12-9-32	8-10-37
67 102 h.p. Diesel ..	24-10-32	1-2-41
68 102 h.p. Diesel ..	6-12-32	1-10-40
69 102 h.p. Diesel ..	27-4-33	18-7-41
70 102 h.p. Diesel ..	1-6-33	1-1-37
71 102 h.p. Diesel ..	31-8-33	19-6-40
72 102 h.p. Diesel ..	18-10-33	11-10-38
73 102 h.p. Diesel ..	15-12-33	9-7-42
74 102 h.p. Diesel ..	22-5-34	1-11-38
75 100 h.p. A.E.C. ..	1-6-34	18-10-33
76 102 h.p. Diesel ..	21-8-34	19-11-41
77 102 h.p. Diesel ..	6-9-34	1-12-37
78 102 h.p. Diesel ..	19-9-34	25-2-38
80 102 h.p. Diesel ..	4-10-34	17-1-36
81 102 h.p. Diesel ..	17-1-36	1-4-38
82 102 h.p. Diesel ..	17-3-36	1-7-38
83 102 h.p. Diesel ..	30-9-36	30-9-36
84 102 h.p. Diesel ..	23-10-36	23-10-36
85 102 h.p. Diesel ..	9-12-37	16-9-42
86 102 h.p. Diesel ..	2-3-38	17-2-43
87 102 h.p. Diesel ..	22-4-38	2-3-38
88 102 h.p. Diesel ..	1-7-38	14-4-42
90 102 h.p. Diesel ..	19-6-40	1-12-42
91 102 h.p. Diesel ..	4-10-40	1-9-37
92 102 h.p. Diesel ..	30-11-40	21-4-38”

“3. Four.

“4. No.

“5. Arrangements have been made to purchase 12 150 h.p. rail motor engines for the construction of new rail motor units, which will be used to gradually eliminate the older and smaller capacity cars. A design is also being put in hand for rail motor units of larger capacity.”

COST OF RECONDITIONING RAILWAY  
LOCOMOTIVES.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. Will he kindly make a statement for the information of hon. members on the subject of recent costs of comparative jobs of reconditioning railway locomotives at the State railway workshops, at privately owned works and in New South Wales, respectively?”

“2. If practicable, will he also give some idea of the relative efficiency with which such jobs are done at such workshops?”

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

“1. The extent of repairs required on locomotives, even of the same class, varies widely, and it is not possible to make any accurate comparison of costs.

“2. With few exceptions the repairs effected at other than the department's workshops compare favourably with those done within the department.”

RAILWAY FREIGHTS TO INLAND AREAS.

**Mr. RUSSELL** (Dalby) asked the Minister for Transport—

“As a first step towards the Government's policy of regional decentralisation, will he bring before Cabinet the important question of a thorough reclassification of railway fares and freights with the object of lessening the disadvantages of distance in the inland areas of the State?”

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

“Freights and fares already are so designed as to lessen the disadvantages of distance, in that the charge per mile tapers with increasing distance. In addition, maximum rates apply on high-class goods railed west from the three main ports. For example, the maximum rate for 500 miles is 260s. 6d. per ton, which is the same rate as for 270 miles; therefore, in the case of consignments, Roma Street to Charleville, these goods are carried the last 213 miles for no additional charge. Apart from sheep and cattle raising, the main up-country industries are agricultural, fruit growing, dairying, flour-milling, bacon and meat preserving, mining, and the production of sugar, eggs, honey and wine, and products of these industries obtain rates on a lower scale when conveyed to ports. These port rates are designed to assist growers, &c., in marketing their output and are material to the development of the State's up-country industries. Women and children who are permanent residents of places in Queensland situated 100 miles and over west of the nearest coastal town are granted special cheap fares to visit the seaside once each year. These fares, which approximate one-third of the normal fares, are very generous and are probably without parallel.”

MOTOR TRANSPORT OF STOCK TO CANNON  
HILL.

**Mr. RUSSELL** (Dalby) asked the Minister for Transport—

“In reference to his answer on 7th instant to my question regarding the shortage of railway trucks for the transport of stock, will he give reconsideration to this matter from the point of view of suspending restrictions upon motor transport to Cannon Hill from comparatively short distances, in order to increase the supply of railway trucks in the far-out areas where the shortage is causing a bottle-neck in our meat trade?”

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

“If it can be shown that there is a sufficiency of vehicles suitably equipped to carry cattle which would materially relieve the railway position, the matter will be given consideration. No orders for sheep vans are being refused.”

UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS.

**Mr. PIE** (Windsor) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“1. Will he inform the House whether the bulletins released by the State Statistician's Department concerning Queensland unemployed are compiled on figures released by the Commonwealth Statistician or independently?”

“2. Does he realise that figures issued by the Queensland Department are outdated by at least three months when released?”

“3. As figures issued in such circumstances are of little, if any, value, will he take steps to have more up-to-date information included in such bulletins?”

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane) replied—

“1. The figures are compiled from special tabulations made by the Commonwealth Statistician, and supplied to the State Statistician so that he may release fuller details for Queensland at the same time as the Commonwealth Statistician releases figures for all States.

“2. Since the first bulletin of this series was issued for November, 1946, the period between the date to which the figures refer and the date of press release has been about three months on three occasions and been less than three months on three occasions.

“3. The present system of recording in the Commonwealth Social Services Department does not permit of any more up-to-date compilation.”

ALLEGED ELECTION IRREGULARITIES.

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

“In view of the allegations of illegal practices in certain electorates made during the course of the speech by the hon. member for Toowong when supporting the

amendment to the Address in Reply moved by the Leader of the Opposition, will he immediately instruct the Attorney-General to instigate a full, judicial inquiry into these charges, when full documentary evidence supporting these charges and now in the possession of my party will be made freely available?"

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

"I have not yet read the statements made by the hon. member for Toowong. The party led by the hon. member for Windsor received a well-deserved defeat at the elections, the people of Queensland having declined to elect them to office as a Government. It is now time for these hon. members to cease whining over their misfortunes and to permit Parliament to proceed with its important work on behalf of the State."

**Mr. MORRIS** (Enoggera), for **Mr. WANSTALL** (Toowong), asked the Attorney-General—

"In view of the grave charges made on 20th instant by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove that the poll in that electorate was sabotaged by certain ballot-papers being deliberately left with the voter's roll-number showing, and in view of the fact that disturbing information regarding a misplacement of a bundle of votes in this election is in our possession, and in view of the further fact that a similar case where the corners of ballot-papers were left unsealed is known to us in another metropolitan electorate—will he order the immediate appointment of a tribunal to inquire into the charges made by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, when related facts in our possession may also be considered?"

**Hon. D. A. GLEDSON** (Ipswich) replied—

"An election petition has not been presented to the Supreme Court of Queensland, at Brisbane, in accordance with Section 104 of the Elections Acts 1915 to 1944. The time prescribed for such presentation—namely, eight weeks from the date of the return of the Writ in respect of the Electoral District of Kelvin Grove—has already expired. The provisions of that section, therefore, cannot be invoked."

#### QUEENSLAND FORESTS LIMITED.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Enoggera), for **Mr. WANSTALL** (Toowong), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"(1.) Has his attention been drawn to the comment published in recent issues of "Smith's Weekly," concerning the tardiness of Queensland Forests Limited in bringing its timber-growing proposition to a head?"

"(2.) (a) What concessions or rights has this company in relation to timber in Queensland, (b) what developmental and harvesting conditions are attached to such concessions, (c) what amount of timber has

been harvested by this company since it was given such concessions, and (d) what information, if any, has he concerning the future development of such timber concessions?"

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Normanby) replied—

"1. I have not seen the article referred to.

"2. The company in question is not carrying out any timber-growing operations on Crown areas. Its sales of bonds were based on freeholds which it acquired in North Queensland. These lands are not under the control of the Forestry Sub-Department. The company has recently purchased two licensed sawmills in North Queensland, and is being supplied with timber under sale agreements held by these mills and transferred to the company. These sales are not in the nature of concessions. Particulars of timber cut or supplied under timber sales agreements in North Queensland are not recorded in Brisbane, but if the hon. member makes application, the Director of Forests will obtain these particulars for him."

**Mr. MORRIS** (Enoggera), for **Mr. WANSTALL** (Toowong), asked the Attorney-General—

"(1.) Who are the directors of Queensland Forests Limited?"

"(2.) Has this company fully complied with all of its obligations under the Queensland Company Laws?"

**Hon. D. A. GLEDSON** (Ipswich) replied—

"1. Reginald Clyde Moulton, 43 Drumalbyn road, Bellevue Hill, New South Wales, chartered accountant; William John Austin, 7 Brae street, The Range, Rockhampton, Queensland, insurance manager; Henry Fulford, 22 Frederick street, Toowong, Queensland, company manager.

"2. Yes."

#### LAND FROZEN FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

**Mr. MULLER** (Fassifern) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"In reference to his answer to my question on 20th instant relative to freezing of land for soldier settlement purposes, will he kindly give the desired particulars in regard to 'frozen' land in the vicinity of Moura railway siding?"

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Normanby) replied—

"The particulars sought by the hon. member with respect to 'frozen' lands in the vicinity of Moura railway station are contained in the statement which I lay on the table of the House."

Whereupon Mr. Foley laid upon the Table of the House a list of the properties within a radius of approximately ten miles of Moura railway siding which had been affected by "freezing" orders.

## STOCKING OF SOMERSET LAKE WITH FISH.

**Mr. MACDONALD** (Stanley) asked the Treasurer—

“In reference to his answer to my question of October 19, 1944, and his letter to me in January last on the subject of stocking the Somerset Lake and fresh-water streams with suitable fish, will he kindly state what progress has been made in the investigation of this matter; also whether or not any practical steps have yet been taken and, if so, where and with what varieties of fish?”

**Hon. J. LARCOMBE** (Rockhampton) replied—

“Investigations by State Fishery and Somerset Dam officials, in conjunction with the Biology Department of the University of Queensland, have so far revealed that there is considerable difficulty in securing stocks of suitable fish, particularly golden perch. It is proposed that officials again visit the Dawson River in the near future to secure specimens of golden perch and Queensland barramundi, with a view to acclimatising these species in the Somerset Dam area. Further studies of the feeding, breeding habits, and life history of these and other fresh-water species will be carried out at Somerset Dam and the University.”

## BRICKMAKING IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“(1.) What expenses were paid to or in respect of a Mr. Gunthorpe, or similar name, who recently visited North Queensland under the sponsorship of the Bureau of Industry, ostensibly to investigate clay deposits suitable for brickmaking?

“(2.) Who is this man, what does he represent, and what was the object of his visit to North Queensland?”

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane) replied—

“1. £46 19s.

“2. (a) Mr. R. E. Gunthorpe, manager of the Evans Head Brickworks. (b) To inspect brickworks in North Queensland to give expert advice on brickmaking, construction, setting and burning of kilns, suitability of clay deposits and other matters to help the companies in the production of bricks to meet the demands for building.”

## RAIL SERVICE, SCOTTVILLE.

**Mr. PATERSON** (Bowen) asked the Minister for Transport—

“In view of the fact that a railway line between Collinsville and Scottville has been in existence for many years, will he give consideration to having this line utilised to provide a regular rail service for the residents of Scottville and district?”

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

“It is considered the provision of a regular service over this privately-owned line is not warranted.”

## UNIVERSITY OPEN SCHOLARSHIPS.

**Mr. PATERSON** (Bowen): I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Instruction whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed him on 20 August—

“1. When was the Queensland University opened?

“2. How many open scholarships to the Queensland University—(a) per 100,000 of the State's population, and (b) per 100 undergraduates attending the University—were granted annually in the opening year and in 1929, and are being granted annually, at present, respectively?

“3. (a) What was the monetary value of the scholarship allowance in the opening year? (b) What is its present monetary value?

“4. Taking into consideration the increased cost of living, how does the value of the scholarship at present compare with its value in the opening year?”

**Hon. H. A. BRUCE** (The Tableland) replied—

“1. 14 March, 1911.

“2. To commemorate the foundation of the University, the Government of the day undertook to award 20 scholarships annually, each with a tenure of three years. In 1929 the number of scholarships was 25 and the tenure three years. At present the number is 25, and the tenure of the scholarship has been increased to coincide with the length of the course the scholarship-holder elects to undertake. Thus the tenure of the scholarship now varies from three to six years. The ratio between the number of scholarships and the total attendance at the University in 1911 was naturally very high, as only 50 day students, 30 evening students, and three external students (a total of 83) enrolled at the University in 1911. (a) The number of open scholarships granted per 100,000 of the State's population was—in 1911, 3.2; in 1929, 2.8; in 1947, 2.3. (b) The number of open scholarships granted per 100 undergraduates enrolled in the University was—in 1911, 24.1, when the total enrolment at the University was 83; in 1929, 3.8, the total enrolment being 666; in 1947, .7, the total enrolment being 3,811, an inflated figure, due to post-war influx.

“3. (a) £26 per annum (living at home); £52 per annum (away from home); (b) £39 per annum (living at home); £78 per annum (away from home).

“4. The value of the scholarship granted at present is, in terms of cost of living, approximately  $\frac{7}{10}$  or 70 per cent. of the value of the scholarship granted in the opening year of the University. There are at present in attendance at the University

168 students who are receiving financial aid under the Commonwealth 'Civilian Assistance' Scheme. From the amount for which a student is eligible under this scheme is deducted the amount of financial assistance the student receives from the State or from any other source. Hence any increase in the amount of the emolument of a State scholarship is of no advantage to open scholarship winners who are eligible for assistance under the Commonwealth scheme. The hon. member is reminded that, in addition to open scholarships, the Government is awarding five Social Service Fellowships (medicine) annually with payment of all University fees, and allowances at the rate of £135 for the first year, with £15 annual increments thereafter, and five Dental Fellowships annually under similar conditions. There are 40 students at present attending the University under these fellowship schemes. Nine Teacher Fellowships were granted in 1947 with similar allowances, and, in addition, three students annually are paid allowances to attend the University to undertake the course in Physical Education. The number of students doing full-time courses at the University under the Department of Agriculture and Stock is 11. The average cost is approximately £200 per student per annum. Forestry Cadetships have been awarded for many years, and during each of the last two years three cadets have been appointed direct from secondary schools and three cadetships were granted to ex-service-men. These attend the University as day students. Thus, in addition to 110 open scholarship-holders at present in attendance at the University, there are 78 other students attending the University at the expense of the Government."

#### INTAKE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Enoggera): I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Instruction whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on 21 August—

"1. Of the total intake of teachers from 1 January to 1 August, 1947, how many were from (a) Teachers' Training College; (b) other sources?"

"2. Of those from the Teachers' Training College, how many had been attending that college for (a) two years; (b) more than 21 months but less than two years; (c) less than 21 months?"

**Hon. H. A. BRUCE** (The Tableland) replied—

"1. (a) 224, (b) 131; total, 355.

"2. (a) Two years, 46; (b) more than 21 months but less than two years, 82; (c) between 18 months and 21 months, 96."

#### PAPERS.

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

Report of the Comptroller-General of Prisons for the year 1946.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under the Stock Routes and Rural Land Protection Acts, 1944 to 1946 (15 August), and the Sandalwood Act of 1934 (15 August).

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

##### EXTENSION OF TIME FOR DEBATE.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier): I move—

"That under the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, the period allotted to debate on the Address in Reply be extended to eight full sitting days."

Motion agreed to.

##### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 21 August (see p. 136) on Mr. Crowley's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

**Mr. HILTON** (Carnarvon) (11.27 a.m.): I am glad to avail myself of this opportunity of participating in the debate on the time-honoured motion before the House, and at the outset desire to express my personal congratulations to the new hon. members who so ably moved and seconded the motion. I wish to congratulate also the other new hon. members who have so far participated in the debate. I think it will be readily agreed that the standard of debate on this occasion has been very high and that the debating strength of the Chamber has been augmented with the arrival of the new hon. members. In common with other hon. members who have spoken I wish all hon. members a very happy and successful Parliamentary term.

I listened very intently to the Speech delivered by His Excellency on the occasion of the opening of Parliament, and I was very much impressed by the record it revealed of the splendid achievements made in this State in the past and the inspiring political objectives it set for the ensuing Parliamentary term. No one can question the fact that Queensland has made very sound economic and political progress within recent years, and with that thought in mind I wish to make some reference to one aspect that has been ventilated by certain hon. members opposite and the Press in general, that is, the alleged drift from the country to the city.

No-one can deny that during war years the population of all the cities, particularly Brisbane, was inflated by necessity. Many thousands of people, both men and women, were then almost compelled to come to Brisbane and other important cities to do war work. As a matter of fact, a similar condition obtained in World War I. Again, if we review statistics we shall find that not only in the war years but during the depression there was an influx of country people to the city, but that fact has not a permanent significance. I have yet to learn that at present there is one single house in any

country town that is unoccupied. I have yet to learn also that there is one single farm or holding that has been abandoned. The position is quite the reverse. There is an unprecedented demand for farms, grazing selections, and, of course, homes in country areas.

After I heard the speeches of certain members opposite I made an endeavour to ascertain the actual position. I first made a survey of my own electorate. I found that there has been a very substantial increase in the enrolment in that area in 1947 as compared with 1944. In fact, the increase was over 700 voters. There has been a similar increase in its population. I referred to the 1933 census figures also to ascertain what was the actual position then in the cities and shires of the area. The details of the recent census have not been released, so that I am not able to compare the two periods on that basis, but taking the estimates made at the end of 1945, a few months after the cessation of war, I found that despite all this talk, and despite the necessary influx of people to the cities because of the exigencies of war, the country was still holding its position. There was an increase in population in country shires and towns between 1933 and 1945, if we take the aggregate figures. It is true that some shires show a small decrease, but others show increases. They vary a great deal.

Of course, the population of the City of Brisbane and other cities has increased, too.

**Mr. Russell:** Have you the statistics relating to the Carpenteria division?

**Mr. HILTON:** I have them all here, but I do not intend to weary the House with the detailed figures in respect of each area. One can take the figures relating to any part of the North, West, Central or South-western divisions and find that the population of some parts decreased while others have increased. But taken over all there was an increase in the rural population between 1933 and 1945. I am anxiously awaiting details of the recent census to demonstrate further that this talk of a drift from the country to the city is nothing but a lot of nonsense. I shall be interested to learn of any property in the country that is going begging for an occupier at the present time.

