

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 17 AUGUST 1948

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy



Queensland Parliamentary Debates.

Legislative Assembly.

SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE TWELFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1948.

TUESDAY, 17 AUGUST, 1948.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

Pursuant to the proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 15 July, 1948, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 12 o'clock noon in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

The Clerk of the Parliament read the proclamation.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

At noon His Excellency the Governor came in state to Parliament House, was announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms, received by Mr. Speaker (Hon. S. J. Brassington) at the bar, and accompanied to the dais.

Hon. members being seated, His Excellency read the following Opening Speech:—

“GENTLEMEN OF THE PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND—

“It affords me great pleasure to meet you at the Opening of this the Second Session of the Thirty-first Parliament of Queensland.

“It is with the greatest pleasure that we have learned that Queensland is to be honoured by a visit of Their Majesties The King and Queen and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret. I have found everywhere I visited in Queensland a sincere loyalty to the Throne and Person of His Majesty, and this visit will be welcomed and deeply appreciated by all the people of Queensland.

“In my Address, when opening Parliament last year, I mentioned I had been afforded an opportunity of seeing much of the State and meeting many of its people and had learned of the hardships and difficulties with which they have had to contend, particularly in those far back areas where amenities are so few. Since that time I have visited many other parts of this State and met many more of its people, and despite the difficulties

experienced in the shortage of labour and materials, I have seen everywhere courage and determination to carry on, which augurs well for the future.

“It is very gratifying to see the splendid effort made in providing food and other essentials for those peoples overseas who are in such dire need of all the assistance we can possibly give. There is starvation and near starvation in many countries in the world at present, and Queensland has done much to alleviate this, but we could and must do more, for where there is starvation there is the germ of war. We in Australia have been spared the havoc and ruin of a war waged in our land, and it behoves us all, therefore, to make that extra effort to supply these needs, which can conceivably do much to avert such a tragedy.

“The receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year ended 30th June, 1948, amounted to £26,819,848 and the expenditure to £26,914,480, leaving a deficit of £94,632 on the year's transactions. This was the first revenue deficit since the financial year 1937-38.

“The effect of the railway strike was shown in the State's receipts, which were £434,387 less than anticipated; but for this exceptional factor undoubtedly a surplus would have been shown for the year. In the circumstances the deficit was not large.

“Receipts of the Railway Department were £841,251 less than estimated, but increases in land revenue and in revenue from stamps and succession duties and transport fees partly compensated for the loss of railway revenue.

“The disbursements of most departments of the State were less than the amounts appropriated, notwithstanding the fact that substantial amounts were required to meet increased salaries and wages following the determination of award variations by the Industrial Court. A large sum, for which no provision had been made, was required for retrospective wages payments, from September, 1947, to railway employees in accordance with the variation in the railway awards.

"For the financial year 1947-1948, the State Government Insurance Office again showed substantial progress. The new business written in the Life Department amounted to 8,704 policies for sums assured amounting to £3,220,550. This was an all-time record for the office.

"During the past year, my advisers have been greatly encouraged by the tangible evidence of the success of their policy for the promotion of new industries, as revealed in the growing number of inquiries by industrialists from England, America, and the southern States of Australia. Some of these have already established industries here, and others are in process of installing plant and machinery to commence operations.

"An important development is the proposal to establish cement works in the neighbourhood of Townsville. By way of encouragement for this new project, the Government has given a bank guarantee for £200,000 to the company through the Industries Assistance Board.

"The outlook for agricultural and pastoral production is generally good, although marred by continued drought conditions in the central and north-western pastoral areas.

"Last season's record wheat crop has been followed by record plantings for the coming crop.

"An excellent season is being experienced in most dairying centres, and dairy production for the year 1947-48 was the sixth highest on record. Pigmeat production, which is closely associated with dairying, is also showing an upward trend. Egg production is increasing and a considerable export trade in poultry is being developed.

"Beef and mutton production has been adversely influenced by the drought conditions in central and north-west Queensland, but elsewhere flocks and herds are expanding.

"My Advisers have formulated proposals to pave the way for the provision of central slaughtering establishments for domestic meat supplies in urban areas, and an enabling Bill will be submitted for your consideration during the Session.

"The 1947 crop of sugar-cane amounted to over 4,000,000 tons, exceeding the previous year's crop by more than 400,000 tons.

"The estimate for 1948 is over 5,500,000 tons of cane, which is expected to yield 800,000 tons of sugar. If this anticipation be fulfilled, production will be second only to the 1939 record yield.

"The objective of a pure milk supply for the community has been advanced by the inclusion of new areas in the tuberculosis eradication plan. At present over 36,000 dairy cattle are undergoing regular tests for T.B. infection, and all reactors are being eliminated from the herds.

"The Commonwealth Government has made available for five years an annual grant of £250,000 to be used for the purpose of raising

the efficiency of the dairy industry. The allocation to Queensland is £68,583, and the Queensland Government has submitted detailed proposals for the expenditure of that sum in this State.

"Producer-controlled commodity marketing boards for Queensland crops of potatoes and tobacco have been constituted.

"There are now in operation twenty-one producer-controlled commodity marketing boards under State marketing legislation.

"In terms of the legislation setting up the Queensland-British Food Corporation, 240,000 acres of land in Central Queensland have been resumed.

"Ploughing by the corporation on the first property resumed for it is well under way and it is hopeful of achieving its objective of 30,000 acres under sorghum in the coming season.

"Loans approved to borrowers from the Agricultural Bank during the financial year 1947-48 totalled £1,473,882 and of the total approvals £1,140,387 represented loans made to ex-servicemen.

"At 30 June, 1948, £2,291,439 of Agricultural Bank loans, interest free for the first three years, had been granted to 1,667 ex-servicemen for general farm purposes.

"The employment position is most satisfactory. Unemployment is practically non-existent, except in the case of those who are temporarily out of work in the seasonal industries.

"A statutory 40-hour week in industry became effective as from 1 January, 1948, and the relative adjustments have been made in all industrial awards.

"New settlers for the first year of post-war migration numbered 1,142 under the free and assisted passages schemes. These comprised 282 families with 396 children of tender years. In addition, 946 Balts were brought here under the scheme for the introduction of displaced persons to Australia, and a large number of full-fare passengers arrived from the United Kingdom.

"With the promise of improved transport facilities from the United Kingdom the number of new settlers is expected to be trebled next year.

"It is the policy of my Advisers to give preference to the family unit so that children may be brought to this State in the care of their own parents.

"For the present, priority recommendations are being given to those persons who are assured of accommodation on arrival and whose employment qualifications will enable them to be classed as essential workers or readily employable persons.

"The number of births registered in 1947 was 28,360, an increase of 1,336 over the previous record year of 1946.

"Marriages during the year 1947 totalled 10,999. This was a decrease of 667 on the previous year, but still higher than any previous year.

“My Advisers have approved of a reorganisation of the Irrigation Commission to provide branches to control all phases of water supply. Much progress has been made despite limitations imposed by the difficulty of finding experienced technical staff.

“Developmental proposals include the construction of main storages and weirs across streams in settled districts and in areas to be opened for soldier settlement and closer settlement generally.

“Provision of water supplies on stock routes is a responsibility of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, and all construction works are proceeding as rapidly as the supply of labour and materials permits.

“The Works programme for 1948-49 involves an expenditure on construction of £330,000 and provides for the continuation of investigations into water resources of the State.

“It is proposed to place at the disposal of farmers the services of specially trained officers of the Commission, who will give competent advice on problems associated with irrigation.

“Construction work on the Somerset dam was resumed last year. At 30th June about 150 men were employed, and it is anticipated that the job will be completed in three years. It is proposed to instal a hydro-electric power plant at the dam.

“Considerable progress has been made with the preliminary work associated with the Burdekin dam project.

“Two Main Roads Commission's parties have completed the survey of large tracts of country both below and above the site which has been selected for the dam.

“A soil party from the C.S.I.R. is in the area. At the experimental farm established near Ayr some 40 acres have been sown with a summer cover crop and the area is now being prepared for sowing of pastures in the spring. Tomato, cotton, and potato trial crops have also been planted.

