

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 22 AUGUST 1950**

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**TUESDAY, 22 AUGUST, 1950.**

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

**QUESTIONS.**

**WORK ON BURDEKIN DAM SITE.**

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Premier—

“How many people are employed at the Burdekin dam site and what work are they performing?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

“Excluding the activities of the Clare War Service Land Settlement Scheme, 63 men are employed in the area of the Burdekin River Project. They are engaged on diamond drilling to test foundations at the site of the main storage dam and the diversion dam site; making a detailed survey to determine the exact site of the diversion dam; locating the access road between Ravenswood and the Burdekin Falls Dam and an access road to the diversion dam site; on survey work associated with the design of the dam itself, and on a survey of the irrigable area below the diversion dam.”

**HOMES FOR PENSIONERS, TOWNSVILLE.**

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“Have representations been made by the Townsville branch of the Pensioners' Association for an area of Crown land to be set aside or vested in the Townsville City Council for the purpose of erecting cottages for pensioners thereon, and, if so, what decision has he reached on the matter?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando) replied—

“Yes. Pensioners' Association was informed that the area applied for—part of Cemetery Reserve R. 148—was required for other purposes and could not be made available as desired. The Association was further advised that district office reports disclosed that the city council had ordered huts and shacks already erected on the area in question to be demolished, and that sites had been made available for pensioners at Happy Valley, which is part of Pasturage Reserve R. 129. If the Townsville City Council, the letter continued, would submit to this department an application to have set aside an alternative area for the erection of cottages for pensioners, such application would be given due consideration. It was suggested the association might contact the council in the matter.”

**STATE HOUSES UNDER CONSTRUCTION.**

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

“How many houses are now under construction by the State Housing Commission—(a) in Brisbane, (b) in other cities, and (c) outside city areas?”

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) replied—

“At 31 July, 1950—(a) 683, (b) 102, (c) 96.”

**STATE HOUSING CONTRACTS PRACTICE.**

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

“1. Is it a fact that in respect of materials and fittings supplied by the State Housing Commission to its contractors, a charge of 12½ per cent. on cost is made? If not, what percentage on cost is charged?”

“2. Is it a fact that the commission insists on making all payments due to sub-contractors? If so, what is the reason for such practice?”

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) replied—

“1. Yes; on purchase price to cover inward and outward handling and storage costs.

“2. No.”

**CALLIDE COAL SHIPMENTS.**

Mr. KERR (Sherwood) asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

“1. What was the tonnage of the stock pile of Callide coal at Gladstone as at 30 June last?”

“2. What amount was shipped during the month of July?”

“3. What was the tonnage as at 31 July?”

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) replied—

“1. The quantity of coal at the Government stockpile at Barney Point, Gladstone, at 30 June, 1950, was 64,217 tons.

“2. No coal was shipped from this stockpile during the month of July.

“3. The quantity of coal at this stockpile at 31 July was 67,378 tons. There are other stockpiles at Gladstone owned by the two Callide operators, but I have no information of the quantities of coal at these stockpiles.”

**SOUTHPORT MATERNITY HOSPITAL.**

Mr. GAVEN (Southport) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“1. What was the estimated cost of the maternity hospital now under construction at Southport?”

“2. What is the actual cost to date?”

“3. When was work on this job commenced?”

“4. How many men are employed on it?”

“5. When is it expected to be completed?”

“6. What is the present estimate of complete cost?”

**Hon. W. M. MOORE** (Merthyr) replied—

“1. £75,864. The estimated additional cost on account of increases in wages and prices of materials since construction commenced is £10,895.

“2. £65,346.

“3. 8 September, 1948.

“4. Fifty-one.

“5. By the end of next February.

“6. It is expected that the work will be completed well within the estimates.”

#### PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulations under The Inspection of Machinery Acts, 1915 to 1946 (17 August).

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

##### EXTENSION OF TIME FOR DEBATE.

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

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

Motion agreed to.

#### COMMONWEALTH POWERS (AIR TRANSPORT) BILL.

##### INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to continue the reference to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of the matter of air transport.”

Motion agreed to.

##### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier) (11.12 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to continue the reference to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of the matter of air transport.”

Hon. members will recall that in 1943, after a conference between the Commonwealth Government and all State Governments, and State Oppositions also, it was unanimously agreed that certain powers should be transferred to the Commonwealth for the duration of hostilities and five years thereafter. In this House we passed legislation transferring certain powers to the Commonwealth until five years after the cessation of hostilities. Some doubt has been expressed as to when hostilities ceased but the authorities

are working on the full surrender of Japan as the date of cessation of hostilities. We remember that notice of the surrender of Japan was received on 14 August, 1945, and on 2 September the formal surrender took place. In the Commonwealth Parliament the Australian National Airlines Act of 1945 was amended in 1947 to allow the Commonwealth airlines to operate in any State which had referred to the Commonwealth the matter of air transport intrastate services under the conditions laid down by that State. The Act provides that where the Premier of a State signifies his approval in writing Trans-Australia Airlines may carry on an intrastate service, on condition, of course, that it complies with the taxation requirements of the State, the same as any privately owned airline company would have to do. That Act of the Federal Parliament hinges on the continuance of the reference of powers. If this reference expires, the Act would cease to have any effect. We should then have to have fresh legislation referring powers to the Commonwealth. This Bill is to extend that reference to permit the continued operation of intrastate services by the T.A.A. on the same conditions as those existing at the present time.

T.A.A. has done a very good service to Queensland since that arrangement was made. It has pioneered quite a few services and has established a number of branch services in Queensland. It has three minor services running in New South Wales. For instance, it takes passengers between Sydney and Canberra on its flights between Sydney and Melbourne and vice versa. It also operates a service from Sydney to Hay. It has established a service between Brisbane and important and sparsely-settled country centres. One important service it has established in the North is that from Cloncurry to Normanton and Burketown. It is quite obvious that a private airline company could not satisfactorily run an air service between such centres, as it is impossible to get revenue from them for the time being. It is a valuable service to the people in that isolated area.

This Bill merely continues the arrangement existing at the present time. It can be cancelled at any time by the Queensland Government. Precaution is taken in the Bill in the matter of power to transfer these rights. There was some doubt at one time as to whether the States had power to do so subject to limitations and the final opinion was that they had. This will continue the existing arrangement and enable T.A.A. to maintain its present services and establish other services if the Government approves of them.

**Mr. Hiley:** For any stated period?

**Mr. HANLON:** I am not putting a definite period in the Bill; it is at the will of the Queensland Government. At any time the Government can withdraw the power. All safeguards are taken to see that we are not giving anything away.

I propose to introduce and have the Bill printed today and leave the passing of the Bill till Thursday.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) (11.17 a.m.): It has been said with considerable truth that the bigger a racket is and the more openly it is practised the fewer people become aware of it. I think this Bill opens up a discussion—or should—that will disclose one of the biggest rackets operating in Australia today. It is a fact that the Australian taxpayer is being called upon to provide the profits for privately operated airline companies.

I agree with the contents of the Bill as they have been stated, that is, the temporary transfer of power to enable T.A.A. to continue to operate, but let us face up to the fact that at the present time the aviation of this country is in the hands of the Government-controlled airlines, T.A.A., and privately controlled airlines, the chief of which is A.N.A. A.N.A. is making a huge profit because the Australian taxpayer is being called upon to provide the aerial facilities, the meteorological information and everything else required to conduct its services; the aerodromes at the main airports and the subsidiary and ancillary aerodromes are supplied by the Australian taxpayer; all the facilities and amenities at the various aerodromes also are supplied by the Australian taxpayer. The other day at the big Garbutt aerodrome we had a huge terminal building erected by the taxpayers and half of this building and all its facilities were handed over to the privately operated and controlled A.N.A., so that the Australian taxpayer is still further being called upon to provide the profits for the shareholders in this privately owned airline.

Here is a proposition I should like to put before the member for Coorparoo, as an accountant. I should like him to work out how much it would cost for an air passage from Townsville to Brisbane if the airline company had to provide its own aerodromes and maintain them, provide its own aerodrome facilities and maintain them, and provide its own meteorological service, all of which is now provided by the Australian taxpayer. I do not know that we have in North Queensland accountants of the standing of the hon. member for Coorparoo, but a friend of mine who claims to be in at least the same grade estimated that if the A.N.A. had to provide its own aerodromes and facilities and amenities, and a meteorological service, it would have to charge £92 a ticket from Townsville to Brisbane. All these things are provided now by the Australian taxpayer.

I know just how these people operate because when the Garbutt airfield was first opened in Townsville I was then a member of the Townsville City Council and that airfield was constructed by the Townsville City Council. We decided that the ratepayers of Townsville were not going to be muled by privately owned air companies—at that time we had only privately owned airline companies operating—so we charged a landing fee to use this then rather primitive airfield. One company refused to pay the small landing fee we imposed. I am not sure now whether it was 10s. or 30s. a touchdown but one privately operated airline company refused to pay that fee and began to land

at Mount St. John. Later the Commonwealth Government took over the Garbutt airfield from the Townsville City Council, agreeing to pay the council the money that they had expended on it. It took us about three years to get the £3,000 or £4,000 from the Commonwealth Government, but eventually we got it. The Commonwealth spent, I suppose, another million pounds in the provision of that fine aerodrome at Garbutt and it spends millions of pounds in the provision and equipping of aerodromes throughout Australia, which are all made available free of cost to the privately operated airline companies. I believe the Commonwealth Government—the Chifley Commonwealth Government—to their credit imposed a landing charge on the aerodromes but the privately operated airline companies, the A.N.A. and other disciples of private enterprise—these glowing examples of individualism in business—took the knock and refused to pay. They used the aerodromes and facilities but refused to pay the small landing fees imposed upon them by the Commonwealth Government.

And now there is another matter that I think in the interests of the public should be discussed—the question of accidents to aeroplanes, particularly those involving loss of life. In the last 12 months or so there have been some terrible airline accidents in Australia, many of them involving loss of life. They have all occurred in planes operated by the companies that run purely and simply for the purpose of making profit. They have all occurred, and all the lives have been lost in aeroplanes operated by private airline companies. I am not suggesting for a moment that the private airlines have been responsible for the shocking loss of life that has occurred in privately operated planes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I do not want to stifle discussion on this matter but I think the hon. member should deal with the Bill, which provides for the transferring of certain power to the Commonwealth Government.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I was under the impression, Mr. Mann, that at the first reading of the Bill we were able to talk in general terms of the provisions of the Bill and if the question of airline accidents and the cause of them—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Airline accidents are another matter altogether from that dealt with in the Bill covering the proposal before the Committee.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I bow to your ruling. However, I am glad that this Bill has afforded me an opportunity of standing in my place in this Chamber and telling hon. members what I have already told the public from the public platform. On the public platform I am not restricted and circumscribed by Standing Orders: I am not screwed down by customs and usages of Parliament.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! What the hon. member says from the public platform is his own business, but he is not on the public platform now.

**Mr. AIKENS:** There I can say what I want to say, but here I cannot. You are not responsible for that, Mr. Mann. However, I am glad to have had the opportunity of exposing this rotten reeking racket, that the Australian taxpayer is being called upon to provide aerodrome facilities and amenities and meteorological information so that the profits of the privately owned airline companies may be still further bloated.

Motion (Mr. Hanlon) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

#### FIRST READING.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Hanlon, read a first time.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

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

Debate resumed from 17 August (see page 119) on Mr. McCathie's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

**Mr. DONALD** (Bremer) (11.27 a.m.): I should like to preface my remarks by sincerely congratulating the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply. The mover, the hon. member for Houghton, clearly revealed in his speech that he possesses splendid ideas, lofty ideals, and great capacity, and that he will be a decided acquisition to his party and Parliament generally. The hon. member, like so many other northerners, is sure to play a very important part in the political life of his State. His election by such a handsome majority is an indication that the people of North Queensland appreciate a Labour Government. When we take into consideration the vigorous and sustained campaign engaged in by opponents of Labour with the view of discrediting the Government in the North, and when we recall the extensive propaganda crying out about the neglect of the North and the need for a new State, it is gratifying to have the electors of North Queensland showing their appreciation of the Labour Government so convincingly as they did.

The seconder of the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Windsor, has had a long and creditable association with the Labour movement in Queensland, both in the industrial and political wings. He will find, as other hon. members who came into Parliament from the trade-union movement have found, that the experience he gained there will be of assistance to him in his new sphere of activity and of great value to the electors of Windsor.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said both in and out of this Chamber in an attempt to belittle the Government's success at the polls. Speeches have been made, articles have been written, and figures have been quoted in an attempt to convince the people of Queensland that we are a minority Government.

Our political opponents say that the combined Country Party-Liberal Party vote—and let me emphasise that it was the combined

total of those two parties—reached 49.1 per cent of the total votes cast, whereas Labour polled 46.9 per cent. and all other parties 4 per cent. Now, Mr. Speaker, even if we assume that those figures are correct, remembering that they were compiled by anti-Labour people and published in an anti-Labour journal, do they prove that we have no right to sit here as the Government of Queensland? Do they prove that we are a minority Government? I say, "Certainly not!" If the figures prove anything at all, they prove that no single party received an absolute majority of the votes cast; they prove that the combined vote of the Country and Liberal Parties does not equal the vote cast against them. Therefore, on their own figures and on their own reckoning, they would be a minority Government if they occupied the Treasury benches. Supported by their own figures, Mr. Speaker, the logic of their argument is that they are where they should be, on the opposite side of the Chamber, in Opposition. That contention is supported by the people of Queensland, the electors of Queensland, who said in no uncertain manner that the Labour Party should remain the Government of Queensland.

A correct analysis of the voting recorded at the last State general election in Queensland was given to this Chamber by the hon. member for North Toowoomba on the Appropriation Bill. It was as follows:—

Labour Party	..	46.8 per cent.
Country Party	..	29.9 per cent.
Liberal Party	..	19.9 per cent.

A little over 3 per cent of the votes were obtained by other candidates. Those figures prove the undoubted popularity of the Labour Party and the overwhelming support it received from the electors of Queensland at the last State election.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition is a keen follower of the game of cricket, having played it with some success. It was due to our mutual interest in the game that I first made the hon. gentleman's acquaintance many years ago. We both served on the Country Advisory Committee of the Queensland Cricket Association and my respect for him now is, if anything, greater than it was then, when I held him in high esteem. I feel sure that the hon. the Leader of the Opposition would not contend that a cricket team that had defeated its rivals individually throughout the season should be deprived of premier-ship honours merely because the defeated team collectively had scored more runs in the aggregate during the season than the winning side.

One angle on the election figures that I should like to submit to hon. members is a table showing the aggregate vote obtained by the successful candidates, for their respective parties. This also shows the fallacy of the Opposition's argument and proves the right of the Labour Party to remain the Government of Queensland. The Labour Party, with 42 members sitting on this side of the House, gained 193,566 votes; the Country Party, with 19 members, gained 86,066 votes; the Liberal Party, with 10 members, gained 66,785 votes; the two joint Liberal-Country Party members polled 10,332 votes, and the

two Independents, 7,303 votes. So we see that even after allowing liberally for the three Country Party members who were returned unopposed, the Labour Party has a very handsome majority and cannot be a minority Government. It must be a majority Government.

Before leaving this question, let us examine the position that prevails in the other States of the Commonwealth, particularly those States where the Labour Party has not been in office for any length of time during the last decade or more. In South Australia, previous to the last election, the position was so bad that the "Adelaide News," an anti-Labour paper, had this comment to make on the need for reform—

"The Government has an obvious duty to review the present system of electorates in order to give a better-balanced representation between city and country in Parliament.

"Under the existing system, with 39 single electorates, a minority of people appointed a majority to the Assembly.

"Sixty per cent. of the electors live in what is classed as the metropolitan area. They are represented by only 13 members.