**Mr. Muller:** How do you account for the smaller enrolments in some of those areas?

**Mr. HILTON:** If the hon. member had been listening he would have heard me state that my electorate, which is purely a rural area, has increased its enrolment, and I mentioned also that although some shires show decreased figures others have shown increases. That was brought about mainly by the influx to Brisbane and other cities during the war. When we get the details of the census just taken we shall be able to talk more definitely on this point, but on the figures available at present it is clear that the population of the rural areas of Queensland show an increase. In fact, I believe we are about to enter an era of great progress in our rural areas. Of course there is a very definite

reason for that. The policy of this Government, despite the criticism levelled at it by our opponents, is calculated to develop the country areas of Queensland.

In order to give more factual information on this matter, I have taken the trouble to obtain the actual figures for public loans and subsidies granted to country areas from 1932 up to the end of 1946. These make interesting reading, especially in view of the talk that the Labour Government caters for the city of Brisbane only. In that period loans and subsidies granted in the metropolitan area amounted to £2,953,869 and outside Brisbane to £9,038,144. Practically half the last amount was by way of subsidies to local authorities. That speaks volumes for the policy of the Labour Party in helping local authorities to provide very necessary amenities in country centres such as water supply, electric light, sewerage, improved roads, and all the other services that the local authorities are charged with the duty of administering on behalf of the people. A marvellous record reveals itself when we analyse the position. It was amusing to hear the Leader of the Opposition trying to make the point that this Government were adopting a hard attitude towards the local authorities and driving them to bankruptcy, as it were, when the fact remains that from 1932 to 1946 the total loans and subsidies to country local authorities were over £9,000,000, half of that amount representing subsidies from Government funds.

In addition, during that same period the Government have spent £642,253 on the building of hospitals in country areas, furnishings and medical equipment, so that the people in those areas would have the best possible medical service available to them. In addition to that we have our excellent programme of main-road construction; we have an excellent system of land settlement, with financial, technical and other aids, provided from Government revenue for the primary producers. In addition we have a very sound educational system. I can appreciate the difficulties that arise in very small centres where there are only half-a-dozen children of school age; but even there the Government, in an endeavour to help those small centres, have adopted a policy of subsidising the capital cost of hostels to the extent of 50 per cent. in certain areas. They are conducted under the auspices of the Country Women's Association. Quite a number of these hostels are doing an excellent work. In my own home town of Stanthorpe we find that children whose homes are situated many miles from any school are boarded at a very reasonable rate, and they are able to attend the primary or secondary schools in Stanthorpe. That policy indicates that the Government are not neglectful of country interests.

**Mr. Plunkett:** Do you know how much finance New South Wales provides for that purpose?

**Mr. HILTON:** I am not conversant with the figure; I should be interested to hear it. But, irrespective of what New South Wales

does, we have adopted a very sound policy in that direction, and some centres are making full use of the opportunities that are available to them.

While speaking on this policy of helping country areas, I might make one or two suggestions in connection with the granting of subsidies for water-supply, sewerage, and electric-light schemes. With regard to the granting of subsidies for water-supply schemes, for instance, whilst a very generous policy of a 50-per-cent. subsidy was in operation, a large number of local authorities with the right spirit of progress took advantage of the opportunity to provide this very important amenity for their citizens, unfortunately other centres—centres where there was no town council or where country men dominated the representatives of the town division, as it were—full advantage was not taken of the opportunity.

**Mr. Sparkes:** How do they dominate them?

**Mr. HILTON:** Because of weight of numbers.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Democratic voting.

**Mr. HILTON:** The hon. member for Aubigny, who is a member of a local authority, should know that if there were no town council at Dalby and there were three representatives of the Dalby division and six representatives of the country divisions, the town representatives would be in the minority.

**Mr. Sparkes:** A democratic vote.

**Mr. HILTON:** I grant the hon. member that, but it does not get away from the fact that in some places country members of councils were able to dominate those representing the townspeople and therefore some centres are not yet provided with this essential service. At the present time, the maximum subsidy for such a project is 33½ per cent., and I would suggest to the Government that when extraordinarily large costs are involved in providing water supplies that factor be taken into consideration and the subsidy be increased to 50 per cent. A subsidy of 50 per cent. is given for sewerage at the present time and to electric light undertakings in the far West. I think that water is more important than either light or sewerage and I strongly urge the Government to give favourable consideration to the granting of a 50-per-cent. subsidy in instances in which high capital costs are involved in providing water.

Likewise, I make the suggestion that the Government give some consideration to the increasing of the scholarship allowance at present payable in respect of a child of a man in receipt of the basic wage or earning not more than £50 per dependent member of his family. If his child has to leave home to attend a secondary school a fairly generous allowance is granted, but I think that in view of the increasing cost of living and increasing costs in other directions it should be possible to review these allowances and to raise the income limit so that people who are unquestionably at some disadvantage by living in country towns in which there are no second-

ary educational facilities should be able to educate their sons and daughters at secondary schools. I know it is a very big question and involves a considerable amount of money, and I can appreciate to the full the excellent move made in that direction by the Labour Government of this State in the past, but I strongly recommend the overhaul of that scheme at the present time.

In speaking of rural development, I strongly subscribe to the view that there can be no real sound prosperity or progress within a country or State unless included in the economy of that State is a prosperous and progressive scheme of primary production. I make that statement unreservedly and in making it perhaps I find myself in agreement with some hon. members opposite.

The Labour Party has always recognised that fundamental principle. That is why it has set down in its platform certain principles of action calculated to bring about a prosperous programme of primary production.

I listened very intently to the speech delivered by the hon. member for Cunningham the other day. The first part of it was a very sound commendation of the Labour Government's policy. He made reference to the operations of the State Wheat Board over the past 20 years. I agree with him that that board has done a magnificent job. I know he agrees with me that it was the legislation brought down by the Labour Government of the time that enabled that Wheat Board to be established just as other legislation has enabled other primary producers to obtain control of their own industries. The policy of the Labour Government has been primary-producer control with commodity boards to foster a spirit of co-operation in agriculture, and we are proud of our achievements in this direction.

**Mr. Plunkett:** You know how they were all sponsored by the primary producers concerned.

**Mr. HILTON:** Who brought down the legislation? I know that at present there are some people who strongly support this legislation, and I well recall that when the first ballot was taken for the establishment of the State Wheat Board a large number of the growers on the Darling Downs strongly opposed it.

**Mr. McIntyre:** What was your attitude to the co-operative milling venture?

**Mr. HILTON:** I have not heard of any co-operative timber-milling venture. I think the hon. member made an interjection along those lines last year, and I have still to learn of the venture to which he is referring.

**Mr. McIntyre:** You conveniently forgot

**Mr. HILTON:** Not at all. I am strongly in favour of a co-operative milling venture and I have recommended action along those lines to the fruit-growers of Stanthorpe to deal with the difficult case position that arises there from time to time, but at no time have they reached the stage of setting

about it because they realise the difficulties confronting them. I may be wrong, but I think the hon. member for Cunningham was one of those who strongly opposed the operations of the State Wheat Board in its early days.

**Mr. McIntyre:** Nonsense!

**Mr. Muller:** Who reduced the farmers' prices after we had our boards?

**Mr. HILTON:** What an absurd interjection! Certain hon. members opposite do not like being told the truth on certain matters. The Labour Party in this State did bring down the legislation that enabled these boards to be created. It does want to give stability to primary industries, and the other day it was with great regret that I heard the hon. member for Cunningham lamenting the position into which the wheat-growers of Australia, of Queensland in particular, find themselves because of their uncertainty with regard to the future orderly marketing and disposal of their products. They are now in a quandary. Last year, when the Wheat Stabilisation Scheme was brought down—it was the best scheme offered to the wheat-growers up to date—they opposed it for political reasons only. The hon. member for Cunningham said that when that scheme was submitted to a ballot of the South Australian wheat-growers it was defeated by a large majority. I knew that was not correct because I read the newspaper report of it at the time, and since then I have taken the trouble to check up on the matter. When that scheme was agreed upon, the Premier of South Australia was the only State Premier to oppose it. Whilst his Government were more or less compelled to subscribe to it to some extent, they adopted all sorts of steps to defeat the whole Commonwealth plan. They submitted it to a referendum of the growers, they spoke against it themselves and they allowed merchants and other vested interests to come into South Australia and campaign against the "Yes" vote. And with all the forces arrayed against the proposal in South Australia the endorsement of the stabilisation scheme was defeated by the small majority of 241. That is not a large majority amongst 16,000-odd wheat-growers. The fact remains that in South Australia, which of course is not a Labour State, almost 5,000 were in favour of the scheme, and that shows that there must be considerable merit in it.

I know that the stabilisation of the wheat industry is very important, and we cannot at this stage visualise what is going to happen in the future. It is a very great pity indeed that the necessary powers were not vested in the Commonwealth Government for the orderly marketing and control of the products that by their very nature have to be handled on a Commonwealth-wide basis.

**Mr. Muller:** Complete socialisation.

**Mr. HILTON:** I have told the hon. member what Labour's policy in this respect is, but he dreams about socialisation. He is a Socialist himself, because he is associated

with boards established under Labour legislation.

Let me say a few more words on the question of Commonwealth control to bring about orderly marketing in our primary industries. We know that the Country Parties in this State and in the Federal sphere were opposed to the granting of the powers sought by the Commonwealth, but they adopted a most extraordinary attitude, particularly in view of the fact that so recently as 1943 the Australian Country Party platform was formulated at a convention in Sydney, and this proposal was adopted and incorporated in that platform—

"Amendment of Constitution—amongst other things to provide for Federal control of all forms of transport, navigation, employment and unemployment, organised marketing of commodities, trusts, combines and monopolies, profiteering and prices, wireless broadcasting, films, registration of doctors and nurses, adoption and legitimisation of children, aviation . . ."

By that amendment in July, 1943, the Australian Country Party wanted Federal control to enable orderly marketing to be brought into effect. How then can its members support their attitude in fighting the referendum proposals in regard to the granting of powers to the Commonwealth to bring about organised marketing last year? The answer lies with those members, but in view of their platform and all that has happened and the parlous and uncertain condition in which they have placed the wheat-growers I do not think they can make an honest answer to those people who want to know why they did such things.

**Mr. McIntyre:** An unfair comparison.

**Mr. HILTON:** I should be interested to hear from the hon. member for Cunningham in what direction it is unfair.

I hope, despite all the remarks made by hon. members opposite and despite the uncertainty of the future, that some plan of action will be evolved to enable this important industry to be put on a sound footing. The hon. member for Cunningham made reference to the fact that wheat-growers were at the mercy of capitalistic combines. It was refreshing to hear that comment. Seeing how efficient and beneficial the legislation brought down by the Labour Party has been—and the same principles are in the Federal Labour Party's platform—it is amazing to see how hon. members allow political prejudices to prevent them from doing the right thing towards primary producers.

In his maiden speech the hon. member for Dalby said that because of the ramifications of the Wheat Board the price of flour was loaded against country folk, but as an hon. member representing a large number of important wheat-growers I was surprised that he did not go further into the matter before he came into this Chamber to put forward that argument to support his contention of stagnation in the country. He knows full well that the prevailing prices for flour in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Dalby, and Roma were

brought about by the State Wheat Board many years ago.

**Mr. Russell:** That does not make it right. It means that your money buys less flour.

**Mr. HILTON:** Those prices were brought about by the State Wheat Board in conjunction with the Commissioner of Prices, but that arrangement did not mean any increase in the price of bread to the consumer. At that time the wheat-growers in Queensland were fighting for economic survival and this arrangement gave them another 2½d. a bushel. It is a long and involved story, but briefly the object of the arrangement was to give the wheat-growers on the Downs an extra price for their wheat. I am sure that the hon. member for Cunningham will agree with me on that point at least.

**Mr. McIntyre:** You are talking of the flour tax?

**Mr. HILTON:** No. I was pointing out that the hon. member for Dalby had referred to the disparity between the price of flour milled at Dalby, Warwick, Toowoomba, and Roma and that of Brisbane-milled flour and I had explained that these prices were brought about by the State Wheat Board in conjunction with the Commissioner of Prices and that the arrangement did not mean any increase whatever in the price of bread in those towns.

**Mr. Russell:** I did not say that it did.

**Mr. HILTON:** There was this further aspect, that the Brisbane millers, having the right to trade freely interstate, could buy New South Wales wheat to the exclusion of Queensland wheat. The whole question is a little involved, but the arrangement was designed to give further economic stability to the wheat-growers on the Downs, and I suggest that the hon. member for Dalby should make a study of that point before he uses the disparity in prices to buttress his argument about the alleged stagnation in the country.

**Mr. Pie:** You have not convinced him that he is wrong.

**Mr. HILTON:** I was making some comment on the wheat industry and contending that it was necessary to have stability in it, but if the hon. member for Windsor had any knowledge of the struggle of the wheat-growers in the days of the depression and subsequently I think he would say that they were justified in getting that extra price for their wheat at that time. That extra 2½d. a bushel went into the funds of the State Wheat Board and has been paid to the wheat-grower. On the one hand we have the hon. member for Cunningham saying that the State Wheat Board has done a magnificent job and now we have the hon. member for Dalby coming here condemning a policy that was devised to help the wheat-growers he represents. I shall let them fight that argument out amongst themselves. I simply wanted to make the point that with this disparity in the prices of flour in those centres

there was no increase to the consumer but there was a real benefit to the wheat-growers.

**Mr. Russell:** What is the price of bread in Cloncurry?

**Mr. HILTON:** The extra rail freights are responsible for the difference between the price of flour in the South and the price at Cloncurry. I may have something to say on that subject presently, but at the moment I should like to turn my attention to the tobacco industry. That is an important industry.

**Mr. McIntyre:** You are more at home there.

**Mr. HILTON:** And I am at home in dealing with the wheat industry. I am a native of the Downs, too. Naturally my sympathy and feelings are always with the wheat-growers, as I know how they were impoverished by capitalistic companies before the Labour Party gave them economic emancipation. (Opposition laughter.)

**Mr. Collins:** It is hard to laugh off.

**Mr. HILTON:** It is pleasing to note that this important tobacco industry is on the up-grade again. The latest figures for production in the 1946-47 season disclose that the number of acres planted in that season was 2,315, and that the yield was 1,950,100 lb. Those figures show a substantial increase in acreage over the 1944-45 season, when we reached an all-time low in tobacco production. In that season the acreage was 1,862 and the yield 1,314,208 lb. This is a very important industry. It has also a very big bearing on the economic position of Australia. That point will be emphasised in the times ahead because of the dollar crisis and other aspects of the international financial position.

For the information of hon. members, I would point out that the average value of tobacco imports for the five years ending 1944-45 amounted to £2,563,672, whereas the average value of tobacco produced in Australia in the same period was £575,147, or only 18.3 per cent. of the total tobacco consumed in Australia. That reveals the wonderful opportunity that exists for expansion in the industry. I was very pleased indeed to note that at the recent meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council the Commonwealth and the States agreed that Queensland, which has always pioneered legislation for the benefit of primary producers, was entrusted with the drafting of a Bill to bring about the orderly marketing of the tobacco crop on an Australian-wide basis. That is necessary because of the denial to the Federal Government of the powers referred to by me a few moments ago—each State now must pass legislation complementary to the legislation that will be enacted by the Federal Government. I feel confident that as a result of the commission given to Queensland to draft that legislation a well-designed scheme will be brought down for the benefit of the industry and that it will ensure its being placed on a sound basis in the future.

Time does not permit me to go into details but the first essential is a fair average price. The cost of production will have to be taken into consideration and some system of appraisement must be established. On that too I want to say a few words. I strongly suggest to the Minister that the men entrusted with the task of appraising tobacco should be fully qualified. Statements have been made to me in the past that unqualified men have been employed and have appraised it in a way calculated to suit the interests of manufacturers rather than the interests of producers.

I believe those men should qualify by examination before the task of appraising the tobacco produced in this or any other State is given to them. Further, I make the plea that the appraisement centres should not be confined to Brisbane. I am very glad to know the northern growers now have an appraisement centre of their own, and I hope that within the next twelve months it will be possible to have a centre for the tobacco grown in the Inglewood-Texas-Yelarbon district, which produces almost 50 per cent. of the total tobacco produced in Queensland, and where the yield per acre is greater than that in any other part of the State. Because of the room for expansion that exists, which is very apparent, these growers should receive all possible encouragement by way of an appraisement centre and satisfactory appraising to develop the industry. Again, I strongly urge that attention be paid to the implementation of the irrigation scheme, so that there can be a further expansion. Water is vital to the production of tobacco, and unless a number of weirs are built in the district in the very near future the expansion of the industry there will be limited. I know it is very difficult to get cement but I suggest to the responsible Minister that he consider the construction of wooden weirs where the sites are suitable. I suggest that he instruct his engineers to make an investigation in that direction because the tobacco-growers in the area want more water as speedily as possible.

Before I finish I wish to make some reference to housing in the country. I think there may be a tendency on the part of the Housing Commission—not by design but by force of circumstances—to overlook the legitimate demands of the country. We know the greatest congestion of population is in the Greater Brisbane area. We know the Housing Commission are doing an excellent job here. In yesterday's "Courier-Mail" we saw an aerial photograph of two housing schemes, showing the number of houses occupied and the proposals for the future; and it made very good reading. But I do not think under the present set-up there is full co-ordination of the facilities for the construction of houses in the country by the Housing Commission. I think it might be worth while considering the appointment of a liaison officer to rectify this state of affairs.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. HILEY (Logan) (12.9 p.m.):** I must confess that I was one of thousands of people in this State who thought that after pursuing one policy for 30 years Labour administra-

tion in this State had at last awakened and seen the error of its ways and was beginning to show some concern over the drift to the city. I noticed with approval expressions by the Premier and other Government spokesmen indicating what some people thought was a death-bed repentance, but certainly was entitled to be regarded as a change of heart and an important change of policy. Proposal after proposal was made that suggested something new in the Government's approach to the matter, some endeavour to stop this herding of a great percentage of our population in the principal centres of the State. But having heard the speech by the hon. member for Carnarvon I am afraid I must join the ranks of the disillusioned, for according to him there is no drift to the cities to correct. Every overcrowded city in Queensland and the failure of the country areas to grow in the same ratio as the cities gives the lie to that assertion.

