

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1950

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Mann, Brisbane) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

ERASURES FROM ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. BROWN (Buranda) asked the Premier—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the fact that representatives of certain organisations are visiting people in the suburbs of Brisbane with a view to reporting to the electoral authorities that some people should be crossed off the roll?"

"2. Are any of these people employed by the State Electoral Office, and, if so, how many are employed on such work and in what districts?"

"3. Does he know that quite a number of people, including old people, are receiving notifications intimating that an objection has been received against their appearance on the roll and asking them to show cause why their name should not be erased from such roll?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"1. I have ascertained that Roll Review Officers, employed on contract by the Commonwealth Electoral Department, are at present checking the Commonwealth electoral rolls covering the metropolitan area. It is understood that these officers are required to report the names of persons who are found not to be enrolled for their present addresses as well as those who are not living at the addresses for which they are enrolled. As these officers are supplied with a card of authority, electors would be well advised to ask to see the authority of the caller before giving the information sought.

"2. No such officers are employed by the State Electoral Office, as the checking of the State rolls is carried out from time to time most efficiently by uniformed officers of the police force.

"3. I am not aware that electors entitled to remain enrolled are receiving notices of objection to their enrolment, but it is recommended to any person receiving such a notice to reply to the objection so that his name will not be struck out of the roll."

MILK FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

"Has the State Government been requested to co-operate in a Commonwealth scheme to provide free fresh or powdered milk for school children? If so, what reply has been made?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"The proposed scheme for the supply of free milk to school children was discussed at the recent Premiers' Conference. It

was the opinion of the State Premiers that whilst the scheme had merit, it was a Commonwealth scheme and, therefore, the Commonwealth should bear all costs in connection with its implementation and operation. The Prime Minister thereupon stated that the contention of the State Premiers would be considered by the Commonwealth Cabinet. The decision of the Commonwealth Government in regard to this matter is now awaited."

OVERTIME, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

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

"What was the total cost of overtime in the Railway Department for 1946-47, 1947-48, and 1948-49, respectively?"

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

"1946-7, £428,812; 1947-8, £460,591; 1948-9, £900,719."

TOWNSVILLE-GIRU ROAD.

Mr. McCATHIE (Haughton) asked the Treasurer—

"With respect to my recent representations in re the road through the Gap on the proposed route between Giru and Townsville and his reply thereto, would he now indicate—

"1. If a survey has been commenced by the Main Roads Commission of this route?"

"2. If the survey is not in progress could he indicate when it is likely to be commenced?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. The surveyor engaged on the work had to be withdrawn some time ago, but instructions were recently issued for the survey to be completed."

TIMBER ON ENOGGERA CATCHMENT AREA.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"1. With regard to a letter (Reference R.309, Enoggera B) forwarded by the Secretary, Sub-Department of Forestry, to Mr. Thorpe, Ferny Grove, on 29 August, 1950, relating to standing pine timber on the Enoggera Reservoir Catchment Area, will he indicate the quantity of pine over 72 inches girth considered to be on that area, taking into consideration the fact that I have a report from an experienced timber assessor that the area contains approximately 15 million super. feet of over-girth pine, very readily accessible, and, in addition, a considerable quantity of crow's ash, tallowwood, ironbark, &c.?"

"2. If this timber were collected and milled, does he consider that this site would be an excellent one for a reforestation scheme for the extension of new pine forests?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando) replied—

"1. Departmental estimate is 16,000 superficial feet of scattered pine over 72-inch girth. The figure of 15,000,000 superficial feet quoted by the hon. member is grossly inaccurate.

"2. No. This area is not a pine planting proposition, for two reasons, first that the area suitable for planting is too limited, second that the clean felling involved in planting would result in temporary pollution and some siltation of the Enoggera Reservoir. The State Forest is mainly of value for hardwood production, and a gang is employed on the reserve treating it for the promotion of growth, quality, and regeneration of hardwoods. For the information of the hon. member this area was originally a water reserve under the control of the Brisbane City Council, which consented to its reservation as State Forest conditionally that operations likely to result in pollution of water supply would not be allowed. The hon. member will recognise the importance of this proviso. Recently the matter of timber sales on the reserve was discussed between Council and Forestry Officers and it was agreed that no further sales would be made for twelve (12) months when the matter will be further discussed."

FREE BUS TRAVEL, TOWNSVILLE SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. Is it a fact that the Commonwealth Government provides free bus transport for Balt and other alien children from the Immigration Housing Camp at Stuart who attend Townsville State schools?

"2. If so, will he provide free transport for Australian children who are compelled to travel by bus to attend State schools in Townsville?"

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory) replied—

"1. It is understood that such transport has been provided by the Commonwealth Government.

"2. The Queensland Government already provides, under prescribed conditions, free road transport to and from the nearest existing State school for all primary school pupils desirous of attending such State school and residing more than three (3) miles therefrom."

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

DATE OF PRESENTATION.

Mr. KERR (Sherwood): Mr. Speaker, will you inform hon. members when the Auditor-General's report will be ready for presentation to this House?

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that the report will be ready for presentation to Parliament on Thursday week.

PAPER.

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

Report of the Public Service Superannuation Board for the year 1949-1950.

DEATH OF MR. S. THEODORE.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (11.17 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Stephen Theodore, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

"2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the widow and family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained."

Mr. Theodore was elected to the 28th Parliament as member for Herbert, succeeding Percy Pease, on 9 November, 1940, but as that Parliament was dissolved on 28 February, 1941, Mr. Theodore did not sit in it. He was elected for Herbert in the next Parliament and continued as member for that district until the end of the 31st Parliament on 27 March, 1950, when he retired on account of ill-health.

The late Mr. Theodore, Mr. Speaker, during the nearly 10 years he sat in this Chamber, became, I think, not only respected but affectionately regarded by the members of this House.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HANLON: He was one of those men who, during their time in this House, while fearlessly putting the case for the political party they support and of which they are members, never say an offensive word to any member of this House. He was one of the kindest souls we ever had here and I am sure he held the respect and regard of every member of it. He was very affectionately regarded by members of the Labour Party who, of course, were more closely in touch with him than the Opposition. He was a very valuable man in the party; he was always in his place and prepared to give his views on any subject that came before us. While he was forthright in his ideas, he had a very natural courtesy and the kindness of nature that made him appreciated by every member of the House.

Mr. Theodore's thoughtfulness for other members and their feelings was remarkable. He never allowed himself—as most of us do when we get heated—to say things that perhaps would be better left unsaid. Stephen Theodore was one of those charming personalities that are perhaps only too few in our legislative bodies. I personally regret his loss to the party and to the Parliament of Queensland. When he realised that his health was failing he wrote to me and

suggested that since he would not be able to do justice to an election campaign it would be better if he retired from the field. That was typical of Steve Theodore's outlook. At that time I doubt whether he had any idea that his life was going to be so short. He simply felt that he could not do justice to the party in an election campaign and preferred retiring from politics altogether to taking part in it under such circumstances.

