

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 28 AUGUST 1947**

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**THURSDAY, 28 AUGUST, 1947.**

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

CIRCULATION AND COST OF  
"HANSARD."

Mr. Speaker laid on the table the report of the Chief Reporter, State Reporting Bureau, on the circulation and cost of "Hansard" for the session of 1945-46.

QUESTIONS.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND BASIC WAGE  
INCREASES.

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

"Have applicants for workers' compensation received the benefit of the various increases effected in the basic wage over the past year?"

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

"Weekly compensation is assessed at two-thirds of the average weekly wages with a maximum of £3 3s. per week for single men and £5 per week for married men with dependent children. Where a worker is paid under an award or industrial agreement, average weekly earnings are deemed to be not less than the award rate. Injured workers have received the benefit of any alteration in award rates, subject, of course, to the maxima of £3 3s. and £5. An amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act was announced in the speech of His Excellency the Governor at the opening of Parliament."

LATE-PAYMENT PENALTIES, STATE ADVANCES  
CORPORATION.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR** (Hamilton) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"In the financial year 1946-47, in how many cases was the penalty of 2d. in the £ for late payment of instalments under the State Advances Corporation Act applied, showing the number of cases in (a) the metropolitan area of Brisbane, and (b) all other cases?"

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

“Where late payments are made, penalty at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum is charged on the amount of the instalment. Such cases are numerous, and to obtain the number both in the metropolitan area of Brisbane and the country it would be necessary to examine for twelve (12) months each of approximately 8,000 individual accounts which examination would entail considerable expense.”

#### INTAKE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Enoggera) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“Of the intake of 131 teachers during the period 1 January to 1 August, 1947, from sources other than the Teachers’ Training College, what were the principal sources from which these teachers were recruited?”

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

“The information is being compiled and will be furnished as soon as possible.”

#### TRAINEES AT TEACHERS’ TRAINING COLLEGE.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Enoggera) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“1. As at 1 August, 1947, how many trainee teachers were attending the Teachers’ Training College?

“2. Of this number, how many had been in attendance—(a) over 21 months; (b) less than 21 months, but over 18 months; (c) less than 18 months, but over 12 months; (d) less than 12 months, but over 6 months; (e) less than 6 months?”

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

“1. and 2. The information is being compiled and will be furnished as soon as possible.”

#### COSTS IN THE KING V. RYLANCE COLLIERIES LTD.

**Mr. PATERSON** (Bowen) asked the Premier—

“1. What damages were awarded the Crown in the case the Crown v. Rylance Collieries Ltd.?”

“2. What were the legal costs incurred by the Crown?”

“3. What damages and costs have been recovered by the Crown?”

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

“1. £67,235 6s. 6d. and costs to be taxed.

“2. £3,036 12s. exclusive of the professional costs of the Crown Solicitor, which have not yet been taxed.

“3. Negotiations are at present proceeding for the payment by the defendants.”

#### LEGISLATION FOR COAL-MINING INDUSTRY.

**Mr. PATERSON** (Bowen) asked the Premier—

“1. Since the beginning of this year, what requests have been received by the Government from the Queensland Colliery Employees’ Union to introduce or amend legislation (a) similar to the Coal Industry Act of the Commonwealth or of New South Wales, and (b) in respect of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, the Workers’ Compensation Acts, and the Coal and Oil Shale Mine Workers’ (Pension) Act?

“2. What discussions have the Government had with representatives of the Commonwealth or other State Governments in respect of these matters?

“3. What decisions or what promises have been made by or on behalf of the Government in connection therewith?

“4. If the Government have refused or are unwilling to grant any of the requests made by the Union, what are the grounds for such refusal or unwillingness?”

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

“1, 2, 3, and 4. In February, 1947, Messrs. Grant and Miller, representing the Miners’ Federation, waited upon the Minister for Mines and myself at Townsville and asked that the New South Wales-Commonwealth Act be extended to include Queensland. Again, in Canberra on 20 August, Messrs. I. Williams and J. Martin, of the Miners’ Federation, made a similar request. On both occasions, I informed the deputationists that the Queensland Government was not only willing, but anxious to make similar provisions for the welfare of miners and the mechanisation of the industry in Queensland as were provided by the new agreement in New South Wales. However, I stressed the danger to the Queensland coal industry of allowing the control to pass into the hands of the New South Wales-Commonwealth Board. That Board is interested primarily in the development of the New South Wales coal industry and would naturally be inclined, under its very wide powers, to restrict rather than to help a competitive industry in Queensland. I made this case in the same terms to the Prime Minister at the Premiers’ Conference, and pointed out that the Queensland Government was quite agreeable to the formation of a Queensland-Commonwealth Board, which would give freedom of industrial development to this State. The Prime Minister was sufficiently impressed with the case made by me that he has instructed the Chairman of the New South Wales Board to come to Brisbane at an early date to discuss with the Queensland Government the setting up of a Board satisfactory both to Queensland and the Commonwealth.”

QUOTAS UNDER COAL PRODUCTION REGULATION ACTS.

**Mr. PATERSON** (Bowen) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. What are the names of the colliery owners holding coal-trading licences issued under the Coal Production Regulation Acts and what is the quota of each licensee?”

“2. Under the said Act, which licensees (a) have been paid compensation and (b) have been penalised for exceeding their quotas?”

“3. What is the amount of compensation or penalty in each case and what were the circumstances under which such compensation was paid or such penalties imposed?”

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

1. I table a list showing details of coal-trading licences.

“2. To obtain complete information of all penalty and compensation payments since the introduction of the Coal Production Regulation Acts would entail a tremendous amount of research by the Queensland Central Coal Board and the various District Coal Boards and would occupy considerable time. However, the only district at present in respect of which such payments are made is the West Moreton district. The following is a summary of penalty and compensation amounts incurred and payable in respect of the last period for which details have been calculated, viz., the twelve months ended 30 June, 1946:— Number of owners who incurred penalty, 6; number of owners who are entitled to compensation, 17; number of owners who neither incurred penalty nor were entitled to compensation, 16; total amount of penalty incurred, £2,109 5s.; total amount of compensation paid, £3,992 19s. Details of penalty and compensation payments are inspected each year by officers of the Auditor-General's Department and a summary is published each year in the report of the Auditor-General.

“3. See answer to question No. 2. Penalties were incurred and compensation paid by certain coalowners on account of a number of reasons (details of which are not available) and who were unable to produce their allotted quotas less the statutory deduction or who exceeded their allotted quotas plus the statutory exemptions.”

Whereupon Mr. Foley laid upon the table of the House a list showing the names of coal-owners holding coal-trading licences.

DROUGHT-RELIEF FOR WHEAT-GROWERS.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) asked the Premier—

“In view of the almost total failure of the last wheat crop in Queensland and the prospect in certain areas of a similar result this year, and as many of these growers are ex-Service men, will he approach the Commonwealth Government for drought-

relief assistance on the lines of the scheme adopted by the New South Wales Government last year—namely, a sum of £750,000 for drought-relief grants to cereal-growers, subject to a contribution of the same amount by the State Government?”

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

“A question directed today by the hon. member for Cunningham to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock reads:—‘1. In view of the favourable seasonal conditions for wheat and the prospect of a record wheat crop in Australia this year, will he make further representations in regard to the lifting of the ban against export of grain sorghum? . . . .’ I would suggest to the hon. member for Aubigny that he and the hon. member for Cunningham go into conference to try to decide whether the wheat-growers are suffering from a drought or a glut.”

OPTIONS OVER LAND BETWEEN BLAIR ATHOL AND ST. LAWRENCE.

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

“1. Does he view seriously the statement made on 26th instant by the hon. member for Mundingburra in his Address in Reply speech that certain well-known people had acquired options over lands between Blair Athol and St. Lawrence?”

“2. Does such statement link up with the ‘financial sharks’ mentioned by him in the ‘Sunday Mail’ of 3 August last, when he said that a group with big money behind it was seeking advance information on the franchise conferred on a British company to develop the Blair Athol coalfield?”

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

“1 and 2. I do not take all statements by the hon. member for Mundingburra seriously, but am quite aware that some people will endeavour to exploit any proposition for their own advantage. In this case, the route of the railway has not been determined and there will be safeguards in any validating legislation.”

ELECTRICITY CONTRACT, E. J. GOLDFINCH & Co.

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

“1. Is he aware that (a) a contract for £10,571 was let by the Townsville Regional Electricity Board to E. J. Goldfinch and Co.; (b) when such contract was let on 24 April last there was no record of the successful tendering company being registered?”

“2. Will he ascertain (a) if the firm mentioned has since been registered and, if so, when; (b) what experience, if any, this company has had in constructional work of the type successfully tendered for?”

“3. Will he inform the House if the principal of the company named is one and the same person as the E. J. Goldfinch who

was convicted in the Brisbane Police Court with one Albert Pianta for having contraband tobacco in his possession?"

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

"1, 2 and 3. I am informed by the State Electricity Commission that the firm mentioned has executed no work and is not under contract to execute any work for the Townsville Regional Electricity Board."

heater; (c) a gas copper; (d) electric hot-water systems; (e) water softeners; and (f) adequate house drainage?

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

"The information is being obtained."

#### NATIONALISATION OF BANKING; CONTROL OF COAL-MINING.

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

"1. Do he and his present Government support the plank in the Australian Labour Party platform advocating the complete socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange?"

"2. Do he and his Government approve of the Commonwealth Government's intention to nationalise the private banks of Australia?"

"3. If so, how does he explain his opposition to the same Government's plan to control the coal-mining industry of Australia, particularly Queensland?"

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

"1. Every member of the Australian Labour Party is pledged to the Party's platform.

"2. See answer to No. 1.

"3. As far as I am aware, the Commonwealth Government does not propose to nationalise the coal-mining industry."

#### BUILDING SITES FOR EX-SERVICE MEN.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Nanango) asked the Premier—

"1. Have the Government been approached by ex-Service men associations to offer for sale building sites in the Townsville district and elsewhere, with a priority of 50 per cent. in favour of discharged service personnel who require such sites to provide homes for themselves?"

"2. If so, what answer has been given to such request?"

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

"1 and 2. Allotments are sold under the provisions of the Land Act, and no preference is given to anyone. The sale of building allotments is a competitive sale—by auction, and by ballot when the ceiling price is reached."

#### EQUIPMENT OF STATE RENTAL HOMES.

**Mr. CHALK** (East Toowoomba) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"How many of the homes built for rental by and for the State Housing Commission in the year 1946-47 were equipped with—(a) other than a fuel stove; (b) a gas

#### SHORTAGE OF SOAPS AND SOAP POWDERS.

**Mr. CHALK** (East Toowoomba) asked the Premier—

"1. Is he aware of the acute shortage of soap and washing powder in Queensland?"

"2. Is he aware that in many water-reticulated cities such as Toowoomba, also many country towns, where householders are not permitted to use galvanised iron for manufacture of household tanks, soap powders, &c., are essential for domestic use as water softeners?"

"3. Can he state the reason for the present shortage?"

"4. Will he undertake to endeavour to have increased supplies of soap and washing powders made available for distribution throughout Queensland?"

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

"1, 2, 3, and 4. I am informed that the demand for soap has increased and the raw material is in short supply. The three main ingredients in the manufacture of soap and washing powders, I am informed, are coconut oil, alkalis, and tallow. Coconut oil, a product of the Pacific islands, is in short supply; alkalis are in short supply because exports from Great Britain have ceased; the tallow position is somewhat easier. Every effort has been and will be made to obtain soap and washing powders for distribution in Queensland."

#### LAND FROZEN FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

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

"In view of the fact that the frozen lands in the vicinity of Moura railway station, contained in the statement tabled by him on 26th instant, have been so frozen for over two years, will he kindly make a statement in regard thereto indicating how much longer the freezing orders are likely to remain in force?"

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

"These lands have been investigated, and it is found that the question of providing adequate permanent water supplies for each block constitutes a problem. A proposal for the provision of a water supply scheme is at present being examined by experts of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. Pending determination of the matter of water supplies, it is considered that lands in this area should remain subject to the freezing order. In the meantime there is no restriction on landholders in the matter of production, improvement, or development."

## EXPORT OF SORGHUM; VERMIN IN DUMPS.

**Mr. McINTYRE** (Cunningham) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. In view of the favourable seasonal conditions for wheat and the prospect of a record wheat crop in Australia this year, will he make further representations in regard to the lifting of the ban against export of grain sorghum?"

"2. Will he kindly state briefly the nature of the report of the officers of his department who investigated the destruction caused in sorghum dumps on the Downs by rats, mice, and weevils?"

**Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Cook) replied—

"1. As I have previously announced, after consultation with the Commonwealth authorities, the position in respect of the export of grain sorghum will be reviewed by the Commonwealth authorities at the end of this month. The Queensland wheat crop is still in jeopardy from dry weather, and it is to be remembered that the Commonwealth Government has guaranteed a floor price for grain sorghum in order to encourage production of this crop so that the shortages of feeding grains in recent years will not be repeated. The Commonwealth is being kept continuously advised of the position.

"2. Various sorghum stacks, involving approximately 25,000 bags on properties or in railway yards between Pittsworth and Milmerran, Dalby, and Jandowae, and around Bonjean, were examined. Some mice damage was seen in all stacks, but so far it is not serious. Slight evidence of rat infestation was observed on a few properties. A very light infestation of weevils with no apparent damage was seen in one small stack at Yarranlea. Elsewhere, the stacks appeared free from weevil infestation. The general condition of most of the stacks is good."

## SUGGESTED PLURAL VOTING, MERTHYR.

**Mr. WANSTALL** (Toowong) asked the Attorney-General—

"With reference to his statement in the House that inquiries revealed no cases of plural voting in the election of 3 May, will he,—

1. Say whether Edward Daniel Murphy, a Labour campaign worker, is shown in the Merthyr returning officer's notification as having voted four times—at Fortitude Valley East, New Farm, New Farm East, and New Farm School polling booths?

2. Inform the House of the precise details of all investigations made into this case?

3. Table all correspondence, reports, &c., made by any authorities in connection with this case?"

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

"1, 2, and 3. Edward Daniel Murphy, who is alleged to have voted at four

different polling places, was interviewed by the police and stated that he voted only once—namely, at the Berwick street, Fortitude Valley, polling booth. There are fifty-five electors bearing the name of Murphy on the Merthyr roll. The police inquired into all cases of alleged double voting in the Merthyr electorate on 3 May, 1947, and have reported as follows:—'No evidence could be obtained to show that the persons mentioned herein voted more than once.'"

## COST OF 40-HOUR WEEK, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR** (Hamilton) asked the Minister for Transport—

"1. Do the recent substantial increases in rail charges cover the added costs envisaged by the introduction of the 40-hour week?"

"2. If not, will he give this House an approximate estimate of the cost to the railways of the reduced working week, and the approximate percentage increase in freights and fares projected to cover the added costs?"

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

"1. No. The recent increase in railway charges merely represented a reversion to charges operating prior to 1943.

"2. The extent to which it will be necessary to increase freights and fares to provide for the increased cost of the 40-hour week will depend upon the financial position of the railways at that time."

## SHORTAGE OF CEMENT, NORTH QUEENSLAND.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) asked the Premier—

"In view of the fact that serious delay is being caused in the construction of urgent local-authority and other works in North Queensland by shortage of cement, will he again give the matter his urgent attention with a view to having supplies made available?"

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

"Delay is being caused in North Queensland, Central Queensland, and Southern Queensland. Every effort has been, is being, and will be made to facilitate production and distribution."

## COAL FOR TOWNSVILLE GAS COMPANY.

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

"1. Has the Townsville Gas Co. made any attempt to secure coal for its plant from any Queensland mines?"

"2. If so, how much did it require and from what mines were the orders filled?"

"3. If not, will he inform the House whether the Government have any power to compel the Townsville Gas Co. to use Queensland coal in order to relieve the

Townsville people of the intolerable burden imposed upon them by the rationing of supply by the company?"

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

"1. I am not aware of any attempt by the Gas Company to secure Queensland coal.

"2. See 1 above.

"3. The Government has no power in this regard."

#### NEW SOUTH WALES CONTRACT FOR RAILWAY COACHES.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) asked the Minister for Transport—

"1. Have contracts been let to a New South Wales or other outside firm for the manufacture of new railway coaches?

"2. If so, when and at what price?

"3. How does such price compare with the cost of manufacture at Ipswich?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. June, 1946; estimated cost, £6,298 each. June, 1947; estimated cost, £7,962 each.

"3. Costs at Ipswich are not comparable, as no provision is made for interest, depreciation, or profit."

#### TRANSPORT OF BLAIR ATHOL COAL.

**Mr. PATERSON** (Bowen): I desire to ask the Minister for Transport whether he has an answer to the first part of the question I addressed to him yesterday, as follows:—

"How much coal has been transported by the Railway Department since the beginning of this year from Blair Athol to (a) Rockhampton, (b) Gladstone, (c) Brisbane?"

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

"(a) Rockhampton, 67,707 tons; (b) Gladstone, 12,830 tons; (c) Brisbane, 20,084 tons."

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

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

Debate resumed from 27 August (see p. 194) on Mr. Crowley's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) (11.23 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with other hon. members in congratulating you on your reelection as Speaker. It is needless for me to say that we on this side of the House will do everything we can to uphold the dignity of Parliament. That has always been our desire in the past and I am sure it will be so in the future.