**Mr. Smith:** That has not been demonstrated yet.

**Mr. HILEY:** Again, by interjection, we get confirmation of the view that there is no drift to the cities in the eyes of the Government. Let us be quite clear about it; if that is the view of the Government, then all this parade of steps that are proposed to correct the danger the Government themselves by their spokesman said exists is so much sham and humbug. I should prefer to hope that in spite of the denial by the hon. member for Carnarvon the Government do mean what some of their spokesmen have said, that they realise there has been a continual drift to the cities, and it is something that every thoughtful person should deplore and seek to correct. I wish the Government well in any step they take in an endeavour to spread our industries and to avoid the constant tendency to overcrowd our population into our principal cities. But it is not my purpose to spend much time on that question. If an effort was made to discover the keynote of the Parliament just concluded I should say that it was essentially a war-time and rehabilitation Parliament. Those problems, at that particular time of peculiar significance, were the dominant notes of that Parliament. The Parliament that now we are commencing may mean many things for the people of Queensland but in my opinion the paramount issue, the issue of most fundamental importance in this Session, is the issue on coal. I believe that the extent to which this State is able to develop its coal resources and their uses may well prove to be the key, for the next generation at least, and possibly for a century hence, to the development of Queensland. I look forward with the keenest interest to an opportunity to discuss in detail the important proposals at present under consideration.

In His Excellency's Speech I noticed some very touching expressions of sympathy with the relatives of the people who were killed or injured in the Camp Mountain railway disaster. I think every hon. member will be touched by these expressions. In considering the implications of that accident and of the laws dealing with victims of that

accident I am led to endeavour to place before the House this morning something that I regard as the growth of something near tyranny of the State, or if you like to put it in other words, Mr. Speaker, the revival of excessive privilege centred in the State. Every student of British constitutional history can trace over the last 900 years two simultaneous trends. One trend has been towards the reduction and the virtual elimination of everything that savours of privilege of the Crown as a personal ruler. I propose to refresh the memories of hon. members in some of the more important directions in which that tendency can be traced. Side by side with that reduction of privilege of the personal ruler has come the second important trend—the development of the nearly full realisation of the political liberty of the subject. Let us have a quick glance at some of the important steps in both these directions.

The first important step must be regarded as Magna Charta. Whereas Magna Charta was a document drawn up much more to protect the rights of the privileged classes of the day—the nobles and the barons—than a document declaring the rights and the privileges of any citizen, it did contain some important provisions tending to this end, and these are as important today as they were then.

**Mr. Collins:** It protected the Crown.

**Mr. HILEY:** It did, but the process I speak of is an evolutionary process, and whilst I should be the last to suggest that Magna Charta should be read as the be-all and end-all of our wishes in that respect it was the first step.

It was in Magna Charta, for instance, that we find first recorded the doctrine of right of trial by a jury of a man's peers. It is the first time in which we see recorded the doctrine of habeas corpus, which established the personal liberty of the subject, protected him from wrongful imprisonment. Again, you get in Magna Charta the first expression of the view that Parliament, and not the personal wish of the king, should be the instrument for controlling taxation. On top of that you have other rights laid down, which have lost their significance in present times. You have the first attack upon that personal privilege of the king of wardship, a privilege that entitled him to take the children of his subjects and direct to whom they should be permitted to join in marriage. In turn you found some attempt to limit another privilege of the king, the right that entitled him to call upon certain of his subjects to provide from their own resources either their own military service for the use of the State, or cash in lieu of it, so that the king could hire his own army.

Then came the development of the 14th century, when the idea of a representative Parliament found fuller development and where you can first trace something that is the equivalent of our modern parliamentary system.

After that, the next most important step was the Bill of Rights in 1689. There we find laid down privileges and rights that we

recognise, and guard jealously, I hope, today—for example, that only parliament shall make or suspend the law, that the election of members of Parliament shall be free, that the right of debate in Parliament shall at all times be free; above everything else, that Parliament shall meet regularly and it shall not be possible to stop the functioning of the parliamentary machine by allowing it to go into recess for excessive periods.

The next great movement can be traced in the reform that found expression in the Reform Act of 1832, when such matters as pocket boroughs were mentioned—and I believe my ears heard some mention of these archaic happenings on the floor of the House in this session. It dealt also with such restrictions of privileges as religious restrictions, sex restrictions, and property restrictions. Generally, it brought in a liberty that we all hold dear today, the right of just and equal representation of all people as citizens.

That was followed by the Chartist movement that came on the heels of the reform movement, and survived up till about the middle of the last century and advocated, and succeeded largely in attaining, such an important reform as equal electoral areas. By "equal" it referred not to the acreage but to the population of the area. It provided also for universal suffrage, payment of members, no property qualifications, vote by ballot with all the attendant secrecy, and something that has never yet been attained, the right of annual Parliaments.

The result of all these successive steps, which were spread over the best part of 900 years of our history, enabled the average British citizen to point with certainty to certain rights and freedoms and liberties that can be summed up as entitling every British citizen, wherever he lives, to hold that he commands personal liberty, that he is entitled at all times to command religious liberty. In no British community do we hold today that any citizen should be under any disability because of his religious belief. In turn, by the improvement of the parliamentary machine and the electoral conception, political freedom was won by those successive steps.

After the industrial revolution, largely by such important steps as the securing of the right of assembly and the right of combination, we reached the point where industrial liberty could fairly be claimed by every citizen. I should say that because of what happened during the last century and to-day we can assert that we have reached the point where the only liberty that remains in some way restricted to British people is economic liberty. I should say that the whole force and thought of all political parties in British communities to-day are directed to evolving gradually some system by which eventually economic liberty will in turn be added to the other liberties I have mentioned.

In the course of the development of personal liberty of the subject we find that the Crown lost all powers that came within the personal right of the Sovereign. For

instance, he lost his powers over forests, and I would remind hon. members that the power over forests was one of the most rigorous and tyrannical powers vested in the Sovereign, for those powers meant that he could outlaw and hang any citizen who happened to shoot a deer in the King's forests. No longer in British communities are the children of any British subject subject to the direction of the King as to where they should be placed in marriage. With the abolition of the right of succession in the eldest son, giving a free right to the disposition of property to parents, all vestige of royal prerogative over succession and marriage disappeared. So far as the individual citizen is concerned he is left as free as the skies to do what he wishes with his own property and children are free to do what they wish. In turn the King lost his personal right to taxation and he lost personal rights concerning the administration of justice and all personal rights as regards the making or suspension of the laws.

Today it is my purpose to show that the rights of the subject which have been built up over 900 years are imperilled by a new form of tyranny. It is in contrast to the personal rights held by the Norman kings but none the less mischievous in its implications to the citizen of to-day. I propose to show you, Mr. Speaker, several ways in which this new tyranny, as I term it, is reducing and restricting our conceptions of the freedom of the subject. I propose to show how the doctrine of the State's limit of liability for negligence and the privilege of the Crown in the recovery of debts affects the citizens. I want to show you the tyranny of the competition with citizens by the State, with taxation advantages to State enterprises. I want to show how the State has the advantage over the citizen in the right to occupy lands without paying its full share of local costs. I want to show how the State quite frequently delights in avoiding obligations it imposes upon the general masses of its citizens. I want to show you how in using judicial machinery in legal claims it enjoys privileges in the matter of costs—how its costs compare with those of an ordinary litigant.

**Mr. Collins:** Who is the State?

**Mr. HILEY:** According to modern standards, the State is just as great a tyrant as those whose heads were chopped off in the days of yore. The State uses tyranny in its exercise of powers of resumption without just compensation.

Let us have a look at some of these matters of which I have spoken in general terms and let us consider some specific examples of them. We start off with the Railways Act. We find that by this Act the Crown limits its liability for any action brought against it under two headings. It limits its liability to persons having claims arising out of negligence and it limits its liability to customers in respect of claims arising out of the fact that the Railway Department is a common carrier carrying the goods of the community.

That liability is limited in two ways. It is limited first of all as to amount and no matter what degree of damage might be suffered by a citizen at the hands of the Railway Department the law says that the precise limit that can be recovered by one person as the result of negligence of the Crown through a railway accident is £2,000. It does not matter what the actual damage is, the Crown says, "We will take a privileged position for ourselves; we will not bear the full measure of the damage that we by our servants caused to these people; we will limit our liability to £2,000."

It is limited in another way, and to my way of thinking an even worse way. It is limited by the statutory formula that is laid down as to the method and practice to be followed in instituting claims against the Government, and I propose to show that because of the variety of time, method, and escape clauses, the practice of the Crown in laying down special machinery to be followed for all the varying matters in submitting claims is making it exceedingly difficult for the average citizen to safeguard his rights in respect of any injury he may have suffered at the hands of some State instrumentality.

**Mr. Dunstan:** What do you mean by the Crown—a department?

**Mr. HILEY:** I am speaking about the State instrumentality. Call it Crown or State if you like, but it happens to be the instrumentality that owns and conducts the railways, which owns and conducts other Government departments and which owns and conducts all manner of semi-governmental activity. Through the exercise of statutory power a hedge has been built up to limit their liabilities and to lay down a special formula to be followed before a citizen can claim his just rights. The variety in these conditions suggests that they were drawn by a Parliamentary Draftsman with delirium tremens. There is variety in method and variety that means that any citizen who has suffered damage at the hands of a State instrumentality is put into the position where the first and absolute essential is that there must be the most careful and obedient attention to the precise provisions of the law as to how he makes his claim, otherwise notwithstanding the merits of the case he is completely out of court. If that is not privilege then I do not know the meaning of the term.

**Mr. Duggan:** Does that not apply to the determination of all matters submitted to the court?

**Mr. HILEY:** There is no limitation as to amount so far as the ordinary citizen is concerned. The only limitation is the limitation of time, the Statute of Limitations. Under the Police Act the process has to be issued within two months or you are completely out and under certain other Acts it has to be issued within six months or you are completely out and under others within 12 months or you are completely out, but the common citizen who causes damage to anyone is very properly accountable within the

limits of the Statute of Limitations and action can be instituted against him at any time up to six years from the time the cause of the action arose. But not so the privileged State.

It shelters behind a two-months' barrier or a six-months' barrier or a 12-months' barrier. Even then the right kind of process notice must be given and the formula observed. In some cases that formula is mandatory. If it is departed from in the slightest degree, notwithstanding the merits of the case, the subject loses his rights. In other cases, permission is given to the court to permit correction of a mistake made in the procedure that has been followed.

Now we come to the councils of the State. We have to remember that they are not only widespread but they conduct a bigger and bigger section of activity within the authority conferred upon them. With the councils you have some extraordinary variations.

At 12.32 p.m.,

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Mann, Brisbane) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

**Mr. HILEY:** Under the Local Government Act an action has to be brought within 12 months, after one month's notice of the intention to take action. The minimum amount of damage allowed to be claimed is not £2,000 but £1,000, if for example it is in connection with a bus owned by the Brisbane City Council. If it is a tram owned by the Brisbane City Council the action must be brought within six months after the notice, but there is no limit of the amount. If a citizen had any choice in the matter it would be preferable that he should be run down by a council tram rather than a council bus. It is quite true that if he is run down by a council tram he must bring action within six months, or within 12 months if run down by a bus. If he is run down by a tram there is no limit on the amount of damages to be recovered but if he is run down by a bus, or in any way injured through the council's negligence, the limit to the damages he may seek is £1,000. What principle is there in these wide variations of times and amounts? What principle is there in an Act that lays it down that the State, the aggregation of all citizens, should be in a position to cause injury through its negligence and pay less damage than its common citizen? Will any voice uphold that principle in fairness and justice? I doubt it.

Come to the Police Act, which I mentioned earlier. Here we have the most absolute barrier in point of time. If a citizen is wrongfully arrested or imprisoned and wishes to bring an action against a member of the Police Force he is compelled under that Act to give notice within one month and issue his writ within two months. What principle is being upheld there?

**Mr. Roberts:** The same principles were in operation before the advent of Labour in 1915 and operated in 1929-32.

**Mr. HILEY:** That is a delightful argument. In effect, it is that the past hallows the present. The function of this Assembly is to examine every Act of Parliament and discover in what manner it can be reformed. There is the voice that gives sanction to the principle that because something is hallowed by years it should not be interfered with!

Now we pass on to other examples of Crown tyranny. Let me take the point I made earlier, that the Crown says "We are not bound by the statutes that we lay down for the common citizen to obey." We have the classic example of the Factories and Shops Acts Amendment Act passed through the last Parliament. That Act not only neglected to bind the Crown to observe the safeguards properly laid down by Parliament on every employer, but the Government positively refused to accept an amendment of the Opposition to accept those regulations. We also have, in keeping with that tendency, a recent administrative decision of the Government that attempted to prevent the free right of union inspectors to see that the industrial laws of this State, so far as they applied to Crown employees, were properly carried out. I am glad to see that that attempt was quickly corrected when it inevitably drew the adverse criticism it deserved.

Take another direction in which the Crown claims privilege. The Crown properly lays down the workers' compensation system to protect people injured or killed in employment or their dependants; but does the Crown—the biggest employer in the State—respect the doctrine of workers' compensation for its own employees? The Minister in charge would have to admit that the benefit of workers' compensation is denied to a great percentage of Crown employees. By what principle is the servant of the Crown to be denied what the Government very properly say is a just safeguard for workers generally throughout the community?

The Crown claims privilege on costs under workers' compensation. Suppose an injured worker, being dissatisfied with the decision of the Commissioner, is forced to go to law to attempt to recover what he feels are his rights from the Crown, represented by the State Government Insurance Office. The fact of it is this: if he succeeds in his claim and is held to have been quite right the Crown says, "No matter what your costs our liability to you for indemnity of costs is limited to one guinea by statute." If that man loses, what happens? The Crown does not say, "We will be content with one guinea." The Crown says, "You will pay, as an unsuccessful litigant, the full measure of costs incurred in resisting your unjust claim." Yet if the Crown loses the case and it is found it has acted on wrong premises, one guinea is the total limit this privileged State will recognise as the right of the common citizen.

We come to other directions in which the Crown in this modern age still claims a privilege I find hard to understand. Take bankruptcy administration in this State and the Commonwealth. We still have the archaic

privilege of the Crown to recover its debts in priority. When a bankrupt's estate is examined and he owes many citizens and the Crown, the Crown holds out its greedy hand and takes everything till it is satisfied; until the Crown is satisfied nothing is available to the common citizen. By what principle, in an age in which we uphold the freedom of the citizen, is the Crown privilege or prerogative of priority in bankruptcy administration defensible? I cannot see it.

**Mr. Collins:** The whole is greater than the part. The whole of the citizens are a greater power than any citizen.

**Mr. HILEY:** We could spend a lot of time theorising on that. My concern is to show the multitude of directions in which the citizen of today is fighting an actual privilege of the State. I suggest that these privileges have reached the point when in Parliament, representative of free people who are willing to uphold the rights of free citizens, some voice should be raised to protest against this new tyranny developing largely under our very eyes.

We know other directions in which the Crown claims privilege. In the Landlord and Tenant Regulations that came in during the war another example is to be found. These regulations were laid down—and properly so—to direct the rentals that it would be permissible for a landlord to charge.

The regulations sought to stop inflationary tendencies of the rental levels in common use. But what do we find? We find in several places throughout Australia the Crown taking advantage of the fact that it was not bound by its own laws, that whereas the Landlord and Tenant Regulations apply to the citizen they apply to no property held by the State.

We find the same argument in relation to price-fixing regulations. With a regulation in force that provides that no second-hand article can be sold at a price higher than 75 per cent. of the new value, we have the spectacle of Crown property being sold at disposal sales for prices substantially in excess of the original cost. Again we have the argument that these regulations did not apply to the Crown, that they were only meant for the consumption of the subject. On what principle is this aggregation of privilege based compared with, as I see it at all times, the most magnificent creature in all our conception—the individual citizen?

There are other examples. The Re-establishment and Employment Act was passed by the Commonwealth Government on the heels of the Queensland Act giving preference to ex-servicemen and provided for preference to returned service men and women. There have been instances where it has been discovered on the clear facts that the Commonwealth Government have failed to obey their own laws. We find in 1946 advocates for the Crown openly arguing the principle that the King can do no wrong. We have not gone very far in our conception of the freedom of the subject when such a doctrine can be argued in such a generation.

Returning to the Governor's Speech, we find very nicely worded expressions of sympathy conveyed to the relatives and dependants of those people who suffered so grievously in that dreadful railway disaster, but if there is any sincerity in this Parliament and if there is any meaning behind those words of sympathy of the Government, then this privileged position of the Crown that enables it to lay down a difficult formula of procedure and a limitation on the amount of damage cannot be sustained side by side with any genuine expression of sympathy. Were the victims of that accident less subject to pain than the ordinary citizen because it happened to be a State-owned engine that was responsible for the damage? Are the dependants of those people able to be clothed with less and eat less?

**Mr. Duggan:** What do you mean by saying that a State-owned engine was responsible for the damage? Do you mean the locomotive itself?

**Mr. HILEY:** No, I did not intend to convey that. What I meant was a State-owned train and the handling of it. I take it there is no intention on the part of the Minister to suggest other than that it was some mishandling of the train that was responsible for the accident. The thing that should determine the measure of the State's responsibility is the measure of the damage sustained, and there should be no statutory formula permitting that damage to be whittled down or denied simply because some careful procedure laid down in an Act of Parliament has not been followed or because the amount of damage happens to exceed a figure that was laid down in any case many years ago, and, at no time I would suggest, was defensible. Recovery of damage for negligent conduct of any operation is one of the most valuable parts of the common law of this land, but the State has elected to take privilege for itself and say that because it is the State and has the power to legislate it will put itself in a more favourable position than a common citizen. Reviewing that clause of the Governor's Speech, there is just cause for us, if we have any remaining regard for the rights of that prince of the community, the common citizen, to do something to correct that great anomaly.

**Mr. THEODORE (Herbert) (12.45 p.m.):** At the outset I join with other hon. members in extending my congratulations to Mr. Speaker upon his re-election. Like those other hon. members, I appreciate the importance attaching to decisions made by Mr. Speaker and I realise that it is our duty to co-operate with him and do everything possible to help him in the discharge of the duties of his high and important office.

I desire also to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. Both hon. members made worthy contributions to the debate and displayed a great knowledge of their electorates, together with the desire to do all they can in this Parliament in the best interests of the people whom they represent and to concentrate on the matters essential

for the defence, progress, and development of Queensland.

I congratulate the Government upon carrying out their policy in appointing Sir John Lavarack as Governor of this State. Sir John Lavarack is a Queensland native and I believe that his appointment meets with the approval of all hon. members on both sides of the Chamber and I am confident that no-one will have cause to regret that an Australian has been accorded this high honour. We know that in the past there has been considerable opposition to the appointment of an Australian-born citizen, many people arguing that no Australian could fill the position properly, but I feel that with the appointment of Sir John Lavarack all members of the community are satisfied. His Excellency has shown a keen interest in our State and a desire to obtain a full knowledge of Queensland and her people. He proved this by visiting various parts of the State recently.