"The 40 per cent. of electors living elsewhere are represented by 26 members."

It is not a coincidence that the 13 members elected by 60 per cent. of the people in South Australia were Labour men whereas almost all of the 26 should be non-Labour representatives elected by 40 per cent. of the people. At the last elections in South Australia the Labour Party, with 105,000 votes, could obtain representation in the House for only 12 members, whereas the anti-Labour Party, which gained 97,000 votes, could get representation in the House of 23 members. Let me put it another way. The anti-Labour Party in South Australia, with 8,000 fewer votes than the Labour Party, had almost double the number of representatives in the House compared with the Labour Party.

Perhaps hon. members opposite may think that I quote South Australia because it is the best example from our point of view but the position there is not nearly so bad as that which exists in Victoria. I shall content myself by quoting from a speech delivered by Mr. Hollway, the recently deposed Premier of Victoria and still Leader of a party somewhat similar in composition to the party occupying the Opposition benches here. In submitting a no-confidence motion against the new Country Party Government in Victoria, he gave the following as the reasons why that Government did not possess the confidence of the House—

"1. The Government of the State by a party comprising only 13 members out of a total of 65 members of this House and who received only 10.6 per cent. of the total votes cast at the recent election provides an extreme and unprecedented illustration of minority rule.

"2. Such rule is not in accordance with the wishes of electors as a whole because at the elections the Premier announced

that under no circumstances would the Country Party countenance the policy of any party whose objective was the socialisation of industry, production, distribution, and exchange, and the Leader of the Labour Party said that his party would not govern with the support of any other party and would not support any other party in office.

"3. Such rule is not in accordance with the wishes of electors as a whole, and should not be imposed until the electors have been afforded an opportunity of expressing their will thereon."

At the last Victorian general elections the Labour Party polled over 100,000 votes in excess of the joint aggregates of the Victorian anti-Labour candidates and yet the Labour Party sits in Opposition in Victoria. It will be seen that the worst examples of minority government in Australia are to be found in those States where anti-Labour parties are in control of the Treasury benches and in each case they swear allegiance to the same principles as the political parties that form the Opposition in Queensland. If these people are sincere in their criticism they should direct it towards their friends who have enjoyed the fruits of minority government for years, and apologise for the time they have wasted or go and hang their heads in shame for the rest of their political lives.

To sustain the assertion that we are a minority Government our opponents opposite must show beyond doubt that they are a single united political party, not united for the sole purpose of defeating the Government, but united in all things politically. This of course they cannot do. Again I quote from prominent members of the Opposition Party to prove my contention in this direction. In the "Courier-Mail" of 27 July, 1950, Mr. Campbell, president of the Queensland Country Party, is reported thus—

"Mr. Campbell said reports of the recent Liberal Party decision to continue pressure on the Country Party to amalgamate could only be viewed with caution."

"The Liberal Party knows, and has always known the feeling of the Country Party members in regard to amalgamation.

"The Country Party will co-operate fully, but will not merge with any other party," said Mr. Campbell."

On the following day, the 28th August, the "Courier-Mail" had the following headlines—

"Predicts Split on £.

"Liberals attacked by N.C.P. man."

It then went on to state—

"The question of revaluation of the Australian £ would split the Liberal and Country Parties, the Northern Country Party president (Mr. G. Hudson) said yesterday.

"I am more suspicious each day of the Liberals and their idea of mutual co-operation," he told the Queensland Country Party conference.

“Do not kid yourselves that they have any time for our friend Fadden. They just put up with him”, said Mr. Hudson. ‘He has said they will revalue the £ over his dead body.’

“The Queensland Country Party president (Mr. A. Campbell) said Mr. Hudson’s expressed opinions were entirely his own.

“Seconding a vote of thanks to the Victorian Country Party president (Mr. W. L. Moss), Mr. Hudson said the Country Party in Victoria seemed very practical.

“The Country Party in Queensland has carried out its obligations with dignity, and to avoid political dissension with the Liberals,” he continued.

“I do not know how much patience some of our fellows have, and how long they will continue with this arrangement, which seems to take quite a lot from us, and does not pay any dividends.”

Now, we have in the same paper on the same day—

“Mr. Moss said the Liberal Party in Victoria had let the Country Party down on a number of occasions. Labour had always kept its promises in its dealings with the Victorian Country Party.”

That is the experience of every party or individual who has dealings with the Australian Labour Party—it always keeps its promises. The “*Courier-Mail*,” continuing, stated—

“The conference unanimously opposed any amalgamation with the Liberal Party, but urged the utmost co-operation.

Mr. Campbell, who was re-elected State president unopposed, said he merely expressed the party’s view when he said amalgamation was impossible.”

That was not his own view. He had said that Mr. Hudson’s views were his own but the views expressed by Mr. Campbell were his party’s. He was merely expressing the party’s views when he said the Country Party would not merge politically.

The following day the “*Courier-Mail*,” the mouthpiece of the Opposition, published the following—

“Country Party clash over Liberal criticism.

“Attempts to refute criticism of the Liberal Party ended in five of the 150 delegates walking out of the Country Party State conference yesterday, it was alleged last night.

“The Press was excluded from the meeting.

“Messrs. S. A. Cameron and J. Leahy, jun., claimed last night that the State president (Mr. A. Campbell) and State treasurer (Mr. J. McCormack) had urged that the subject should be dropped.

“Thursday echo.

“The discussion followed the statement by the Northern Country Party president (Mr. G. Hudson) at the conference on Thursday that the question of revaluation of the Australian pound would split the Liberal and Country parties.

“Mr. S. A. Cameron, who was Country Party candidate for Carnarvon in the recent State election, said he had claimed Mr. Hudson’s remarks would sabotage public confidence in the Federal Government.

“Mr. Cameron said he moved that the conference dissociate itself from Mr. Hudson’s remarks, and express complete confidence in the support of the Liberal Party, and the Country Party’s determination ‘to maintain the present high standard of co-operation between the two parties.’

“Mr. Hudson, it was claimed, opposed the resolution, and said he stood by his previous remarks.

“Mr. Cameron said that he refused to withdraw his motion.

“Move defeated.

“It was defeated on a show of hands, and both Mr. Leahy and himself, accompanied by three other delegates, walked out of the meeting.”

“In a joint statement last night, Messrs. Cameron and Leahy said they believed Country Party members generally desired complete unity and co-operation with the Liberals in the face of the national emergency.”

That proves that what Mr. Hudson said had the approval of the majority of the members at the party conference.

To show that this dissension is not confined to Queensland but is prevalent throughout the length and breadth of Australia I quote the following—

“The Melbourne ‘*Argus*’ in its report of the Country Party’s Central Council meeting quoted a motion proposed by the former Country Party President (Mr. S. Lockhart), condemning the banks and describing them as the enemy of the Country Party.

“The motion, which was carried unanimously, was as follows:

“That the associated banks be notified that this party views with concern their very definite participation in the political field in opposition to the Country Party, and their very material contribution to the Liberal Party fight to exterminate the Country Party.”

“The present Country Party president in Victoria, Mr. Moss, commenting on this motion, said: ‘Members viewed the alleged action of the banks in working against the Country Party as a breach of fidelity.’

“The banks were pleased to accept from the Country Party its challenge to the State Labour Government on bank nationalisation in 1947.”

On the face of that evidence, who is going to believe that the Opposition is a single united party? It is true that in this Parliament hon. members opposite sit as a single unit, politically opposed to the working people of Queensland, with one set of officials, instead of two separate parties each with its own officials, as was the custom in the past, but this manoeuvring will deceive no

one and is being forced on the Country Party by the so-called Liberals. This fact has been publicly stated by the managers of the Country Party.

The city section of the present Opposition keenly feel their repeated failures to make political progress, and have made some pretence of losing their identity by merging with what to them appears to be the more practical and successful party, the Country Party. It is only their frustration that has driven them to this course. They have tried their very best and have been assisted by the Press in their endeavours to supplant the Country Party as His Majesty's Opposition. They have failed and now they have changed their tactics; they hope that by pursuing the policy of peaceful penetration they will achieve their desire.

I can appreciate to the fullest extent the alarm felt by the hon. member for Aubigny and the leaders of the Country Party outside this Chamber, and warn the Country Party members within of the great danger that lies ahead. Surely they have no desire to suffer the humiliation their party has had to face in the other States of the Commonwealth, particularly in Victoria, at the hands of the Liberal Party!

Let us briefly trace the history of the city fraction of the Opposition. They first sought the support of the electors of the electoral divisions within the Greater Brisbane area, as the Queensland People's Party. The name was chosen for the specific purpose of confusing the people in order to gain the support of the people, for the organisers knew that to become a political force in Queensland they would have first to win the support of the Queensland people and then win their votes. After several unsuccessful attempts, which must have cost a small fortune, they accepted the inevitable. The people of Queensland refused, in a very decided manner, to accept them as the party for the people of Queensland, remaining loyal to the Australian Labour Party, the only real people's party in Australia.

Let me emphasise, Mr. Speaker, that this continued loyal support given by the people of Queensland to the Labour Party and to successive Labour Governments is not blindly or lightly given, but is given in exchange for wise legislation, plus good government over the years. It is for that reason, and that reason alone, that the Australian Labour Party and the Queensland Labour Government have a record of continuity of office not enjoyed or equalled by any other party or Government in any other part of the world.

The Queensland People's Party realising they could not sell themselves to the electors as the people's party despite the fact that during their short existence they had three different leaders, decided to change their name. They are now known as the Liberal Party. I contend that they have no more right to call themselves the Liberal Party than they had to call themselves the Queensland People's Party. Anyone with the slightest knowledge of political history knows that the policy of

the Liberal Party of Great Britain, the original Liberal Party and the party with a history and tradition, would not be acceptable to those members of this Parliament who masquerade as Liberals. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we saw and heard them actually gloating over the announcement of the final results of the last British general elections, in which this once great and proud party, the Liberal Party, was almost annihilated. This overwhelming defeat of the British Liberal Party brought no regrets to the members of the Queensland Liberal Party, for the simple reason that they have nothing in common with the real Liberal Party, except the name.

The Country Party, Mr. Speaker, has become known as the Contrary Party throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, for its actions, past and present, have been contrary to the well-being of the man on the land and the country dweller generally.

Among the Opposition sits a member who entered this Parliament as a member of the Queensland People's Party. Shortly afterwards he became a member of the Liberal Party and successfully sought re-election as the Country-Liberal candidate; all this within the short period of approximately three years. Surely that is a record for Queensland, if not for the British Commonwealth of Nations; three parties in three years is very good going, a performance he must be proud of.

So we see, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition are anything but a single united political party as they would have us believe, and further, their claims that we are a minority Government is just as false as the political labels under which they offer themselves to the electors of Queensland. Truthfully and honestly described, as it has been fairly extensively throughout Australia, the last State election in Queensland was a victory for common sense and honesty over deception and trickery. The Premier in his policy speech outlined in simple language the Government's policy and programme. He asked the electors of Queensland to pass judgment on his Government by their past deeds and legislation and the programme they were offering to them, refraining from making any extravagant promises. On the other hand, the anti-Labour candidates, almost without exception, indulged in a campaign that was calculated to bring fear into the minds of the electors. We had the absurd claim that if the Labour Party was re-elected there would be no more free elections in the State of Queensland. Perhaps the extensive use made by Opposition candidates of this sort of propaganda did cause the electors of Queensland to think, and having thought, they could come to only one conclusion—that free elections and everything that goes with democratic government would be much safer in the hands of the Labour Party and Labour Government than in the hands of any other party or Government.

Writing in the Brisbane "Telegraph" during the election campaign, the hon. member for Coorparoo and then leader of the Liberal Party contended that the first of the five main issues the people of Queensland had to decide at the election was the choice

between "Socialist" or "free." He meant, I assume, a choice between a Socialist State and a free State. The hon. member should know that a true Socialist State cannot exist without freedom and that people cannot be completely free outside a Socialist State.

#### Opposition Members interjected.

**Mr. DONALD:** Let me assure hon. members opposite, for fear they are thinking in the wrong direction, that the overwhelming majority of people within the Labour Party regard Stalinism as a foul perversion of the ideals of Socialism.

After the success of the Socialist bogey during the Federal campaign it was used extensively throughout the State campaign. All sorts of fantastic stories were told to the electors by our opponents of what would happen to them and to this State if Labour was returned, stories in keeping with the "Last free election" claim of, "Make it Liberal, State and Federal." Throughout our State our opponents were freely using this slogan whilst their Federal friends were showing the Queensland people in a practical way just how liberal they could be to the wealthy industrialists of Victoria by using money provided by Queensland taxpayers, in common with other taxpayers throughout the Commonwealth, to subsidise coal from foreign sources whilst coal at grass was available in abundance in Queensland to the same consumers.

Socialism was made an issue during the State election campaign to a greater extent than previously. It had paid dividends in the December Federal elections and was looked upon as a winner. The Labour Party in Queensland, happily, honestly and willingly accepted the challenge, with the result that we are still the Government with an increased majority. Every retiring member of the Government who contested the election was returned. This was an undoubted glowing tribute paid by the people of Queensland to our Premier and his party, especially when we take into consideration that with a few exceptions the whole of the Press of this State was against us. (Opposition interjections.) The triennial Labour-in-Politics Convention, the movement's highest governing body in Queensland, comprising delegates from A.L.P. branches and affiliated unions throughout Queensland, met in Toowoomba a few weeks before the election campaign and unanimously reaffirmed our objective, namely, the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange. The interpretation given after the adoption of the socialisation objective in 1921 remains the same. This interpretation was: That the Australian Labour Party proposes collective ownership for the purpose of preventing exploitation. Wherever private property is a means of exploitation it is opposed by the Party. The party does not seek to abolish private property, even as an instrument of production, when such instrument is utilised by its owner in a socially useful way without exploitation. We are not ashamed of that interpretation—in fact we are proud of it—and it is the interpretation that the people of

Queensland have endorsed, and any other interpretation or objective is false. (Opposition interjections.)

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. DONALD:** The party encourages private ownership. That is reflected in our advanced housing legislation, proved by statistics, for in Queensland 65.3 per cent. of our people own, or are in the process of owning, their own homes. That percentage is not nearly equalled in any other State of the Commonwealth or outside the Commonwealth. The Government will not be satisfied—

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member for Aubigny has interjected frequently and has disregarded my call to order. I ask him to desist.

**Mr. DONALD:** The Government will not be satisfied till every family in Queensland has been provided with a home of its own. Socialism will enable everyone to have a home of his own, thereby making private-ownership possible for all. That is the policy of this party and is the true interpretation of Socialism. All Governments, whether Labour or non-Labour, adopt socialistic principles and put them into operation. The only difference is that Labour Governments put socialistic principles into operation because they honestly believe in them. We proclaim Socialism on our platform, believing it to be the best for all concerned, whereas anti-Labour Governments are compelled to adopt it as the result of economic circumstances and often only because economic pressure demands it.

Every Government in the Commonwealth have been forced to develop the resources of our continent by the building of State railways. In fact, we have had requests from hon. members opposite during the very short time this Parliament has been in session for the Government to build more State railways in Queensland. The Lord Mayor of Brisbane, a bitter anti-socialist, was compelled to take over the motor-bus services of Brisbane in an attempt to give the people of this city a better transport system. This same gentleman was reported in the "Queensland Times" of 29 March last, and also in the metropolitan Press, as saying—

"I think the most sensible people today are agreed that where a monopoly is essential, that monopoly should then be publicly owned, or publicly regulated or controlled."

Perhaps that explains why the Lord Mayor of Brisbane relinquished leadership of the Queensland People's Party and left this House broken-hearted. (Opposition laughter.) In that statement the Lord Mayor of Brisbane wishes to be associated with sensible people. I leave the interpretation of his remarks to hon. members.