“Exploration work has been undertaken at the site of the dam, and the time is rapidly approaching when the working plans can be commenced.

“It is expected to commence construction of the access road from the Charters Towers railway at Mingela to the dam site in the current financial year.

“The expenditure by the Main Roads Commission for 1947-48 on new roads and maintenance amounted to £3,746,000 as compared with £3,411,000 for the previous year. In addition, a sum of £497,000 was spent by the commission in various ways, including the expenditure of £227,000 on the construction of the new bridge across the Burdekin River.

“It is worthy of note that from the inception of the Main Roads Commission to 30th June, 1947, the roads expenditure in the Northern Division of the State equalled £44 per head of the population; in the Central Division (including Mackay), £40 per head; and in the Southern Division (including Brisbane), £21 per head.

“There has been raised, recently, the question of the formation of a new State in the northern portion of Queensland. My Advisers, over the years have expressed strongly the need for the development and population of Northern Australia, as being the only way to safeguard the peace and security of the Commonwealth, and have spared no pains to develop North Queensland.

“To have a properly balanced Commonwealth Parliament, it would be advantageous to have at least three States across the northern portion of the continent, each with representation in the Federal House. It was with that end in view that the Premiers of Queensland and Western Australia waited on the Prime Minister to secure the appointment of a Northern Australia Development Committee, which has been formed, and is now planning for the development of the north.

“My Advisers are prepared to recommend the establishment of additional States in Queensland when, as a result of their developmental policy, the new States will have a reasonable degree of financial and economic stability.

“Despite world-wide shortage of materials and equipment, the electricity supply industry in Queensland has made further progress. The number of consumers connected has increased to 205,333 and unit sales to 425,000,000, representing increases of 5.6 per cent. and 9.5 per cent. respectively on the previous year's figures.

“The fifth regional electricity board came into operation on 1 October, 1947.

“The estimated cost of the works programmes of the publicly owned electricity authorities in the State now in hand or to be commenced in the coming year totals approximately £13,000,000, of which £3,800,000 is scheduled for 1948-49.

“In Northern Queensland, surveys for the Tully Falls scheme are nearing completion, and construction should commence in 1949.

“Western Queensland has received the Electricity Commission's special attention during 1947-48, and a comprehensive report containing proposals for this part of the State has been completed.

“My Advisers have continued their policy of restricting building operations to dwellings of a size sufficient to meet average family requirements, except where permits are allowed for other premises after good reasons have been shown.

“Consequent on the restriction of other less urgent buildings, the construction of dwellings has progressed very satisfactorily. The figures for dwellings completed in Queensland compare most favourably with those of the other Australian States.

“Dwellings completed in Queensland in 1947 were 9,316; in 1946 they were 5,538. This progress is being maintained.

“The Queensland Housing Commission, during the year ended 30th June, 1948, completed 825 houses, had 719 in various stages of construction, and approved the erection of 267.

"Although there has been a marked improvement in production figures for building materials, such as bricks and tiles, action is proceeding with a view to effecting a further substantial increase in production to a figure considered adequate to cope with the heavy projected requirements for those materials.

"The shortage of building materials manufactured in the South is still a serious problem and every effort is being made to have supplies to Queensland increased.

"In order to increase the available rolling stock as rapidly as possible, the Railway Department, at 30 June, 1948, had under construction or on order (including orders placed with outside contractors) 88 locomotives, 30 suburban cars, one dining car and three composite sleeping cars; in addition to 781 wagons of various types, two 102 h.p. and 12 150 h.p. rail motor units.

"With a view to expediting the return to service of locomotives awaiting repair it was decided, towards the end of 1944, to have a number placed with private firms. To 30 June, 1948, 71 locomotives were placed in traffic after repair by these firms.

"The report of the committee appointed to investigate the proposal to electrify the Brisbane suburban railways has been received, and further details are being sought in relation to several matters contained in the report. Upon receipt of this information my advisers hope to be able to make their decision.

"The development of the Callide coal deposits has raised the question of transport to the coast. Railway construction with shortage of material and labour is most difficult. It would be impossible for some years to undertake the construction of long lines over the difficult country to link the field with Gladstone. However, the problem can be solved to some extent by a deviation at Mt. Morgan to obtain an easier grade and eliminate the delay on the rack section of the line to Rockhampton.

"My Advisers have this matter under investigation and hope that the deviation—a matter of six or seven miles—can be undertaken this financial year.

"Mr. F. H. Harrison, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the South Australian Railways, who was appointed by the Government to undertake an inspection and to report on the various locomotive workshops, has recommended the removal of the metal section of the Ipswich Workshops to Redbank and the construction of new workshops at Rockhampton and Townsville.

"The site for the Redbank Workshops has been selected, but, as this involves the acquirement of a considerable area of land now owned by the Commonwealth Government, the approval of that government is awaited before the resumption of the additional land and the development of the site can be proceeded with.

"Sites have also been selected at Rockhampton and Townsville and the matter of their acquirement is also receiving consideration, together with other aspects of the report.

"The Burdekin River bridge—the largest single post-war project actually under construction in Queensland—has been advanced to the stage where two of the nine large reinforced concrete caissons designed for the river bed have been successfully sunk some 100 feet through sand to foundation level.

"The total number of men employed on this major undertaking now exceeds 200. It is proposed, in the first half of the current financial year, to sink four more of the caissons in the river bed and complete the main pier at the south bank of the river and, during the latter half, to commence the remaining three caissons, complete the pier tops of the first two river piers, and to proceed with portion of the work on the south bank viaduct piers.

"Attention has been given by the Department of Harbours and Marine to the improvement of harbours throughout the State, and, in order that channels may be maintained and improved for larger vessels, tenders have been invited for a new suction dredge to be used in Brisbane and outports, and provision is being made by the Townsville Harbour Board for the construction of a similar dredge for use at that port.

"With the objective of augmenting the supply of fish, both for consumption in a fresh state and for canning, the Government, in conjunction with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, has arranged to explore the Barrier Reef waters, and adjacent waters north of Cairns, as part of an investigation into the possibilities of extending operations into areas not at present being used.

"Queensland's mining industry is showing steady progress due primarily to the high prices ruling for base metals, and also to the fact that much prospecting and development have taken place in various parts of the State by major mining companies and numerous small operators.

"The demand for coal continues more strongly than ever, and this has stimulated greater efforts for higher production. While a record output was achieved during the 12 months ended 31 December, 1947, there was a drop in coal production in the first half of 1948 because of the stoppage associated with the railway strike.

"Experts employed by the Powell Duffryn Technical Services Ltd., London, are now engaged on behalf of the Government in surveying the resources, mining methods, cleaning processes, handling practices and utilisation of the coal deposits of the State.

"In the Callide Valley, further boring operations have revealed seams of from 40 to 60 feet, and a detailed survey is being made to determine the exact extent of the coal resources.

"Tin production has steadily increased and to-day Queensland is producing the largest proportion of Australia's tin.

"Continued improvement was maintained in the silver-lead-zinc output. The State's major producer, Mount Isa Mines Ltd., completed an outstandingly successful year—its production of silver-lead-zinc products being valued at over £4,500,000.

"The new copper plant programme of Mount Isa Mines Limited has been delayed because of the inability of manufacturers, both domestic and overseas, to give delivery of major items of plant and structural steel which have been on order. Although some progress has been made in the mining section of the programme, little work in the way of actual construction has started on the mill and smelter sections. Preliminary work in connection with foundations for buildings and mechanical equipment is under way, and these will doubtless be ready when deliveries of structural steel and equipment are made. In the circumstances it is unlikely that the programme will be finalised until towards the end of next year.

"Further exploitation of the beach sand deposits on our South Coast beaches has greatly increased the production of rutile, zircon and zircon-rutile concentrates, and recently a survey of the mineral sand deposits on North Coast beaches between North Stradbroke Island and Fraser Island, near Maryborough, has been completed.