Notwithstanding the difficult problems with which it has had to contend during and since the war years, the Labour Party won its sixth successive victory in Queensland at the recent elections. Many practices and a good deal of misrepresentation were indulged in by our opponents. The people wisely put their trust in the Labour Party, knowing that it was the only party competent to form a Government from within its own ranks, the only party that had a definite policy to submit.

I take this opportunity of thanking the returning officer in my electorate for the way in which he carried out his duties. I have no cause whatever for complaint. I have contested four elections and on no occasion have I seen anything wrong. Like other hon. members, I have received statements that certain people appeared to have voted twice, but on investigation it has been shown that people of the same name and living in another part of the electorate have merely exercised their right to a vote at some other booth.

The election, so far as I was concerned, was conducted cleanly and I think that that is how all elections should be conducted, if possible. There is nothing more degrading or deplorable than to see a campaign of personal abuse, which gets no-one anywhere and gains nothing for anybody.

When I say that certain methods were employed in the campaign in my electorate I do not cast reflections on the candidates opposing me, but I am referring to the methods adopted by certain people who went amongst the electors and informed them that they were paying too much in taxation and that they were being robbed by the Government. These people said, "If you vote for the Country Party, you will have your taxation reduced." That is the kind of propaganda I take exception to. That sort of thing was told to electors and particularly to the foreign voters whom such people ordinarily despise. I have heard these people in places where it did not matter denouncing and decrying these foreigners, the very people whose votes they tried to get by telling lies.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Are those the only stories you heard?

**Mr. THEODORE:** The hon. member has only bullocks to talk to in his electorate, whereas we have people. Labour's success at the polls is a tribute to leadership and its steadfast determination to serve the people in this State during the extremely difficult war period and the immediate post-war period.

**Mr. Sparkes:** How does your majority compare?

**Mr. THEODORE:** It is a substantial majority and nobody has a chance of defeating me in that electorate.

The Government and the Labour movement realised during the war that the post-war period would introduce an era of great economic and social changes. No-one can tell what form the changes will take. Now, a matter of two years after the cessation of hostilities, the political and economic outlook of the world is uncertain. The Labour Party in Australia has, over the years, withstood attacks of organised opposition and powerful soul-destroying influences that are represented in the Opposition in this House. The objective of the Labour Party is to obtain for the wage-earner economic and social justice, which was previously denied to him. There are many in this House today who are conversant with conditions that existed in years gone by and they must realise the tremendous benefits that have been conferred on the common people. In the times I refer to, people suffered the agony of unemployment, they knew the trials of destitution and starvation, they were brought down to the lowest depths of degradation by the very people who condemn Labour and what it stands for. Those are things we must not forget. Hon. members opposite would like us to forget those times but we cannot forget them, nor will we forget them. It is because of the conditions that obtained in those days that the Commonwealth Government are taking steps to provide against their recurrence and we, as representatives of the working class, are determined to play our part to see that they do not recur.

At the present time there are few unemployed in Australia, whereas in pre-war years unemployment was one of our most serious problems. The Government have shown their determination to eliminate the causes of unemployment so far as it is humanly possible. In this comparatively young and fertile country there should be no unemployment; nothing is more distressing or demoralising than the spectre of unemployment. Despite the fact that there are work and opportunities for all today, it is our bounden duty as the representatives of the people to take such steps as will guard their future.

The Governor's Speech reveals the intention of the Government to proceed vigorously with certain public works that will provide employment for our own people and for an increased number of immigrants who will make their homes in Queensland under the migra-

tion schemes. When these plans are carried out they will add enormously to the wealth production of the State.

Of course, there are many obstacles in the way and the reasons are plain why they have not proceeded at a faster rate than they have. Those hindrances are beyond our control. The Queensland Government, in common with other Governments, are experiencing great difficulty in removing these difficulties, but we are doing our best. The Government are condemned because houses are not being built at a faster rate and because building materials are not more readily available. I know how that affects the agricultural industry and the sugar industry in particular. I know what the people engaged in the sugar industry went through during the war years and are still contending against. But these are forces over which we have no control and they will continue until they can be rectified.

We have heard a good deal of talk about what should be done and will be done, and I have often myself suggested great undertakings that should be launched, but the time has arrived when words should be transferred into action. It is action that we want, and that is the aim of the Government. We are not waiting to be directed from an outside hand; we know what is required. We know that the great plans that have been made must be put into action as soon as possible.

**Mr. Sparkes:** A great deal of material is available in New South Wales and other parts of the Commonwealth.

**Mr. THEODORE:** But the lack of shipping has been one of our great problems—it has been very difficult indeed to transfer material to where it is required, and nothing is more heartrending to people in agricultural industries who require such materials to enable them to continue to produce than to be told that it is not available. The trouble is that there are not enough ships to bring it from the South. There are many reasons why the material cannot be made available, but the Government are not Mandrakes, they cannot do the impossible. However, we are doing our best.

At 2.15 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

**Mr. THEODORE:** Despite anything that may be said to the contrary the promotion and welfare of the sugar industry has been the special care of successive Labour Governments in Queensland. All sections of the industry have both realised and acknowledged this fact. All the progressive legislation affecting the production and marketing of sugar was enacted by a Labour Government. They provided not only for the protection of the growers but for improved rates and conditions for those working in the industry. It is impossible to deny that the Labour Governments have had the welfare of the industry, both the growers and the workers, at heart during the various periods they have administered the affairs of this State. Leaders of the industry in both organisations have from

time to time expressed their appreciation of the services rendered to the industry by the Government.

In this connection I would refer particularly to the representations that have been made to the Commonwealth Government and at times to sugar interests overseas, and to that time when the Hon. W. Forgan Smith, as Premier of Queensland, at the request of the leaders of industry at a time when it was in a parlous condition, went overseas and placed the case for the industry in this State before the international sugar interests, and at the same time attended to the disposal of our surplus production. His efforts were of great benefit to all the people directly and indirectly concerned with the industry. The industry is very efficiently organised, a fact that redounds to the credit of the men engaged in it.

A careful review of any modern industry reveals convincing proof that the application of science has greatly improved its productive capacity and that as the years progress the practical application of academic research is ever on the improve. This is true of the sugar industry, not only in the agricultural sense but in the milling and refining phases. That has all played its part in the present set-up of the industry. Before the war there was a world-wide over-production of sugar. This necessitated a lowering of production costs in order that we could continue to compete on the world's markets. All those engaged in every branch of the industry, and their organisations, recognised that if the industry was to survive and be able to produce sugar for sale overseas at competitive prices, they would have to improve their methods. They employed all the means within their power, and they went to a great deal of trouble to meet the conditions that were continually arising. There have been improvements in the mill in the way of increased extraction of sugar from the cane on the one hand and increased recovery of bagged sugar from the extracted juice on the other hand. These things are responsible for bringing about a great deal of the efficiency that exists in the mill today.

In modern mills the increase in crushing rate is from 50 to 100 tons an hour. I can quote an instance of the Tully mill, which was built to crush 50 tons an hour, but it is capable of crushing over 13,000 tons a week, which is over 100 tons an hour. Besides being able to do that and contrary to the expectations of various authorities, it has been able to maintain and actually improve its coefficient of work. The trouble today is that although a high stage of efficiency had been reached up to the time the war broke out we find we are not now crushing at an economic rate. Today, instead of crushing 100, 110 or 112 tons an hour, we are crushing about 50 tons an hour. Tully is doing 5,000 tons a week instead of 13,000 because of the shortage of labour and the inadequate cane supply.

Yesterday I received letters from my district, and the writers told me they feared they would have great difficulty in getting the present crop off, although it is a very

light one. It is estimated that they will crush about 200,000 tons of cane. At one time that would be a simple job and would be done in about 22 weeks under normal conditions. Today all cane is burnt. We have a large number of inexperienced young cane-cutters in the area, and when the rains came on many of these men left; they can get work elsewhere. This condition of affairs has accentuated the crushing problem.

**Mr. Pie:** Have you any idea how much the extra cost is?

**Mr. THEODORE:** The cost has risen considerably owing to the low crushing rate. It increased about 35 per cent., I think. Those are the things the industry has to contend with, and they are not generally known.

The introduction of modern machinery into the field has played a very important part in the industry. Rigid control of cane diseases and the introduction of disease-resistant varieties under the supervision of the Bureau of Experiment Stations, which is supported by a levy from the growers and millers, has had good results.

**Mr. Macdonald:** The growers have no say in the matter.

**Mr. THEODORE:** They have all the say they desire.

That has saved the industry from being wiped out by the ravages of cane diseases. It was very essential work and the growers in their common sense realise it was necessary to have rigid control in order to prevent the spread of cane diseases. All these things have brought the industry to a very high state of efficiency under normal conditions but unfortunately these do not obtain today. As I have stated, the crushing rate of the Tully mill has declined and the cost of production has considerably increased. The most unfortunate thing is that the position is becoming worse owing to the lack of labour and the inability to work on anything like economic conditions. Last year the industry experienced the worst drought in its history, at any rate in the area north of Townsville. That had a very damaging effect and caused great loss to last year's crop. It is having a very serious effect on the present season also.

There are people who believe the industry to be in a wonderful position because of the high export price, a price that was previously unheard of. The export price of sugar today is higher than the home-consumption price, yet many farmers will find it very difficult to meet their commitments. Having regard to the important role the sugar industry played in the defence of the nation and its economic structure, it is necessary that that structure be preserved and I believe the Commonwealth Government will have no hesitation on this occasion in acceding to the request that the delegation visiting Canberra to put their case before the Government will make because all the factors they will be able to present to the Commonwealth Government will warrant a restoration of the half-penny a lb.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Do you mean that it will be belated recognition?

**Mr. THEODORE:** I shall have something to say on that. The sugar industry is the only industry in Australia that during the war did not receive for some reason or another some kind of financial aid from the Government.

**Mr. Pie:** Why was that?

**Mr. THEODORE:** I will endeavour to outline what occurred. All the industry received was a small amount by way of a railway concession on fertiliser and a small sum of money to help build extra storage sheds required to store sugar at the mill when the shipping position was difficult during the war. That is all it got. I make no apology and I have never done so—when assailed during the election campaign at different times—for supporting the claim made by the sugar industry for some recognition and particularly for the restoration of the half-penny per lb.

**Mr. Pie:** Why was it not done?

**Mr. THEODORE:** Why was it not done? Because of Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden. That was why it was not done. I can tell the hon. member that during the ten years when Lyons, Menzies and Fadden were in power, no representations were made to them for either an increase or a restoration of the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb.

I am sorry that those hon. members opposite who represent sugar areas are not present, because I wish to refer to some of the statements made by the hon. member for Mirani. He complained of the present constitution of the Sugar Board. The Sugar Board comprises a chairman, one representative of the millers and one representative of the growers. It was established under the Sugar Acquisition Act of 1923. Its functions are to negotiate annually contracts with the C.S.R. and Millaquin companies, which act as agents for the Queensland Government for the financing, refining and distribution of sugar and also arrange for the shipping. The objection to the Government nominee of recent years emanates from certain members of the industry who, although they claim to represent the industry, represent only a section of it. They are complaining because they want to have a say in who should be appointed to the Sugar Board.

**Mr. Heading:** Why should they not have a say?

**Mr. THEODORE:** They have the same say as anyone else.

**Mr. Heading:** Who appoints them?

**Mr. THEODORE:** The Government appoint them from the industry, and in making the appointments they have due regard to the welfare and best interests of the industry.

When these people who complain about the Sugar Board did have representatives nominated by the industry—I refer now to the days of Messrs. Powell and Innes—they

still complained and squealed, their complaint then being that they could not get all the information they wanted. It is my firm belief that they got all the information that it was possible and practicable to give them. It must be appreciated that the members of the Sugar Board will not give information if they are not satisfied that it is complete or final. No-one can convince me that the members of the Sugar Board are not honestly and earnestly trying to carry out their jobs in the best interests of the industry.

**Mr. Aikens:** The first time they disagree with Forgan Smith they will go off the board.

**Mr. THEODORE:** Mr. Forgan Smith did not appoint them to the board; the Government made the appointments, and that interjection by the hon. member is a reflection on the Government.

The hon. member for Mirani stated that because the sugar industry did not have the representatives on the board that it should have had, the jute subsidy was denied to it. He made the statement that the industry did not get the subsidy—

**Mr. Pie** interjected.

**Mr. THEODORE:** The hon. member for Windsor knows nothing about the subject. The fact remains that no matter who was on the board nothing better could have been done because it was the Commonwealth Government who decided who was to participate in the jute subsidy.

Another statement was made by the hon. member for Mirani to which I must refer, He discovered that during the war certain sugar was shipped from Sydney, the extra cost of which he said was charged to the industry. That statement is not correct, because sugar was railed from Sydney and the industry was charged the ordinary shipping rates and the Commonwealth Government paid the balance.

During the hon. member's speech the other day he referred to the increase in the home consumption of sugar, and the hon. member for Mundingburra interjected by asking if there was any increase, to which the hon. member for Mirani replied that there was. Then the hon. member for Mundingburra made the remark that he was glad that he, the hon. member for Mirani, had cleared up that question, because some hon. members on this side of the House might have been hazy on it. I think the only one hazy on the matter was the hon. member for Mundingburra.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I rise to a point of order. I did not say that some members on this side of the House were hazy on it. I said that some members on this side of the House would seize on that; my prognostication was correct, because the hon. member for Herbert has seized on it.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask that the hon. member for Herbert be allowed to complete his speech without further interruption.

**Mr. THEODORE:** I will state the home-consumption position. In 1940 the home consumption of sugar was 399,491 tons and that figure gradually increased to 463,088 tons in 1946. That figure is not yet complete and so it might be a little more. The increase in home consumption since 1940 has been approximately 64,000 tons.

**Mr. Pie:** Even with sugar rationing?

**Mr. THEODORE:** During those years a considerable amount of our sugar was used by service men, and of course that sugar was sold at export price. It must be remembered that there were numbers of service men in this country during the years in question, and notwithstanding the rationing there was a considerable increase in home consumption. On the other hand, the export figures show that in 1940 we exported 383,692 tons but that figure declined in 1945 to 205,453 tons. In 1946 it was 72,545 tons, and it is doubtful whether we shall reach 100,000 tons this year. The overseas price has increased. If the quantity of sugar for export is reduced it will have a material effect on the overall price paid to the growers.

I have not much of my time left but I want to repeat that the industry is fully justified in presenting a case to the Commonwealth Government for the restoration of  $\frac{3}{4}$  d. a lb. for sugar. The industry is entitled to some financial help, in common with other primary industries. I want to make it clear that I am not contending that the butter-producers did not deserve the financial help that they got from the Commonwealth Government but I want to make it equally clear that the sugar industry should have participated in some of the financial help too.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. LOW (Cooroora)** (2.41 p.m.): First of all I should like to join with other hon. members in extending my congratulations to His Excellency the Governor, Sir John Lavarack, on his appointment of Governor of Queensland. I wish him "the best." I congratulate you also, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to your high and honourable position. I extend my congratulations also to the hon. member for Brisbane on his appointment as Chairman of Committees.

I should like to place on record my grateful thanks to the people of Cooroora for electing me as their Parliamentary representative in this Chamber. I will do my best for them and for the State as a whole. The electorate of Cooroora was represented by Mr. H. F. Walker for 40 years. When he retired and made way for my entry into this Assembly he left with the honour, which he had enjoyed for many years, of being the father of the House and I look round this Chamber with interest to see just upon whom that honour can now be bestowed.

My people were pioneers on the North Coast, right back to the days of Cobb and Co., when there were no railways in that part of the State. I have lived in that district all my life and I am the first native-born

member of the district to represent the electorate of Cooroora in Parliament. I offered myself as a candidate for Parliament with a sincere intention of striving for a better deal for the primary producers and for the people generally in country areas who lack many of the amenities available in city constituencies, such as roads, electric light, and adequate water, which they richly and rightly deserve, and above all to strive for a new deal in education for country children.

I join with the Leader of the Country Party, the hon. member for Murrumba, in condemning the very bad state of the electoral rolls. Hon. members opposite have more or less failed to regard this matter in the serious light that it calls for but I want to say quite positively that the State electoral rolls are due for a clean-up. There are thousands of names on the rolls that should not be there; in short they are in an absolutely deplorable condition. During the last elections I sent electioneering literature enclosed in an addressed envelope to every elector in my area but to my great amazement when the elections were over 245 envelopes were returned unclaimed, marked "Deceased," "Left District," or "Unknown." I think that in itself is a sufficient condemnation of the rolls as they stand to warrant the Government in deciding to cleanse them.

The number of electors on the Cooroora roll is 10,708. Only 9,912 voted. The returning officer sent out Form 17 to over 870 electors who did not vote. As a result 271 of these names have, under section 63, been removed from the roll. The present practice makes it far too easy for a person to get on the roll. We have heard a great deal on the subject during the present debate. In the olden days the electoral machinery made it too hard for a person to get on the roll. Present methods make it too easy and lead to corrupt practices. The claim for enrolment or transfer or change of address made on Form B should provide for the applicant's signature to be witnessed by a justice of the peace, not by an elector as at present.

**Mr. Aikens:** What about a worker out in the bush?

**Mr. LOW:** At present justices of the peace are to be found all over the place. Therefore, there should be no hardship there. Form B could allow for many fictitious names to be placed on a roll and for an unscrupulous candidate to get someone to vote in the name of the person enrolled without being detected, as that would not be plural voting. I know a man who conducts a business in Queen Street, Brisbane, and lives in one of Brisbane's suburbs who got his name transferred to the Cooroora roll and described himself as a farmer. He is a Queen Street farmer.

In a sincere effort to do the right thing to get clean rolls, I intend to adopt a key roll and check the names of the people in my electorate from it. I would suggest to the Government, too, that they issue a quarterly supplement similar to what they did in the

recent election in order to enable anyone interested to check the erasures and new enrolments. That would not necessarily mean that the roll would have to be printed every three months, but on the other hand it would enable those who were willing to do the right thing to see that a roll in a particular electorate contained only those entitled to enrol. By the same token those not entitled to enrolment could be erased. In that way everything could be conducted fairly, squarely and above-board.

The residential qualifications of a voter should be increased from one to two months. A one-month qualification at a residential address is not sufficient.

I suggest also the abolition of the fee of 2s. 6d. chargeable for any objection. If I wanted to do the right thing, which I intend to do, in connection with the 245 names I alluded to previously, it would be necessary for me to lodge 2s. 6d. with each objection. Why should I, or any other person, be penalised because of his preparedness to help the authorities to remove from the roll the names of persons who were not entitled to be there? If the Government agreed with that suggestion the rolls would be much better than they are at present.

