

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1950**

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# Queensland Parliamentary Debates.

## Legislative Assembly.

### FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT.

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE FIRST DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE FOURTEENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1950.

[VOLUME 2.]

TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER, 1950.

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

#### QUESTIONS.

##### AERIAL DROPPING OF DINGO BAITS.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo), for Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“As I have received a complaint from a resident of the Cloncurry district that dingo baits were dropped in his orchard, close to his house, and also in a soak in the creek from which his drinking water is obtained, will he kindly advise what instructions are issued regarding aerial dropping of such baits, and what precautions are taken to ensure that human beings and domestic animals are not included in the kill?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando) replied—

“The pilot of the aircraft engaged in the aerial poisoning campaign is instructed that baits are not to be laid within 15 miles of any township or within 5 miles of any station homestead or station outbuildings or within 2 miles of any watercourse, tank, dam, or other water facility. Information supplied to the Department by the Government Analyst indicates that the risk of poisoning human beings or stock by the baits used is negligible.”

##### SHORTAGE OF OXY-ACETYLENE GAS.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah) asked the Premier—

“1. In view of the serious shortage of oxy-acetylene gas for industrial purposes, mainly in the case of small garages and other small workshops, will he kindly have this matter investigated and advise (a) where and by whom is this product manufactured, and (b) can anything be done by the Government to secure a fairer allocation to the small users I have mentioned?”

“2. Is production of the gas in question of a monopolistic nature and, if so, is the monopoly due to patent rights? If not, what is the reason?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

“1. (a) The principal supplier of acetylene gas and the only manufacturer of oxygen gas in Queensland is Commonwealth 1950—2 E

Industrial Gases Ltd., of Breakfast Creek, Road, Newstead, Brisbane. At the present time their plant manufacturing oxygen and acetylene gas is located in Brisbane, but the company has already installed, in Townsville, a plant for the production of oxygen gas which it hopes will be in production within a few months, and which is to be followed shortly by a plant for the production of acetylene. It also has plans for the installation of a similar plant for the production of both oxygen and acetylene at Rockhampton within the near future. (b) The main drawback to increased supplies of gas is the acute shortage of cylinders. The company proposes as from 1 November, 1950, to institute a new system of supply to its customers which will, it is hoped, ensure a more rapid turnover of cylinders. This action, together with the commencement of production of gas in Townsville which will release more cylinders because of the saving in time now being taken to freight cylinders to and from North Queensland will, it is hoped, do much to ease the situation.

“2. Although there is only one firm in Queensland producing oxygen in commercial quantities, several firms manufacture their own acetylene gas from small plants. Neither process is protected by patent rights and any person is free to engage in manufacture at any time.”

##### EFFECT OF WAGE INCREASES ON BUDGET.

Mr. MUNRO (Toowong) asked the Treasurer—

“Having regard to the statement in his Budget Speech of 17 October, 1950, that ‘No provision has been made anticipating variations of awards resulting from applications which will be before the court during the course of the financial year,’ will he inform the House—

“1. Approximately to what extent would the Budget deficit of £767,825 have been increased if provision had been made for expected variations of awards as above referred to?”

“2. Similarly what would be the estimated increased expenditure resulting from such anticipated variations of awards if such variations were effective for a full year instead of for a portion only of the financial period?”

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

"1. It is not known to what extent the Budget deficit for 1950-51 is likely to be increased by variations of Awards resulting from applications which will be before the State Industrial Court during the financial year, and any attempt at such an estimation by me would be improper. As the hon. member is aware the Court makes judgments based on the evidence before it, and the estimation of any additional cost involved in the present applications must await the decisions of the Court.

"2. See answer to No. (1.)

#### OPEN-CUT MINING.

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

"In regard to an opinion expressed to me that open-cut mining in Great Britain might be discontinued in or about 1952, are there any negotiations in progress for the transference of open-cut plant and personnel from Britain to Queensland? If so, will he give the House full details?"

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

"Neither the Queensland Coal Board nor the Department of Mines knows of any negotiations in progress for the transference of open-cut plant and personnel from Britain to Queensland."

#### PREFABRICATED HOMES.

**Mr. PIE** (Kedron) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

"1. In further reference to my question of 17 October concerning the importation and creation of prefabricated homes, from the information he supplied, will these homes cost, without Government subsidy, £2,159 each, and with Commonwealth subsidy, £1,859, excluding cost of land, fencing, sewerage installation, fittings, and furnishings?"

"2. Can he give any approximation of what the total cost of these homes individually ready to occupy, will be to the purchaser, including land, fencing, sewerage, fittings, and furnishings?"

"3. Will he explain the term 'plus rise and fall' used in his reply as to the net estimated cost of these homes?"

"4. Can he state what will be the number of rooms and the squares of each of these homes?"

"5. When does he expect delivery of the homes?"

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

"1. The average cost per house is £2,159, excluding Commonwealth Government subsidy, and £1,859 with the subsidy. Such prices include fencing, drainage, water and electric light services, and fittings (bath, electric stove, electric bath heater, electric wash boiler). These are the first large contracts for supply and erection of imported prefabricated houses entered into by any State of the Commonwealth, and are at better prices than obtained by any other State.

"2. The total cost of land is not yet known, and I do not propose to give any information not based on facts.

"3. As is the custom with contractors at present, they require to be indemnified against any increases in the cost of labour and/or materials from the date of tender and during the currency of the contract. Similarly, the other party to the contract would receive the benefit of any decrease in the cost of labour and/or materials.

"4. Houses are of two, three, and four bedroom types, and include living room, bathroom, kitchen and laundry. Floor areas range from 917 square feet to 1,170 square feet for the Swedish houses, and 909 square feet to 1,110 square feet for the French houses.

"5. First shipment of the French houses has left France and is expected in Brisbane on 15 December, 1950. First shipment of the Swedish houses is expected to leave Sweden in the first week of December, 1950."

#### COST OF MAIN ROADS, NORTH QUEENSLAND.

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS** (Whitsunday): I desire to ask the Treasurer whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on 19 October—

"Will he supply the costs of construction and reconditioning of roads under the jurisdiction of the Main Roads Commission as follows:—(a) Townsville south to Mackay; (b) Townsville west to Claremont and Hughenden; and (c) Townsville north to Cairns?"

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

"Since inception of the Main Roads Commission until 30 June, 1950, the following amounts have been expended on permanent works and maintenance as set out below:—

—		Perman-ent Works.	Main-tenance.	Total.
		£	£	£
1. Townsville to Bowen	to	806,377	184,505	990,882
2. Bowen to Proserpine	to	83,186	29,027	112,213
3. Proserpine to Mackay	to	432,327	113,654	545,981
		£1,321,890	£327,186	£1,649,076

#### PAPERS.

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

Order in Council under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1946 (12 October).

Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1949.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Regulations under the Gas Acts, 1916 to 1946 (12 October).

Orders in Council under—

The Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948 (12 October (2)).

The Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement) Act of 1921 (12 October).

#### DEATH OF HON. H. F. WALKER.

##### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier) (11.14 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 Honourable Harry Frederick Walker, a former Member of the Parliament of Queensland and a Minister of the Crown.

"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."

The late Mr. Walker was first elected as member for Wide Bay on 18 May, 1907, and represented that electorate through the 16th, 17th and 18th Parliaments. When the electorate of Coorooora was constituted under the Electoral Districts Act of 1910, as from the beginning of the 19th Parliament, he became its first member and represented it without a break until he retired at the end of the 30th Parliament on 3 May, 1947. The late gentleman served continuously through fifteen Parliaments and for a period of 39 years 351 days—a record for Queensland. He was Secretary for Agriculture and Stock in the Moore Ministry and held ministerial office from 21 May, 1929, to 17 June, 1932.

The late Mr. Walker was in this House recently enough for quite a number of the present members to have known him well. He was a very kindly gentleman, and in the hectic days of the depression when the Moore Government were in office, he was one of the Ministers who made very few mistakes in his administration. He was always courteous to members, and I have a very kindly memory of his courtesy to me on numerous occasions, when I represented the Opposition and he represented the Government at public gatherings. That was a task that devolved on me quite frequently in those days, as it did also on Mr. Walker as the representative of the Government, and I personally appreciated his courtesy to me on every occasion on which we came together on behalf of our respective parties in the Parliament of this State.

The late Mr. Walker made very few enemies. He was in office at a very hard time when the Government of the day were subjected to intense criticism, but Harry Walker, as we all knew him, was one of those men who took everything in good part and, in the main, maintained a sound friendship with members of the House. He gave a very long service to Parliament—he was here for almost 40 years—and during that time he was a very faithful representative of the electorates he represented, and I am sure that irrespective of the political outlook of his constituents, none of them could ever say that he neglected them or their interests.

**Mr. HILEY** (Coorparoo) (11.17 a.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the Premier. During the first three years that I served in this Parliament the late Harry Walker was the member for Coorooora, and I think all of us who were here during his period in this House have a clear mental picture of his sitting in that characteristic attitude of his on the right-hand end of this bench. He was hard of hearing and had a little trick of sitting in a certain way; I can close my eyes and quite easily see Harry Walker, just as he sat there years ago.

I came to know the late Harry Walker exceedingly well, as much after he left this Parliament as when he was here, and the thing that impressed me about him was that he was a man who, having had a very hard and a very rough life in his early days, had learnt from his experience to become one of the most gentle men of my acquaintance. He was not weak in his approach to anything; on the contrary, he was essentially strong, whilst preferring to adopt a gentle approach to everyone, which I think is the truest kind of gentlemanliness one can meet.

Another impression that the late Harry Walker left with me was his ever-ready sense of humour. I was present with other hon. members of this Parliament on the occasion of the dinner tendered to him at Tewantin on his retirement. He told us of a series of episodes in the various elections he fought and I can remember the flashing humour with which he told us about some of them. One that remains in my memory dealt with an occasion on which his opponent was not well known in the district, and the first town he visited in that widespread electorate was Tewantin. He was attempting to cover a large area under great difficulty, and the late Harry Walker met him, learnt of his trouble and said, "Don't worry, I will lend you a horse to help you to cover the district." However, he did not tell his opponent that he was lending him a horse that Harry Walker himself had ridden at every show ring in the district for years. It was typical of the impish humour of the man that he could remember such an incident with keen delight and appreciation.

The late Harry Walker was a superb judge of country. As you know, Sir, he started work in Gympie in the decline of its mining days and witnessed the temporary eclipse of that great town, but he also contributed to its rebirth in the development of its great dairying industry.

In my conversations with Mr. Walker I came to discover that he knew all the physical features of the area far better than the average man. He knew every inch of the Mary Valley, every property and every paddock. I have heard other people discuss with him the areas that he had not been on for 20 years but immediately they mentioned a particular hillside it brought to his mind a knowledge of the country. He was a man who knew the country as few men knew it.

Mr. Walker took a keen interest in mining and he was also deeply interested in forestry pursuits, and everything associated with the dairying industry was close to his heart. He

left a very wide circle of friends. I venture to say that he was one of the greatest hunters who have ever served in this House. Above the lamentations of his friends, I picture the wild ducks on Lake Cootharaba, the crabs and the fish at Tewantin and Noosa, the flock pigeon that Harry Walker so successfully stalked through the pockets of the pine scrubs of Noosa—I picture these birds and animals joining with the many mourners in the loss of a man who above all else had the secret of winning and holding the approbation of his many friends. I second the motion.

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

#### POULTRY INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### INITIATION.

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry) for **Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock): I move—

“That the House will, at its next Sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Poultry Industry Act of 1946, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### MARGARINE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### INITIATION.

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry) for **Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock): I move—

“That the House will, at its next Sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Margarine Acts, 1910 to 1939, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### DISEASES IN STOCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### INITIATION.

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry) for **Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock): I move—

“That the House will, at its next Sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1949, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

#### COMMONWEALTH JUBILEE HOLIDAY BILL.

##### INITIATION.

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry): I move—

“That the House will, at its next Sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness

of introducing a Bill to make provision for a public holiday to commemorate the jubilee of the Commonwealth of Australia.”

Motion agreed to.

#### SUPPLY.

##### COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(Mr. Riordan, Flinders, in the chair.)

Debated resumed from 19 October (see p. 794) on Mr. Gair's motion—

“That there be granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1950-51 a sum not exceeding £643 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

**Mr. WOOD** (North Toowoomba) (11.26 a.m.): The duty of a Treasurer of any State is always an onerous one. Queensland, during the many years in which it has been governed by a Labour Government, has been very fortunate in those who have occupied the position of Treasurer; and the present occupant of the office is no exception to the rule. The majority of hon. members will join me in congratulating the present Treasurer on the interest that he has shown in his portfolio and the capacity and the enthusiasm that he has brought to solving the problems that confront a Treasurer.

In his very comprehensive Financial Statement, which is before us for consideration, the Treasurer makes reference to the very serious deterioration in the international situation since the previous Financial Statement was brought down in this Chamber. We all join in regretting this deterioration and we hope that very shortly our worries will be dispelled and we shall see a world working towards the end of peace. I cannot help thinking that there are, unfortunately, some who seek to use the international situation and its gravity for their own political ends. Particularly do I notice this in some of the remarks of the hon. members of the Federal Government, who in their statements day by day are attempting to use the gravity of the international situation towards turning people against the Labour Party and using it in a base attempt to win an election that they may think will develop in the near future. I deeply deplore any attempt to use a grave international situation solely for political ends.

A perusal of the Financial Statement discloses a very comprehensive public-works policy for the ensuing twelve months. We know that members of the Federal Government, in association with some hon. members of the Opposition, have been attempting to convince the people of Australia that all the States and the Commonwealth Government should concentrate only on those works that have an immediate defence value. I cannot for one moment agree with the correctness of that attitude. Just let us look for a moment at some of the activities set out under this scheme. They are the Stanley River dam, continuation of the University buildings, St. Lucia bridge, soldier settlement, rural development, the erection of a high-level railway bridge over the Burcklin

River, housing, water facilities on stock routes, mining, buildings, and so on. I ask hon. members to point to one of those items that has not a great value to the people of the State. It would be a very sorry position for us if almost immediately after a world war we again adopted the attitude that the State would do only those things that had an immediate defence value. Should we, for instance, stop building our houses? Should we stop enlarging our hospitals? Should we stop increasing our educational facilities? I say that it would be a very short-sighted policy and a tragic commentary on our attitude towards the future development of this country if we allowed defence and defence only to be our guiding light in determining the activities in which the State should engage for the ensuing year.

Reference has also been made to the unsatisfactory financial relationships between the States and the Commonwealth. It was obvious to all, even after a brief reading of the reports of the recent Premiers' Conference, that the Prime Minister and the Hon. A. W. Fadden, the Commonwealth Treasurer, adopted a very arrogant attitude towards the States—not only our State of Queensland, but all the States in the Commonwealth. We know very well that the States had to fight hard to convince the Commonwealth Government that there was any need for any raising of the allocation under the formula. We know that Commonwealth revenues are very swollen at the moment, and I think it is very, very sad that a State has to go on its knees to the Commonwealth authorities in order to seek assistance to avoid a deficit. All economists tell us that in times of prosperity or of inflation deficits should be avoided at all costs, and it is very, very hard for a State without control of the taxing powers to do this when it finds its requests are rejected with contumely by a Commonwealth authority with swollen revenue, and with a great taxing power.

I was very interested to read in the Treasurer's Financial Statement the reference to the work that has been done in Queensland under our hospitals scheme. We all know very well that there was a tremendous outcry from the B.M.A. and from the Opposition when Mr. McKenna introduced his health scheme: yet we find today that the B.M.A. which was so adamant in its objection to the use of that form set out by the department, now allows all its members to use it under a mutilated scheme. Sir Earle Page has not placed before the Commonwealth Parliament one word of explanation of his health scheme. In Queensland the full acceptance of the scheme outlined by Sir Earle Page would set us back very many years. If we had done nothing else in Queensland—and of course I do not agree that we have not—the hospital policy that has been followed by successive Labour Governments in Queensland for many years past alone justifies the continuance of Labour in office. We have gone past the stage when no hospitals board or committee in Queensland knew from year to year exactly what its receipts would be, when no hospitals board could budget for

the ensuing year, when efficiency was even impaired as a result of restricted finance, and when nurses had to be taken from their noble task of healing to go out soliciting donations from all and sundry and often receive snubs and insults in the process. Today the annual income of any hospitals board in Queensland is assured, so that every one of them can determine from year to year exactly what its requirements are and know it will be certain of receiving an income to keep those services going.

I was also interested in the reference to the work done by New Australians and I confess that in this regard I am more than a little perturbed. We all realise the wonderful work done by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration under Mr. Calwell as Minister. He was much maligned but now, after he is out of office, is receiving full credit for his magnificent job. I feel that the scheme he introduced will go a long way towards building a greater Australia but I feel also there is a danger of falling again into errors already committed. I have seen many of these New Australians come to our land. They have been keen and in the main of very good types but I fear a tendency is growing for the New Australians to group themselves into camps according to nationality and unless the average Australian gives them a greater degree of welcome and shows a more practical interest in their every-day problems we shall find that many of these communities of New Australians will not be absorbed into our community. If this happens it will be very regrettable. On the other hand, if we can overcome that tendency to disregard the New Australians and their problems, we can do much towards setting them on the right track and making them feel more at home.

A subject that appeals to me very closely is education and I am sure all members were very pleased to note in the Financial Statement that the allocation for the educational requirements of the ensuing year is nearly £4,700,000. The amount of that vote alone will dissipate the idea that the Opposition are trying to place in our minds that nothing is being done for education. This is very far from the truth. We need only to read in the Financial Statement that approximately 38 per cent. of the income-tax reimbursement is taken by this vote to realise how prominent a place education plays in our life today and what a full recognition is being given to it by this Government. It is a matter for regret that in many quarters it is only in recent years that any interest has been focused on education. It was of interest to me to read of a Gallup poll taken in Great Britain just before the end of the last war. The persons questioned were asked to state, in order of urgency, the grave problems that would require attention after the war. As usual, a cross-section of the people were interviewed and of these 51 per cent. stated that the most pressing problem was finding jobs for demobilised soldiers, 23 per cent. gave housing first place, but not one mentioned education as the gravest problem to be dealt with after the war. That should give us very deep cause for thought. Unfortunately we

find education being made the basis of a political fight. I have noticed in this session particularly that members of the Opposition have done all they could to convince us that in education nothing is right. On this subject, they made purely political attacks on the Government.

I do not intend to do so. I could quite easily show to this Committee, if I had the time at my disposal, how educational reforms have taken place because working-men and women of the community have desired to improve their conditions and make things easy for their children and that all reforms have been fought against by members of the political parties opposite. I do not intend to do that, but propose to read one quotation from an essay of a gentleman by the name of Mandeville, who wrote on charity schools early in the eighteenth century. I am picking this extract because I think it is typical of the view taken by the predecessors of those now sitting in Opposition. That gentleman said—

“Few children make any progress at school, but at the same time are capable of being employed in some business or other, so that every hour of those poor people spent at their books is so much time lost to society. Going to school in comparison to working is idleness, and the longer boys continue in this easy sort of life, the more unfit they will be, when grown up, for downright labour, both as to strength and inclination. Men who are to remain and end their days in a laborious, tiresome and painful station of life, the sooner they are put upon it at first, the more patiently they will submit to it for ever after.”

That is the political attitude taken by those whose descendants are in Opposition today. It is not my desire to make education a political battleground; it should be above political dog-fights.

In their criticism during this session we have heard hon. members opposite making trenchant remarks about our educational system in Queensland and launching bitter attacks on the Government for their handling of the educational structure of the State and telling us that there is nothing right with it. I have not heard one hon. member opposite devoting any time to telling us what is right with our system. To make statements that our educational system has fallen down is to say something that hon. members opposite know to be grossly incorrect.

I have found, after 20 years' practical experience as a school teacher, that year by year there is a marked change in our schools, in our methods of teaching, and in the attitude of the teacher and the child towards his work. I find that the child who does not look forward to going to school is the exception, that most children look forward to packing their bags and trotting off to school. Children do not regard the teacher as an enemy or their school as a place of burden. The great majority of them like their school and like the instruction they receive at school and regard their teacher as a friend.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. WOOD:** There has been a change in the attitude adopted since I went to school. I can remember teachers whom I liked very much and I can remember punishment being meted out to me which if I as a teacher meted it out to school children would earn me dismissal, and rightly so. Our schools are infinitely better equipped than they were. I come from a city famed—and deservedly so—for its educational establishments, both kindergarten and primary and secondary schools. The name of Toowoomba stands very high in the educational world and with the exception of one school to which I have drawn the attention of the Secretary for Public Instruction, our schools in Toowoomba are of an exceedingly high standard. They are schools to which parents can send their children with every confidence that they will be taught in good surroundings and schools that can be regarded as a second home. The equipping of our schools has improved out of sight, our syllabus has been remodelled from year to year, and a standing committee is in existence that has the authority to suggest more alterations in the syllabus from time to time.

I was interested to read in, I think, the “Telegraph” of last evening that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke with a nostalgic yearning of the education that he received when he was a boy. He said they were taught a little of everything; a little of physiology, a little of geology, a little of music, and a little of something else, and he regretted that the syllabus was changed.

**Mr. Aikens:** And he was flogged fairly regularly, too.

**Mr. WOOD:** If his experience was anything like mine, he was flogged very regularly.

I do not for one moment think that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stated the opinion of the great majority of parents, the great majority of teachers, or the great majority of children, and I suggest that he did not know what he was talking about when he tried to hold up the syllabus of years ago as superior to the one we have today.

Not only has the syllabus been modified and made more liberal from year to year, but the conditions of teaching have improved. Today the teacher occupies a position in the community that befits the job he does, his standard has improved from year to year, and we hear very few of the sneering references to teachers now that used to be made some years ago. Their conditions of working are infinitely better, and teaching has become more sympathetic. As an example of this, hon. members probably know that every school is required to keep a corporal-punishment register, and an examination of the register in a school today, contrasted with an examination of that book for a period of 10, 15 or 20 years ago would show without question that the great majority of teachers today take a much more sympathetic and humane interest in the child

than they did then. Of course, I do not suggest that there are not still those in the service who are not fit to be there.

**Mr. Gair:** There are weeds in the best-kept gardens.

**Mr. WOOD:** There are.

The proper time to find these people is in the first year of their service, when they are being trained in the Teachers' Training College. It is no use waiting till they have been in the service for 20 or 30 years; they can be found out in their first year at the Teachers' Training College.

I find, too, that in spite of all the criticism we hear about the lack of parental control, children today are much easier to handle than ever before. Children today come to school better clothed, better fed and better informed in their own homes, and are far more amenable to discipline than were the children who went to school in my school days. Further, not many teachers today experience grave cases of insubordination in their classes, which was by no means the exception some 20 or 30 years ago.