Elections always make changes. The recent election made changes on both sides of the House. It will be admitted that the election turned in favour of the Country Party but we see new faces on the Government benches too. It will be admitted that new members of Parliament generally, no matter on which side they may sit, enter this Chamber imbued with a sincerity of purpose to do the best within their power to advance this State. I hope—I am sure—that all new members will be guided by that spirit.

In listening to the speeches made on this motion I was particularly struck with those of the Minister for Transport and the hon. member for Carnarvon. I was rather surprised to find prominent members of the Government Party setting out at the very outset of the session to attack two young members with the object of destroying them politically. (Government interjections.) The Minister was the worst offender. I saw Mr. Speaker looking very hard at him and I thought he was going to speak to him because he was repeating himself so often. The Minister hardly said one sentence without using the words "the hon. member for Dalby." I do not know of any member who has got greater publicity than the hon. member for Dalby. The hon. member might go up, as some of the hon. gentleman's railways do and cause him no end of trouble. (Laughter.)

**Mr. Smith** interjected.

**Mr. SPARKES:** If I could get young steers in the same condition as the hon. member is in I should make a heap of money out of them. (Laughter.)

I will deal first with the hon. member for Carnarvon. I am surprised that a gentleman occupying the position the hon. member does should make a statement that there is no drift from the country to the city. It shows the absolute appalling ignorance of a member of this Parliament; and it goes to show that we cannot take much notice of the statements he made about the hon. member for Dalby. The hon. member for Carnarvon said, "The hon. member for Dalby talks about wheat-growing. What does he know about wheat-growing?" I know the hon. member for Carnarvon is rather hurt; he is feeling a "bit under the skin" because he was not taken into the new Cabinet, and he is giving vent to his spleen. Unfortunately he attacks a new member; he says, "What does he know about wheat-growing?" What is the actual position? We find that the hon. member for Dalby is one of the biggest wheat-growers on the Darling Downs.

**Mr. HILTON:** I rise to a point of order. I did not make use of the words that the hon. member for Aubigny says I uttered. I never said that the hon. member for Dalby knew nothing about wheat-growing. I ask the hon. member to accept my denial.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member for Aubigny must accept the denial of the hon. member for Carnarvon.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I naturally accept—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! And whilst I am on my feet I would suggest that the hon. member for Aubigny be allowed to address the Chair without interruption.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I accept the hon. member's denial, but my hearing must be bad. We shall be able to check up from "Hansard" later.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member cannot make reservations; he must accept the denial of the hon. member for Carnarvon.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I accept it.

I should like to tell the hon. member for his edification that the hon. member for Dalby is one of the biggest wheat-growers on the Darling Downs.

**Mr. Hilton:** I know that.

**Mr. SPARKES:** That may be of some benefit to the hon. member and may prevent him from making such stupid statements about the hon. member for Dalby.

Having dealt with the hon. member for Carnarvon, I must now turn to my friend the hon. member for Toowoomba, who is Minister for Transport. I wish to congratulate the hon. gentleman on his elevation to such an important position. I admit that it is one of the most difficult portfolios in the Cabinet and I feel that the difficulties of his portfolio have been playing on his nerves and that is what caused him to make the wild statements we heard from him; I cannot imagine him making such statements in normal circumstances. Let us examine what the hon. member for Dalby did say, to which the Minister for Transport takes such great exception.

**Mr. Hilton:** You cannot quote from a current issue of "Hansard."

**Mr. SPARKES:** I take it, Mr. Speaker, that you will direct me as to what I can and can not say. The hon. member says that I cannot quote from "Hansard."

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I am listening very attentively to the hon. member.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Dalby asked for common-sense administration of the Queensland railways. Has the Minister any objection to that?

**Mr. Duggan:** No.

**Mr. SPARKES:** No objection whatever—that is splendid. The hon. member then said that good efficient railway service can be a factor in the development of the State. The Minister will not take exception to that? The hon. member then proceeded to give specific instances in which freight charges were against the country interests, and quoted to the Minister one instance of sorghum railed from Dalby to Brisbane at 18s. 9d. a ton.

**Mr. Duggan:** With our characteristic generosity we have arranged for the person concerned to have the freight concession sought.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Is not that wonderful? Congratulations to the hon. member for Dalby for bringing it forward. It shows that the hon. gentleman should take more notice of an experienced young man like that hon. member. I am glad and congratulate the Minister through you, Mr. Speaker, on having the foresight to agree to something that the hon. member for Dalby put up. As time goes on, the Minister may be granting a lot if he listens to members like the hon. member for Dalby.

**Mr. Smith:** Make up your mind what you are going to do.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I could make up my mind what I would do with the hon. member and it would not take me very long. (Interjections.)

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I would point out to hon. members that this is a Legislative Assembly—not a pantomime—and it is the responsibility of hon. members to keep its proceedings up to the standard of a Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I would remind the Minister for Transport that the hon. member for Dalby is an experienced man and in addition is a very good customer of the railways. Do we abuse customers? Comment has been made on the running of the American railways. Do those railways abuse their customers in the same manner as the Minister the other day abused one of his customers? I will quote from the "Hansard" I have with me and for the benefit of the hon. member for Carnarvon I will say that it is for the 1945 session—of course, the hon. member is about that far behind events himself. As far back as 1945 I said that the railways have an important part to play in the development of this State. I still hold with that, but they must give an efficient service to their customers. Unless such a service is given to their customers, the railways cannot expect to pay and the Minister and the railwaymen must be made to realise that for their own benefit they must give service to their customers. Surely the Minister for Transport will agree with that.

**Mr. Davis** interjected.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I did not quite hear the hon. gentleman's interjection, but I should not imagine it would be very sensible, having regard to where it came from. However, the points raised by the hon. member for Dalby were sound and I am surprised that the Minister took exception to them. I should have thought that one who I believe is sincere in his endeavour to put the railways on a sound footing would have listened attentively to a speech delivered by a practical man.

I come now to the hon. member for Cooroora. Our friends opposite are always telling us that you must have a worker to represent the people. In the hon. member

for Cooroora we have a railway worker with 20 years' experience of the clerical section of the system and he gave the Minister what I should think was valuable information.

**Mr. Duggan:** We are always willing to receive that.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I can only repeat that apparently the hon. gentleman must have been suffering from nerves. One would never have thought that he was pleased with the information, judging from the way he received it. When the Minister is not in agreement with something that is offered from this side of the House I should hope to see better behaviour from him. During my term in this Assembly I have never seen him behave in a similar manner to that in which he acted yesterday. Yesterday he gave us a shocking display of bad temper.

A good deal has been said on both sides of the Chamber about the recent election campaign. I do not propose to go into this matter at length, but as much has been said it is probable that where there is smoke there is fire. I have the greatest respect for my opponent at the recent election. He played the game as straight as a die throughout the campaign, but unfortunately he was misguided by two men. More unfortunately still, those two men were employed in two sections of the Public Service that do more for the Commonwealth than any other part. I refer to the Police Force and the Postal Department. During the election campaign Constable Paterson, who was on leave, went through the electorate getting votes. To my mind he was a disgrace to his uniform and the force in which he is employed. Despite what has been said by some hon. members we must admit that the police have to perform some very delicate duties, and it is to their credit that in most cases they perform them well. In this instance I am sorry that the constable joined in the election campaign.

The postmaster—I understand his name is Gough—was equally bad. Not only did he do what the constable did but he visited other post offices throughout the electorate to find out how many names were on the roll. It is strange that in the electorate of Aubigny, where I get a majority at every polling booth except one, where I am defeated by nine—the figures are 79 to 88—the postal vote this year was three times as great as ever before. I was defeated in the postal vote. This seems strange, but I make no suggestions, merely leaving the matter to hon. members to think out for themselves.

We can quite understand what the position might have been in some of the electorates where the results were close—we can understand how they could have been affected if the same action had been taken there. The statement I have made about the electorate of Aubigny can be verified; the figures are there for anybody to see.

**Mr. Aikens:** Don't you believe that a policeman or a postal official has any civil right?

**Mr. SPARKES:** I do, but I do not think that the hon. member for Mundingburra or anybody else has the right to go round and misrepresent things.

**Mr. Aikens:** I am not talking about misrepresentation. I am talking about their interesting themselves in elections.

**Mr. SPARKES:** It must be admitted by every member on the Government benches that the Government lost ground in the country at the last elections. There can be no doubt about that.

**Mr. Smith:** I increased mine.

**Mr. SPARKES:** There has to be an exception in everything, Mr. Speaker, to prove the rule, and the exception is my friend the hon. member for Carpentaria, where there are only about 600 people. The others have all drifted to the cities from his electorate; anybody who wanted to get away got away. Why, the electorate has gone to glory. Yes, he had a majority, but I would advise him not to take that majority too much to heart because in the next three years he will probably have a sorry look on his face, the same as other hon. members on his side.

**Mr. Collins:** You told us that the last time.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I will deal with the position in relation to the Minister who interjects. His stocks have gone down because at the elections before last he had a majority of 1,846 but this year his majority was only 903—a 50 per cent. reduction. Where will he be next year? Why, Mr. Speaker, any schoolboy could answer that question. There may be others on the Government side of the House who would like to come into this matter. Figures talk in all languages; a similar position prevails in respect of Carnarvon.

**Mr. Bruce:** Give us the totals?

**Mr. SPARKES:** Just a second. The Minister would walk in; he is getting so old that he cannot see the light of day. He should put on his glasses to see where he is walking. I will deal first with the position in Carnarvon. In the 1944 elections the sitting member had a majority of about 900, but this year that majority was reduced to 400. I ask: where will Carnarvon be in another three years? Now I will deal with the electorate of The Tableland. One would think that the hon. member for The Tableland had a wonderful majority.

**Mr. Bruce:** Give us the facts.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Yes, I will give the plain facts; I always rely on giving them. The hon. member's majority in 1944 was 1,524, but this year it was 826, and I again ask: where will he be in three years' time? If the hon. member is hale and hearty—and I hope he is—you will find that he will be walking up and down the street.

**Mr. Bruce:** Oh, no.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Then he will be gone. Is there anybody else on that side of the House who would like to come into the discussion?

**Mr. Smith:** Carpentaria.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I told the hon. member that there was one exception.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. Bruce** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Government Members** interjecting.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I should like the Secretary for Public Instruction to show a little courtesy when I call for order and I should like the hon. member for Aubigny to address the Chair and not seek interjections.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really started off to quote the figures to show that in the country electorates—with the odd exception that proves the rule—the vote had been against Labour. The next electorate I take is Dalby and in that case it is not that the majority of the Labour member was reduced but that Labour was ousted entirely. At the 1944 election the majority for the Labour representative was about 279 and at the last election the Labour candidate was down by 1,759. Will hon. members opposite say that that is not a swing against Labour? It is not an isolated case, either.

Now I come to the Kennedy electorate and I know how the hon. member for Kennedy feels about that—like some of the young girls of the Youth Movement in the procession on Monday night when it was so cold. He is shivering at the results. In the 1944 election the hon. member was returned with a majority of over 2,000 and we heard a great deal from him, but at the last election his majority was a little over 200 and we rarely hear from him now. Where will he be at the next elections—a majority of 2,000 reduced to 100 or 200? Is there not a swing against Labour there?

Look at what happened in Mirani. At the 1944 election the Minister for Transport, Mr. Walsh, had a majority of 1,193, but after going to the polls this year and holding the important position of Minister for Transport he is down by 1,354. The hon. member for Toowoomba now holds the position of Minister for Transport and he should mark that result. For his sake I hope it is not an indication of what is to happen to him, but it is just as well for him to heed the warning.

Now I come to Port Curtis. Hon. members opposite may interject as they like, but unfortunately for them I am making this speech and I am giving these figures. There is no doubt whatever that there is very much truth in the old axiom that the truth hurts. When you tell the truth you can always get the true reactions of hon. members opposite. At the 1944 election Labour had a majority of 1,800, but at the last election that had dropped to 300. Where will Labour be at the next elections for Port Curtis?

Now I move along to the Warrego electorate, and I know, Mr. Speaker, that you know that country very well and no man in this Chamber is better able to speak of this far-western part of the State than yourself. At the 1944 election Labour had a majority in Warrego of 2,000, but at the last election of only 700. What is going to happen in the Warrego electorate at the next election?

**Mr. O'Shea** interjected.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I suggest to the hon. member who has interjected that he should make the best of the next three years in Parliament and put a little aside because the writing is on the wall.

Now I come to Warwick. At the 1944 election the Labour majority was nearly 800, but at the last election Warwick returned the little boy on this side with a majority of 300-odd. Will hon. members opposite say that those figures do not disclose this startling fact to them, that the vote swung against the Labour Party in the country?

**A Government Member:** You said last year we should be beaten this year.

**Mr. SPARKES:** The fact remains that I have given the figures and there is something wrong with the Government of the day in the country. If hon. members will listen I will tell them—and I have always held this opinion—what I think should be done not only to keep the people in the country but also to maintain the faith of the people in the country in the Government of the day. I hope when I do so that hon. members opposite will not do as the Minister for Transport did and disregard my advice, as he disregarded the representations of the hon. member for Dalby. If he does, we shall know exactly where we are.

We have heard a great deal about the cause of the drift from the country to the city. I regard the remarks of the hon. member for Carnarvon on this subject as foolish and stupid and worthy of no more than passing reference. The drift from the country to the city is very evident and is known to every sensible public man in Australia. It does not matter what the Government do. It is a problem that faces every Government in Australia today. How we can arrest that drift and induce the people to stay in the country is the problem facing Governments. Some hon. members have suggested an inducement could be given to them by levelling off the income tax. I will not say that will be a cure of the evil. In fact, there are many who do not agree with that idea. I suggest that there are three great problems in the country today. They are roads, electricity, and water.

Many hon. members, probably some of my own friends on this side of the House, will say: why put water or irrigation last? I do so for the simple reason that the greater part of Queensland does not lend itself to irrigation. I say advisedly the greater part. There are certain parts such as the Lockyer Valley, the Cooyar Valley, and Barambah Creek that do, but they are comparatively small areas in this great State. When I visited the United

States of America I went very closely into the question of irrigation there. I found that in all instances they had exactly what we have not got in this State, and in some places we have factors unfavourable to irrigation that they do not possess. For instance, the great inland area of this State is black-soil country. We have not one river that is fed from snow-capped mountains. We have no great rivers leading into Western Queensland. Therefore the great western areas of Queensland, from what I have seen in other parts of the world—this may not be popular—do not warrant such schemes as we hear proposed and we shall not be able to make great advances with irrigation in the western areas. It was for that reason that I placed irrigation last on my list of the three great things that the inland calls for.

I realise that water is vital for development, but I place roads first and electricity second. Roads are the great important things required throughout the length and breadth of Queensland today. I have been associated for nearly 30 years with local authorities. I have studied the road question. I have seen the growth of roads under the direction of local authorities. If we continue to build roads under the present set-up, we shall never build the class of road that Queensland requires. It does not matter whether the Government are Labour or Country Party, or what they may be, some action must be taken to build roads at a faster rate than we are building them today.

Roads cannot be built under our present shire system. Apart from that, it is unfair that a man, because he owns a farm, should be called upon to contribute as largely as he does towards the cost of building roads.

In the olden days the horse and sulky were the means of conveyance and the extent of travel was perhaps 20, 30, 40 or 50 miles a day, and a bitumen road was not necessary; it was much better to have a good earth road. As hon. members may have seen demonstrated at the Exhibition, we have gone from the bullock dray and sulky to the fast motor vehicle. If the people on the land are to have some of the amenities of the city and so be induced to remain in the bush, we must first provide good all-weather roads.

**Mr. Devries:** What does it cost to build a mile of metal road?

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member should be the last person to interject in that respect. The cost of a metal road in the inland represents an enormous sum.

**Mr. Devries:** That is so.

**Mr. SPARKES:** That is why I have said that it is beyond the ratepayers to do it, and the Government of the day—irrespective of their political colour—must realise that this is a national question. The local authorities cannot do it. In the area that the hon. member for Gregory represents, if the whole of the properties were handed over to the councils, in some cases they could not provide sufficient money to give the people roads throughout the area.

**Mr. Devries:** I agree with you there.

**Mr. O'Shea:** You believe in nationalisation.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Do I believe in starvation? (Laughter.) If the hon. member will listen, he will learn something. Representing a far western area, the hon. member knows that he must disagree with the hon. member for Carnarvon. I point to towns in his own electorate that to-day are not the prosperous towns they were 10 to 15 years ago. The hon. member cannot deny that. It is not a matter of hundreds of thousands of pounds; it is a matter of millions of pounds that must be found for building these roads. The day is past when local authorities could provide the necessary money. It should be done and must be done by a tax on everyone. If I come along and buy 20 gallons of petrol it does not matter whether I own a piece of land or not, I pay the petrol tax; and that money should go towards the building of roads throughout the State; until it does, we cannot have the roads that the people in the country districts require.

**Mr. Smith:** Do you agree that the motor vehicle has created ghost towns in the West?

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member has driven nearly all the people out of his electorate, and now he wants to know about the ghost towns. If the hon. member would listen to what I am saying, he would probably learn how to get the people back into his electorate.