Closer co-operation is required between the registrar of deaths and the electoral authorities. There appears to be some weakness there at present. It is a good idea to appoint in each electorate, if possible, the clerk of petty sessions in the central town. He has the time and the staff to give the necessary attention to the work. It is appropriate that I should at this juncture pay a tribute to the returning officer of the Cooroora electorate, Mr. Schafer, the clerk of petty sessions at Nambour. He did a remarkably good job at the recent elections, and was courteous to all concerned. This is the earliest opportunity I have had in this House of paying him this tribute and thanking him for his services. If we are going to have clean politics, then let us have clean rolls.

Another matter that occurred in the recent election calls for some attention. I now refer to the Hon. H. A. Bruce, the Secretary for Public Instruction. I wish to lodge my objection to the reported utterances of this gentleman in opening the Labour Party's campaign in Cooroora at Nambour.

The hon. member for The Tableland is reported to have said—

"Had the electors of Cooroora returned a Labour representative years ago the development of this area would have been much further advanced. Roads from Montville to Nambour, Bli Bli to Nambour, Coolum to Yandina, would probably have been completed if Labour had been returned for Cooroora."

Now, Mr. Speaker, what does this statement mean? I interpreted it to mean—and the other electors did the same—that "if you do not vote Labour you know what to expect."

At a complimentary dinner held at Yandina on 25 June I gave these reported utterances of the hon. member for The Tableland

a bit of publicity and Mr. Bruce retaliated with a letter to the Nambour "Chronicle" of 8 July, 1947, in which he stated as follows concerning myself:—

"Mr. Low states that it would be his purpose to see that a fair proportion of public expenditure was meted out to Cooroora. There will be no necessity for Mr. Low to worry himself because the Government definitely sees that public money is spent in the best interests of the State as a whole, which of course includes Cooroora irrespective of whether it is represented in Parliament by a member of the Labour Party or anti-Labour Party."

**Mr. Bruce:** There is nothing wrong with that.

**Mr. LOW:** That sounds all right. I was waiting for the hon. gentleman to come in. This is what Mr. Spencer, the Labour candidate, said in the presence of the hon. member for The Tableland at the opening of the Labour Party campaign at Cooroora; this is what appeared in the Press—

"Mr. Spencer stressed the point that no money had been spent in the Cooroora electorate, with the result that the roads were in such a condition that it was almost impossible for the farmers to get to the railhead with their produce, especially after heavy rain. It was deplorable, he continued, that a town like Nambour should be without a water scheme, which was the first essential in progress. The railway station was a disgrace to the district, and did not impress the tourist on his arrival. As a member of the Nambour Rural School Committee, Mr. Spencer said that the conditions there were far below the high standards of efficiency that the school had attained. Classrooms were over-crowded and cloakrooms were converted into staff rooms. Ground floor classrooms were under water after heavy rains, and other conveniences were in a deplorable state. No. 1 priority should be given in the building of a new high school."

Mr. Spencer, the Labour candidate, was right. Cooroora has had a rotten deal by all Labour Governments in the past, and I hope Labour will mend its ways and give a better deal in the future.

**Mr. Gledson:** It was misrepresented by the Country Party.

**Mr. LOW:** We have heard enough of that. Now you have heard what I have to say and that is definite (laughter).

Our most important need today is production, more production, and still more production. Let us examine the reason for this lack of production. Crippling prohibitive taxation is the cause of the lack of production today. I was pleased to see that the honourable the Premier has at last shown a front to Mr. Chifley in connection with his intrusion into the affairs of this State. We find the Chifley Government are gradually white-anting and sabotaging the State system. Until we show a determined front to their intrusion into the affairs of the State we

shall not get the desired production we are entitled to. Here we find the incentive of everyone has been killed through this crippling and unnecessary taxation. It has killed the incentive in the primary producer, the working man, the professional man, and the business man. The primary producer, realising that he is being taxed so heavily, has reduced his production by half. That means that there are less commodities, higher prices and a black-market, which is detrimental to the primary producer and the working man in general. The increase in the basic wage is of no use whatsoever. It means that if you receive 5s., 7s. or 10s. extra you get into another tax grade and the cost of living goes sky-high. For that I blame the Labour Party. It has done nothing whatever to curb the increase in the cost of living.

We find that today the worker, whom the Labour Party claims to champion, is not in a position to buy a home of his own. Homes now cost over £1,000. Refrigerators have increased from £32 to £100. We must make a determined effort to bring down the cost of living. The only sensible way in the economy of the State in general is by way of a reduction in taxation and until the right to tax is restored to the State we cannot expect anything from Canberra, with its socialisation plans.

There is an industry in my electorate and throughout Queensland that has received a rotten and raw deal, in fact the worst of all, and that is the dairying industry. If anybody needs help today it is the people who are engaged in this industry. They have to make an all-in effort, husband, wife, and the family, all working. The other day I was absolutely astounded to hear the hon. member for Kelvin Grove say that he thought dairymen were getting a fair and just price today. I sincerely hope and trust that the hon. member was not the mouthpiece of the Labour Party when he made that statement, considering just what the dairyman has had to go through and what he is going through. Loans are of no use whatsoever. They are only a temporary palliative, as they must be paid back eventually. What the dairy people want is cost of production plus a margin of profit, and I hope every hon. member in this Chamber will join with the people in authority when the time comes to see that those engaged in the dairying industry get a better deal than they got in the past.

The committee on costs that sat in 1945 gave a decision that it cost at least 1s. 11½d. a lb. to produce butter. The British Government met their obligation at that price but the Australian Government did not. The costs committee sitting at present will give a decision at any time now, and I hope that the decision will ensure that the dairy farmer and all engaged in that industry will receive cost of production plus a reasonable margin of profit.

In all sincerity I say that I really think that hon. members on the Government benches, in order to be consistent with their desires and statements in the past of their preparedness to fight for those who are not getting a fair

deal, should fight now, because if anybody today is not receiving a fair deal it is the dairyman. When butter is placed on your table and you know that the butter has been bought at less than cost of production you should declare it black. That is the way I look at it. You know very well that the dairymen are not receiving the price to which they are entitled. We know the price is below cost of production, but what do we do about it? I hope we shall all join in the fight on behalf of the dairymen. I trust the committee referred to will give the dairymen a just price and a fair deal. They have not received it in the past.

To overcome the difficulty I would suggest the establishment of a primary production tribunal with a judge of the Supreme Court as president; a tribunal on similar lines to the Industrial Court to which the people engaged in primary production could submit a case for a just price. Not only the dairying industry, but all industries should have that right, and if such a tribunal decided that it cost so much to produce an article we should be willing to pay the corresponding price. We should not leave the producers high and dry, as we have done in the past.

I endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Mirani who supported the case for the restoration of  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a lb. in the price of sugar, which was taken off voluntarily by the industry in 1933. The present rising costs of production warrant the application made by the industry for the restoration of this small sum, and I sincerely hope that the overtures made recently to the Federal Government will be successful.

Mention has been made of the decentralisation of population. The four main factors governing the distribution of population are education, roads, light, and water. Previous speakers have dealt with roads, light, and water, and I wish to make a few comments on the need for better education facilities in country areas. The facilities provided for educating our children play a big part in the decision of the parent as to whether he should remain in the country or go to the city to give his children better education. We need improved educational facilities in country areas. We need bigger classrooms, light in all buildings, we need water and improved sanitary conditions.

Recently I made a survey of the schools in the Cooroora electorate and wish to refer in particular to the condition of the Tewantin school as to which we have had a good deal of correspondence with the Minister. On my visit there I found the playshed in a deplorable condition. It was an old shingle-roof building and at least 60 per cent. of the shingles had fallen off. I noticed on the veranda that most of the hat pegs were missing, with the result that school-bags and hats were strewn all over the floor. The classrooms were overcrowded, and some children were sitting on boxes. There was no water at the school and the headmaster informed me that there had been none there for four years. The fences were all broken down.

This is the type of school building we find at the popular seaside resort at Tewantin.

In order to overcome the difficulty, I suggest that the Premier give consideration to setting up a separate Works Department to be controlled by the Secretary for Public Instruction. He controls many public buildings and would have enough work to warrant the establishment of a special Works Department under his control. Such a system would be far better than the present method, under which the Secretary for Public Instruction makes recommendations and the Secretary for Public Works implements them.

There is great room for improvement in the rates of pay and conditions of work of country teachers. To my mind the time is ripe for the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the reason why so many resignations are taking place. I know that in the country areas teachers are not receiving enough remuneration to enable them to meet the present cost of living and take their proper place in society. In many country areas the schoolmaster or mistress is looked upon as Citizen No. 1.

If the school mistress, for instance, does not receive an adequate remuneration she is forced to depend on her parents so that she may do what is expected of her. Many of the young girls being sent out to country areas should get a better lift along than the department gives them.

I should like to say a word or two at this stage about the need for reducing the minimum daily attendance required by the department, which at present is too high; it should be reduced to seven, because in many instances country children are now being deprived of the benefits of an education to which they are entitled. I say most emphatically that many farmers are being forced to put their holdings on the market for sale for the reason that they cannot get the education they desire for their children. That is a deplorable state of affairs because education is one of the most important things in life, and if a child lacks education he is at once under a handicap.

I think that the allowance for the organised transport of children to schools of 8d. a mile for the smallest vehicle is far too little. In the Mary's Creek district a contractor who was taking children to school went on strike and in my opinion he has every reason for doing so. In 20 days he transported 364 children a distance of 400 miles for the paltry sum of £13 6s. 8d. The roads in that area are in a deplorable state and he has much hilly country over which to travel. I think that the rate should be 1s. a mile for children being transported to and from schools. The Government is not encouraging farmers to send their children to area schools and they are sending them to schools where the teacher has at least five classes to teach in a day.

I have a word to say in connection with free passes for children attending rural schools. Children travelling by rail from Eumundi and Palmwoods to Nambour get

free passes, but if children from Maroochy-dore and other outlying places travel by bus to the Nambour school their parents are expected to pay for their transport. That is clearly an imposition and does not subscribe to the idea of free education about which we hear so much.

I think that the Department for Public Instruction is overdoing the ground-improvement schemes because it expects school committees to undertake cementing, asphaltting, fencing, and drainage. That is not the purpose for which a school committee is elected. A school committee should do most of the minor jobs round a school but such jobs as I have mentioned are certainly jobs for the Department of Public Works. I am surprised that a Labour Government should ask farmers to do that class of work in their spare time. It is a wonder the unions do not attack them about it.

The road problem in country areas is certainly a serious one and the State Government are strangling local authorities with the ever-increasing commitments they are putting on them in connection with loans borrowed in the past. Very little road construction is taking place at the present time and it appears to me that there will be little construction for the next two or three years. When roads are constructed I submit that they should be sealed in order to save heavy maintenance costs later on.

Local authorities should be relieved of past indebtedness and in this connection I cite the Maroochy Shire Council. I think that the present Government are strangling that shire to such an extent that it will hardly have any money to spend on roads. Its obligations to meet its Main Roads Commission commitments and the tramway indebtedness are excessive.

The construction of main roads should be financed from registration fees and petrol tax, and when we read and hear of large sums of money being diverted annually from the petrol tax to Consolidated Revenue we can only say that it is a misappropriation of funds.

Let me tell hon. members something about the tramlines in the Maroochy Shire. The Premier knows all about them, I know, but the figures in relation to their indebtedness will be of interest to many other hon. members. The Buderim tramline was built on 1 July, 1916, by means of a loan for £34,348 13s. 4d. for 40 years at 4 per cent. The amount paid off the principal up to 30 June, 1947, was £14,098 9s. 5d., and the amount still owing is £20,300 3s. 11d. The annual interest and redemption payment is £1,331 8s. 6d. and the tramway was closed in August, 1935. Although it was closed down, the people in that district are still expected to pay for it.

Now I come to the Mapleton tramway. It was built on 1 July, 1917. The loan was £29,581 17s. 5d. for 40 years at 4 per cent., and the amount paid off the principal up to 30 June, 1947, was £17,489 18s. 2d., whereas the amount owing to 30 June last was £12,091 19s. 3d. The annual interest and

redemption payments amounted to £920 13s. 4d. The tramline was closed in December, 1944. However, the Maroochy Shire Council was also charged with the responsibility of maintaining roads in districts which these tramlines used to serve. At 30 June, 1947, an amount of £32,392 3s. 2d. was still owing by the Maroochy Shire Council for these two defunct tramlines, although an amount greater than the original loans had already been paid to the Government in interest and redemption. The Government have been approached on a number of occasions to wipe off this indebtedness, but without success.

Now let us see what the Government can do for the city interests—and this is an interesting comparison. In February, 1947, tolls on the Story Bridge were abolished and the bridge handed over to the Brisbane City Council. An amount of £750,000 was written off the capital cost of the bridge, and £1,808,978 was written off the capital cost of the Brisbane sewerage scheme. The annual saving in interest and redemption payments in the case of the Story Bridge is £37,500 and in the case of the Brisbane sewerage scheme £111,071. That means that the rest of Queensland will continue to contribute £89,000 per annum towards the annual cost of the Story Bridge and the Brisbane sewerage scheme. My point is that if the Government can wipe off £2,500,000 from the capital cost of the Story Bridge and the Brisbane sewerage scheme they can also wipe off the indebtedness on the two defunct tramlines in the Maroochy shire, especially as this indebtedness is really strangling the district and preventing it from progressing.

Now let me deal with the subject of transport, which is something more in my line. I am pleased that the Government are approaching the subject of road transport in a more sensible way than they have in the past, thereby enabling that form of transport to play a part in the field. I do not believe in unrestricted transport but a sound co-ordinated plan of rail, road, and sea transport. In passing I should like to pay a tribute to the railwaymen, who did an excellent job during the war years. When the restrictions that have been imposed on other forms of transport for the benefit of the railways are removed the railways will have to be prepared to meet road competition by modernising the carriages and rolling-stock generally. It will only be a matter of keeping abreast with present-day methods and requirements. If the railways do that they will be able to do a good transport job.

I think that the new Minister for Transport, Mr. Duggan, is carrying out his job very well. He is shaping very well indeed and I wish him "the best" in his new position.

I am not, however, very much impressed with the order for the Garratt engines. I should have preferred to see an order given for a similar number of engines of the B18½ type. They are the best engines of their class for both passenger and goods traffic. The position is not hopeless from the wagon point of view; the greatest trouble is experi-

enced in the lack of engine-power. We all know the position regarding the Garratt engines. The engine-power that the railways should be having the benefit of today is in the Garratt engines now lying idle at South Brisbane.

The goods classification is out of date and should be redrafted in order to meet competition and cater for present-day needs. It is clearly out of date and is having a crippling effect on the railways. I say that as one who has had much experience and I hope that it will be reviewed. The second-class traffic is what motor competition exists on. There must be a substantial reduction in second-class railway rates to meet that competition. The railways need reorganising and placing on a better footing, and all services require to be speeded up. The line between Caboolture and Gympie requires to be duplicated to accelerate both stock and goods trains. I should like to see that work carried out in preference to the electrification of our suburban railway system. It is an undertaking that is long overdue and one that would help the State. I suggest also that the Railway Department establish its own fleet of motor trucks at all principal stations to collect and deliver goods within a reasonable radius of a railway station. The issuing of return tickets between any two stations on any day during the week should be extended to the country, the same as is being done in the city.

The Government have announced their intention of introducing a 40-hour week in the railways. That is impossible. If the Government had concentrated on giving railway employees their annual leave they would have done a mighty job. Today nearly every officer has from two to four months' annual leave due and has no hope of getting it. We are faced with the problem of the introduction of a 40-hour week into the railways when the department cannot evolve a system whereby its employees can get the annual leave to which they are entitled.

Let me call attention to the effect of the increase in fares which has recently taken place. This is how they affect the country—

—		Old Fare.	New Fare.	Increase.
		s. d.	s. d.	Per cent.
1 mile	.. .. .	0 5	0 7	40
2 mile	.. .. .	0 6	0 8	34
3 mile	.. .. .	0 7	0 9	29
4 mile	.. .. .	0 10	1 0	20
5 mile	.. .. .	0 11	1 1	18
6 mile	.. .. .	1 0	1 2	17
7 mile	.. .. .	1 2	1 4	14
8 mile	.. .. .	1 4	1 6	12½

The effect of the recent 10 per cent. increase in rail fares is shown in the increase of the second-class single fare between Nambour and Brisbane from 8s. 6d. to 9s. 9d. This is equivalent of 15 per cent. increase. Seat tickets have gone up from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 6d., equivalent to an increase of 29 per cent. The price of second-class sleeping berths has increased from 5s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. a night, an increase of 18 per cent. The cost of first-class sleepers has increased from 15s. to 17s. a night, an increase of 13 per cent. Cloak-

room charges for one day on an article weighing 56 lb. and under have increased from 3d. to 5d., equal to 67 per cent. Platform tickets have increased from 2d. to 4d., an increase of 100 per cent. The rate on corpses has increased from 4d. to 6d. a mile, which is equivalent to 50 per cent. These are examples of how only some of the increases work out.

Let me give a comparison between suburban and country rail fares and how this increase has been apportioned. The second-class single fare from Brisbane to Taringa, a distance of 3 miles, costs 6d., whereas a second-class single fare from Nambour to Woombye, a distance of 3 miles, costs 9d. The increase in the country example is 50 per cent. The second-class return fare from Brisbane to Taringa is 7d., whereas there is no return fare between Nambour to Woombye, where travellers have to take out single fares both ways. This costs them 1s. 6d. The increase in that case works out at 157 per cent.

From Brisbane to Chelmer, 5 miles, second single costs 7d. and the same distance in the country 1s. 1d., representing a country increase of 86 per cent. Brisbane to Chelmer return is 9d. and for the same distance in the country the cost is 2s. 2d., representing an increase in the country of 189 per cent.

I have about exhausted my time. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. members, for the very patient hearing you have given me.

**Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay)** (3.21 p.m.): In making my contribution to the debate, Mr. Speaker, I desire to join previous speakers who offered congratulations to you on your retention of the Speakership. I feel satisfied that you have justly earned the position, following on your three years of office during the last session.

I desire also to congratulate the mover and seconder for their capable contributions to the debate; and to the other members of this Assembly who made their initial speeches I offer my congratulations also.