"During the period covered by this review, several important Acts were passed affecting the mining industry in addition to the agreement concerning the Blair Athol coal field. The most important of this legislation was that providing for the setting up of a Coal Board to control and regulate the coal mining industry in Queensland. This Act will come into effect during the latter half of the year.

"The Coal Mining Acts were further amended to provide for the better regulation of safety conditions in coal mines, and the provisions now enacted compare favourably with those in other parts of the world.

"It is proposed to review the existing conditions under which coal mining leases are granted under the Coal Mining Acts in respect of Crown land. To this end, consideration is being given to a Bill to amend such Acts as will provide, in addition to the existing labour conditions, that the holder will produce coal in such quantities as may be determined. It is hoped that this proposal will ensure the working of the leases in the best interests of the community.

"Twenty-two properties, comprising a total area of 81,027 acres, situated in the Atherton, Cairns, Dalby, Gympie, Nanango, and Toowoomba districts, have been acquired for War Service Land Settlement purposes.

"Sixty-four farms have been allotted by ballot to approved ex-servicemen, some of whom have commenced operations on their blocks. Most of them already have their farms in production, despite difficulties in the supply of farm machinery and materials.

"Twenty-nine blocks have been made available as Grazing Homesteads exclusively for ex-servicemen.

"An area of 48,617 acres of sugar lands suitable for eligible landless ex-servicemen has been examined.

"Two hundred and fifty ex-servicemen have bought sugar land, exercising their preference rights under the War Service (Sugar Industry) Land Settlement Act.

"One hundred and seventeen sugar assignments have been allotted to ex-servicemen owning or holding options over land.

"Assignments or farm peaks have been increased in the case of 142 owners of sugar land, and 156 assignments have been allotted to be balloted for by landless ex-servicemen.

A scheme has been approved to settle 40 ex-servicemen on irrigated tobacco farms on the Burdekin River. It is intended that ex-servicemen selected for the farms be trained by the Agriculture Department in tobacco-growing under irrigation on experimental plots in the Clare and Pioneer districts.

"The heavy demand upon our Crown forests for mill logs continues. Over 200 million super. feet were delivered in 1947-48.

"Employment in reforestation work was stepped up and over 1,600 men were employed at the end of the year. About 4,000 acres (or nearly 3 million trees) were planted during the year. Extensive work was done on natural forests for promotion of growth and regeneration.

"Many parts of the coastal and adjacent mountain areas of North Queensland have carried and carry heavy forests of many varieties of timber, amongst them superlative cabinet-woods such as walnut, maple, cedar, black bean, silky oak and kauri.

"In past days much of this forest was converted to farm purposes, but my Advisers are fully conscious of the great value of these forests and their policy is to protect them. Classification is proceeding so that lands best suited for forest production may be maintained for that purpose and an adequate area permanently reserved to provide for the timber needs of the future. Timber reserves north of Townsville total 1,943,457 acres.

"My Advisers continue to place the greatest emphasis on preventive measures as a means of maintaining a high standard of public health. This objective is being pursued by the joint efforts of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, the Health Education Council, and the Department of Public Instruction.

"By instructing the children on the fundamental principles underlying the maintenance of public health my Advisers are confident that great victories will be won in the war against disease.

"Heavy demands are still being made on the hospitals of the State and new construction is being delayed because of shortages of manpower and materials.

"Although the position has improved, nursing staffs everywhere are shorthanded, but in these difficult circumstances they have maintained a high degree of efficiency and devotion to the service of the sick.

"Difficulty is still being experienced in staffing schools adequately, but the position has been eased to some extent by the re-employment of suitable retired teachers. Further improvement should be effected at the beginning of 1949, when additional trainees will be available.

"Forty-nine teachers, who served with the forces in the last war, are in attendance at special classes at the Teachers' Training College. These classes will terminate in December next, and the teachers will then be available for duty.

"The recently established Research and Guidance Branch of the Department of Public Instruction is now in the process of development. A Senior Research and Guidance Officer has been appointed. His first duty will be the preparation of plans for a school record system to record essential information regarding each child's achievements, abilities, and characteristics. This will enable effective educational guidance to be given throughout the school course and ultimately form the basis of sound vocational guidance at the end of formal education.

"A special committee consisting of the Public Service Commissioner and officers of the Department of Public Instruction has prepared plans for the decentralisation of education to be given effect early in 1949.

"The Senate of the University, too, has agreed to co-operate with the Government in the planning of regional development and the devolution of administration, and has submitted proposals for the promotion of university teaching by the extension of the operations of its Department of External Studies.

"The Adult Education Service continues to be very popular throughout the State, and an additional centre has been established at Cairns.

"More than 3,000 ex-servicemen have been trained on behalf of the Commonwealth Government for the building trades and thousands more have been equipped either by full-time training or part-time training for other vocations.

"An extension of the regulations under the Apprentices and Minors Act to cover apprenticeship in special sections of the retail distribution trades was recently gazetted. Queensland is the first State of the Commonwealth to make provision for apprenticeship in these trades.

"The university buildings already erected at St. Lucia are in partial occupation by a section of the University Engineering and Physical Education Departments, and are being prepared for further occupation at the commencement of the 1949 academic year.

"Part of the buildings has been made available to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, which has set up a

laboratory and testing station for agricultural and pastoral research, pending the establishment of a permanent station later on.

"This arrangement has enabled research work of vital importance to Queensland's primary industries to be put in hand without delay that would otherwise have been unavoidable.

"The work of the Local Government Department has increased steadily during the year, especially in the town water supply and sewerage section. Today there are 202 schemes comprising town water supply and sewerage works, drainage schemes, and swimming baths either in the course of construction or being planned in working detail by the local authority to the value of £9,000,000.

"Claims have been made by the various unions for increased salaries and classifications throughout the Public Service, including the teaching service. The Industrial Court has already given decisions which will substantially increase the salaries of clerical officers, and a review of other salary scales and of Public Service classifications is proceeding.

"My advisers confidently expect that the improvement in the salaries and working conditions in the Public Service will attract and retain the services of qualified, experienced, and competent officers so necessary for efficient administration.

"Early attention will be given to improving Public Service superannuation. It is proposed further to subsidise the fund from consolidated revenue so as to allow an increase in the benefits to officers of the service on retirement.

"The Estimates for the current financial year are in the course of preparation and will be submitted to you as early as possible.

"During the session you will be invited to give consideration to the following, among other measures:—

Sugar Experiment Stations Acts and Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Acts Amendment Bill.

Apprentices and Minors Acts Amendment Bill.

Amendment of the Criminal Law to make better provision for dealing with serious cases of reckless and dangerous driving of motor vehicles.

A Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the manufacture, storage, sale, and use of explosives.

A Bill to consolidate and amend the Traffic Laws.

Diseases in Stock Acts Amendment Bill.

Nurses and Masseurs Registration Acts Amendment Bill.

Second-hand fruit Cases Act Amendment Bill.

Fair Rents Bill.

Local Government Acts Amendment Bill.

State Education Acts Amendment Bill.

Medical Acts Amendment Bill.

Public Service Superannuation Acts Amendment Bill.

A Bill to amend and extend the Profiteering Prevention Act.

A Land Sales Bill.

A Bill to make provision for the establishment of central abattoirs in urban areas.

A Bill to amend the law relating to coal-mining leases.

“I invite your earnest consideration of all matters that may be brought before you, and I pray that the blessings of Divine Providence attend your labours.”

His Excellency then left the Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER left the chair at 12.38 p.m., resuming it at 2.15 p.m.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

JUDGE FOR 1948.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter from His Honour the Chief Justice intimating that His Honour Mr. Justice Stanley would be the judge to preside at the sittings of the Elections Tribunal for the year 1948.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN.

Mr. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of Standing Order No. 13, I hereby nominate the following members to form the panel of Temporary Chairmen for the present session:

William Alfred Brand, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Isis;

Eric Paul Decker, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Sandgate;

George Henry Devries, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Gregory;

Thomas Dunstan, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Gympie;

Paul Jerome Remigius Hilton, Esquire, Member for the Electoral District of Carnarvon.

DEATH OF MR. H. M. RUSSELL AND MR. R. W. HISLOP.