In Victoria, ever since that State started to use coal as a means of obtaining energy, almost all its production of black coal has come from the State coal-mines at Wonthaggi,

which were developed by non-Labour Governments. The huge open-cut brown-coal mine at Yallourn is also a socialistic undertaking, as is the manufacture and sale of briquettes and the generating of electric light and power for a large part of the State of Victoria. The basis of these two industries is the socialistic brown coal from Yallourn.

In South Australia, Mr. Playford, the anti-Labour Premier, was compelled by the failure of private enterprise to supply his State with sufficient coal to keep the wheels of industry going, to open up and develop by the open-cut method the mine at Leigh Creek, some 380 miles north of Adelaide. That venture has succeeded, in spite of the fact that the coal being won is the poorest in quality of any coal being produced in Australia, in providing South Australia with sufficient energy to keep its industries working.

During the discussions on the Queensland-British Food Production Bill reference was made to the Peak Downs venture to which hon. members opposite, both in this Chamber as well as outside of it, have often referred as a huge socialistic venture. It is interesting, therefore, to hear remarks of appreciation from what I should say is one of the most conservative anti-Labour organisations in Australia. I refer to the Bank of New South Wales, which has this to say about the undertaking. This was published in the "Telegraph" of the 18th of this month:—

"Peak Downs as Model.

"There is apparently a growing tendency to take the Peak Downs project in Queensland as a model for the development of Australia's open spaces.

"The Bank of New South Wales quarterly review surveys the success of the Peak Downs undertaking and says it has led to suggestions that parts of north and north-western Australia may be suitable for similar extensive development.

"The bank says the Peak Downs experience has 'raised the question of whether large-scale scientific methods of farming may be used to open up some other areas of the continent which are not now considered worthwhile.'

"A private farmer from Queensland has begun sorghum growing on a large scale near Newcastle Waters in the Northern Territory."

Whether that venture was Socialism or not, it was so described by hon. members opposite, while we on this side of the Chamber were content to say that if it was Socialism, then let us have more of it. Now we find a conservative organisation such as the Bank of New South Wales paying a tribute not only to the Labour Party of this State but to the Socialist Government of Great Britain, pointing out and showing to the world that the Labour Party at least had the capacity not only to govern but also to look far enough ahead to make adequate provision for the future.

In certain quarters there has been very severe criticism of the Federal Opposition because of its attitude to the Communist Party Dissolution Bill. The Communist

Party Dissolution Bill, which, if assented to as was intended, would have given the Menzies Government almost complete power legally, not only to dissolve the Communist Party but also to dissolve other non-Communist organisations and to declare and penalise as a Communist any person who supported or advocated the objectives, policies, teachings, principles or practices of Communism as expounded by Marx and Lenin. As both Marx and Lenin have written at great length concerning conditions of living and employment of workers and as they have advised working people to unite politically not only for their own protection but to improve their living and working conditions and as they have also written extensively drawing attention to the need to abolish unemployment, poverty and all their attendant evils, how on earth is it possible for any individual or organisation to support a campaign for better living and working conditions, for the abolition of unemployment, poverty and everything else that goes with those two evils without repeating at some time or another something already said or written by either Marx or Lenin? Thus by so doing, either a worker or an organisation could be, if the Government or its officers were so disposed, declared as being Communists and could be penalised for supporting the objectives, policies, teachings, principles, or practices of Communism.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. GAVEN (Southport) (12.9 p.m.):** At the outset I desire to extend my hearty congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected again unopposed to the high office of Speaker of this Assembly. I give you my assurance that at all times while I am a member of this Assembly I shall give you every possible assistance in the carrying out of your many onerous and difficult duties as Speaker of this House.

Being a new member, I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the electors of Southport for the confidence they reposed in me in electing me their representative in Parliament. I am conscious of the honour that has been conferred on me and I am fully aware of the obligations and responsibilities that go with me in the office.

It is only fitting and right that I should say a word or two of thanks to the returning officer for Southport, Mr. Shepherd, who is C.P.S. there, for the excellent way in which he played his part in the election campaign. He carried out his multifarious duties with tact and initiative and with complete satisfaction to the whole of the electors and the candidates. He is an excellent man and a good citizen, and we are very fortunate in having a man of such calibre in the area to act as returning officer.

For 61 years and 31 Parliaments the electorate of Southport was an integral part of the old Albert electorate. For the past 21 years it has been represented by the present hon. member for Darlington, Mr. Plunkett, and I wish to take this opportunity of thanking him for having represented the electorate of Southport for the past 21 years. He is a

man of very high principles and he has carried out the duties of member with signal success and upheld the dignity of this House at all times. His integrity and probity are beyond reproach and I voice the sentiments of the electors of Southport today when I say they are very grateful for having had the services of such a man for 21 years, a man who has carried out his duties of the office honourably and honestly.

The electorate I represent embraces an area of 300 square miles, comprising 260 miles of hinterland and 40 square miles in the town of South Coast. As hon. members are aware, 25 of these 40 square miles comprise unbroken sand and surfing beaches. We have 250 square miles of very fine mountain scenery, beautiful fertile valleys, and ever-running streams that enable the people on the land to irrigate their crops. Within that area dairying, cattle-fattening, fruit-growing, and such industries as sawmilling, brick-works, mining, and many others I have not time to enumerate are carried on. I just make these remarks in passing because it is not always remembered that we have a very fine hinterland where these industries exist, which employ many industrial people.

I should like briefly to touch on one of the most important forms of government we have in this country today, namely local government. Having been a local government representative for a number of years I want to impress on hon. members the fact that its functions are among the most important in our State. One of the most important is the construction and maintenance of roads. In Queensland the total mileage of roads is 135,524, and the 135 local authorities throughout the State are charged with the duty of constructing and maintaining approximately 116,000 miles of those roads. Truly that is a very big responsibility. For the year ended 30 June, 1948, £3,634,590 was expended by local authorities on those roads, and of this amount £2,192,956 was expended on maintenance. That unmistakably proves that local authorities, like the Main Roads Commission, are charged with a very heavy responsibility financially and otherwise in maintaining and improving our roads. It must be borne in mind that the function of those bodies does not cease with the construction of roads; they have to be maintained and just as much money is expended in maintaining as in constructing new roads.

These figures are illuminating. We are informed, moreover, 68,000 miles of roads have not yet been constructed by local authorities, so that it is apparent that the responsibilities of local authorities will be very heavy indeed for many years to come unless some adequate arrangements are made to finance them. They are finding that financing their work is becoming almost impossible. I suggest, that in order to give them a better deal some of the channels of finance that rightly belong to them and that have been taken away from them during the years should be handed back to them.

1950—F

In the first place, the petrol tax was introduced to provide money to develop and maintain the roads throughout the State. Last year the Federal Government took from the States approximately £20,000,000 by way of petrol tax, and £9,000,000 was handed back to the States, of which Queensland's share was £1,728,000. The year before, I believe, £15,750,000 was taken from the people of the Commonwealth by way of petrol tax and £1,000,000 was handed back to them in Queensland and in 1947 we received approximately another £1,000,000 towards maintaining our roads throughout the State. And from land tax last year the States took £374,450 and the Commissioner for Transport took £504,877.

I concede that the Government have been very generous by way of subsidy. For the last 18 years approximately £11,500,000 was paid in subsidy to the local authorities. At the same time I want to make this point: had the local authorities received the money to which they were entitled they would not have needed anything like £11,500,000 by way of subsidy. If the local authorities are to continue the fine work they have been doing they will have to be compensated in some way. In many shires we find tremendous areas are exempt from rating. For instance, in Nerang, which I represent, over 10,000 acres is so exempt. There are areas belonging to the Sub-Department of Forestry and other Crown lands, and 2,000 acres are devoted to prison farms and the rest that goes to make the total was resumed for national parks. Many thousands of acres are thus exempted from rating purposes which adds to the difficulty of local government.

We find too, that each year many millions of feet of Crown timber taken from those forestry areas, and during wet weather, and dry weather too, heavily loaded trucks cut the roads to pieces, and thus place an added burden on the shoulders of the local authorities. In many areas rates have increased so much over the last few years that they have reached saturation point. In my area people who are trying to carry on dairying with less than 300 acres have had to pay £1 an acre a year in shire rates, and coming closer to the sea, we find the people are paying up to £1 a week for an allotment on which to put a home.

Something will have to be done to end this very unsatisfactory state of affairs. One way out of the dilemma would be to double the petrol tax and let the money be used for the purpose for which it was intended, the development and maintenance of our roads. I cannot see that there is any equity in increasing motor-vehicle registration fees, because by that means the man who uses the road does not pay any more than the man who does not. The motor-car of one man may go on the road only a dozen times a year whereas another man has his vehicle on the road every day of the year, but each pays exactly the same fee. I suggest to the Government they do something to help local governing bodies, perhaps by doubling the

petrol tax and handing the resultant money to the local authorities to help in developing roads throughout the State.

Here I wish to say a word or two of the Main Roads Commission and the work carried out by it. As a member of this Parliament, I shall always do my best to be fair. If I believe the Government are deserving of credit or praise, I intend to give it, but if I think they should be criticised for the way in which they discharge their responsibilities I shall be prepared to offer just and constructive criticism.

During the many years I was a member of a local authority Mr. J. R. Kemp was Commissioner of Main Roads and today I take this opportunity of paying tribute to him and the officers of the Commission for the very fine job they did out in the area in which I have lived and worked for so long and in which I was a member of the local authority. I believe Mr. Kemp to be one of the greatest of public servants. Because of his initiative, ability, and engineering skill this State has a great deal to thank him for. The gentleman who follows in his footsteps, Mr. Crawford, has a very difficult job ahead. There has just been a long period of wet weather, in which main roads, by-roads, and subsidiary roads have been literally cut to pieces. Mr. Crawford as Commissioner of Main Roads will have a very big job in putting them in order. In addition he has taken up this office when heavy earth-moving equipment has become scarce and skilled labour difficult to get. Mr. Crawford has a mighty job in his hands and it is the duty of the Government and the Opposition to help him in his work in every possible way. We shall never develop this State except by working in harmony and doing our utmost to help such officers in their work.

Throughout the length and breadth of Queensland the mileage of gazetted main roads under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Main Roads is approximately 20,000. Less than one-half of this has been constructed, thus there are 11,000 miles of road to be constructed. As I pointed out previously, when the Main Roads Commission constructs a road it creates an asset. That asset must be protected but we find that for every mile of main road laid down in this State the cost of maintenance is increasing all the time because there is so much additional mileage of road to maintain and it is of very little use creating an asset if it cannot be maintained. The same thing is happening with main roads as I pointed out was happening with local authorities; the cost of maintenance is becoming prohibitive and most of the money that should be used for construction work is absorbed in maintenance. At one time the cost of maintaining a road was between £40 and £60 a mile but today this cost has increased to between £200 and £300, and if that state of affairs continues it looks as though all we should be doing in Queensland would be maintaining the assets, unless some other finance is made available for construction.

The Valuation of Land Acts, 1944-47, was passed by this Government and implemented and the Government appointed as Valuer-

General the manager of the Agricultural Bank, who is a very fine officer. The department has launched out on a valuation of the lands of Queensland with remarkable results. For instance, in part of the area I represent an amalgamation of shires was recently brought about. Before the amalgamation members of local authorities realised that the valuation of contiguous areas often differed to a marked degree; in other words, there was a big disparity in valuation of areas that were divided merely by an arbitrary boundary. We thought that when the amalgamation took place the valuation of these areas would be carried out by skilled men or men who were supposed to be skilled in the valuation of land and that these anomalies would be rectified, and that there would be a uniform valuation of land. We find, however, as the result of the valuations recently completed in my area, that this has not happened and that as many anomalies exist today as existed before. For instance, we have the spectacle of a hotel property on a main-road corner being sold for from £14,000 to £16,000, although the unimproved value of the land is set down at about £40 to £50. As against this we have a dairy farm of 100 acres being valued at £10 an acre, or £1,000. If the local authority struck a rate of, say, 1s. in the £, the hotel property would pay about £2 10s. and the dairying property of 100 acres would return £50. Surely there is no equity about that and I for one thought that as soon as the Valuer-General got busy in the newly amalgamated area these anomalies would be straightened out. I can assure hon. members in all sincerity that they have not.

I had much to do with the previous Secretary for Local Government when this amalgamation was being made and I suggest to hon. members of this Assembly that in some areas amalgamation has merit whereas in others the result has not been good. In the area I represent we had three or four big shires with smaller shires in between. A local authority must be equipped with heavy earth-moving machinery and possess skilled operators to carry out its functions effectively, but smaller shires with a revenue of only from £5,000 to £10,000 are not financially strong enough to buy it. To carry out the work of local Government as it should be carried out nowadays such a council must employ good engineers, have good clerks, and the requisite machinery. An area with an unimproved value of, say, £60,000, as for example the old Coomera Shire Council, bringing in general revenue to the extent of £7,000, has not the necessary financial stability. It was a wise move, therefore, to amalgamate a number of such shires, but I would not recommend amalgamation throughout Queensland and I advise the parties concerned to step lightly before entering into amalgamation. I say without the slightest equivocation that amalgamation in the shire I represent is of great benefit to the people, provided at all times that the men elected to the local authority do not try to borrow its way out of debt and do not lead the rate-payers they are elected to represent into a blind alley. You can overplay your hand in

an endeavour to get more work done than you can really afford, and you must be careful in borrowing money under present-day conditions. With a solidly constituted council and a council that is careful in its borrowing, amalgamation cannot fail, but amalgamation in itself will not solve the problems of local government. Amalgamation is only a temporary solution as we have to have other means of getting revenue than the charge against the unimproved value of land. If we do not get this, all local authorities will be in real trouble. It is incumbent on each and every one of us to help solve the problem and to put local authorities in a position where they can do their job thoroughly.

I take the opportunity of congratulating the Government on the very fine job being done on the South Coast, particularly by the Minister for Transport, in at last providing the people of that area with a good road transport service. As was promised by that hon. gentleman when he visited the district during the election campaign, tenders were called for a bus service to the South Coast. For the last 20 years bodies such as the progress associations, the chambers of commerce and the various local authorities have battled for some sort of a road service, and at last we have one. I was very pleased to see that the Blue and Red bus people were the successful tenderers for this service. They pioneered the run and took the risk of carrying on when the position was not nearly as good as it is today from the financial point of view. The people who paved the way should be the ones to get the service. The Blue and Red proprietors have done a very good job for the people in that area and I was very pleased to see that they were successful in getting the contract. We thank the Government for honouring their promise to call tenders for this bus service, which will fill a long-felt want.

For many years the railway service to the South Coast has not been anything like what it should be. Railways are absolutely necessary for the development of this State, but the present railway service to the South Coast is outmoded and inadequate. I am very sorry to have to say that because railways play a very important part in the development of any district. I suggest to the Minister that he should immediately investigate conditions on the South Coast railway system and at least see that adequate toilet facilities are provided in all carriages. He should also investigate the straightening of curves and the strengthening of bridges so that the travelling time can be materially reduced. I am sure that as the district develops—as it must, with its great potentialities—people will patronise the railways if they are given a decent service, so I ask the Minister and the Government to consider improving the present service and making it fit for the people to use.

I should now like to say something about the hospital set-up on the South Coast. For many years we have been striving to get a public hospital at Southport. The local authorities in the area have paid to the Government over £70,000 in precepts, and for many years the people of Southport were promised a public hospital. I can take hon.

members back to 1923, when Mr. James Stopford, the then Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, said on the public platform—

“The people at Southport are justly entitled to a hospital, and I will leave no stone unturned whilst I am Home Secretary to see that they get their hospital.”