The appointment of Sir John Lavarack as Governor of Queensland was, I believe, appreciated by the people of Queensland. As one who has advocated the appointment of local or Australian-born people to this position, I feel that the appointment of Sir John Lavarack has met with the approval of the majority of the people. On his visit to North Queensland one could glean from the remarks he made that he had a great knowledge of his native State and had a fervent desire to assist in the development of this wonderful State. I think all hon. members will agree that we have a wonderful State.

After listening to some speeches from the Opposition benches, one would be more or less influenced to think that we are in a state of the doldrums, that we are going downhill and going fast because we have not a Government controlled by the Country Party or the Q.P.P. It would appear the Opposition members cannot accept the fact they have been defeated at the elections, nor can they accept the fact that the Labour Government for many years have done remarkable work. Members opposite continually criticise the

Government and find fault with their activities and forecast that we shall eventually end up in chaos because the people have put a Labour Government back into power. Every member who has spoken from the Opposition side has expressed his consciousness of his responsibility as a member of this Assembly. If they are conscious of that responsibility I would ask them to accept it and try to instil in the minds of the people a confidence in government instead of trying to engender in them a distrust of government, which will eventually bring disaster to this State.

I believe the Government, being the highest authority in this land, should receive recognition for the good things they do, and by the same rule it is just to criticise them for the things that are wrong. I believe constructive criticism should be the basis of the Opposition attack. We find they have continually attacked this Government and the Commonwealth Government on matters of legislation but they cannot bring proof that that legislation was detrimental to the welfare of the people of Queensland and the Commonwealth in general. I say they are doing a disservice to the nation and a disservice to their own people by their continual criticism of the Government. If they recognise their responsibility to the State and its people, for goodness sake let them try to bring forth some constructive criticism that will help this Government and the Commonwealth Government in handling the affairs of State.

We are now entering our third year of peace and although we can say we have done remarkably well in the change-over we are still faced with some very difficult problems, and irrespective of the Government in power the Government of today will have much difficulty in handling the problems confronting us. The Labour Party, during the years it was in control of the Federal benches during the war, did a remarkably good job, and I believe that this Labour Government, with whom I am happy to be associated, can take great credit for the part they played in helping the Federal Government in the war effort. The Labour Government in power today, with the legislation forecast and that which they have placed on the statute-book during the last three years, will be doing the right thing by the State of Queensland. During the past few years we have seen many changes in our economy, and in the next few years we shall face many difficulties that will call for careful and efficient government. Many of the problems are the aftermath of war and I know that we, the people of Queensland, have sufficient initiative to deal with them. Queensland is in the forefront of the Commonwealth, and we in this State, together with the people of Australia, have a wonderful heritage. Australia is the best country in the civilised world. That is accepted as true by all people, and I believe that we in Queensland today are living under conditions comparable with those of any other section of the civilised world, and that is so because the Governments who have controlled the Treasury benches for many years have given to the people that to which they are entitled. The improvement in the living standards and

conditions that Queenslanders enjoy is attributable to the administration and the legislation of the Queensland Labour Governments. Much has been done, but much remains to be done, and although I agree with many of the statements of hon. members who have spoken about the increase in production that is necessary, there are other matters that must be attended to in the interests of the future welfare of this State.

Much has been said about housing, but although the problem is still difficult there has been a general improvement in the building of homes and providing the people with accommodation. I know that perhaps home-building has not proceeded as it should have, but I think we have done remarkably well. I have no desire to take from the private contractors any credit for the part they have played in the home-building programme throughout the State, nor do I wish to hear criticism being hurled at the State Housing Commission for the very important part it has played in the matter. The Government also have played their part in imposing through the Bureau of Industry the necessary restrictions to help towards this end. Criticism has been levelled at the Government because of the retention of the restrictions, but I would ask critics of the Government and the State Housing Commission what would have occurred had these restrictions been lifted. I believe that it has been only by the retention of these controls that such progress with housing has been possible.

Private enterprise has played and will continue to play an important part in housing the people but in the Mackay area in particular the private contractors have not played fair with the Housing Commission or the Government in that at the beginning of the Commission's activities there it was impossible to get any contractor to submit a tender for the erection of homes. It was only after repeated attempts that we were successful in getting one contractor to build homes for the Housing Commission. The private contractors found that they could ask higher prices when building privately than they could submit in tenders to the Housing Commission. I admit that the position has eased now and that more homes are being built for the Commission by the various contractors, but while the Housing Commission has done a particularly good job in providing homes for the people throughout the State, I repeat that the private contractors in Mackay in particular did not play fair at the beginning.

The Government have been criticised for not investigating the high cost of houses. I have stated previously here that an investigation is needed because I do not believe that these high prices can be attributed solely to higher wages or improved conditions; neither do I believe that they can be attributed solely to the increased cost of building materials. I suggest that if an investigation was made it would be found that other factors are keeping prices high. At present, with homes costing anything from £1,100 to £1,200, it is impossible for a worker to undertake the

responsibility of entering into an agreement to buy a home because if he does he will be paying it off for the rest of his life.

Another important factor is that the materials used in home-construction are not of the desired quality. Much of the timber is green and a good deal of it is of inferior quality. Perhaps one reason why contractors avoid entering into contracts with the Housing Commission is that they can use second-grade timber when erecting homes privately and charge first-grade prices for it.

I have also suggested previously that consideration should be given to the establishment of a cement works in North Queensland. In past years houses in the North were constructed almost completely of timber, whereas today cement, fibro-cement, brick and plaster are being used. This is mainly because of the inferior quality and scarcity of timber. It must be admitted that green timber does not make a good house.

At 3.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Mann, Brisbane) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** People are increasingly using concrete and cement plaster for home construction, and I believe that the building of a cement works in North Queensland would provide people with the means of using cement in the structure of their homes. If we look at the use of cement in North Queensland we can readily understand what a valuable asset a cement works would be. I have no definite figures, but I should say that the cement used in North Queensland over a 12 months' period would be approximately 20,000 to 30,000 tons. At present all that cement is manufactured in the South, and as far down as Victoria, and it has to be shipped or railed to the North. With freight charges the cost in the North is very heavy. We have unlimited supplies of raw material in the North—I say unlimited advisedly—for the manufacture of cement. I cannot understand why private enterprise has not undertaken this work. We have heard much criticism of Government interference in industry, but there is certainly an opportunity in North Queensland for any ambitious company to undertake the development of the cement industry. I cannot understand why nothing has been done. I make the suggestion that the Government undertake this work, because this would be an industry that would pay for itself, and at the same time render a good service to the people of North Queensland.

Reference has been made of the State Transport Commission and its activities, and at this juncture I congratulate the Government on the appointment of Mr. Anderson as Commissioner, of Mr. Riding as Deputy Commissioner, and Mr. Manning as secretary. I believe that nothing but good can come of the work of the Commission, because each of those three gentlemen has had extensive experience and they are men of ability. I have no doubt in my mind that the work of the State Transport Commission will be carried out efficiently, and we shall see the

Act that was recently passed implemented as it should be and the various parts of Queensland will as a result benefit.

Transport, as the previous speaker mentioned, vitally concerns the people in the out-back parts of this State. I believe that too much money has been spent in the metropolitan area on roads and insufficient has been spent on the country areas. The development of many of the country areas today is being handicapped by the lack of good roads, and there is ample opportunity for the Commission to undertake valuable work in the north of Queensland in this matter. Good roads are essential to the primary producer, essential to the welfare of the country people, and I make an earnest appeal to the Government to improve the roads in country areas. Whilst Mackay is not badly served—it is not actually a rural area—many of the roads in the Mackay area could be rebuilt or metalled or sealed with bitumen. Because of excessively wet seasons in the North it does not take long for a road to be cut to pieces if it has not been properly built.

Splendid work has been done by the State Electricity Commission also and I thoroughly endorse the opinions of other speakers concerning the need and the value of electricity extensions throughout the State. Electricity is essential, not only in the home but also on the farm. It makes for efficient farming and for development generally. The further extension of the activities of the Commission will be watched with great interest by all concerned. The Government were very wise in establishing regional electricity boards for the extension and development of electricity facilities throughout the State.

The Bureau of Investigation set up in the Department of Public Lands 12 months or so ago to investigate irrigation possibilities has already done much good work and its reports in the future will be eagerly awaited. I am satisfied that it will furnish us with excellent information. Irrigation is of the utmost importance to rural areas in that it is essential for the development of the primary industries. I know the value that irrigation would be for the production of sugar-cane in my own electorate. In the past we have had to depend upon natural rainfall but over the past two years sugar production in that area has seriously declined on account of drought, whereas if irrigation had been available we should have been able to maintain our production level and perhaps increase it.

Much has been said about Empire preference, which has been a great help to the sugar industry of Queensland, and it will be agreed that it is essential for the continuance of that industry. Since it has been in operation the sugar industry of Queensland has benefited to the extent of £25,000,000 and so I urge the Governments, both State and Federal, to do everything possible to see that Empire preference for the sugar industry is retained. If it was removed, our sugar production would be restricted to the requirements for Australian consumption and that would mean that our present production would have to be

cut by about half. Without Empire preference it would be impossible for us to export sugar and sell it profitably at world export price. This industry is of the utmost importance to Queensland and so Empire preference will have to be retained in order that it may be protected and encouraged.

There are other matters affecting the sugar industry of Queensland that may be considered during the international trade talks at Geneva. While there is no reason to believe that they will have any immediate effect on the embargo that is an important asset to the industry, that will have to be carefully watched and closely guarded.

The embargo, like Empire preference, means a big thing to the industry. Whilst the price of sugar remains at its present level and production can be maintained there is little chance of the embargo being affected, but with a reduction in price and a reduction in production it is quite possible that the embargo may be interfered with. It behoves the Government of today to try to maintain both the embargo and Empire preference.

Many hon. members doubtless read the statement attributed to Senator Armstrong, which appeared in one of our local newspapers recently, in which it was stated that he was going north to see for himself whether it was possible to admit more Italians into the sugar industry. As a representative of a sugar electorate, I do oppose any suggestion that more Italians be absorbed into the industry. There are not many Italians in the Mackay district, but I believe there are many in the northern sugar districts. If there is room in the industry for more growers than at present, then additions to the industry must be restricted to Australians. We have thousands of Australians who today are prepared to enter the industry and undertake both cane-cutting and cane-growing if given the opportunity. We shall find that there is no great shortage of cutters at present in the North.

**Mr. Jesson:** They are 200 short in my electorate.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** That may be so; I am referring to Mackay. We experienced little difficulty in the past in finding cutters for the industry, and we had cutters before the Italians came here.

**Mr. Jesson:** We have had to employ blackfellows.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. GRAHAM:** That was during the war years. If any more people are to be admitted into the industry, then the admissions should be restricted to Australians. I will oppose the introduction of any aliens into the industry. Australia has done a good job in developing the industry under white-labour conditions. We must retain that principle. Senator Armstrong "spoke out of his turn" when he said Italians should be introduced into the industry. I am not prejudiced against Italians, but as there is such a demand by Australians to be admitted

into the industry they must have preference. Hundreds of returned soldiers are today denied entry into the industry because of the restrictions that exist; therefore if there are to be more admissions into it, they should receive the first chance. There is room for expansion in the industry. If we could get a larger overseas quota, what is there to stop us from increasing production by from 80,000 to 100,000 tons?

Much has been said about the decline in our Western population. Opinions are varied on that point. One hon. member this morning said it was not a fact that the population in rural areas had declined, whereas another hon. member said it had. I believe that there has been a general decline in population, not so much in our farming areas as in our western areas.

The latter is the part of Queensland with which I am most closely concerned. We find the whole of our coast belt from Brisbane to Cairns enjoys a particularly good climate, and it is fairly closely settled. We have industries established throughout the whole of the coast belt and living conditions are congenial and pleasant, consequently we find the population has increased. But what of the western areas? I have taken out a few figures but I will not weary the House with many of them. I do not know why the western areas are declining in population. I believe that unless this Government do something definite for the development of our western areas, in a few years' time we shall not have a western area. The following table of figures is interesting:—

Town.	Population.	
	1941	1945
Charleville .. ..	3,555	3,400

**Mr. Sparkes:** How much has it gone ahead?

**Mr. GRAHAM:** It has gone down.

**Mr. Sparkes:** That is not according to the hon. member for Carnarvon.

At 3.51 p.m.,

**Mr. SPEAKER** resumed the chair.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** I must disagree with the hon. member for Carnarvon. I think the hon. member was referring to the farming areas; I am talking of the western areas. The figures continue—

Town.	Population.	
	1941	1945
Longreach .. ..	4,700	4,500
Winton .. ..	2,700	2,600
Cloncurry .. ..	6,300	6,100
Boulia .. ..	614	379
Diamantina .. ..	196	150
Croydon .. ..	256	220

Some of these figures, although small, show a big percentage of drift of western population. Take the whole of the western part of the State from Charleville to Croydon and we find that apart from the Mount Isa Mines, we have nothing but the pastoral industry to keep a population going.

I admit that I am at a loss to know how industry can be stimulated in the western areas in order to attract more people to them.

**Mr. Kerr:** A lower rate of taxation.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** I doubt whether that would encourage the people to stay out there. The prime factor in the decline of western population is our climatic conditions. People do not like the hot western areas and they come to a more congenial climate. Other factors are responsible for the decline—previous speakers mentioned them—lack of amenities, such as educational facilities, water and electric light, that would help to make life in the West more congenial. People are not satisfied to remain in the West and put up with the conditions there, consequently they are coming away, and unless something definite is done and some encouragement is given to them, unless we try to improve conditions in the West we shall find a continual decline in our western population.

I want now to make a few references to Blair Athol, which has been the subject of a good deal of discussion. The future of Blair Athol vitally concerns Mackay, which I represent, so I may be privileged to make a few comments about the development of that area. Blair Athol coalfield was discovered 80 or 85 years ago.

Over that period little development took place. Today two mines are operating and at the present time production is on the increase. A movement is afoot to intensify development and certain proposals have been made by certain people. It should be well known that some 12 or 18 months ago an agitation was set up in Mackay for the building of a railway line from Blair Athol to Mackay. We at Mackay believed that for the future development of that field it would be necessary for a railway line to be constructed to the coast to give the field access to port facilities. Immediately that agitation was started, whether it was merely coincidence or not, the Commonwealth Government came in with assistance for the development of the field. However, I contend that the agitation that started in Mackay some two years ago has been responsible for the interest that is now being shown in Blair Athol. And it is necessary for a railway line to be constructed from Blair Athol to the coast. Therefore I may be permitted to make the suggestion that the line be built to Mackay, because at Mackay are to be found the port facilities necessary to handle an increased production from the field and Mackay is as close to it as is any other port.

**Mr. Sparkes:** It must be got to the seaport.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** Yes, and the port of Mackay has great claims in that respect. It has been said that Mackay wants all the plums for itself, but that is not true; we are quite willing to help in the development of Blair Athol and give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

One of the first factors to be considered is the establishment of industry on the field

but with the quantity of coal at Blair Athol I believe that until the export trade is developed the field will never be developed to the degree to which it should. There are unlimited supplies of coal; that is unquestionable. I believe the field is capable of producing up to 3,000,000 tons of coal per annum and no one port could handle that quantity and therefore my suggestion to the Government is this: build a railway line from Blair Athol to Mackay and connect that line with Collinsville. That would give five ports from which the coal could be exported: Bowen, Mackay, Gladstone, Port Alma and Rockhampton. Recently an agitation was started in Rockhampton based on the claim that it should have its share of the trade. Good luck to Rockhampton! I believe that the Blair Athol field is big enough to provide shipping tonnages for the five ports mentioned. With the right approach to the needs of Blair Athol it could produce up to 3,000,000 tons of coal per annum and Bowen, Mackay, Port Alma, Gladstone and Rockhampton could all share in the export of the coal.

Moreover, a railway line from Mackay to Blair Athol would open up very attractive country. The unlimited mineral and timber resources in that area require only the provision of transport for development.

**Mr. Sparkes:** And it is good grazing country.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** That is so and until such a line is built that country will lie dormant, as it has lain for the past 100 years.

While I am not at present opposed to the English company, because I do not know sufficient about it, I believe that the wealth of the country belongs to the nation and not to the private individual, and if the Blair Athol wealth is to be developed—not exploited—then this State should do it. That wealth belongs to the people of this State and the Commonwealth and if an outside company that is fortunate enough to have £16,000,000 in its pocket is to be given the right to exploit—and "exploit" means many things, including taking the good out of the field—what value will the nation get out of it? I think the responsibility for the development of Blair Athol, which is a national asset, rests on the Government and the field should be developed and exploited for the benefit of the people of Queensland and Australia.

As yet, nobody knows what coal lies beneath the ground between Blair Athol and Collinsville. From the little information we have of the area, it would seem that there is unlimited coal there. At Walker's Creek, just outside Nebo, there are coal seams that are said to be 40 feet in depth, and I feel confident that there is a tremendous area of coal-bearing country between Blair Athol and Collinsville that could be developed if a railway line was constructed from Mackay to Blair Athol and from Blair Athol to Collinsville.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. LUCKINS** (Maree) (4.1 p.m.): At the outset I wish to congratulate the new hon. members of this Assembly on their approach to the problems of the State. They have contributed something to the welfare of our people. And I congratulate you, Mr. Brassington, upon your re-election to the high office of Speaker.

I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without extending congratulations to His Excellency, Sir John Lavarack. He spent most of his young days in the area I represent, and it is gratifying to know that we have a man of his type occupying the position of Governor of this State.

Much has been said about the problems confronting us. Many problems unfold themselves from day to day, and a wise and prudent Government would do well to give some consideration to the matters raised by hon. members on both sides of the Chamber.

The great problem concerning most of us today is the position in which we find the United Kingdom, both financially and otherwise. It is regrettable that after the high prestige she has enjoyed for over 300 years Britain has been reduced to her present sad plight. I am pleased to know that the people of Australia, South Africa, Canada, and all other British Dominions are playing their parts in restoring to Great Britain some of the prestige she has lost through no fault of her own. She is carrying a tremendous burden in looking after the interests of those nations who have not been able to look after themselves. The taxpayers of Great Britain have contributed much to the comfort of those parts of the world that were disturbed so greatly a few years ago. It is costing them in the vicinity of £80,000,000 a year to maintain some sort of order in Germany.

We also have our own problems, and I am sure that we will deal with them in the way that will be in the best interests of the State and ensure the greatest possible development in the very near future.

I wish to bring under notice one or two anomalies that have arisen in connection with this Chamber. Perhaps I shall be pardoned for suggesting that when hon. members ask questions of Ministers the Ministers might give such answers as will enlighten both the community and the hon. members asking the questions, irrespective of the party to which they belong.