I am sure I express the feelings of every member when I say that we deeply regret his loss to Parliament and to this State.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.20 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I regret the circumstances of having to second the motion moved by the Premier and desire to associate every member of the Opposition with the hon. gentleman's remarks. All of us who had the privilege of knowing the late Steve Theodore appreciated his friendliness, his kindly nature, and the valuable work that he did in this Chamber. It can truthfully be said that Mr. Theodore earned the title of one of nature's gentlemen. He was a particularly hard worker in the discharge of his Parliamentary duties and concentrated most of his attention on problems associated with the sugar industry.

I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Theodore many years before he came to this House. We worked together in the interests of the early organisation of the fruit industry when he grew bananas on the slope of the Buderim Mountains. The hard work that he put into it on the problems that he tackled was indicative of the way in which he accepted all his responsibilities. I think all hon. members will agree that all his speeches in this House were marked by great sincerity. He had a very temperate approach to all the problems on which he spoke and, as the Premier has said, he never had a harsh word to say about anybody, irrespective of how he might have been provoked in the heat of debate. He was one of the most even-tempered men this House has seen in the time I have been here, and this House and the State have certainly lost a very valuable member and citizen in the passing of the late Steve Theodore. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing him valued his friendship. We have lost a great friend whose qualities were appreciated.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (11.23 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in expressing my sincere regret at the death of Stephen Theodore yesterday morning? He was a man who had excellent ideas and a great respect for his fellow men; he was a man who could not think ill of any man. On a recent visit to Tully I visited him and asked if it was possible to convey to the members of this House any wishes he might have. He told me to give to each and every member both on the Government and Opposition benches his very kind regards. He was delighted when I told

him of little incidents that had occurred. I can assure hon. members that Mr. Theodore had a very high regard for them all and his passing will leave a deep void in that part of North Queensland for which he worked for so very many years.

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

TULLY FALLS HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the chair.)

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (11.26 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to authorise and provide for the construction, maintenance and utilisation of a hydro-electric project in the vicinity of the Tully Falls for the purpose of securing increased supplies of electricity for the further development of Northern Queensland, and for purposes incidental thereto or connected therewith.”

The purpose of the Bill is to authorise the construction of this undertaking. The whole matter has been carefully surveyed and such things as the flow of water in the storage area, the annual rainfall and things of that kind have all been considered, and it has been decided that the scheme is perfectly sound economically. Of course, as a capital work it will receive assistance from the State Government. We have submitted the matter to the Commonwealth Government, asking them to provide a subsidy for the undertaking, not on the ground that it is a completely economic undertaking but on the ground that it is desirable in the interests of the settlement and industrial development in the North that electrical power should be made as cheap as possible in that area. It is hoped that the Commonwealth will give the same assistance as the State and if it does the Cairns region will have electric supply at a cheaper rate than in any other part of the State. This is desirable in the interests of industrial development in the North. The undertaking will supply the electrical energy that is essential for comfortable household work and living in the tropics.

One reply I got from officers investigating the scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth Government was that they would not recommend it for a Commonwealth subsidy because it was a sound economic scheme. That rather made me laugh because when we asked for a subsidy for the Burdekin it was refused on the ground that it was not a sound economic scheme. If we could shift the Tully River down into Victoria for a period we should undoubtedly get the job done.

Mr. Aikens: If you shifted it to Brisbane, that would be far enough.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member may have that opinion but Brisbane people have the idea that they are not receiving any

better deal from the Commonwealth Government than the rest of Queensland. It is quite obvious to any unbiased person and one who is not parochially-minded, that the whole of the State must be affected by any act of the Commonwealth Government in relation to subsidies or expenditure in Queensland. It is worthy of note that if anything is done by the Commonwealth Government or neglected to be done by the Commonwealth Government for the defence of the northern part of this continent, it affects not only North Queensland but the whole of Australia. It affects Sydney and Melbourne just as much as any other part of Australia. It is rather a pity that the possibility of immediate financial returns to people and companies rather clouds their outlook on these matters, and that they are more concerned with immediate returns to themselves or their own particular undertakings than they are with the future safeguarding of this continent. We have to meet and overcome such an attitude. To the best of our ability, we must try to convince the Commonwealth people that their only safety lies in developing and populating not only North Queensland, but the whole of North Australia. The developing and populating of that part of the country is essential to the safety of the people of Sydney and Melbourne; only a fool would think otherwise. Some people are inclined to concentrate too much on their own immediate advantage in any undertaking and are blind to their long-term safety. They are averse to planning years ahead if they cannot see any prospect of some immediate gain.

I discussed this matter with the Federal Government 18 years ago and have done so every year since then, and just before the outbreak of World War II. I received a letter from Mr. Casey, who was then Federal Treasurer—I have it in my office now—in which he pointed out that the Federal Government would not give us any aid in the building of a railway line to link Dajarra with Darwin because of the urgency of defence works in the South.

An Opposition Member: What did Chifley do when you asked him?

Mr. HANLON: He simply said he could not do it. By that time the Japs were at our door, and Menzies and Fadden had cleared out. It was impossible to build railways in the short time that was then available, and we had to concentrate on roads. We had been refused aid for a defence road to the North inside the range, and this State was going on with that job itself when the Curtin Government came into power and gave us some aid. We were already getting on with the defence of the Commonwealth at the expense of the people of Queensland. It was not until the Japs were threatening the people in the South that they became conscious of the necessity to do something in North Queensland. However, the existing threat to the safety of the democracies will surely once again bring to the minds of the people in the South the necessity to develop the North. I am still counting on the Federal authorities to take a common-sense,

long-term view of the safety of this country and give some aid in the development of North Queensland. I am not in the least ashamed of asking the Commonwealth to put something from their defence funds into North Queensland and North Australian undertakings. I am not asking it for North Queensland alone; it is the North of Australia as a whole that is threatened. I am not behindhand in asking the Commonwealth Government to put some expenditure into North Queensland when we realise that £200,000,000 is to be spent out of defence moneys by the Commonwealth Government on the Snowy River scheme on the ground that it is a defence undertaking.

Mr. Nicklin: Who started the Snowy River scheme?

Mr. HANLON: The previous Government, but it is still going on. That is the outlook in the South. However, I will say this for the previous Prime Minister: he gave us an assurance that he would help these undertakings in North Queensland.

Mr. Evans: He attacked the Government last night on defence expenditure.

Mr. HANLON: That may be. He may not be averse to attacking defence expenditure.

I do not agree with expenditure that is designed to keep the penguins from pecking at the ankles of people in the South whilst the North is being left open.

I am making the same charges now as I have made every year since I have been in Parliament—certainly since I have been a Minister, for the last 18 years. We see the danger to the North. As I said repeatedly before World War II, we have no justification for holding this great continent empty whilst thousands of millions of people are short of land on which to grow the necessaries of life. As a matter of fact, we shall not be allowed to hold it empty. Only fools would think that we could hold this great continent empty as it is.