At every election we were promised a hospital if this or that party was returned to power, but we did not get one. I am very happy to say, however—and I again thank the hon. member for Baroona, the hon. member for Charters Towers, and the hon. member for Albert for what they have done in this direction—that today the Government are at last building a hospital in Southport. It is a 14-bed maternity hospital with nurses' quarters, and the Government have given us an undertaking that immediately the erection of the maternity hospital has been completed they will begin the construction of a public hospital. We need a public hospital badly, and it will fill a long-felt want.

There are over 20 schools in the Southport electorate and most of them are in a fairly good condition from the point of view of repairs and maintenance. However, the school at Labrador was built on a very unsuitable site, as it was virtually a swamp, and the playing grounds are inundated for approximately nine months of the year. This matter is now being dealt with by the Secretary for Public Instruction, however, and a new school is to be erected about half a mile from the present site. I am very grateful for that also.

I come now to the main school in my electorate, the school at Southport, which has to cater for over 800 children, and has a teaching staff of 29. There have been many promises to construct a brick school in Southport, and I know that as far back as 1947 money was allocated for that purpose. The present school is a disgrace to any Government; it is in a shocking condition. The Minister in charge of the department will admit that and has said that perhaps it is the second-worst school in the State. I know that there is a shortage of labour and material at the moment but I hope something will be done as soon as possible to give Southport a brick, modern up-to-date school. It is well warranted and I feel that the Minister will do something about it. There is hardly any room for the children to play in the present playground and generally speaking the school is totally inadequate.

The public buildings throughout the Southport electorate are not in keeping with the importance of the town of South Coast. The courthouse and the police station at Southport are in a good condition, from the point of view of maintenance, and were recently painted. Rooms have been added to side and front verandas but the building generally is not in keeping with the township of Southport. I trust that before long a decent courthouse and C.P.S. office will be provided.

I come now to the police station at Nerang. Thirteen years ago it was condemned as being unfit for human habitation. There is

a very fine officer in charge but he is living there under very poor conditions. I understand that last April money was allocated for the exterior painting and maintenance of the fence but it is totally inadequate and is an absolute disgrace. Something should be done about it immediately. It is very embarrassing to ask good officers to go and live under such conditions. I hope that steps will be taken immediately to provide a new police station at Nerang.

I come now to the Coolangatta police station. Bad as the Nerang police station is, Coolangatta's is worse and no-one would recognise it as a police station unless he knew it was one and saw the Crown in front of it. It is a small box-like structure and unless you knew otherwise it could be taken for an antiquated surf shed. I hope that something will be done about this matter immediately, and that buildings will be provided in keeping with the importance and size of the township.

My time is getting on and there are many other matters I should like to mention but I cannot deal with them all, so I pass to a very contentious one concerning the South Coast and it relates to the Buildings Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act, 1945 to 1948. I do not subscribe to all the conditions of that Act by any means but on the other hand I want to make it plain to every hon. member that I do not believe that all building controls should be lifted. I certainly believe that we should have homes before hotels but people who are entitled to homes are unable to get them today. I hope to be able to prove that in the short time left to me.

This Act was amended in 1948 because it was pointed out that people who own homes in Brisbane were building homes at the seaside which they visited only once or twice a year or perhaps at the week-end. Having been a working man all my life I speak now in support of the working man who cannot get a home on the South Coast. There are 42 pages in the amending Act and in two lines, that is, Section 15, new Section 17A, the Minister may at his absolute discretion give or refuse to give a permit for the building of a home. In that area people are entitled to homes but there are prospective home-builders who do not own a home anywhere else who cannot get a permit to build one there. I am not making any attack on the present Minister or on any Minister of the past. They have at all times treated me with the utmost courtesy when I approached them, but I have been consistently refused when I made application on behalf of these people. They say, "No, they still do not come within the category and are not entitled to a home." I say that every man who does not own a home is entitled to one, whether it is to be erected on the South Coast, the East Coast, the North Coast, or the West Coast.

**Opposition Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. GAVEN:** As proof of my sincerity in this matter I will read some answers that

have been forwarded to me in reply to representations I have made on behalf of these people. This is one of the most iniquitous Acts that have ever been passed by any State Parliament in this Commonwealth. It is unjust and unfair and I hope it will be wiped off the pages of the Statute Book, when the history of the 31st Parliament is written—and one day it will be—it will always be a blot on the pages of the Statute Book, and as applied to the South Coast particularly has been shockingly administered. I wish to bring under notice the applications of several people who have made representations through me for the construction of homes for themselves. The first application I will refer to is that of a man who was a schoolteacher for seven years at Southport before the last war, and is a returned soldier. He went to New Guinea and was practically blown to pieces in the defence of this country. When he came back he was in a psychopathic ward for some time, but he is now in a position to rehabilitate himself and is anxious to get a home on the coast if someone will look after him. His mother has decided that if he is successful in getting a permit to build a home on the South Coast she will do so. When I made representation on behalf of this man, for a permit for a home I received the following letter in reply—

"I desire to refer to your personal representations made on behalf of this gentleman who desires a building permit to erect a dwelling house at Palm Avenue, Surfers' Paradise.

"This matter has now received my personal consideration, and in view of this gentleman's unfortunate circumstances, I regret to advise that it is not possible to authorise the issue of a building permit to enable him to erect a dwelling house for his own occupation.

"However, I am prepared to grant favourable consideration to an application by his mother to erect a dwelling house to be used as her permanent residence provided the following actions are taken:—

(a) That evidence is produced to the Building Control Office that this lady has either disposed of her business at the South Coast or ceased to take an active interest in it.

(b) That evidence is produced by her as to her ownership of the land on which it is desired to build.

(c) That a copy of the contract of sale with respect to her property at Ipswich is produced to the Building Control Office."

This woman owns a property in Ipswich. She has rented it for 18 years and the last tenant has occupied it for 12 years. She gave the piece of land in question to her son, and it now appears that it is necessary for her to get it back from him before she can proceed to place a building on it. She would have to submit her business to public auction. She would also have to sell the business or house at Ipswich. That is all to be done in order to obtain a permit to build a house of

10 squares at Surfers' Paradise, which would have to be the only bit of land she owned in this country!

The next case is that of a woman who had owned a seven-roomed house at Southport. She lost her husband and the family grew up and got married. She desired to erect a building of six squares on the only piece of land she owns now at Lather Street, Southport! She applied for a permit to build a house on this allotment, and this is the reply she received—

"I desire to refer to your personal representations made to me on behalf of Mrs. D. K. Hughes, who made application to the Building Control Office to erect a dwelling house at Lather Street, Southport.

"This matter has now received my personal consideration, but I find that this lady has recently sold her dwelling house at High Street, Southport, and as a result she is not eligible for a permit to erect another dwelling house at the South Coast area or the Redcliffe Peninsula during the operation of the Building Control Acts.

"It is pointed out that this lady can erect a dwelling house in the metropolitan area or any other seaside resort without restriction, provided approval is obtained from the local council."

The house that this lady sold consisted of seven rooms. That fact has deprived her of building a dwelling of six squares in Southport. She can go anywhere else in the State and build a house of 1250 squares. Where is the saving of building material in this case? That is definite proof of discrimination against the South Coast area.

The South Coast depends for its livelihood on tourists and the "South Coast Express" on 18th instant published this paragraph—

"New Luxury Flats for Tweed Heads.

"A block of luxury flats specially designed to cater for the Southern tourist trade will soon be built at Tweed Heads.

"Site of the flats is the Pacific Highway on the road to Boyd's Bay bridge.

"The flats will be built by Mr. Les. Pearce, former owner of the Currumbin Hotel and now of Brisbane. The block will comprise 19 flats, built in the form of a quadrangle with a drive in front.

"Each flat will consist of two bedrooms, lounge-dining room, kitchen and bathroom.

"Currumbin estate agent, Mr. Lin Corr, who will probably handle bookings of the new flats, said yesterday that they would have every modern improvement.

"They are being built to attract wealthy tourists who are likely to spend months at Tweed Heads.

"Mr. Pearce is building the flats at Tweed Heads because Queensland building restrictions prevent him from erecting them at Coolangatta, which was his original choice of a site."

So we see that Queensland timber and building materials are going to New South Wales to be used to bolster up their State to the detriment of our own. If they are refused

permits at Coolangatta they use the Queensland material to build in New South Wales. Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution provides for free inter-state trade and we find our building material is going over in truckloads to be used in New South Wales, but we cannot bring a wheelbarrow into Queensland because we cannot get a permit to use it.

I make that plea for the development of that tourist area, which would bring in many millions of dollars to Queensland. The Commonwealth obtained 3,000,000 dollars by providing for tourists, which is something worth while. It is our industry and there should be some elasticity and modification in building control on the South Coast. I make that plea on behalf of the area that I represent. Unless something is done we shall lose people from Queensland; they will go to New South Wales and live in buildings that are built of timber and material that was brought from this State.

**Opposition Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (12.47 p.m.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to again address this Chamber in an Address in Reply debate, and I am distressed and disappointed to find that this, the thirty-second Parliament of Queensland, has assembled at a time when world conditions are again causing the free people of the world concern. It is very evident from present-day happenings that we, as a civilised people, have not yet found a basis for permanent world peace. Despite the lessons learned from two major conflicts we are again on the threshold of the third World War which pre-eminent statesmen of all countries have said is inevitable. Despite the activities of the United Nations and all other bodies that were created with the intention to formulate a policy for peace, we find that the world today is in a state of uncertainty and despair. Present events present a gloomy future for the generations yet to come. Little did we think after the last conflict, in which thousands of our young men folks gave their lives in the cause of freedom, that within a decade we should hear another call to arms.

Is it that wars are necessary for a continuation of our civilisation and way of life, or is it that they are the outcome of a system that has been with us for centuries and is not acceptable to all the nations?

Conflict between nation and nation has occurred down through the ages since the creation of man; ever since the birth of Christ human life has been sacrificed to the god of war.

It is true that war calls forth the best in the human race and that men who sacrifice their lives in war are eulogised as heroes and their memory is revered by all who remain. No greater sacrifice can a man make than that he lay down his life for his country and we have witnessed the acceptance by the menfolk of all countries of their responsibilities in this regard, and we pay homage to them accordingly, but as one who believes in the brotherhood of man as

expressed in the Sermon on the Mount as we have it in the Gospel of Matthew, I confess that I am alarmed and concerned at what the future holds. Could I foresee that as the present troubles are overcome we should reach a state of society in which all people would have security and freedom, I should be a much happier man. Surely with the sacrifices that have already been made, man is entitled to an existence to which he can look with some assurance.

We who live in this continent have enjoyed, perhaps to a greater degree than many who live in other countries, the freedom and security to which all people are entitled, but with the development of the modern instruments of war our security is being challenged, and as a consequence we are again being asked to provide the man-power and other essentials of war to maintain and retain the freedom of our democracy. The first World War was a war to end war. We won the war but lost the peace, and, as a consequence within three decades the second war began. This war was fought to destroy the vicious and destroying agencies of Fascism, Nazism and Shintoism. The present indications are that the next conflict will be an effort to destroy the equally pernicious and soul-destroying system of Communism.

As a result of the two world wars the capitalist system has been retained and with all its weaknesses is with us today. Can it be said that capitalism, which to my way of thinking holds as many defects as any other system, if not more, can be the agency through which mankind will be emancipated? Does capitalism offer what mankind is seeking? Can this pernicious system, the prime motive of which is the profit motive, solve the present-day difficulties of trade and customs? Has it through the years of its operation given that uplift to the human race which would ensure a continued acceptance of the system, or is it that the peoples of our civilisation are endeavouring to free themselves of the shackles of capitalism and have, to a large degree, voluntarily or otherwise accepted Communism?

What then, I ask, is the solution? Are we to go on staging a major war every few years to destroy such ideologies as arise? I believe that the time will come when mankind will accept as a general basis of government the one and only democratic and sane system, and that is Socialism as we know it and as it is expressed in Labour's programme, a system of government by which the people will benefit. Much has been said against the Australian Labour Party on this policy of Socialism. Elections have been fought on it. Parties opposed to the Australian Labour Party have used the socialistic policy of the Labour Party to endeavour to mislead the people of this State and the Commonwealth. We find if we look more deeply into the real meaning and intention of the policy as expounded by the Labour Party that it does not hold the terrors the opponents of Labour would have the people believe it does.

We find from the dictionary that "Socialism" is derived from the word "social" and that it describes what occurs

when the public as an aggregate body or as a group decide to take over or acquire any service, institution or industry and conduct that service in the interests of the community. Is there anything wrong with that—giving to the free people of this community the benefit of the things to which they are entitled? From that word too we derive the word "socialisation" which, reduced to simple terms, means ownership by the people of any service, institution or industry. If any service or industry is not being so conducted that the people derive a reasonable benefit and service from it or if an industry is not supplying the needs of the community or nation, the people through their representatives in Federal, State or municipal government, must take action to remedy the position either by reconstruction or acquisition of these services. This has been done over the years both by Labour and anti-Labour administrations.

It can be said that the Labour Party has never tried to hide its objective under a bushel, which indeed, has had the support of the present Prime Minister of Australia, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, who is quoted as saying that should he at any time be convinced that any industry was not giving service to the people he would not hesitate to nationalise it.

The people of Queensland and Australia to a great extent are living under many socialised services, services that are of great benefit to the people. In fact, socialised services are commonplace in our community life and many people do not realise the extent to which socialisation has gone in their everyday life. Our water and electricity undertakings are socialised services and who can say that the people of Queensland—might I say the people of Australia—would have any other system? In Queensland, particularly in the city of Brisbane, we have socialised bus services, a service put into operation by I suppose one of the greatest opponents of Labour, the present Lord Mayor. He and his council did not hesitate to acquire bus runs operating in Brisbane and to put them under the control of the Brisbane City Council. Why did he do that? He knew that by so doing he would give the people of this city a great service; he accepted the principle and put into operation a service that can truly be said to be socialistic.

**Mr. Aikens:** You have a socialised electric-light undertaking too.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** I have said that throughout Queensland under our system of electricity administration we have a socialised service and indeed we find that not only under State instrumentalities but under Commonwealth instrumentalities we have socialised services of great benefit to people. For example, we have the post and telegraph system operating throughout all States. Could such a service like that be operated by individual enterprise? Of course not. We find, and rightly so, that the Labour Party, in an endeavour to give to the people of this community a service to which they are entitled, has adopted a socialistic outlook, and for it I make no apologies.

Our hospital system, too, is another example of a socialised service. We contend that in Queensland we have one of the finest hospitalisation services throughout the world, and I think it can be said that Queensland is the only State offering to the people irrespective of their standing in the community an entirely free service. The hospital service of this State ranks second to none in the world and I say again that the people are entitled to this service. Looking back over the past few years, what has happened in the Federal sphere? The Federal Government have been fooling about and have neglected to implement a policy of hospitalisation on behalf of the people. The Commonwealth Government have a greater responsibility than the State Government in this respect, and it is time they accepted a greater degree of financial responsibility in regard to the hospital system throughout the States. We as a Labour Party have no hesitation in saying that our policy in relation to hospitalisation is justified and we look forward to an extension of that policy.

Another socialistic service in Queensland is the Main Roads Commission, which was brought into being by a Labour Government many years ago. Since its inception, a vast network of roads has been laid down throughout our State. There must inevitably be areas that have yet to be serviced by main roads, and I think any reasonable-minded man would admit that it would be utterly impossible for every part of this vast State to have the class of road that everybody desires to have. Since its inception, the Main Roads Commission has spent £75,000,000 on road works, and it is interesting to note that with only one exception no local authority has wanted to take away from the Main Roads Commission the work of building roads. The exception was the Wangaratta Shire Council, which I believe recently passed a resolution to the effect that it would be in its interests to handle its own road-construction work. However, people who have any knowledge at all of the vast amount of work required in road construction would agree that only an organisation like the Main Roads Commission could do such a job effectively. Despite the criticism that has been levelled at the Main Roads Commission by Opposition members, I think it can be said that throughout Queensland today we have a particularly fine road service. Everyone admits that the western areas are just as much entitled to their share of main roads work as the cities, and it is very bad practice for any member of this Assembly to criticise the Main Roads Commission for the work it has not done, seeing that it has done so much during the years of its existence.