I should now like to mention an innovation introduced by the department that has met with signal success; unfortunately, it has not yet been able to extend it to the outer areas. I refer to the visits to schools of teachers of singing. At present only a few centres in Queensland are visited each week by these specialists. When more teachers become available, when they are more easy to get, I hope to see the scheme extended to the outlying districts so that the children in country areas can have the same facilities in this respect as are available to city children. I would strongly protest against any curtailment of the scheme and fight for its extension.

In Toowoomba we have in Mr. Mansell Jones a gentleman whose work for the children is deserving of nothing but the highest praise. Weekly he takes the children from Grade II upwards for singing lessons and the class teacher follows those lessons with his lessons. Not only has the job that Mr. Mansell Jones has done at the schools been amazing, but he fills a very important part in the cultural life of the community. For instance, he conducts a senior choral society, a 'teenagers' choir, and a junior choir, and the fact that the department has made his services available has been a boon not only to the children of the schools that he visits but also to the whole of the music-loving people of Toowoomba.

**Mr. Aikens:** He teaches the children to discriminate between good music and bad.

**Mr. WOOD:** He does, and he has done a very good job.

The main problem facing the department today is the teacher shortage. We know that it exists; I would not stand here and say that it did not. I served in this Parliament from 1946 for about 14 months and returned to my job immediately after my defeat at the polls. I counted it an honour to be able to do that because I do not know

any job that is a greater privilege than teaching children. I had served for four years in the army, I was back a couple of weeks, contested the elections, I was in Parliament for 14 months, and three months after I had taken over my job I had a class of 96 children. Conditions have improved to a large extent since then but no-one is yet satisfied. The Minister is very concerned about the situation and the Government are doing all that they can to overcome it.

It is no use hon. members opposite getting up and saying that there is a shortage of teachers—we can all say that—without offering a suggestion to overcome it. Before the last elections the hon. member for Coorparoo addressed the teachers at the Teachers' Training College. He went there to sell the teachers his policy and he was asked this straight question, "What is your short-range plan for overcoming the problem of shortage of teachers?" and he said, "I have none." Yet he and his followers will use this subject as political ammunition. They will use the children for political purposes. I object to those tactics. The department is seriously concerned about these matters but there is no use in flogging the issue unless we can offer a solution of the trouble. Conditions of work are better than they ever were before and increasing wages is not a solution to the problem. The teaching profession is suffering from the same problem as faces branches of all other industry. There would be no difficulty, if the Government needed only to appoint teachers to schools in Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Townsville. The great majority of the schools in Queensland are outside the cities and therein lies the trouble. The young men who could be recruited to the teaching service have the same attitude towards living in the city as is to be found in all other industries. This difficulty is even greater among young girls. No-one likes to see girls of 18 to 19 years of age, just out of the Training College, being sent to the remote parts of the State. I know that the department does not send them out unless it is compelled to do so by the exigencies of the circumstances.

The great trouble in sending men out to these districts is the shortage of houses—it is hard to get any contractor to build houses away from a city or town—and I suggest that in making allocations of housing construction one in six or ten or a dozen should be a teacher's residence at a school where none exists at the moment. If residences can be supplied in those areas young men would be induced to go out there. In teaching the only way in which a man can gain promotion is by starting in the lowest class and working up. A man cannot remain in a city school; he must go out into the country and work his way up through the various classes of schools. With more houses more young men about to be married would be willing to go into the country. It is easy enough to say that, but I know the problems of the department and I am aware that you cannot solve them by merely asking a contractor to tender for a house away from the city, for he is very reluctant to do so,

but I am firmly convinced that that is the chief way to reduce our teacher shortage—making it possible for the young man to go out into the country. His accommodation would be secure if he is married and he could make his start on the ladder of promotion from that small school. By this means you would go a long way towards solving your teacher shortage problem. While we have this reluctance to leave the city and while we have a shortage of residences in the country for the young man we shall find a great difficulty in overcoming the teacher shortage.

A great deal has been said about the scholarship examination. I am not a champion of the system by any means. I said in remarks I made previously in this Chamber—remarks that I had no time to develop, as my time expired—that it had its great weaknesses, but it is true also that a lot of rot is talked about it by the critics of the system. They say children collapse under it. I have not seen any children collapse. It is said also that the teacher is compelled to drive them. That is not following the instructions of the department or the Queensland Teachers' Union. It is the fault of the individual teacher who ignores both the union and the department, who have given definite instructions that time will not be systematically extended and that the children are to be taught as of the 7th Grade, that they are to be given a full-syllabus instruction and that they are to take their part in the activities of the school. They are not to be spoken of as a scholarship class. The 7th Grade syllabus should be taught in such a way that it will be adequate for the children sitting for their scholarship. But despite all the instructions from the department and the union there are teachers who try to use the scholarship as a means of advancement to such an extent that we had one ex-teacher in this Chamber who said that the children were driven and were not allowed to take part in sport. The weaknesses of the system are a result of the actions of the teachers themselves. If the teachers as a body follow the dictates of their union, as well as their department's instructions, those weaknesses would disappear.

I can trace the change that has taken place in the scholarship system by taking my own case. I took my scholarship at the Central School in Maryborough. It was a very good school. The system that operated there was that I went to school from 8 o'clock in the morning and from then to when the first bell went at a quarter past 9 I had scholarship work taken by the head teacher; then from half past 9 to 4 o'clock I did the class work, I had a lot of homework given to me by the class teacher and after school, from 4 o'clock to 5 or half past 5, I was taken over by the head teacher again for scholarship work and I got quite a load of homework by him. In addition to that, we worked back every Saturday morning in the year. Those are the conditions under which I sat for the scholarship. You do not find those conditions operating today. No teacher would be game to push the scholarship children through in that way.

Those who have given their criticism of the scholarship examination have made half-hearted suggestions as to what should replace it. An internal examination has been suggested by some, but an internal examination does not alter the system, it merely shifts the responsibility; it takes the responsibility from the shoulders of the department and throws it back on the teacher, and gives him more responsibility.

The accrediting system that is being used in some of the southern States has been suggested. Under this system certain schools are allowed to lay down a course of instruction and the schools are approved or accredited by the department, and their certificates are recognised as taking the place of the ordinary certificate received in an external examination. I point out, however, that there is no unanimity in any of the States where the accrediting system operates as to whether it is a successful substitute for the scholarship examination.

I hope to see the time come when all children will have an unrestricted right for secondary education—without an examination by internal, external or accrediting system, but this is bound up vitally with the question of raising the school-leaving age and until conditions have so changed that we can go on with our enlarged building programme that is necessary for this advance I am afraid it will not be possible. I favour the ultimate abolition of all qualifying examinations for entrance to secondary schools and the giving of every child the right to go to a secondary school if he wants to do so.

**Mr. Devries:** That would automatically follow.

**Mr. WOOD:** That would automatically go with the lifting of the school age. In spite of all the tests made by the Research and Guidance Branch of the department it is very difficult to say what a child who has passed the scholarship is going to be like when he goes to the secondary school. We have a tremendous wastage of children who have passed the scholarship. For three or four weeks they go to a secondary school and then leave, or they leave shortly before Junior or after the Junior. It is hard to determine with any degree of accuracy what success scholarship winners will meet with.

There is one thing to which I am absolutely opposed, and that is the publication of the examination results in the newspapers. I have seen children sit for their scholarship and wait for the time when the results were to be announced, and the cruellest disappointment that the child feels is not in knowing that he failed in the examination, but in having to wait for the results and seeing the names published in the newspaper or, as happens in the towns and cities, displayed on a board for all to read, so that he goes up and sees his friend's name on it and his friend says, "I got there but you missed." That is the thing that hurts the child. I suggest that in order to obviate that experience each child should be notified personally of the result of the examination and it should not be featured publically in the

Press. I know from personal experience that is what hurts the child—and he is at a very emotional age.

One thing that struck me last year was the cruelty of a metropolitan newspaper in publishing the answers to the questions while the examination was still proceeding. We know very well that the scholarship examination starts off with English in the first morning. In the afternoon the subject is geography. On the second morning mathematics is the subject, and the last subject is history. A child is always inclined to magnify mistakes. Naturally, when sitting for examinations, children go outside the examination room after a subject is finished and compare answers and in doing so do not bear in mind so much the things they have done right as the things they have done wrong. In Brisbane last year a metropolitan newspaper published the complete answers to the subjects, taken I think on the Wednesday, when the children were sitting for examination on the Thursday. The subject that tries the pupils most is mathematics and hon. members can imagine the feeling in the mind of a child who is a bit shaky about his mathematics if he picks up the morning's newspaper and sees the complete correct answers to the previous day's examination papers. He thinks he may have done badly, perhaps worse than he did. Many such children would collapse before going into the examination room for the second day's subjects and I say shame on those newspapers who publish answers while the pupils are still sitting.

There is one other phase of the activities of the Department of Public Instruction that I should like to touch on and it is the issue of the yellow cards. I feel rather strongly on the question. A yellow card is given to every teacher, irrespective of whether he is a first-class, fair or indifferent teacher—he gets this yellow card every year. It does not matter whether his teaching ability varies a minute fraction, he still gets the card. It is a humiliation to a grown man or woman to be handed a card assessing teaching ability, disciplinary power, and industry. Whether it is a good or bad card, I still say it is a humiliation to the teacher to receive it. I know more heart-burnings are caused to many teachers by these yellow cards than any other single phase of their work.

**Mr. Sparkes:** It looks as though the hon. member for Isis had converted you.

**Mr. WOOD:** The hon. member for Isis has not converted me: what I am saying now about yellow cards I have said for very many years.

To me teachers fall into three categories. The first is those who are seeking promotion from grade to grade; having passed their examinations their promotion for the year's automatic increase depends on the yellow card. They could simply be classified by the inspector as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. No. 2 category is made up of teachers who seek promotion from class to class of school through transfer. The teachers in this category could still receive a detailed card. No. 3, which comprises the great majority of

teachers—women and many men—comprises those who never seek promotion from class of school to school but are quite satisfied to remain assistant teachers throughout their teaching careers. The third class comprises the great majority of teachers. I would suggest that all that need to be told teachers seeking promotion from grade to grade is whether they are satisfactory or unsatisfactory—

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Do you suggest that the great majority of teachers do not seek promotion?

**Mr. WOOD:** The great majority do not seek to go to schools of their own as head teachers. There should be no need at all to give yellow cards to those who remain as assistant teachers and do not want to go out as head teachers.

The change in this system would necessarily mean a change in the inspector's attitude towards teachers. The inspector could advise more than he does at present. If he concentrated less on the assessing of teachers, on mythical marks and handing out these cards, and more on giving advice I feel that the teachers would look forward to his visits more than they do. It is very difficult, too, for an inspector to assess the work of a teacher, particularly when there is so much confusion amongst all of us as to what the aims of teachers really are. If I asked individual hon. members of this Committee to tell me what he held to be the chief aims of education, probably each would give me a different answer. My view might be the same as yours, Mr. Riordan, but there would be a vast difference of opinion amongst us. It is hard to assess teachers, but it is so much harder when we know that we are by no means unanimous as to the aims of education.

To my mind there are three chief aims in education. They could be summarised broadly, although not necessarily in this order, in this way: to equip the child to earn his own living, to equip him to play his part as a citizen of his state, and to enable him to develop the latent powers and faculties of his nature and so enjoy a full and useful life. Broadly speaking, those are the three principal aims of education and any educational policy, to be successful, must embrace all three. How hard must it be for an inspector, having in mind the broad outlines and aims of education, to go into a school and after a brief run through it to say how successful or unsuccessful the teacher is? A builder may be erecting a structure of brick and it would not be a hard job for an expert to walk round it, examine it, and say whether he has done a good job or a bad one. But you cannot take the product on which the teacher is working and tell at a glance whether his work has been successful or not. Much of the work for which the teacher strives does not show results until many years later. I suppose that in this Committee there is not one hon. member who, years after his schooldays, does not remember a certain thing said or taught to him by his teacher. There is delayed action, very often, in the results of the instruction given by our teachers.

It is to be regretted that in the years gone by provision was not made in many schools for adequate playing areas. This is one of the greatest difficulties the Department of Public Instruction has to contend with. It should be unnecessary in a country the size of Queensland for any school having an attendance of 800 or 1,000 pupils to have inadequate playing space. I hope that in the planning of future schools the first thought in the minds of those responsible will be the size of the playing areas.

I believe too that it would be an improvement to limit the size of schools. There are a number of schools in Queensland with attendances of 1,000 or over. I say that no head teacher can get to know his teachers and the children thoroughly if he has a school with such an attendance. I suggest 500 or 600 as the maximum attendance for schools in this State. By giving effect to that rule we should be serving a twofold purpose. The first purpose would be to give to the head teacher a school he could handle with satisfaction and the second would be to give added opportunities for promotion to teachers. I suggest that the Government limit the size of schools to a maximum of approximately 600 to each school in future planning operations.

There is much more I should like to say on the subject of education. I very seldom believe in working the parish pump because I think that in political life there is ample that can be said from a broad State point of view, but there are occasions when one must do so, and I am led to say that one valuable work done in the last couple of years has been the extension of the University lecture facilities. There are many external students and it is of tremendous help to them if lectures can be supplemented by external lecture facilities. In some parts of Queensland—I believe in Rockhampton, Townsville, and Ipswich—these extension classes have been provided. At present I think they are limited to philosophy and English—I do not think they could ever go past the full arts faculty—but it is of tremendous value to the external student to receive personal assistance of this kind. I press for the extension of the scheme to Toowoomba because, as I said before, no city in Australia has a higher educational standard than Toowoomba. The standard there is very high, in both the State and the denominational schools, primary, and secondary. I do not think any city in Queensland gains a greater percentage of University scholarships than Toowoomba. All our schools are noted for the work they do; I know of no place in Queensland that has a higher educational standard, and I urge that serious consideration be given to the extension of this scheme to that city.

Now, Mr. Riordan, the Financial Statement that has been brought down by the Treasurer shows the difficulty that is encountered in handling the finances of the State. It is no easy problem to make a State run itself. Difficulties are met and overcome and then new difficulties confront the Treasurer and have to be solved. No doubt, the thing

that is causing the Treasurer very great concern at present is inflation. It worries all of us. We know not from day to day where we are heading. We heard a lot about the Chifley pound's being worth 12s.; we hear today about the Australian pound's being worth only 8s., and it must be a matter for very grave concern to every Australian to know when this trend will be checked.

We hear it said, "You must increase production!" No doubt an increase in production would help—we must have production in our community if we are to attain a balanced economy—but that is not the only answer. I can remember the time not many years ago when coal-miners produced to such an extent that they had an 18 months' supply of coal on the grass, and the mine-owners shut the mines down and said to the miners, "You have produced all we want now. We will let the mines lie idle for a while." I refer hon. members to the great industrial country of the United States of America, which is the greatest industrial power in the world today. Her production figures are a record. Under-production is not the trouble in the United States of America, yet she is faced with the same grave economic problem of inflation as we are. Greater production alone will not solve the difficulty.

In spite of all that is said, I am still not satisfied that many sections of our community are not having a Roman holiday at the working-man's expense, nor am I satisfied that many businesses are not making exorbitant profits. We hear talk about pegging wages; I should not mind them being pegged, as long as prices were pegged at those obtaining before the recent increase in the basic wage granted by the Federal court. If wages were pegged under those conditions and men were allowed to get some benefit from the court's most recent increase in the basic wage, there would be some justice, but nothing would convince me, after watching very carefully the activities of many of our big business men, that they have not been having a great game at the expense of the working men and women of this country, and that they have not been taking us for a jolly good ride. Unless the Federal authorities do something to arrest this inflation, as the hon. member for Nundah so rightly pointed out, we are heading straight for a depression. We cannot avoid it unless more value is put back into the pound. No one wants to see it, but many of us are blinking our eyes to the fact that we are heading straight for a depression unless steps are taken to put more value into the £.

I think it was the hon. member for Cherm-side who said in this chamber that Mr. Menzies was the greatest Australian that has ever lived. The hon. member for Norman agrees with him. Without even thinking, I could name a dozen men outside politics who have done more for Australia than the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies. In spite of the soothing syrup that is ladled out to us by the Prime Minister when he speaks, the people of Australia are still looking for something positive. It is not enough to prepare a speech in sugary language and to have heart-to-

heart talks with the nation unless they are followed by some action. We have had no such action so far from the Commonwealth Liberal-Country Party Government that will arrest the inflation that threatens to engulf us.

Make no mistake about it, all the legislation designed to tell men how they should think is not going to stop the spread of Communism when a depression hits us.

All the legislation designed for that purpose will not matter twopence then. You cannot have Acts of Parliament to tell men what they are to think in a time of depression. That is not the answer to Communism. We must make sure that the soil is not fertile for the spread of Communism. You cannot prevent it from spreading by legislation. We must take care to see that this fertile soil is not created by a depression.

We have heard a great deal about increases in meat prices and in the few minutes at my disposal I want to give examples of the scandalous state of affairs by which some people force up the price of meat. Not so long ago I was shown a docket that a retail butcher got from a wholesale butcher. All the prices were right, they conformed to the price regulations, but the docket contained the price of two pigs at £7 each, £14 for the two, but he never got them. I found on investigation that this was by no means an isolated case and the meat was sold by a Brisbane wholesaler to a Brisbane retailer. That is one way in which meat prices are forced up by unscrupulous people who without doing anything at all charge excessive prices in order to make more profit for themselves. The working people have to suffer while these people do all that they possibly can to circumvent the prices legislation.

I know that there are many more things that I could discuss on the Financial Statement but my time is running out, and I should like to end by congratulating the Treasurer on the work that he has put into the preparation of his Budget. The Treasurer was a very capable and sincere private member and he has shown the same capacity for work, the same knowledge of his duties, and the same enthusiasm as a Minister as he did as a private member. I am sure that while the State has the present Treasurer in charge of its financial affairs he will see that all our resources are very carefully husbanded.

**Mr. DONALD (Bremer)** (12.25 p.m.): I desire to add my congratulations to the Treasurer on the presentation of his first Budget. I feel very confident that that hon. gentleman will display the same energy and wisdom in his new portfolio that characterised his administration of the other departments that he previously controlled.

I was very surprised to hear the hon. member for Coorparoo attack the Government on the deficit forecast for this financial period. It is one of the very few deficits that Treasurers have budgeted for in this State over the last decade. I was surprised that mention was made of it by the hon.

member for Coorparoo as on no occasion has the Opposition ever offered congratulations to the various Treasurers when they brought down Budgets revealing continual surpluses. The hon. member for Fassifern, during the debate on the last Budget, said it was a comparatively easy matter for the State Treasurer to return a surplus because all he had to do was to rely on the generosity of Uncle Ben Chifley. If we apply that logic to the present circumstances—and I am not admitting that the hon. member's logic is correct—we can only come to this conclusion: that the leader of his party in the Federal sphere who is the Federal Treasurer, is not prepared to give to his own native State the same generous and deserving treatment that it obtained from a Labour Treasurer.

The hon. member for Coorparoo referred to the expected deficit as a record deficit. Again he was wrong. That very doubtful honour, if it is an honour at all, belongs to the party of which he is an adherent, whose representatives returned it when they last occupied the Treasury benches. If he wants to apply surpluses or deficits as a test of good or bad government, let us compare the financial results of States governed by Labour, such as Queensland, and those governed by anti-Labour parties. If we turn to the "Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics" we shall find, without wearying the Chamber with other figures, that for the last financial year the Tory-governed States of South Australia and Victoria ended their financial year's work with an expenditure in excess of income. In Victoria the deficit was £1,385,000 and in South Australia it was £345,000. While the anti-Labour Governments were managing those States so ably, in the opinion of their party followers in this House, the Queensland Government were able to show a surplus for the same period of £50,000. True, it is not a very substantial surplus, but it is a big improvement compared with a deficit of nearly £1,500,000 shown by the Victorian Government for the same period. If we turn again to the "Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics" we shall find that for the six months ended December, 1949, the Victorian Government had a deficit of £2,900,000, and the South Australian Tory Government a deficit of £60,000, yet in Queensland, under wise and prudent Labour leadership, a surplus of £137,000 was achieved. If hon. members opposite want to challenge the capabilities of Labour or anti-Labour Governments on their financial achievements we are quite willing to accept that challenge.

The hon. member for Coorparoo went to great length in emphasising that controls were of no use, that they would not stop inflation, or give any benefit to the community. He followed this declaration with the statement that wages should be pegged. He would peg the price of the only commodity that the worker has to sell, namely, their labour power. Their wages should be pegged and their earning capacity should be pegged, and their degree of comfort and their standard of living also should be pegged. He emphasised too that the control of prices was a failure. If

that is true, he cannot lay any of the blame on any member on this side of the Chamber because, during the campaign on the prices referendum, we made it very plain that the States of themselves could not control prices effectively. Therefore, any inefficiency of price-control lies at the door of the Opposition. What did he say about profits? He said that the profits of their supporters were sacrosanct, that you must not touch profits at all, but they would peg wages all the time and reduce them; in fact, they ended their speeches on the cry that they did not know what effect the increase in wages was going to have. Unfortunately, the increase in wages will not bring any positive relief to the working-class, because of the increase in prices.

Speaking of inflation and the danger of inflation, which appears to be on everyone's lips, we have powerful and wealthy organisations like the Institute of Public Affairs inserting advertisements in the daily Press, contending that inflation is almost as great a danger to Australia as Communism, and asking the people of the Commonwealth to fight the ever-increasing inflationary trend. The past five years have been years of great prosperity for Australia, but also years of great economic difficulty. In a world suffering from the aftermath of war, a world of shortages, rising prices and economic dislocation, our national Government have had a hard struggle to keep the Australian economy on an even keel. The dominating problem has been to prevent the inflation referred to by the Institute of Public Affairs from getting out of hand, and to protect Australia in advance against the threat of a post-war threat of depression. It is my intention to explain to members of this Chamber how this problem was tackled by the Commonwealth Labour Government and how the present Federal Government are handling the situation. Before doing so I should like very briefly to define inflation, and show how it affects the people generally. Inflation is an expansion of the volume of purchasing power without a corresponding expansion in the volume of commodities available for sale. The result, other things being equal, is a rise of the general price level.

Inflation is almost as much an evil as deflation. It expropriates all those whose incomes are fixed in terms of money, not only the numerically unimportant group of rich people whose income is derived from invested capital, but also a great number of small rentiers, and particularly the growing class of war, age and invalid pensioners, as well as the numerous people depending on superannuation for a livelihood. Although, comparatively speaking, workers benefit during an inflation period when employment is easy to obtain more than during a deflationary period when there is widespread unemployment, the wealthy private banks, monopolists and others are able to increase profits enormously during both periods. Workers, on the other hand, are continually and systematically robbed by ever-increasing prices during an inflationary period such as is being experienced in Australia at present, and are

continually and systematically impoverished down to the breadline during a deflationary period such as experienced during the early '30s.