These defence measures down round the south-eastern corner of the continent, where there is the bulk of the representation in the Federal Parliament, are rather laughable when you consider the reluctance on the part of the Federal Government to do anything worth while in North Australia. I am complaining just as much about the lack of interest by the Federal Government in North and West Australia as I am about North Queensland, but of course North Queensland is my particular responsibility. However, the whole of North Australia is involved and unless it is developed we shall be paying a terrible price for the neglect, a price we nearly had to pay a few years ago. If this country has to pay that price it is not going to be the fault of the people of Queensland. They are willing that this developmental work should be done, and this is one proposal that will enable industries to be established up there.

I get awfully tired of listening to people asking us to send population to the North. You do not send population anywhere;

population goes to where there are means of living. For instance, you cannot send a mass of people to live in some town or some area in the North, but the people will follow where there are means of livelihood. In order to create the population you must first of all create the industries, and this is one undertaking that will help to create them. Where you have cheap power you have the possibility of establishing industries.

Mr. Pie: Not only cheap power, although that is a basic principle.

Mr. HANLON: That is exactly what I said. All industrial development has taken place where you have ample, cheap power in the form of coal or electricity or in any other form. Where there is cheap natural power, development will take place, and if we want to see industrial development take place in the North we must provide that power. The whole of the output of the big Mt. Isa Company goes away from Queensland to be treated elsewhere because electricity in the northern part of the State is too dear for this purpose. The lead and silver goes to England, and zinc concentrates to Tasmania. If we had cheap electric power in the North made available by hydro-electric undertakings there, the whole of the output of the Mt. Isa Company would be treated in the North. One of the persons who urged the production of hydro-electric power in North Queensland was the general manager himself of the Mt. Isa undertaking. We are quite confident that if we can supply that electric power the whole of the output of the company will be treated in North Queensland and a permanent industry established.

I recommend the Bill to the Committee. It will be an interesting one to study. I propose to bring the debate to the first-reading stage and then allow a reasonable period of time in which hon. members may study the Bill before going on to the next stage.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.38 a.m.): This being the first opportunity I have had of speaking in Committee since your appointment as Chairman of Committees of the whole House, Mr. Farrell, I desire to congratulate you on your appointment and wish you well during your term of office.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN: The Premier, in introducing the measure, said that it was an interesting one. It is an interesting one and it raises a very interesting point. The Premier endeavoured to concentrate the whole of the attention of the people of Queensland and Australia on his contention that this project had not been built long ago because of the alleged shortcomings of the Commonwealth Government. Let us examine that point and see whether his Government have any responsibility in this matter or whether this present Government and previous Labour Governments have had any responsibility in this matter. I say very definitely they have.

This is a project which has been investigated and looked into by committee after

committee for years. Its economics have been known to be sound for years and have been recognised by his Government but right up to the present day nothing whatever has been done to put this very desirable project in train. For the last 24 years Labour in this State has been talking about the Tully Falls but nothing beyond investigations, instructions, blue-prints, etc., etc., have resulted up to the present time. This project has been tossed backwards and forwards from this one to the other one for so long that the people of North Queensland, who have realised the possibilities of the Tully Falls for many years, have been wondering whether they could get anything done in the matter by the present Government, and whether this Government would ever take their attention away from the south-east corner of the State and do something for the much-neglected North.

In 1946 we find in the then policy speech of Labour's Premier, the late Mr. McCormack:—

"I am convinced that great economic advantages will accrue from the proposed harnessing of the Barron Falls and a similar development at the Tully Falls. The Government will endeavour to bring these schemes to fruition without delay."

Without delay! That was in 1926. There have been a few slight delays in the period of 24 years that have elapsed since then. What has the Labour Party been doing in that period in an endeavour to make its Governments stand up to their responsibilities? It was not until there was some little representation from this side of the Chamber about the North that the Government at last wakened up and endeavoured to do something to combat the clamour. Notwithstanding the fact that this scheme was referred to in Labour's policy speech in 1926 and again in 1929 nothing was done.

Labour was defeated at the polls in 1929 and it was not until the much-maligned Moore Government took over the reins of office in this Chamber that anything was done about the Barron Falls and Tully Falls schemes. We find that the Moore Government, among other things, gave the necessary guarantee for the construction of the Barron Falls scheme by a joint local-authority board. They did not talk; they did something. (Government interjections.) Those are the facts and hon. members opposite cannot deny them.

The Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme was not revived again, after being forgotten by the Labour Governments from 1926 until 1944 when we find reference to it in the report of the State Electricity Commission. Expert committees were set up to investigate the possibilities of the Tully Falls and the reports of these committees were transmitted to the Premier and his Government. But these reports, instead of being acted on by the Government—after all, they were reports by experts, who were asked to make them—were referred by the Government to the Co-ordinator-General for Public Works for further consideration and report. Dilly-dallying all the time! The history of the

Tully Falls project discloses that there has been dilly-dallying all the time so far as the present Government are concerned. They have talked a lot about doing something but it is not until now that they have actually done something, which we are now being asked to consider.

I can quote instance after instance in which this matter has been referred to committee after committee. Instead of taking real positive action, the Government have done nothing but continue to talk about it and abuse somebody else for not doing something that they ought to be doing themselves. In November last year this scheme was submitted to Cabinet, after all those multitudinous investigations, and the Acting Premier, Mr. Gair, said that the State Electricity Commission had recommended that the Commonwealth should be asked to contribute one-third of the capital cost and had urged that the State Government begin the project soon to meet the demand for electricity by northern consumers; that Cabinet had considered the commission's report on the scheme and decided to pass it to the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for his recommendation. What did Cabinet do? Notwithstanding the fact that they had reports that were complete and fully documented, they referred those reports to the Co-ordinator-General for further consideration and report, notwithstanding the fact that the Co-ordinator-General at that time was snowed under with works referred to him and responsibilities that had been placed upon him.

There is no doubt in the minds of hon. members on this side of the Chamber at least that from the State and the national point of view the Tully River Falls scheme is very important, and it is most necessary that immediate action should be taken to do something towards the construction of the works along the lines laid down in the reports of those experts. We are fed up to the back teeth with the continual backing and filling of the Government in regard to their responsibilities, and the lack of action in carrying out important projects like the Tully River Falls scheme. We appreciate the great need there is to give the area that will be served by the Tully Falls scheme cheap power and plenty of it, just as we appreciate the need to give that power to all parts of the State where it is possible to do so. Instead of talk about this desirable objective, we desire to see some action on the part of the Government.

The Premier said that there had been careful surveys of this scheme. There have been very careful surveys over a number of years. That is very desirable in the consideration of any scheme, particularly a scheme of any magnitude. It is, however, notable that there is a marked difference between the Government's approach to this scheme and their approach to the Burdekin Dam scheme. Most intensive reports have been obtained on this scheme before anything has been done about it, but in the Burdekin scheme the Government dashed in with their ears back, on very sketchy investigations of the whole possibilities and the

economics of the proposal. As a result we have presented to us a half-baked scheme in regard to the Burdekin Dam. Fortunately, this Tully Falls scheme has been soundly investigated, and hon. members have had an opportunity of perusing the various reports that have been submitted by the expert committees to which I referred and of judging the value of their recommendations.