This matter of roads is so important that I cannot stress it too strongly. I hope the Government will take cognisance of the fact that it is one of the most important things of the day.

Electricity is a wonderful thing in the country, but under the present system one would have to be nearly a millionaire to connect up with the electricity service in the country areas, and it is no use connecting Jandowae with Dalby and Chinchilla unless the people in between are served too. That is the trouble we are up against today.

Now I want to address some more remarks to the Minister for Transport. It is not by way of criticism as I wish to emphasise to the hon. gentleman that I am wholeheartedly with him in his opinion that the railways have a big role to play in this State. There is no doubt about that. There are a number of splendid men in the railways and it is a great pity that they should be made to suffer because of a few, but the railwaymen must be made to understand that they are common carriers and the public are their customers to whom they must give service and that they must realise that or go to the wall. No matter what a Government do, they cannot stop progress and if the railways are not prepared to give a fast and efficient transport service to the people they must give way to road transport and let it give to the people the service each and every one demands.

**Mr. INGRAM (Keppel) (12.1 p.m.):** I am very pleased indeed to be again standing in this Assembly and able to participate in this debate and add my contribution to the debate on the motion so ably moved by the hon.

member for Cairns and seconded by the hon. member for Nundah. I am sure that the speeches delivered by these two members indicate that they will be an acquisition to this Parliament.

I also join with hon. members in extending my congratulations to His Excellency, Sir John Lavarack, on his appointment as Governor of Queensland. I feel certain that he will discharge his duties with credit to himself and the people of the State. The authorities responsible for such a wise choice are to be commended. I have always contended that a native-born Queenslander should be appointed to fill this high position and I am pleased that at long last that is so. My contention has always been that there have been the brains and ability in Queensland to fill such offices without our having to send overseas.

To you, Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations on your re-election. You have filled the chair with credit to yourself and I am sure you will continue to do so. Whilst I continue to be a member of this Assembly you can rest assured that you will have my wholehearted support.

To the Premier I offer my sincerest congratulations for the way in which he led his party, the Australian Labour Party, to victory at the election on 3 May, 1947. Every person must admit too that in doing so he fought one of the cleanest fights ever known. He did not abuse or slander his opponents. But I cannot say the same about them. The electors of Queensland admit that he put up a splendid fight and he is very highly thought of by these people.

We have listened to a great deal of talk in this Chamber during the past days on how the elections were conducted. The Opposition members, particularly the Queensland People's Party, charged Labour supporters with having committed irregularities. By their speeches in this Chamber one would regard them as the lily-whites of Queensland but they are far from being that. I say definitely that the workers of the Queensland People's Party, particularly those in my electorate and other electorates in the Central Division, were as crooked as one could find them. I have had a great deal of experience over the past 30 years in elections and I have never known such dirty whispering campaigns from house to house indulged in, not only by their candidates but also by their organisers. They even went to the extent of getting clerks from Government departments to act as scrutineers at the polling booths and to sit at tables outside the booths to try to gull the people into voting for them. In many cases they even got pretty little girls to sit in these positions, thinking they would catch the eyes of the young men and get their votes.

**Mr. Chalk:** Were you jealous?

**Mr. INGRAM:** I was not a bit jealous.

Hon. members opposite complained that a policeman had taken a candidate round in the North, but they went to the extent of taking officials from Government departments in the Rockhampton district and inducing them to stand as candidates, whereas the Labour

Party relied only on members of the A.L.P. and affiliated unions for help during the campaign. The Labour Party did not lower itself by going to Government departments in an attempt to gain control of the Government benches. I merely mention these things to show how low Queensland People's Party supporters will stoop in their efforts to win an election.

As another instance of the depths to which they will sink, let me say that the hon. member for Toowong said from the platform that I, the hon. member for Keppel, did nothing in this House but play billiards from morning till night. What a deliberate falsehood! Queensland People's Party members, as well as Country Party and Labour members, have a right to go into the billiard room for a little recreation when they wish. Did I ever object to the hon. member for Toowong's leaving this Chamber to go to the courts and plead cases to augment his Parliamentary salary? Did I object to his leaving the Chamber on week-days when the House has been sitting to go into the country and play golf? I do not object to any man's having his recreation, but I mention these things to show how low Queensland People's Party supporters will sink.

I was also accused by the Queensland People's Party, through the Press, of residing in Brisbane. I do not reside in Brisbane. My home address is Walterhall, Mount Morgan, where I have been for 30-odd years.

The hon. member for Toowong said also that I never spoke in Parliament. That is a deliberate falsehood. One thing is certain, however, and that is that I speak only on matters about which I know something, whereas members of the Queensland People's Party are jumping up continually, speaking on matters about which they know nothing, and this for nothing but propaganda purposes.

We were also accused of bringing into the Fitzroy and Keppel electorates hundreds of workers from other parts of the State and inducing them to take employment and become enrolled so that we could benefit from their votes and win those seats. I have never heard more deliberate falsehoods in my life. Not one worker was brought to either Keppel or Fitzroy from any part of the State for that purpose.

**Mr. Jesson:** Tell us about Lake's Creek.

**Mr. INGRAM:** I will come to that later. If the Queensland People's Party supporters had taken the trouble to read the Tory Press in Rockhampton, the "Rockhampton Morning Bulletin," they would have seen that the chairman of the Fitzroy Shire Council, Mr. O'Shanesy, contradicted that assertion made by the Queensland People's Party, and at the election before last he was their candidate for the Rockhampton seat.

That will show how low the Queensland People's Party will stoop when they say that we had to get people from other parts of the State into the central electorates, and give them jobs so that we could get their votes.

I heard the hon. member for Toowong saying the other day in this House that Labour supporters did this and Labour supporters did that with regard to application forms for postal votes. Would it surprise you, Mr. Speaker, to know that their own candidate for Keppel also handled application forms for postal votes, a thing that I, myself, have not been guilty of. Notwithstanding all these charges made by the Queensland People's Party against the Labour Party, not one seat in the Central division of the State was lost to Labour, although the Opposition Party spent thousands and thousands of pounds in each and every electorate in an effort to get control.

During the visit by the hon. member for Windsor to Rockhampton at election time he stated that the Premier was not game to go to the Lake's Creek meatworks. There was no need for the Premier or any Labour candidate to go to the meatworks. That fact was proved by the election results. The hon. member for Windsor paid a visit to the meatworks and it is rather strange that at the previous elections when Labour candidates went to the meatworks they addressed their meetings in the dirt behind the slaughter-yards, but when the hon. member for Windsor and his candidate wanted to address meetings at the same meatworks those meetings had to be held in the dining-room or other inside parts of the works. Of course, when he got to the dining-room the men objected to Mr. Bruce Pie's speaking in the meatworks.

**Mr. Pie:** Not the men.

**Mr. INGRAM:** Yes, they did. The men would not allow Mr. Bruce Pie to speak.

**Mr. Pie:** The organiser would not.

**Mr. INGRAM:** The hon. member for Windsor turned on the organiser, Mr. Power, and said, "You are the cause of this and I am not afraid of you." Is that not correct?

**Mr. Pie:** I will tell you what I did say.

**Mr. INGRAM:** The organiser said, "Not when you have the police and the works managers to protect you," and to this the hon. member for Windsor said, "I am not looking for their protection." With that Mr. Power putting down his glasses, said, "If that is the case, come on." But Mr. Bruce Pie turned on his heel and walked away. He would not accept the challenge of the organiser. What do we find appearing in the Press a few days later—"Has not Mr. Pie got guts?" It did not look as if he had when he turned on his heel and would not accept the challenge of Mr. Power. Those statements are true in every particular.

A few nights after this the Queensland People's Party candidate, Mr. Weir, when addressing a meeting at Mount Morgan, referred to this incident at Lake's Creek by saying that when they got down there and were approaching the dining-room all they could hear was cat-calls, groans and tins rattling and that when they got inside all they could see was chunks of beef and no

brains. He was referring to the workers. That was the sort of statement made by the Queensland People's Party candidate in his election address at Mount Morgan. What a fine statement, coming from a school teacher? I should like to remind the Queensland People's Party that the men in the meatworks have as much brains and ability as their candidates at that election, if not more.

These Lake's Creek meat workers have done a fine job over the last few years and they are continuing to do that job. They are criticised and condemned by hon. members opposite and were especially despised by their political enemies during the last strike, of which the company itself was the sole cause. I propose to explain just how these meatwork bosses have treated scab labour there and I cite one case in particular. It refers to two lads, one 17 years of age and the other 16, the first being a free labourer and the other, the 16-year-old lad, a member of the A.M.I.E.U. A fight had occurred and it was reported to the works manager, Mr. Hincheliff. He had the two lads brought before him and he said to the A.M.I.E.U. member, "I do not believe you but I believe this lad," indicating the free labourer, "because he is worth two A.M.I.E.U. members." Turing to the free labourer he said, "You can go back to your work," but the A.M.I.E.U. member had to leave his job. That is what takes place at the Lake's Creek meatworks and that is the stuff that the Queensland People's Party stands for today, although its members have the audacity to get up in this Chamber and say that they are behind the workers. I want to say right here and now that the Queensland People's Party cannot gull the workers into voting for them. In fact, the people in the country have long realised that the Queensland People's Party is purely and simply a Brisbane show, nothing else.

We have had a good deal of criticism from hon. members opposite, especially the hon. member for Windsor, about our alleged obsolete railway workshops and machinery. Before I go any further, let me say that the hon. member for Windsor did not at any time during the last election campaign go to the Rockhampton railway workshops. He simply relied on the information that he got from the Queensland People's Party candidate, this Flash Gordon of Rockhampton who opposed the Treasurer, Jimmy Lacombe, and, oh boy! what a hiding he got! This man who ran against Jimmy Lacombe condemned the very railway workshops in which he had been employed, but when he was sadly defeated at the polls he could not get back quick enough to these obsolete workshops to take up his job again. All this criticism and condemnation of the railway workshops is just purely political propaganda against the Labour Government.

We have heard also a good deal of criticism, and destructive criticism at that, about our railway system, but I would remind hon. members opposite that they should be sure of their facts before they criticise the railways of Queensland. They are everlastingly squealing about our slow stock trains. Are

they not aware of the speed of these trains in the other States in comparison with those in Queensland? Let me tell them all about them. The overall speed in New South Wales is 14.8 miles an hour, as against 15.7 miles an hour in Queensland. The Queensland Government grant wonderful concessions to the man on the land, such as rebates on freight for store and stud cattle. The rebates are substantial, in some cases, as with fodder for starving stock, up to 50 per cent.

Let me compare now the freight on live-stock in Queensland with that in the other States of Australia. My first comparison relates to the cost of carrying a bullock on the railways 600 miles. Here are the figures:—

	s.	d.
New South Wales ..	35	3
South Australia ..	42	3
West Australia ..	36	6
Queensland ..	26	8

The figures for Queensland are the lowest, yet hon. members opposite say that we are over-charging the man on the land in the present freight rates.

The rates for sheep for a similar distance are as follows—

	s.	d.
New South Wales ..	3	6
South Australia ..	3	4
West Australia ..	3	8
Queensland ..	3	0

Again these figures show that Queensland has the lowest rate. These figures should prove that the Queensland Labour Government have given and will continue to give every consideration to the man on the land in the matter of freight rates.

We have heard a great deal of criticism of our allegedly slow trains and hon. members opposite say that our trains should be run to timetable. I do not know anything about the Southern Division but I intend to quote facts concerning the Central Division. In that division we have a tremendous number of trains going night and day through Rockhampton and when we take into consideration that fact we must admit that it is impossible for them to be exactly up to time. I have frequently seen in the course of my travels a train waiting in a siding to allow another train to pass.

To illustrate the heavy traffic through Rockhampton, I quote the following numbers of trains in and out of that centre on specific days:—

Monday, 28 July ..	100
Tuesday, 29 July ..	90
Wednesday, 30 July ..	90
Thursday, 31 July ..	78
Friday, 1 August ..	91
Saturday, 2 August ..	99
Sunday, 3 August ..	67

That is a total in seven days of 615 trains.

Then we have hon. members opposite particularly contending that our railways today are not doing the job set them. I will show that the railways are carrying increasing tonnages in the Central Division; again I do not know anything about the Southern

Division. The following figures are for the inwards and outwards traffic at the Rockhampton goods depot:—

	Inwards.	Outwards.
	Tons.	Tons.
1945.		
July ..	7,669	4,715
August ..	7,751	5,409
September ..	7,197	4,377
October ..	8,603	4,824
November ..	9,618	5,019
December ..	7,496	4,031
1946.		
January ..	7,353	3,895
February ..	8,288	5,123
March ..	8,979	3,929
April ..	10,771	5,242
May ..	13,439	6,248
June ..	8,343	5,063
Total ..	105,507	57,875
July ..	8,340	4,992
August ..	11,135	5,409
September ..	13,070	7,112
October ..	14,006	8,547
November ..	11,404	6,894
December ..	9,112	4,680
1947.		
January ..	10,480	4,911
February ..	9,702	4,007
March ..	11,355	4,484
April ..	10,348	4,561
May ..	13,178	4,075
June ..	10,903	4,653
Total ..	133,033	64,925

The increase in the inward traffic was 27,526 tons, equal to 26 per cent., while the increase in the outward traffic was 7,050 tons, equal to 12 per cent. These figures show that the railways today are doing a magnificent job, particularly in the Central Division, of which Rockhampton is the centre.

Hon. members opposite talk about the speed of our trains. We know how easy it is to criticise and how difficult it is to support that criticism by facts. I will give some facts that will disprove their claim. They are found in the following table:—

Section.	Miles.	Time.		M.P.H.
		Hrs.	Min.	
Townsville-Bowen ..	119	4	42	25½
Bowen-Proserpine ..	40	1	30	26½
Proserpine-Bloomsbury ..	22		50	26½
Bloomsbury-Mackay ..	53½	1	55	28
Mackay-St. Lawrence ..	94½	3	15	29
St. Lawrence-Rockhampton ..	107	3	46	28½
Rockhampton-Gladstone ..	68½	2	25	28½
Gladstone-Bundaberg ..	110½	3	52	28½
Bundaberg-Baddow ..	52½	1	50	28½
Baddow-Gympie ..	58	2	15	25½
Gympie-Roma Street ..	106½	4	31	23½

I have more figures here but I do not want to weary the House with them. It is all very well for the Opposition to squeal about the trains they say are delayed, but there are the actual figures, and they cannot get anything better in any other State; in fact, there are other States in which their miles per hour are only half that of Queensland.

I wish now to make reference to housing. I heard the hon. member for East Toowoomba criticising our houses the other day, and talking about their being jerry-built. First I want to commend the Government for the magnificent way in which they are going about the erection of houses throughout Queensland. I do not know how many houses are being erected in East Toowoomba, but I

know a great number are being erected in Rockhampton. I challenge the hon. member for East Toowoomba to contradict my statement that these houses are equal to anything that have been built in this State; it is not true that they are jerry-built. I have been through the houses in Rockhampton both before completion and afterwards. I went and interviewed the tenants and they told me that they had never been in such good homes. That speaks volumes for this Government.

**Mr. Muller:** Have you ever been out to Moorooka?

**Mr. INGRAM:** I am talking about Rockhampton; I know nothing about Moorooka.

Much has been said about irrigation. I agree that it is something that we must push on with. But we must realise that we have only just finished a tremendous war and it has been absolutely impossible for any Government throughout the Commonwealth or the world to do in the space of time at their disposal the things that they wanted to do. The Government are doing all they possibly can towards the provision of water. In the Central Division, for instance, they have experts testing the underground supplies. We must keep moving and move quickly if we want the farmers to remain on the land and prosper. We have excellent supplies in the Central Division, particularly in the Fitzroy River and other great streams, that could be used to encourage these people to produce more than they are producing today.

I heard condemnation from some hon. members opposite of the Government's main-roads policy. I say without fear of contradiction that the Government are going on well with their policy. The Opposition should realise that it has been impossible to get the machinery, the tools and the men required to carry out all the jobs that the Government wish to do. I give great credit to the Main Roads Commission; it is doing a very good job in the Central Division, in all parts of which road works are in progress and in many of them bridges over creeks as well. The Government and the Main Roads Commission are to be congratulated on the way in which they are carrying out the work under trying circumstances.

We have heard a great amount of criticism of our State Labour Government, but I say emphatically that no Government in the Commonwealth or in the world have done more for the people they govern than the Queensland Labour Government have done.

At 12.30 p.m.,

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

**Mr. INGRAM:** The Queensland Labour Government proved that they were competent to do the job the people gave them and they will do it for many years to come.

**Mr. MULLER** (Fassifern) (12.30 p.m.): In this my first speech in the first session of the 31st Parliament, I offer my sincerest

congratulations to His Excellency the Governor, Sir John Lavarack, on his appointment to the high and honoured position of Governor of the State. I extend them to his his partner and wife, Lady Lavarack, also. I am sure that we gathered here know exactly the part a man's wife plays in the carrying out of his public duties, and I am sure we wish them both a very happy and successful term of office.

I take this opportunity also of congratulating Mr. Speaker on being reappointed to that position. In public life it is one thing to attain office, but quite another thing to retain it. To yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I offer my sincere congratulations on your having been again appointed Chairman of Committees of the whole House. I have no complaint to make of the treatment you or Mr. Speaker has given me while in your respective positions.