In the July-August issue of the Institute of Public Affairs Review, the official organ of Big Business in Australia, attention is directed to the passive way of waiting till the reaction from the World War boom forces a lower level of prices and costs within Australia. The Menzies Government have adopted this passive way ever since their election to office in December of last year on each occasion on which they have been challenged on the question of inflation or increasing prices. It is the way anti-Labour Governments adopt, where possible, whenever they are faced with a similar state of affairs politically.

The passive way to which the Institute of Public Affairs referred has always been the policy of anti-Labour to the extent that it has been tolerated by the workers, who are the victims. It is the one that promotes the inflating of the currency and increased prices in times when there is a shortage of labour power, i.e., when there are more jobs available than there are workers to fill them, and for the deflating of the currency and the reduction of wages and prices when an abundance of labour power is available. This policy brings in its train, as it was intended to, widespread under-employment and unemployment, which is of course, followed by loss of homes and furniture and other commodities purchased by the time-payment method whether they are paid for, or in the course of being purchased. Then follows widespread insolvencies and losses for the small business concerns, traders, shopkeepers, farmers and other sections of the community, who find it impossible to meet their commitments because of a fall in prices and loss of business. All these losses, which in the aggregate represent many millions of pounds, are in turn enormous gains for the wealthy banking groups, powerful monopolists and other exploiters. In addition, they gain as the result of a lowering of wages and prices as value is automatically put back into the pound and the pound's purchasing power is immediately increased.

The extent to which the Menzies Government are compelled to finance the sending of troops overseas to Korea or additional expenditure for defence purposes may determine whether they will be able to continue to give effect to the passive way of putting back value into the pound. The extent to which the workers will continue to tolerate being robbed by the ever-increasing tempo in the rise in the cost of living, which incidentally is returning handsome profits to the Commonwealth Government's wealthy financial supporters, may also determine the issue.

An upward movement of prices is expected during a war and, in the main, people do not complain of these increases very much but they are not used to the way prices go up after a war and complain bitterly of

these increases. If you can recall, Mr. Riordan, what happened after the Armistice of 1918, you will remember that prices rose more rapidly than they did during the war period, 1914 to 1918. You will remember the boom of the post-war transition period and remember also the slump resulting in the world-wide depression that followed. It is true that many countries were hit harder and suffered longer than Australia although we here counted our unemployed not by tens of thousands but by hundreds of thousands. The Commonwealth Labour Government realised in 1945 that Australia would have to pass through another post-war transition period and that this time an uncontrolled boom would be extremely severe and prolonged, resulting in a depression more disastrous than the last.

There have been six years of war, as against four years of World War I. Everywhere manpower and production were diverted on a much larger scale than before to purely essential war industries. There was a very acute shortage of basic commodities and foodstuffs throughout the world, and there is no sign that these shortages are being overtaken. However, the people had little idea of the dangers ahead. They were naturally pleased at the successful end of the war: the twin evils of Nazism and Fascism had been defeated, democracy had triumphed. They were about to enjoy the fruits of peace after a well-earned victory. They thought that in a very short period things would be back to normal. The then Federal Opposition played on this feeling and, unfortunately, the Press did very little, if anything, to educate the public. The Commonwealth Government were also aware that under the Constitution it was doubtful how long they could legally continue controls over inflation, once the fighting was over. To their credit, it must be admitted that the Government were prepared to fight the dangers of inflation, thereby jeopardising their chances of re-election by continuing unpopular controls. The need for these controls in Australia was not due to any runaway inflation such as that experienced in Germany and other European countries after World War No. I. in 1923 and in China and Hungary after the end of World War No. II. Neither did it arise from those consequences of inflation known only too well to the Australian consumers—shortages, higher prices, poorer quality, poorer service, and a lowering of efficiency by employer and employee alike, due without doubt to the ease of selling goods and winning profits and the number of jobs available. These conditions were almost unavoidable in Australia's post-war economic conditions, with or without controls. An uncontrolled boom would have increased the real income of some and reduced the real income of others. Profits would have risen much faster than prices, wages more slowly, salaries and pensions much more slowly still.

This was the experience in America, for in the first twelve months after price-control had been lifted in June 1946, retail prices rose by 20 per cent., company profits by 60 per cent., and hourly earnings in factories

by 12 per cent. American wages have not caught up with prices yet, and profits are still a long way ahead, which confirms the claim that under our present economic system wages are always chasing prices. Confirmation of that is to be found in our Industrial Court system as we know it in Australia. People are saying that as soon as the judges of the courts decide that an increase in the basic wage is warranted and give it accordingly, prices must go up. Why is this so? Before the wage-earner, no matter in what industry he is employed, whether he is an engineer or a common labourer, can obtain from the court an increase in his wages, he must satisfy the Court that the cost of living entitles him to that increase.

**Mr. Gair:** The increase in the wage is on the increased cost of living that has already taken place.

**Mr. DONALD:** Exactly. During the period he was on his previous wage he was robbed over and over again and he will be so robbed during an inflationary period.

After World War I. many ex-service men suffered from the effects of uncontrolled inflation. They bought at the boom prices prevailing in 1920—land, stock, homes, furniture and businesses—and a few years afterwards lost their capital and their jobs.

Inflation breeds slumps and depressions for the following reasons: goods in the shortest supply bring the highest prices; people anxious to do well flock into these industries. Boom prices are willingly paid for land, stock, factories, machinery and other equipment. When demand falls to normal as the shortages are overtaken, the surplus employees and capital employed in the industry are left high and dry. Profit and prices fall, the value of invested capital drops, bankruptcies occur, wages are cut, and unemployment grows.

In the absence of any stabilisation policy our export industries are very vulnerable to boom and slump. Country Party members will agree that prices of our primary products always rise and fall more sharply than any other prices. During a boom period primary producers and people willing and eager to enter primary-producing industries are prepared to, and do, pay high prices for land, stock, and equipment essential for the carrying on of their industry. Generally speaking, domestic prices in the main follow export prices upwards, which is followed in turn by an increase in wages. When the slump comes, export prices fall faster and farther than the prices exporters in Australia have to pay for the goods they buy, and to some extent this is equally true of the labour costs they must meet. The excess profits accumulated in the boom period are lost in the excess losses of the slump. People who entered the industry in the boom, having had to pay extra high prices for land and stock, which absorbed their profits, which were admittedly high, find themselves ruined. These were the dangers the Chifley Government tried hard to avoid.

The causes of post-war inflation are, I think, well known. During a war, if not the major then a very substantial part of

our man-power and production is diverted to war purposes, and civilian expenditure is limited and in many cases prohibited. The money that would have gone to buy a bigger helping of butter and meat, extra clothing, housing, a motor-car, &c., is to some degree taken from the people in taxes and higher prices, but it must be admitted that a considerable portion of it was saved.

With the ending of the war, the people naturally desired to buy all the things they were denied during the war and it must be remembered that they had the necessary money to do so. Ex-service personnel wanted large supplies of clothing; farmers wanted tractors, farm equipment and fencing wire; business men wanted material, offices, factories and machinery, and Governments desired to carry out deferred programmes of road construction, irrigation, the building and maintenance of hospitals, schools, railways and other major projects.

The ending of the war reduced the nation's need for essentially war goods and made available man-power for productive resources, but unfortunately these resources could not be converted immediately to the production of civilian goods. Consequently, the demand for the arrears of civil production was at its height at the close of the war, while it was some time before production could get into its stride. Our imports were not available to any great extent, because the Home Land, our main supplier, had suffered a greater dislocation of production than we had. That was also true of all European countries from which we had imported supplies. Any available resources of Canada and the United States of America were extended to the limit to meet the needs of people whose countries were in a much worse condition than Australia.

The supply of goods produced was not all available for immediate consumption, as a large percentage was needed to build up the stocks of manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. The spinning-out of supplies had reduced stocks to the bare minimum during 1942-43. It is true that they were built up again during 1946-47 and the first half of 1948, but more production than is generally realised went onto the shelves during this period instead of into immediate use.

So we find that the immediate post-war period was one of severe shortages accompanied by an abnormally high demand that greatly exceeded an abnormally low supply. Had controls not been introduced, which was suggested by the hon. member for Coorparoo, prices would have soared. The then Commonwealth Government saw that they would have to tackle the situation from three sides: to boost the abnormally low supply; to restrict the abnormally high demand; and, until the gap was closed, to control prices.

I am prepared to admit that controls could have been done without, but at a price. All controls could have been abolished and inflation allowed to run its course. Inflation itself would, in the end, have closed the gap. With the defeat of the prices referendum and the resulting weakening of effective price-control, as we have had demonstrated

to us over and over again, prices have risen and, as the result, a given wage, pension or salary, is buying less and less, the poorer buyers have been shaken off, and the demand reduced to something like what the rich buyers need.

No important group advocated this policy openly; the injustices of inflation and the danger of a slump to follow were too great. But numerous groups were advocating the abolition of controls on the particular goods they were selling and, where controls still exist, they still are. "Let prices find their own level! Let prices rip!" How often have we heard that cry from hon. members opposite! The loudest cry was a sure indication that in that person's industry, supplies were still inadequate and the prospects of huge profits were very tempting. These never-ending piecemeal attacks certainly went a long way towards breaking down controls.

The Liberal Party, in keeping with its usual tactics, pursued a much more subtle policy on controls. "Demand exceeds supply," they said, and answered, "Very well, increase supply." We heard them say in this Chamber that that was the positive approach to the problem. "Controls," they said, "restrict production, reduce incentive, stifle initiative, and cause the very shortages they are supposed to control. Reduce controls and you will stimulate production." The Labour Government were accused of continuing controls because they liked pushing people around. That argument, as the passing of time has shown, was fallacious, and when used by people who should know better, dishonest. However, it had a superficial plausibility and it impressed sections of the community who had it constantly presented to them by the newspapers. There is not one hon. member opposite, who, if he spoke the truth, would not say that the Chifley Government had done an excellent job. What success the Federal Labour Government did achieve in pursuing a steady and sound policy for economic stability was in the teeth of this Opposition clamour and in an atmosphere that greatly and unnecessarily increased the difficulties of an already difficult economic situation.

Our standard of living depends upon the volume of goods and services we can produce. When demand exceeds supply it is much more desirable to bridge the gap as far as possible by stimulating supply than by curtailing demand. The Federal Labour Government were well aware of this obvious truth when they began to meet the post-war situation. The biggest contribution that Government could make to Australian production was to ensure the smooth transfer of men and women from the various Services to industry and the maintenance of full employment thereafter. This, I think all hon. members will agree, they did exceedingly well. Almost 1,000,000 ex-service personnel were demobilised and found useful employment without having to suffer many months of unemployment, as happened after World War I. No fewer than 250,000 were provided with tools of trade and a similar number received training in various trades, professions or callings. For some years

before the war one-tenth of the Australian workers were without means of livelihood, for the simple reason that there was no employment for them. Since the end of the war unemployment has been negligible.

Given full employment, however, it is obvious that further spectacular increases in production were simply not possible. The business man claimed—we have heard this again and again and it has been emphasised by hon. members opposite—that a reduction in his taxation would encourage him to increase his production. How could he increase his production? Where was he to get the man-power, the material, or the factory space? The only real possibility of increasing production, once we have full employment of our productive resources, is more efficient use of these resources. This can be done even in modern industry, by employing more and better machinery. However, we have in the past relied largely on importation from abroad for our machinery requirements. The United States of America was the only country with an export surplus of machinery during the post-war years but dollars to purchase American machinery were very scarce. The Australian engineering industry has been producing a good deal of machinery and its production is still expanding. But increased home production of capital equipment cannot make a quick contribution to the output of consumer goods, for the immediate effect of producing more machinery is to reduce the output of other things. At best, mechanisation is a gradual process.

Better organisation by employers and steady work by employees are next in order in the contribution to higher production. Both are important and certainly desirable, but they cannot increase output to any great extent in a short period, or do much to overcome the arrears of six years of war.

In a predominantly private-enterprise economy the positive steps that Governments can take to increase productivity in industry are naturally limited. The Commonwealth Labour Government were, if anything, over-ambitious in their efforts to encourage new enterprises and expand secondary industries. The investment of many millions of pounds of new capital from overseas was facilitated. Government-owned war-time factories, with their plant and equipment worth millions of pounds, were sold or leased to private enterprise.

**A Government Member:** Just what were they worth.

**Mr. DONALD:** From memory I think £80,000,000. At least £10,000,000 was advanced to private firms by the finance department of the Commonwealth Bank. Expansion of secondary industry received such an impetus that the establishment of new factories and plant has run ahead of the labour available to run and maintain them.

Let us get to shortages. Hon. members opposite blame members of the working-class for a reduction in output and say that

shortages are a big contribution to the present position. The shortages of the post-war years have been due, not to a failure of supply, but to abnormally high demand. The production of most commodities is higher than before the war, not merely in absolute figures but per head of a substantially increased population, and yet we have shortages. The most severe shortages have been in fuel and power, the production of coal per head of population in 1948-49 was 8 per cent. higher than in 1938-39, that gas was 47 per cent. higher, and electricity 58 per cent. higher. In spite of all the criticism of the housing lag, there were more houses per head of population in Australia when the census was taken in 1947 than there were when the census was taken in 1921. We did not hear any outcry of a housing shortage in 1921, for the simple reason that people then could not afford to buy more than there were. Full employment, which we emphasise, and higher real incomes for those in the lower income groups, have increased the demand for homes and many other things, such as higher-quality food, milk, fruit, clothing, etc. Who will contend that the workers are not entitled to them? It would have needed a phenomenal increase in production to meet the arrears in demand quickly. Employers could not have achieved it—I say that deliberately—no matter what incentives they were given.

Surely to goodness they could not expect any greater incentive than they were given! They were, in fact, given better incentives than they ever had. It had never been easier to make sales or profits. Insolvencies were at a minimum. According to the national-income estimate, in 1946-47, company profits after taxation were 50 per cent. above those of pre-war times, 65 per cent. above them in 1948-49 and 90 per cent. above them in 1949-50. That seems a reasonable incentive, even after making full allowance for increased prices. Uncontrolled inflation, of course, would have meant still higher profits in the short run. So it is not surprising that short-sighted business men, not thinking of a slump ahead, chafed at inflation controls imposed by the Chifley Government.

The only important thing that the Government could have done to increase production, and did not do, was, to exercise greater control over production. Australia's main difficulties during the post-war period have been due to the tremendous increase in the demand for such basic essentials as coal, steel, building material, and house-building labour. Shortages in these fields have greatly retarded the production of many other commodities. Had the Chifley Government continued their war-time prohibition of non-essential production and their war-time direction of labour into industries essential for the transition period, these shortages could have been overcome much more efficiently and rapidly. Yet the Government were never criticised for abandoning these controls. The public was entitled to decide how much control it was prepared to stand.

But later complaints about the consequences of decontrol suggest that had the people been better informed they might have preferred retention of controls for a longer period.

The 40-hour week has been blamed by the Press and some hon. members opposite for a certain degree of inflation. I remind hon. members opposite, however, that the hon. member for North Toowoomba, when delivering his speech on the Budget, drew attention to the inflation in the United States. The granting of the 40-hour week by the Commonwealth Court of Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration from 1 January, 1948, may have temporarily reduced production, or at least reduced the rate of increase of production, but examination will show that the adverse effects on production have been greatly exaggerated.

For several reasons, the reduction in the standard working week from 44 to 40 hours did not reduce production in anything like the same proportion. In many firms, employers were stimulated by the pressure of higher wage costs to introduce improvements of management or new machinery, which actually increased output or prevented a serious fall. In other cases the 44 hours were worked, the last four at overtime rates. This raised the cost and prices but kept production up.

Dr. S. S. Stevens, of the Department of Economic Research, Melbourne University, conducted a survey of the effect of the introduction of the 40-hour week on 70 Victorian firms. The investigation showed that during 1948 production per man-hour increased by 9 per cent. Increases in mechanisation and improvement in management may have helped in a small way, but the survey strongly suggests that if the 40-hour week slowed up the rate of production the effect was much smaller than critics of the policy believed.

Even assuming that in some small way the 40-hour week acted as a brake on productivity, it was to the Australian workers a long-awaited and prized improvement in their living standard, a deliberate preference for more leisure as against more goods. Refusal to grant this improvement would, I feel, have involved far greater losses to production through industrial unrest. The change, however, was well timed. As Dr. Stevens suggested in the preliminary report on his survey, the change in the standard working week, coming at a time when demand for goods and services was high, but many shortages were beginning to disappear, was absorbed by industry much more easily than it would have been in a condition of acute shortage or depression.

The Chifley Government knew as well as their critics that to increase supplies was preferable to restricting demand, but, as we have seen, most of the measures the critics proposed for stimulating production would have been ineffective. In the post-war situation increasing supplies could not possibly bridge the inflationary gap. If inflation was to be checked it was essential to control demand.

Direct controls over the amount of labour and materials that could be used by industry were abandoned when the war ended. Control of business expenditure, therefore, had to be exercised indirectly through controls of funds available to business for capital expenditure. The war-time control of borrowing from the public through the issue of shares (capital issues) was continued, to prevent wasteful use, for example, of building materials to build racecourses, breweries, hotels, or picture shows, rather than homes. Taxation of company profits was kept at high levels. However, the chief instrument for restraining excessive business expenditure became the control of bank advances. When industry borrows money from the banks, it has so much extra money to buy goods and services. If production is at capacity, the extra money cannot bring extra labour or other resources into production; it merely forces prices up.

The Commonwealth Government retained their war-time powers over the volume of loans to industry under the banking legislation of 1945. This control of bank advances has been so smooth and efficient that its immense importance in maintaining economic stability in the post-war years is easily overlooked. It is not generally realised how grave would have been the consequences of mismanagement of banking policy. Over-expansion of bank loans is akin to over-expansion of the note issue. When a Government print notes indiscriminately to pay for their needs, they increase demand indiscriminately and cause a runaway inflation. Exactly the same thing would have happened had the banks been allowed to issue credit indiscriminately. The experience of the post-war years has demonstrated how essential it is in modern economy for the banking policy to be dovetailed into general economic policy. This is possible only if one authority is ultimately responsible for both and if that authority has adequate control over the banking system.

Government expenditure on goods and services makes claims on scarce resources in the same way as private expenditure. One aspect of an anti-inflation policy, therefore, must be to keep watch on Government expenditure, usually referred to as public expenditure. But that does not mean that expenditure by private firms or consumers should always receive preference over those forms of expenditure that meet the needs of a community as a whole, such as defence, education, transport, irrigation or social services, which are therefore most conveniently carried out through public authorities.

At the end of the war the Commonwealth Government's demand for goods for war purposes fell heavily, releasing resources for civilian production. Commonwealth and State Governments also helped by further postponing public works and projects already deferred during the war. The only important increase in expenditure of this kind sponsored by the Federal Government was in housing, but I think hon. members will agree that was a case of dire necessity. Yet no

aspect of the Chifley Government policy has been more vociferously attacked by the anti-Labour parties and Press than their alleged excessive expenditure.

I admit that much of the criticism has not really been aimed at the level of Government expenditure. Many of the Chifley Government critics disliked the objects of expenditure, that is to say, increased social services and essential Government controls of the economy, and hoped, by enlisting the support of the taxpayer, to get controls and social services slashed. For the rest, criticism of excessive and wasteful Government expenditure has arisen mainly from the fact that the Government did in fact spend more in each of the post-war years than they did before the war. But so has everyone, because prices have risen.

If we examine the position we shall find that there is no foundation for the claim that there were high increases in Government expenditure from 1938-39 to 1948-49. In 1938-39 the Governments (Commonwealth, State and Local) purchased for civilian purposes 10.75 per cent. of the total goods and services available, in 1946-47 10.76 per cent. and in 1947-48 10.75 per cent. and in 1948-49 11.71 per cent. so that in 1947-48 the percentage was exactly the same as in 1938-39. The increased expenditure of almost 1 per cent. over pre-war years in 1948-49 was due in the main to public works and maintenance carried out by State Governments.

In one respect, and I admit it quite candidly, Government policy may have increased demand in the provision of cash social-service benefits. These cost £31 million in 1938-39 and £103 million in 1948-49. Much of this rise merely reflected increased rates of pensions to compensate for the increase in the cost of living. Merely to prevent social service benefits from falling behind other incomes, they increased their cost by £60 million between 1938-39 and 1948-49. Allowing for this, we find that new social services cost about £20 million per annum extra during post-war years. This amount is not a net addition to total demand. As these payments are financed out of taxation, the taxpayers' demand is reduced, though it is doubtful whether it is to the same extent as the demand of pensioners and others is increased.

The assumption, therefore, that increases in social-service expenditure have been a major factor in post-war inflation is wrong.

But what if improvements in social services had made a major addition to total demand? Would any hon. member suggest that, in view of the necessity of restraining total expenditure in the country, the requisite economies should have been made at the expense of the poorest and neediest among the people, the aged, invalid, widows and others receiving social-service benefits? That is what criticism of excessive expenditure on social services implies. Australia, once one of the most progressive nations in matters of social policy, has fallen a long way behind other countries in the quality of her social services.

Some of the improvements made by the Chifley Government were long overdue and were justified, even if they required somewhat greater economy in other directions.

**Mr. Dewar:** But the major improvements in social services have been brought in by the Menzies Government.

**Mr. DONALD:** If that interjection is made when the hon. member is in a serious mood, I should hate to hear what he might say when he is in a frivolous mood.

I shall not be so foolish as to suggest that the exceptional prosperity we have enjoyed in Australia for several years has been entirely, or even mainly, due to the Labour Government's policy, but it has certainly helped. World shortages and bountiful seasons have enabled Australia to take the full advantage of record export prices, and post-war demands have made it somewhat easy to maintain full employment. The danger during the last five years was not low prices and unemployment. On the contrary it was, and still is, a hectic boom and inflation, followed by slump and depression. The Commonwealth Labour Government's record must be judged by their success in maintaining a reasonable degree of economic stability. If mistakes were made, they were not those charged by the Chifley Government's critics, but, on the contrary, were mistakes rendered unavoidable by the need of any democratic Government to carry the public with them in their policies. If the policy was not as successful as it might have been, the blame rests with those who, from ignorance or greed, misled the people into withholding support from policies more adequate to the nation's needs.