I refer briefly to a question I addressed to the Treasurer a few days ago concerning the amount expended on motor-cars bought by the Government during the financial year ended 30 June last and the purpose for which the cars were being used. The Treasurer, who controls the finances of this State—of all people—politely told me in reply that the Treasurer has no control over expenditure on motor-cars. Whether or not he was sincere in his answer to the question, I offer the suggestion that members on this side of the House might be treated in a different manner when they seek information. I hope I shall not have occasion to call attention to this matter any further. When I address questions

to members of the Government I expect—I know that there are Standing Orders to the effect that Ministers are not obliged to reply to questions—that I shall have courtesy extended to me.

I congratulate the Minister for Transport on his elevation to the responsible office he now holds. Such a position calls for the best we can get in a man and I have every confidence in the new Minister and believe that he will be an improvement on his predecessor. That statement may not satisfy many members in this House, but I have every hope that this young man will give an excellent account of himself. He has a difficult job to hold because we all know that the railways of this State have been neglected during the past 25 to 30 years.

There are many laws relating to the government of the railways that call for special attention, and I was pleased that the hon. member for Logan called attention to one or two of them this morning. I, however, wish to say a word or two in connection with compensation for damage caused or loss of life sustained on the railways of this State. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the railways are common carriers; they go out for trade and charge for services rendered, and I honestly believe that when a mishap occurs on the railways the department should be in the same position as any individual or private company in regard to compensation. The railways should pay the same compensation for loss of life as a private company would be called upon to pay in a court of law.

I refer to this matter for the purpose of making a comparison. Recently a case was before the Supreme Court of Queensland in which a doctor was proceeded against for heavy damages in connection with the alleged neglect of a woman patient. I do not intend to mention names but I am sure the case will be known to most hon. members. The woman concerned was successful in her claim and the jury awarded her £2,300 damages. It is a question whether that was sufficient to cover the damage caused to her through the apparent neglect of the doctor. In the recent mishap that occurred on the Queensland railways many people were killed, some of them fathers and breadwinners of families, but under the Railway Act the department's liability for compensation is limited to £2,000 in each case. I think that the matter should be properly ventilated and I ask the Minister for Transport whether he will bring before his Cabinet the question of reviewing the compensation scale or making ex-gratia payments for the loss of breadwinners. I think that the matter should be considered in a way to provide that those families who have lost their breadwinners will not suffer in the years to come.

Although the Railway Department is a common carrier its liability in respect of goods or parcels lost while in its care is limited to £10, although we frequently read that railway passengers have lost valuable suitcases containing goods up to a value of, say, £30. We have reached the stage in social development when we might well say that we

should devote a little more interest to the rights of our fellows, and so I suggest that the by-laws be amended so as to impose upon the department the obligation to pay a fair and reasonable amount to compensate for loss of goods or lives or damage or injury caused by it.

The time is opportune to carry out this reform in the interests of decency. I should like the new Minister for Transport to amend the law so as to give aggrieved persons a right of appeal, and especially I suggest that the people concerned in the Camp Mountain disaster should have a right of appeal either to the Commissioner, the Minister, the Cabinet or even to Parliament so as to enable them to be amply compensated for their loss or injury. This would give the Minister an opportunity of intimating to all concerned that he was sympathetically disposed towards the victims and believed that they should be adequately compensated.

I am firmly of the opinion that the railway rolling stock and railway system generally may not be in the sound condition that we imagine it to be in today. During the war years the department earned huge profits, and some years ago an Act of Parliament was passed establishing a Railways Renewals and Replacements Reserve Fund. Had the Government taken advantage of that Act and set aside a certain amount of railway earnings made during war years there would now be a handsome credit in that account for the use of the Railway Department, amounting to something like £12,000,000. We know that the Government have stored away vast sums taken from surplus revenue during the war years and amounting to about £20,000,000, but we should remember that this revenue was obtained chiefly by the Railway Department.

Now is the time to have a thorough investigation concerning the safety of the railway system. Let us ascertain quite clearly whether the trucks, the carriages, the rolling stock generally, the permanent way, and indeed the whole railway system, are in the good order that we should like them to be. It would be in the best interests of the Minister to carry out this investigation to see whether passengers or live stock are likely to be endangered by some hidden defect in the system. I have no desire to dwell any longer on this question of adequate compensation for loss of life and goods or for damage or injury.

The present is a golden opportunity to remove many obstacles in the department that retard the progress of this city. Chief among these are the level crossings. They have been an eyesore and a humbug in our civic life.

I propose now to apply my remarks to another department that calls for some attention, although the matter is not as serious as we are led to believe it is. It refers to the dissatisfaction in the Police Force. Recently, a section of the Press gave publicity to alleged unrest in the Police Force in connection with a departmental move concerning promotions and concessions to the C. I. Branch and traffic section. It would not be for the good of this State to permit

any trouble in our Police Force. The men in the force are doing a wonderful service for the community. That being so, each section should be entitled to the administrator's best consideration, in regard to both promotions and conditions. In addition to doing a fine job, the police work a great deal of overtime, but they only get time off in return. In 1941 I called attention to the fact that the police got only one day a fortnight off for overtime worked. It would be in the interests of the community if even one day a week was given to these men. The ordinary police are doing an excellent job in protecting life and property. The C. I. Branch has developed the detection of crime along scientific lines. If the members of the branch, because of their specialised work, are deserving of higher remuneration, it should be granted to them the same as is done in other industries. Surely that should be the concern of the Minister.

I wish to draw attention to a very important matter concerning the welfare not only of this State but of the Commonwealth. We have heard much said about monopolies and combines operating in the Commonwealth. I have always believed, and still believe, that a Government elected by the people should devote some attention to their well-being, particularly with regard to the way of life of the worker, his housing conditions, and his conditions generally. After all, we are not on this earth for very long; it is said that our stay here is but three score years and ten. At the age of 21 we are supposed to have gained sufficient knowledge to take us along the stage during which we should be of some use to the community. When we get near the three score years we find that the time hangs heavy on our shoulders, and we cannot do as much as we once did in the interests of the community.

Recently I saw an announcement in the Press that Ben Chifley and his Commonwealth Government propose to nationalise banking.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. LUCKINS:** Not "here," I hope. I hope in the interests of the British people that the socialistic or communistic control will find little or no favour in this State.

**Mr. Bruce** interjected.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** There is a great deal of over-expenditure everywhere, and the hon. gentleman will find it in his own department. If you want to employ people you have to develop the system to create avenues of employment. If you are going to have employment controlled by any Government you are doing a disservice to many people who contribute much to the Commonwealth and the State. Private enterprise should be encouraged because it has created activities in this State and throughout Australia that justify it. What has caused this monopoly-socialism advocacy by Mr. Chifley? I always understood that he was a good Labour man, but I am convinced that he is nothing more nor less than an agent for the Communists of a foreign power. He is exercising

a good Communist control, and he has proposed, more or less because of bitterness occasioned by his defeat in regard to Commonwealth control, that local authorities should bank with the Commonwealth Bank. Hiding behind the good old type of Labour man, we find that Mr. Chifley, erstwhile Labour man, but now Communist, is going to exercise a control that has been foreign to the British people for thousands of years and that will always be foreign to them. If there is one thing British about our people it is the tradition of the Old Country that enables every man to exercise his liberty and freedom as he desires. Why should we submit ours to a foreign doctrine?

Who are these people who are coming along here and doing this? We are under the control of this man Ben Chifley, erstwhile Labour man, but pronounced Communist from his activities during the last few years. It was this man Ben Chifley who employed a man on atomic research in Central Australia who had been interned in Western Australia and who had been released when Russia came into the war; and he has been aided and abetted by the Labour Communist Government. What is the use of trying to fool ourselves? We have to face up to these facts. The people I represent sent me here to see that their liberties and freedoms are not put in jeopardy by any Government; and if the time comes when we have to fight for it, as the people had to in other countries, then I am prepared to stand up and fight. I will fight for what I believe is truly British in the interests of my people and I will not allow any foreign doctrine to be introduced into this country if my people have to suffer.

What is the proposal that Mr. Chifley put up in regard to the banks? He has caused fear and strife and all sorts of injury to our system as a result of his statement. Why? What have the Commonwealth got that the ordinary banks have not got? If there was only the Commonwealth Bank and I went in and I was not of the same political colour as the manager—and we know political appointments have been made—he would say, "No, you belong to the Opposition; you are of the old Tory brand; you get out; we cannot meet your requirements until you show a change of mind"—just as they do in Russia under the Stalin administration.

We had examples of it in Germany during the last war. Germany was virtually bankrupt; the Reichbank was depleted of funds. Because of the Nazi system of control there were no funds in Germany and everybody's securities had gone. In Italy, Mussolini, one of the chief Socialists—and apparently Socialist and Labour are the same—took advantage of the opportunity to clamp down on the people's funds. Poverty overran the land and Mussolini set out to reconstruct society. He did so, but on the basis of Fascism, the same as Chifley and Evatt are doing in Australia today. They want no opposition. They want authority to go overseas when they like and take their families with them at the expense of the taxpayer. We find a very shining example of this in the past few months; 14 or 16 Commissioners

have been appointed by them to control the water-front. They appoint Government officials to do jobs that are unnecessary. There is a limit to what the taxpayer can pay. Why have we our courts, our industrial courts, and our Acts of Parliament?

**Mr. Theodore** interjected.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** The hon. member would hate to think that it was possible that I could remain long enough to expose him and the dirty, rotten tactics he stands for. (Government interjections.)

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I am prepared to take my place in the community and exercise my right as a representative of the people.

**Mr. THEODORE:** I rise to a point of order. I object to the remarks of the hon. member that I stand for dirty, rotten tactics. I do not stand for any such thing.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member for Maree must accept the assurance of the hon. member for Herbert. I must say that continued interjections make it very difficult for me to hear the remarks of the hon. member who is speaking.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I believe that I am contributing to the debate something that is of interest and for the good of the community of this State. I take my place in this Assembly with the right to speak for the people I represent. I am not unmindful of the fact that the district is a Labour stronghold, but I would remind hon. members opposite that my constituency sent me here to represent them after 15 years of Labour representation, when they fared very badly. I am always prepared to accept a challenge, and I can assure the House that I am very careful in looking after the interests of electors.

I am not prepared now to discuss the recent elections and I do not want to waste the rest of my time in doing so. That has been gone into very fully. I won the seat on a fair and reasonable count. I have no complaints to make, and at this stage I compliment the returning officer and the staff that controlled the election in Maree. But there is one thing I cannot control, and that is the large number of people who got on the roll just about a month or two before the elections. When we sent out notices or our policy or anything of that kind in regard to the election, the letter was returned, as the hon. member for Cooroora said, marked "Unknown in the district" or something like that. That should exercise the mind of the Minister.

I made a visit recently to North Queensland and I was astounded at what I found in the vicinity of the Tableland. That area could be the granary of the world.

We have a tropical area there that will grow almost anything capable of being grown in the inner tropics. If the Tableland, the Darling Downs and other parts of Queensland were fully developed and planted with

grain, spices and other foodstuffs Australia would be one of the richest countries in the world. I realise, of course, that until we have the population necessary to carry out this work we cannot do much, because you must have the man-power, the brains and the implements necessary for planting and developing a country like this.

Many years ago I said in this Chamber that we had enough wealth in our forests to pay the national debt, and I am more than ever convinced of the truth of that statement. In our forests we have resources of wealth that have never been touched. While in North Queensland I was amazed to see men dragging out of the forests wonderful maple and silky oak, but I did not see much replanting going on. I believe that a certain amount of pine reforestation takes place in some parts of the State, but I should like to see it extended to such special timbers as oak and maple.

While I was up there some beautiful logs were going through. When I inquired as to their destination I found that some were going to Cairns, some to Brisbane, and others further south for processing and milling. One man told me that they could get much more for their timber than they get in Australia. When I asked how I was told that in about three months there would be several American ships coming to our ports and they would be getting rid of their timber in the log direct to America.

**Mr. Hilton:** What types of timber?

**Mr. LUCKINS:** Oak, maple, and other special cabinet timbers. It might be advisable to have some system whereby we could prevent the black-marketing of our timber to America or anywhere else. I have reason to believe that a good deal of black-marketing is going on with ships coming to port and loading up while we do not know what they are loading. I do not know that we can do anything to prevent people from sending timber to America, because she is a great money power of the world today. She has most of the world's gold, which came formerly from the British Empire, and they say that money speaks all languages. It would seem that they are willing to take our timbers but they are not decent enough to agree to reciprocity of trade by taking our wool. I hope that if we are to manufacture our special timbers into furniture some steps will be taken to replant the forests we are denuding.

I know that the Minister is sincere in seeing that the future wealth of our forests is preserved, not only for the timber contained in them but for the chemicals and other things that lie hidden in our trees. The tea-tree, for instance, is a valuable asset to the community because from it can be produced a property called ti-trol, which is a highly-prized disinfectant, a disinfectant ten times stronger than ordinary disinfectants. If we take care of our natural resources we shall have, as I said once before, sufficient wealth to pay our national debt.

I extend my best wishes to the housewife of this State because for her there is no wages board to lay down a rate of remuneration or set out the conditions of the services she renders to the community. I urge that in the near future a law be introduced by which she will have a half share of the wealth created by her husband. Whether any other hon. member speaks on that subject at least the House will know that there is one champion here of the housewives of the community.

**Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra)** (4.37 p.m.): I think the debate so far has been notable for the contributions of the new members. They have, however, raised nothing contentious to arouse the ire of the Government. Being new they no doubt do not like to say anything that might give offence. I do not suffer from such inhibitions and consequently my speech will be directed to problems that need immediate solution.

I pay particular reference to the speech made by the hon. member for Mirani and particularly that part in which he referred to the claim by sugar-growers for an extra  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb. for sugar. When the new member got to the most interesting part of his speech and was about to tell us who was responsible in his opinion for the failure of the State Government to press the claims for the extra  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. he was interrupted by interjections from the Government benches. You, Mr. Speaker, called the House to order and the new member mistakenly assumed that you were calling him to order and allowed himself to be innocently diverted from his subject. I only hope that the next time he speaks he will pursue the subject from the point at which he was interrupted the other day. Whilst I am dealing with it I say that although I am learning fast I consider myself but a student of the sugar industry and I am willing to listen to men like the hon. member for Mirani, the hon. member for Isis, and the hon. member for Bowen, who have a first-hand knowledge of the industry, so that I also might some day become completely conversant with it.

I say now that I believe that the extra  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb. should be granted to the growers but at the same time this Government, which is merely an agent for the C.S.R. Coy., should see that the extra  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. is not gobbled up by the C.S.R. Coy., or the financial institutions, fertiliser and machinery combines, as everything else is gobbled up, with the condonation of the Government. If the sugar industry is to get an extra  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb. for sugar, let that  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. go to the growers and not to those who fatten and batten on the growers.

The Governor's Speech contained the usual amount of ballyhoo and poppycock. It was written as usual on Dunstan House paper with the A.W.U. letterhead torn off, and it must be admitted that Mr. C. G. Fallon in writing the speech used terms and phrases with which His Excellency was familiar so that His Excellency could deliver the Speech without undue hesitation or interruption. I will deal with the Governor's Speech or some parts of it, I hope, on a later debate.

I believe that every person who makes a speech should follow the excellent example set them by ministers of religion and that he should take a text for his speech. These estimable gentlemen usually take a text from the Bible, and while I also perhaps could take a text from the Good Book, I intend to take my text from an anthology of verse. One poem in it runs something like this—

“ Mourn not the dead that in the cool  
earth lie, dust unto dust  
The sweet, clean earth that mothers all  
who die, as all men must  
But rather mourn the apathetic throng,  
and the cowed and the meek  
Who know the world's great anguish and  
its wrong, and dare not speak.”

I think we have reached the stage in Australia today when everyone who knows the anguish of the world and realises the problems that confront us should at least dare to speak. No-one has ever accused me of not daring to speak, and after I have finished my speech today no-one will be able to make such an accusation against me in respect of this speech.

The first matter that I want to touch upon is the very contentious matter of Blair Athol. I am very concerned and the people also are very concerned at the rumours that are being bruited abroad that this Queensland Labour Government intend to hand over the exploitation of Blair Athol and the land between Blair Athol and the coast to an overseas financial institution. I say right here and now that if this Queensland Labour Government have neither the courage nor the ability to develop Blair Athol and its hinterland in the interests of the people of Queensland, then they should have the decency to resign, get off the Government benches and allow them to be occupied by some party or by some people who will develop that land in the interests of the people who own it.

**Mr. Muller:** By the Country Party, for instance?

**Mr. AIKENS:** I can remember when a similar set of circumstances existed in North Queensland, when the Chillagoe Company was helped by a party somewhat similar to the Country Party—the hon. member for Fassfern interjected about the Country Party—to establish itself in far North Queensland, just as rumour says that the present Labour Government propose to allow an overseas financial company to establish itself at Blair Athol. The conditions created by the Chillagoe Company and its gross exploitation of its workers and of the resources of the State made possible the birth of the Labour Party in the northern part of the State. It was responsible for the rise of the Riordan dynasty. It was because of the existence of the Chillagoe Company that the Riordans came into Parliament, and the Riordan political dynasty was established. If it had not been for the Chillagoe Company perhaps the Riordans would not have come to the forefront of the Labour Party. They fought against the very thing in the Chillagoe Company that rumour says the Labour Government propose to set up in Blair Athol.

While they are on it, the Government might also investigate some of the information that I received today that quite a lot of land has been taken up in the Kalaka district—it is understood that the new railway is to be built to St. Lawrence. They might ascertain who exercised the option over the land and also for whom the land is intended. I shall fight the overseas exploitation of the natural resources of this country while I have strength and breath to do it. If Blair Athol is handed over to a private financial concern, all that it will do will be to rip the guts out of the Blair Athol deposit, mine it purely for profit, and not in the interests of the development of this State. If it is given timber concessions or railway concessions it will exploit them only in the interests of profit for its own overseas shareholders and not in the interests of the development of Queensland, or in the interests of the people of Queensland who own the Blair Athol coal-mine and own the land and timber in between it and the coast.

Another matter that concerns us very much today is the parlous and perilous position in Great Britain itself, and I want to say here and now that I hope this British Commonwealth of Nations of ours will be preserved and perpetuated.