At 12.32 p.m.,

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

**Mr. MULLER:** This first session of this Parliament is unique in respect of the procedure that was adopted in the early part of the session. In my experience at no time has it been necessary for the Leader of the Opposition to move an amendment to the Address in Reply. When the amendment was moved I must confess I was somewhat vague as to the information likely to be placed before the House, but having listened to the speeches of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and members of the Queensland People's Party, I have come to the conclusion that a cloud still hangs over the recent State elections. I regret to have to say that. I sit here, not in the role of judge, but as an ordinary layman or jurymen, and I feel I am expressing the view of the people of this State who have read the speeches made and the evidence submitted, and the replies from the Government benches, when I say that it is doubtful whether the right parties are today acting in the capacity of advisers to His Excellency the Governor. I formed this opinion, and so far nothing has been said or done to alter it. I formed the opinion, for instance, that in and around the city of Brisbane ballot papers are as cheap as rags. I must be quite fair. I do not think advantage should be taken of the privileges we enjoy in this House to criticise any section of the Public Service, and first of all I must point out that in my own electorate there is a clerk of petty sessions who is returning officer; and if you placed me on my oath I could not tell you whether that man has ever voted for Labour or for Country Party. The remark applies to the number of the presiding officers that officiate throughout the electorate. I have no reason to doubt the integrity or sincerity of the officers, and I am not saying this merely because I have been successful at the poll. I honestly could not say which way these gentlemen vote, but when I see what has occurred in Brisbane and the loose methods employed in connection with postal votes, I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

you will forgive me when I say that I feel doubtful whether the right men have been elected.

I cannot understand why there should be any difference between an election conducted in Fassifern and one conducted in the city. I know that in the Fassifern electorate it is not possible to obtain postal votes in the easy slipshod manner in which it is done in the cities. I was amazed to hear it said that people, even though they do not represent a political party, have been able to go to electors with application forms for postal votes and then hand ballot-papers to them. Where did these men get those ballot-papers?

**Mr. Moore:** There is no evidence to support that at all.

**Mr. MULLER:** That has been reported to this House and not one hon. member on the Government side has been able to refute it. If that has been going on then I can only express the hope that during this session the Government will amend the provisions of the Act relating to postal and absentee votes in particular.

**Mr. Gair:** Tell me why they did not report it if they had evidence to support their statements?

**Mr. MULLER:** In all fairness to the Deputy Premier I must say that I was impressed with the strength of his reply. He asked why, if these things are as glaring as has been asserted, the persons making the charges did not report the matter to the police. But they retorted by asking for a royal commission into the allegations. Since that day we have had only silence.

**Mr. Gair:** The Act provides that any complaint may be made within eight weeks following the return of the writs.

**Mr. MULLER:** I am aware of that.

**Mr. Gair:** They have had three months, and they come here to make their statements, not out of any conscientious desire to correct the position but merely to gain political capital.

**Mr. MULLER:** If a thing is wrong for eight weeks it can be wrong for months and nothing has been done by the Government to satisfy the public that the recent elections were conducted on clean lines. I repeat that if any legislation is brought down to amend the Act I hope we shall see a tightening up of the provisions governing absentee and postal votes.

Another charge that has not been refuted was that made by one hon. member on this side who said that a count had been made in one polling booth in the Kurilpa electorate and it showed a majority of approximately 80 in favour of the Queensland People's Party candidate.

**Mr. Gair:** Why did they not take that to the Tribunal?

**Mr. MULLER:** I am mentioning things that have been placed before the House. After this count was made a check count was

decided upon. That check count was made and it is asserted here that it was signed by the presiding officer and both scrutineers, who thus certified it as correct. Then, it was stated, the presiding officer asked the scrutineers to attend next morning for a review of the count that had been made the previous night. When the count was reviewed it showed not a majority of 80 for the Queensland People's Party candidate but a majority of something like 38 for the Labour candidate. In addition, five informal votes were found in the bundle. I am satisfied that the weather can change overnight but I am by no means convinced that ballot papers that were placed in a ballot box and sealed can change overnight unless they are interfered with.

**Mr. Gair:** Do you not think that matter is serious enough for reference to the Tribunal?

**Mr. MULLER:** I should say yes.

**Mr. Gair:** Why did they not make application to the court?

**Mr. MULLER:** I say to the Deputy Premier that if those charges were made against me and I were in his position I would not let the matter hang in doubt for five minutes but would have a thorough investigation.

**Mr. Gair:** Political propaganda.

**Mr. MULLER:** The Deputy Premier has had the opportunity of clearing the atmosphere and satisfying the people of Queensland.

**Mr. Gair:** They did not even report it to the Under Secretary for Justice.

**Mr. MULLER:** They should have satisfied the people of Queensland that these things did not happen. It is this sort of thing that causes so much harm in the minds of the people. We are supposed to have a high standard of democracy and everyone has equal rights at the polls. I am not making the charges but I am giving the Government every opportunity to clear themselves.

**Mr. Gair:** I answered them.

**Mr. MULLER:** I ask the Government to clear the matter up. I should hate to be a member of this Assembly and think that sort of thing was going on and if the Deputy Premier will authorise an open inquiry I shall take my hat off to him and congratulate him. If hon. members on my left have made unfounded charges, they should be exposed. It has been alleged that illegal practices were adopted during the recent elections and the people of Queensland still doubt whether the right party has been elected. The Leader of the Opposition moved the amendment to the Address in Reply, however, with a different object in view. He moved it purely and simply on the grounds that Labour was in office with a minority vote. There was no charge or allegations of irregular practices, but in this case there have been allegations of irregular practices and not one finger has been moved to satisfy the people of Queens-

land that those irregular practices were not indulged in.

I did not wish to devote so much time to the recent elections but—I am pleased to know that the Deputy Premier is in the House and I regret that the Premier is not present—I feel that in the interests of the people the matter should have been cleaned up. All we want is the truth, nothing more, nothing less.

I referred when speaking on the recent Appropriation Bill to the excellent speeches made by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. I repeat my remarks and sincerely congratulate the hon. member for Cairns and the hon. member for Nundah on the speeches they made. The thought occurred to me that those men had come into this House with clear and unbiased minds and spoke of things as they believed them to be. We members of this Assembly represent a fair cross-section of the community. There are several new members on both sides of the House but the difference between those new members on the Government side and those occupying the Opposition benches is that the men on this side of the House will be entitled in future to continue to express the same views as they expressed in their maiden speeches, whereas the new men on the Government side of the House, if I understand Labour policy, will not be permitted in the future to have their own views. They will have their speeches made by Mr. Clarry Fallon, by Mr. Healy or by Mr. Chifley, who will do their thinking for them. That, of course, is regrettable.

While I am in my usual solicitous mood today, I should like to congratulate the Government on what is described in the Governor's Speech as a 10-year plan. I like the idea of planning, because if we are to progress in business and in other directions we must have some objective. The Government have a new stunt in what they describe as a 10-year plan, but I am just afraid that they will not be long enough in Government to complete it. However, I want to assure them that in the event of their being defeated at the polls in three years' time, the Opposition who will then be in Government will complete the plan, although it may be necessary to amend it in two or three directions.

I notice also from His Excellency's Speech that the Government have been successful again in balancing the Budget, a very important feature of any business undertaking. We should pay our way, although that is not a common practice with Labour Governments. Although they have balanced the Budget and shown a surplus of £15,856, on which I congratulate them, if you turn to the next page in the Speech you will see that for 1945-46 the Government spent £2,408,664 from loan funds, and last year £4,531,663, or £2,122,966 more than in the previous year. I mention those figures simply to point out that there is no great difficulty in balancing the Budget when you can draw upon loan funds more heavily than before, and so ease up on consolidated revenue when it appears that the Budget

may not be balanced. It is an easy matter to balance the Budget in those circumstances when plenty of loan money is available.

I want to congratulate the Premier on the stand that he took at the recent Premiers' Conference, and particularly on his attitude towards uniform taxation, taxation allotments, social services and unification. I am with him in those matters right up to the hilt, but again I have to confess that I am rather confused when I contrast the attitude of the Premier on those subjects with his attitude towards the nationalisation of banking. I defy anyone to dispute the contention that all these matters are more or less socialistic and that the Government have only themselves to blame for the mess they are in with regard to uniform taxation. My mind goes back only a few years to the time when the subject of uniform taxation was introduced into this House, when a statement was made by the then Premier, the Hon. W. Forgan Smith—one that I shall never forget and one that I think is perfectly sound. When the proposal was introduced into this House the then Premier said something to the effect that the moment you forfeit your right to tax you forfeit your right to govern. That statement sank very deeply into my mind and I repeat that I shall never forget it. At that time hon. members opposite were almost hostile towards uniform taxation, but what has happened? What has happened is the reason why I mentioned earlier in my remarks that the new hon. members opposite would perhaps in the future not be allowed to do their own thinking. A few weeks later the Government took the question again to a Premiers' Conference, and at the direction of the Australian Council of Trades Unions they were told that they would have to accept uniform taxation whether they liked it or not. Soon after that, the State Parliament reassembled. In the meantime, I think, Mr. Cooper had become the Premier of the State.

Mr. Cooper came back from a Premier's Conference at Canberra and said, "Gentlemen, the position is slightly different from what it was when we examined the case a few weeks ago. Today we are recommending that you accept the principle of uniform taxation. It is not going to last for all time. It is just for the war period and 12 months thereafter." The 12 months have gone but uniform taxation is still with us. Moreover, Mr. Chifley has told the Premier pretty definitely, as well as other Premiers, that the principle of uniform taxation is going to stay.

I again think of Mr. Forgan Smith's statement that if you forfeit your right to tax, you forfeit your right to govern. We see that period approaching us very rapidly. I want to know what the Premier's position is with the members of his own party? I am delighted to see the hon. member for Buranda in his seat this morning. When he made his maiden speech in this debate he did not impress me as being a man who suffered from excitement, as he delivered his speech quite calmly and clearly. He declared him-

self an avowed unificationist. That is something he cannot refute. He based his conviction on the success of the Greater Brisbane system which he declared was framed on the basis of the principles of unification. He was an outright advocate of unification. We find men on the Government benches who are avowed unificationists and the Premier trying to justify a policy that is in contrast to that of the Commonwealth Government. Let us have a look at these other socialistic methods. After all, to me they spell socialisation. As I have said on a previous occasion, there is not much between Socialism and inflation and the Douglas Credit theory and Communism, too, if you like. They were all hatched in the one incubator from the one breed, the only difference being that one goes slightly further than the other. I congratulate the Premier on taking the stand he did at the recent Premiers' Conference on this question even at this late hour. I cannot reconcile his attitude on unification with that of the nationalisation of banking. After all, nationalisation of banking is just a matter of completing the chain. Under the bank nationalisation scheme the Commonwealth will be able to tell the State when to come in and where to get off.

Why is it intended to get rid of our private banks? We have been told that their nationalisation is necessary in order that we might be geared up—those are the words used from time to time by the Commonwealth Government—in readiness for the recession that is going to take place. Here I wish to remark that Mr. Chifley and the members of his Government seem to be quite sure that this recession or depression is coming, for they want to be geared up in readiness for it. On the other hand they have not given us one reason why the Commonwealth should take over private banks to be ready for this recession. They have not given us the slightest argument how nationalisation of banking will strengthen their position in dealing with this recession. It will only mean that they will be able to take the assets from the people who save money in order to help those who do not want to work.

We have had the Commonwealth Bank in business for quite a while. It has been optional for any one of us to transfer his account from a private bank to the Commonwealth Bank. I ask any hon. member opposite what advantage he obtains from transferring his private account from a private bank to the Commonwealth Bank. No-one has told us what work the private banks have done. I could give you thousands of instances of the good they have done, and how they have helped free and private enterprise. They have helped me and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I believe they have helped every other member of this House. I recollect the days when I started on a farm—I do not think any member in this House was as poor as I was at that time; many of us were in the same boat—and I had to borrow money, which was a great help to me.

**Mr. Collins** interjected.

**Mr. MULLER:** I am perfectly sure the hon. gentleman at some time or other was happy to go to a private bank; and I am sure he does not regret having done so either. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would not be in the position he now occupies if it were not for the help he got in those days from the private banks.

After all, what are the private banks? Are they exploiters or profiteers? No, of course they are not. From time to time I have heard the parrot cry, "You have to get rid of the money barons; they control the finance of the country; they make money." The policy of the Social Credit people was just plain silly because they said the private banks manufacture money and manufacture credit. If that were so, would it not be a great thing to have shares in a private bank, because the value of those shares would hit the roof? I should have been a shareholder long ago, and so would the Secretary for Public Works, who is about to interject. (Laughter.) The banks have done a great service. They keep my books and your books. Many of these men are experienced in finance, and they advise their clients from time to time.

I want to be kind to the Australian Labour Party, not only in Queensland but throughout the Commonwealth. I warn them that if they persist with this policy of the nationalisation of banking—wiping out the private banks—they will not be in the race at the next election, because the people will not stand for tinkering with their money.

**Mr. Crowley:** Why are you worrying?

**Mr. MULLER:** The hon. member will not be here, anyway; he is here only by accident.

I mention that because I confess I have been somewhat confused about the Premier's attitude in regard to the nationalisation of banking, and socialisation. Labour has tried to tell the world that it is perturbed at the growth of Communism. After all, what is the difference? There is not a great deal of difference. There may be a religious view, or something like that, but outside that it is just inflation. We have to go a little deeper than that. Suppose the policy of socialisation is right, that we have to accept it. I want hon. members to examine the trend of events under a system of socialisation. I am willing to accept the democratic way and if the majority of the people say that we have to accept socialisation, what do you think will happen? Hon. members know perfectly well that if we had all these "isations" we should have starvation. That is very evident already. Both in England and here we see that as a result of the socialisation trend nobody is willing to work. Socialisation is not what these people represent it to be—share and share alike; it is "live on the other fellow." Somebody has to work to produce the necessities of life. If you are going to raise the living standard, you must have production of goods. If I am going to loaf on the system it means that others have to work harder. During the last

election campaign men came to speak to me after my meetings, and they said to me, "We do not agree with all you have said, but we do agree that we must have a system that compels everybody to work."

At 2.15 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

**Mr. MULLER:** I have been endeavouring to impress on the House that if you, Mr. Speaker, are rich and I am poor it makes no difference to the contribution either of us can make to the economy of the State. What is needed in this country today is workers: it does not matter whether they are rich or poor. We hear it said that the only people who make any contribution to the State are workers and a great many of them are unionists. Whether a man is rich or poor, so long as he is working he is doing his share. Frequently people who refer to a certain section of the people as workers do not know what they are talking about, as in a great many instances these people do not work nearly so hard as those of whom they are talking.

There is not the slightest doubt that we are in a mess. We are in a financial mess such as we never have been in before, and an endeavour is being made to squirm out of it by a policy of inflation. Inflation is not a solution of that problem. History proves that under a system of inflation it is the poor people who suffer, chiefly because they have no assets to inflate. A man on a farm with only one cow, under a system of inflation has two cows; his one building becomes two buildings, whereas a man's wages do not go nearly as far as they would under normal conditions. One section of the community are becoming alive to this fact, the wage-earners, who have been supporting members on this side. That was demonstrated very clearly at the last elections. (Government interjections.) I would ask hon. members whether they can tell me of any time in the history of Queensland when the wage-earner's money would buy less. That silences many of my interjectors. Never was there a time when the award wages would buy less. The effect of this inflationary policy today is that instead of carrying a pound note in one's pocket one has to carry three pound notes.

As to union control I would point out that today we are not the elected representatives of the people but are elected by the unions. During the past 12 months we have had the spectacle of the ban on Dutch ships. This is a slur on the integrity of the people of Queensland and Australia, because a few unions have the power to decide whether a ship shall sail or not sail and the Government are too weak to put these men in their place. Where will that lead? Today it was said that hon. members should not make statements without making the necessary inquiries and becoming reasonably well-informed, and my information is that the people in Indonesia who are rebelling are a section of people influenced by Communistic motives. They are murderers, destroyers, they confine

people in their homes and burn those homes, and the Dutch Government are endeavouring to defend the innocent people. But when their ships come to Australia, because a certain section here are in league with the striking unionists or Communists, these ships are not loaded. Where are we getting to? That should silence interjections from the other side of the House. It is a serious matter, one that should not be passed over lightly. I wonder, if this sort of thing is allowed to continue, what is likely to be the next move.

We have had uniform taxation, under which the Commonwealth tell the States how much they are to have. Now we are threatened with nationalisation of banks and we have also the unions telling these people where to get off.

I repeat that our worth to the community is measured by the goods we produce. How much are we producing? There never was a time when goods were so short or so dear as they are now, and I charge the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock with being partly responsible because he and his colleagues played no mean part in putting the Chifley Government where they are today. We have been told that we can prevent inflation by price-fixing, but under a system of price-fixing supplies of goods have become shorter and shorter until we have now become satisfied that this method is economically unsound. For too long now this country has been controlled by theorists while practical men have been pushed aside.