There is no doubt this scheme will be of considerable benefit to the area served by the Tully Falls. It is strategically placed and it is situated in very close proximity to existing power lines. It will not be expensive to tie up the power grids serving the coastal and inland areas of North Queensland. It is not so far distant from the great northern city of Townsville as to preclude a tie-up with the northern network served by the Townsville Regional Board in order to use any surplus power that may be generated. This will bring about the link that is desirable between the various electricity grids of the northern parts of the State.

The Premier and in fact all hon. members are desirous that the Commonwealth Government should recognise the value of this project and help it financially from two points of view, namely, that it will add to production and be a very valuable defence work in the northern part of Australia. But, Mr. Farrell, I would suggest to the Premier that the way to get Commonwealth assistance is not by engaging in carping criticism of the Commonwealth Government at every opportunity, such as the hon. gentleman engaged in in this Chamber this morning and such as he never loses the opportunity to engage in and in the manner in which he behaved at the recent Premier's Conference in Canberra. No Government are likely to regard any project favourably if they are blackguarded uphill and down dale, as the present Commonwealth Government are by the Premier and hon. members behind him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman is not going to develop that argument.

Mr. NICKLIN: I intend to develop it, Mr. Farrell. The Premier criticised the Federal Government and I intend to answer his criticism.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will not be too long.

Mr. NICKLIN: I will not be too long, Mr. Farrell. The Premier took up a considerable amount of his time this morning in criticising the action of the Commonwealth Government in regard to the Snowy River scheme and said something about the people in the south having their ankles pecked by penguins.

Mr. Hanlon: I never opposed the Snowy River scheme at the Premier's Conference, but do not forget the North.

Mr. NICKLIN: That is what I am not going to do; I emphasise that, "Don't

forget the North." But do not let us forget that the Snowy River scheme was not started by the present Federal Government but by their predecessors, the Federal Labour Government, and the present Government are accepting their responsibility in carrying on something that was sponsored by their predecessors.

Mr. Hanlon: I do not object to their carrying it on.

Mr. NICKLIN: I believe that if the Federal Government are properly, reasonably and temperately approached, they will get right behind the Tully Falls scheme, because it has everything that is necessary to justify the support of any reasonable Government; and admittedly the present Federal Government are a reasonable Government.

But now let me get back to the point, "Don't forget the North." We want to see the northern part of Queensland and of Australia developed so that it can be properly defended and when the Premier talks about penguins I would recall his mind to the fact that it is not so very many years ago that he was prepared to sit a potential enemy right on the top of Queensland—he was going to give away New Guinea. What about the North then?

Mr. Hanlon: I would sooner have white people there than the Japs.

Mr. NICKLIN: Hitler would have been as dangerous, as he was an ally of the Japs.

Mr. Hanlon: Not at that time.

Mr. NICKLIN: There are other things to be considered when talking about the defence of the North. I do not intend to say much about the scheme at present. We on this side of the Committee are 100 per cent. behind the development of the Tully Falls project, because it has everything that makes it desirable, and should be constructed as early as possible. That it is a sound economic undertaking has been proved by the reports we have before us and if it will supply cheap power to the vital North of this State and this continent, it will bring about an increase in population and thereby give us the most necessary requirement in adequately defending Australia. We must see to the peopling of our empty spaces. The only complaint I have is that it has taken so long for the project to be put into effect. If it had been begun when the Labour Party said that it would start it away back in 1926 we should have had the Tully Falls project constructed at possibly one-third of what it will cost to-day and we should have enjoyed for many years the benefits that must accrue from such a work.

Mr. Devries: The cost factor can be applied in many instances.

Mr. NICKLIN: Of course.

I conclude by offering a word of advice to the Premier. If he wants co-operation from the Commonwealth Government and the aid from that Government that is so necessary and desirable in this project, he might

change the attitude he is adopting towards them and not resort to abuse of them at every opportunity, as he does at present.

Mr. MORRIS (Mount Coot-tha) (11.58 a.m.): Because I have been very interested in the Tully River project for some time I was anxious to hear the introduction of the Bill this morning. I agree 100 per cent. with the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition that the project is a very desirable one and one that will be of great help to North Queensland and that it should be proceeded with at the earliest opportunity. I regret, as the Leader of the Opposition also said, that it has taken a Labour Government in Queensland 24 years from the time the scheme was originated to reach this stage, which, when all is said and done, is not one whit further ahead in a practical sense. There has been a tragic waste of time in putting the scheme into operation, and I cannot understand why a Government who pretend to have the interests of the State at heart could have allowed that time to elapse before beginning anything really constructive.

I listened with great care to the introductory remarks of the Premier this morning and was amazed that he gave so little information of the actual scheme to the Committee. Virtually the whole of his time was spent in castigating the Federal Government. We have heard that same old story time and time again, and I intend to refer to it in some detail at a later stage. We wanted to hear about the scheme for which this Bill is being introduced. We have heard not one word of it. It seems to me that whenever the Premier has to deal with a project in Queensland that will not be successful, he goes into flowery eloquence in describing its supposed merits. But at last, when he has something decent to sell, he does nothing to—

Mr. Hanlon: I thought you knew all about it. You have just told us how impressed you were with it.

Mr. MORRIS: After the number of fiascos that have been foisted on the suffering people of Queensland over the last few years by the Premier and his Government, it is indeed refreshing at last to have a scheme put forward that is basically sound.

One comment I should like to make about the development of the Tully Falls deals with the Report on the Development of the Tully Falls for Hydro-electricity purposes that was submitted by the State Electricity Commission in 1949. I have read the report with great interest, and I have never seen another report that is as informative as it is. I take it that the principal officer responsible for its compilation was Mr. Cochran and I feel that we are very much indebted to him because it gives us an opportunity of studying the background of this scheme.

My reasons for believing that the development of the Tully Falls is very desirable are, first of all, that I think it gives us a basis for a complete electric grid in North Queensland, which alone is very desirable,

particularly as it will give cheap electricity throughout the whole area; secondly, when it is put into operation it will save huge quantities of coal that would otherwise be used in producing electric power and for similar purposes.

I should like to deal with those statements in a little more detail. On page 6 of the report appears a careful analysis of the estimates of future electricity demands in the North, and it is estimated that in the period 1950-55 there will be an increase of 16 per cent. in the annual load for that area. The percentage increases for the next three periods of five years each are respectively 12, 6 and 5. Later on the report points out that this is a conservative estimate of the increase that will take place in the North, and my opinion is that it is exceedingly conservative, because from a later passage in the report, in dealing with the development of electricity demands in other countries, it appears that New Zealand uses the figure of 9 per cent., which I think is nearer to the mark when we are considering North Queensland. Brisbane's average rate of increase has been 8 per cent., but it is much more developed than the North. I think the figure of 8 per cent. would be nearer the mark when considering the North and that the estimate of 5 per cent. is much too low.