Before long, with the rest of the world, Australia will very likely enter a new economic phase. The economic dangers that will confront us will be the opposite ones to those with which we have had to deal since the war: falling instead of rising prices, deficiency of demand instead of excess demand, and unemployment instead of a labour shortage. To the average Australian, still carrying the memories of the 1929-33 depression, the dangers of this new phase will be very familiar. They will require no less wise Government control than the preceding phase, which is about to end. The penalty for heeding the apostles of business freedom may indeed be very disastrous.

I conclude by saying that the Menzies Government will be well advised to remember and learn from the lessons of the post-war years.

Before resuming my seat, I should like to thank the Government for their action in advertising for a lecturer-organiser in the coal-mining industry who will be attached to the Ipswich Technical College. Such an appointment was promised some time ago, and will fill a long-felt want in the coal-mining industry. Those who are directly connected with that industry are jubilant at the fact that these advertisements have been inserted in the local and overseas Press, and

are hopeful that everything will be in readiness to enable this lecturer-organiser to take up his duties at the commencement of the next academic year.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH (Cook)** (2.34 p.m.): It was not my intention, on being elected to this Parliament, to indulge in personalities, and so far I have been able to grapple successfully with any personal problems that have arisen without taking advantage of privilege. However, I was mildly attacked by an hon. member on a recent occasion when I was absent; I refer to the hon. member for Carpentaria. Although his attack was very mild, I intend to reply to it. He endeavoured to belittle statements that I had made on the ground that I was talking about places to which I had never been.

In reply let me tell him that I have not spoken of places where I have never been and that I have been to quite a number of new places in my electorate since I was elected. I suggest to the hon. member for Carpentaria that had he given as much attention to that part of the Cook electorate, which he then represented prior to the redistribution, as he had given to his own private business I should not be here today.

So much for myself. I now must take sides on behalf of an old friend and colleague, the hon. member for Mirani. Prior to the war I spent most of my life at Gordonvale, in North Queensland, where I knew the hon. member for Mirani. I knew him when I was a lad and later on the part that he played in the development of the district. It has been implied, I think by the hon. member for Bundaberg, that the hon. member for Mirani was not very well liked and indeed has a bad name in that part of the State. The hon. member for Mirani's name ranks amongst the highest for the part he has taken in the development of that area in North Queensland. When the hon. member for Mirani was a working-man he fought for his rights in the early days and in those times there were many rights the working-man did not get. The hon. member saw that he got them and he, with other farmers in the Mulgrave district, organised to fight the sugar-mill companies for due recognition, and ultimately got it. I do not propose to go into all the things that he did in the development of the area but if you want any proof of his actions and of what I say then let me tell you that whenever the hon. member for Mirani visits Gordonvale, one of his former employers, whom he bashed as a working-man, always invites him to be his guest, thereby indicating that he appreciated the fact that the demands made by the hon. member for Mirani as a cane-cutter were always just. Let me give further proof, if it is necessary. During the last Federal election campaign the hon. member for Mirani carried out the campaign in the subdivision of Gordonvale for the Country Party candidate, Mr. Tom Gilmore, and for the first time in history the anti-Labour poll was in excess of the Labour poll in that area.

So much for personalities. It has been notable that everyone who has spoken on this debate so far has been unanimous or

at least has given lip-service to the need for developing the undeveloped parts of the State, particularly the far north of Queensland. In the last few days there has been a chance for the Government to show their sincerity in this respect, only in a small way it is true, but it is something that is required right away. Last week I asked a question of the Treasurer in the House and for the time being the answer has been satisfactory. There are people endeavouring to establish a new industry in the Bailey Creek area between the Daintree River and Cape Tribulation. They have proved that they can grow rice but the cost of transport facilities was out of all proportion to what they could get for that product. The result now is that they have 5 tons of last year's crop but they have no means of transporting it economically. All they are asking is for immediate assistance in the way of cheap transport for this rice.

The 100-foot motor vessel "Merinda" makes a weekly trip to Cooktown. It calls at an anchorage at Cape Tribulation but not at Bailey Creek. These people ask for immediate help, that that motor vessel be subsidised—the amount will not be great—so that it might call at the mouth of Bailey Creek to enable these pioneer settlers to load their produce and keep contact with the port of Cairns.

The next thing they require—and they have asked for it for years through the Douglas Shire Council—is the opening up of the Bailey Creek-Cape Tribulation area by the construction of a road. There is some excellent land there. In fact, the land was reported on in 1922 by the Royal Commission of which Mr. W. Harris was chairman. That commission recommended the establishment of a sugar mill at Tully to open up that area, and in doing so said that the Bailey Creek-Daintree area should receive second preference for the establishment of a sugar mill. I mention that to show that there are thousands of acres of first-class land in that area that at present are growing nothing but virgin scrub.

The Treasurer, in answer to my question last week as to the construction of a road from the Cook Highway to Bailey Creek, said there was no record that any promise to construct that road had been made. I accept his statement but I have no doubt that he is aware of a statement I made in this Chamber previously that Mr. Kemp, the then Main Roads Commissioner, had given a verbal undertaking to the chairman of the Douglas Shire Council, Mr. Raymond Rex, a man known well to the Ministry, that he would construct a road from the Daintree into this land at Bailey Creek to enable it to be opened up. Shortly afterwards Mr. Kemp was seconded from that sub-department and appointed to a higher position, but nothing has been done about the road since.

I am aware there are certain difficulties. I discussed the matter with a Minister outside the House the other day. A bridge over the Daintree River would probably cost £25,000, some say £50,000. That expenditure would probably be made for a few people, who would use it immediately, but it

must be recognised that immediately road access was given this land many owners of the land would proceed to develop it. If the Government think that the construction of a bridge is not possible at present, they can still provide road access for these people. They could provide a small ferry similar to that in use at Moggill. That would be a start as it would provide some means of access. The people of the district contend that a dry-weather road can be constructed in two or three months by means of a bulldozer. It is up to the Government to prove their sincerity in even this small way and give this area an opportunity to be developed. There is no doubt about its richness or the need to populate it with the utmost expedition.

The Treasurer has budgeted for a deficit for this financial year. That is something that Governments can do but individuals cannot. If an individual budgeted for a deficit and it became an accomplished fact he could only continue to live by bartering pumpkins and cabbages for eggs over the fence with his neighbour or sending the kids down town selling bottles for 2d. each.

If the total of our expenditure is to exceed the total of our foreseen revenue, it is up to the Treasurer, I think, to obtain that revenue by some other means.

**Mr. Power:** What would you suggest?

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** I will suggest something.

**Mr. Power:** What do you suggest cutting out?

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** I am not going to cut out anything. Do not think for a moment that I am one of those punters who have hundreds of pounds to spend on racehorses. However, like 90 per cent. of Queenslanders and Australians, I enjoy a little flutter at certain times, even though it may be only 5s. or 10s. or even 2s. 6d.—and we usually try the hardest race in the country—the Melbourne Cup. The point is that the majority of the people of Queensland and Australia like to have a small bet, at least a couple or three times a year. We live in a democracy. There are people who do not believe in betting; they do not think it is any good for us or for themselves; and they are entitled to their opinion, as long as they do not try and stop other people from doing what they think is right, that is, of course, if those other people are in the majority. That is the essence of democracy. The majority of people do like to have an occasional bet at least. In this State, with the exception of the people in Brisbane—quite a number of people in Brisbane do not go to the races to have their bets—the majority of the people who desire to have a bet on the Melbourne Cup or the Caulfield Cup are forced, through the action of this Government, to break the law. If the people are compelled to break some of the laws you cannot blame them for breaking other laws. I mention this to the Treasurer as an avenue from which he could obtain increased income and at the same time give the people occasion

for more respect for the law, because the present Act is causing people to have disrespect for the law. They know the S.P. bookies operate in every town of any size within this State, and they know that periodically they are pounced upon and if they do not appear they are fined £50—recently it went up to £100 and some of them are appearing now—but that is looked upon as their taxation.

**Mr. Aikens:** Their licence fee.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** Their licence fee. If, on the other hand, they appear, instead of forfeiting bail they are fined only £30 and they get a conviction recorded against them. So naturally most of them do not appear and everything goes on its merry way. The point is that if you and I go into an S.P. betting shop—which is a common gaming house under the law—we are liable to be arrested for being in a common gaming house. The whole thing is entirely wrong. As far as I can see, the only advantage of the Act that prevents the legalising of S.P. shops or betting shops under proper control is to the racing clubs of Brisbane. I look at it from the point of view of the country man. If we are in Brisbane and there is a major race on in some other part of Australia, we can go out to the races and lay our money, but the country man is forced to break the law, if he desires to bet. Quite a number of Brisbane people break the law on Saturday afternoons by telephoning betting shops. The objection of the large racing clubs in Brisbane, to the legalising of betting shops could be overcome by closing these shops while the racing is taking place. Obviously, if they are left open at such a time, a number of people will not attend the races but will be sitting round radio sets listening to the races, and consequently the clubs, which have to provide prize moneys and are put to other expense, would lose a certain amount of money.

**Mr. Aikens:** S.P. shops in some country places close now when the racing is on.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** They do by agreement in all places.

**Mr. Power:** You are advocating the legalising of betting shops?

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** They should be legalised and this would also give another avenue for revenue to the State, and a considerable amount of revenue at that. Such action would also increase respect for our laws.

The other day I listened to a radio news item giving information that a spokesman from the Department of Public Lands or some other department complained of the greatly increased price in land and said this was making it more difficult to settle soldiers on the land. In fact, it was stated that land priced at £4 an acre some few years ago was now costing the Government £12 an acre to buy. I suggest that the Government give consideration to districts where mainly lip-service only has been given to the potentialities of the land, districts in which the land

could be bought for virtually nothing. And here I might mention the Cooktown, Laura, McIvor and Dighton River areas, where land can be bought for 5s. an acre or less. It is places such as this that the Government should be endeavouring to open for settlement, places in which land prices are not high, because of lack of competition. At present they can get in on the ground floor, buy the land, and settle soldiers on it. They need have no fear now that people will not want to live in such places. Here I acknowledge the fact that within the past fortnight the highway under construction between Cairns and Cooktown is now completed. Certainly it is only a fair-weather highway, but it is a highway; improvements such as the construction of bridges and resurfacing can be effected as time goes on. There is now a State-wide interest in the area but if the Department of Public Lands got to work and bought some of this land while it is still cheap it could be opened up for soldier settlement. The Government should not wait another six months, thus allowing some land investors to get in there, buy up the land and offer it for sale at £8 or £10 an acre. Recently two members of the shire council of this area interviewed several Ministers and since they have returned to the area they have been inundated with letters inquiring as to the possibilities.

**Mr. Sparkes:** What is the land suitable for?

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** I will not mention cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes, &c., because they would immediately bring forward the interjection, "Where will you find a market for them?" but I would mention three basic commodities. It has been proved that they can be successfully grown in the area, because they have been grown there for the past 50 to 70 years. They are cotton, peanuts, and citrus fruits. Citrus fruits I will dismiss, inasmuch as the marketing aspect comes in, but it has been proved that the district is capable of growing very good tobacco leaf. Of the three certainties, cotton has a guaranteed price and Australia's peanut demand is such that one of the leading peanut men in Australia made a statement recently that we shall be importing nuts next year. We know that we are not half way towards supplying Australia's requirements of tobacco and even when we catch up with the demand in Australia there is the demand all over the world for this product. There is another challenge to the sincerity of the Government. They can do this if they want to. They might be as sincere about the development of the North as I am but it has taken them over 35 years to become keen.

The Government are supposed to be an anti-monopoly Government but there has been a general trend, going on for years—and it is increasing all the time—for monopolies to control everything in the State. This monopoly business has extended to the entertainment industry, because in every area you will find a monopoly buying up the picture shows in a town where there are three and closing two of them. After about 12 months

the one remaining picture show will be largely screening second releases or third releases of 1939 vintage. In the big stores, you find companies like Dalgety & Co., which has lived on the wool-grower for 50 years, now that the wool-grower has his own co-operative, out to buy the biggest store in every town. That company is doing this. I can quote three instances from memory. This firm bought the largest store in Rockhampton but runs it under the name of the previous owner, Williams Pty. Ltd. I mention also Friends of Gladstone and McKimmins of Townsville.

Some three years ago there was great agitation in North Queensland for the establishment of a cement works in the North. There was agitation at Bowen to have the works established at that town; there was agitation from the Mareeba-Chillagoe area, where there is limestone in sufficient quantities to keep a cement works going for ever. A new company called the North Australian Cement Company was floated with the controlling interest in the hands of the existing Queensland Cement and Lime Company Ltd. at Darra. The Government supported and made possible the formation of a new company. The promised new company has had the effect of silencing the agitation in the North. There is no sign of the establishment of a cement works at Stuart near Townsville. I suggest that so long as the Queensland Cement and Lime Company Ltd.—and I have no particular prejudice against the company—can supply somewhere near the requirements of cement in Queensland from Darra no works will be established in the North. Work is proceeding on the railway line but there is no sign of a cement works. There is an acute shortage of cement in virtually every town in North Queensland. Builders and contractors cannot get it.

**Mr. Power:** There are shortages of other materials as well.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** Yes. Some time ago it was announced that any firm could order as much cement as it wanted from the South but over the last three or four months sufficient railway trucks could not be got for the carriage of cement, the reason being that motor-cars carry a higher freight rate and, as a consequence, get priority. I am not blaming the railways altogether for that, although they are supposed to be there for the benefit of the people. The cement company has now put all North Queensland merchants back on a quota that is insufficient for their requirements; so that, even if the merchants could get the railway trucks now, they still cannot get enough cement. Why has the cement company done this? I suggest that it was done to ensure itself sufficient supplies of cement for its new project in Brisbane, which is to make bricks of house-building size for the building trade in Brisbane.

The hon. member for Bremer had quite a lot to say about price-control. I do not want to criticise his opinion, because it is generally held by people who have not had much practical experience of price control. Price-control will work only if wages

and other costs are pegged. That is why it worked reasonably well during war-time, but when wages were unpegged it ceased to work. However, it was always a very big thorn in the sides not only of the Prices Branch, but also of those people who had dealings with it. I know what I am talking about, because I had some experience of price-control. It is one of the greatest delaying factors on earth, yet I agree that prices must be controlled by some means. Whether it should be done by controlling profits or by some other means, I am not sufficiently informed to say.

I shall proceed to show why there is always a black-market where there is price-control. Take the case of a merchant importing some everyday commodity required in the building industry, such as plunge baths. I had a lot to do with plunge baths, which were on a quota till they started to come out from England. The only firm in Australia manufacturing them was in Sydney. The merchant in Cairns would receive a crate of six, nine or a dozen baths and his customers would immediately start to scream out for them. Invariably it would be found that the landed cost of the baths had increased since the previous consignment and, to keep within the law, the merchant had to submit an application for a price for the baths. Delay would naturally result and the customers would go along to the person handling the baths and say, "The house belonging to so-and-so is completely finished with the exception of the bath." The merchant would say, "I can't sell you a bath, because I haven't got a price." The customer would say, "I will give you £20 for a bath." The officials in the Prices Branch were always snowed under with applications, and sometimes it was six or seven weeks before a firm could get an approved new price.

**Mr. Power:** There is no justification for that today.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** It happened regularly.

In the meantime, the managing director of the firm holding the baths, would say to the manager of the hardware department, "You are allowed only so much buying capital and you are supposed to turn it over every so often. You cannot have any more money till you sell those baths." Therefore, the customer is clamouring for baths, the managing director is telling the manager of the hardware department that he cannot get any more till he has sold the ones on hand, and the Prices Branch is snowed under with work and delaying the selling of the baths.

**Mr. Power:** You said you sold them at a black-market price.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** I did not say that, I was selling for a reputable firm. I wanted to point out the way in which black-markets come about because so many people are prepared to offer so much more for the thing they want and cannot easily get that the temptation to do it is there. After all, a lot of people are subject to temptation.

Then the hon. member for Bremer referred to costs but it is generally realised that the higher the cost the harder the burden on the consumer of goods. Let me refer to an elementary matter in this connection. Let us suppose, for instance, that a merchant imports a 12-gallon copper boiler at a landed cost of £1. The Prices Branch allows him to add 20 per cent., or 4s., to the cost. That allows him to sell the boiler at £1 4s. But let us also assume that later on costs increase because of increased freights, increased wages and so on, and that the landed cost of the boiler is £2, to which he is allowed to add 20 per cent. But that is 20 per cent. on £2, giving him a selling price of £2 8s.—he gets an extra 4s. on that margin. The Prices Branch saw how that operated some years ago and tried to correct it by cutting down the money margin but it failed to take into consideration the fact that the merchant required the higher money margin because the cost of running his own business through higher wages, freights, etc., had also gone up.

Those are a few little simple things that are not known to everyone and apply to the control of prices under what has come to be regarded since the war as the orthodox method. No wonder it has fallen down. I agree that we should have some form of price-control and I think that the form that has been promised, of control of profits, by excess profits tax so long as it also prevents the concealment of excess profits, will be the proper one. The only other one with any chance of success is that designed to bring about increased production but a combination of the two will probably save us from a good deal of trouble in the future.

Much has been said about the establishment of new States. Indeed, the Premier proclaimed in the Press that he was in favour of new States but if we had new States we should be taxed at the rate of £4 a head more. I do not know where he got that figure because, after all, taxation is uniform throughout Australia. There has been a great deal of talk in favour of new States in Queensland but there always seems to be a "but" attached to these statements. As we know, Australia is about the same size as the United States of America and the United States is the most greatly developed country in the world. That development has been largely brought about by the fact that the country was divided into many small States, 48 in all. When we have a look at the problem of new States in Queensland we can see some difficulties. For instance, in the case of education, if Queensland was divided into three separate States it would be a nuisance having to produce another two educational systems and in the process perhaps quite a number of people would want to alter the systems, a state of affairs that would be not good from an Australian point of view and would carry us further to the bad. I am a great believer in new States if at the same time we delegate some of the functions of the present State to the Commonwealth to make the new States a practical idea.

One department that would benefit by unification is education. Any person whose livelihood has carried him from one State to another, and has small children, can vouch for that. I have had such experience in three States, Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland. As you go north you are told that the educational system of the State is the best in the Commonwealth but you find as you move your family from one State to the other that on the assumption that your new State's educational system is higher than the one you just left the child is put back a grade just for luck. Education would benefit from the unified system of education, if it had decentralised control. I do not argue that someone in Canberra should wield a big stick. Under a unified system decentralization could be maintained by Regional Directorates such as that now operating at Townsville. Another State instrumentality that would benefit from unification is railways. If unification had been applied to our railways 50 years ago, we should have standardised railway gauges today.

A considerable amount of thought must be given to creating new States. It might be contended and logically so, that an area more densely populated than another would have a preponderance of electoral representation. That would seem to be borne out by a statement made by the Treasurer in relation to allocation of loan and subsidy moneys expended in various parts of the State for the year ending 30 June, 1950. The amount in Brisbane was 10 per cent loans but the proportion of subsidies expended in Brisbane was 55 per cent. That is out of all proportion. That happens when the bulk of representation comes from one area. I do not begrudge Brisbane anything, even the electrification of its suburban railway system. The only criticism I have of that proposal is that it should have been consummated 20 years ago when Melbourne completed and Greater Sydney commenced electrification of their suburban railway systems. Closer Government attention is required to the development of our undeveloped areas. For that reason, and for the reasons I have given before, there is quite a lot of food for thought in the proposal to create new States. We shall not get any lasting justice until New States are created in Queensland. I do not mean that we should have something akin to three foreign States where one exists now, but I do mean States that will be created into three separate governing and administrative groups. We can get over difficulties associated with transport by handing the control of railways to the Commonwealth, with certain safeguards to the States to prevent the authorities in Canberra from closing any section of railway line and deciding against the extension of any existing line. It might be possible to apply to railways the same principle as I suggested for education. Later on other Government instrumentalities, such as the Police Force, might be federalised. Some States have a good Police Force and others fair.

**Mr. Smith:** What about Queensland?

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** Queensland has the best force in the Commonwealth.

**Mr. Smith:** Don't leave Queensland out.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** I will not. Our thanks for that are due to Mr. Carroll and Mr. Smith, not the hon. member for Carpentaria.

I should like to say something about our railways—they are something that the people own—and I do not wish to appear non-constructive in my criticism of them. I have travelled on the Sunshine Express in the last six months as many times as anybody, I suppose, and I cannot help comparing it with the service that it offered before the war. Our railways are losing money. We know they have to lose money to enable certain primary industries in the sparsely populated areas to survive. For instance, the railways help the woollen industry by carrying sheep in drought times at a rate considerably less than cost, and that is essential to the great woollen industry. The same applies to many other primary industries. What I wish to criticise is the direction in which the railways are moving. The Minister for Transport is, I think, doing everything possible to rectify certain shortcomings, but in one respect I think he could perhaps improve the railways, that is, by putting them back to the standard at which they were before the war.

Every time there is a criticism of the railways one runs a risk because someone writes to the paper and says what a wonderful job they did during the war. They did an excellent job during the war; they were strained to their utmost; they could not do another bit of work. I know that the men were working as many hours as they could and that the rolling stock had been run almost to a frazzle. While this was being done, there was no fighting in Queensland or in Australia. If there had been fighting in Australia they would have been required to do a terrific lot more; but they did not have the capacity to do much, if any, more than they were doing.

Let us take a look at our best train—the Sunshine Express—in Queensland. It is giving a pretty good service to the State, but its standards are those of about 30 years ago compared with those of any modern country. Before the war I presume that the Commissioner for Railways desired first-class travellers to travel on the train, because he would get more profit out of them. Second-class travellers are carried at a very reasonable fare and first-class passengers pay about twice the second-class fare and in addition one guinea a night for a sleeper. The state of the Sunshine Express in post-war times is such that it is causing people to use the airways more and the railways are losing day after day potential first-class passengers to the airways.

Let us look at relative conditions on a trip that takes two days and two nights from Brisbane to Cairns or Cairns to Brisbane. In a second-class sleeper there are three people in the one compartment and three sleepers without any bedding on them but which are quite comfortable. When night

falls, these people in the compartment can pull up their sleepers themselves—it is a matter of fixing up the centre one and you have the lot—and it is a matter of mutual arrangement between the three passengers as to whether they go to bed at 7 o'clock or 10 o'clock. Most people who are over five years of age like to stay out of bed later than 8 o'clock. During the war the first-class passenger was able to do so. The sleeping compartment in the first-class compartment provides for two passengers and before the war there was a lounge car at the back to which a passenger could go and smoke and read, so that he could go to bed when he felt like it. Since the war the lounge car has never been on, so the first-class passenger who does not want to get his head bumped every time he moves has to go to bed as soon as the sleeper is put up. It is the conductor's job to do it at nightfall. This condition recently prompted a southern tourist to remark, in my hearing, that the Queensland Railways are virtually asking first-class passengers to travel by air.