A moment ago I referred to the number of men in the Public Service. The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock knows that while he has some very good men in his department who are worthy of their hire he has many who are not. I suggest that we have a large number of public servants who should be put out and made to earn their living as anyone else has to do. When we see this condition of affairs it is no wonder that people are drifting from the country to the cities. The hon. member for Carnarvon said yesterday that there was no drift to the cities, that he had made a survey of his electorate and found that no farms or grazing properties had been deserted. What he says is true as to the grazing properties and the farms, but the point is that where at one time each of these properties had three men engaged it now has only one. The man who says there is no drift to the cities does not know what he is talking about.

The hon. member also claimed credit for the Labour Party for introducing organised marketing. We are advocates of organised marketing.

**Mr. Collins:** But you were not when it was introduced.

**Mr. MULLER:** We are advocates of organised marketing, but we are opposed to the socialisation of industry. A few years ago, when the proposal was submitted to Parliament that the Constitution be amended to give the Commonwealth Government power over markets, all we asked was that they add the words, "under the control of the pro-

ducers thereof," but the Government did not accept that. Labour advocates a policy of socialisation of marketing and the principles of socialised marketing and organised marketing under the control of the producers are as far apart as the Poles.

I repeat that 90 per cent. of our present trouble is caused by the interference of Commonwealth and State Governments. I have stated that we advocate organised marketing and I hope to have the opportunity later of dealing with some of the statements made by the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock in connection with it.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong)** (2.25 p.m.): This debate, Mr. Speaker, has seen some notable contributions, particularly those delivered by the new members in their maiden speeches. I compliment those hon. members, because the making of a maiden speech is not an easy accomplishment.

I want to pay tribute this afternoon to His Honour the late Mr. Justice E. A. Douglas, whose tragic death yesterday shocked us deeply. I should not like to allow the opportunity to pass without offering to his wife and family my deep and very sincere sympathy in their sorrow, nor should I like the opportunity to pass without directing the attention of the people of Queensland to the fact that in the death of Mr. Justice E. A. Douglas they lost one of their most able champions. After he had been appointed to the Bench, in keeping with the traditions of the judiciary which have endured over the centuries, he cast aside all material ambitions, but retained one ambition only, and that was to deliver to posterity the rights that had been handed down to him by his ancestors. One of those rights—the one which he valued beyond all the rest—was the utter and inalienable independence of the judiciary. It was characteristic of the late Mr. Justice E. A. Douglas that he recognised that right, and asserted it, not as a privilege of a judge but as the common right of the people of the State.

In his steadfast defence of the independence of the judiciary, he was reminiscent of Lord Justice Coke, who answered the claim of James the First to a divine right in the King by reminding him that the King's own title to his crown had no other foundation than the known laws of the land. It would be well today for the people of Queensland to remind themselves that in this era judges are, more than at any other time, their only real safeguard of personal liberties, and I crave indulgence to elaborate on that point. It might be well that I quote from remarks made by an eminent American jurist, John Marshall, who said of the duties of a judge—

"He has to pass between the Government and the man whom that Government is prosecuting, between the most powerful individual in the community, and the poorest and most unpopular. It is of the last importance that in the exercise of those duties he should observe the utmost fairness. Need I press the necessity for this?"

Does not every man feel that his own personal security and the security of his property depend on that fairness? The Judicial Department comes home in its effects to every man's fireside; it passes on his property, his reputation, his life, his all. Is it not to the last degree important that he should be rendered perfectly and completely independent, with nothing to influence or control him but God and his conscience."

That adequately and precisely summarises the position of the late Mr. Justice E. A. Douglas. To pronounce a judgment that he did not implicitly believe to be founded upon the law and truth was as impossible for him as it was to prevaricate with God and his conscience.

Lord Bowen many years ago could have been seeing far ahead and indeed have been speaking of the late Mr. Justice E. A. Douglas when he said—

"There is no human being whose smile or frown—there is no Government, Tory or Liberal, whose favour or disfavour could start the pulse of an English Judge upon the Bench, or move by one hair's breadth the even equipoise of the scales of justice."

Not only was the late Mr. Justice Douglas temperamentally suited for his high office, he was intellectually equal to the exacting duties of that office. Gifted with a judicial mind, equipped with an immense capacity for work, he acquired and constantly drew upon a deep well of legal knowledge and mature wisdom. Furthermore, from his judgments and the reasons behind his judgments, he appeared to have been brought up in a religious reverence for the original simplicity of the laws of England. It was his constant desire to strip them of all sophistry by which they are sometimes perverted, and to penetrate those artifices by which they are sometimes involved in obscurity. He had a heart to distinguish right from wrong. He had a head to distinguish truth from falsehood. He understood the rights of humanity, and his supreme virtue was that he had the spirit to maintain them. On the passing of this honourable judge, this noble, great and sincere man, who has given so much valuable service to our State, I feel that we in Parliament should pay a tribute to him.

The debate has indicated a very big improvement in the quality of debates in this Chamber, but I have noticed from time to time a tendency on the part of some hon. members, not more than a few, to be somewhat light in their approaches to their duties here. I say that having regard to the situation through which we are passing today and the decisions that we are called upon to make if we value democracy sufficiently. Because I believe that today more than at any time, more than or even as much as during the perilous war years, our system of government is in grave danger. The reason why I think the danger is so great is that it is not so clearly recognised, because the threat comes invisibly from within rather than visibly from without. We have had six years of socialistic experiment, but now we are to get the full

blast of the attack of socialism upon our democratic system.

That brings me to this point, that Socialism and democracy cannot co-exist side by side, with all respect to hon. members opposite, who I know sincerely believe in their socialistic planks, but I trust that they will enable me to put before them my views on the subject in such a way that I shall at least be credited with sincerity in expressing them.

I believe that if we are to get the centralised government that is being proposed today by the Federal Government, and apparently subscribed to by this Government, we shall see the end of British democracy as we know it, and that is why I deplore the fact that the Government here have ignored or brushed aside the very grave charges of election malpractices that have been made in this House this session. These matters are not to be lightly brushed aside by any Government, particularly when some of them were made from the Government side of the House. That is all the more reason why they should have been fully and adequately investigated. The point is that the charges have been made, some by hon. members on this side and some by hon. members opposite. Many of those charges I have made publicly, and I say here again that I have in my possession statutory declarations concerning the offences. It was announced with a great flourish of trumpets that the police would be put on to investigate the taking of these statutory declarations, and although I have held myself ready to be interviewed by the police, having actually made an appointment when I could be interviewed, they have not as yet been to see me.

**Mr. Hanlon:** When the police want you they will get you.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** When the police want to see me they will see me at my convenience, and by my favour—make no mistake about that. I thank God that I am a free citizen in this community. I have committed no offence. Anybody who subscribes to the views of the interjector, the Premier—that the police will see me when they are ready—is due for a big surprise.

**Mr. Hanlon:** They will see you all right.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** The rights of a citizen of this country are governed by the Constitution. If any police officer desires to see me I will co-operate with him to every extent, but I will certainly suit my own convenience before I am interviewed. I happen to know my rights and where I stand.

Let me make my point. It is this: That the Government, in fairness to the police administration, ought to declare publicly that the police are not proceeding with these inquiries because they are only making fools of the Police Force. It is not fair to the Police Force to announce publicly with a fanfare of trumpets, that they are, in Gestapo fashion, to be put on the scent of innocent people who supplied information. The use of the Police Force in an attempt to persecute

political opponents is nothing else but the use of the Gestapo. I dare the Government to proceed further with this farcical suggestion.

**Mr. Crowley:** You said this is a free country.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** It is, but the attempt of the Government to use the Police Force to intimidate—and I use the word advisedly—the political opponents of the Government shows that we are fast approaching the Gestapo-like State about which I have been protesting. I have those declarations in my possession, but the Government are not willing and do not desire to obtain possession of those statements, because they will indicate such a state of affairs that they will compel the Government not to prosecute the innocent people who gave me those statements, but to get on with the important and grave business of investigating the matters complained of.

**Mr. Hanlon:** You are an accessory to the offence if you do not give that information.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** If the hon. gentleman thinks I am an accessory, then let him prosecute me. He knows where to find me any time he wants to.

**Mr. Aikens:** Will you take the photograph of Stalin off your wall as you did the last time before the Press photographers snapped you?

**Mr. WANSTALL:** The only photograph I have on my wall is a photograph of that great man, Winston Churchill.

The Government's failure in the public eyes to pursue the inquiries they have announced has resulted in causing many sections of the community to believe them to be bereft of sincerity.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Stop moaning about your hiding, and get on with your work.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** It is a cheap sneer to say that we are squealing.

There is in this matter a vast responsibility on the Government, and that is to keep public confidence in the electoral laws of this State. So far as the Premier's sneer that we did not win is concerned, I throw it back into his teeth. We won, but it was the people who lost. They lost their democratic right to the effective expression of their will. No matter what sophistry or artifices may be adopted by the Premier, he cannot avoid the inevitable conclusion that he and his party enjoy the support of a minority of the people. Put it any way you like, that fact is incontrovertible.

It has been said, and very truly, that every country gets the type of government it deserves. I say that the Government as they see the people in all classes throughout the community rising in revolt against the denial of their democratic right, are endeavouring by every subterfuge and every cunning trick to sidestep the position. Look at the question I asked the Attorney-General yesterday—whether he would appoint a tribunal, not

an Elections Tribunal (the questions said nothing about an Elections Tribunal)—and he pointed out that the time for appointing an Elections Tribunal had passed.

That is a complete begging of the question and something not worthy of a Minister of the Crown. The question was a serious question asked in pursuance of my right as a private member. The revolt that is sweeping throughout the community is really against Labour's crude attempt to flout both the people's will and ignore the people's good. It is a revolt against Labour's vicious attempts to monopolise all money and commerce and so to turn Australia into a slave state.

Members on the other side are becoming increasingly aware of the lack of public confidence in the Labour movement in Australia; and that has been brought sharply home to their minds by the Chifley socialistic proposals that have emanated from Canberra in the last few months. I would say this: no Government have the right to exercise over the people a control for which they have not a mandate, and that is the simple issue we are faced with today. Did the Chifley Government go before the people on a platform of socialisation of the banks? They did not. They came before the people with the 1945 banking platform, which presupposes and demands in the terms of the legislation the co-existence side by side with the Commonwealth Bank of the trading banks. That is the platform in relation to finance on which the Chifley Government were elected. This matter becomes relevant to the issues in this House because of the Premier's announcement in support of the Chifley Government's socialisation plan. I think it is incontestable that the Federal Labour Government have not the authority of the people and if they pursue this plan they will be doing it by way of a fraud upon the people from whom they obtained a mandate in 1946.

Where will democracy be in a few years' time if this policy is pursued to its logical conclusion? Let us discover what is the logical conclusion of this policy of National Socialism; because that is what it is. Call it nationalisation, call it socialisation, and what do you get? National Socialism. Call it Nazi-ism or National Socialism or Communism or Fascism, but it comes back to this: there is no material difference whatever 'ism you put up. Let us remind ourselves that Hitler's race theory was that the Germans were superior to any other race and would dominate the world. How does that differ from Chifley's theory of the master politician; because that is what his theory amounts to, and it is put over the people without the people's will. Hitler's cry was, "One Government, one people, one Fuehrer," and Chifley's cry is, "One Government, one bank, one Fuehrer." Where is the difference between him and Hitler in his approach to this question? If Federal Labour is allowed to go ahead with its notorious socialistic plans, within two years British democracy will be replaced by National Socialism.

(Government interjections.)

**Mr. WANSTALL:** It will be won before two years if I am any judge.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. WANSTALL:** You have to look at the events that occurred at the Premier's Conference and look at the commendable stand taken by the Premier against the further encroachment of the Commonwealth Government into the legitimate sphere of State rights to find support of my statement that the Chifley Government are reaching out their hands for all the power of one centralised government in this country. Unless the State Parliaments assert their rights under the Constitution and take a strong stand there will be nothing in the way of the achievement of the centralised-government plan.

In the attitude of the present Chifley Government towards the States of Australia I can see so substantial difference between Chifley and Ned Kelly, except that Ned Kelly plied his trade on horseback. In this centralised-government theory we are heading for a slave State on the totalitarian pattern and it is recorded in history that every dictatorship, whether Nazi, Fascist or Communist, started by following the same pattern as is laid down by the Chifley Government.

**Mr. Aikens:** How can you have a dictatorship with a free election every three years?

**Mr. WANSTALL:** How did Hitler come to power? A free election in which he got the majority of the people's votes, but it was the very last free election that those people had, and if the Chifley Government succeed in putting into force their master plan for centralised bureaucratic government in this country that will be the last free election we shall have, unless we take unto ourselves by force the rights we are deprived of. All other dictatorships follow the same pattern. First of all, they control transport. Is not that Chifley's approach? Then they control communications. Is that not Chifley's approach?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I think in referring to the Prime Minister the hon. member should use proper terms.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I am sorry; I have brief notes showing "Chif."

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I think all hon. members should keep that in mind. As the first elected citizen of the land the Prime Minister is entitled to his proper title.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I would point out that my notes have abbreviations and in the course of the debate, particularly in view of the interjections and interruptions on my left, it is very difficult for me to put my thoughts in the form I should like.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I would remind hon. members on my right that if they care

to answer the hon. member for Toowoong they will be given the opportunity to do so by way of a speech.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** The point I was making is that at the present time the Prime Minister is following the pattern of socialising first of all transport, then communications, and then finance, and that is precisely the pattern followed by Hitler, Mussolini, and the dictators in Russia.

Labour has always disavowed and disowned the Communist, but now Labour is beating the Communists at their own game. Every Communist smear sheet in Australia is coming out with eloquent tributes to the Prime Minister's nationalisation-of-banking proposals. What is the Labour Party and what is Mr. Chifley himself doing? Does Mr. Chifley dissociate himself from the sickening praises that plaster the gutter rags run by the Communist Party in this country? He is welcoming them with open arms. He is welcoming the support of the Communists, he is taking them to his bosom on this Socialistic plan. (Government interjections.) It is all very well for hon. members who cannot express themselves in words to "teh, teh," when I make my point, but that is not an answer to the point.

The reason why the Federal Government's socialistic proposal has been receiving so much acclaim from the Communists in Australia is that it is precisely what the Communists themselves would have done if they had been in power. And this is the proposal that has received the blessing and support of His Majesty's Government in this State. It is the proposal that more than anything else will sound the death-knell of the rights of this Queensland of ours as a sovereign State. I suggest to the Government in all seriousness that if they support this proposal, which must inevitably lead to the centralisation of government in Australia, they will betray the trust given to them by the people of Queensland—or rather by the minority of the people of Queensland.

**Mr. Aikens:** Are you advocating mass migration from Queensland to Canberra?

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I am asking that the Government of this State should protect the rights of Queensland, because those rights will be in jeopardy if Canberra goes ahead with this monopolistic plan.

**Mr. Aikens:** You do not object to financial monopolies.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** The hon. member for Mundingburra is completely erroneous in saying that I do not object to financial monopolies. If he will be fair with me, he will say that on many occasions from this very place in the Chamber I have stated my views in opposing monopolies of all kinds, whether they are private or government, but particularly if they are government monopolies, because they are the biggest monopolies in the world. The point that I made earlier was that many Labour members sincerely believe—(Government interjections). Mr. Speaker, I do

ask to be allowed to be heard. I cannot make my voice heard, I am sure, in the "Hansard" gallery, above the persistent interruption on my left.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. WANSTALL:** Nobody relishes interjections more than I do, but I do suggest that the interruptions are so constant that they are out of order.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I think the hon. member will have to give me an opportunity of determining whether interjections are in or out of order.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I thank you, but I submit I am entitled to ask for protection.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to the hon. member, too, that he address the Chair. He would then probably keep aside many of the interjections that are being made.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I do claim the right to reply to interjections, particularly interjections of a personal nature, that are made in the course of my speech.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member has had every right to reply to the interjections that have been made.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** The point I made earlier was that many Labour members sincerely believe that they can socialise our country and at the same time retain free democracy. They are wrong if they have such a belief, because the essence of a democratic system is the retention of private ownership, not exclusive private ownership but the principle of the right of property, because if you socialise the whole of the country you must inevitably discard and deny all rights of property of a private nature. Democracy is private ownership, and without it you have economic dictatorship, which means outright political dictatorship. You cannot separate economic dictatorship from the political economy of the country in which it is operating.

Under our system of private ownership, subject to adequate safeguards that I am foremost in advocating, you have the surest guarantee of freedom, not only for those who own the property, but for those who do not own property but who live in that free community. For so long now have certain hon. members been fed on a diet of Marxist nonsense that they cannot digest hard facts when they are put to them; otherwise, it would be realised that it is the inevitable goal of the complete socialistic state to deprive people of their free right and to sound the death knell of free democracy. You cannot have Government monopolies, any more than you can have immense private monopolies, and at the same time preserve to the people every fair measure of liberty that is theirs. You cannot have officials planning everything and still have that British freedom that has been handed down to us by our ancestors after being won in bloody struggle.

**Mr. Moore:** They have not had much freedom in Great Britain.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** They have no freedom now under a Socialist Government. I welcome and appreciate that interjection because it gives me the opportunity of making the point that never since the days of Runnymede and Magna Charta have the British people been such abject slaves as they are today, and they are in that position because of the breakdown, failure, and nonsensical theorising of their incompetent Labour Government.