Dealing with the cost of providing electricity, I think that the cheapest electricity it is possible to provide is hydro-electric power when it is used in conjunction with irrigation. I have come to that conclusion as the result of the study of figures that I have been able to obtain from the South and from other places. The next cheapest power is that produced by ordinary hydro-electric schemes, such as the Tully Falls scheme is proposed to be. When we study the figures and find that when this scheme comes into operation it will be possible to generate power for as little as slightly more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a unit, we can realise that the North will be served with electric power much more economically than at present. Even with the best means of production in operation at the present time the cost of generating electricity with coal ranges from 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. down to 1d. a unit.

The Leader of the Opposition made reference to the fact that much delay had occurred in the implementation of this scheme and again I would remind the Chamber that this report points to the fact that had the scheme been put into operation when it was first conceived 24 years ago there would have been an enormous saving in the installation of diesel plant for the generation of electricity in the North. There again we have an instance of the failure of the Labour Government over the past 24 years, one that has cost the State hundreds of thousands of pounds. If the scheme had been put into operation years ago much of the installation of diesel plant could have been avoided. The report also suggests that in order to provide for a full electric grid for North Queensland there should be a system of inter-connection of electricity produced from various sources. That idea too was conceived many years ago. It has

been in operation in England and is now being developed very extensively in Victoria. It is an ideal method of providing electric power.

Mr. Hanlon: It has been in operation in Brisbane for years.

Mr. MORRIS: Yes, and it should have been in operation in an infinitely more extensive way in North Queensland than it is at the present time. For instance, there are many sugar mills in the North that are capable of playing a part in this inter-connection system but because it was not done their surplus power has been wasted. For instance, even at Mackay only two of the seven sugar mills are connected under this system, yet by the use of their surplus energy they are able to produce electric power at .7d. a unit. It is no use realising the value of the system and putting it into operation in Brisbane alone, where the Premier says it has existed for some years, and not putting it into operation in the North, where there is an urgent need and demand for cheap power for industrial development. Evidently the Premier realises the need for such a scheme and I want to know why the Government have not converted their knowledge into some practical action in this respect, and in particular I want to know why all the sugar mills in North Queensland have not been brought under this inter-connection system so as to help in providing cheap power for industrial purposes.

Mr. Hanlon: You had better ask Mr. Ian Wood why he has not done it in Mackay.

Mr. MORRIS: The Premier has had years in which to provide these opportunities in the North and has failed to take advantage of them. The attitude of the Premier is typical of the Socialists—if they have failed to do something themselves they blame someone else. They never seem to realise that they themselves are to blame for failing to bring something into operation so they look for a means of escape. They have not got the initiative, the foresight and the vision to develop the State as it should be developed. I give the Premier credit for having studied the development of electric power in the other States of Australia, particularly Victoria, and if he had demonstrated the vision and forethought displayed in Victoria and other parts of Australia in the matter of electric development we should have had an infinitely more progressive electric system in Queensland than we have today. The system in Victoria is infinitely more progressive. You have only to go to Victoria to see how natural water resources and hydro-electric power are being developed to realise that they have been harnessed in a way that has not been thought of by these Queensland Socialists. (Government laughter.)

There is much similarity between the Tully Falls scheme and the Kiewa scheme in Victoria. I have a pamphlet in my hand relating to the Kiewa project. I have found

it of very great interest and if anyone wants to have a look at it he may do so. The water power at Kiewa is being harnessed and six turbines have been installed to produce in all 1,000,000,000 kilowatts of electricity. The Tully Falls scheme will have three power stations, which will produce 325,000,000 kilowatts of electricity, and the capital cost is estimated at £12,000,000. If we compare one with the other we find that to produce 1,000,000,000 kilowatts of electricity at Kiewa requires a capital cost of £25,000,000 and that of the Tully Falls scheme, which will produce 325,000,000 kilowatts of electricity—considerably under half the quantity—is about the same, for it is about half the cost of the other scheme. I should say that the two schemes are very similar in that regard. The Kiewa scheme had a head of 4,200 feet while that of the Tully Falls scheme is estimated at 1,480 feet. Therefore, from all points of view, they can be related very closely. That brings me to this point: the Premier said that if only we could shift the Tully Falls scheme to Victoria we could have it built by Commonwealth aid. I should like to point out to the Premier and this Committee that the Kiewa scheme was developed entirely by the Government of Victoria, without the aid of Commonwealth funds.

Mr. Hanlon: £200,000,000 of Commonwealth money is being used to develop the Snowy River scheme there all the same.

Mr. MORRIS: I am talking about the Kiewa scheme, which is being developed entirely by the Victorian Government. They are not going about crying, whingeing and moaning for Federal help all the time, as our Premier never fails to do. They have enough initiative to develop their own schemes under their own power. It is a pity that our Premier does not do the same.

Mr. Hanlon: Queensland is carrying £30,000,000 of the cost of the Snowy River scheme.

Mr. MORRIS: The hon. gentleman persistently refers to the Snowy River scheme. I am not talking of the Snowy River scheme; I am talking of the Kiewa scheme. If his knowledge of that scheme is so slight as one would imagine by his interjection I would commend a study of it to him; he might learn a good deal in that way. I want to remind him again that Kiewa is being developed by the State's resources alone. Just to support that argument I mention that I read in the "Courier-Mail" of 2 February this year that the Victorian State Electricity Commission's third loan for £2,000,000 for the Kiewa-Morwell scheme was heavily over-subscribed at £2,250,000 in 2 days. That scheme is being carried out by the Victorian State Electricity Commission and is being supported by the people of Victoria wholeheartedly because of their faith in development there. I dare to suggest that if the Premier launched a similar scheme here to develop the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme and ceased crying for Federal aid he would get enough support from the people of Queensland to give effect to the scheme on a State basis.

There is one point in the report that I feel has not been given in full detail and that is the evaporation from the dam, which is being built as high as it is possible, practical and feasible to build it on that site. It will impound 146,000 acre-feet and I believe the evaporation will be very severe. I know that on the Murray irrigation scheme in Victoria they calculate that they use effectively only approximately 40 per cent. of their storage water; the balance goes in evaporation and seepage, and where they reticulate for irrigation a considerable amount goes in over-supply and that sort of thing, but the chief reason for using only 40 per cent. of their water is the huge evaporation. I should particularly like to know whether the Premier can give us any information about the evaporation that is expected from this huge dam at the head of the Tully Falls. I have no doubt it has been considered but I should like to know on what basis.

I conclude on the following notes: firstly, I know that everybody who has studied the possibilities of this dam and the production of electricity from the Tully River falls will be wholeheartedly behind the project and will be very eager to see that after the 24 years that have been lost there is some real action to develop the scheme; in the second place, I want to sound a note of warning of the difficulty of getting and holding an efficient staff. We know it has been the practice of the State Government to be rather parsimonious in their payments to the very highest-qualified engineers and other men; and I believe that this scheme can only go ahead satisfactorily if we have an able and capable staff to run it. I feel that unless the Government abandon this parsimonious attitude of the past towards the highly qualified staff they need we shall not get the staff required to complete the project satisfactorily. The third point I wish to make is a real criticism of the Tully Falls scheme. It is one that I think is of vital importance. In the Kiewa scheme there are six power-houses and one has been built and five are in process of being built. Because of the vital danger from aerial attacks to those lifelines, as it were, in the event of war, the other power-houses are being placed underground. Let me quote a short extract from this circular in regard to that, because I think this is a vital necessity where the Tully Falls scheme is concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to develop that argument in detail.