As we all know, the present cost of road construction is tremendously high. The cost of materials and of wages has increased considerably, and it is far more expensive to build roads now than it was previously. However, considering that the Main Roads Commission spent over £3,500,000 on road construction in Queensland during the last financial year, I think it can be said that it is doing a particularly fine job. Further, as I

have already said, it can be rightly termed a socialistic organisation, because it is controlled wholly by the Government.

It was very interesting during the course of this debate to notice the contrast in the various approaches made by hon. members to matters relating to the Main Roads Commission. For instance, the hon. member for Southport praised the Main Roads Commission, whereas the hon. member for Roma criticised it because of the state of the roads in his electorate. He said that the western roads were snake-like, winding, back-breaking, glue-pot bush tracks. Everyone will admit that in some parts of the Far West the roads are not paved with bitumen and in periods of wet weather are difficult to travel over, but perhaps the hon. member for Roma would like to see a bitumen road right up to his front door. Again, it has to be remembered that many of these people who complain about the roads in the West do not even live out there; they have been fortunate enough to have gained a very comfortable living from their occupations in the West and have gone to the cities to live.

They are not justified in criticising the Government for the lack of main roads in the State. Taking things by and large the Main Roads Commission has done a particularly good job, although I admit that there is room for further expansion. Many areas still desire all-weather roads and as time goes on the commission will provide such roads in the remote parts of the State.

Again, it may be said that the railways in Australia are socialistic undertakings, because every one of them is controlled by the Government. In the course of his speech, the Leader of the Opposition said that the railways had improved little if at all in the past 30 years. That was a rather exaggerated statement. Did not the Queensland railways do a mighty job during the war years, just as they are doing a splendid job today? From my own personal experience in the department I know that they have done good work. It would perhaps be an advantage to have in Queensland the railway systems that operate in other parts of the world, but we must recognise the fact that the State is a vast area, sparsely populated, and it would cost a tremendous sum to duplicate many of the lines build new ones in all directions and improve the rolling stock, simply to placate some disgruntled people. Generally speaking, the people of Queensland are satisfied with the railway services, because they have done a particularly good job and are continuing to do so. Of course, the Government are not unmindful of the need to improve railway facilities, and in the last year or so provision has been made for improved engine power and rolling stock, improved permanent way, so as to speed up the train service. Provision has also been made for improvement in rolling stock generally, and taking it by and large the Government recognise their responsibilities in providing the best possible railway service.

**Mr. Gair:** Everybody praised the railways for their splendid war effort.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** The job that the railways did during the war years could not be faulted. They carried millions of tons of war material besides coping with normal traffic. The railwaymen worked long hours and everyone put his and her shoulder to the wheel. The railway employees generally did a splendid self-sacrificing job. They are doing equally well today in the handling of traffic.

Both anti-Labour leaders in their policy speeches advocated more socialistic railway lines and there have been requests from many areas for new railway lines in Queensland. I am not going to deny that some of them may be necessary, because closer settlement always follows the construction of a railway line—we had that experience in the North—when railway lines were built closer settlement followed—in the course of time when manpower and materials become available we shall be able to extend the railway facilities to other parts of the State. However, I am getting away from the point that I wanted to make—that despite the criticism of the Labour Party by anti-Labour forces the anti-Labour forces are advocating and do advocate to a great extent the very same things as the Labour Party in the giving of socialistic services.

We have, for the sake of argument, our Stock Routes Improvement and Animal and Vegetable Pests Destruction Act. If we look at that Act in the proper perspective we must admit it is a socialistic one because it creates a Government instrumentality. Who would claim that the graziers, or their association, would attempt to take the control of stock routes out of the hands of the Government, and make and maintain them? Yet they are prepared to take the advantages accruing from the benefit of these stock routes! If we take Government instrumentalities right through we must admit that they come within the definition of socialistic legislation.

Again, our fire brigades are controlled by the Government, and operate for the benefit of the people. They certainly come within the ambit of socialism and they are doing a good job for the people. Then we have the State Government Insurance Office, which cannot be described as any other than a socialistic concern, because it is controlled by the Government. It has been operating for and giving service to the people, and has over a period of years forced a reduction in fire and accident premiums. Therefore, it has given a service to the community and by that alone has justified its creation.

**Mr. Gair:** It was not scrapped by the Moore Government.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** It was not because the Moore Government were aware of its beneficial effects. Although the Moore Government did not show themselves to be possessed of much ability they did realise that the State Government Insurance Office was something worth hanging onto. It is worthy to note here that the State Government Insurance Office controls workers' compensation, which in itself is a particularly fine piece of legislation, for it gives to the worker in industry an employer protection.

Consequently, if our State is developed along those lines I cannot see that the Opposition have much cause for complaint. The Labour Party over the years has endeavoured by legislation to uplift the working conditions of the great mass of people. The legislation it has enacted has operated for the benefit of the working class and at the same time has succeeded in helping in developing industry and consequently the resources of the State. Queensland enjoys a standard of living comparable with that of any other State. Its people are living under ideal conditions and enjoy a greater measure of security because of the protection given to them by the Labour Party, in addition to the protection it has given to industry. It may be said that we as a people are fortunate in having the opportunity of living in such a fine State. Its people are certainly very fortunate in having such a sympathetic Government to look after their interests. While the Labour Party has held the reins of power in this State the people have had no cause for concern. They have reflected that state of mind by showing their continued confidence in the party by re-electing its representatives to control the destinies of this State. Irrespective of what the Opposition may say on the shortcomings of the Australian Labour Party, particularly the Queensland Labour Party, the people have continued to show their confidence in it and that is why we have again seen its members re-elected to the Treasury benches of this State.

**Mr. Evans:** On a minority vote.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** Nevertheless we are the Government of the day. The present Leader of the Opposition has occupied his post for a considerable time and I venture to predict that should he retain the confidence of his party he will remain in that position for a long time to come. I believe, too, that the Opposition might possibly have had a chance of becoming the Government once again had they approached the people last May in a proper spirit and taken them into their confidence. But, as I have previously said, they endeavoured to mislead and fool the people. The hon. member for Port Curtis the other day quoted the statement by the Leader of the Liberal Party to show how they tried to fool the people in relation to Callide. A similar statement was made about Mackay. The Leader of the Opposition tried to fool the people there into supporting the Liberal Party candidate by saying to them, "Return the Liberal Party candidate and we will build a line to Blair Athol."

**Mr. Nicklin:** Nebo.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** That statement was made by the Leader of the Opposition and was published by the "Daily Mercury," in which he said he would build a line to Blair Athol.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Nebo.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** I will produce the copy of the "Daily Mercury." The hon. member for Coorparoo said he would build a line to

Nebo. He said he would give access to Blair Athol through Pentland. It shows they had no common policy and it was a case of "Tell them this and that and endeavour to fool them into believing that we will do something," although these parties knew it was an utter impossibility.

**An Opposition Member:** Tell us about the line from Callide to Gladstone.

**Mr. GRAHAM:** I am not concerned about that because I have too many other matters with which to concern myself in connection with my own electorate. I know the Callide position is very contentious. I believe the hon. member for Port Curtis has thrown the bag wide open and he has shown how the Commonwealth Government were prepared to sacrifice Callide by failing to give it a subsidy although they were prepared to subsidise black-hewn coal. I believe that if the Labour Government had not put the pressure on the Commonwealth Government, Callide would not be receiving the help that is now promised and we should still be importing coal from Africa or India, which would be detrimental to Callide.

Let us look at the coal position so far as it concerns Mackay. We know that coal is an asset to Queensland and that we have plenty of it. Much has been said—and I have quoted it too—in regard to Nebo and Walker's Creek and the need for Government investigation. Recently we had the Minister for National Development, Mr. Casey, up here discussing various projects with our Premier. I am disappointed that the question of the Mackay hinterland was not before him, because I believe that for large-scale development in Queensland, whether it be at Mackay, Callide, or the Burdekin, Commonwealth assistance is necessary. I believe Mackay has some claim for hinterland development and that its projects should be put before the right authority. We have the potentials for large-scale development. We have every type of raw material that is necessary for development, such as timber, large-scale low-grade mineral deposits, and agriculture. We have ample opportunity to develop coal because of the large deposits that are known to be there. Personally, I should like to see the Government take immediate steps to investigate the possibilities of development in that area. It has been said that a railway line 50 miles from a point on the Netherdale line would give access to that area. I am not prepared to say that it could be done—it is a matter for technical advice—but the day will come when that area must be developed. The rich resources of that area cannot remain undeveloped when money is to be expended in other parts of the State. Mackay and the area surrounding Mackay have certain claims to development and I know the Government will in due course give consideration to them.

**Mr. Evans:** When?

**Mr. GRAHAM:** Rome was not built in a day. While I am the representative for Mackay in this House I claim the right to

put the case for Mackay. I am not so parochial as to say that Mackay is the only place in Queensland to be developed.

There are only a few minutes of the time allowed me under the Standing Orders, and I cannot conclude without congratulating the mover and seconder of this motion. These hon. members made very worthy contributions to the debate and showed they have a very clear knowledge of the State. They showed they were sincere in their approaches to the issues they put before the House, and as time goes on they will prove an acquisition to its debates.

I congratulate Mr. Speaker on his re-election to that office. He has shown tolerance and understanding in the past, and I know that if he can retain his health—and I sincerely hope he will—during the term of three years he will give that same consideration to the matters that come before this House and its members.

Reverting to the development of the Mackay Hinterland, it opens up the very contentious question how Blair Athol, 168 miles from Mackay, should be connected with the coast. We have heard various rumours that Mackay is the centre from which Blair Athol coal should be shipped. I believe that instead of building a railway line from Mackay to Blair Athol, as has been advocated, the suggestion of the Mackay and Hinterland Development League for a railway line into the area known as the Mackay Hinterland should receive first priority. The coal deposits of that area warrant an immediate investigation. Blair Athol, as I have said, lies 168 miles from Mackay, whereas this area is only a little over 50 or 60 miles away. It would not entail a huge financial burden on the Government for them to consider the desirability of building a railway line to that area, which would not only tap the coal potentialities there but in addition the other mineral, timber, and agricultural resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I must say that this Government have before them a tremendous responsibility in the next three years, as we expect to see large-scale developments in this State. However, I am more than confident that with the capable handling of the task Queensland can look forward to a continuation of the era of prosperity.

**Mr. DEWAR** (Chermside) (2.40 p.m.), who was received with Opposition "Hear, hears," said: At the outset I associate myself with the good wishes extended to Mr. Speaker on his re-election to office and I join with those who wished him good health. I also associate myself with the sentiments of loyalty expressed to our most gracious Majesty, King George VI.

It has been accepted through the years as being traditional that maiden speeches are more or less heard in silence. I wonder if this does not impose a restriction upon the hon. member making his maiden speech because if one believes in fair play one feels that one cannot be too provocative, although one might feel that way. I shall do my best not to be provocative on this occasion although I do feel that I shall incur the wrath of the Government. However, I must take my chance.

During the first part of this speech I intend to deal with housing matters as I believe this question is one of the most important facing the people of this State. I refer, in retrospect, to the election speeches made each three years over the last six years. I remember the speeches made in 1944 by members of the Government Party and I recall the words of the Premier in promising 30,000 homes in the ensuing three years with a refrigerator, no less, in each unit where possible. In 1947 our Premier made a similar statement, that the Government would build 30,000 homes in the next three years but on that occasion he was judicious enough to drop the promise of a refrigerator. In 1950 we heard a similar promise of 30,000 homes for the following three years.

I believe that life is made up of two fundamentals, on the left talk and on the right action. It is easy to talk but it is a good deal harder to produce results. Let us look at the results of the efforts of the Government over the last six years in regard to housing. The hon. member for Cooroora says that we should need a microscope. How true! For the first half of 1944-45 nothing was done but I grant that there was a war. For 1945 the only figures available show that 1,600 homes were built in the whole State. In 1946 5,538 homes were built in the State or roughly 7,000 homes of the 30,000 homes promised and guaranteed by the Labour Government in 1944.

In the following three years there was a deal of improvement. The Government, through the instrumentality known as the State Housing Commission, either built or sponsored 3,808 homes and whilst they were performing this colossal task private enterprise built 23,787, and so we see that roughly 27,000 homes of the 30,000 promised were built. So we find that 35,000 homes were built in Queensland of a promised 60,000. No doubt, as the Treasurer put it, this is socialisation bolstering up private enterprise. In view of these blatant promises year by year I feel that the people are entitled to ask: where are the 60,000 homes?

Let us go a step further. We find that at various times over the last three years many of the members of this Government have made statements that showed they firmly believed and guaranteed that the housing problem would be ended in 1950. I do not think anyone—not even one of the 46 per cent. of the people who voted for the Government—will be foolish enough to say that by 1950 you will have solved the housing problem. Ministers of the Government have stated that 1950 will see the panacea of all housing ills but I believe that we shall not see the problem solved in the next ten years, even if we do not have a war with the Government's Communist friends.

In view of the fact that 16 per cent. of the houses that have been built in this State have been erected by Government instrumentalities, I should like to mention that about six weeks ago I visited Adelaide, mainly to investigate what I thought was a fairly good housing set-up. I believe at all times that it is fair to look at every side of

a question before having much to say about it, and I visited Adelaide because I had heard that the South Australian Housing Trust was building homes of a reasonable type at a fairly reasonable price. I found that the South Australian Government have kept completely away from the building and financing of homes for sale.

**A Government Member:** It is run by a Trust.

**Mr. DEWAR:** Thank you, I found that out.

They have set up a housing trust, which does not finance houses for sale. However, people who wish to build a home can arrange their own finance and the trust will supply the plans and supervise the building of the home for a charge of 3 per cent.

I have in my electorate of Chermside, which is on the north side of Brisbane, quite a number of Housing Commission homes; in fact, I should say I have about 300 or 400, exclusive of the two ex-army camps. I have had a good look at the houses being built in my electorate, and during my election campaign I called on every house that had been erected for the Housing Commission. As a result, I firmly believe that there is no comparison between the type of home being built in South Australia and that being built in this State. For purposes of comparison, I would inform hon. members that the average wooden home built in Queensland costs between £1,500 and £1,750 at today's prices, whereas in South Australia a brick home of 972 square feet costs £1,480, a brick home of 1,120 square feet costs £1,730, and a brick home of 1,304 square feet costs £1,910. The South Australian homes are of a good design with plenty of variety, and have tiled roofs, stainless steel sinks, heaters in the bathroom and the kitchen, and the cost of land and fencing is included in the price. The three per cent. charge for supervision is included in the price, and, what is more important, when the new owner goes into the home it is ready for use. I mention that because Cowan street in my electorate contains about a dozen homes in which were installed gas stoves, gas geysers and gas piping for gas coppers. In fact, the only thing missing was the gas itself. There was no gas in the district then, and there is still no gas in the district, and those people have been in those homes for 18 months. One man told me last Sunday week that not only did he have no gas in his home but for some time he could not even get a copper for his wife to boil the clothes in. They had to boil the clothes in kerosene tins over an open fire in the yard.

I am not saying there is any reason why gas should be there, but it is up to any organisation that runs a concern like the Housing Commission to have some form of liaison so that homes are not built in areas before roads are provided and gas appliances are not installed before there is gas in the area. That is only plain common sense and I submit to the Minister concerned, who is absent, that he should have some form of liaison so that that sort of thing will not happen.