I have been speaking about the best train in Queensland, the Sunshine Express, but I now will refer to the worst train, the Cairns-Tableland train. Certainly this railway is the best for scenery, the best of any in Australia. The other day, in order to get my figures right, I asked a question in this House. Some of the engines and carriages used on that line have been running there for over 40 years. There are 25 engines now in use which have been in use for over 40 years. The Minister for Transport replied that they are regularly repaired and overhauled but the hon. gentleman knows that they are old and out of date. Some years ago, before the strengthening of the railway bridges between Innisfail and Cairns to enable the C 17 class of engine to haul the Sunshine Express trains to Cairns, three reasonably new and modern P.B.15 engines were stationed at the Cairns depot. These engines were used on the Tableland train as well as to haul the Sunshine Express, but since the strengthening of the bridges mentioned before, these engines have been sent South, and replaced by older models.

Moreover, although the engines are 40 years old and some of the carriages even older than that, the trains on the Tableland line run to the same timetable as 40 years ago but haul a smaller load than at that time. Is that indicative of progress? Is even the Sunshine Express train progressive compared with modern railway systems? No doubt I shall be told not to forget that we have had a war in Australia. But that remark applies to Western Australia also and that State is now running on the Perth-Kalgoorlie line, to connect with the Commonwealth Transcontinental train, a train with air-conditioned lounge and dining cars. Western Australia is farther from the Australian steel works than Queensland but it is operating this modern and progressive train.

I draw the attention of the Minister to these facts because there are a number of things that could be done to improve the

railway service and attract additional revenue and, after all, this is part of his objective. If something can be done to induce the people to make more use of the railways they will certainly make use of them. People will not be encouraged to travel on the railways if the trains are uncomfortable.

As to the booking of sleepers on the Brisbane-Cairns railway: if a passenger books a fortnight or a month ahead, he will obtain a good sleeper. I telephone the Railway Department only about 24 hours ahead of the time I wish to travel and naturally do not expect to obtain the best of accommodation. That means the Pullman which is an extra sleeper that is attached to the Sunshine Express to Townsville. Passengers and conductors hate this pullman sleeper and so far as women passengers are concerned these pullman sleeping cars are a disgrace because one end is allotted to men and the other to women, with only a curtain drawn across the aisle to make the partition between the two sections.

**Mr. Smith:** The same principle operates in the pullman cars in America and on the Continent of Europe.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH:** I suggest that the hon. member ride in this pullman sleeper. I travelled in it only last week. Tourists travelling in Queensland are sometimes allocated berths on this pullman sleeper and a South Australian tourist said to me that the Queensland railways seemed to want to encourage tourists to travel by air. Cairns to Brisbane ticket-holders in the pullman sleeper travel in a sleeper from Cairns to Townsville and on arrival at Townsville have to change into their pullman sleeper coach. The sleeper in which they travel from Cairns has been booked for Townsville passengers. This is an inconvenience and interferes with the time allowed them for refreshments and so on.

Those are a few more things to be improved to encourage people to use the railways, to make it possible for more trains to be run and therefore more income to be received and less loss to be made on the Queensland railways.

Much has been said about the steel industry of Australia; much has been said too about Bowen as being the logical place for the establishment of a steelworks in Queensland. Quite recently I travelled south on the same train as Mr. Paddy Atherton, who was Secretary for Mines at one time, and we got onto the question of coke-ovens. He was the Minister responsible for the establishment of those ovens. It was recently announced by the Government that it was their intention to increase considerably the number of coke-ovens at Bowen with a view to helping the Australian steel industry. That is a laudable object and I wish them all success. I understand, however, that coke is being imported into Australia—that we cannot get enough to run our steelworks. We have coke-ovens at Bowen and the logical thing would be to increase the production of those ovens. As I said, it was announced that the Government intended to increase the

number of coke-ovens in the State considerably so that we could increase the production of coke to help in the production of steel.

In examining the actual facts in connection with our coke-ovens I intend to present some information that I ask the Government to consider carefully. Before you increase the number of coke-ovens in this State it would be a good idea if we got full production from the coke-ovens we have at the present time. Perhaps it is not generally known that at Bowen there is a darg on the working of coke-ovens. There are about 33 coke-ovens at Bowen and the darg limiting production of coke provides for the working of 12 ovens one day, 12 the next, and nine the following day. Where is the common sense in talking about increasing the number of coke-ovens before you get a reasonable production from existing ovens? I should like to see 100 coke-ovens at Bowen but I think it is up to the Government to see that they get production from the ovens they have already got.

**Mr. SMITH** (Carpentaria) (3.28 p.m.): In making my contribution to the debate on the Financial Statement I should first like to clear up a little matter mentioned by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. He said that I personally attacked him. When I replied to his criticism of the alleged neglect by this Government of the North, how the devil could it be said that I attacked him personally? I attacked the hon. member on what he said. He said that this Government neglected the Cape York Peninsula. What he did before he entered this Chamber I do not know; I did not know him until he came here. He said that if I had looked after the Cook electorate as I looked after my business, he would not be here. And neither he would. He still does not know that at the only two polling booths in the Cook electorate that were in the electorate of Carpentaria he received a minority vote. At the Coen polling booth and at the Thursday Island polling booth he received minority votes. The people of Coen, Wenlock and Iron Range and that part of the old Carpentaria electorate knew the value of my services when I represented them, but those people gave the hon. member a minority vote. He still does not know what votes he received in that part of the electorate. But let me tell the hon. member that Queensland still presents great opportunities for young men. As a young man, with my father, I had the guts to go out and do something for myself. That is what made me what I am today. My hands and my guts earned me everything I have today, and I do not want the hon. member for Cook or anybody else to come here and criticise me. The same opportunity as I had still exists in this State for anyone who cares to take it. Young as the hon. member is if he and I were put in an acre paddock where there were a goat and a lamb, he would soon know who was eating the lamb. I should not be eating the goat. (Government laughter.)

So much for that. That is the answer to the hon. member for Cook. He still does not know what goes on in the electorate he

represents. I listened to him very attentively this afternoon and to his speech in the Address in Reply debate, and I still criticise him in his political sphere as the representative of the Cook electorate. If he thinks I am being personal when I do that, he should go home to his mother and get his napkin changed; he is still a baby. In his speech in the Address in Reply debate and again this afternoon, the hon. member kept right away from the part of his electorate that I know so much about. Instead, he dealt with the Atherton Tableland and other electorates. He kept away from his own electorate.

As I previously represented a part of the hon. member's electorate, I should like to let him know something about the good work that has been done there. This is an extract from today's issue of the "Courier-Mail"—

"The Mayor of Cairns (Alderman W. H. Murchison) and the District Engineer of the Main Roads Commission (Mr. R. Gallop) have returned from an overland trip to Cairns and Cooktown. The Mayor said Cooktown had a bright future and a water supply was one of its first essentials in its development. Commenting on applications from prospective settlers, he said he hoped that everything would be done to eliminate land speculation. He said the Main Roads Commission is doing good work on the Byerstown Range and road construction was proceeding from Coen to Laura and Wenlock, and from Wenlock to Portland Roads."

Is that not worth commenting on, Mr. Clark?

**Mr. Wordsworth:** I commented on it.

**Mr. SMITH:** It is worth commenting on, because as we read the Budget we can see the sabotage of this State Labour Government by the present Federal Government, ably assisted by hon. members opposite. What a deplorable thing it is when we find that as the result of the sabotage of the present set-up in the national Parliament, in spite of the present prosperity of the nation, this State has had to budget for a deficit and has had to curtail its programme of works! The same remarks apply to all the other States.

Every day we read in the trade and finance columns of the "Courier-Mail" and the "Telegraph" that industries in this State are earning huge profits. I am not condemning them on that score, but is it not deplorable that the Menzies coalition crowd at Canberra should take hundreds of thousands of pounds from the taxpayers of this State and at the same time force the Queensland Government to budget for a deficit? The Federal Government have also compelled the State Government to restrict their works programme, an extensive programme of work involving hospitals, schools and other important works that go to make this State. It is something that the people of this State should have something to say about. I know that the Budget presents an opportunity to the accountancy section of members of Parliament to tear it about but we

have frequently heard the hon. member for Mundingburra say that accountants can be picked up like bad pennies in a Jew's shop. They are prone to criticise the Budget from the viewpoint of figures, but the average person in this State wants to know: what is the Government's programme of work? At present there is a huge programme of work in relation to hospitals, a huge programme in connection with education, and the building of schools; then there is the University, and there is a huge programme outlined in the Budget not only by the Government themselves but also by local authorities.

Only last August the Local Authorities Conference held in Brisbane decided upon the amount of money that would have to be allocated to enable semi-governmental authorities to carry out their works programmes but the Premier found at the recent Premiers' Conference in Canberra that the entire scheme had been sabotaged by the present Federal Government. We can deal with that programme of work in detail so that it may appear in cold print, thereby giving the people in the outback parts of the State an opportunity to know the facts as they glean them from "Hansard." "Hansard" is very well circulated by members of the Government Party. Let us remind the people that the Federal Liberal-Country Party Government hoped by the restriction of loan money to bring the State Government in Queensland to their knees. That nefarious plot was helped by the delegation from hon. members opposite that went to Canberra and interviewed Mr. Menzies on matters of development in this State. What would they have said had a delegation of Communists gone to Canberra seeking the elimination of a works programme? A delegation from hon. members opposite went to see Mr. Menzies concerning the Queensland Government's programme of works in addition to the works programme of local authorities as approved by Mr. Kemp, the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, and this delegation asked Mr. Menzies to approve only of such work as the delegation thought should be done. The Opposition would then be the first to get up and declare that the Communist Party was attempting to sabotage the Queensland Labour Government. They can be placed in the same category as the Communists; the visit of this deputation, which included both the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, was only an attempt to sabotage the State's programme of works, which had been drawn up for the development of the whole of the State, not a part of it. That programme of works, which they attempted to sabotage, was outlined by the Government to the electors and approved by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works long before 30 June. The local authorities had budgeted for sewerage schemes, road works, beautification schemes and amenities, all of which had been approved by Mr. Kemp. The Government in turn, through the Premier, had submitted this huge programme of work to the Federal Government at Canberra. Shortly after the visit of the Premier to Canberra the deputation from the Opposition

also visited Canberra and interviewed Mr. Menzies, and placed before him a programme of works that they thought should have priority. They were the saboteurs of the State. I say that very emphatically and loudly. They went to Canberra only because they belonged to the same political breed as Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden, and in an attempt to persuade him to abandon the programme of public works submitted to the Federal Government by this Government.

The ten-point programme that the Opposition deputation urged before Mr. Menzies did not contemplate public works beyond the Tropic of Capricorn. The people of North Queensland can thus test the sincerity of the Opposition who advocate the development of that portion of the State. If that deputation had been from the Communist Party the Opposition parties would have asked for the implementation of the Communist Party Dissolution Bill before it was really put into operation. The members of the deputation did not represent the people of Queensland; they represented the Country Party and the Liberal Party. What right had they to make their representations to Mr. Menzies? Were they in a position to carry out the public works they recommended to Mr. Menzies? It was one of the cheekiest requests that any party could possibly make. Their objective in visiting Canberra appeared to be for no other purpose than sabotaging Queensland's works programme. What right had this deputation to go to Canberra?

**An Opposition Member:** It is a free country.

**Mr. SMITH:** It is a free country; that is why the Communists and other parties are able to abuse that freedom. This is the party that advocates dealing with the Communists; let us advocate doing something to these people who have attempted to do something worse than the Communists have done.

Let me read of what irrigation and water conservation schemes were started in this State by Mr. Kemp.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Didn't the Commissioner for Irrigation have something to do with them?

**Mr. SMITH:** The hon. member's party went down to sabotage Mr. Kemp and the Commissioner for Irrigation.

This is what "The Courier-Mail" had to say on 15 December, 1944. This is what the Liberal and Country Party leaders went down to sabotage when they visited Mr. Menzies recently. The article reads as follows:—

**"PRACTICAL USE OF WATER.**

"Mr. J. R. Kemp has given readers of The Courier-Mail a carefully considered account of what can be done with Queensland's water resources by conservation and irrigation measures.

"It may not satisfy some amateurs who have been attracted by vast projects for turning rivers into the frequently parched interior of the State. But what Mr. Kemp tells us holds much more certain

promise of large and early developmental benefit when peace releases manpower, material, and machinery for extension of irrigation in areas where there is a supply of surface or underground water to draw upon.

"The work that has been done by the Bureau of Investigation on Land and Water Resources, under the chairmanship of Mr. Kemp, since the bureau was appointed last year, reveals praiseworthy energy and practical direction. The question of combating erosion has not been neglected. The Government should be ready to go right ahead with a soundly conceived programme for developing Queensland's land and water resources as soon as the war is over."

This is what the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition decided to do at Canberra in order to sabotage the Government proposals:—

"More irrigation projects, particularly in the Dawson, McKenzie and Burnett areas, and the Obi-Obi water scheme on the North Coast."

That is away down in the southern part of the State. They went down to sabotage, not only the Government, but the recommendation by Mr. Kemp to the Bureau of Industry. I wish this to be known by the people of North Queensland, because the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, when they were in the North, were saying what they would do if they were returned to the Treasury benches. Now, because they have not received the support of the electors, they have decided to sabotage the efforts of this Government to develop the North. We heard them criticising the huge programme of works to be carried out in this State by the Government. Ever since I can remember it has been the policy of the Opposition to do that kind of thing, but immediately a project becomes a success they begin to eulogise it. One need only read the pages of "Hansard" in the years 1923 to 1926, during the early stages of the development of Mt. Isa, to see that that is so. The then State Labour Government decided to help this then small mining concern develop this mineral field.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Who were the principals in those days?

**Mr. SMITH:** The principals in those days were Queenslanders. They were assisted by the Labour Government at the time. When this was discussed in this Chamber the Opposition called for four divisions in an attempt to prevent the Labour Government from building 64 miles of railway-line from Duchess to Mount Isa, contending that it would be only a white elephant. Mineral deposits nowadays can be developed only by huge mining concerns. The huge copper deposits in the Cloncurry field can be developed only in this way but the Opposition objected to concessions to the huge Broken Hill South Company as an inducement to come to Queensland and endeavour to develop these low-grade copper deposits

on much the same scale as Mount Isa. The Leader of the Opposition criticised the Labour Government for giving concessions to the Broken Hill South Company and the Zinc Corporation. Cloncurry copper deposits were not the only minerals in view. Other districts in North Queensland could be developed on much the same scale as Mount Isa. At that time the Leader of the Opposition had much to say and criticised the Government. The small prospector-miner is now out of date. Huge low-grade mineral deposits have to be developed on what might be termed mass-production lines and the only way by which we shall get these Queensland deposits developed is by inducing similar concerns as Mount Isa to come in and do it. In the days before 1922, copper shows such as Mount Elliott and Mount Cuthbert closed down. They could not treat ore below 8 per cent. in copper. Today the Broken Hill South Company want nothing over 4 per cent. and even lower than that if it can be got in large quantities.

**Mr. Kerr:** On present-day prices.

**Mr. SMITH:** Not on present-day prices. I am referring to 1948. The Broken Hill South Company said it could work profitably a deposit having from 2 per cent. to 4 per cent. copper and about 4 dwts. of gold to the ton at the then prices of such metals. The Leader of the Opposition on 1 May, 1948—

"Speaking at Buderim tonight, the Leader of the Country Party, Mr. Nicklin, referring to the State Government's decision to grant the right of prospecting 2,000,000 acres of Queensland's richest mineral area in the north to the Broken Hill Pty., said it was only in keeping with Labour's policy of assisting monopolistic capitalism.

"It paralleled the Government's action in 1933 when two well borers, Bode and Kirton, were refused a license to prospect an area of 500 acres near Hughenden for coal, yet some years later the Government granted Mount Isa Mines Ltd., licenses to operate the same area.

"Mr. Nicklin said the dark secret of Labour's mining policy had at last seen the light of day."

At the present time the Leader of the Opposition is objecting to huge works like the Burdekin River Scheme and the Tully River Falls project, just the same as his party objected to the building of the line to Mt. Isa. We have to remember these things; the people of Queensland will have to know them and the only way they can be informed of these things is by means of speeches made in this Chamber and published in "Hansard," a publication that circulates very freely among the people of the western part of the State.

We heard much said in this Committee about the introduction of the 40-hour working week. We heard much agitation by hon. members opposite and by Mr. Menzies and members of his party in the Federal sphere. They call for more production and say that greater production will have to be achieved

by the workers of the Commonwealth. They have not mentioned any section of the workers nor have they pointed the bone at any section in regard to the lack of production. If there is less production under a 40-hour working week, how is it that huge concerns and business people are making the profits they make? Would these big business concerns have clamoured for permits to put up expensive additions to their factories if they were not making profits? Barry & Roberts and similar firms are kicking out the little tenants in their business premises so that they can have extended areas for their operations. Does that indicate that the 40-hour working week is retarding the progress of these people? Is the 40-hour working week retarding the profits of the Mt. Isa mines?

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Is there such a thing as incentive payments?

**Mr. SMITH:** Not incentive payments, but a lead bonus is paid.

**Mr. Kerr:** The more they produce the more they get.

**Mr. SMITH:** When the price of lead falls the amount of the bonus falls. If the tonnage falls the lead bonus does not fall. The lead bonus falls and rises according to the price of the metal—the price of lead in America. The price of lead in the month of October fixes the rate of bonus paid by the company in November.

**Mr. Aikens:** And the workers get it irrespective of production.

**Mr. SMITH:** Yes. Let me read what the management has to say. I quote the following from the report of Mt. Isa Mines—

“Since 1 January, 1948, a 40-hour five-day week has been worked throughout the mine with the exceptions of underground, transport and grizzly sections. These latter worked a 40-hour six-day week roster which appears to satisfy haulage and hoisting requirements necessary to maintain mill capacity.”

The miners at Mt. Isa work a 40-hour week in five days but the haulage men work the same hours spread over six days. The management say that this does not affect the company so far as the 40-hour week is concerned. The annual report of the Under-Secretary for Mines states in relation to Mt. Isa—

“Production of lead ore only proceeded satisfactorily throughout the year, with the following exceptions—”

The exceptions were only accidents and coal strikes. It continues—

“A 40-hour five-day week has been worked throughout the mine with the exception of underground transport and grizzly sections which have continued to work a 40-hour six-day roster satisfactorily.”

Are the shearers working to the detriment of the graziers under the 40-hour week? Is not the wool coming in in the same quantities as it did before? Are the pastoral

workers in the cattle industry not producing as much under the 40-hour week as they did before? Are the shop assistants loafing under the 40-hour week?

Although I do not desire to criticise the hon. member for Kedron personally or his business, I heard him say here the other day that every worker in this State should work a 48-hour week. Was it not the honest work of employees in Bruce Pie Industries Ltd. that enabled the hon. member to produce all the material that he did and to pay a bonus? Are the workers in the textile industry loafing under the 40-hour week? When hon. members opposite criticise the workers of this State and say they are not pulling their weight, let them name the industry they have in mind. They cannot do it.

**Mr. Kerr:** What about the tying-up of ships in our ports?

**Mr. SMITH:** Let the hon. member give us figures.

The Federal court has just completed the hearing of the basic-wage case, which lasted for 18 months, and this is what Judge Dunphy had to say about production—

“At times sweeping allegations are made that the Australian worker, as a class, is not putting forth his best efforts during the shortened working hours.

“No substantial evidence was produced to support such a proposition except as far as the coal miners were concerned.

“In fact, the greater proportion of employers’ witnesses were not prepared to support such an allegation.

“My own observation is that some workers are working harder and faster than before.”

That gives the lie to the statements made so consistently by hon. members opposite. During a hearing that went on for 18 months, witnesses for the employers did not give one substantial item of evidence of non-production by workers. Hon. members opposite get up and say these things with loud mouths—

**Mr. Kerr:** That was a minority report.

**Mr. SMITH:** I will read them all. I cannot find where Judge Foster said anything detrimental about the workers of the Commonwealth; neither did Judge Kelly. He said—

“If that brought about the transfer of labour from unessential to the essential industries, a better balance in production would be achieved, also the threat of inflation depending on the extent of the transfer achieved might become less serious.”

**Mr. Kerr:** Do you think that is a good idea?

**Mr. SMITH:** It may be or it may not be, but not one of the judges, who listened to thousands of words spoken by advocates for the employers, heard any allegations that the workers were not putting their weight behind industry.

It is something worth ventilating, but it makes you angry to hear certain hon. members opposite say on every day and at every opportunity that the workers of the State are not pulling their weight in industry. Let them name any industry in which the workers are not pulling their weight. First we have the coal-mining industry.

**An Opposition Member:** The wharfies.

**Mr. SMITH:** The wharfies?

**Mr. Sparkes:** The building industry, too.

**Mr. SMITH:** Are the men in the dairying industry working less since the introduction of the 40-hour week? The hon. member for Fassifern may be able to tell us that. Are the men in the pastoral industry working less since the introduction of the 40-hour week? Let the hon. member for Aubigny answer that. Of course they are not. The hon. member for Roma is a sheep-grower. Let him tell us whether the pastoral workers are working less or whether the shearers are working less since the introduction of the 40-hour week.

**Mr. Watson:** What about sugar?

**Mr. SMITH:** Are the shearers not entitled to some benefit out of the £600,000,000 wool-clip of Australia? The hon. member for Mulgrave said that the sugar-growers were loafing on the job.

**Mr. Watson:** I did not say that.

**Mr. SMITH:** The hon. member did, because he said, "What about the sugar workers?"

**Mr. WATSON:** I rise to a point of order. I have never criticised the sugar workers. I merely had in mind the half-day a week over the 40 hours that they are working in dealing with big crops this year.

**Mr. SMITH:** The hon. member said, "What about the sugar workers?" but if the hon. member has not got the guts to get up and say that he said it, then I accept his explanation. However, he furnishes the answer to my question—there has been increased production in the sugar industry. More ships are coming to Australia than ever before.

**Mr. Sparkes:** But they cannot get out.

**Mr. SMITH:** The hon. member is able to send his beef overseas, and somehow or other it is not rotting in this country. The ships can take it overseas to Great Britain and sell it at prices greater than those ruling in Australia today. I do not smell any rotting meat about the city of Brisbane that cannot be sold by the hon. member for Aubigny. The wharf-lumpers are loading his meat, and it is going overseas with sugar and other primary products.

I like to refer to these matters, but it is deplorable that in the midst of all this prosperity the State has to budget for a huge deficit.