Mr. MORRIS: I am pointing out the need for putting the whole of the power-houses in the Tully Falls scheme underground. The extract reads—

"Water flow from storages to power stations will be almost entirely underground through a system of tunnels driven in solid rock under the mountains for a total distance of about 18 miles"

"With the exception of No. 3 power station (26,000 kilowatts) already built

above ground, the five other stations will be located in large vaults hewn out of solid rock deep underground.

"The largest station will be No. 2. . . . It will be 650 feet underground. . . .

"Now under construction, No. 4 station will be 450 feet underground. . . .

"Deepest under-ground in vertical distance will be No. 1 station and No. 5 station, but they will be under mountains so steep that the shortest entrance to them will be by a tunnel from the mountain-side."

I think that is a matter of vital importance. That is what is being done to protect from aerial attack a scheme that is 1,500 miles south of the Tully River falls. The Premier and all other hon. members realise that if Australia is attacked she will be attacked immediately from the air and if attacked from the air the most vulnerable part is North Queensland. In the Tully Falls scheme we have an undertaking, costing approximately £12,000,000, and providing 335,000,000 kw, that is vital to the development of North Queensland and industries established there. Obviously it is vital to any war effort that should be in operation. We are leaving the power-houses in such a position that will be so vulnerable that the first attack could put the whole scheme out of action. That is one of the most vital points in the Tully Falls scheme which is of great benefit to North Queensland, and I hope that the Premier will see to it so that when it finally comes into operation—and I hope the first part will come into operation in 1956—it will operate from underground where it will not be vulnerable to air attack and can be of great use in a time of great need—in a time of war.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.22 p.m.): Mr. Farrell, in my long and useful life I have eaten many strange foods and drank many queer liquids, consequently I have developed a cast-iron stomach that enables me to sit in this Chamber and listen without being sick, to the sickening hypocrisy spewed forth from both sides of this Chamber with regard to the development of North Queensland. Let us be honest about it. One can number on the fingers of one's hands the men in this Chamber who are honestly and sincerely concerned for the development of the North but every now and again we have members of the Opposition seizing the opportunity to castigate the Government and thereupon standing up in this Chamber and talking about the need to develop northern Queensland. They are interested in the development of North Queensland only at election time and when it affords them an opportunity to attack the Government. The Government too are interested in the development of North Queensland only at election times, and at certain specified times in between.

It is quite true, as the Premier has said, that Federal Parliamentarians are only concerned for the development and protection of the southern portions of the Commonwealth. That is abundantly true, indubitably true, but it is also indubitably true that the

Government the Premier leads—when he can gather them together to lead them—are concerned only for the development and protection of the south-eastern corner of Queensland. Consequently, we hear from time to time all this casuistry, sophistry and sickening hypocrisy concerning the need to develop North Queensland. Let the Queensland State Government give some tangible lead in the development of North Queensland and we of the North, who know the North, the people of the North and the needs of the North, will begin to believe that the Premier is at last becoming honest and sincere in his protestations.

The Premier in his opening remarks said that there is a need for population in North Queensland. He said, and he is very sententious when he said it, that you will not get people to go to the North by simply inviting them to go; you will get them to go there only if there is work to employ them there. Let me tell the Premier that that is not the real magnet that will attract population to the North. As a matter of fact, over the last 18 years, since the Premier has been a member of this Labour-Party Cabinet, the North has lost population.

The North has failed to retain the population it held when the Premier became a member of Cabinet, a fact of which he so often boasts. As a matter of fact, population will not go to a particular part of the country, and population will not stay in a particular part of the country, unless it not only has work but has also a comfortable living and decent conditions for the women and children and is treated as white human beings should be treated; and it is abundantly true that since the Premier has been a member of Cabinet the Labour Government have consistently treated the people of North Queensland as semi-civilised blackfellows. It is necessary not only to find jobs for the people but to put them on a par with the favoured ones who live in other parts of the State. It is necessary to give them medical facilities; it is necessary to give the children educational facilities and it is necessary to provide transport facilities and it is necessary also to give the children an equal chance in life with the children of the favoured South—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: I am simply developing the argument introduced by the Premier himself when he said that the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme will be responsible for bringing extra population into North Queensland. I am telling that hon. gentleman that unless his Government alter their attitude towards the people of the North and particularly towards the children of the North, then as fast as people go to work at the Tully Falls they will come away and they will come away faster than they went there to work. The people of the North are losing every day in the race for education and transport—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like the hon. member to get back to the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: I will return to it, as I do not want to transgress on your tolerance. Population will not stay in the North under the administration of the present State Labour Government.

Let me tell the Premier something about the Tully hydro-electric scheme and what it might do and what the Government fervently hope it will do. Let me also tell the people of Queensland what the Government have in mind in regard to the Tully Falls scheme and their other irrigation and hydro-electric schemes. It is the intention of the present Labour Government to turn North Queensland into a granary and a primary-producing area of the State, simply to keep the secondary industries of Brisbane going. Our people in the North are to be the wood-and-water joeys for the secondary industries of Brisbane, and the Premier cannot deny that. If he really wants to take population to the North and hold them there he must get rid of the bug-bear of the North in an industrial sense by ridding it of the slack-season unemployment. He can do that not only by irrigation schemes and by the establishment of huge farms and agrarian communities but by establishing side by side with those primary industries the secondary industries that will give the people of the North permanence of employment. It is the slack season and the lack of other amenities that are driving population away from North Queensland.

Mr. Pie: You cannot have secondary industries in a slack season.

Mr. AIKENS: The secondary industries continue all the year round but could be so adjusted so as to absorb most of the seasonal unemployment. Since the hon. member for Kedron has interjected, let me say something to him. He has, I understand, just arrived back from an overseas visit and he has his own grandiose plan for the enlargement of secondary industries in Queensland. I suggest that he take some of them to the North. Let him take some of his woollen and textile mills to the North. He has a mattress-making factory already in the North but it was something he took over from Heatleys. I give him credit for that—such as he deserves—but let him take his textile factory up to North Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already extended to the hon. member a good deal of latitude. I must ask him now to get back to the motion.

Mr. AIKENS: Very well, Mr. Farrell. I was led astray by the interjection of the hon. member for Kedron, and I am particularly susceptible to that sort of thing.

In the past we have had quite a number of schemes aimed at harnessing the potentialities of the North. For instance, I remember going over four years ago with the then hon. member for Bowen and the present hon. member for Haughton, who was then and I believe still is the chairman of the Ayr Shire

Council, to the turning of the first sod in the building of the Burdekin bridge by the Premier and it is not built yet. Of course, we have had other schemes in North Queensland. In one of them—I admit it is not a developmental scheme, I refer to the plan for the erection of an insane asylum at Charters Towers—not even a fence post has been put up so far.

Mr. Burrows interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: If I had to live with the hon. member for very long I should be the first patient.

Mr. Hanlon: You should have been there a long time ago.