MOTIONS OF CONDOLENCE.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (2.17 p.m.); by leave, without notice: I move—

“1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Hugh McDiarmid Russell, Esquire, and Roland William Hislop, Esquire, former members of the Parliament of Queensland.

“2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the relatives of the deceased gentlemen the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained.”

Mr. Russell was elected to the 24th Parliament as member for Toombul on 8 May, 1926, and represented that electorate through two Parliaments, the 24th and 25th. Under the Electoral Districts Act of 1931 the electorate of Toombul was altered to Hamilton, as from the beginning of the 26th Parliament. Mr. Russell became the first member for Hamilton and served until the end of the 28th Parliament. He was a member of the Queensland Parliament for the whole of five Parliaments, his period of service being from 8 May, 1926, to 29 March, 1941.

Mr. Russell died on 6 May, this year. He had a long and distinguished public career. He was an alderman of the Brisbane City Council, and one of the pioneering aldermen of the Greater Brisbane City Council and there served with credit to himself and his party before entering Parliament. He became a member of this House at the same election at which I was elected and quite a few hon. members who are still here were closely associated with him during his period in this chamber. He was leader of the United Australia Party for some time and finally paid the price that most hon. members have to pay—eventually he was defeated at the elections and retired from public life, returning to the control of his business. He undoubtedly gave of his best while he was in this chamber.

Mr. Hislop was elected on 11 May, 1935, as member for the electoral district of Sandgate. He served through the whole of two Parliaments, the 27th and 28th, and his period of service was from 11 May, 1935, to 29 March, 1941. Mr. Hislop was a very popular member in this chamber, popular with hon. members on both sides. No matter how hot the debates became, he was always noted for his good humour. I do not think that he ever uttered a word that caused the slightest affront to any other hon. member. He was a very good unionist and devoted to the interests of his constituents.

After his defeat at the 1941 elections Mr. Hislop served for a good many years as a welfare officer for the Apprenticeship Committee and many lads who are now tradesmen remember the kindly interest that he took in their welfare.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (2.20 p.m.): I second the motion of condolence moved by the Premier. Both Mr. H. M. Russell and Mr. R. W. Hislop rendered great service to their country. They had many friends both inside and outside the House who very much regretted their passing.

Mr. Russell was, as the Premier has said, a gentleman who like many other hon. members qualified through service on local authorities as a member of this Assembly. In both spheres he gave great service to the State. He was a man who had the interests of Queensland at heart and always worked hard in an endeavour to place this State in the forefront. He also took a prominent part in the business affairs of this city and was associated with various business organisations. He was a particularly keen debater.

He had an analytical mind that enabled him to make some very fine contributions to the debates of this House. He was a fighter in every sense of the word and no doubt many hon. members opposite remember the fighting speeches he put up on the floor of this Chamber during his term in this Parliament.

Mr. Hislop was a quiet and unassuming gentleman, although, nevertheless, he was a hard worker, and during the six years he was a member of this Chamber he made many friends. As the Premier has said on his retirement from public life he did an excellent job as welfare officer in association with the apprentices of this State. He did not look for anything for himself, rather did he always endeavour to do a good job in the interests of his fellow citizens.

The Opposition join with hon. members opposite in supporting this motion of sympathy and condolence with the families of the two gentlemen in question.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HILEY (Logan) (2.23 p.m.): I should like to join those who have expressed their sympathy in the passing of the late Messrs. Russell and Hislop.

Mr. Russell was, I think, the first member of Parliament who I knew really well on the public side of my life. I came into frequent contact with him in connection with the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce of which we were then both members and I had occasion to witness some of his work in this House. Mr. Russell was an exceedingly heavily built man and he always impressed me as possessing the character of the bulldog as well as resembling it in physique. When I observed him at work in the House, tenaciously sticking to his argument and fighting for the points he made, he always gave me an impression of having the same mental and moral qualities as those which he undoubtedly possessed physically. There is no question that he served his day and generation exceedingly well according to the views he held. I am glad to join with those who have paid a tribute to the work that he performed and the contribution he made to the public life of this State.

I knew Mr. Hislop in name only and I accept the tribute paid to his memory and join in expressing condolences with his relatives also.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, Building Societies, and Co-operative Societies for the year 1946-47.

Report of the Manager, Golden Casket Art Union, for the year 1947-48.

Report of operations under the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1947, for the year 1947-48.

Report of the Comptroller-General of Prisons for the 18 months ended 30 June, 1948, with statistical tables for the year ended 31 December, 1947.

Sixty-third report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Stock.

Twenty-seventh report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Government Inscribed Stock.

Report of the Agent-General for Queensland for the year 1947.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamations under—

The Diseases in Plants Acts, 1929 to 1937.

The Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1947.

Orders in Council under—

The Banana Industry Protection Acts, 1929 to 1937.

The Fauna Protection Act of 1937.

The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1946.

The Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1947.

Regulations under—

The Dairy Produce Acts, 1920 to 1944.

The Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1948.

The Fruit Marketing Organisation Acts, 1923 to 1945.

The Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Acts, 1923 to 1934.

The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1946.

The Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1947.

Regulation under the Land Acts, 1910 to 1948 (16 April).

Regulation under the State Forests and National Parks Acts, 1906 to 1948 (29 July).

Regulations under—

The Nurses and Masseurs Registration Acts, 1928 to 1940 (25 March).

The Health Acts, 1937 to 1946 (amending Food and Drug Regulations) (13 May).

The Health Acts, 1937 to 1946 (amending Poisons Regulations) (13 May).

The State Children Acts, 1911 to 1943 (5 August).

Regulation under the Art Union Regulation Acts, 1930 to 1943.

Regulations under the Co-operative Societies Act of 1946.

Order in Council under the Coroners Acts, 1930 to 1943.

Order in Council under the Foreign Governments (Titles to Land) Act of 1948.

Order in Council under the Jury Acts, 1929 to 1934.

- Proclamations under the Justices Acts, 1886 to 1948.
- Orders in Council under the Magistrates Courts Act of 1921.
- Order in Council under the Money Lenders Acts, 1916 to 1946.
- Regulation under the Prisoners' Parole Acts, 1937 to 1943.
- Order in Council under the Public Curator Acts, 1915 to 1947.
- Order in Council under the Queensland Law Society Acts, 1927 to 1941.
- Proclamation under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Acts, 1855 to 1948.
- Orders in Council under the Supreme Court Act of 1921.
- Balance-sheet of the Union Trustee Company of Australia Ltd. for the year ended 29 February, 1948.
- By-laws Nos. 472 to 479 under the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1946.
- Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1945 (25 March and 29 July).
- Order in Council under the Standard Cement Concrete Roofing Tiles Act of 1948 (8 July).
- Proclamation under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1940, and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1940 (19 March).
- Order in Council under the State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943 (25 March).
- Proclamation under the State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943 (25 March).
- Order in Council under the State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943 (1 April).
- Order in Council under the State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943 (8 April).
- Order in Council under the State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943 (8 April).
- Proclamation under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1940, and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1940 (13 May).
- Proclamation under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1940, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1940, and the Queensland-British Food Production Act of 1948 (3 June).
- Regulations under the Public Service Acts, 1922 to 1945 (24 June).
- Proclamation under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1940, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1940, and the Queensland-British Food Production Act of 1948 (24 June).
- Proclamation under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1940, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1940, and the Queensland-British Food Production Act of 1948 (24 June).

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that His Excellency the Governor this day delivered to Parliament an Opening Speech of which, for greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy. I presume hon. members will take this Speech as read?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

OPENING DAY.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (2.47 p.m.): I move—

“That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this the Second Session of the Thirty-first Parliament of Queensland:—

“May it please Your Excellency,—

“We, His Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislature of Queensland in Parliament, assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of Our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present Session.

“The various measures to which Your Excellency has referred and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our most careful consideration and it shall be our earnest endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State.”