To quote another instance, a man living in my electorate asked me to look into a problem with which he is confronted. A house at Grovely has been allocated to him. It has been erected, but the water is not connected with it. There is no electricity and there is no road and it would be impossible for anything but a rabbit to get into the yard for the next six months, but the house is finished. It is a rental home and look at the revenue that the Government will lose because the house cannot be occupied for the simple reason that a road has not been made.

Let me take the argument a little further. This will apply to electorates represented by Government members, too, if they have Housing Commission homes in the area. Let me remark here that I note that these homes are usually built in anti-Labour electorates but I do not mind because I can always get 50 per cent. of the votes at least. The Government are treating the people in such a way that they are turning Labour voters into Liberal voters. For instance, I can show that people in the Chermiside electorate have been in their homes for two years and are still getting the slush and muck from the so-called roads washed through their yards. Virtually every week I have requests from people to get them out of the homes because of the damp conditions under which they are living. When they complain to the Housing Commission they are told that it is a Brisbane City Council problem but they know it is not a council problem. I have always been under the impression that before a property-owner could subdivide his land and sell it he had to provide first-class roads and concrete gutters in the area. But not so the Housing Commission, not so the Government. They come along and grab an area, divide it, put up houses, and they are occupied; and when the people ask for roads they are told that it is a council problem. That is going on in my electorate now and if anyone disputes the fact I am prepared to take him out in my car at my expense at any time he pleases.

I quoted figures showing the cost of homes in South Australia. I believe they are vastly superior to the homes that are being built here and are well within the means of the working man. The figure I quoted for the construction of a brick home in South Australia is a reasonable one. I know that more homes are being built in Queensland than in South Australia but of course there is a difference in population. South Australia, a highly industrialised area, depends for its material on imports from other places. For instance, it has not so much timber as we have here and naturally we should expect more homes to be built here. Make no mistake about it, the cost of material in South Australia is not low by any means—face bricks cost the same as they do here, £10 a thousand while ordinary bricks cost £9 6s. a thousand, dearer than they are here. Yet they have been able to build homes at more reasonable prices in South Australia because the Government have kept out of the actual building of the homes. They have simply provided the plans and supervised the work at a charge of 3 per cent. The homes

are superior to those here, the prices are lower, and so the worker has a chance of getting one. The secret lies in the fact that the Government themselves have kept out of the building of the homes. South Australia has operated over a period of years with a minimum of industrial disputes—a matter with which I shall deal later on in my speech.

The rental system under which we operate in this State is laid down in the State—Commonwealth agreement and it is not for me to criticise that system because I do not know enough about it. I do not believe in putting my head in where it is likely to be chopped off, if only sometimes. The point I make is that South Australia kept out of the Commonwealth—States agreement and speaking from memory—I am prepared to be corrected—I believe the maximum rental in Adelaide is 25s. a week whereas in Queensland a man in receipt of £8 or £9 a week pays anything up to £2 5s. for rent, according to his economic rental ceiling.

What strikes me as being grossly unfair with respect to the rental of Government houses is that if a man was sufficiently fortunate to get into a house, say, at Stafford when it was built, in 1946, his rental was fixed at 30s. a week. That is for a two-bedroom house which cost about £1,340. His friend working alongside him, who was not so fortunate in that he did not have such a large family, had to live in one of the Housing Camps until 1950 before getting into one of the State Housing Commission houses, and then had to pay a rental of £2 5s. a week for a similar type of house. Is it fair that one man in one district should pay a different rental from a man occupying a similar type of house in another district? I cannot offer a cure for that anomaly, but that policy does place an unfair hardship on one section of the community and requires to be investigated.

These facts show quite clearly that the Labour Government have failed to keep their promises over the last six years with respect to housing. It is true that they have built only 5 per cent. of the houses they planned and promised. No-one can gainsay that private enterprise did not play its part in providing houses for the people because it constructed 95 per cent. of the houses that were built. We are becoming accustomed to the Labour Government's failure to fulfil their promises, but we are entitled to ask: Why have their promises not been kept? There is an alarming shortage of houses and there can be little doubt, judging from the present position, that that shortage will continue. I would appeal to the Minister, knowing that new brooms sweep cleanly to make a positive approach to the housing problem. Something more can be done. If he adopts a positive approach to the subject he will see that there is a proper liaison between his building authority and the constructing agencies so that the workers can be adequately housed.

I want to deal with the second paragraph of the Governor's Speech in which he said that this House had met at a time of crisis.

Never have truer words been uttered. Today we as a people stand condemned to a slow process of strangulation because of the actions of one section of the community. I am willing to be placed in the category mentioned by the hon. member for North Toowoomba when he stated that anyone who declared that the Communist Party was responsible in any way for the high cost of living has a one-track mind. I gladly admit, then, that I have a one-track mind because I firmly believe that the Communist Party and its activities, and those who run with them, are largely responsible for the fact that the cost of living has completely got out of hand. Today, we find that the Communist Party, because of its programme over the last few years in deciding how much coal should be hewn and what quantity should be supplied to the steelworks, and because it decided our foreign policy with respect to Indonesia, which country promises to give us a lot of trouble, has put a stranglehold on our national development. The reduction in the output of steel and its increased cost have been brought about mainly by decreased coal supplies, the work of the friends of hon. members opposite, the Communists. As a result there has been a shortage of materials, the effect of which on our housing programme is just one aspect of their work. At times building has been brought almost to a standstill because of that shortage. The Communists have decided not only our foreign policy but just how much and when our coal should be produced. On the motion for the election of Mr. Speaker the hon. member for Bundaberg referred to the great Australian Labour Party. I am prepared to disagree with him when he uses that term.

**Mr. Devries:** Of course you would; I know that.

**Mr. DEWAR:** I believe very strongly that the great Australian Labour Party died in 1921 and ever since then the policy its members adopted would cause great Labour men such as Dave Bowman and Andrew Fisher to turn in their graves. (Government interjections.)

I did not expect that to be well received. In 1921 the great Australian Socialist Party took its place. The hon. member for Maryborough rather petulantly asked what right had we to call the Government a Socialist Party. We have a perfect right to call the Government a Socialist Party, even if we had not had the spectacle of one member of the Government saying today, "Of course we are Socialists." Just in case it may be felt that the hon. member was wrong, let me quote from page 16 of the official report of the Triennial Conference of the Australian Labour Party. These sentences appear—

"The Labour movement was going to be split in twain. If they set that out, it was no longer the Labour movement of Australia. Why not call it the Communist Party?"

Who said that? Mr. Theodore, that great Labour man who was eulogised in this House

a fortnight ago. He was recognised as a great Labour man and that is what he thought of the Socialist Party from that day onwards. We realise that he died a capitalist but he was a Labour man when he said that. If I have not said enough to prove that hon. members opposite should be called Socialists, we have the pledge that each one of them signed before he was endorsed. They know what it says—the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange. Each one of them signed that.

We know what happened after 1921. After that date we find in true Socialist form—the Labour Socialists proceeded willy-nilly to go ahead with a programme of socialisation. We found cattle stations, fisheries, butcheries and coal-mines were socialised. What happened? Need I ask? £4,500,000 was lost—sufficient to build a golden line between Callide and Gladstone; 4½ million pounds wasted by the Socialists.

**Mr. Burrows:** It did not go to Africa.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. Burrows:** It did not go to Africa. (Government interjections.)

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I hope hon. members will obey my call to order. If they do not do so I shall have to deal with them.

**Mr. DEWAR:** I should like to take the matter a little further. I think hon. members opposite have changed their name again; theirs is no longer the great Australian Socialist Party, because today they stand as the Great Australian Communist-Protection Society.

**Mr. WOOD:** I rise to a point of order. The statement is not correct as applied to me as a member of the Government party and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The hon. member for Chermiside!

**Mr. DEWAR:** I repeat that the party we know as the Government, owing to its protection of an organisation, has labelled itself the Australian Communist-Protection Society. We have the spectacle of the Labour-controlled Senate saying, "Hands off the Communists!" I have not heard one word from any responsible member of the Government in which he stated that hon. members opposite did not stand behind the Labour-controlled Senate in its action in protecting the Communist Party. For instance, never once have I seen them raise their hands in horror and utter the words, "We do not associate ourselves with the stand of the Labour Senate," consequently I assume hon. members opposite stand firmly behind the Senate in its determination to protect the Communists. If there are any doubts of their not standing behind it, look at their record of bank nationalisation, petrol rationing and the referendums, in other words, members of the Government opposite stood behind the Chifley Government in every socialistic measure that Government took, therefore I must assume they also stand

behind the Labour Senate in their determination to thwart the will of the people to crush the Communist Party. There can be only one conclusion: either the people who expressed themselves so forcibly on 10 December in favour of the Menzies-Fadden Government are right or the Labour-controlled Senate is right. Both cannot be right. Frankly I think the Bill dealing with the Communist Party will go through the House of Representatives so fast next month that it will have to be stopped to be cooled down. The people of Queensland have the right to know the stand the Government take in respect of that Bill.

During the past two or three weeks we have witnessed ridiculous and fruitless efforts to drive a wedge between the Opposition parties. (Government laughter).

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. DEWAR:** Members of the government have the audacity by innuendo and by plain words to drive a wedge through the united party in Opposition. (Government laughter). Now let me ask the Government a question: are they an undivided party? Do they not have factions within their own ranks? Do they not have those who hate Socialism? Do they not have those who hate the Communists? Do they not have those who walk with the Communists on May Day? Why, two of the Government members had to appeal to the rank and file because Caucus would not endorse them for the last election! Then members of the Government have the audacity to tell us they are not a split party. The Government are split in twain and Government members know it. Their attempts to drive a wedge between the Opposition are only futile attempts to cover their own shortcomings. On this side of the Chamber you see a united band of 30 men determined to wipe Socialism and Communism from the Australian way of life.

Some of the members of the Government, in speaking to this motion, suggested that the Communists ran with the Liberals. I do not think they marked our Country Party colleagues with that stain. May I quote figures that give the lie to such a ridiculous statement? In the Oxley electorate on 10 December there were Country Party, Liberal, Labour and Communist candidates. On the allocation of the Communist candidate's preferences do we find that these went to the Liberal Party or to the Country Party? Most certainly they did not. Of 576 Communist primary votes the second preferences of over 400 went to Labour. Notwithstanding this members of the Government have the audacity to suggest Communists voted for the Liberals.

The question has also been asked by the Attorney-General, I think, of how we should know, in an electorate where there was only a Country Party man standing against Labour whether Liberals would support him, or vice versa? I suggest that argument is completely blown out in view of the experience in the Federal electorate of Capricornia, where some three years ago a Country Party man, Mr. Davidson, was elected.

Last year a Liberal candidate in the person of Mr. George Pearce was endorsed for that seat. Did we find all the Country Party supporters voting Labour? If they did, every Labour man must have voted for Mr. Pearce, because he was the gentleman elected. That argument is as capable of holding water as a sieve.

I should like to dwell for a short time on the question of the onus of proof as contained in this terrific Act of injustice according to the Labour Senate—that the Menzies-Fadden Government have had the audacity to foist upon the Australian people. Never in my life have I heard so much rubbish talked about something of so little importance. What is this onus of proof, in any event? Every hon. member knows what it leads to. Once a man declares he is not a Communist, it has to be proved that he is and if he is proved to be a Communist, is he shot as undoubtedly he would be if he were in Russia, the country he loves? Is he to be thrown in gaol for life? Nothing like that happens to him. All that happens is that he is no longer employed by the Government, and what a terrific thing to happen to him! This type of traitor is allowed to run free because the Labour-controlled Senate in the Federal sphere has held up the Bill when today there is the possibility of a war throughout the world and when American boys are losing their lives and when shortly our own Australian boys will be fighting against enemies of the type who are being protected by a Labour-controlled Senate. I would not give one Australian boy for every Communist in this country. I had an experience, in point, although not directly with Communists, and an experience that did not hurt me, so I know what I am speaking about. In 1943-44 a similar thing happened to what is reported in yesterday's paper, of a Communist drive to prevent the loading of arms for Korea. In 1943-44 I was one of 2,000 or 3,000 waiting at Bradfield Park, Sydney, for embarkation overseas. What happened each morning at 5 o'clock? We were lined up and many of us picked out. What had we to do? We had to load ships at the Sydney wharves because the Communists would not do it. The ships were taking food and ammunition to our men in New Guinea. What did the Chifley Government do about it? They sent us—6s. 6d. a day wharf-labourers—down to do the work. That is what the Chifley Government did, and that is the Government hon. members opposite eulogise. Thank heavens, they were thrown out of office on 10 December last, because that was the only chance this country had of survival.

The statement may not be accepted but I say sincerely that I come into this House as a comparatively young man. I am not interested in any members of this Government as individuals. I shall never be so interested. I shall never make a personal attack upon anybody, but I shall attack the Government collectively as a group representing a political theory that runs counter to mine, and counter to that of the 7,000 constituents in the Chermiside electorate who voted for me and my policy. To those electors I tender my thanks. I shall criticise

when I think the Government's policy runs counter to the policy I believe in. I repeat that I am not interested in hon. members opposite individually; collectively I am, and I finish with these few lines to explain what I am trying to say—

“I give no thought to my neighbour's worth

Or the way he makes his prayer.

I grant him a white man's place on earth  
So long as his game is square.

If he plays it straight I'll call him mate  
And if he cheats I'll drop him flat.

Old class and rank are a worn-out lie

For all clean men are as good as I

And a King is only that.”

**Mr. GARDNER (Bulimba) (3.15 p.m.):**  
At the outset, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Haughton and the hon. member for Windsor on the able manner in which they respectively moved and seconded the motion now being debated. I feel certain that both of them will be of considerable assistance to the Government.

I should also like to congratulate Mr. Speaker on his re-election to his important office. I have known him for the past 20 years and I am sure that hundreds of people will be with me in wishing him good health. I trust that he may be spared for many years to carry out his important duties as Speaker of this Assembly.

I represent the electorate of Bulimba, which is an industrial area of Brisbane, and it is on workers' conditions generally that I desire to address this House today. To do so, it is necessary for me to cast my mind back prior to 1912. I was a young man then, but I well remember the conditions that existed. Low wages and long hours were the lot of those people who were fortunate enough to have a job, but unemployment was the largest industry operating at that time. I have known men to work from 50 to 60 hours a week for a mere pittance of from 30s to 35s. a week. I have seen children work for periods of from six to 12 months without receiving any wages at all, and if their parents were unable to pay a £10 premium to have them taught a trade, at the end of 12 months they were put off. Then, if they were fortunate enough to get a job somewhere else they were paid 2s. 6d. a week for the first six months and 5s. a week for the second six months. And so it went on.

I have seen skilled tradesmen paid 1s. an hour and unskilled labourers from 6s. to 7s. a day. In those days there was nothing like continuity of employment, and men were out of work more often than they were employed. I shall leave it to the imagination of hon. members to estimate how much they earned in 12 months. I have seen teen-age girls sweeping out shops at 10 and 11 o'clock at night, and then having to deliver parcels on their way home, in order to keep their jobs. I have known butchers to work till 11 o'clock on Saturday night and to go back on Sunday morning to clean up the shop and serve a few customers.

Overtime was unheard of in those days. If the boss of a factory decided that an order

had to go out on a certain day, the hands had to stay behind till it was completed. No overtime was paid. In the transport industry, carters and lorry-drivers never knew when they would finish work at night, and it was the rule rather than the exception for these men to get home for their evening meal at 8 or 9 o'clock.

Workers' conditions in the country were no better than they were in the city. Most hon. members on both sides of the House have read about the strikes that resulted in the birth of the Shearers' Union, which later became the A.W.U. In both the country and the towns things were bad. In the city it was a common sight to see homes being sold for the rent. Indeed, every school-child knew when a red flag was flying outside a house what it was there for. I can recall the conditions when I was a boy and later as a young man and I would remind the House, if that should be necessary, that the Liberal Party were in power in this State from the time of Separation until 1915, and those were the conditions that existed in those days.