**Mr. Sparkes:** That will take some explaining.

**Mr. SMITH:** It is easy to explain, and I will explain it now. Did not a delegation from hon. members opposite recently visit Canberra to tie up with the Menzies Government and sabotage the State and its finances? It was successful in blocking many items on the Government's works programme. Hon. members opposite accuse this Government of being a Socialist Government trying to oust private enterprise. Let me read what the Government have done to induce private industry to operate.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** What are you quoting from?

**Mr. SMITH:** I am quoting from a little book issued by the Premier. Its statements are quite honest, although they might be foreign to the hon. member. It enumerates what the Government are doing to help private industry, but by the mere fact that the hon. member's Leader and Deputy Leader proceeded to Canberra and urged certain public works before Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden they endeavoured to prevent this State from getting allocations of money for that purpose. Nevertheless, they felt they were doing a good job. They have the same political aspirations as Mr. Menzies and by back-door methods have attempted to retard the progress of this State. I heard the hon. member for Cook say that the projected cement works in North Queensland would never be started. Who are its shareholders? I will give some of their names. This Government have given a bank guarantee for £250,000 in respect of those works. That is to encourage the establishment of local industries. The principal shareholders in the works are Mr. Jules Kruttschmitt, the managing director of Mt. Isa Mines Ltd., Mr. A. Axon, consulting engineer, and Mr. Arty Fadden. Mr. Fadden owns the lime show a few miles out of Townsville where the cement company proposes to get its supply of lime.

**Mr. Kerr:** You know that the cement company has bought it.

**Mr. SMITH:** Mr. Fadden is one of the three principal directors of the cement works. If there is any sabotage in the commencement of those works, the onus is on those three gentlemen. The cement company is taking over the lime show from Mr. Fadden so that it can operate. If the cement company does not start as the hon. member for Cook states, he will have to look to his own organisation for the reason. We want to see it start.

**Mr. Gair:** The Government have guaranteed its account for £250,000.

**Mr. SMITH:** A lot of truths can be found in the Premier's pamphlet as to what the Government are doing to encourage production. It enumerates the works that the Government hope to be able to carry out this financial year, but that the Liberal and Country Parties are not desirous of seeing consummated. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition at election time wrote to all local authorities asking for their support so that they might get a better deal. What better

deal could any local authorities get than the loans and subsidies given by the Government in this State? The following table shows the Treasury loans and subsidies approved for the local authorities during the 17-year period from 1 July, 1932 to 30 June, 1949:—

	Treasury Loans Approved.	Treasury Subsidies Approved.
	£	£
Brisbane .. .. .	1,524,484	3,827,327
Other cities .. .. .	1,940,901	3,884,964
Towns .. .. .	573,231	648,889
Shires .. .. .	3,034,355	1,974,593

There was a total amount of £17,000,000 paid to local authorities in loans and subsidies, yet hon. members opposite have the audacity to say the Labour Government do nothing for the local authorities.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**Mr. SMITH:** I should like the hon. member for Aubigny to tell me what amount his shire received recently from the Government.

**Mr. Sparkes:** A very good shire.

**Mr. SMITH:** I will not embarrass him by reading it out.

The Opposition say, "What are the Government doing for the back-country?" There are many items that do not receive the publicity they deserve. Only recently we had established a fresh fish supply to the north-western area of the State, by means of which the people in the towns in the north-western part can receive fish from the coast at Townsville at the same price as they receive it in Brisbane and the coast towns. In 1947 the Government, to encourage the supply of fresh fish, approved of the payment of subsidies to the extent of 6d. a lb. In 1949, 32,298 lb. of fish were carried by subsidised air services. That is typical of the many things that are being done in this State for the benefit of the people. How many of those privileges or benefits or amenities provided for the people will have to be curtailed by the non-payment of the moneys due to this State by the Federal Government? In order to give the people benefits such as dental clinics, and to carry out the works programme set out by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works we must have finance, and we find that Menzies and Fadden have refused to give our Premier the money necessary to continue these services, and they will have to be curtailed owing to the non-sympathetic attitude of the Federal Government.

**Mr. Sparkes:** But you are going to spend £10,000,000 on the electrification of the railway system in Brisbane.

**Mr. SMITH:** If that is done it will enable the steam locomotives to be used to haul such commodities as wool, Mount Isa products, and other things from the country districts. How many locomotives will then be made available for the transport system to the far West and North-West? Recently the Premier gave details of assistance to graziers in bad seasons. Mount Isa paid

railway freights according to the fluctuation in the price of metal and the graziers could work on similar lines. All these things will have to be curtailed if the present Federal Government do not give greater financial support to the State. The Flying Doctor Service operates in the western areas and additional financial assistance has been provided by the State Government by payment of a mileage rate for special trips to aboriginal missions in the Gulf. Additional assistance is also given to the Bush Children's Health Scheme. I bring all these things before hon. members inasmuch as they are some of the main items that should cause the Federal Government to give greater financial assistance to the State of Queensland and because of the hostility shown by the Opposition to the huge works projects of this State.

The Leader of the Opposition and his supporters spoke against the Burdekin dam project, stating that it was not necessary for agricultural pursuits or cattle-fattening and that it would be a white elephant, but hon. members opposite did not tell the Committee that at the present time from 20,000 to 25,000 tons of zinc concentrate are sent from Queensland to foreign countries to be refined. If shipping was available the tonnage would be greater. The Mount Isa Mines organisation has informed the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, Mr. Kemp, that it is prepared to erect a zinc refinery somewhere in the Burdekin dam area to treat 25,000 tons or more of zinc concentrates a year. Is not that advantageous to the State—the expending by Mount Isa Mines Ltd. of a few million pounds on a zinc refinery? It will provide employment for Queenslanders. At present the refining is done in Norway, Belgium, or England. There are only three or four zinc refineries in the world. Should not this work be expedited? The hon. member for Mulgrave knows the difficulty of the sugar farmer in getting fertilisers. With the construction of a zinc refinery on the Burdekin Mount Isa Mines Ltd. would manufacture all the fertilisers required by farmers in North Queensland, in fact by the farmers in the Commonwealth.

**Mr. Watson:** Where will it get the money?

**Mr. SMITH:** I do not think Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. would engage the hon. member as its brain-box. It is one of the greatest lead-producers in the world and in a few years' time will be one of the greatest copper-producers in the Commonwealth. Before that company spends £2,000,000 or £3,000,000, does not the hon. member think it will have brains to advise it on the project.

**Mr. Watson:** You are speaking of ammonia, not fertiliser.

**Mr. SMITH:** Ammonia, my foot! I am speaking about sulphuric acid and all the other by-products from a zinc refinery. I am saying that it is up to the Government to go in for these works and thereby encourage the establishment of such industries in the North.

**Mr. Wordsworth:** How long will the Burdekin Dam take to complete?

**Mr. SMITH:** If it was left to the hon. member's brains and initiative, it would not be built for many years.

**Mr. Wordsworth:** And if left to you?

**Mr. SMITH:** I am a member of the State Labour Government party, and if the hon. member encourages Mr. Fadden and Mr. Menzies to make money available, the scheme will be put into operation in quick time, but if the Leader of the Opposition and others keep on going to Canberra to sabotage these projects, the greater the time it will take.

**Mr. Wordsworth:** How many years?

**Mr. SMITH:** That depends on how often hon. members opposite go to Canberra, and how long Mr. Menzies remains in power.

I have mentioned these things to show that the Labour Government in Queensland have many projects under way, not only for the North but for the West, and in fact for the whole of the State. If money is not available to the Government to proceed with them, the projects will be hung up for an indefinite period. We should start a very strong agitation, not only through Labour members in the Federal sphere but through Liberal and Country Party members, for the return to the States of their own taxing powers. The sooner that comes about the better it will be for this State.

**Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra)** (4.28 p.m.): I came into this Parliament a little over six years ago and I said that I would fight according to the rules laid down by my opponents. At times my opponents are on both sides of the House and if they want to fight according to the Marquess of Queensberry rules, so I will fight, but if they want to fight according to dog and goanna rules, they can do it that way. Either suits me fine.

At the outset I am going to reply to statements made by the hon. member for Bundaberg, the misanthropist—

**An Opposition Member:** What is that?

**Mr. AIKENS:** If the hon. member cares to look at a dictionary he will find that a misanthropist is a man-hater. The hon. member for Bundaberg and the Premier made certain statements about me and my party and because they did not make them in the personal sense I do not propose to reply in a personal sense. I propose to give this Committee some facts and statements of truth concerning statements made by the hon. member for Bundaberg and the Premier with regard to the North Queensland Labour Party.

In his Address in Reply speech the hon. member for Bundaberg said that the North Queensland Labour Party was some sort of an agency for the Communist Party. The Premier the other day, with his eyes sticking out like lamps on a sanitary cart and squealing like a brumby stallion, said that I was a fellow traveller with the Communists. I will give this Committee some indisputable facts and, as far as possible, I will give the Committee those facts in proper chronological order.

Let us take the branch that was the genesis of the North Queensland Labour Party, that is, the Hermit Park Branch of the A.L.P. In 1941, the Hermit Park Branch of the A.L.P. was advised by the Q.C.E. of the A.L.P. to refuse admission to two of its members, Messrs. Corcoran and Illich. I was not a member of the Hermit Park A.L.P. at that time; I had been previously expelled, in the circumstances that I so honestly, frankly and lucidly set out in a speech that I made in this Chamber in 1944. If anyone wants to know about it, he can read it in "Hansard." I do not intend to recapitulate it. However, the branch decided that it would stick to Corcoran and Illich, whom the Q.C.E. contended had been associating with the Communist Party and were, in effect, fellow-travellers of the Communist Party. As the result of the decision of the Hermit Park A.L.P. to stick to Corcoran and Illich, it was deregistered by the Q.C.E. The branch thereupon invited me to return to it with full continuity of membership to assist it in its fight for justice against the Q.C.E.

As the Hermit Park A.L.P., that is, the deregistered branch, we conducted two municipal campaigns in Townsville, in 1943 and again in 1946. Hon. members will see that I am being quite frank about everything, because we have nothing to hide, nothing to regret, and nothing to be ashamed of. In the Townsville municipal campaign in 1943 and again in 1946, while there was no suggestion of collaboration, no suggestion of a joint approach to the people, or even of a joint platform or policy, we reached an agreement with the Communist Party that we should run only seven candidates for the ten seats and the Communists would run the other three, and that we both should seek public support for the full team. The mover of the motion to come to such an agreement with the Communist Party was Mr. Corcoran. I am not saying that in any sense derogatory of him, because I supported the motion and so did all the branch, I think with the exception of one or two members.

In 1943, of course, our seven candidates were elected. Again in 1946 our seven candidates were elected. But between the Townsville municipal election of 1946 and that of 1949, many things happened. In the first place, there was a deterioration in the spirit of co-operation that had existed between Russia and the Western democracies during the war, and, as a consequence, the Hermit Park Branch of the A.L.P., which had then become the North Queensland Labour Party, decided that it could not enter into any agreement with the Communist Party in respect of the 1949 Townsville municipal election, and we ran our own team of ten candidates. Also between 1946 and 1949, the two men over whose alleged Communist collaboration the Hermit Park A.L.P. had been deregistered by the Q.C.E., had been re-admitted to the A.L.P., as the result of the endeavours of the hon. member for Bundaberg, then organiser of the A.L.P.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Who were they?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Corcoran and Illich. I mentioned their names in the first place. They were the men over whom the branch was deregistered in 1941.

In 1947, when Corcoran and Illich walked out of the Hermit Park branch of the A.L.P. as the result of a difference Corcoran had with one of our other members named O'Brien, the hon. member for Bundaberg rushed to Townsville as organiser of the A.L.P. and after approaching them arranged to take these two men back into the A.L.P. In 1949 those two men stood for the Townsville municipal election carrying the A.L.P. endorsement. Now, who are the collaborators with the Communist Party?

**Mr. Dewar:** The Labour Party is a united party, is it not?

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. member will have his opinion on that and I shall have mine, and we shall both be quite happy about it.

Let me now go back to the State elections in 1944, when the Hermit Park Labour Party decided to nominate me for the Mundingburra seat. At that time the Communists supported me and particularly a little gallant group of Communists in Ayr—the hon. member for Burdekin can vouch for their personal honesty and integrity—assisted in the formation of an Aikens election committee at Ayr and I am personally grateful to them for the assistance they rendered to me and my party during the election campaign. Again in 1947 the Aikens election committee in Ayr, on which there were many decent, clean-living honourable Communists, assisted in my campaign and in my election. I am grateful to them for their help and I make no bones about it. At that time, as I have said before, the deterioration that exists today had not occurred.

The moment we decided, however, to nominate candidates for the 1950 elections, that is, the elections that were held this year, we received information that the Communists were no longer willing to support the North Queensland Labour Party candidates, because the Communists would not support the North Queensland Labour Party. They ran their own candidate in Haughton, which embraces part of Ayr, against the candidate put up by the North Queensland Labour Party. In 1949 also, when we refused to make an agreement with the Communist Party in the municipal elections in Townsville the A.L.P. made an approach to the Communist Party for an agreement, but the Communist Party brushed them off. In 1949 we formed a branch of the North Queensland Labour Party in Innisfail and the Communist Party issued a special dodger opposing the formation of that branch. That special dodger is in my possession and anybody can read it if he cares to come to my room. It is also in the possession of the A.L.P. and the Q.C.E.

When you talk of collaboration with the Communist Party you must remember that because there was this splendid spirit of co-operation between Russia and the western democracies up to about 1948, we did openly make these election agreements with the Communist Party. Since then, however, we honestly feel that we cannot make

such agreements with them. When we did make the agreements with them they were honoured, they kept their word as they gave it to us. Although they can no longer give me the political support that they gave me in Ayr—Ayr is not in my electorate now—I hope that I shall retain their personal friendship. I appreciate their personal friendship. I appreciate the personal friendship of men like Joe Hicks of Ayr. I hope that I shall retain their personal friendship. I would rather be the personal friend of a decent, clean-living Australian Communist like Joe Hicks than I would be the personal friend of a dirty, treacherous, Nazi collaborator like Robert Gordon Menzies.

In 1950 we came to the real test—and I hope these facts are sinking in. I come now to the State elections of 1950, held on 29 April this year. The Communist Party of course issued a statement, published in the Press. I think I have it here word for word but I shall not look it up because my memory is sufficiently retentive to give hon. members an idea of what they said in the Press at the time.

The Communist Party issued a statement, and it was published in the Press to the effect that "Where Communist candidates are not running for electorates in the coming State election the Communist Party will support the A.L.P. candidates, with the exception of Aikens and Marriott in Mundingburra and Bulimba, because they have always been loyal to working-class principles in the House." At the moment when that statement by the Communist Party appeared in the Press I was in Cairns. I read it in the "Courier-Mail." I immediately went to the "Cairns Post," and gave a statement to the "Post" that was telegraphed down to the Townsville "Daily Bulletin" and then to the "Courier-Mail." It was published in the "Post" of 27 March, 1950. I want to contrast the open and frank attitude of our party with the hole-and-corner attitude of the Labour Party on this matter. Everything we have done since we became a separate party we have done out in the open. The moment we reach a decision we give it to the Press and the public at no time has any doubt as to where the North Queensland Labour Party has stood on any political issue. Our policy is, and always will remain, one of transparent honesty and faith and trust in the people to whom we appeal for support. Therefore, on this date the following statement was published in the "Cairns Post"—

"Red's Support.

"Statement by Mr. Aikens.

"The Leader of the North Queensland Labour Party, Mr. T. Aikens, M.L.A., said in Cairns last night that the action of the Communist Party in running candidates in opposition to those of the North Queensland Labour Party in Mulgrave, Mourilyan and Haughton and supporting the Official Labour candidates against theirs in Townsville, Flinders, Charters Towers and Tablelands, should explode any idea of a connection between the Communist Party and the North Queensland Labour Party.

“Mr. Aikens stated that the decision of the Communist Party to ask its supporters to vote for him personally in Mundingburra was made entirely by that Party alone without reference to him or his Party. In 60 odd other electorates, the Communist Party was supporting Official Labour candidates, including Messrs. Hanlon and Walsh, and he could feel neither flattered nor complimented by being grouped with them.”

Never during the campaign did the Labour Party, either through its parliamentary leader, the Premier, or its organiser, the hon. member for Bundaberg, make any similar refutation with regard to Communist Party assistance to the A.L.P.

Here will be another test as to who are the collaborators with the Communist Party. If the the ex-member for Bundaberg, Frank Barnes, is physically able to contest the Fortitude Valley by-election you will see a test before the public gaze. I shall be on the platform of Frank Barnes and the Communist Party will be supporting the official Labour candidate right out in the open. The only difference between the A.L.P. and the North Queensland Labour Party in its past agreements with the Communist Party is that everything we have done has been done openly and honestly. We have no apologies and no regrets and when we found we could no longer, in keeping with our conscience, reach an agreement with the Communist Party we made a public declaration of the fact.

But the A.L.P. adopts an entirely different attitude. Let us look at the attitude of the A.L.P. with the Communist Party. For two years and nine months after every State election we see exhibitions such as we witnessed the other day when the Premier, and other top-ranking members of the Labour Party, stood up and accused everyone else of being a Communist collaborator. I have heard the Premier accuse every member of this Chamber at one time or another of being a fellow-traveller with the Communist Party. That denunciation of the Communist Party goes on for two years and nine months after an election. In the following three months—the vital three months prior to an election—top-ranking members of the Labour Party kiss the posterior of every Communist within kissing distance.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Riordan): Order! I ask the hon. member to be a little decent in his remarks.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The truth hurt you as much as it hurt—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to conduct himself decently. If he does not obey my call to order I will name him.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I thought I was using excellent English. I could have used the vernacular or the slang term but I refrained from doing so. Let me give you this example. I should like to point out that when I came here the late Speaker told me

that when the debate on the Address in Reply and the Financial Statement was on there was almost unrestricted scope for debate, so long as a member kept within the Standing Orders and the rules of good conduct and good order.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** That right has not been restricted.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Thank you very much.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** As long the hon. member is reasonably decent.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Thank you. But I would point out that decency is always a question of degree.

It is the practice of the members of an A.L.P. industrial group, when they belong to an organisation and cannot get their own way in that organisation, to run to the Press and denounce all those who oppose them as Commos. Sometimes that helps them and sometimes it does not. I want to say here and now that I do not care a continental red cent what anyone calls me. I have been called everything in my long and useful life and these epithets and abuse run off me like water off a duck's back. In 1939, when the Q.C.E. refused me endorsement in Townsville, they said I was a Communist collaborator and at the same time the Communists were denouncing me as a Fascist; so at that time I was a Fascist-Communist. I have been branded as many other things in the interim and, I repeat, I do not care a continental red cent what they call me. But there are other people in our party and I have the interests and integrity of my branch to look after. When the Australian Clerks' Federation had their convention recently in Nowra, and the A.L.P. industrial group could not get control they made a statement to the press that the Communists had taken control of the Clerks' Convention and Murgatroyd, secretary of the Federated Clerks' Union in Townsville and secretary of the North Queensland Labour Party, voted with the Communists. Members like the hon. member for Bundaberg and the Premier get away with the tagging of the Communist label on people, but on this occasion the northern papers made a grievous “blue.” The “Townsville Bulletin” and the “Cairns Post” published this stupid statement. I would have treated it with contempt as I always do, but Murgatroyd slapped the editor of the “Bulletin” and the editor of the “Cairns Post” with a writ for libel that made them gasp. Anyone who cares to go to the library will read on the leading article page of the “Townsville Bulletin” of 3 August this year a long and humble apology to Murgatroyd published by the editor of that paper. Murgatroyd made him apologise twice. Having frightened him, he went on and frightened the editor of the “Cairns Post” and made him apologise twice in big headlines on the leading page of the paper. So all this talk of the North Queensland Labour Party's being associated with the Communist Party is pure bunk—everyone knows it—and when the Labour Party spews it forth it does so in order to create a screen or veneer for its own actions.

The Premier was up north the other day; he was up north to open the Townsville Show again this year. For the second year in succession the show society, for some reason known to themselves and their gods, invited him up, but even the heavens rebelled. It rained cats and dogs and the show was washed out. I will deal later, however, with the Premier and northern development.

I propose now to devote a few minutes to a statement made by the hon. member for Bundaberg the other day in which he suggested that some of the funds of the North Queensland Labour Party came from the Liberal Party or the traditional enemies of Labour. We had in Townsville during the election campaign no less a person than the Minister for Transport. He was boosted in the Press and over the air as Labour's foremost orator, and as the result of that Press boosting a number of people went along to hear him. I was flood-bound in the West on the night he spoke in Townsville. I got to Townsville on the first train that got through from Hughenden a couple of days later, and one of my good friends and supporters met me on the platform. He said, "I went along to hear Duggan the other night." I said, "Well, what do you think of him as an orator?" He replied, "Nugget Jesson has got it on him." (Opposition laughter.) That might be the limit of fanaticism so far as personal support of the gentleman is concerned. Of course the Minister of Transport had to get something off his chest and this is what he said—here I quote from facts—

"Townsville Bulletin—April 6th, 1950.

"Duggan opens for Labor in Townsville.

"He (Mr. Duggan) queried the source of the North Queensland Labour Party's funds, and suggested that the bulk of them may come from Labour's traditional enemies."

I got back to Townsville, I think, the next day, and I went to the Townsville "Daily Bulletin" and this item appeared on 8 April—

"Challenge to Official Labor."

"Accredited nominees of the A.L.P. may examine revenue records of the North Queensland Labor Party with the right to publish any information, provided that reciprocal rights are accorded the N.Q.L.P. to inspect the records of Official Labor.

"This offer, made on Friday afternoon by the Leader of the North Queensland Labor Party, Mr. T. Aikens, M.L.A., is a sequel to a statement made by the Minister for Transport, Mr. J. E. Duggan, at a public meeting in Townsville on Wednesday evening. Mr. Duggan, at the meeting, queried the source of the N.Q.L.P.'s funds, suggesting that the bulk of them came from Labor's traditional enemies.

"The North Queensland Labor Party," said Mr. Aikens, "will make all records of its receipts, accounts and donations available for full inspection by any persons 1950—2F.

nominated by Mr. Duggan or the A.L.P., with full right to publish any information contained therein."

"The offer, said Mr. Aikens, was being made provided that the A.L.P. likewise made records of its receipts, accounts and donations available to any persons nominated by him (Mr. Aikens), with the same right to publish any information which the search may reveal.

"N.Q.L.P. funds, said Mr. Aikens, were supplied by membership of the Party, and individual donations from genuine North-erners. "If Mr. Duggan be sincere in his doubts on the point, and has real influence or authority with those in control of the A.L.P., he can settle the question once and for all by prevailing on them to accept this challenge," concluded Mr. Aikens."