The formality of this motion may rob it of its value. If so, that is to be regretted, because I do not think there was ever a time in the history of this State, the Commonwealth or the Empire when it was so desirable that every member of the community, not only in this Legislature but outside it, should direct his endeavours towards the development and the prosperity of this State. Although we may have procrastinated it is not yet too late to do this work and so I intend to devote most of my time to emphasising again the value and importance to Australia of the coal industry of Queensland. This State can and will ultimately make a very large contribution towards meeting the heavy and increasing demands made upon the coal-mining industry by industries in general.

The need for the development and exploitation of our vast coal resources becomes greater every day, and the reluctance of certain people to admit this need must be entirely ignored; it is based on ignorance, prejudice and lack of foresight. Unless we move quickly and give a practical demonstration that we can supply good coal to industry, what is the use of asking industry to supply us with essential goods? For example, the manager of Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. about 10 days ago announced that owing to coal shortages his company's output for the last 12 months was the lowest it had

been for 13 years. I do not want to be ultra-dramatic, but that is a startling and a sinister statement. The Broken Hill Pty. Co. is a big concern. It controls either directly or indirectly about 90 per cent. of Australia's heavy industries and we are dependent on these industries very much more than we actually realise. That statement is the most alarming one that we have had since the declaration of war. Actually, a declaration of war may of itself mean homicide, but that statement meant nothing more and nothing less than national suicide.

Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., as I said, is one of the biggest industrial combines in Australia. I have no brief for any industrial or other combine, but we have to be factual and we have to be realistic.

Mr. Russell: It produces the cheapest steel in the world.

Mr. BURROWS: I am pointing out that we are living in a fools' paradise—and before I finish most of the Opposition will feel at home. (Government laughter.)

There is no better indication of the economy of Australia than the rise or fall of the production of that company. I have not investigated it, but I should not be surprised if its profits today were greater than ever. But that is immaterial to the point I wish to make today. We are desperately in need of population. That is as plain as a pikestaff. It is a self-evident fact. Secondly, we are told every day that the markets for our primary products are unlimited. Thirdly, without any increase in population or production, has there been sufficient expansion of our industries, particularly those dependent upon coal as a basic fuel, to satisfy the demands on their output?

Now let us ask ourselves: can we house even our present population satisfactorily, to say nothing of the possibility of housing, say, another 1,000,000 or more migrants? Or how can the primary producer, who is asked to produce more of his products, do this if the necessary implements and utensils are not given to him? You will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that every one of these points brings us back to the production of the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. To me, everything hinges on our ability to step-up production in our secondary industries.

Apart from industrial needs, let me point to another angle of our problem, as recently stated in a Sydney paper—

"We are issuing warm clothing," said the Rev. George Van Eerde, Superintendent of the South Sydney Methodist Mission, "but only fire will warm the undernourished bodies of the slum people.

"Little children returning from school are put straight to bed. It would be better for some of them if they were allowed to take their chance with the cold, for their beds, damp and cold, are often death traps.

"This winter is keeping ministers and undertakers busy. They will be busier unless coal and power are provided quickly."

That statement does not indicate a lift in our population.

It does not matter what solution is offered or how sincere we are or how anxious to make this country safe, apart from our desire to help feed other countries; it all goes back to the need to increase our coal output.

The Broken Hill Pty. Company Ltd. is not the only one short of coal, as we read of dwindling stocks here in Brisbane, and a proposal that coal shall be drawn from the Callide by rail, a distance of 500 miles, if Brisbane industries are to be kept going. The output of the older coalfields of Southern Queensland has not increased at the same rate as the demand, and if Courtaulds Ltd. decide to establish its industry in Queensland—and we sincerely hope it does—we shall be required to supply it with electricity or coal equal to at least 100,000 tons per annum.

But the demand from the southern States for coal is even greater than our local needs. New South Wales produces a great deal of coal and the burden of supplying the deficiency in the southern States is placed on that State, to the detriment of her own industry; it even means robbing the firesides of her unfortunate people, who depend on coal for fuel. In addition to this demand from other States, there is an overseas demand. New Zealand is desperately short of this commodity and I understand she is importing it from Britain and America. In today's "Telegraph" it is reported that Victoria is importing a large quantity of coal from England. Poor old England! They are milking the old cow dry.

The cold hard fact that we have to face is that unless we cast aside our complacency and apathy and settle down to a determination to produce more coal, the whole basis of our economy will be destroyed. We must, amongst other things, relieve New South Wales of some of the responsibility of supplying the other States.

Having established the urgent need for increased coal production, let us ask ourselves what we have done about it. In the course of my remarks I hope to be able to point out what we can do.

First, we have begun the very necessary work of a detailed survey of our resources, and we have agreed to help the enterprise of a certain concern that has offered us the genesis of a colossal plan to exploit one of the several large coal deposits in Central Queensland, but if anyone has deceived himself into believing that that is the only contribution he or any Government can make, he is sadly lacking in imagination.

We cannot do enough to hasten the detailed survey of our resources that has been begun by Powell Duffryn Technical Services Ltd.; indeed, in a sense we are fortunate that, bare or limited as our knowledge of them may be, it is still well ahead of our capacity to exploit them.

The big scheme or proposal to develop and exploit Blair Athol is still in the embryo stage. If it ever matures, so much the

better, but even if it fails to materialise we have not lost anything by our negotiations which have made a big contribution towards making us coal-minded and in addition given our vast coal resources a great deal of much-needed advertisement.

However, without abandoning hope in any degree—and nobody can say I have abandoned hope of Blair Athol—we must be realists and accept the fact that such a scheme will require a lot of luck and a lot of priority over materials already in short supply to give it any chance of producing the much-needed extra quantity of coal within the next seven years. In the meantime we must get on with the job ourselves. We have the capacity and we have the resources. All that is required is enterprise, initiative and determination to get on with the job.

Obviously, we must turn to the enormous deposits of coal in Central Queensland as the source of this much-needed extra production and the first thing to examine is the possibility of using our existing facilities, as we know that we have not sufficient labour and materials to perfect methods of handling and transport at present. There is no need to waste time on grandiose ideas of artificial ports, on which millions of pounds have been squandered already, as we have at hand the best port in Queensland, one capable of sheltering the whole of the British Fleet, according to the late Lord Jellicoe. It is waste of breath and time for people to talk of making great artificial ports when we have Gladstone virtually lying idle within 100 miles of the second- and third-largest coal deposits in Queensland. I refer to the Callide and Selene fields.

Let us now examine the immediate requirements of the coal trade, which in our case I submit are three in number—

Existence of large deposits.

Port facilities.

Lines of communication or transport from fields to port.

Having ascertained the essentials and accepted the logic of the need for getting on with the job of immediate production, let us proceed with an examination of existing deposits and facilities.

Firstly, we have the Selene coalfield which does not lend itself to open-cut working but, nevertheless, is already accepted as being much cheaper to work than any other field in Australia, apart from the open-cut mines. On two consecutive days last week, ten men produced over 100 tons a day at this mine by purely hand methods. This time, last year, I was arguing and pleading for the Coal Board to allow this mine to work yet only a few months ago a deputation of coal-owners from the Maryborough district waited on the Secretary for Mines asking him to refuse a licence to that field. Considerable survey work is required to establish the size of the field finally but sufficient is known to prove that over 100 million tons of coal is in sight. This field, fortunately, is on the branch railway line to Gladstone, 112 miles distant.

Next we have the enormous Callide deposit, situated 70 miles by road from Gladstone. Anyone who cannot realise the vastness of this deposit has not read or listened to the news of late. Callide, being an open-cut mine, offers coal at fantastically low prices, and when sufficient labour, material and enterprise are offering to build the 50-odd miles of missing link of railway between Gladstone and Biloela, this field should export coal in quantities and at a price that will revolutionise the coal industry.

Then we have the great Blair Athol field, whose only disadvantage at present is its distance from a port, but this distance could be reduced, by a deviation, to approximately 250 miles. At present, however, the round-about route of 308 miles offsets its otherwise unlimited potentialities. I might mention that in 1929 this field exported 50,000 tons of coal to New Zealand through the port of Gladstone.