Compare them with the conditions today. There was no workers' compensation in those times. If a man was unfortunate and met with an accident he got nothing from his employer. He was first of all thrown on his neighbours and then on to charity to save himself and his wife and family from starvation and frequently was forced back to work long before he was well enough to go. But since the election of the Labour Party in 1915 there has been a gradual improvement in working and living conditions in Queensland, as a result of the introduction of the humane legislation of that Government. However, after 15 years of Labour progress the people saw fit to return the Liberal Party again and you all know with what disastrous results. When the McCormack Government were defeated in 1929 they left about £5,000,000 in the Treasury but the new Liberal Government thought so little about the needs of the people that they lent a large portion of it to a southern State and spent the balance in providing intermittent relief work. After the Liberal Party had put their policy of "Give the boy a chance" into operation during the period 1929-32 things were never worse in the history of Queensland.

Diverting for a moment, I should like to remark that the then Premier, the Hon. A. E. Moore, is now an elector of mine and I believe that when he realised the hash that he had made of things during his period he voted for me on 29 April last.

In 1932 the Labour Party was returned to power again, and again showed that it was equal to the task of giving work to the workers. The day-labour policy had been introduced early in 1915, thereby saving thousands of pounds in contractors' profits, giving good conditions to the artisans and resulting in better jobs than had hitherto been available. This policy was reintroduced by the Labour Government in 1932 thereby giving work to the workers and leading to the construction of public buildings throughout the State. The Labour Government were

responsible for lifting the depression that had been experienced in Queensland and throughout Australia

Since then there has been a steady rate of progress. The State Government Insurance Office, for instance, has been responsible for cutting premium rates by half, again saving thousands of pounds to the people and making it possible for the Government to implement their scheme of workers' compensation for the benefit of workers in industry. Only those who have been unfortunate enough to meet with an accident appreciate what a benefit it is to have an income while lying sick in bed, or while they are incapacitated. We all realise that an injured worker will reach the convalescent stage more quickly if the fear of want does not stalk his family or himself at such a period. Today a widow and her dependents will receive on the death of the breadwinner compensation varying from £1,250 to £1,500. In 1912 that benefit was only a dream. Today it is an accomplished fact.

The establishment of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Court has been a great benefit to the people and workers alike. Its human consideration of cases of dispute and its ability to make satisfactory and quick adjustments has been the means of saving thousands of pounds to both the employer and employee and great inconvenience to the people. Many disputes that might have resolved themselves into long drawn-out strikes have been settled through its agency.

These are only a few of the benefits that have resulted from Labour's policy, but they are monuments to Labour's ability to govern in the interests of the people and they are so great that we can defy the Opposition's attempt to destroy them. Conditions under Liberal Governments in the period I have referred to were little above the coolie level, and I venture to say that if that party was unfortunate enough to be returned to power we should see no improvement in them. Today, after 30 years of Labour's regime, the people are getting a better share of the results of their labour and are enjoying a full and happy life, while business people are doing better than ever before.

Notwithstanding what has been done to build up the standard of living for the people, much yet remains to be done. Today there are hundreds of workers who do not enjoy the amenities in the shops and factories that should be provided. There are thousands of people too who want their own homes. I believe that with the implementation of the programme as read by His Excellency, and the continuation of the vigorous housing programme evidenced by the Government in the last three years, these present difficulties will soon be overcome. What Government other than our own Labour Government have made it possible for 65 per cent. of the people to own their own homes? Even that is not good enough. Every man or woman who desires a home should have it. Our workers are entitled to live a full life and rear their families removed from the fear of want and

hunger. If we as a Government can remove those fears and supply those wants, we shall have no need to fear any onslaughts on our programme. With the transport system operating today and the advent of electric trains a distance of 20 to 25 miles from the city will occupy only about an hour. Therefore, homes built within that radius will be an acquisition, and workers with a shorter working week will have the necessary time to beautify and improve their homes.

This brings me to the subject of the high cost of living today and to suggest that something should be done to protect the family man again. The three essential food-stuffs of our workers are milk, bread and meat. I am very concerned with the upward spiral in costs. The people of Australia made a fatal mistake when in the recent referendum they refused to give the Chifley Labour Government power to control prices. It was pointed out to the people that prices could only be effectively controlled on a national basis. The Queensland Prices Branch is handicapped because the producers have held a gun at the heads of the authority by selling on the New South Wales market. The present Federal Government gulled the people into believing that they would put value back into the £, and that there was too much control of industry.

The public are already realising how foolish they were in believing those false prophets. I realise that the present Federal Government are in office for three years and that they will necessarily legislate and administer the affairs of Australia only for the benefit of the class they represent; consequently I seek to find out what we can do in our position. Already there are signs of industrial unrest because of the inflation that is striking Australia. I make the suggestion to my Government that there is a state of national emergency in relation to the prices that are being charged for food, and if the Federal Government will not act, let us see what can be done locally. The first Labour Government in 1915 set an example to the other Governments in Australia in this regard. Although I know there will be howls of derision and anger from the Opposition and talk about the losses on butcher shops and State stations, I say that if our people could obtain a similar reduction in prices today as were effected at that time I should not hesitate to use the whole machinery of government in this state of emergency to bring about that effect.

I know that the Opposition will crow about losses on butcher shops, so I will take meat as an example. Today the huge increases are being carried out by market manipulation, as they were in 1915. At the outbreak of war in 1914 the same people were responsible for the fact that meat rose from 6d. to 1s. a pound. Within a few months of the Labour Government's coming into power the price of 1s. was reduced to 7½d.

**Mr. Plunkett:** What book are you reading from?

**Mr. GARDNER:** From memory. This was done despite the fact that Queensland suffered one of the worst droughts on record. How extensive that drought was can be seen from the following figures. In 1915 there were 5,455,945 cattle and 23,129,919 sheep, and in 1917 there were 4,591,644 cattle and 15,245,508 sheep; a loss of 864,301 cattle and 7,884,411 sheep. What could be done under such chaotic conditions of drought could be done today.

My concern is for the worker and his wife and family. Unless this racketeering is stopped they will be in a parlous condition. Let us take the case of eggs. What worker with four or five children can afford to pay 3s. 6d. a dozen for eggs? The position is ludicrous. I should like to see the position investigated from the angle of having pullets made available from hatcheries—Government hatcheries if that is the only way they can be obtained at reasonable cost—so that every family will have an opportunity of getting an egg a day for each child, which he is now denied but which he should have, according to the medical fraternity.

Another item is milk. We are told every child up to 14 needs a pint a day. The medical profession has advocated the giving of this quantity for years. The present price of milk is exorbitant. It costs as much to distribute milk as to produce it, and I should like an investigation made into this question to see whether some effective reduction in price could not be made by having pasteurised milk supplied in all cities and towns by civic authorities or some Government control board that has actively controlled other primary products up to date.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may be wondering just where my argument is leading. The producer is entitled to a fair return for his labour and the wage-earner is entitled to protection. Despite any wage increases to meet costs of living, the worker is no better off than he was prior to the war; therefore I suggest that legislation be enacted that will ensure that in relation to foodstuffs only the rate of profit equivalent to the pre-war rate shall be lawful and the Commissioner of Prices shall be clothed with powers and have sufficient staff to see that only this rate of profit on foodstuffs operates.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) (3.36 p.m.): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we meet as His Excellency said in his opening Speech, in a state of crisis, but before I deal with that crisis I wish to make a few remarks about the constitution of this Parliament as the result of the recent shocking redistribution of seats Bill. The old Parliament had 62 members; this Parliament has 75. What the extra 13 members are going to do, I do not know, and they do not know. As the result of that Bill 13 extra members of Parliament were unloaded on the already over-burdened backs of the people of Queensland. There was not enough work to keep 62 members of Parliament fully occupied. In Townsville I occupied a rather enviable and peculiar position. There I am a political trinity, three in one, and despite the fact that my services are available to the people 24 hours of the day, I

have told them from the public platform and told hon. members in this Chamber that I do not work anything like 40 hours a week. What the rank-and-file members of the various parties work per day, goodness only knows. Many of them, as soon as being elected to Parliament, bought into, acquired or established private businesses in order to keep themselves occupied in Brisbane. Many members of Parliament regard their parliamentary duties purely and simply as a well-paid hobby. I read the other day in one of our weekly newspapers, I think the "Sunday Mail," an article about the Southern drones and spivs who periodically congregate on the South Coast and at Surfers' Paradise. If that paper really wants to write an article on genuine drones and spivs, let it come and see some of the No. 1 drones and spivs in this House of Parliament.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I would ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark. He must refer to hon. members by their correct titles.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Very well, I will withdraw the remark.

We have on my front and left the Labour Party which, as has been correctly stated by the hon. member for Chermside, is a party split into various factions. The split became very apparent and manifest just prior to the last elections when the warring sections came into the open and declared bloody war upon each other, a war that was not resolved until the Labour in Politics Convention at Toowoomba. It was later carried a further stage at the Caucus meeting during the election of Cabinet.

In the pre-selection of candidates by the Labour Party, we saw some most amazing things. I can speak only of what actually happened in the North. I make it a practice of speaking only of the things that I actually know anything about. I do not in this Chamber trade information second- or third-hand. I know in the North the Labour Party candidate was selected long before nomination day and then, in order to try to quieten down some of the malcontents in the North, they sent a pair of inquisitors to North Queensland.

Those two men were Messrs. Muhldorff and Cole and they were supposed to go to North Queensland and put the Labour candidates through the grille or the race, as it were. And the tragedy and the joke of it was that neither Mr. Muhldorff nor Mr. Cole would know a genuine Labour man if he fell over one. However, they came to North Queensland and held various sessions and inquisitions in the various parts of the North.

One of our party members went through in one of the northern centres to find out what was going on and he reported back that the proceedings resembled the grilling adopted by detectives in the back rooms of the Criminal Investigation Branch—and he was speaking from experience. One unfortunate member in Townsville who thought he would get the nomination for Haughton bought a toothbrush and cleaned his teeth

for the first time in 22 years. I later told him that the buying of a toothbrush was a waste of money but he said that when his wife had finished using the one she had she could wear that one out, too. Mr. Muhl-dorff not only sought information from the various candidates and from the various stooge groups of the Labour Party in and around Townsville but went up and down the town asking everyone his opinion and even asked some of the barmaids in the hotels in which he was drinking their opinion as to whether so-and-so could beat Aikens for the Mundingburra seat. He said to one barmaid, "Do you think Butcher can beat Aikens?" and she said "He would have three chances of beating Tom Aikens, yours, his own and Buckley's." Mr. Muhl-dorff thereupon issued a statement to the Press that there was not a North Queensland Labour Party in the North, it was merely the Thomas Aikens Party. As a result of that irresponsible, lying statement—and you, Mr. Mann, cannot stop me from calling Mr. Muhl-dorff a liar—

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr. Mann): Order! I do not want the hon. member to try to provoke the Chair. I do not intend to stop any hon. member from saying what he has the right to say but I impress upon him not to say things in this Assembly he has no right to say.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Time marches on. As a result of that irresponsible and lying statement the returning officer or, rather, the Principal Electoral Officer for Queensland was instructed by the Government to do the dirtiest and most contemptible and most despicable thing he ever did under instructions. In the list of candidates issued to the various polling booths throughout Queensland, in order to influence any absentee votes cast for the electorates being decided, instead of classifying our candidates under the heading of the North Queensland Labour Party he classified them under the heading of the Thomas Aikens Party. I know that the Labour Party has got down into the gutter in fighting elections before but in this case it went further than the gutter and got into the sewerage pit. I wrote to the Principal Electoral Officer asking him under whose authority he did this shocking and contemptible thing but the poor chap has not had the guts to reply.

Sometimes humorous things happen during election campaigns and I think one is worthy of repeating. This is a statement made by the Secretary for Labour and Industry during his campaign in Charters Towers. I have a lot of time for the Minister but on this occasion he had a doctor for his opponent—his opponent was a Liberal—and in the course of one meeting he said that a doctor, if elected to Parliament, could only give half of his time to his patients and half of his time to his constituents—a sort of shandy-gaff arrangement, and was therefore a failure both as a doctor and a politician. Drs. Noble and Dittmer, please note!

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Labour Party, which has arrogated to itself the right to

brand itself under the sacred name of Labour, came back into this House with a majority. As I say, it was split not in two parts, but in three. By the grace of the redistribution and the gullibility of certain electors its members will be the Government, and because of the closeness of the result, they will go down in history as the photo-finish Government. Let me say, however, as it was a photo-finish between the Labour Party and the Liberal Party, that I am particularly pleased that the Labour Party got its nose in front, because, much as I detest a certain section of the Labour Party, I detest much more the party that masquerades under the name of the Liberal Party.

**An Opposition Member:** Which party do you belong to?

**Mr. AIKENS:** I belong to the only dinky-die working-class party in this House, and the only party in this House that is not split asunder.

Now let me deal with the Opposition. We have prominent in the Opposition, of course, the dominant faction of the Opposition—the old Country Party; the "fire low and lay 'em out" boys. We must give them credit for their consistency in their advocacy of the reduction of the workers of Queensland to the coolie or the slave level. They honestly believe that the worker should work from dawn till dusk for no wages at all; that he should live in a bag-and-bark humpy with a cow-dung floor, and with a hurricane-lamp as the only means of illumination; that he should live on corned beef and damper with a tin of cocky's joy as a special treat on the anniversary of Artie Fadden's birthday.

Part of the Opposition on this occasion is that peculiar political set-up known as the Queensland branch of the Liberal Party. They started off as the Queensland People's Party and they were born so prematurely that they almost deserve the designation of something else. However, a group of Brisbane's go-getters wanted to get into Parliament and looked round for someone's assistance. As the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Mr. J. B. Chandler, had some standing in the community, because at that time he had a reputation for honesty and integrity, and because he had money and a radio station, this group of persons attached themselves to Mr. J. B. Chandler and called themselves the Queensland People's Party. When they had finished using Mr. Chandler, and his money, and his integrity, and his radio station, when they felt they could stand upon their own feet, they threw him overboard, and the Deputy-Leader of the Liberal-Country Party in this House branded him as an old goat. They then attached themselves to the very discoloured and odoriferous political shirt-tail of one Robert Gordon Menzies. So we have as the Opposition in this Chamber the Country Party and the Liberal Party, and the hon. member for Chermiside says, "There is no split in the Opposition!" In a spirit of mistaken camaraderie and bonhomie, when I walked past the Leader of the Opposition a little while ago I slapped him

on the shoulder and, as a result, I have a bruised palm, as you can see. The Leader of the Opposition has fixed a steel plate underneath his shirt, a very wise protection in his dealings with the Liberal Party. Were it not for that steel plate, it would not be long before a dagger would be quivering between his shoulder blades, driven there by the first member of the Liberal Party on whom he turned his back.

When we speak about election tactics, I doubt if the Labour Party, which gets fairly low at times, got any lower than the Liberal Party during the recent campaign. The Liberal Party adopts pretty shady tactics, but in the recent campaign it appealed to the people not on the basis of the soundness of its policy but, as far as I could determine, simply on the publication of a photograph of the wife—or the supposed wife—and children of the Liberal Party candidate. The Liberal Party circulated that sort of stuff round the electorates and, in effect, said to the electors, "We know that our policy is on the nose; we know our candidate stinks; but for God's sake give us a vote for the sake of his wife and kiddies." They circulated pamphlets all over the North seeking votes for their candidates because they had wives and children. They took their wives and kiddies, unwittingly and unknowingly I have no doubt, into their election campaigns. Being a genuine northerner and representing a genuine northern party, I can say that the northern people were vastly amused, interested and entertained by the interest that was shown in North Queensland during the recent election campaign.