That appeared also in the southern papers. What did we get from the Minister for Transport and leaders of the A.L.P.? Abyssmal silence! In the "Truth to Tell" column of the Brisbane "Truth" of 2 April, 1950—and I have no doubt that this item is quite true; I have no doubt it got into "Truth" in exactly the same way as quite a lot of other information about Labour members gets into the "Truth to Tell" column of the Brisbane "Truth"—we found this—

"Mates at Lands Office Hotel handed A.L.P.'s Ted Walsh three figure presentation Friday, on eve of his departure for election campaign in Bundaberg."

**Mr. Walsh:** Good luck to them!

**Mr. AIKENS:** Good luck to them! It was their money and they had every right to do just what they thought fit with it. I know the people who made this donation to the hon. member for Bundaberg. Many of them used to live in Townsville and in previous election campaigns many of the people who subscribed to this three-figure donation to the hon. member for Bundaberg, when they were in Townsville also subscribed to our party's elections fund. Consequently, if we got money from the traditional enemies of Labour, so also, on his own admission, has the hon. member for Bundaberg.

**Mr. Walsh:** It did not come from the Clonecurry bank.

**Mr. AIKENS:** God knows where it came from. You would know more about the Clonecurry bank than I would.

**Mr. Walsh:** It would Mr. Chaplain.

**Mr. Evans:** It is nothing to what Fairy-mead subscribes.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am not concerned about that. I repeat on the floor of this Chamber the challenge I made to the Minister for Transport. I have made this challenge, I do not know how many times, from the public platform. I challenge the Labour Party to let me examine, or let any representative of mine examine, the books and documents of the Q.C.E., with the right to publish any information I find therein, and I will give the Labour Party the same right with regard to the books and documents of

the North Queensland Labour Party. I know that the Labour Party will not accept this challenge because once the workers and useful people discover the irrefutable evidence as to whence the A.L.P. gets its funds, that will be the end of the Labour Party in Queensland as a working-class party.

**Mr. Sparkes:** You do not mean to say that you are optimistic enough for it to be accepted.

**Mr. AIKENS:** At least the challenge stands and it should silence the Labour Party. It should be the last to accuse anybody of getting money from the traditional enemies of Labour. I might say concerning the North Queensland Labour Party that we have had certain people offer to subscribe to our campaign fund, but they were told courteously but firmly that our funds were not open to donation from such people. On the other hand I doubt whether the Australian Labour Party could quote an instance in which it has knocked back a donation. Where does it get the £35,000 it gets every State election for its electioneering campaign? I repeat the challenge.

I now propose to get onto that part of the debate nearest and dearest to my heart—the development of North Queensland. We have heard much talk of the development of North Queensland; we have had some fine suggestions put forward by hon. members opposite. As a result of the last election we have got down from North Queensland at any rate some men who seem to be good northerners and who give every indication of being good northern fighters. I hope they will continue to be so. When I came here in 1944 and first raised the standard of North Queensland in this Chamber I was called a ratbag, a blatherskite, and goodness knows what else. The Premier the other day branded northern people as bums, crawlers and belly-achers. I can remember the Premier's remarks in 1947 when the hon. member for Mirani came into this assembly and joined with me in the fight for a fair deal for the North. I can remember the Premier quivering with indignation when the hon. member for Mirani raised the question of the North and branding that hon. member as a country bumpkin. The people of the North are called bums, crawlers, village idiots and anything to which the Premier can give tongue.

There have been various schemes for the development of North Queensland. Various proposals have been put forward, chiefly by hon. members opposite, but now and again—a rare occurrence—we get some such proposal by members on the Government side, to provide employment and industry for the people in North Queensland. I have given this matter serious consideration, and I believe that the drift from the country to the city and the drift from the North to the South goes much deeper than the mere establishment of industries and the mere provision of employment. Mr. Riordan, every mother and father love their children, whether they are New Australians or old Australians; irrespective of nationality, irrespective of place in life and irrespective of stratum in society, they all try to do the

best they can for their children. There may be one or two extraneous examples who are not worth bothering about. Consequently I think, until we grapple with the problem of northern children and give them an equal chance in life with southern children, we shall not hold our population in the North.

Let me tell the Committee what is causing the drift of population from the North. In the country areas of North Queensland—and nobody knows this better than you yourself, Mr. Riordan, because no electorate impinges more on this problem in the North than your electorate—many hundreds of children attend primary schools and pass the scholarship every year. Several of them do, at any rate. When such a pupil passes the scholarship in a northern country school his education ends there unless his parents can afford to put their hands in their pockets and provide the money to send their child to one of the secondary schools in one of the big northern towns. In the electorate of the hon. member for Flinders, which stretches from the boundary of the Mundingburra electorate near Mingela right out to Gilliat, there is not one secondary school. There is not a secondary school between Charters Towers and Mt. Isa, a distance of roughly 500 miles as the crow flies.

**Dr. Noble:** Are there any secondary school tops to primary schools?

**Mr. AIKENS:** No, Charters Towers is the last one in that line.

What is germane to the Flinders electorate is also germane to the other northern electorates, and any child who passes the scholarship in that area has to finish his education at the scholarship standard unless his parent puts his hand in his pocket and sends him to one of the secondary schools in Charters Towers or Townsville or in the South. Even if one of these country boys is able to go to one of the secondary schools in Charters Towers or Townsville, with the financial assistance of his parents, and subsequently passes the senior, the same difficulty arises. I am speaking now not only of the country northern boy or girl who passes the senior, but of any northern boy or girl who passes the senior. Unless the parent can again afford to put his hand in his pocket and send the child down here to the University, his education finishes at the senior. I know we have been agitating for a northern university and that land has been acquired for one in the Mundingburra electorate in Townsville, but even then there will still be the problem of the country boy or girl who has to go to Townsville to attend it. However, we do not look as though we shall get a northern university in my little grandchild's time, so we have to deal with the problem as it confronts us today.

After a long study of the problem connected with the real cause of the drift from the country to the cities, I believe that until we get a northern university this is the only solution: adequate allowances for northern country children attending secondary schools in northern towns, with free transport to their homes at holiday periods; adequate

allowances for all northern students attending the University or Teachers' Training College at Brisbane, also with free transport to their homes at holiday periods. The adoption of the first suggestion would put the boy who lives in Nonda or Gilliat or Richmond, or any of the towns in your electorate, Mr. Riordan, and who passes the scholarship, on the same footing as the boy who lives in Charters Towers, Townsville or Mt. Isa and who passes the scholarship, because it would enable him to attend a secondary school. His parent would be recompensed for the cost of his board and lodging and for his transport home at holiday periods. Under such a system, the boy from Richmond, Hughenden or Gilliat or other country school would have an equal chance of obtaining secondary education with the boy from Charters Towers or the boy from Townsville. The same thing would apply, of course, to the girls from the various country areas; they would have an equal chance of obtaining secondary education with girls in Charters Towers and Townsville.

Under the second suggestion, when any children attending the northern secondary schools passed the senior, whether they came from country districts or from towns in which a secondary school existed, their parents would be paid adequate allowances to meet the cost of their board and lodging in Brisbane while they were attending the University, the Teachers' Training College or any other medium of advanced education.

The northern boy and girl is placed at a grave disadvantage in the matter of secondary education and particularly in the matter of university education, compared with the boy and girl in Brisbane. I am pleased to see that at least in two respects the Government are realising the hardship that northern scholars suffer in attending schools in Brisbane. I asked a question the other day concerning teacher fellowships and about persons holding fellowships in dentistry to the Queensland University. To my astonishment I was told that for years, that is, ever since the scholarships have been granted the boy who came from the far North to Brisbane and held a fellowship in dentistry got only the same allowance from the Government as the Brisbane boy who lives in his home and is provided with board and lodging by his parents. Consequently, I suppose the Brisbane boy is £2 10s. to £3 a week better off than the boy who has to come to Brisbane to go to the University to take out his fellowship in dentistry, because the latter's parents have to pay for his board and lodging here. I am pleased to see that after all these years the Government are realising that they must make adequate allowance for such country scholars to the University in Brisbane.

If I remember rightly, too, I think the Secretary for Public Instruction is going to review the allowances made to northern boys and girls and country boys and girls attending the Teachers' Training College. I put that to the Chamber in all seriousness as a genuine northerner knowing the needs of the northern people and knowing the opportunities that should be given to the North.

If you were a northern parent and you had a brilliant boy or girl and you happened to be a worker in industry and that child passed the senior examination and you wanted to give the boy or girl an opportunity of taking advantage of his educational attainments, what would you do? You would do what hundreds of other northern families have done in the last few years and dozens are doing every year, that is, you would sell up your home in the North, come to Brisbane and get a job here in order that your brilliant son or daughter may have the best educational opportunities. Such parents are forced to do that. If the Government provide an adequate living allowance for country students at the University in Brisbane we may stop this drift, but by not doing so we not only lose a student when he qualifies but we also lose his father and mother and his brothers and sisters who come to Brisbane when the home is moved. I know that that is one cause for the drift from the North. A person whose son is holding a fellowship in dentistry told me that his wife wanted him to come to Brisbane on transfer. He is a railway tradesman, and they are very short in the North. I know that they are short everywhere but they are shorter in the North than anywhere else. The wife wants him to come to Brisbane so that he can give board and lodging to the son while he is taking advantage of his fellowship in dentistry at the Queensland University, but unless the Government make an adequate allowance for that to be done, I feel we shall lose this man just as we are losing scores of others from the North every day. That is the crux of the reason why people are leaving the North—because the northern children and particularly those in country areas in the North have not the same educational facilities for advancement and promotion as the favoured boy or girl in Brisbane.

I suppose the next serious thing troubling the northern people, and particularly country people of the North, is the lack of medical facilities. Take places way up where I went just prior to last Christmas, to Georgetown and beyond, those back-country areas in North Queensland where there is not a doctor sometimes for 200 to 300 miles. At times they have to take long, arduous journeys by road or rail in order to get to the nearest doctor or the nearest hospital.

When they get to the nearest hospital or doctor they find there a general practitioner. I am not suggesting that these country doctors are inefficient but I do suggest that there is a limit to the knowledge of a general practitioner. When they get to the nearest hospital, the general practitioner in charge may decide that they need a specialist's attention and off they have to go again on another long wearisome journey to the nearest specialist, whether in a northern town or in Brisbane. All the risks must be taken by the Northerner and all the expense must come out of the Northerner's pockets. How many do you, Mr. Riordan, of your own knowledge, know in the back country who have had that experience? We talk of the pioneers; let us consider their trials and tribulations. How

many people do you, Mr. Riordan, know of your own knowledge living out in the backblocks who get sick and because a visit to the nearest doctor would entail a long and arduous journey dose themselves up with pain-killer and other remedies in the hope that their pain or sickness will pass in a day or two, and finally, when they get really bad and are taken into the nearest hospital, are told that they have delayed their journey too long, and should have been in a week or fortnight before? Therefore, not only do we lose another Northerner, but other people not game enough to go into the blackblocks. People get scared by this person's death. Time and again we read of an untimely death and subsequently the family say, "We are not going to submit to the risks our father, son, or brother submitted to, we are going to the nearest big town or to Brisbane where we shall have medical attention right at our front doorstep."

Here is another tangible suggestion I put forward to the Government—free transport to northern country people to the nearest town where there is a hospital or doctor. At present they have to pay their own transport to the nearest town. To give them free transport to the nearest hospital would place them on a par with people in the more settled districts. If you give a sick person free transport from Georgetown to Mareeba Hospital, or from Reid River to the Townsville Hospital, you simply place them on equality with people who live in Mareeba or Townsville where they can go to their hospital in a matter of a few minutes.

**Dr. Noble:** Have you not a free rail-motor ambulance in the Far North?

**Mr. AIKENS:** They have a free rail-motor ambulance but today the distance to the nearest hospital or doctor is often so great that the call for the ambulance is often delayed until it is too late. The hon. member knows that in such a case a person would delay seeking medical advice until he was sick enough to be transported by ambulance. I am sure that not one-hundredth of the hon. member's patient's come to him by ambulance. It is the person who falls sick and is forced to travel by train or road that I am thinking of. Once they get to Mareeba, Cairns or Townsville they can get medical attention, and even specialist's attention at Townsville. If specialist's attention is not available at Townsville these people, unless they are in indigent circumstances, have to pay their own fare to Brisbane and their own fare back. That is why the country people are leaving the country—because they do not enjoy the medical facilities people in big towns enjoy. That is why I propose in addition free transport to all Northerners needing specialist's attention to centres where it is to be obtained, whether that is in Townsville or Brisbane.

I propose again that there should be a helicopter service to transport the sick in the Far North to the nearest base hospital. We have an airport at Garbutt, a very fine aerodrome at Cairns, and another one at Charters

Towers. Some arrangements could be made with the R.A.A.F., to have helicopters stationed at Garbutt and Cairns so that they could fly out in all weathers and land anywhere at all, pick up a sick person who needed attention and transport him to the nearest base hospital.

When they brought that person into the nearest base hospital, if the doctor thought he should have specialist attention in Brisbane or elsewhere, he should be supplied with free plane or rail transport to get him to the specialist. It is only by giving the northern people the same medical facilities as are enjoyed by the people in the big towns and Brisbane that you will get the people who live in the North to remain in the North. No matter how many industries you establish, and no matter how much employment you provide, life is sweet and if they think they are endangering their lives by living up in the country, with primitive medical conditions, they will drift to the city as fast as they can.

I also advocate travelling medical clinics to radiate from every base hospital by rail and road, and if necessary by air, so that the country people who feel off colour and think they are suffering from some serious disease in its incipient stages, instead of travelling 200 or 300 miles which may take a week, can call at the travelling medical clinic when it makes its regular visit. It should be possible to have travelling medical clinics radiating from every base hospital and visiting every country area at least once a week, and in many places they could visit them twice or three times; and the people who felt they were suffering from the early stages of serious complaints could visit the clinics and the doctor would either tell them that the illness was minor and that they did not need hospitalisation or diagnose it as something serious that could develop into a major illness, and in that event pack them off to hospital without delay. It is only by giving the people personal security that we shall ensure keeping them in the North.

In the few minutes I have left, I want to deal with the statements made about the establishment of secondary industries in Northern Queensland. We have heard a great deal from time to time, and I again remind the Premier and the Government and the people of Queensland that those who talk of secondary industries are now becoming firmly convinced that the proposals I put before the House many years ago were sound in essence and in fact. We find on page 5 of the report of the Secondary Industries Division for this year these pregnant words from Mr. Ross—

"However, industrialists contend, rightly or wrongly, that to establish their works in country centres, with extra costs of freights, power and other charges, difficulties of transport, and a limited local market places them at a great disadvantage compared with their competitors already established in the large populous cities, where the main markets are. It may

become a question of granting decentralised industries some form of subsidy or compensation to place them on an equal footing with their city competitors."

That will have to be done before we can really establish secondary industries in North Queensland. They will have to be subsidised and assisted, as has been suggested by no less a person than the Director of Secondary Industries, in order that they may meet competition of the well-established southern businesses.

Much has been said of the need to establish a fruit-canning industry in North Queensland. Last year I dealt with the formation of the North Queensland Development League. That league was established at a public meeting at Townsville and immediately came in for a tremendous blast of adverse criticism, not only from the Government but from members of the Liberal-Country Party, who could not get political control of it. At the inaugural meeting of the league we had Mr. Summers, from the "Courier-Mail," who made a very intelligent and cogent speech, and immediately he did, the supporters of the Government were running round North Queensland suggesting that the "Courier-Mail" was only supporting the North Queensland Development League because it wanted to increase the sales of the "Courier-Mail." I do not know whether the "Courier-Mail" wants to increase sales in the northern towns or not, but I do know they have done something the Government and the Opposition have not done. They have been consistent in their advocacy of northern development, and whatever their reason for it might be, at least we should thank them for as much as they have done.

The North Queensland Development League will go on fighting its battle against all comers and all critics. This is a little pamphlet issued in connection with the establishment of a quick deep-freeze industry in Townsville to treat northern fruit and, later, northern sea-foods. These words should sink into the pachydermatous hides of members of the Labour, Liberal and Country Parties that did so much to smash the North Queensland Development League—

"During World War II. the American armed forces faithfully built a cold store and freezing works at Aikenvale, Townsville, and, which since, has become available for purchase.

"Your Mr. W. Appleton, whilst Secretary of the North Queensland Development League, saw the possibilities and communicated with Charles S. Hoffman, processor and exporter of frozen fruits, who, in March this year, came to Townsville, inspected the plant, arranged for his purchase, and helped organise your Growers' Association Ltd.

"The processing and marketing organisation, of which your Growers' Association Ltd. is the principal fully protected, and preferentially secured shareholders, is registered as The North Queensland Food Products Pty. Ltd."

That is well under way. A large American cool stores at Aikenvale have been bought. The growers have been organised into a semi-co-operative company; directors have been appointed; public meetings have been held. Various growers interested in the enterprise have attended and given their full support. In the Townsville "Daily Bulletin" of 22 May, 1950, I find this very interesting item—

"For the first time Mr. Hoffmar mentioned the sea foods project. Later, he said, the lobster, crayfish, prawn and crab, with other possible varieties, would be processed in the plant. This food lent itself most admirably to 'deep-freeze' methods, and the Gulf waters would be brought into the scheme. In all, the project could only be called 'immense' from the northern point of view."

I commend this cutting for perusal and observation by all hon. members and any interested member of the public.

I have here a prospectus of the North Queensland Growers' Association Ltd. It is well under way. In addition to taking over cool stores it has recently bought a property near Aikenvale for experimental farms in order to help the growers in the production of the various tropical fruits. This states—

"Tin containers will be procured locally, labour will be called for locally, supplies will be required locally, and when fully operated, it is anticipated that—

Over £25,000 per annum will be spent locally on wages;

Over £20,000 per annum will be spent locally on general requirements.

Over £250,000 per annum will be spent locally on fruit and vegetables."

The Association intends to can up to 2,000,000 lb. of strawberries annually; up to 250,000 cases annually of smooth-leaf pineapples, also large quantities of stringless mangoes, papaws, cantaloupes, rock melons, and passion fruit, etc. Other things needed in plentiful supply are citrus fruits, rough-leaf pineapples, Bowen tomatoes and mangoes (all varieties) for concentrated frozen fruit juices, fruit pulp and purees. These people are well under way—and not a penny of assistance from the Government. They did not ask for any assistance from the Government, but asked for something I think they are entitled to get, protection from the C.O.D., a State supported southern-controlled organisation that will crush them, just as it crushed other similar northern industries, as soon as it get a chance. And here I read from a letter that the North Queensland Growers' Organisation sent to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock on 26 May of this year—

"The Northern Growers have decided to adopt the 'deep freeze' method of processing their produce, and are in the process of floating a company for that purpose. However, a point which seems to be overshadowing the project is the power of direction of the C.O.D."

"A processing company was formed in Townsville many years ago, to treat our tropical fruits. Interference, and what is termed 'misuse' of directive powers caused this firm to close. This point has long been a very sore point with the growers, and now that we are going to process, some means will have to be found to prevent the C.O.D. from directing all, or the greater portion of the crops, to Brisbane."

That is the point troubling them and in fairness to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock and the Premier I must say that assurances have been given that the firm, so far as possible, will be protected from this southern octopus. There is a fear that the Government might not be able to control the Committee of Direction. The Government are not in control of the Committee of Direction and cannot direct the operations of that committee, but which has tremendous legislative powers. The Committee of Direction could smash this northern industry, just as it smashed the other little one. If the people interested in northern development do not get behind this northern industry and see that it gets the protection that it should have—

**A Government Member:** You be careful of Mr. Hoffman.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Although very interested, not being a grower I have never attended any of the meetings. Meetings were called and the growers attended and all the stuff has been published in the Townsville "Daily Bulletin." Another finalising meeting was held the other day and the northern growers have adopted the scheme and, as a matter of fact, have selected their own directors. I will mention the provisional directors. I understand that these provisional directors were elected the other day as the permanent directorate of the concern—

"Frederick Campbell, farmer, Horseshoe Bay, Magnetic Island.

"William Charles New, manager and farmer, Herveys Range Road, Mundingburra.

"Michael Pace, farmer, Rollingstone.

"Frank Ivey Spiegelhauer, farmer, Mutarnee.

"Norman Stewart Symes, farmer, 7 Cannon Street, South Townsville.

"William Henry Stralaw, farmer, Broughton, Charters Towers.

"Herbert James Faloon, farmer, Charles Street, Aitkenvale.

"George Donnington Western, farmer, Stuart.

"Lovie Granich, farmer, Horseshoe Bay, Magnetic Island."

(Time expired.)

**Mr. GAVEN (Southport) (5.28 p.m.):** In making my contribution this afternoon to the debate on the Financial Statement it is not my intention to spend very much time on the Budget except to say that, it is rather peculiar, to my way of thinking, that whilst the Government restrict the budgeting of local governing bodies and many other business

activities and will not allow them to budget for a deficit, the Government themselves are allowed to do so. Under the Local Government Act, an Act of Parliament passed by the present Government, a local authority must anticipate and budget for every item of expenditure in the year's work ahead and on no account whatever is it allowed to overspend. It cannot budget for a deficit and it is therefore peculiar that the Government who issue this instruction can themselves budget for a deficit.

I can assure the Committee that the Treasurer has my sympathy in bringing down his Budget under the circumstances existing in this State. In my humble way I have had something to do with budgets from time to time; I do not envy him his job under present circumstances as I see them.

I rose particularly to take the opportunity of making an appeal on behalf of the area I represent and on behalf of Redcliffe for the repeal of the Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act. I hope that at the end of my speech perhaps the Minister in charge of this Act and the members of his Government will see fit to do something about the iniquitous state of affairs that has been created. In my maiden speech I allotted only about seven minutes of my time to this Act, but it brought to life the senior Ministers in a very frenzied defence of building controls. I made it very clear at the outset that I was not in favour of the abolition of all building controls, but that I was in favour of having the area that I represent and the area of Redcliffe placed in the same category and on the same footing as the remainder of this great State.

Let us examine calmly and coolly the operations of the Act from the very day of its inception. There is no need to make a lot of noise in this Chamber. After all, I hope we are all sound, sensible men and that the majority of hon. members, irrespective of what side of the Committee they are sitting on, will try to be fair when a fair case is put up.

The Act has failed in its intended purpose. It was introduced in an effort to provide homes for the people, and it received the wholehearted support not only of the members of this Chamber but of perhaps 98 per cent. of the people of this State. However, after it had been operating for 12 months the people began to realise that it was not providing the thousands of homes that the Government said it would and, in a frenzied search for a means of escape, the then Secretary for Labour and Industry, who is the present Treasurer, suddenly realised that not only could he pass the buck for the Government's inability to provide more homes, but he could also make this Act of Parliament perhaps one of the greatest pieces of political propaganda in the history of this State.