Having examined and established the unlimited quantities of coal available and waiting to be loaded into waggons, let us now pause and ask ourselves whether we want to be honest and use the only natural and efficient port available or whether we want to contradict the report of the Commission appointed in 1931 to inquire into the suitability of Queensland ports, which said—

“The Gladstone Harbour is well known to be the best harbour in Queensland and, for all practical purposes, is almost ideal.”

Assuming that we are honest, and having proved both ends of our argument or contention, let us now examine what transport facilities are available to connect the point of supply with the point of export. In this matter again we find that our difficulties are not great, as geographically the port of Gladstone could not be in a better position, being at the apex of a triangle with the Selene and Callide fields as its other two points.

We must remember the present limitations of our railway service and appreciate the value of any possible alternative road service as a means of augmenting it. In this connection we again find ourselves in the happy position of having a main road constructed for defence purposes and at present virtually unused running past the Callide field to Gladstone, a distance of 70 miles, 15 of which are bitumenised, while the balance has a good surface and is mostly of first-class standard.

We thus find that we can use two different rail links plus a good road link—Selene to Gladstone, a distance of 112 miles by rail, Callide to Gladstone, 170 miles by rail, and Callide to Gladstone by road, a distance of 70 miles. To this we can add as much use as the Railway Department can give of the rail link between Blair Athol and Gladstone, which, as I have stated already, carried 50,000 tons of coal in 1929.

No other point on the coast, even if it has a natural harbour, has the same hinterland as Gladstone, and none of the places suggested as sites for an elaborate and expensive artificial harbour would have as many points of supply.

Another feature, in these days of quick turn-round of shipping, is that Gladstone would be at least one day's sail closer to Melbourne or Adelaide than any of the suggested artificial ports, and there would be no delays while ships were waiting for suitable tides for ingress to and egress from the port, and no dredging or other expensive maintenance is required to keep it safe.

The more I examine the possibilities of exporting coal in large quantities from Queensland within the very near future, the more certain I am that it can be done. There are no physical difficulties in the way, although I admit that I have encountered mental difficulties in people who apparently are much happier obstructing than constructing. As I have stated already, we must be realists and, instead of dreaming of grandiose schemes, get on with our job.

When I spoke in this debate last year, I made a similar appeal to use our existing facilities and get on with the job of producing more coal. I must admit that I am disappointed and have often been exasperated at the slowness of the progress that is being made, but I still believe that there is hope and I have been considerably heartened by the negotiations that took place during the past week with the Victorian Minister for Transport, Mr. Kent Hughes, the mine-owners at Selene and Callide, and various Government departments. At the first of the several interviews I had with Mr. Kent Hughes and his associate I was asked in all seriousness whether the Gladstone wharves were connected to the railway line. I have also been reliably informed that the New South Wales Coal Board recently inquired whether there were any wharves or a jetty at Gladstone. Such questions are not entirely based on ignorance and I am convinced that certain interests deliberately foster and create them in order to retard the progress and recovery of this country or to protect their own investments somewhere else.

And Mr. Speaker, there is another type of Quisling who is attacking the possibility of road transport between Gladstone and the Callide field. This road, which was built by the C.C.C. as a defence road, cost over £100,000 and the obstructionists say that it will not stand up to heavy work. I have investigated the carrying capacity of the bridges along that road and find that all the major of them are A class and that with very little effort the smaller ones that are not of sufficient capacity to carry 20 tons could be brought up to that specification. I have been informed that £100 a mile a year is the ordinary maintenance cost. Let us, for argument sake, treble that sum and allow for a great deal more maintenance and contingencies. At £300 for each of the 70 miles the maintenance cost would be £21,000 a year. We need not bother to set off the existing maintenance costs, which would be required whether any coal was carted over the road or not.

Mr. Evans: Is it bitumen?

Mr. BURROWS: Fifteen miles out of the 70 miles are and the rest is a defence

road. The road licence fee for the transport of coal on this route has been fixed at 3d. a ton a mile. Let us assume that 2,000 tons of coal a week is carted over the road. That works out at £437 10s. 0d. a week; but we have to bear in mind that 2,000 tons is only the equivalent to about six or seven trainloads. Taking a working year of 50 weeks we have £21,875 in fees to offset the increased maintenance charge fixed at the exceedingly high rate of £300 a mile per annum and totalling £21,000. If the fees collected were put back in the shape of maintenance of the road there would be more than required.

Mr. Evans: The State Transport Board fixes that fee.

Mr. BURROWS: It does not matter; it all goes into the one fund and Consolidated Revenue would have to pay it out. I submit that the amount collected in transport fees would be more than the sum required to keep the road in good order. The only thing wrong with the whole idea is that the proposal to cart coal by road emanated from a determined progressive and patriotic body in Gladstone and not from some bureaucratic public servant. I have listened to and read of grandiose schemes of building artificial ports, dredging rivers, &c., but if we could take all the other so-called ports of Queensland and put them together, they would not have the same value as the harbour of Gladstone. Notwithstanding the many millions of pounds that have been expended on these white elephants, both in construction and maintenance, not one of them offers the same economy of working as the port of Gladstone.

The sponsors of these suggestions to build artificial ports and harbours in preference to using a natural and more centrally situated port, are only trying to hold up production and progress. Even if we had decided to build a big harbour at any of the three or four points suggested along the Queensland coast in the past six months, where should we have got the material to do so? Last year, in this debate, I advocated the appointment of a Minister to deal with coal production alone, and my experience since has strengthened that opinion. The present Secretary for Mines is very competent and well fitted for that position, but he is also Secretary for Public Lands, exercising jurisdiction over that very comprehensive and big department. If the ramifications and responsibilities of either of those departments are not sufficient to keep a Minister busy in each of them, then I am a poor judge of human capacity. We cannot stabilise our government if we have to defer decisions. The Minister cannot be in two places at once, and, as a consequence, the work of both departments must be held up.

Besides its value and the contribution it has to make to our national reconstruction the coal industry has offered, and can offer, immense economic value to the State, and we should not miss an opportunity to exploit or advertise its potentialities. Instead of Mr. Kent Hughes or any other potential customer having to come to Queensland for information about our coal, we should send the

information to him. We are not doing enough to advertise our resources. I regret to say also that in my opinion we have not sufficient co-ordination between our transport departments and the Mines Department. For instance, the Monto railway depot was drawing its coal supplies from Callide, a distance of at least 270 miles by rail, while the Selene mine, which is 12 miles from Monto, received instructions to reduce its output to 20 tons a day. However, I am pleased to say that when I drew the Premier's attention to this anomaly it was immediately corrected. Still, it should never have occurred.

Only a few weeks ago the Selene mine was told, on Government orders, that its output must not exceed 20 tons a day. What is the position at that mine now? The Selene mine looks like being able to sell an unlimited amount of coal to Victoria. It was urged in the last issue of the "Sunday Mail" that we should not send our coal out of the State as we had not enough to meet our own local requirements, or words were used to that effect. There is plenty of coal on the Selene and Callide fields to supply all our requirements, with plenty to spare for the Southern States, which so badly need our coal. There is no need for Mr. Chandler to get panicky lest there should not be enough coal in this State to provide adequate electricity at the tramway power-house, but he will not be able to get enough coal if he is not prepared to pay the freight on it. If the people of Brisbane want the coal and desire to remain in Brisbane, they must pay the freight on it, just as the people in the country must pay the freight on the goods that they buy in the cities. If, on the other hand, the people in Brisbane want coal and want cheap coal, then let them do the decent thing, that is, to shift their factories to the coalfields. Then I can guarantee them that they will get their coal for 7s. 6d. per ton. There was no great outcry against the quantity of coal, not a very big quantity no doubt, exported through Maryborough to the South in the past few months, but as soon as an effort was made to exploit the mines in Central Queensland certain people made a great noise about it, contending that we could not spare this coal for the other States.

To me the whole thing does not make sense, and, as I have already stated, the industry is too important and too valuable to be humbugged about by divided control. We are trying to run our Government too cheaply. The sooner we charge one Minister answerable to this Parliament with the full responsibility of organising and exploiting our coal trade the sooner we shall start to get somewhere.