They have been brought to their knees and dragged down to such a condition as Hitler with all his might could not bring them to. They have been brought to this state of affairs by reason of the half-baked stupid socialistic planned economy. The British people are in such a position that the Government have absolute powers—the power of saying “You will go here; you will work there; you will sell your product there; you will do without this and you will do without that.” That is the state of this traditionally proud British country of ours, and I am sure that such a state of affairs has been brought about by Socialism run mad in Britain.

We have not seen the worst of the ill-effects of the stupid socialistic plan in Britain. It is just what the present Federal Government are endeavouring to foist upon the people of this country and it is a plan that bears the support and the endorsement of our State Government in Queensland. Surely they are not blind to the realities of the situation; surely they can see the effect that this policy has had on Britain; surely they can see the effect it is having on Britain's greatest Ally, America, a country upon whom Britain is utterly dependent at the moment or for at least a short space of time.

**Mr. Aikens** interjected.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I defy any hon. member of this Assembly to produce a single instance of any country that had a planned economy where the people remained in a state of freedom. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a fair challenge. Hon. members will not be able to point to any country to show where, under a planned economy, the people have been free. The two terms are absolutely irreconcilable.

**Mr. Jesson:** What is your definition of freedom?

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I should not expect the hon. member for Kennedy to know a definition of freedom but I should expect him to know the meaning of totalitarianism. It is a word that means Socialism translated from theory into practice and wherever you translate Socialism from theory—which sounds beautiful—into practice, you cannot fail to enslave the people who live in that country. A complete endorsement of my point is to be seen in the people of Britain today. The British Government have found it necessary,

because of short-sightedness and stupidity over the last two years, to take unto themselves the power of directing people, directing them even where they shall eat and sleep, and the people are no longer free. Socialism is being translated from theory into practice and that is the state of affairs that awaits us in this country unless we assert our rights.

**Mr. Aikens** interjected.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I am not so silly as to suggest that we have reached the time when we can throw overboard all the controls forced upon us by the unbalancing of our country during the years of war. To suggest that because I recognise the sense of that proposition I am a Socialist is utterly revolting.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Nobody suggests that you are a Socialist.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I thank the Premier for that interjection. I make the point that Lenin, Hitler, Mussolini, Laval and others were Socialists, and I ask: how did they finish up? They became thorough tyrants and no Socialist can avoid being a tyrant.

There is one thing to remember, however, about the Federal Government's action and that is now there can be no mistake as to their intentions—they have taken off the mask under which they have been trading for the last few years. We see the Labour movement now for what it is worth. It is drunk with power and it is not the first time we have found a tyrant to be drunk with power. The most disgraceful pages in the history of the British race are to be found in the Reign of Terror towards the end of the 18th century.

At that time a Government, a political party, became drunk with power, and the people, instead of suffering only from the tyrannical oppression of one king, found themselves suffering from the oppression of a number of tyrants. That is what we are heading for in this country. Labour proclaims that it will fight monopolies, but what is it doing with its banking proposal but setting up one huge, all-powerful octopus to obtain a stranglehold on the private lives and the private financial affairs of every member of the community? And we in this Parliament must realise where we stand in this situation. We must see that it goes deeper than a fight between Mr. Menzies and Mr. Chifley or a fight between Mr. Nicklin and Mr. Hanlon. It is a clash of ideologies, the final struggle in the clash between socialistic theories and the theory of a free democracy. That is the test that faces the people today, and this is the beginning of the dictatorship that will mean the death-knell of all our democratic rights. I want this Parliament to declare itself—whether it believes in freedom or is against freedom for the private individual in the community. I want it to declare whether it believes that the Christian teaching that man is greater than the State is right or whether the socialistic teaching that the State is greater than man is right. That is the test today.

**Mr. Aikens:** Do not introduce any more sectarianism here.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** I resent that suggestion by the hon. member for Mundingburra. It should be unnecessary for me to raise a point of order. The suggestion that the mere use of the word Christian means sectarianism is utterly ridiculous. That is absurd.

**Government Members interjected.**

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! My patience is almost exhausted. If my call to order is not obeyed I shall have to take the extreme measure of naming those hon. members who disobey me. I am endeavouring to give the hon. member for Toowong a chance to state his case, and to give hon. members generally a chance to get from him his points in regard to that case.

**Mr. WANSTALL:** We are now placed in that position because it is the teaching of the Communists that the State is greater than the man, and that the rights of the State transcend those of the individual. That is the test we are facing today, and it is in the action of the present Federal Government that we see in operation the doctrine that the rights of the State are greater than those of the individual man. In this Parliament I think the time has come when we must take a stand and ask the people fairly and squarely what is their decision, and not have Socialism introduced by the back door, as is being done today. We should take that stand whilst this Parliament has still time to express that opinion, otherwise I venture to say that if the present Federal Government's socialist plans are continued the time will come when Parliament in this State will not be in a position to express a free and independent opinion. Already the purse-strings of the community upon which we depend are being tightened before our faces by the Federal Government, and we are being told that we shall have to take whatever the Federal Government dole out to us, whether we think it is right or wrong, or whether we think it sufficient for the development of our State or not.

How are we going to strengthen our case against that if we agree to the socialisation of the whole of the financial set-up of our country? Are we not pulling the noose tighter and tighter round our necks? Instead of having to fight uniform taxation alone we shall have to fight a system under which the Commonwealth central Government will be the sole controller of the whole of the people's money.

The people should be the sole arbiters on that matter. So, Mr. Speaker, I make this point, and my final point: where does this Parliament of Queensland stand?

**Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (3.5 p.m.):** I wish first to extend my hearty congratulations to Sir John Lavarack, not only on his appointment as Governor of this great State but on being the first Queensland-born to be

appointed to that high and exalted position. I congratulate him also on opening the thirty-first Parliament of this State.

I desire also to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on again being re-elected to the high and honourable position of Speaker of this House. You have with courage and without fear carried out your onerous duties in the past impartially and honestly. I wish you well and hope you will live for many years to enjoy the honour of occupying your very high office.

I feel sure, too, that the people of Queensland did the right thing in again reposing their confidence in this Government and re-electing them for another term to guide the destinies of this State.

The most notable feature of the Speech is the promulgation of a 10-year plan. That plan will have for its object the orderly marshalling of the great resources and potentialities of this State and in doing so working to a detailed plan over a period of years. Previously our administration has been sectional. It is now being reorganised on a very solid foundation. The departments that have been created are in charge of qualified officers who will enhance the efficiency and quality of public administration. The plan will cover every phase and detail in the development of our resources.

It has been my privilege to peruse closely the statistics of production and resources of this State. They reveal that no other State in Australia can compare with Queensland in the wide scope of such a plan, its great developmental possibilities, and the capacity to produce so many commodities. There is no known mineral that cannot be found in this State. Neither is there a fruit or vegetable that cannot be produced here.

The first essential of that plan is to increase production. Our predecessors overlooked a vital fact, probably through lack of resources, or want of population, or lack of stability to provide us with the wherewithal to stabilise our economy. Water is a big factor in the development of any country. "White coal" supply plays a very important part, not only in the irrigation aspect of any developmental policy but also in generating power for industry itself. "White coal" is the cheapest power obtainable. I predict that when our plans are complete, when our water resources are harnessed and used for developmental purposes this State will become one of the gems of the British Empire.

The second essential necessary for increased development is cheap electrical energy. In fact, it is vital. Cheap power is absolutely necessary, not only for the production of commodities but for cheapening production costs to enable a commodity to be marketed within the reach of the pockets of the people.

Sufficient labour should be available for all these purposes. It is very pleasing to note the migration that is taking place from other States to Queensland. Notwithstanding that it embarrassed this Government at a period when that influx was greater than the labour

demand. Nevertheless when we regain an even keel our economic plans will require many workers. The establishment of secondary industries is necessary for the prosperity of any country. Our primary production has reached a high level.

At 3.10 p.m.,

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

**Mr. KEYATTA:** Our secondary industries are developing, and when the plan is at its peak we shall have a wealthy State. Under the 10-year plan transport will enable commodities to be sent to the market economically and rapidly, the needs of the people will be met by rail, road, air, and sea. The State transport system is a very big thing and covers every phase of the economic life of the State. It has meant the co-ordination of services so that there will not be any overlapping and that the administration can be carried out on efficient and sound lines. Probably we shall not see the full benefit of the scheme during the transitional period of the next few years but later we shall see the great benefits that will flow from this essential legislation.

There have been unremitting efforts to carry out irrigation and water-supply schemes for these are some of the means by which we shall increase production of our national wealth. Schemes have been inaugurated in the southern portion of Queensland and the productivity of many areas has been almost doubled. That is cogent evidence that we are planning along sound lines. As development takes place, you will find that population will follow. If you provide the wherewithal the community will grow.

Take Mount Isa. We all know what it was before the silver-lead and copper resources were discovered. When wealth was proved to be there in abundance the population followed, and today Mount Isa is one of the most important towns in the Far-Western district. It represents a case of natural decentralisation combined with efficient administration in developing resources. The creation of Mount Isa was made possible by legislation, which provided a subsidy. The establishment of that important centre meant a continuity of rail services to the far-western areas. The results we have already achieved show that in carrying out our decentralisation policy we are planning correctly.

I emphasise that our administrators should concentrate to the fullest extent on the development of the Far North. Population is the first line of defence, and that can be brought about only by the development of industry. The North Australian Development Committee, of which the Premiers of Queensland and Western Australia, the Prime Minister, and Director-General of the Northern Territory are members, was formed for the purpose of collating evidence concerning the natural wealth and productivity of that area.

Every effort must be made to develop this sparsely settled area with its population of one or two persons to the square mile. The Commonwealth has responded and is co-operating with the States for its development, but I emphasise that the work must be done as expeditiously as possible, because in the ordinary course of events it takes industries years to establish themselves and develop. In the interests of our economy the move must be made as early as possible. I understand that shortage of material and labour is a factor in the delay.

I repeat that in the far-northern areas of Queensland there are many resources that could be developed to support a large population. It should not be an excuse that the project cannot be accomplished because of lack of funds, as it has been proved conclusively repeatedly in the southern part of the State that saturation point has not been reached for our commodities. If the commodity is marketed, it is within the power of the people to buy it.

It is a long stretch of coastline between Darwin and Thursday Island and ports must be established on natural harbours. In that district there should be at least one or two harbours with proper shipping facilities.

Hydro-electric- and water-conservation schemes have proved to be successful in other parts of the world, and the Government have wisely established a Department of Irrigation and Water Supply with a highly-qualified officer in charge, a man who not only has ability on the technical side but has a sound and practical knowledge of such works. The Government have also pursued the policy of appointing men as heads of projects who have not only gained technical knowledge but also had practical experience. That being so, there is no doubt that the project will be an ultimate success and I look forward with pleasure to the day when this grand State of Queensland will be a granary of which we shall all be proud.

Another feature of the Government's policy of development is the regional system for the supply of electric power. Previously local authorities had the control of this amenity. For instance, the Townsville City Council, the Hinchinbrook Shire Council, and the Ayr and Home Hill local authorities had individual control, but with the present system this area is brought under one controlling authority with the various shires having representation on the controlling body. This not only leads to economy in working but also eliminates overlapping of administration.

There has been a good deal of criticism of the price of electricity since the change, but this has been due to factors over which the authority has had no control. I am confident that it will be found that when the scheme is in full operation this price will be reduced considerably. The history of all departments shows that with the gaining of experience as time goes by costs have been reduced. The object of the scheme is to provide cheap electricity for both industrial and lighting purposes and I have every confidence in its being successful within the very near future.

The works programme for the present financial year has been designed to continue a policy of encouraging settlement. It is also designed to develop avenues of wealth production and the programme, apart from the emphasis on housing, will cover a wide range of projects and will provide for hospitals, educational facilities, and a vigorous programme of electrical, road, and irrigation work. It will be noted that hospitals are to be brought under the regional scheme. In this way it will be possible to avoid the long and costly delays occasioned by having to refer matters to Brisbane for decision under the present system.

Every encouragement has been given to the development and expansion of secondary industries. We have the raw materials and all we need is secondary industries to process them. With the establishment of these industries we shall not only augment our wealth production considerably but also encourage greater decentralisation of our population.

The Main Roads Commission has continued the survey of the Burdekin River for irrigation, hydro-electricity, and flood-mitigation purposes. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research has undertaken to co-operate with the State in its survey of the Lower Burdekin. A research station is in process of establishment at Ayr, and investigation is proceeding on the possible establishment of an irrigation scheme for pastures for the fattening of cattle on an extensive tract of land in the Lower Burdekin area. I am proud of that because I played my part in bringing the matter before the notice of the Premier and the responsible Minister. By departmental surveys data will be collected for record purposes and for use in the future.

The Lower Burdekin is one of the richest valleys to be found in the Commonwealth. Water can be got at from 10 to 15 feet, and the whole scheme will cost little to bring to fruition. The object is to bring about development of the country, by giving land-hungry people a chance to establish themselves and succeed better there than they could do perhaps in any other part of the State. With the potentialities that exist, development will come about. That there are areas on the Lower Burdekin for the fattening of cattle has been demonstrated in the years gone by, because we have in the vicinity, you might say, three important meatworks, namely, Merinda near Bowen, Alligator Creek near Townsville, and Ross River at Townsville. The establishment of an experimental farm will play an important part, particularly for the grower of prime beef stock in the production of meat for the local market and for export.

Through scientific research this State has benefited considerably, and I do not think there is any other in the Commonwealth that can compare with our records, particularly in the matter of services rendered to the people. Very often, where a highly-qualified officer is required, one will find that a member of the Public Service has been successful in getting the position.

**Mr. Heading:** Because you do not pay them.

**Mr. KEYATTA:** In any industry, or for that matter any walk of life, we find that people very often seek a change in their class of work and want to go elsewhere to gain greater experience. That is one of the reasons why these scientific men leave.

**Mr. Pie:** They go from the State to private enterprise.

**Mr. KEYATTA:** They go anywhere. On the other hand, we have been successful in getting very distinguished men from private concerns in the South.

I am very keen about the development of the Lower Burdekin, because, as I have said, it is an essential part of the Townsville district. Its development has been co-ordinated with that of Townsville. The Ayr tramway, a privately-controlled line in the early days, played a great part in the development of this district. I should also say that in the Lower Burdekin the cultivation of sugar-cane yields a greater tonnage and density than is to be found in any other part of the Commonwealth and probably the world.

The Government have agreed to pay subsidy on the aerial transport of fish and other foods amounting to 6½d. a lb., thereby enabling people at Charleville and other inland towns to get fresh fish at a reasonable price. I made representations to the Government to have a similar subsidy paid in respect of aerial transport from Townsville and this was done. The people are very appreciative of this service, especially those in the West, who are able to get fruit and fresh fish, and it indicates that the Government are very sympathetically disposed towards all people who are willing to give an essential service to the people.

A move has been made to establish increased watering facilities along the inland roads. During the war years there were water conveniences and facilities approximately every 10 miles along the defence road, and these conveniences are to become permanent. The road has been reconditioned, it is now in first-class order, and it will help materially in the development of that part of the country. I understand that a township is to be planned on hygienic lines, but I am not sure whether it is to be at Alice Springs or Tennant's Creek.

**Mr. Pie:** What will the people do out there?

**Mr. KEYATTA:** Alice Springs will become the radiating centre of developmental activity. There is considerable mineral wealth in the area, including mica. In the past the primitive and unattractive conditions have made it exceedingly hard for miners to stay in that district, but their lot will be made more comfortable by the development of a township and its attendant conveniences.

**Mr. Pie:** What about the fruit cannery?

**Mr. KEYATTA:** That is on its way and according to the report of the investigator Townsville is the next place to be developed. The fruit-growers in the Tully, Cardwell and Woodstock areas are, by virtue of their geographical situation, particularly interested in the selection of Townsville for the establishment of a cannery. There is no doubt that the fruit can be produced in those districts. In recent years the Australian Estates Ltd. has developed into one of the biggest pineapple growers in Queensland.

**Mr. Pie:** Where are they growing pine-apples?

**Mr. KEYATTA:** In the Pioneer district. They are also contemplating the growing of other tropical fruits, such as papaws and mangoes.

The past year has disclosed a marked increase in forestry activities in the State. It is estimated that the output of mill logs from Crown forests for housing will be 30,000,000 superficial feet in excess of the quantity produced in 1945-46.

The Government are continuing a vigorous programme of roads. During the year 1946 an amount of £8,418,000 was approved for the construction of workers' dwellings, and an amount of £1,353,000 for other buildings.

In the first quarter of this year the number of dwellings completed for every 100,000 population was 200 as compared with 90 in New South Wales, 88 in Tasmania, 87 in Western Australia, 76 in South Australia, and 69 in Victoria. Those statistics have been issued by Mr. Colin Clark, Government Statistician, who is a highly efficient officer. They cannot be questioned. Encouragement has been given to the erection of dwellings by the placing of restrictions on other forms of building. That has enabled the number of dwellings constructed in this State to be much in excess of other States. A contractor in Townsville, Mr. Williams, has built a great number of houses at an approximate cost of £85 a square. Recently he received a contract to build a further 50. Statistics also reveal that more houses have been begun in Queensland than in any other State, notwithstanding that the shortage of labour was much more acute in this State than others.