Mr. AIKENS: I would rather be mad than bad.

We have all these schemes and the necessary blue-prints for the development of the North, and then the Premier very adroitly passes the buck to the Federal Government—and I believe that the Commonwealth Government should bear some share in developing North Queensland; I believe that they should accept some responsibility for the North. We had "Bombay" Casey in the North prior to the last election; he flew over various areas and said he was going to help in the development of the North, but, of course, 29 April came a few days later and Mr. Casey immediately lost all interest in the development of North Queensland.

If the Government—and I am speaking now of the State Government—are honest and sincere in their expressed desire to develop North Queensland and to attract and hold population there, let them give a No. 1 priority to all public and developmental work set out for the North; let them direct all labour, all materials, all technical assistance and all money to the bringing into fruition and the completion of all schemes that they have in hand in North Queensland; let them give North Queensland a No. 1 priority over all other developmental works in the State. There is the test of their sincerity. I know what reception that suggestion will get. The Premier will stand up and wave his hands like a prestidigitator; he will say, "The State will be developed as a whole. The Commonwealth Government must bear their share of the responsibility. We will develop the North if and when we get the money and the men and the material." We have heard it all before and we are sick and tired of the hypocrisy of this Government, backed by the majority of the Opposition, towards North Queensland.

The Premier has said—and correctly so—that North Queensland must be developed; that it must be populated, and that it must be fortified, because it is the open door to the Commonwealth. Surely the Premier does not expect the present Prime Minister of Australia to do anything to protect Australia? Surely he does not expect that Mr. Menzies is interested in the protection of Australia? Anyone who cared to read the statements that Mr. Menzies made prior to

World War II. would form the same honest opinion as I, that is, that at the outbreak of war with Germany and Italy the first two men in Australia who should have been interned were Sir Raphael Cilento and Robert Gordon Menzies.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: There is a man who spent all his time spewing out his panegyrics of Hitler and his regime, and who the Premier now asks us to believe is interested in the development and the protection of this country.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not ask the hon. member again to get back to the motion. If he cannot do so, I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. AIKENS: Very well, Mr. Farrell. I merely want to say that this is just another piece of political flim-flam. I am going to support it because I support every move, however visionary it may seem, for the development of North Queensland, and I shall do all that I possibly can to help or to goad the Government into doing something concrete and tangible about it. I support this Bill in regard to the development of the North in exactly the same way as I go in and buy a ticket in the Golden Casket. The odds are against my winning a prize but hope springs eternal in the human breast. The odds are against anything tangible being done to harness the Tully Falls for electric power or for irrigation, but because the shot is on, to use a sporting phrase, I shall support the Bill, in addition to goading the Government from time to time into doing something about it and about the Burdekin dam scheme and about the various schemes and other things they have promised for the North. I shall also do what I always do after every session of Parliament, and that is expose to the people of North Queensland the hollow sham and mockery contained in the Premier's remarks on such a Bill as this.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (12.37 p.m.): Replying to the hon. member for Mundingburra, I would say that it is remarkable to find so many men in this country with great powerful bodies but minds about the size of a body louse. Whenever they approach any subject they always like to find out first whether there is something in it for themselves, and these people are doing more harm to North Queensland than any other force in North Queensland. Mr. Menzies will never do as much harm to North Queensland as those people who portray North Queensland as the home of bums, crawlers and bellyachers, and that is what is being done by the hon. member for Mundingburra. Whenever he gets up in this House he describes North Queensland as being the home of hoboes howling out for someone else to feed them, screaming to someone else to give them something, whereas North Queensland is a place of decent and independent free men who only want the opportunity to work for a living. They want to do the

decent thing. They only want a fair deal from the rest of the community and nothing more—that is, the decent crowd.

Mr. Aikens: And they do not get it.

Mr. HANLON: They get the hon. member for Mundingburra, and believe me, they don't like it. He spoke about goading the Government into doing this and doing that, but the only thing that he will goad them into doing will be to spread D.D.T. very liberally about the premises.

The hon. member said also that educationally the children of the North were backward, that they were not in the race. When I was in North Queensland recently I presented two of the most coveted prizes in educational circles in Queensland to two children of the North—they had beaten the rest of Queensland. One was in Townsville and I think the other was in Cairns. Two of the most coveted prizes, the Lilley medal and the Byrnes medal, went to two children of the North, one in Cairns and I think the other in Townsville. They had beaten the rest of Queensland. Yet, we have this relic of the indecent age getting up in this Chamber and saying that educationally the children of the North were not in the race. Why does the hon. member for Mundingburra slander the children of the North like that? In scholarship and Junior examinations they are certainly equal to the best of the children in the State, and physically I think they are superior to those in the southern parts of Queensland. They have courage, they have ability, and they must have industries.

The workmates of the hon. member for Mundingburra in North Queensland have given him the sardonic name of "Energy." He was portrayed as "Energy" because he sat down and did nothing. (Laughter). It is rather a pity to waste so much time over a man who pretends to represent but really slanders the people of North Queensland so consistently as he does. It is evident that he is endeavouring to make up a little for the absence in this Parliament of the ex-hon. member for Bowen, his party comrade.

Mr. Aikens: He supported you in the last election.

Mr. HANLON: He supported you.

Mr. Aikens: He supported you.

Mr. HANLON: No, he supported you. (Laughter). His party advocated voting for Aikens. Naturally, the hon. member was regarded as a member of this party.

Let us examine some of the criticism which we heard from the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition said that they were solidly behind this scheme but there was only one thing wrong with it, that was it was not done long ago, and if we would only go to the Federal Government and pull our forelock nicely for Mr. Menzies we should get somewhere. (Dissent). He probably meant that we were to be considerate of Mr. Menzies—perhaps show appreciation of his physique. The Leader of the Opposition pulled his forelock when

he asked Mr. Menzies to forget about the State's northern projects and give him a dam at Obi Obi Creek. (Government laughter). He pulled his forelock, too, when he asked Mr. Menzies for aid to drain the Merrimac Swamp. That is strongly implied in the hon. gentleman's notice of motion—

“That in view of the paramount importance of increasing the wealth production of this State as rapidly as possible, in order to improve the defence potential of Australia, to safeguard living standards, and to provide for a substantial increase in population by migration in the near future, it is the opinion of this House that the Government should have a thorough review and overhaul of its developmental programme with a view to giving priority to works and projects most likely to give the quickest and best results commensurate with the quantities of materials, labour, and so on.”

Here is the Leader of the Opposition getting up and saying that this work in North Queensland should have been done long ago, after he has gone down to Canberra with his co-conspirator, the Leader of the Liberal Party, and asked Mr. Menzies for the time being to forget all about the projects the Government are asking to be done for the development of North Queensland and construct a dam at Obi Obi Creek, near his orchard. (Opposition interjections). Obi Obi Creek is in his electorate and the Merrimac Swamp is in the electorate of one of his supporters. These are the things he went to Canberra to ask the Prime Minister to do for the defence of North Queensland! It is just as well that the Tweed River is not too far from Brisbane or he would be away down near Newcastle somewhere. (Government laughter).