I sincerely hope that, consistent with the text of the motion I have had the honour to move, the measures referred to by His Excellency will receive our careful consideration and that our fullest endeavours will be directed towards not only the advancement but also the protection of this State.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN (Buranda) (3.21 p.m.): I have very much pleasure indeed in seconding the motion so ably moved by the hon. member

for Port Curtis. I am pleased to have the opportunity of doing so because I believe the various matters contained in His Excellency's Speech are of the very greatest importance to this State.

At 3.22 p.m.,

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

Mr. BROWN: I want to take this opportunity of congratulating His Excellency on the sustained and continued interest that he appears to be taking in his high office of Governor. That interest is displayed by the vast area he has travelled over since attaining his high office; in fact, he has travelled over virtually the whole State. He will, by continuing the policy of travelling throughout the length and breadth of the State, gain full knowledge of its vast wealth and potentialities and become cognisant of the great developmental work that the Government are undertaking to achieve that purpose. I believe that with the aid of the whole of this Parliament and the powers that be outside this State the time is ripe for its very great development.

The hon. member for Port Curtis has told us a great deal about coal. Coal is an essential product for this State's development and the development of our resources in this mineral is overdue. It seems inconceivable that it has not already taken place but the Government are big enough and have the courage to do things and I feel sure that we shall emerge victorious from this period of development. There is no reason why this State should not become the bulkhead of this great Australian nation.

Whilst we are carrying on this work of great development we at the same time should not be unmindful of the fact that the whole of the northern portion of Australia requires development. I was pleased to note in His Excellency's Speech that something was said of the formation of three States across the northern part of Australia and that the Premiers of Western Australia and this State had already conferred with the powers that be with the object of bringing about that development.

In order to develop that vast area we shall require millions of people; that is the only way to develop this great country. These people will have to be brought into this country and when they are brought here they should be treated as human beings ought to be treated.

We must guarantee them good conditions; and in return, I venture to prophesy, they will fight if need be in order to maintain those good conditions. The development of the northern parts of Australia is absolutely essential from a defence point of view; and I believe the best way to defend Australia is to develop it.

I am indeed pleased that His Excellency saw fit to mention in gratifying terms the efforts that are being made in Queensland to provide food and other essentials for Great Britain and other European countries

that are on the verge of starvation. I hope the good work that is being done by the Government and the people of this State will continue until all the nations and the peoples of the world are satisfied with our efforts in the production of the necessaries of life; and I hope that life will become the pleasure it should be for every human being.

In my maiden speech 12 months ago I said I was a unificationist. I said I was a unificationist because I believed in it. I am still a unificationist. If my memory serves me right, the hon. member for Fassifern said something about that statement of mine during his speech on the Address in Reply debate last session. He said that he could not make me out, that I said the thing quite calmly and coolly, that I did not say it in the heat of the moment. He implied that I was a person to be looked down upon or to be afraid of. I want to assure the hon. member for Fassifern that he need not be afraid of me. I am still a unificationist.

Mr. Maher: Shame on you!

Mr. BROWN: Probably if the hon. member for West Moreton knew sufficient he also would be a unificationist. He is an individualist, and out for profit—profit for himself and himself only.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN: I am out to support the working-class masses of this country and the world. I am out to help them overcome the difficulties, and the only way is to look forward to the implementation of projects such as I am enunciating, which will free the people from starvation and want.

Mr. Maher: You have also to produce.

Mr. BROWN: I have done as much production as the hon. member for West Moreton.

Mr. Maher: You do not show the scars.

Mr. BROWN: I do not need to look at the stars; I look at my work. I want the hon. member and all other hon. members to understand me when I say that in my opinion only two forms of government are required in any country, that is, national government and local government. For instance, this great land of Australia could be divided into smaller States or provincial areas.

These States would have full power to control all local affairs and the Commonwealth Government power to control national affairs. If this was done, I believe we should be better governed than we are to-day.

Mr. Muller: You are a unificationist.

Mr. BROWN: I am a unificationist and the hon. member knows it. I have been talking about him for some time. Probably the hon. member was looking for the cat in the vat. (Government laughter.)

At 3.31 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. BROWN: I believe the time has come when we should go further into the question of unification. Having passed through two world wars in a few short years, every thinking person must come to the conclusion that the method adopted by the various nations in world affairs will not bring about the peace that we thought the last war at any rate would bring to us—the everlasting peace that all nations desire. I believe there is a way of abolishing war, with all its horror and destruction. I am in favour of the unification of nations with a Parliament composed of representatives of all nations to deal with international affairs.

Mr. Maher: Dreaming is no use in a realistic world.

Mr. BROWN: That is the trouble. The hon. member for West Moreton seems to be dreaming all the time. He must realise that we cannot live as individualists and individual nations. We depend on each other. That applies to Governments and to nations. I believe the introduction of such an international Parliament would solve the problem so much discussed in the Press to-day, that of permanent peace.

The first requirement of such a Parliament would be an international currency in place of the various currencies in use to-day, necessitating exchange and all that sort of thing.

Mr. Muller: Have you been talking to Frank Barnes?

Mr. BROWN: I am not talking to Frank Barnes, I am talking to hon. members opposite.

The international Government would have control of the international currency. Here I might mention that I am in favour of the nationalisation of banking in Australia, but we cannot talk on that subject at any length at present because an appeal is being made from the judgment of the High Court of Australia to the Privy Council.

The next requirement necessary to bring about peace is an international language. The adoption of these suggestions would, I believe, eliminate war for all time and create everlasting peace.

That would be one of the greatest steps we could take towards uplifting the great mass of people who constitute the working classes of all countries in the world, and I believe that it may come quicker than we expect. We cannot be unmindful of the advances made by science in our means of travel and communication. Only a few years ago we were weeks away from Great Britain and other countries whereas today we are only a matter of days apart. Only a few years ago we were weeks away from our enemies while today we are only a matter of hours from them, and they from us. I trust that these words will fall on ears that are attentive enough to absorb something that should lead to the uplifting of humanity throughout the world.

Recently I had the privilege of visiting a part of North Queensland and it was an education to me to see the vastness of our

forests and the immensity of our agricultural and mineral wealth. To me it seemed that North Queensland could supply the whole of our requirements of almost everything. Last session the hon. member for Kelvin Grove spoke of the waste of timber that is taking place in that part of the State and what I have seen leads me to agree with him. Up there huge trees, with branches bigger than most of the sticks we see down here, are being wasted. Surely something can be done with this timber! I hope something will be done in the very near future.

Another step that should be taken is the passing of legislation to make the treating of timber for borers compulsory. I visited a sawmill at Ravenshoe where they were treating timber for borers. This mill exports most of its timber to New South Wales, and in that State timber cannot be sold unless under guarantee that it will be borer-proof for two years. Within the last 12 or 18 months one of my friends built a house in Queensland and within 12 months he was forced to replace the floor because of the ravages of borers. An Act similar to that operating in New South Wales would prevent such happenings here. If people have the courage to build houses today then at least they should have the protection of being assured that the timber used in their homes is free from borers. I hope to see something done to make it compulsory to treat timber for borers, as this would be of great benefit to future home-builders of the State.

I had also an opportunity of looking over the tin-dredging plant at Mt. Garnet. There is no doubt that the company concerned is to be congratulated on its enterprise, but having seen the dredge working and the amount of slush that is going into the Herbert River, I am satisfied that the hon. member for Kennedy has much in his argument that something should be done to protect the people living along the banks of that river. I do not care who does this work of clarification, although personally I think the company should do it. If the company will not do it under its lease, then I think that the Government should attend to the matter on behalf of the people, whose water is being spoiled and whose cattle are being lost as a result of drinking it. I wish the hon. member for Kennedy every success in his agitation to have this matter adjusted.

The Government are to be congratulated on the stand they have taken to assure the public a pure milk supply by implementing the plan for the testing of dairy herds for tuberculosis. I have noticed that herds are undergoing tests for T.B. At the same time, I must say that the cost of distribution of milk to the public is too high.

Mr. Maher: High because of the 40-hour week.