I desire to bring before the House a matter that has arisen prominently in connection with the construction of houses in Townsville. Homes built in Townsville, as in Brisbane also, have been full of borers a few months after completion. Softwoods (pine) are unobtainable because the mills mill only scrap timber for small sizes, such as 2 x 1 louvre-blades, &c., as they get a higher price for all softwood timber over 6 inches by 1 inch. They mill only 12 inches by 1 inch, 18 inches by 1 inch, and 9 inches by 1 inch because they get this higher price. That imposes a hardship on the working man. The Townsville branch of the A.L.P. has requested me to ventilate this matter on the floor of this House. The timber in the mills is full of borers and timber milled from it is sent out on the take-it-or-leave-it attitude. There would be enough log timber to meet the require-

ments of North Queensland if 50 per cent. of the logs felled there were retained for northern requirements whereas, I understand, the greater quantity of logs felled in the North are exported. Whatever may be the cause, this inferior timber and lack of suitable timber creates a hardship for the people.

The Department of Public Instruction proposes to establish a Research and Guidance Branch to develop a system of vocational guidance so that every encouragement may be given to children to pursue the courses best suited to their aptitude and ability. A qualified inspector will interview them for this purpose. He will give them an intelligence test. Later another test will be given in order to confirm the results of the previous test, so that no mistake will be made in developing the scholar along the lines of his aptitude.

The hon. member for Mundingburra, in referring in this House to a certain matter, mentioned my name. It had to do with my campaign. He said that I would not have any truck with a certain A.L.P. branch, or campaign committee, that I would not touch its campaign with a 40-ft. pole. The actual position is that three years ago, when the last election was being fought, my campaign committee, that is, the Townsville branch of the A.L.P., decided that in future it would conduct the election in conformity with the rules of the Townsville branch of the A.L.P.

That was all that happened. The hon. member for Mundingburra raised the matter in such a way that a wrong impression may have been created. There was harmony between the three groups. Representations were made that there should be a combined committee, but experience taught my committee that the campaign could be best conducted within the ambit of our own organisation.

It is proposed to liberalise miners' pensions and legislation will be brought before the House for that purpose. There is no greater scourge than miner's phthisis. It is a very humane move that the Government are contemplating. The person who suffers from miner's phthisis should be helped to the fullest possible extent. Not only does the patient suffer intense pain but a good deal of money has to be spent on necessities for the patient, and this sometimes casts a heavy financial burden on the family. I am pleased to know that the pension will be increased in order to make their lives a little brighter.

We have heard a good deal of condemnation of the railways. The Queensland railways have rendered a great service to the State. We have the greatest mileage of line of any State, and there are over 20,000 employees. The railways cover a sparsely populated area, and we know there are many anomalies that arise over which we have no control. If hon. members opposite were in power, they would not be able to do any better than we have been able to do in the past. The technical staff are an important section of the railways, and it is difficult to ignore the advice of a competent authority. For years we heard the

ery that there was something wrong with our railways—and many of us began to believe there was—but during the war years they did a wonderful job. Their record was something of which we can be proud.

At 3.44 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

**Mr. KEYATTA:** The railways are run for the benefit of the people. Probably the Government could make them pay, but at whose expense? Every facility is provided for settlers in sparsely populated areas. For instance, the Townsville mail pulls up in order to provide something for the people from the dining car. It means a stop but it is only right that we should help these pioneers, who are less fortunate than the people in the cities who enjoy all the amenities of civilisation. The railways, I repeat, have given a service of which we should be proud. Constructive criticism of them is useful, but destructive criticism is of no use at all.

**Mr. RUSSELL (Dalby) (3.45 p.m.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity of congratulating you on your appointment to the Speakership. I should like to associate myself also with the expressions of congratulations extended to His Excellency on his appointment to the Governorship of this State.

When I last spoke in this Chamber I addressed myself principally to railways in general and particularly to their rail-freight classification and its effect on rural industries, and pointed out that I believed this to be one of the greatest contributing factors towards creating the problem of population drift. I am very sorry to have it from the lips of the Minister for Transport that we can expect no change in the rail-freight classification.

I take this opportunity of acknowledging and thanking the hon. gentleman for giving such lengthy consideration to my speech. The hon. gentleman dwelt on it for quite a time in this Chamber but did not give me any satisfactory answer to the anomalies I quoted.

The hon. gentleman, I think, showed weakness when he brought into his arguments my personal business in connection with freight sent from Cunnamulla. Surely more useful employment could be found for the clerks in the Railway Department? The hon. gentleman also showed extraordinary ignorance of the pastoral industry if he thought that the only expense I have on a wool clip of £23,000 is £612. For the benefit of those who read "Hansard" and are not conversant with the industry I would point out that I and many others in the pastoral industry in the Cunnamulla district suffered grievous loss last year in our business operations.

Today I desire to deal with land settlement because it is one of the factors contributing to this drift of population and could be made a factor in its correction. The Department of Public Lands today and for many years past has been administered as an instrument of revenue rather than as one by which this State could be more fully developed. I find it rather difficult to understand why, in the pro-

posal of decentralisation, the first departments to be decentralised should be those of education. Surely it would be more beneficial to apply the policy first to land.

**Mr. Jones:** If you cut up your own holding it would help in that direction.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I shall come to that later. I will deal with them all. The Government will sooner or later have to formulate measures that will encourage people to go and live in the outlying areas and the only practical way to do that is to allow them to give rein to their initiative, which has been so long curbed. The policy should be one of continual expansion of development and production with a view to settling more people in the areas suitable for closer settlement.

**Mr. Collins:** There is a demand for the land you have cut up, is there not?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Yes, I am coming to that.

The chief motivation behind this development should be to give to all people who are prepared to work the opportunity to own their own land and homes and become financially secure.

This State is too large to be administered as one unit under one Land Act, the areas are so vast and the conditions so varied that what is applicable in one area is not in another. At present there are too many land tenures and this makes equitable administration most difficult. The State should be subdivided for the purpose of administration, with special conditions for each division, and a limitation of areas in all those divisions suitable for closer settlement.

If the State was so subdivided we could legislate much more effectively for the promotion of a progressive land-settlement policy.

To illustrate my point, let me broadly divide the State into four zones:—

- (1) Proved agricultural areas already served by railways, road, and towns.
- (2) Undeveloped areas with a 26-inch rainfall and over, which is sufficient for agricultural development.
- (3) Grazing areas in the 20- to 25-inch rainfall belt.
- (4) The western areas of the State, with a rainfall below 20 inches.

The areas that are already served by railways, roads, and towns should receive immediate attention in furthering closer settlement. There should be a limitation of areas in those districts, based either on a sliding-scale rental that would make it unprofitable to hold too large an area or a direct limitation based on carrying capacity.

Closer settlement could be promoted by the resumption of all the areas that are suitable for farming. This would effect an immediate result, as the essential transportation facilities already exist. I submit that no great hardship results to the present owners provided—and this is important—they are paid out on values as at the date of acquisition.

The present scheme for soldier settlement being undertaken by the State and Federal

Governments is in the right direction, but it is not broad enough in its concept. I believe that the State department could have done the job more expeditiously and better by itself. As I understand the existing agreement, the State, as a condition of financial aid is required by the Federal Government to acquire land at values below those existing at present. This is grossly unfair to existing holders, who, on the reinvestment of their capital, have to take today's values. All other things, such as tractors, motor-cars, indeed everything else, are selling at inflated prices largely owing to Government taxation. There is no suggestion of the Government's foregoing any of their revenue in this direction.

There should be freedom of contract to cut up land so that closer settlement could come about naturally. This is possibly the best of all forms of settlement. This freedom of contract does not exist today.

There are two factors in satisfactory settlement. One is security of tenure and the other the establishment of good rail and road communication with marketing facilities.

As to the first of these, I suggest that the Government are wrong in not granting freehold titles to holders of living areas. The perpetual-lease title, being subject to reappraisal, prevents landholders from building up an equity in the land, as any increase in value goes to the Crown. There is no harm, but rather every advantage, in allowing farmers and settlers to become well off.

Previous attempts at closer settlement have not all been successful; in some cases because it was attempted before its time but more often because the capital value of the land was too high.

That, however, does not justify the confiscation of the land at a value lower than that existing today. For the purposes of present land settlement, if values are considered to be too high, any excess should be paid for by the whole community and not by a section of the people who happen to have capital invested in the land.

Dealing broadly and hurriedly with the second zone, that is to say, the undeveloped area of Queensland in the 26-inch and better rainfall belt, I contend that this should receive immediate but different attention. Roads and railways should be built to open up the country.

If a land-settlement policy goes hand in hand with these and other projects such as water conservation, such a policy would stimulate all sorts of associated activities. It would bring benefits and opportunities to people not necessarily qualified for land settlement. Such a scheme would be of tremendous benefit to the State as a whole. We should develop those areas that will ultimately have to be developed if we are to hold this country from the teeming millions of the outside world. We should create opportunities not only for our own people but for the people of other States, and we should encourage the right type of immigrant from abroad.

There are parts of this State, such as the Springsure, Peak Downs, and Charters Towers districts, with soil similar to that found on the Darling Downs and with a similar rainfall. Possibly that country is not suitable for wheat-growing but it would unquestionably be suitable for the growing of summer crops and for other forms of mixed farming. I believe too that the Government have a wonderful opportunity of developing the rich coal deposits of Blair Athol and the Callide Valley, which are adjacent to much of the country to which I refer. The presence of mineral deposits make profitable the practical development of the land in this area. It is in the 26-inch rainfall belt.

With the development of coal-mines and the building of railways and roads this area I have been speaking of would automatically come under my first heading and should then be treated accordingly.

I now come to the third zone—the area of the State that is in the 20-25-inch rainfall belt. This type of country needs specialised attention. Areas should be generous, to withstand the periodical droughts and to put landholders in the position to husband their land in a proper manner. Generally speaking this type of land is taxed too heavily and too much money is taken from it, which retards development.

**Mr. Jones:** They are not very willing to give it up when leases expire, I notice.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I shall come to that. There should be a limitation of areas in this zone on the sliding-scale method I spoke about, starting at nominal rates for the living area and rising.

What the Department of Public Lands does in practice is this—and I am coming to the point raised by the Minister—when a lease falls due the opening rental of the new lease is raised. I contend that the opening rental should be lower and not higher. The policy of the department then seems to be to jack up the surrounding country when the leases come up for reappraisal. It shows that the department is acting as a revenue machine rather than as an instrumentality through which the State can be developed.

**Mr. Jones:** The fact that there are 200 to 300 applicants for the blocks when they are thrown open shows that they are acceptable to those people.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Anyone would go in for a block when he had nothing to lose, but my point is that he should be in a position to become a happy, contented, useful, and successful settler. The Government are ruining the country.

**Mr. Jones:** Have you not got enough land that you can subdivide? What are you squealing about?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I am coming to that.

The residential qualification would prevent trafficking in land and would help the small man to get ahead faster than he does today. It is the small man who is the basic factor.

**Mr. Jones:** You have a big property yourself. Why do you not cut that up and make it available?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I am waiting for the Government to cut it up but they will not come and cut it up. The only condition that I lay down is that they pay for it. The higher costs of today mean that a greater area is needed in order to make a living. I point out that it would be in the interests of the State and the selector if the Government were to reduce costs rather than raise the rental and give additional areas. All the time they are raising costs they are making it necessary to have a bigger area in the western country in order to make a living and in that way driving the people away from the country. The policy should be to serve the small man because he is the basic factor in settlement. The old saying, "Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves," applies here.

**Mr. Hilton:** Do you not think that the Land Court is functioning efficiently?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I do not think that the Land Court is functioning efficiently and I will tell you why.

I now come to the fourth zone, namely the far-western country with a rainfall below 20 inches. This requires entirely different attention.

It is not realised by many people that of all the suitable pastoral areas which will become available for resumption there is room for only approximately 250 new settlers. I believe that the restoration of Western Queensland does not lie along the lines of closer settlement but rather along the lines of an improved standard of living for the people who work in the pastoral industry. The status of the pastoral worker must be raised. Apart from giving him good conditions to attract him to the country, he must be allowed to enjoy conditions that will permit him to marry and bring up a family in reasonable comfort.

**Mr. Jones:** In other words, allow the big pastoral companies to hold what they have? Is that what you mean?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I am coming to that.

Secondary industries should be attracted wherever they are practicable in these areas. The railways could be made the medium of such encouragement. I have previously pointed out how the Railway Department discriminates in its freight charges by charging a higher freight rate on scoured wool than on greasy wool, which precludes the establishment of the only industry that is suitable to some of these areas. We listened to the explanation of the Minister for Transport yesterday, but it did not cut any ice with hon. members on this side of the House. In areas with a precarious rainfall it is not desirable to cut up the land into small areas because the holders have not the economic stability to weather the long periods of drought that are inseparable from this part of the country.

**Mr. Jones:** What do you mean by small areas?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Living areas.

**Mr. Jones:** But what do you mean?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** That depends on the type of country. You cannot lay down a uniform figure for the entire State. While an area of, say, 240 acres, may be adequate near the coast you would require 40,000 acres out in the West.

**Mr. Jones:** You are putting up a case for the big pastoral holders.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I am not putting up a case for the big pastoralists at all. I am putting up a case for a proper standard of living for the people who live in Western Queensland. I believe that a higher standard of living in the far-western areas can be provided only by allowing that district to be held in large areas, but of course with this must go the obligation on the part of the landholder to provide conditions for the pastoral workers equal to those that obtain for workers in other parts of the country.

**Mr. Devries:** In other words, a higher measure of security?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Yes, certainly; you want a higher measure of security.

Rentals generally in the western country are too high, and the carrying capacity is over-assessed.

**Mr. Jones:** You are putting up a case for the United Graziers' Association. I have had this thousands of times.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** A reduction would allow land-holders to give better conditions to their workers. The formula adopted by the Land Court in fixing rents really gets back to the question of carrying capacity, because this is the basic factor. I am familiar with large and widely separated areas in Western Queensland, and I know that they have never carried the stock that they are rated to have carried. They have nevertheless not been without their problems. For the benefit of hon. members who are not familiar with Western Queensland conditions I would point out that droughts can largely be man-made, that is, the heavier one stocks the more frequently do they occur. Therefore, the right policy should be to stock lightly.

I have been before the Land Court, and I have heard assessors give unreliable evidence—

**Mr. Jones:** That applies to graziers sometimes, too.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Possibly. It is due to lack of ability on the part of graziers and selectors to prepare their cases, and particularly to lack of agreement between many landowners, which results in over-assessment of the country. Some of us do not appear to advantage under cross-examination in the Land Court, but if we were to put some of the legal fraternity onto shearing sheep or milking cows they would appear very much more stupid.

I have seen comments by members of the Land Court in which the tendency of assessing officers in over-estimating the carrying capacity of the land is publicly criticised. Has the Minister taken any notice of that criticism? Has he issued any instructions to his officers to cease such practices? If he has not, why has he not, because it is having a very harmful effect?

A comparison of the rentals in New South Wales and Queensland is interesting. The rental of a grazing property in the Cunnamulla district, with which I am familiar, works out at 2s. 1d. a head a year. This is a living area. In New South Wales similar country with a similar tenure works out at 4½d. a head. This is the point I want to make: if you are going to keep on raising rentals in Queensland you will have to give holders more and more land to make a living.

**Mr. Wanstall:** Mr. Payne has always pointed that out.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** That is so, but his views have been totally disregarded.

**Mr. Devries:** Would you limit his profits?

**Mr. Jones:** Mr. Payne is chairman of the Land Court, and makes his own decisions.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** No, the Land Court is very circumscribed in the determinations it makes.

**Mr. Jones:** Not in the matter of rentals.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Yes, it is. Its powers are laid down in the Act. It is not given enough discretionary powers. Those limited powers are contained in section 125. I anticipated this very question that the ex-Minister asked. That is a section of the Act that should be amended.

**Mr. Jones:** I see you do not know much about the Land Court.

**Mr. Wanstall:** He is right about that point.

**Mr. Jones:** No, he is not.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Continual stocking with sheep gradually denudes much of our western country and the trees indigenous to it, such as mulga, coolibah and gidyea.

Under natural conditions young trees will grow up to take their place but when it is heavily stocked the sheep come along and eat the trees before they reach maturity. This is apparent in the far-western country. There you see young trees abounding that afford protection to the country in times of drought. The loss of trees in themselves is not a disaster if the land is allowed to retain a cover of pasture. If that country is largely denuded of pasture the only way to correct the condition is to take the sheep off so as to allow the grasses to re-establish themselves.

It is the duty of the Government to put landholders in the position to look after the land they occupy and to put more into it. The Government have to help them to do it. Generally speaking, because of

unsatisfactory tenure, high rental, and high taxes, too much is taken out of the land and too little is put back. This results in soil erosion and land impoverishment. I believe a great advantage could be gained by adopting some of the measures taken in the United States of America to deal with this great problem. There is no question that in parts of this State land is going back in productivity. This serious state of affairs should receive the immediate attention of the Department of Public Lands.