My quarrel with the Opposition is that they see no virtue in anything that does not benefit their own interests. Their interests are centred on their own electorates. They fail to see the interests of this State as a whole. It is amusing to me to hear the Leader of the Opposition saying by implication that I should scrape my boots and pull my forelock to Mr. Menzies, when no doubt he would be considerate. The Leader of the Opposition suggests that the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth is not regarding these projects from the point of view of defence or the development of the Commonwealth, but purely and simply likes a suppliant to come along and wriggle before him. Queensland will not wriggle before anyone; neither will Queensland go on her belly to anyone. Queensland will go before the Commonwealth with a case for its rights. When I go to Canberra I never cease to put a case for a fair deal to this State. I do not say that we get a fair deal.

We certainly did get an undertaking for a North Queensland project, in view of the development of the Snowy River project, which started off at £66,000,000 but later

became £200,000,000. The then Prime Minister talked about a £66,000,000 programme; and we spent a day on it at Canberra. I did not object, provided North Queensland got a deal. Later on it became £200,000,000. Although we had an undertaking from Mr. Chifley in regard to the development schemes for the North, the undertaking was withdrawn by the Menzies Government. I do not like the present Government's withdrawing an undertaking given by a previous Government to do anything about North Queensland.

There was also the case of the aerodrome in the Cape York Peninsula. I had a letter from the Prime Minister, Mr. Chifley, about November last pointing out that approval had been given and an instruction had been given to the Department of Works and Housing to put that aerodrome in order. It was an emergency landing place on a flight from Thursday Island and it would be useful for defence purposes. A couple of months ago I had a letter from Mr. Fadden saying that the Federal Government were countermanding the instruction to the Department of Works and Housing. Something had been granted and an instruction to go on with this work had been given and they countermanded it. You do not find them countermanding anything in the south-eastern corner of the Commonwealth.

The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha gave a very learned discourse on hydro-electric production generally and told us we should have linked up all the sugar mills at Mackay long ago. The chairman of the electricity authority there is a gentleman called Ian Wood, a Liberal Senator in the Federal Parliament. He was the mayor of Mackay for some years—not a bad sort of a joker; I know him pretty well—and I suggest to the hon. member that he get in touch with him. I hope he will take notice of his opinion. He might advise him. At Maryborough the regional board has linked up Hynes and Sons, Wilson and Hart, and the Maryborough sugar mill, with an electric supply. When you create an electric authority you do not go round with a safety-pin, a napkin and the bottle; you expect them to undertake their own work. Already that electric authority has linked up these concerns; the Government did not do it. In Mackay, if Senator Wood, the mayor, thought of it, and it was economic—I do not know whether it is or not—he could undertake it.

The hon. member went on to say that it is 24 years ago since this job was recommended and it should have been done. The experts of 24 years ago did not give the detailed information that is necessary for this job. A general survey of the catchment and the amount of water have been carried out, but this task has been under way by the Co-ordinator-General since 1946. In 1944 instructions were given to have a survey of the waters of the northern rivers. We did not take a particular river. This Government look at Queensland as a whole,

and they looked at the northern rivers as a whole; they were not interested in this river or that river.

Mr. Morris interjected.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member exhausted his time cackling nonsense this morning; he cannot interrupt me with any more of it.

In 1946 the Labour Government instructed that the northern rivers were to be surveyed to ascertain the way in which they could be best put to use. They have now been surveyed down as far as the Burdekin. All of them have some potentialities. In 1946 instructions were issued to get on with the planning of the Tully scheme. I know that the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha could design a dam and the foundations and all the rest of it in a matter of five minutes or perhaps overnight but Mr. Kemp's organisation has been working on it for some years possibly it would be glad of a little advice from the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha. But the work is going on. Borings took quite a long time. A dam cannot be built before establishing the foundations. The fall of the whole of the river, not at the actual falls, had to be surveyed and tested to ascertain what additional dams could be put in. The idea is to make full use of the flow of the river. The work is going on now. If we had a policy for the development of this country of the same kind as that adopted by the people of the political kidney of the Country Party, we should get nowhere. When a previous Labour Government were in office they were faced with the same hostility as we are faced with except that it was more barefaced and more open. The good old Liberals in those days were frankly out to destroy the Labour Party and Labour Movement at any price. They did not conceal their attitude.

Mr. Evans interjected.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member who has just made an interjection should know this because he was in North Queensland at the time. It was a Labour Government who linked up the North Queensland railway. One could not get even as far North as Rockhampton at one time. One had to travel by steamer from Gladstone. One had to travel also by steamer to get from Rockhampton to Mackay and to Townsville and Cairns. There was no rail link between Townsville and Cairns. It was a Labour Government who built these hundreds of miles of railway at a time when they were having the greatest difficulty in getting money. They also built co-operative sugar mills and developed the sugar industry in the North. Everything that is worth while in the North has been done by a Labour Government. But at what a price and under what handicaps! The Labour Government were in power during the war years. At the end of 1919, when these great projects were in hand, the Liberal Party, then in opposition as is the Liberal Party today, sent three of its leading men to England to prevent the Labour Government of this State from getting the money to go on with State work.

Mr. Morris: Sheer nonsense!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HANLON: Hon. members opposite evidently do not know the political history of this State. Sir Robert Philp, Sir Alfred Cowley, and Mr. J. A. Walsh were sent from the Opposition to London to prevent the then Premier, the late E. G. Theodore, from getting the loan money necessary to do these works. In order to keep some work going. Mr. Theodore was forced to raise a loan in America. He was forced by the Liberal Party of Australia to do this. These men did not go overseas of their own volition but under instructions from the party that is now sitting in Opposition criticising this Bill. They went overseas to prevent the money from being obtained. They absolutely prevented the loan to carry on this work from being raised in England. Now their political descendants—

Mr. Morris: Absolute and sheer nonsense!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to take notice of my call to order. His interjections are unparliamentary and I will not permit them any longer. The Premier must be allowed to make his statement without further interjections.

Mr. HANLON: The political descendants of Philp, Cowley, and Walsh sit in this Chamber today and ask why this project was not built in 1920, but they are descendants of those who prevented the Government from getting the money to do it. It was not because the work was not desirable, not that it had not been recommended, but that they hated the very existence of the Labour Government. The Country Party did not then exist as a party. The only country representatives in this Parliament in those days were the representatives of the squatters, who regarded the ordinary farmers as being mere slaves and vassals not worthy of political representation at all.

The political Country Party, as we know it today, could not be charged with that attitude. There are a lot of people in the State like the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha who were not old enough to take notice of what was happening in Parliament in the '20s.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Some of us were old enough.

Mr. HANLON: Then what is the hon. member doing on that side of the Chamber if he knows what happened? If hon. members know the political history of this State, why then are they associated with a party that has done so much to destroy the State? I am inclined to think it is because they are ignorant of what has happened that they are with the Opposition. Anybody who knew what was done to destroy the Labour Party should not be associated with the Opposition.

I shall content myself with those remarks, as I only wanted to answer the statements hon. members opposite had made.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 12.58 p.m.