We had the Country Party candidates, who came there openly, flagrantly, and without any apology whatever, simply stealing some of our slogans, such as "Give the North a Fair Go." The Country Party copied that and placarded it all round the place. When I went to Cairns I said to myself, "We have no candidate for Cairns, but probably the candidate from the Tableland or Mulgrave is doing a good job," because all over the town were these placards saying, "Give the North a Chance"; "A Fair Deal for the North", but when I looked closer I could see in very small letters underneath, "Vote Country Party on 29 April." They had come out openly and flagrantly attempting to ride into power on the slogan of "A Fair Go for the North", which had been stimulated and organised by our party.

The Labour Party was much the same, but of course on this occasion its members were shaking in their shoes, they had the wind up. We had a veritable procession of the top-line speakers, such as Ministers of the Crown. Even now the northern people will point to little damp-brown patches and say, "This is where some of the visiting Labour politicians sat during the campaign," and on one chair there was a great big damp brown patch with a placard above it reading, "This is where Jack Duggan sat." The Labour Party was just as good as the Liberal Party and the Country Party in promising everything for the North, but the northern people had heard all that before.

While they were interested in hearing all the promises that were being made with regard to the North, do not think for one moment that the Country Party, the Liberal Party or the Labour Party have fooled the northern people. The northern people will believe that the Government are sincere in developing the North when the work that is proposed to be done is actually completed, not when promises have been made or when blue prints or plans have been drawn.

The Liberal Party went one better. Its candidates were accompanied by their leader, the hon. member for Coorparoo and Mr. R. G. Casey condescended to go as far as Townsville. He held a meeting in a marquee and he told a story that was supposed to be funny and the people of Townsville, being good-natured, good-mannered, and courteous enough, laughed, but no-one saw the joke. The next day, Mr. R. G. Casey flew over the Burdekin dam site in an aeroplane. Because of the hospitality that he had received in Townsville the previous day, he spent most of his time flying over the dam site with his head in a brown-paper bag, and so saw very little of the Burdekin dam site.

The North was the cynosure of all eyes during the last election campaign. There were politicians from all parts of Australia promising that North Queensland was going to come into its own. We were told during the course of this debate that the people had returned the Labour Government and had thereby given a further indication of their confidence in them. In the old Parliament the Labour Party had seven representatives out of 10 from North Queensland. They put in an extra three for the North and did not win one of them. They still have only seven northern representatives out of 13 northern seats. So that the Labour Party received from this cradle and citadel of the Labour Party of the past one of the greatest rebuffs ever received by a political party.

In our essay into politics we as a party did much better than the Labour Party did in its first essay into politics many years ago—from a standing start our party polled nearly 8,000 votes. That is something that gave the Labour Party a considerable amount of concern and is giving the Labour Party a considerable amount of concern today.

Unfortunately, I have not time to elaborate on all the points I have made, but as a genuine northerner who knows the northern people and who lives among the northern people, and who knows what the northern people want, I want to say that we are talking glibly about the defence of Northern Queensland. The northern people believe that defence, industry, and population go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other. The North needs industry and population, particularly that industry which gives economic security and a regular pay envelope to the workers, and which gives them an incentive to remain in the North. Population will follow and remain if the Government face up to their responsibilities and give to the people of Northern Queensland the

same educational, medical, and transport facilities as they lavishly provide for the people of their beloved Brisbane.

At the present time we are losing population. We cannot even hold the Baltic immigrant. As soon as the Balts' two-years contract is up they depart for the big cities because they also like to think that their children will get the same opportunities and chances in life as the children in other parts of the State. Unfortunately, the dice are loaded against the northern people to-day and those people who want to give their children a real chance in life have to come to Brisbane to live, or put their hands in their pockets in order to send their children to Brisbane. That is how the position rests with regard to Northern Queensland.

I did hope I should have something to say on Korea. I only want to say that Korea is a godsend to Fadden. Mr. Fadden will blame Korea for having fallen down on all his election promises last December. He promised to put the value back into the £ and reduce taxation. The Korean conflict has come to him as a godsend. I appeal to you, when you talk of Korea and the impending Formosan conflict, which must come, to look at every problem that confronts Australia from the viewpoint of Australia. Be 100 per cent. Australian, study the facts and make up your own mind on the facts as they present themselves to you. Ask yourselves not "What can we do for the sake of our own political party," but "What can we do to ensure that Australia will survive and the useful people will get everything they are entitled to." Let us remember that newspaper articles can be bought and sold on the open market. When we read provocative newspaper articles let us ask ourselves, "Was that newspaper article inspired?" and, if so, "How much money changed hands for the inspiration of it?" I wish I had time to develop that argument. If we can remain calm, let us study the facts and form our own opinions and do at all times all those things which are in the genuine interests of Australia and the useful people of Australia.

Before getting onto the real gravamen of my speech I want to deal with another statement of the hon. member for Chermiside, in which he dealt with the onus-of-proof clause in the Communist Party Dissolution Bill. He said, "I never heard so much bunk talked about it in all my life." If the Labour Senate and if the Federal Labour Party fall down on their job by not persisting with their amendments on this Bill, and force a double dissolution of both Federal Houses, then they won't be worth a dumper as true representatives of the people.

Let me read something about the onus of proof or averment clause that was said in this Chamber only as late as 1948. The statement was—

"It is sub-clause 4 to which I wish to draw the attention of hon. members generally because it contains a practice that can at the best be described as a most discreditable and disreputable practice in the history of our courts and the administra-

tion of our justice. It is the good old averment clause so beloved of those who prosecute citizens for offences. . . .

"It establishes the guilt of the defendant without giving him the opportunity of cross-examining the witnesses who are called against him. . . .

"It strikes at the very root, at the very foundation, of our system of justice, which is that the defendant is innocent until proved guilty. . . .

It is good enough for the criminal court and the Crown would not want to invert the onus of proof in a criminal trial."

Those words were spoken by Charlie Wanstall, a sound barrister and a prominent member of the Liberal Party. That is what Charlie Wanstall thinks of the onus-of-proof clause, and that is what I and every decent citizen thinks of the onus-of-proof clause that has been attempted to be placed in the Anti-Communist Bill by the Menzies-Fadden Government. I repeat that if the Labour Party fall down on its amendment of the onus-of-proof clause, it will not be worth a dumper.

Now I want to say this: we heard during this debate mention by the mover of the benefits bestowed on the country people, particularly the people in the area from which he and I come, by the establishment of a regional electricity board. Before the establishment of that board we had a fine electric undertaking in Townsville. Our service was efficient and our charges were moderate; and our electrical sales department was something of which any city would be proud. Then came the regional electricity board, and all that disappeared. The regional electricity board, which operates on Star Chamber principles and operates almost in secret has bumped up the charges, given us an inefficient supply of electricity, crippled the sales department, and placed a millstone of debt round the people's necks from which I doubt if those living at present will ever be free. If anyone wants to start a fight in Townsville or in the area represented by the hon. member for Haughton, let him stand up and try to extoll this monstrous thing—the Townsville Regional Electricity Board.

If a regional board is regarded by the Government as essential for the control and supply of electricity, why have not the Government constituted a regional electricity board for Brisbane? Why has it to be unloaded upon the unfortunate people of the country? Circumscribed as I am by time, I must make my remarks brief. At one time when I made a statement I was told that I should buttress it with documentary evidence, and I now do so. This is a statement from the "Ayr Advocate," which is published in the area in which the chairman of the shire council is the hon. member for Haughton. This is what the "Ayr Advocate" thinks of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. There is a big advertisement on the front page of the issue for June this year which reads as follows:—

"Wanted

"An Electric Power Station at Ayr.  
(For further Particulars apply to any Electricity Consumer.)

"It is not the practice to publish a 'Wanted' advertisement on the front page of a newspaper, but, in this instance, deviation from precedent is deemed warranted.

"Far too frequently, we have had to explain to subscribers and advertisers that late publication was due to electric power failure.

"At one time, this town obtained its electric light and power from private enterprise.

"The service was efficient and charges reasonable.

"Then came the Regional Electricity Board. We were promised better service and lower charges. Neither promise has been fulfilled.

"That is why a 'Wanted' advertisement is published above."

That is not the most serious point. I have a most serious charge to lay against the Townsville Regional Electricity Board, of which the hon. member for Haughton is a member. There has been in Townsville for some time a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the operations of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. There have been much speculation and comment and many ugly rumours, but as a public man I have learned to discount rumours and search for facts and truth. Early this year I was approached by a man named Forno. Because he happens to be a relative by marriage I had to be particularly careful. I am not responsible for the fact that he was a relative of mine by marriage any more than the Premier is responsible for the fact the chairman of the T.R.E.B. is a relative of his by marriage. Neither of us has any control over those things. Knowing my opponents and knowing the charges that may be laid against me, I was particularly careful to be sure of my facts before I made any charge.

I found to my astonishment that tenders were called early this year for 20,000 yards of filling for the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. It received several tenders—

	Per Yard.
	s. d.
Arndt .. .. .	.. 6 6
Miles .. .. .	.. 5 6
Threuf .. .. .	.. 5 3
Forno .. .. .	.. 4 9
Western Construction	.. 4 6

Western Construction's tender being accepted I will not go into all details, as I have not the time; the clock is against me. When it was known that Western Construction was leaving the town after falling down not only on this contract but on a harbour-board contract Forno went to the manager of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board and said, "If Western Construction are going to fall down on that contract I am prepared to do it on my tender. I will give you a letter to that effect." The manager said, "I do not want a letter. I will spring it on the board at the next meeting." At the February meeting of the board—the full board—at which Mr. S. F. Cochran was

present, he being the chairman of the State Electricity Commission, they were notified that Western Construction had fallen down on the job. Their money was estreated. The board then started to talk among themselves whether Forno would take the job on at the 4s. 9d. a yard, that being the next lowest tender. The manager knew Forno would take it because Forno had told him, but presumably because he had been instructed he kept his mouth shut, he said nothing about it. Hon. members should listen to these amazing circumstances. The board then decided unanimously at the February meeting to write Forno and ask him would he accept the contract at his tender price of 4s. 9d. a yard. Forno wrote back and said that he would accept the contract at his tender price of 4s. 9d. a yard. He later went into the board's office and signed all the relevant papers except the actual contract itself.

At the March meeting of the Board, when Sam Cochran was not present, three members of the board, the hon. member for Haughton, Mr. Kelly, and an elderly chap named Kelso, decided that the offer of Forno was not an offer at all. They backed and filled and they decided to call fresh tenders—knowing Forno's price was 4s. 9d. a yard. A remarkable development occurred. Arndt, the man who had previously tendered at 6s. 6d. a yard, a drop of £2,000 on his previous tender. Forno was tied to 4s. 9d. a yard. Miles tendered 5s. a yard. The board accepted Arndt's tender. Then it became apparent Western Construction had blown back into town and they were preparing to assist or carry out the tender that had been given to Arndt, the tender they themselves had dropped at the February meeting.

When this was brought to me I wrote to the Minister for Labour and Industry, thinking he was in charge of the electricity affairs of this State, as he was in the last Government. I subsequently found that the Hon. W. Power was the Secretary for Mines and in charge of electricity matters. I received a long letter from the Minister and from the Chairman of the State Electricity Commission. I was not satisfied and I did what any ordinary citizen would do. I went to the Regional Electricity Board's office in Townsville and asked the secretary, Mr. Coghlan, to allow me to peruse the minute book and the relevant documents. At all times I asked for nothing more than a full inquiry. No-one can suggest that I was pushing Forno's barrow; I was particularly careful not to do so. I asked for a full inquiry. The secretary of the board said, "You can have a look at the books so far as I am concerned, Mr. Aikens. My hands are clean, but we will have to ask the manager." We went to the manager's office and I asked him. The manager said, "We have to get in touch with the chairman, Mr. Kelly." He said, "I will have word back in a couple of hours." Then I set a simple trap for the Secretary for Mines and Electricity.

**Mr. Power:** He didn't fall in.

**Mr. AIKENS:** He fell in, boots and all. I said to the manager, "Look, I cannot come back this afternoon. I will not be back until Wednesday." I went straight home and wrote a simple little innocent, air-mail letter to the Minister telling him I had been in to see the books and documents and also that if the chairman had nothing to hide he would let me see them. I waited until Wednesday. The Minister got my letter on the Tuesday and he wired the chairman urgently on Tuesday to refuse Aikens permission to see the books and documents.

**Mr. Power** interjected.

**Mr. AIKENS:** He fell into the trap. Here are the documents, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have not time to read them all. Here they are available for perusal and I have even got the letter from the manager of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board informing me that the Minister had instructed the chairman to refuse me permission to see the books and the documents.

Listen to this—no, I have not got the time to read the letter I wrote to the Minister. I placed the whole matter before the Premier and I thought that even if he is not an honest man he is a very astute one. I placed the whole matter before the Premier, asking him to suspend the Minister—

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr. Mann): Order! I warn the hon. member for Mundingburra that he is getting very close to imputing improper motives by saying that the Premier is not an honest man.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I did not say that. I said that if he is not an honest man he is at least an astute one and there is no imputation in that remark. I asked the Premier to suspend the Minister and grant me an inquiry himself. The Premier laughs but I will tell hon. members what the Premier did. He got the secretary and the manager down to Brisbane and he held an inquiry sub rosa—under the cushion—and Arndt was forced to withdraw his tender and the manager was told to resign—or else. The manager has resigned, Arndt has withdrawn his tender, and the Premier has offered me the burnt sacrifice in the person of the manager—

**Mr. Hanlon:** I would not know the manager.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Pure bunk! You cannot tell me that. As I said, an inquiry was held under the cushion and Arndt's tender withdrawn and the manager resigned under pressure and the Government hope that the people of Townsville will let this odoriferous thing lie. I believe that the Government are not game and have not got the guts to hold the public inquiry, and that is all I want. I want a public inquiry so that the people of Townsville and the Townsville Regional Electricity Board area will know on whom to apportion blame. I believe that the blame has been incorrectly apportioned and we shall find that

the unfortunate manager has simply been the instrument in the hands of the hon. member for Haughton and Mr. Kelly, the chairman—

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark—the imputing of improper motives to the hon. member for Haughton.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If I have imputed anything to warrant it I will withdraw it.

We want a public inquiry because the affairs of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board stink and everyone in Townsville knows they stink and the mere fact that Arndt's tender has been withdrawn and the manager has been sacked will not satisfy the people of Townsville who are already groaning under the burden of debt imposed upon them by the formation of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. They have seen one of the finest little electric-light authorities gobbled up by the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. The Townsville people saw £500,000 worth of their assets taken over and have had their charges increased since that monstrous thing near the jetty started four years ago and is not finished yet—and God knows when it will be finished. They do not know whether it will be completed in their children's lifetime or their children's children's time and whether they will be able to pay for it.

Apart from this case the general conduct and control of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board, screams loud for a public investigation. Is it not a serious matter that the chief administrative officer of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board was called to Brisbane as a result of a complaint I made, and forced to resign? Is not that a serious matter? If it is not a serious matter then I should like to know what the Government regard as being a serious matter and on behalf of the people of Townsville and on behalf of the people who are served—rather inadequately and expensively served—by this extravagant monstrosity known as the Townsville Regional Board I again make my claim in this House. I pledge to make available to any hon. member who cares to read them all the documents in connection with the shocking case, and I again urge the Premier, in the interests of ordinary honesty, justice, decency and cleanliness, to give us the full inquiry I have demanded on their behalf. If he will not give us a full public inquiry, then I have the right to ask him what he has to hide.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Who eventually got the tender?

**Mr. AIKENS:** The tender was relatively unimportant, it was nothing. It was merely an indication of how things were going. The tender is a matter of relative unimportance. I merely quoted that to show how things were being conducted "under the cushion" up there.

(Time expired.)

Debate, on motion of Mr. Power, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.17 p.m.