The legislation enacted in the United States of America proved very effective. Briefly, the problem was broken up under three heads—erosion from wind, erosion from water, and erosion in natural pastures from overstocking. The remedies were these: they built wind-breaks, and for the erosion from water contour ploughing was done, and thirdly, they spelled the pastures that were being denuded of their pasture. In every case the Government compelled all the landholders to take proper action. It was not expected, however, that they should bear the burden alone. In every case the Government waived rents or taxes. If we followed that example it would be necessary for the Government to waive the rents on these lands which it was desired by the holders and by the Crown to restore.

How many members on the Government side of the House have been to the far-western places such as Boulia, Adavale, Thargomindah, and Winton, where they would see the silent evidence of what I say? The places were better 50 years ago. With the encroaching dust and the lack of amenities there is little wonder that the people are leaving these places. The only way to get them to go out is to offer them something more than a bare existence.

**Mr. Jones:** You are putting up a case for the people who were responsible for this.

**Mr. RUSSELL:** It is no good going back into past history; we are dealing with the present. This is the only Parliament I have ever been in and I am telling hon. members the situation as I know it to exist in the West because I know the West better than I know any other part of the country.

The way in which the Government are dealing with their expiring leases is causing considerable concern to people who are interested in the development of this State and to the holders of the leases themselves. At the present time over 10,000,000 acres are held under occupational licence—possibly a lot more; the figures are obscure and hard to get. From the point of view of the holders of the occupation licences the position is most unsatisfactory.

**Mr. Jones:** What do you suggest?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I am coming to that. The holders are not able to formulate any policy in regard to stocking or progressive improvement and I suggest that the Government should announce immediately some extension with a developmental condition whereby the land can be put back into production.

**Mr. Jones:** Give them another extension?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** At the present time it is impossible for the department to deal properly with all these lands because of the shortage of surveyors and the acute shortage of labour and materials. Even if it were able to cut them up, the selectors cannot make economic units of them. They have not the material or labour to deal with them. If the department can do anything with these leases, by all means take them, but if not leave them to the existing holders until they can.

The unsympathetic attitude of this Government has been amply demonstrated in their attitude to the farmers in connection with drought relief. I realise that the application of drought relief is difficult, but if a promise had been made to the farmers and the people they would have been in a position to take care and save their stock in many cases. It is too late now to get the best results. The loss of stock has been a national loss.

Fodder conservation should be encouraged, and in this connection there should be provision for deductions for income-tax purposes. The Government could use their influence with the Federal authorities to have this concession granted; it should encourage enterprise.

In conclusion, I would point out that our great problem in this State is continuity of supply. That is why we have such difficulty in competing with other countries on competitive markets. I believe the agricultural areas of this State, if properly handled, could be more fully developed so as to provide fattening pastures for stock bred in the hinterland, in much the same way as the corn belt of the U.S.A. serves that country.

The present conditions of labour in the Far West are such that it is impossible to run a property efficiently. Good types of men are not being attracted to the pastoral industry, because of the conditions that exist. Men who are willing to work must be offered more than a reasonable chance of success.

The liberal land policy that I advocate is one of reduced land charges. The Department of Public Lands should take from the country only sufficient revenue to meet the costs of administration. The Government would get their revenue back in all directions, by way of greater production, by way of income tax and other forms of taxation, and eventually create a happy and contented population in the rural areas.

I might mention here too that reduced land charges enable the holders to build up an equity in their land, and this equity is a great advantage because it carries the landowner over periods of drought. It may be likened to the inside fat of an animal that carries it over bad times.

The railways should be made to help and not hinder the establishment and distribution of industries in the country areas. The rail-freight classification could be made a great factor in this connection.

**Mr. Hilton:** Do you not think they do that?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** I dealt with that very fully previously, and thought I succeeded in convincing most hon. members as to why it prevented the establishment of industry in the outlying areas. We want as many people in the country as possible, because the results of such a policy snowballs as it proceeds. If there is a variety of jobs and occupations in our rural areas, they tend to hold the lads and lasses growing up in those areas. They are the best population that the country can have.

**Mr. Devries:** You would not say wool-scours would do that, would you?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** Of course they would. You must have people to run wool-scours. I do not know how many are necessary to run a scour but I should say that there are technical jobs and at least 20, 30, or 40 people would be required.

**Mr. Devries:** What percentage of the growers can please themselves as to how much of their clip they will scour?

**Mr. RUSSELL:** That is not the point. I can scour what I like, but it does not pay me to scour. I do scour in New South Wales.

I was interested to read that Mr. H. W. Herbert, the Agricultural Economist of the Bureau of Industry, estimated the possible future population of this State at 5,000,000. I feel that in arriving at that figure he had these reforms in mind.

The only way to create settlement is to give rein to the initiative that lies latent in our people.

**Mr. O'SHEA (Warrego) (4.22 p.m.):** I do not propose opening my remarks in the manner adopted by previous speakers in offering congratulations.

The debate on the Address in Reply was on a high level until the hon. member for Aubigny disturbed it this morning. He certainly put on a very good show. He must have thought he was juggling with Chief Little Wolf.

**Mr. Sparkes:** He is a gentleman compared with some of you chaps.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I do not propose to introduce personalities into the debate but I do wish to reply to some of the statements made by the hon. member for Dalby, those referring to land rentals in the West in particular. I think the rental on his Cunnamulla property would be about 3d. an acre or a little less. There is no rental on Jimbour because it was a free grant years ago and is now held under freehold tenure.

**Mr. Sparkes:** He paid for that.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I do not care what he paid. My point is that if the land was given to the people free I should like to know how much that would help to tide them over the difficulties confronting them during the hard times experienced in the West periodically. Land rentals are not the trouble out in that part of the State. Abuse of the land is responsible for the destruction of the land in the western country.

I agree with some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Dalby; he is more intelligent than the hon. member for Aubigny. He has stated something very clearly, something that I have advocated in this House, namely, that no person should be put on the land out in the West without the assurance of a sufficient area to maintain him and his wife and family.

Let me deal with the question of the drift of population from the West we hear so much about, if there is that drift. It shows that private enterprise has failed. It shows that those people who are in occupation of the land by probably the generosity of some previous Government have failed to provide the amenities we hear spoken of for the people who are employed in the pastoral industry.

**Mr. Russell:** They cannot do it.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** The hon. member will be doing it to the order of the Industrial Court. These people who talk about their generous feelings towards the people who are employed in the pastoral industry have to be marched before the Industrial Court and made to obey the industrial laws of the land. (Opposition interjections).

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. O'SHEA:** The position is that if people are drifting from the West, upon whose shoulders is the responsibility? Is it upon the Government? Is it upon the Government to send them back and pay them some stipend to work for the employer who is in occupation of the land? The responsibility is upon the occupiers of the land to maintain the employees in a reasonable state of comfort, and they could give them a bit better than the miserly wage that the court lays down. It is a minimum wage and there is nothing to prevent the occupiers of the land from giving them as much as they like. But the point is that they do not like.

**Mr. Sparkes:** The State is the worst employer of the lot.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. O'SHEA:** Barring the hon. member for Aubigny. I want to make a few remarks concerning the elections but I have no fault to find with the conduct of the elections. The only thing I regret—

**Mr. Pie:** You are lucky to be here.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I invited the hon. member to come out. He is the big scone—Adbul the Bul-Bul. (Laughter.)

My only complaint in regard to the elections—and I do not believe the statement—is that, that Matron Nora returned to Charleville whilst I was in hospital. She came to Brisbane but Mr. Nicklin sent her back because he said there was a possibility of O'Shea's dying (Laughter). I am not dead yet and I shall not be dead for a long time. That is the reason why I issue the challenge to my friend to throw himself in the way—he is so much concerned about me and my political future. I do not know why he should be so interested in me.

**Mr. Pie:** You have a way with you.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I shall play with him for a while yet.

The main charge against the Government is that they have failed to do the very things that the people in occupation of the land should do for themselves. They are charged with having shortcomings in respect of western country, the near inland country, and the coast country and everywhere else. What is the responsibility of a Government? Should they go out and subsidise these people who unfortunately are in occupation of a very great area of Queensland? Fortunately, Queensland is more happily situated in this respect than the other States of the Commonwealth, because in this State more than 90 per cent. of the land is still vested in the Crown. The hon. member for Dalby spoke about the freehold tenure.

**Mr. Russell:** For farming areas.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** What about the freehold land that he holds? Does not the freehold tenure suit him? Is it that the land is too heavily taxed?

**Mr. Russell:** I am talking of basic living areas.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I do not know what the hon. member is talking about.

**Mr. Russell:** I am telling you.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** And I am sure that the hon. member does not know himself. He put forward the usual argument advanced in this House in connection with land settlement. What privilege has the individual or what privilege should he have over the general community? Why should he have some pull that a very big percentage of the people cannot enjoy?

**Mr. Pie:** What do you mean by that?

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I will tell the hon. member but I think he is too dull to understand what I am saying.

**Mr. Pie:** I am not too dull today.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I think the hon. member is. Already a man who is in occupation of pastoral land is entitled to exercise a priority over a part of the resumed area when the lease expires. He may have been in occupation of the land for 40, 50, 60 years, or more—since 1865. He has been in occupation over that period and he is entitled to exercise a certain priority when the lease expires. Why should he be given that advantage that 95 per cent. of the people cannot enjoy?

**Mr. Pie:** He has held it for 60 years.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** Yes.

**Mr. Taylor:** And he can exercise priority over the best block?

**Mr. O'SHEA:** Yes.

**Mr. Pie:** It is then still in the family.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** Yes, and that is where the hon. member's property will be when he dies.

Let us have a look at another phase of this alleged drift from the country to the city. Not only do I blame the pastoralist to a great extent for it, but I blame also the local authorities to some extent, which by the adoption of mechanisation have eliminated the opportunities of employment in western areas.

Local authorities have mechanised their plants by money borrowed from the Government, and in some cases by subsidies, to such an extent that after a man has been turned off a station property he has nowhere to turn for employment. The hon. member for Dalby made one statement that was to a great extent true, that is, that there was a possibility that hard times would come on the people employed out there in the pastoral industry as station hands today. I am not going to deal with that now. A shire council may buy £10,000 worth of machinery and road-making plant and then set to work on the construction of roads with about eight men, whereas that work previously absorbed 46, 60 or 80 men.

**Mr. Pie:** You will have to build more roads.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** The local authorities are building them. They are providing for the people out in that country who are making their livelihood there. The people are obliged to go somewhere to find employment. It is admitted that the pastoral industry cannot provide the employment for them. Where are they to turn? Either the dole or to some other part of the country.

**Mr. Pie:** Does that explain the drift to the city?

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I am not concerned, in my argument, whether there is such a drift or not. All I am saying is that if a drift has taken place those are factors contributing to it. I represent an electorate in which there are no dairies, no white sows and no big litters. Nor do they get any help from the Government; they have not asked for it from the Government or anyone else. They are getting it from the banks. The banks unfortunately own a lot of the country. They do not own the hon. member for Dalby's because he is on his last half million. (Laughter.) That would not affect him at all.

The fact remains that many people, principally small holders in that part of the State, are involved with the banks. They are probably the victims of a policy adopted 40 years ago that was not very sound so far as land settlement was concerned. The hon. member for Dalby was able, after his father paid for the property at Jimbour, to sell part of it at a decent figure and thus offset the purchasing price.

**Mr. Russell:** That is all right; the farmers are there.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** The farmers have got there without any aid from the hon. member. The very future of our western country

depends to a great extent upon the policy that is going to be carried out in the future by this Government.

After all, the Government for the past 33 years—with the exception of a disastrous break of three years—have had the confidence of the people of Queensland, and the policy has worked out fairly well.

I was a bit amused by the farmer from Nambour railway station who was giving us a little bit of a story about farming. I should prefer to think that it was the folly of youth that betrayed him into making the statement he made about farming than that he spoke from a knowledge of farming.

I was also amused by the speech delivered by the hon. member for Aubigny, especially the part of it in which he became a professional tipslinger and tipped this Government to go overboard at the next election. He was much concerned with members of the Government, but he is losing sight of the fact that it is only as a result of a stroke of good fortune that he happens to be here himself.

I do not believe that half the criticism that has been directed against the Government by members of the Opposition was meant. I believe it was only introduced for the purpose of taking up the 40 minutes that is allowed each member on the Address in Reply.

We heard nothing from the hon. member for Dalby about the effect on the wool industry of over-stocking.

**Mr. Russell:** Yes, I dealt with that.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** He did not; at least not half as fully as I am going to deal with it. We did not hear any statement beyond the fact that the hon. member had to pay £600-odd to transport his wool from Coongoola to Brisbane. That appeared to be the only thing worrying him. I agree that the £23,000 is not all profit on his wool clip; there are many incidental expenses in connection with its production.

The other matter I wish to draw the attention of the House to is the fact that under the closer-settlement system in the West there has been a disgraceful abuse of the land that is vested in the Crown. It belongs to the Crown, and no tenant should be allowed to abuse it. I think the only cure for that is the reduction of stock. If a man's country is assessed on a certain number, he should run the gauntlet of losing his lease if he stocks beyond that figure. Otherwise you are going to have abuse of the land—people will be allowed to go on without regard to its future, and you will then find the incoming settler at a later date (and this applies to pastoral holdings, too) placed at a great disadvantage.

**Mr. Russell:** The Land Court sets the standard.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** The hon. member does not believe that the Land Court is qualified to set it. The Land Court sets the standard but it does not limit the stocking of areas to the land's capacity and thus prevent the

consequent abuse of the country, with the result that the incoming settler must struggle against adversities made for him by his predecessor.

**Mr. Russell:** We never carry the sheep we are rated to carry and never have, in any part of Queensland that I know of.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I should be somewhat inclined to say that the hon. member has betrayed how little he understands.

**An Opposition Member:** I did not know you were a station-owner.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I am not like the hon. member, I haven't got enough land to lie down on.

These abuses have been going on for years and are nothing short of a tragedy. Those who have been in the happy position of being in occupation for all these years have extracted the wealth from the land and have left a legacy of eaten-out country that in some instances will not recover within the next 20 years. I understand all about the preservation of these valuable trees, the mulga and others, of which the hon. member speaks.

I paid particular notice also to the hon. member's remarks on the United States of America made in his very cultured voice. I was very interested in them, but should have preferred him to confine himself to the conditions in this State and say that he had carried out every condition that was imposed on him and every obligation he had to his employees.

**Mr. Russell:** I have, and more.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** The cunning gentleman, the man who at one time said to me, "I want my union ticket."

**Mr. Russell:** That is right, because I worked as a station hand.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** We must be very careful of him. I was careful with him. We find him long-range-planning.

However, the most essential thing in this State is the preservation of the wool industry and unless we are prepared to husband that industry and improve on it we shall find Queensland slipping back in the coming years. We have this anomaly existing in Queensland: We produce 8 lb. of wool per sheep from a 99-per-cent. Merino flock, whereas in New South Wales, from an 81-per-cent. Merino flock they produce 9 lb. of wool per sheep, the reason being the unscientific breeding here, the carelessness of people occupying the land, their over-stocking, and probably their being too mean to pay enough for rams that will ensure their keeping up a reasonably decent standard of clip.

I will give the House some figures. On one station property in the south-west of Queensland, where they have 100,000 breeding ewes, they averaged 11 lb. 8 ozs. of wool last year. That is 3 lb. 8 oz. over the average for the State. The small holders round that station averaged only 7 lb. and less.

Let us come a little nearer home, to Goondiwindi. Take Tarrewinabar, where they averaged 14 lb. 2 ozs. over the whole clip. That is 6 lb. above the average for the State. If the Government have any responsibility at all, it is to see that this industry is properly protected. We cannot allow it to run out. We cannot allow it to be destroyed by the avarice of people who happen to have the means to stock their properties.

**Mr. Russell:** That is what I have been telling the House.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** Then the hon. member told it in a different way and we did not understand it.

About three or four years ago I suggested in this Chamber that schools of science should be set up in Queensland to give sheep-breeders the advantage of scientific advice and service that would then be available. Although the system in New South Wales is far from all that may be desired, it is a fact that any Queenslander desiring an analysis of his wool must first send it to Sydney to be scoured in a laboratory and then to Geelong for analysis. There is no reason why that service should not be available in Queensland.

**Mr. Russell:** Where would you suggest it should be—Cunnamulla?

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I suggest that we put the hon. member in charge and in six months there would be nothing of it left.

**Mr. Macdonald:** That is too stupid for words.

**Mr. O'SHEA:** I am speaking now to the hon. member for Dalby but if the hon. member for Stanley wants a little dose later I will give it to him. I am serious, when I suggest that this should be done to preserve the main industry of this State. It is extremely doubtful whether we shall be able to carry on even with the small number of stock we have in the State at present if we allow this drift to continue in the breeding of our stock.

It has to be remembered that in this State today there are not as many sheep as there were prior to the reclamation of 26,000,000 acres of land from prickly-pear by the introduction of the cactoblastis. There were many more sheep 50 years ago than there are today. I am going to say that they were not in the same class as the larger part of the sheep in the State today, and if any responsibility at all rests upon the Government it is to see that the standard of our sheep is maintained and improved. There is no reason in the world why Queensland should not be producing 10 lb. a sheep instead of 8 lb.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Collins, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.56 p.m.