Mr. BROWN: The cows give as much milk under a 40-hour week as under a 48-hour week; probably the hon. member for West Moreton would not like to work 48 hours a week to draw the milk out of them. He would sooner take it out of the workers of

Brisbane. The producer, who has everything to do in the production of milk, gets only 1s. 10½d. a gallon for his milk in Brisbane, and included in that sum is a subsidy of 4d. The public, on the other hand, are paying 3s. a gallon.

Mr. Nicklin: For bottled milk.

Mr. BROWN: Yes. I think that the price to the farmer is a fair one; I do not think he is getting too much.

Mr. Nicklin: He is not getting enough.

Mr. BROWN: If a farmer can buy a farm, stock it, feed his stock, buy milk-cans, can the produce of his stock, pay for all labour, and cart his milk to the roadside or railway station, and pay freight, all for 1s. 10½d., it seems to me that the charge of 1s. 1½d. for the delivery of that milk in the streets of Brisbane is too much. The system of distribution seems to be the biggest hurdle we have to get over. That obstacle not only stands in the way of the supply of milk but all foodstuffs and articles that we require, in fact all articles that the workers have to buy. Only the other day, I noticed that a profit of 47½ per cent. was allowed to the person selling furniture. The person making it gets approximately only 5 per cent. more. In his cost you have to go right back to the fellow who goes into the forests and cuts the timber, to the hauler of the timber, to the miller, to the carpenter or joiner or cabinet-maker who puts that timber into furniture.

The manufacturer may charge a furniture distributor £5 for an article but the distributor is allowed to sell it for £7 10s. That is a crying shame and something should be done about it.

Mr. Maher: What is the price-fixer doing?

Mr. BROWN: I do not know and perhaps the hon member is too busy milking cows to find out either.

Again, the high prices of electrical appliances prevent many people from availing themselves of up-to-date labour-saving devices that would help the housewife to share in the benefits of the 40-hour week. She cannot enjoy those benefits because of the high prices charged for these appliances, and the 40-hour week has not been responsible for those high prices. In the near future the Government will be bringing down a measure to deal with price-fixation but something more than that will have to be done. Indeed, the time has arrived when a measure should be introduced to limit the margins of profit. That is not going to be an easy task. If the labour of the worker is to be sold in the Industrial Court at so much an hour, a day or a week, it is only fair that the price of the product of his labour also shall be fixed by the Industrial Court.

Mr. Maher: It is fixed now by the price-fixer.

Mr. BROWN: I think we should do it the other way—that a measure should be introduced limiting the margins of profit and they should be fixed by the Industrial Court.

It is very gratifying to learn that during the year 9,316 dwellings were completed in Queensland and that progress is being maintained. The Government are to be congratulated on such an achievement in such a short space of time. That number is nearly twice the number of the year before. The Labour Government have been in power in this State for 30 years of the past 33 years and it is a world's record, I suggest, that in this State 70 per cent. of the people either own their own homes or are in the course of buying them. It is a record of which we might well be proud and it certainly does not support the blue-ruin cry of our opponents that only devastation follows Labour rule. Remember the important facts that the Labour Government have occupied the Treasury benches for 30 of the past 33 years and that the result is what I have pointed out, which is, I believe, a world's record. I do not think that any other country can boast of such an achievement.

Although the Labour Government have carried out such splendid work, the fact remains that building costs are too high. Again this is a difficult matter to solve and it is hard to say just where the increased costs arise. I trust that something will be done very soon to cheapen the cost of home-construction in the interests of the great body of workers who desire to have their own homes in this State.

From His Excellency's Speech it would appear that a difficulty is being experienced in adequately staffing our State schools. This has compelled the department to re-engage a number of retired teachers who have signified their willingness to re-enter the service. The department is justified in adopting that policy, but notwithstanding this fact there remains a big lag of teachers. That is accounted for in some respects by the large number who paid the supreme sacrifice in World War II. and by the fact that a number of young men and women who saw service in that war are now unfit because of war disabilities. In addition, a number of young people who were called into the services have not been able to rehabilitate themselves. There is also the increasing number of new scholars coming forward each year. In view of the difficulties we are passing through in these abnormal times, something more than we are doing will have to be done. We all admit that we are living in abnormal times and when we are living in abnormal times we must adopt abnormal methods. In this connection I have a suggestion to make. It may not be popular but it is worth a trial. I suggest that the department should advertise that an entrance examination for the Teachers' Training College will take place in six months' time. That examination should be open to any boy or girl who has not sat for the scholarship examination, provided he or she is not less than 16 nor more than 20

years of age. Such candidates may be now engaged in other occupations but the method I propose would enable them to qualify by examination for admission to the college for a special course of training before being drafted out into our schools. During their period of training the Government would have to pay the salary applicable to their calling. If this suggestion was adopted it would help in no small way in overtaking the present lag in teachers.

It might be said, "look at what it is going to cost." I do not view it from that angle. We do not spend enough money on education. We should be employing more specialists in training our teaching staff. I admit that we are engaging specialists but only to a small extent. We should be preparing for that time when the school-leaving age will be extended from 14 years to 15 years. Teachers handling those scholars should possess special qualifications. If my suggestion was given effect to the time when an extension of the school-leaving age could be put into operation would be brought nearer.

In all our big centres provision should be made in each school for a child-minding centre, with a kindergarten attached. People caring for children under the age of five years should be properly trained. The need for this is prominently brought under my notice every week. I am associated with a child-minding centre in my electorate. It is carried on by a voluntary band of women who give up their time on one or two days a week to attend to the little tots. We have had as many as 56 children on one day in that centre and as many as 105 in two days in one week. That is proof of the need for something along the lines I have suggested. Where could we have better provision for child-minding centres than in our schools?

If that was done, I believe it would be of great service to the people of this State. It is only fair that the women who are bearing children and who have to go out and do all sorts of shopping and other business should be able to leave their children in good hands so that they will not have to worry about them during their absence on these missions or while they were enjoying a little recreation.

I congratulate the Government on the establishment of a research and guidance branch of the Department of Public Instruction. I think that the money spent in this activity will show a good return. I think it is long overdue. I believe we have people who are qualified to give our children advice as to the best calling they should follow. I think in the past we have been apt to teach our children only one thing, that is, that life depends on how much money we can get. I think it depends on how good a citizen we can make. I believe the scheme will be a success and I congratulate the Government on the stand they have taken.

His Excellency said in his Speech that the Government continued to devote the greatest effort to preventive methods as a means of maintaining a high standard of public health. I congratulate them on that.

I should like to draw the attention of the House to a matter to which I have given a good deal of thought during the recess. I had the privilege of visiting Mt. Crosby with some of my colleagues and while there I made extensive inquiries about the softening of the water supply for Brisbane. I got in touch with people in authority, and they gave me to understand it was quite possible and would not cost too much to have the water softened before it was sent through the pipes into the homes in the city, so that the women would be able to wash their clothes in good soft water. If that was done, we could eliminate the whole of the tanks in Brisbane and Ipswich, and thus could get rid of 90 per cent of the mosquito menace. I agree that prevention is better than cure, and I hope this suggestion will not fall on deaf ears.

There is another matter to which I should like to draw the attention of the House, and it is not a very pleasant subject. Unfortunately, I do not see the member for Windsor here.

Mr. Hiley: You want to use your eyes.

Mr. BROWN: I am sorry; I beg his pardon.

The following article appeared in the "Sunday Mail" of August 1 under the heading—

"MANY GHOST VOTERS."

The article states—

"'Thousands of people named on State rolls don't exist,' Mr. B. Pie, M.L.A., said yesterday.

'It is the votes of these ghosts that give Labour candidates their majority in a number of city seats when there is a close contest,' he continued.

'In such seats it is virtually impossible to defeat the Labour member under the existing set-up of State rolls.'"

I should like hon. members of both sides of the House to listen attentively to this—

"'What happens at State elections is very simple, as explained to me by a prominent member of the Labour Party still sitting in Parliament,' Mr. Pie said.

'In many metropolitan electorates there are staunch Labour supporters who would do anything for the Labour Party.'"

(Time expired).

Debate, on motion of Mr. Nicklin, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

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

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 10.30 a.m. to-morrow."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.3 p.m.