That does not signify that I hope that its economic injustices and its social inequalities will be preserved and upheld. But I hope to see the British Empire and British Commonwealth of Nations, as a complete and unified entity, go marching forward side by side with other democratic nations along the road that leads to the emancipation of the useful people—the working class. It must be admitted that there is not an Australian today worth his salt who would not endure more hardship, or make more sacrifices, or even agree to a more stringent rationing if he knew for a surety that the food which he denied himself would go to the British people and workers. The British people won the war—the ordinary man and woman won the war. They were promised after the war that everything would be hunky-dory, that the Nazis would be hanged, that the Fascist criminals would be brought to justice, and that there would be full and plenty for them all. Today what do we find? It is true a few Nazi leaders have been hanged, but it is also true that many Nazi leaders and high-ranking Nazi officials are holding well-paid positions under the British and American administration in Germany, while the very men and women of Britain who won the war and made victory possible are starving because the British Government, the Attlee pseudo-Labour Government of Britain, just as we have a pseudo-Labour Government here and another in the Federal House, are following the old line set down by the Conservative Government and are debasing themselves by sending millions of pounds of food to feed the swashbuckling Nazis. That food should be going to their own people. Let the British people give the people of Australia an assurance in which they can believe that every pound of food

and every square inch of cloth we are willing to deny ourselves will go to the British people and there would be such a resultant effort by our populace that it would be impossible almost to get ships to move it from Australia to Britain.

We know, of course, the international complications Britain has become involved in over the centuries. We had the repercussions of it the other day in the engagement of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip of Greece. I congratulate the little lady. She has a right to be married. I only hope that she is marrying the man of her choice. I only wish, too, that circumstances had been different and she might have chosen to marry the son of a waterside worker or the son of a meat-worker or the son of a coal-miner or the son of a garbage man. But no, British snobocracy insists that the heir to the throne must marry only one of Royal blood. Consequently millions of pounds of British food and millions of pounds of munitions have been shipped from Britain to Greece in order to keep the Fascist King of Greece on his tottering throne long enough for Princess Elizabeth to conform to the form of British snobocracy and marry a person in the purple.

I suppose we are indeed fortunate that Prince Philip was available. In the early days German princes were favoured by British Royalty. When the late Queen Victoria ascended the throne the despised and disreputable Duke of Cumberland was next in line of succession. It was necessary to marry Queen Victoria as quickly as possible so that she could have as many children as possible in order to stop this detestable person from ascending the throne and ruling the British people. That set of circumstances does not apply today. There is no immediate hurry for Princess Elizabeth to be married and bear children. No-one would take umbrage if even young Princess Margaret, or the Duke of Gloucester or one of his children ascended the throne. But it was fortunate that there was a white prince of Europe available. The German princes disappeared after the 1914-18 war. The Russian princes of the Czarist regime are in America queuing up waiting their turn to marry Barbara Hutton or some Hollywood harlot. They would sniff at the half million that is granted to the Queen of England and regard it only as chicken feed.

It is nothing compared with the money they could get from Barbara Hutton or some other American heiress. If Prince Philip had not been available British snobocracy would have forced this unfortunate little girl to go further afield for a Royal sire—probably to Asia or Africa to marry an Afghan or an Abyssinian. It would have been a sight for the gods to see the snobs of this country if the young girl and her husband came out here, bowing and scraping before the dusky Prince Consort and kissing the coal-black hand of Prince Haile Selassie or Prince Abdul Mahomed.

I wish the little girl all the happiness to which any normal little girl is entitled. She stands for that great symbol of unity and

trust in the great British Commonwealth of Nations. I wish her, as I would my own daughter or the daughter of any member of this Assembly, or resident of the State, all the happiness in her marital state.

Let us get on with the subject nearest and dearest to my heart, that is, the development of Northern Queensland. A little bit of a shadow-show went on in Canberra just recently. North Queensland, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is undeveloped. It had no industries to speak of—no big secondary industries—and the population generally was kept down to the minimum because of the neglect over a period of many years by this Queensland Labour Government. Every time, particularly in recent years, when there was a popular move in the North to bring the needs of North Queensland before the people in control, the agents of the Labour Government did all they could to sabotage it. In March, 1942, when things became acute in Townsville and the Townsville City Council sent me to Canberra to do what I could to alleviate the conditions there, the A.W.U. in Townsville—the agent of the Queensland Labour Government—wired the secretary of the Q.C.E. and asked him to get in touch with George Martens and ask George Martens not to receive me. In 1943, when the food position was acute and the Townsville City Council called a meeting of representatives of all organisations, the A.L.P. and the A.W.U. were the only organisations that refused to come. In 1945, when the Trades and Labour Council called a people's conference to deal with the establishment of industry in North Queensland, the Labour Government did all they could to sabotage the conference. Although representatives came from as far north and west as Eacham and Mackay and Hughenden, and some of the men from shire councils and progress organisations happened to be railwaymen the Queensland Labour Government's Railway Department refused to grant them passes or leave to attend the conference.

In 1944 the people at last became conscious of their needs, and becoming conscious of the need for organisation, sent the member for Bowen and me to this State House. Mr. Fallon said, "That is nothing; the people are merely stampeded as a result of the war. Wait till 1947, till the people have regained their sanity and once again pledge their allegiance to the Labour Party; then all the Northern seats will again be in the Labour Party bag." We waited till 1947. What happened? The war had ended. Mr. Fallon thought the people had returned to what he termed political sanity and would again vote for Labour en masse. The Premier was not deluded. With all his faults—and he has many, like myself—I think that politically he has a bushy tail, and he is wise and wily. He was in the North in February for the Labour in Politics convention, and he sensed the tremendous upsurge of public opinion behind all the organisations fighting for a fair go for the North.

He came back and set out the State campaign. Again I pay tribute to his

political astuteness and perspicacity. He knew he could not come to the North and fight on the real issue that confronted the people. But down here he took the Q.P.P. by the hand and beautifully led it up the garden path. Like Napoleon, he fought the election in his own time and on ground of his own choosing. Napoleon has said that he attributed all his successes to the fact that he fought his enemies in his own time and on the ground of his own choosing; so the Premier fought the election with the Q.P.P. in the South in his own time and on the ground of his own choosing. He completely clouded the issue in the South and fought the issue with the Q.P.P. purely on personal grounds. He asked the people, "Am I not a better man than Bruce Pie?" He had his photograph taken in a 10-gallon hat and a flannel shirt. He donkey-licked Bruce Pie in the Southern and Central Divisions.

But in the North it was different. I was not behind the door when political tactics and astuteness were handed out. In the North I made a statement that if this election was going to be fought in the North it would be fought on my ground if not in my time, and so I made the statement in the Northern papers that this election would be fought purely and simply on the Government's neglect of the North, no personalities would be introduced from my platform and no personal filth would be allowed. I kept to that right through.

The Premier came to Townsville and he laid off the development of the North. He gave the people a beautiful talk about Bruce Pie. Later in private conversation I said to him, "I wish I had an official Q.P.P. candidate in the field; the things you are saying about the Q.P.P. are only baby talk to what I would say about them." The Premier followed me in Ayr and said the same things about Pie that he had said in Townsville. He wisely kept off the problem of the North. I introduced it, as did also the hon. member for Bowen. We fought the last election on the State Government's neglect of North Queensland over a period of years. What happened? The most complete rout in the history of the Labour Party—Mirani, Bowen, and Mundingburra lost to it, and Kennedy would have gone had the hon. member for Windsor kept his snout out of it although I am glad in the circumstances that it did not go to Johnston. While I do not believe that the hon. member for Kennedy is the alpha and omega of a Labour politician, nevertheless I prefer him to a Q.P.P. member in the House.

Townsville would have been affected too and wise and wily old George Keyatta knew it. For the first time in 30 years the hon. member for Townsville refused to fight a combined campaign with the Mundingburra and Kennedy Labour candidates. He said in effect, "Not on your life. I am not going to be associated with you. I will not touch you with a 40-ft. pole. I am going to run my own little campaign and collect my own money right in Townsville. I will fight it on the impregnable policy of "Good Old George" and he fought it on that

basis and on that basis he is impregnable. I will not tell hon. members of the House the story I have told some of them about the mother and the child that required to be weaned but that gives an idea of his impregnable position as long as he keeps to "good old George." He was wise enough to fight the election on the basis of "good old George." He would not touch the hon. member for Kennedy, nor the Labor candidate for Mundingburra. Not on his life would he do that! He thought, "Aikens has got you and the party on the run and I am not going to start running with you."

The people of the North will not be impressed, they will not be deluded by the beautiful little sham-fight so effectively staged and so well advertised the other day in Canberra between the Premier and the Prime Minister. The people of the North are not fools. They know it for what it was—a wonderfully well-staged sham-fight in accordance with the long-term plans laid down by the A.L.P. to rehabilitate itself in North Queensland. It does not appear as if I shall have time to deal with it now, but before this Parliament finishes I will and, what is more, I will deal with it on the platform in the North when I return after this session.

We know quite well that North Queensland has had a deplorable deal from the Federal Labour Governments since they assumed office in 1941. They treated us worse, particularly in Townsville, than they would treat a crowd of Japs. Let me give two instances of what the Commonwealth Government have done to Townsville quite recently. Our roads were torn up and damaged by excessive war traffic. We made application for Commonwealth compensation for those roads, and Chifley, after a number of talks with Mr. Edmonds, although he had the facts and figures at his disposal, although he only had to call upon Army records, said to the Townsville City Council, "You will have to prove your case up to the hilt. You will have to supply me with information and facts that the war-time traffic on the Townsville roads was greater than the peace-time traffic before I will even listen to you." We took up the fight. We went to ex-Army officers, to the Railway Department, to the harbour board, to everyone, and by dint of a good deal of hard labour, we prepared for submission to Mr. Chifley facts that were already in Mr. Chifley's possession.

Take the case of the Commonwealth resumptions of land in Townsville. I said off the public platform that they stink to high heaven, but unfortunately the ordinary civilian has no redress. But when he took on the Townsville City Council, Chifley took on a fighting organisation. He resumed a bit of our park land. He "stood over us," and the other day, at my instigation, supported by my colleagues on the finance committee, and later by the full council, a letter went from the council instructing our solicitor to take High Court action if necessary against Chifley in order to bring him to his senses and in order to get common justice for our people.

While I admit that we have had a deplorable deal from the Commonwealth Government, the non-development of the North, the lack of population in the North and the concentration of the population and of all the industries in this great bloated city of Brisbane, can be laid at the door and at the feet and on the head of no other party than the Queensland Labour Party. They and they alone were responsible for our unpreparedness prior to the last war. They and they alone were responsible for the fact that we had no industries in the North and we had so few centres of population in the North that both the Federal and State Labour Governments thought that we were not worth defending in the early days of the war when the Japs came down towards New Guinea. They and they alone are to blame, and they are not going to dodge their responsibilities as far as I am concerned.

The Premier—and again I say he is a wise old bird—set out a plan. Although he cannot immediately rehabilitate himself or his party in the North, although he cannot bring back the prestige that his party has lost, he, or rather the Q.C.E., has issued instructions that every A.L.P. member, every A.L.P. supporter, every A.L.P. sympathiser in the North must interest himself and become active in every northern organisation from the biggest to the smallest, from local authorities down to the humblest progress association, and work together and gang up in order to get control of those northern organisations to stifle criticism and direct suggestions along the old stereotyped A.L.P. lines. He does not think I know it, but I was told it the other day, and even if I had not been told it I should require to be blind, deaf, dumb and certifiably insane if I did not immediately realise it of my own instinct when I saw what happened in Townsville the other night at a Townsville City Council meeting when Alderman Abererombie and Alderman O'Brien, who have been the Townsville City Council's delegates on the North Queensland Local Authorities Association, which has set up a consultative and advisory committee to inquire into the establishment of industries in the North, were replaced by Alderman Hamilton and Alderman Corcoran on the motion of Labour Alderman C. M. Butcher. I only hope that for the good of their consciences and immortal souls Alderman Corcoran and Alderman Hamilton did not know that they were being used by Butcher in this long-term plan of the Labour Party.

The Government know they cannot convince the North, so they are hoping to strangle the organisations of the North and stifle discussion, but whilst I have the strength to clamber on to a platform in the North and whilst I have the remnant of a voice left I will continue to advise the northern people that they can rely upon only themselves and that they will get nothing from any big city party, whether that party is a Labour Party or the Q.P.P., which is much more viciously centralised than the Labour Party. I am not concerned with the Q.P.P. It is a political

corpse, and a decomposing and putrefying corpse and will continue to foul the political atmosphere of the State only so long as the Country Party allows it to do so. If the Country Party lays down the gage of battle it could wipe the Q.P.P. out of existence in one election. Whilst the Q.P.P. remains it will remain a decomposing and putrefying force.

That is the position in the North and I warn people now about this Labour infiltration. The Premier knows that he is between two stools. If he does what he said he would do and establish industries in North Queensland he is going to lose the support of the Brisbane people, on which he relies at the present time, and he knows also that if he takes industries away from Brisbane and sets them up in the North as he should do the Brisbane voters will drift from the Labour Party to the Q.P.P. if that party has not already been wiped out of existence by the Country Party, or they will drift over to the Opposition forces; and if he continues to build up Brisbane at the expense of the country he will lose more seats in the North next election. Consequently, the Premier is not game to do either, and not being game, he is endeavouring to stifle discussion in the North.

I do not believe that secession is the answer to the problem, but the Premier and the Prime Minister can consider themselves very lucky indeed that the only flag raised is the flag of secession. They are damned lucky it is not the flag of rebellion. People of all shades of political opinion and in all classes of society have been forced to the realisation that North Queensland people can rely only on those men in Parliament pledged to the development of North Queensland who have placed party allegiance second, third, fourth or fifth on the list, as the case may be.

When you say that the Labour Party is not responsible for the state of affairs in the North—I am referring to the Queensland Labour Party—I want to read the most astonishing letter any member of Parliament ever got to drive home the point I have been stressing here today. I will read a letter that Mr. Colin Clark wrote me of his own volition as late as November of last year. He is the £1,800-a-year man, or was on that salary when I saw the last Estimates, who is the economic and financial adviser to the Government. The Government are sending him overseas in order that he might come back and tell them what to do. Mr. Colin Clark is the white-haired boy of the Labour Government when it comes to industry and this is what he thinks about the Government who elevated him to the position he occupies today. He wrote me on 26 November, 1946, and he dealt first with some statement I had made about the right treatment of sex offenders. He agreed with me on that, but this is the point I want to drive home, because he further said, "Another point on which I agree with you is in feeling extreme concern about schemes of industrial development which do nothing more than aggrandise the city of Brisbane which is already far too large." There is Mr. Colin Clark in a letter to me saying, "Tom Aikens, you are

right. The things you have been saying in Parliament are right, and this Government who pay me are wrong."

I am particularly concerned about Mr. Clark's phrase "schemes of industrial development" because the word "schemes" suggests the future tense.

I want to know what other schemes of industrial development by the Labour Government there are that are still going further to aggrandise the city of Brisbane and that we do not know anything about. It appears to me that Colin Clark rather innocently blew the gaff. I may be wrong, but the word "scheme," suggests the future tense to me. There is the condemnation of his own Government. I have not been too easy on Mr. Clark in my remarks about him in this House and he has no need to write me that purely to curry favour with me.

**Mr. Muller:** He probably will not write to you again.

**Mr. Aikens:** At least he was honest enough to write this. He wrote and told me that I was right and that the Government that paid him are wrong.

The Governor's Speech, Clarry Fallon's speech through the medium of the Governor, talks vaguely of a 10-year plan. Let me give you some idea of what the people of North Queensland think of the Government's 10-year plan. They are building a bridge over the Burdekin River. When the Premier—who is a man with his ear to the ground all the time—went down from Townsville to Carstairs to turn the first sod of the Burdekin Bridge I was at Ayr. I had addressed a meeting at Ayr the night before; I was one jump ahead of the Premier all the way. I went onto the Ayr platform and I decided to go across as an act of courtesy to be present at the turning of the first sod of the Burdekin Bridge. I saw a train with the big locomotive coming along shining and burnished and with all its coaches and I said to myself, "Holy smoke! I shall never get a seat." The train was made up of nine coaches to accommodate 4 or 5 hundred but it carried 30 people, 17 of them on railway passes. There is one thing about the Premier and that is that he has a sense of humour. There were 30 people on the train. All the workers on the bridge had been given a day's holiday. All the kiddies at the Home Hill State school had been given a full day's holiday. So we had a small audience and the Premier turned the first sod.

The people in the North know what the Government's 10-year plan means. If we do not continue our unremitting pressure on the Government—and that is our only hope—we shall get nothing. We will no longer be fooled with words. We know what the 10-year plan is and we are not foolish enough to fall for this Labour infiltration plan. The Premier turned the first sod of the Burdekin Bridge prior to the 1947 elections. Prior to the 1950 elections he will drive the first rivet

in the first span. Prior to the 1953 elections he will drive the first dog-spike in the first transom, and prior to the 1956 elections he will screw the first nut onto the first bolt in the first girder. That is what we shall get from the 10-year plan if we do not keep the pressure up.

When I speak of the Premier, of course I do not mean the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, because he will not be in the Premier's position for very long, as he is not persona grata with Clarry Fallon. Very shortly we shall probably see that he has been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Stradbroke Island or perhaps Trade Commissioner for Bribie Island or Chairman of the Rags, Bones and Bottle Board—at a high salary of course and with a staff and a palatial office. When I refer to the Premier I refer to the Premier of the day. And I hope it will be a Labour Premier because I should not like to see the Government replaced by people who represent the moneyed interests, the racketeers, and the profiteers, as do the hon. members opposite.

The Charters Towers people are asking when they are to get the mental home that was promised to them. I am very interested in the construction of a mental home at Charters Towers because if I have to stay in this House and listen to the speeches of some hon. members for very long I may be one of the first patients. I may be wrong, and the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs will correct me if I am, but I think last year that hon. gentleman dug the first post-hole.

Prior to the last election he was sinking the first post-hole. Prior to the next election we shall find him boring the first hole in the first post. Prior to the election after that we shall find him poisoning the first white ant in the first post. (Laughter.) So it will go on if we do not keep up unremitting pressure on the Government.

The people of the North are roused; nay, they are fighting mad. Now, I have warned them of this infiltration plan of the Government. They will be madder still. Infiltration is quite a good idea. The Japs used it successfully in the early days of the Pacific campaign, as their opponents did not know anything about it. But we are wide awake now to the infiltration plan of the Labour Government in regard to the organisations which are fighting for the development of the North. The people of the North, after many years of neglect on the part of this Labour Government, a neglect that has brought North Queensland down to its present position, are now wide awake to the fact that they must organise and be North Queenslanders first and party political members next.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Duggan, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5.16 p.m.