**Mr. Gair:** Because the members of the local authority failed to do their duty, and you were one of them.

**Mr. GAVEN:** When the Treasurer and the Secretary for Labour and Industry were dropping bombs round me in their replies, I

listened attentively and with great interest to everything they had to say, appreciating the fact that every man has the right to be heard. If I am not to be heard as I heard them, I suggest that they must have a very weak case.

In 1948 the Act was amended after a vicious and unwarranted attack on innocent people, and I intend to prove that statement if I can do so in the time at my disposal. It is a significant fact that every Supreme Court action taken against persons for breaches of the Act has failed, and although greatly increased penalties were provided in the amending Act, to my knowledge not one person has been indicted in the Supreme Court since it came into being. If all these alleged breaches occurred, why did not the Government take some action to impose some of the penalties that the Act was amended to provide, instead of spending thousands of pounds of public moneys in having inspectors for the suppression of what was regarded in other parts of the State as a civil right of the people? It was a civil right in 99 per cent. of the State, but in the other 1 per cent the set-up was altogether different.

It cannot be denied that the Act has failed. Despite the fact that the other States depend on the importation of large quantities of timber, plywood, joinery and other building materials, Queensland is the only State where controls on the building of dwelling houses still exist. One has only to visit the wharves in various parts of the State to see the amount of Queensland building material that is being exported.

Apart from restricting commercial building, the Act has not been responsible for the erection of one more home in this State than would have been built had it never existed. In actual fact, many more houses would have been built but for the operations of this Act. Evidence of that can be seen on the South Coast merely by looking across the border fence into New South Wales. The extent of our loss of houses can be gauged by the activities of only one South Coast plumber, who I understand has used £7,000 worth of plumbing material from Queensland sources on New South Wales building projects during the last 12 months, and the plumbing costs on an average dwelling are less than 20 per cent. of the whole cost. At least eight other plumbing tradesmen on the South Coast are working in New South Wales for 90 per cent. of their time, using materials from Queensland sources.

This building boom in New South Wales began on the very day that Zone B was created in Queensland and I give you my assurance in all sincerity that the boom will continue so long as Zone B exists. Many Queensland people have already bought land across the border for the purpose of speculative building with material that the Queensland Government are so generously making available to them.

**Mr. Power:** You know that we cannot stop it from going over the border.

**Mr. GAVEN:** Quite true, because of Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution provides for free interstate trading. The statement that the Act is purely political propaganda is unassailable. Here are the facts: for months the advertising columns of the Brisbane "Courier-Mail" have contained increasing lists of homes for sale, and none to let. The "Courier-Mail" of 21 October advertised some 130 dwellings in Brisbane for sale, with vacant possession, and scores of others advertised for sale in the same issue could probably also be purchased on the same conditions. Big building companies are searching for buyers, not tenants, for hundreds of houses, and are offering liberal terms to attract buyers. Speculative builders who have erected hundreds of homes in the city area are finding considerably more difficulty in selling houses and quite a few of these gentlemen have realised that the big boom is waning and rather than become landlords they are retiring from business.

It is quite legitimate for the speculator to operate in the city but it is a crime in Zone B—a stigma and a crime. In the words of the Treasurer—

"The housing camps are still full and there are many young married couples living with in-laws, in boarding houses and in rooms."

That is true, I agree and the only answer is that almost everyone who is in a position to build or buy a home of his own already has one. The evidence is there, that there are at least 300 homes in Brisbane that can be bought today and we have hundreds of people who want a home and have not got the money to buy one.

**Mr. Gair:** A plain stupid statement.

**Mr. GAVEN:** How is it a stupid statement? Take the paper advertising hundreds of homes for sale. The Government have not done anything whatever to provide homes for the people who cannot afford to pay at least £2 a week rent and comparatively few are available even at that price. They use the Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act as a smoke-screen to cover their failure to provide houses instead of the housing camps or humpies for the poorer classes to which they appear to be permanently condemned.

Let us examine the Act and see the extent to which it has been effective. Why was it introduced in the first place? Back in 1948 the then Secretary for Labour and Industry, now the Treasurer, sent to the South Coast an investigator, not an inspector, to go through the town of South Coast to find out what was actually going on in regard to building. This inspector, Mr. Copley by name, made a report and I saw clearly and emphatically that while he was there he did not know whether he was in the South Coast or South Africa. The report he submitted to the then Minister, now the Treasurer, was malicious, mischievous, and without any foundation in fact whatever. On that report the Treasurer was misled but he brought in the amending

Bill in 1948, placing South Coast and Redcliffe in one zone—one type of legislation for one section of the people as against those in the rest of the State.

I took the advice of the Treasurer and perused "Hansard" and I agree that when the Bill was introduced the whole of the Opposition were in accord with it but at that time they had no idea of its ramifications, and implications or the way in which it would be administered. I do not blame the Treasurer or the present Secretary for Labour and Industry for the way in which it was being administered.

I pointed that out very clearly, even though the Secretary for Labour and Industry said that I was making an attack on the Treasurer and himself. I am satisfied that as fair-thinking men, if they knew what was going on on the South Coast, they would immediately repeal this iniquitous Act.

I took the advice of the Treasurer and I read and examined the debate on the passage of the Bill through this House. In fact, I perused "Hansard" very carefully. I found that the hon. gentleman built up his case for the Bill on the action of an ex-publican who built a house on the South Coast with the approval of the local authority. The first case that the hon. gentleman mentioned when introducing the Bill was that of Mr. H. A. Warner, ex-publican of Warwick. The hon. gentleman said—

"Case No. 1: A man named H. A. Warner, an ex-publican from Warwick, owned a house at Southport in Stevens Street. About 1945 he sold to Mrs. Myles-Ford and left Southport."

Is there anything wrong with that? Mrs. Myles-Ford, who bought his house, is still occupying it. That shows she is a permanent resident. She has remained in it ever since.

The hon. gentleman went on to say—

"After a short period he returned and took up residence in Walker Avenue. He bought land in Scarborough Street from a taxi-driver named Berinot and obtained from the Southport Council local-authority permit No. 17464, dated 15 October, 1946, to erect a residence on this land at a cost of £1,736 and with an area of 1,250 square feet plus garage. He gave the usual undertaking regarding residence. The house has not yet been completed but measures approximately 1,450 square feet. It has been sold for approximately £3,000 to a Mr. Fraser, who recently purchased Firth's Garage, &c., in Scarborough Street."

That is all right. Mr. Fraser is a permanent resident, he bought the house and has lived in it ever since. So the hon. gentleman is all wrong. The local authority was right in issuing the permit, because the Act says—

"Provided that if at any time within the operation of this Part of this Act, the person constructing such dwelling-house or any other person to whom he may have disposed of the dwelling-house by sale, lease, or in any other manner, shall use

such dwelling-house for any other purpose than as a permanent residence, such person shall be guilty of an offence."

That is the point I am trying to make. He signed the declaration that he was going to reside in it permanently, or that the person to whom he might have disposed of it would use it for no other purpose than a permanent residence. The declaration Mrs. Myles-Ford, for instance, signed was to the effect that she was going to keep the dwelling as a permanent residence for herself. The declaration is one printed by the Government Printer on Government paper and reads—

"I propose to erect a building at (insert the exact address and/or Local Authority description of property)....."

"I hereby undertake that during the operation of the abovementioned Act, this building will not be extended so that its area exceeds 1,250 square feet, calculated according to the provisions of the Act and Regulations made in accordance with the Act, and that it will be used as a permanent residence and that I will not allow it to be used otherwise than as a permanent residence.

"I further undertake that, during the operation of the abovementioned Act, this building will not be let or sold to any person who has not lodged with your Council an undertaking to the effect as this one."

The point I am making in respect of the provisions of the Act is that if I held 100 allotments I could build 100 dwelling-houses, provided I sold them or let them to legitimate permanent tenants. If a person who signed that undertaking was proved not to be a permanent tenant, the Minister could prosecute him for making a false declaration. Every person who signed that declaration resided permanently in the house in question. How did the local authority know that the applicant would not sell to another person who would become a permanent resident?

**Mr. Gair:** They never attempted to police it or co-operate one iota with the Government.

**Mr. GAVEN:** The next case refers to S. E. Loughheed, a painter who has resided in Southport for many years. He received a permit to build a house in Olive Avenue. The fact that the house in Scarborough Street measured 1,450 square feet but because no action was taken is no reflection on the Council, because at that time the policy of outside measurements was changed to inside measurements and the 1,450 square feet was computed by outside measurements.

Case No. 2 is that of G. H. Waymouth. He received a permit and built a house in High Street, which was sold to a permanent resident of many years in Southport, a Mr. McDonnell, who is very well thought of as a salesman in the motor industry. Mr. Waymouth received a second permit and built a house which he had occupied himself

until recently, when it was bought by the Commonwealth Government as a residence for the postmaster.

Now we come to the famous Cowderoy case. Mr. Cowderoy received five permits to build five working houses in the working-class area of Southport, and all are occupied by working men in the area, and some were purchased through the War Service Homes Division.

Now let me quote the Preston case. Local Authority Approval No. 20863, dated 17 August, 1946, was issued to Thomas Preston to build 1,130 square feet in Walton Street. On 8 November, 1948, the Bureau of Industry issued permit No. Q. B. 8662 to Thomas Preston to build 750 square feet in the easement off Walton Street. On 17 October, 1949, the Bureau of Industry issued permit No. Q. B. 13055 to Thomas Preston to build 950 square feet in the easement off Walton Street.

So it will be seen that what I have been saying is correct. It appears that as the Government have done the same thing there is nothing wrong with the council's action.

Now we come to the very good case or the very bad case, as far as the Government are concerned—the Ballinger case. On 27 July, 1946, Mr. Ballinger, on behalf of the Hollywell Holiday Syndicate, lodged application and plans with the Southport Town Council to construct a number of cottages at Hollywell. The council replied on 13 August, 1946, stating that the council could not issue a permit and that application would have to be made to the Bureau of Industry. When the council inspector discovered that the work was proceeding he took the Bureau of Industry inspector, Mr. Kendall, to the site and helped him to measure the structures. However, the Government took no action in the matter. The Government definitely let the council down in this matter; it was not a case of the council's letting the Government down.

Section 10, Subsection (2) (b), of the old Act gives the local authority power to issue a permit if the person constructing such dwelling house or any other person to whom he may have disposed of the dwelling house by sale, lease, or in any other manner shall use such dwelling house as a permanent residence. That established the fact that the Act never intended that the man should occupy the house himself, but attempted to ensure that it was to be used as a permanent home. The clear intention of the Act is to provide homes for permanent residents of the area.

I have approached the Secretary for Labour and Industry on several occasions and I have found him a decent man to deal with and I do not wish it to be inferred from what I am trying to say that the Treasurer is not a decent person to deal with. He has extended the utmost courtesy to me whenever I have had occasion to approach him.

In the first instance the Minister, during the course of his reply, challenged me and the hon. member for Murrumba, to produce

to him one instance where one honest, decent, permanent resident working man in the area had been refused a permit. He said that if I could produce that to him he would give him a permit. After I produce this deserving case I hope the Minister will—and I know he will—issue a permit. I do not intend to speak on behalf of the hon. member for Murrumba; he is well able to look after himself. The first case is one that I brought forward in this Chamber previously. I appeal to every hon. member, whether on the Government or the Opposition benches, to help me to get a permit for this man. If ever a man deserved a permit this man does. The reply of the Secretary for Labour and Industry was that in the first instance he was a single man, secondly that his mother owned a cafe down there, and thirdly she owned a home in Ipswich. I admit that he is a single man and his mother owns a cafe

**Mr. A. Jones:** Be fair in this case. He is in hospital.

**Mr. GAVEN:** He is able to rehabilitate himself and come out. This man was a returned soldier who was very badly knocked about in the war. Formerly he was a school teacher and a good type of man, a good athlete, footballer, and swimmer. He was knocked about so much in the war in New Guinea that his right arm had to be amputated. He has deafness in right ear—ear drum perforated. He was in a bad nervous condition. He had gunshot wounds in thigh and his teeth shattered. As the Minister has said, at the moment he is in hospital but he is able to rehabilitate himself. His mother owned a home in Ipswich and a cafe on the South Coast but she is now living in a tiny room 8 ft. by 8 ft. She has sold the home in Ipswich and all she asks is that they get a permit to build 10 squares in Palm Avenue, Surfers' Paradise. That is the only bit of land this man has.

**Mr. Gair:** When she made application she had a home.

**Mr. GAVEN:** She has already sold the home in Ipswich, that being one of the hon. gentleman's conditions. She has asked for a permit and has been consistently refused. I know the Minister will reconsider this application and do the best he possibly can.

I would put the hon. gentleman right on another point. In the first place he said this was a single man and no single person receives a permit for the South Coast. I have made investigations and find that single people down there have got permits, and got permits from the Bureau of Industry. I do not blame the Minister for the way the Act is being administered; I do not think he knows what is going on.

The first cases of these is that of Miss Grace Irene Sheehan, Country Club Hotel, Stanthorpe, a single woman. She received a permit, No. QB/9554, 14 December, 1948, for 1248 square feet, Pacific Highway, Surfer's Paradise.

The next case of that of E. Hicks, Third Avenue, Southport, a single man, Permit No. Q.E. 1555 8, 1,080 square feet. This lad was told that no single person was allowed to build on the South Coast but he could build anywhere else in the State.

Mrs. Bunting, Pacific Highway, Surfers' Paradise received a permit to build and built in Bower street, Southport. She is a widow and, therefore, in the same category as a single person. This lady sold the home in Bower street, Southport, and received a permit by the Building Control Division to build another home, and has done so, on the Pacific Highway, Surfers' Paradise.

**Mr. Gair:** You know the reason why.

**Mr. GAVEN:** I could not tell the hon. gentleman anything about it.

**Mr. Gair:** Of course you do: you know so much about it. You know the woman is a cripple and gets about in a wheel-chair.

**Mr. GAVEN:** I know sufficient about it to know that she is not a cripple. The Treasurer is mistaken. He is thinking of another person.

The next case is that of a man by the name of Cole. This man has lived at Surfer's Paradise for 18 years; he is a hard-working man and engaged in the building industry. To be quite fair and frank in his case, I must say that he had an uncontrolled house and sold it some time back, but had no idea at the time he sold it that he would not get a permit to build a new home on the allotment that he and his wife own. He has made application to build but has been consistently refused. There is nothing in the Act to say that once a man sells a home he cannot build another. Other people have had homes, sold them, and have received permits to build again. E. M. & G. E. Bones, of Burleigh Heads, recently sold a shop and residence to a Mr. Breen. Mr. Bones has since obtained a permit to build a new residence after disposing of the other one, but Cole, Hadley, Hughes, and other people have been refused. Why? Mr. Breen owned and sold a home at Coolangatta and was then allowed to buy another home and a business, but other people are told that if they sell in that area they cannot buy or build there again. Mr. Cole's case is a most deserving one. He is no sharp-shooter or bookmaker, but a decent hard-working fellow. This business is creating hardship.

I am not prepared to stress the circumstances in the case of a Mr. Warnock, who desires to erect a home at River Terrace, Surfer's Paradise. He signed the required declaration to the effect that he does not own any other land in the Commonwealth. He has been consistently refused because he does not come within the category.

I mention next the case of Mr. J. Hadley, of Ferny Fairway, Burleigh Heads. I played football with this man over 25 years ago, and he is a hard-working decent fellow. He has been living in a tent on his allotment and has all the required building materials on the

ground, even to the roof. He has been consistently refused a permit to build. He had an uncontrolled house, which he sold to a Mr. Mandross, a cafe-owner and permanent resident in Burleigh Heads. He was not aware that he could not rebuild; in fact, he was told that he would not be prevented from building so long as he sold to a permanent resident.

I read in the posh columns of the "Telegraph" of no later than 16 September last that Mr. and Mrs. Allom had sold their home at Ascot and were now building a home at Southport. Apparently one can sell a home in Brisbane and go down to the South Coast to build, but a person resident in the area has no chance of doing so. I appeal to every fair-minded man that it is time that this iniquitous regulation was wiped out. We all know that we are losing building materials to New South Wales.

To quote another case: a Mrs. Hughes had a home of eleven rooms in High Street, Southport, at the back of the industrial area. She lost her husband and for a time was living by herself. She sold the house, which was on 1½ acres of land, to a man who was starting a poultry farm. The Minister said that she signed a declaration before she sold her home and that if she sold she would not obtain a permit to build another home and that she does not come within the category.

She has been told that because she sold her home for the terrific price of £2,500, she cannot get a permit to build a home with a floor area of 600 sq. ft. As I have said, she has lost her husband and has only her daughter living with her. She has had a lot of worry and trouble. She has been told she can build a home of 1,250 sq. ft. anywhere in the State, with the exception of the South Coast and Redcliffe. This is a very deserving case, and one in which I think a permit should be granted.

The next case, a very pathetic one, is that of Mr. and Mrs. M. P. Hill, of 23rd Avenue, Palm Beach. These old people are both over 70 years of age and have lived in Palm Beach for 20 years. Mrs. Hill wrote to me some time ago as follows—

"Some time ago I made application to the Building Control to erect a permanent dwelling on my land at Palm Beach, and I received a reply from the Department to the effect that my application was rejected.

"I wish to state my case with the hope that my application will be reviewed.

"Both my husband and myself are over 70 years of age. We are not well to do, just struggling along and keeping slightly ahead of the old-age pension, and at this stage of our lives we have no desire to become speculators.

"I have been part-owner of a dwelling at Palm Beach for approximately 20 years and have lived there permanently for 16 years. My sister, who is an ex-1st A.I.F. Trained Sister, was the other part-owner of the dwelling.

"Owing to my sister's ill-health because of war service, it became necessary for her to realise on her share of the property, and as I was not financially able to purchase her share, it was agreed to sell on the open market, and that I would then have sufficient money to erect a smaller home for my husband and myself which would be more within my ability to maintain than the larger house that has been sold. At my age and serious state of health I am not able to act as cleaner and caretaker for other people, and in view of your oft repeated statement that you would ensure that every person who required a permanent home would have no difficulty in obtaining a permit, I consider that under the abovementioned circumstances I come within that category.

"I had no idea when I sold my interest in the house that I would not be allowed a permit to build on the only small block of land that I own in this world.

"I received as my share of the sale of the large home the magnificent sum of £1,200. Surely I am entitled to a home to live in in the State which my husband and myself have worked so hard all these years to help develop."

Mrs. Hill wrote another letter to the then Secretary for Public Works and Housing, which I shall not read at this stage, but a letter that she wrote to the present Treasurer reads as follows—

"Once again I am asking permission to build a small house at Palm Beach for my husband and self. We have no home and are both over 70 years old. I hope you can see your way clear to grant me this favour.

"I have had Masses and Petitions offered up that you would let me build my home. My sister, Miss Isambert, who was half owner with me, worked in the same office as your wife. I do pray our prayers will not be in vain. We will have a Golden Wedding on the 20th September. What a beautiful gift it would be were I to get word I could get my little home.

"Still praying and hoping for a good reply."

I think that is a very deserving case, but she was refused permission to build. However, at the same time and in the same area we find that a Mrs. Ann Harris, wife of Ray Harris, bookmaker, received permit No. 113466, on 15 June, 1950. This lady lives with her husband, who owns two houses on the South Coast, one in Boundary Street, Coolangatta, and the other in Tugun. This building is to have three shops underneath and two flats on top. The shops are to be a delicatessen shop, a barber's shop, and a chemist's shop.

The next case is that of Mr. T. Skancke, of Albert street, Burleigh. He wanted to build a fish shop on his property at Miami. Then there was the case of Mr. and Mrs. P. Olsson, who applied for a permit to erect two shops. Skanske's application was placed 12 months ago for a fish shop on the Pacific Highway at Miami, opposite the post office. This man

was giving good service to the people in his fish trade but he was told that he did not come into the category at the time.

Then there is the case of Thomas Charles Halbert, who got a permit to erect two flats on top of two shops at Surfer's Paradise at a cost of £3,000 plus extras. The permit was issued this month. I am reliably informed that the theatre and shops were recently purchased for approximately £20,000. Yet when Mr. E. Diamond made a similar application recently to both the department and the Minister, to live in one flat himself and the other to house the Coolangatta doctor, which in my opinion is a deserving case, he was told he did not come within the category and permits were not issued for that class of building.

The next one is a very deserving case, that of a man named Walker, of Upper Coomera. He is 70 years of age, an old pioneer, one of the men who came and opened up the country. He did a very fine job and left his mark in indelible print on the country there. He did hard work and laboured long hours. He cannot work his land to the best advantage on account of his age and desires to get young people in to work it. He was told by the department that he did not come within the category of those who could get homes at the present time. However, he was also told that if he sold his farm the department would consider the issue of a permit to him. He wants a permit to build but was refused because he had a farm! However, on 11 April, 1949, a permit was issued by the department to Dr. Meehan to construct a house at Surfer's Paradise to cost £2,250. The permit is No. Q.B. 9877. He can have as many homes as he likes in Brisbane and have one on the coast but a person without one anywhere cannot in many cases have one on the coast for permanent residence. Men working on the coast have been refused permits consistently because at some time or other they sold a home in that area. Yet others have sold and obtained permits.

The next case is that of Mr. B. Hall, of Palm Beach, a returned soldier, who has been totally incapacitated. He served for 26 years in the Air Force and is getting a pension of £3 10s. a week and 30s. a week for superannuation, making a total of £5. He has to climb 17 steps to get into his house. He asks that he be allowed to put in a septic system and a couple of braces underneath the house, because in rough weather, when there are storms, the building feels that it is going to collapse or fall down. He got a stop-work order served on him by the inspector, Mr. Martin, who told him that he had exceeded his £50 permit. The work had to stop. At the same time as he was stopped a man in the same area named Brandon, a bookmaker, received a permit, No. 95159, on 31 August, 1949, for £50 for a septic tank and was allowed to carry on to the extent of £1,000.

Mr. H. Abrahams, bookmaker, got a permit No. 79344 for £50 and carried on and extended his repairs to £900. The permit was dated 9 June, 1949. Then Mr. W. G. Puet, bookmaker, got a permit No. 94092,

issued on 19 October, 1949, for £50 for septic tank, and carried on with further house repairs to the extent of £1,200.

Mr. I. F. Roberts, bookmaker, got permit No. 113497, issued on 7 July, 1950, for £50, already extended to £1,500 and the builder says that it will now take £2,000 to complete this renovation.

Then there was the case of Mr. S. Sheldon, bookmaker, permit No. 79342, issued 25 May, 1949, for £50 for septic tank and he went on to the extent of £1,500.

These are the sort of things that are going on and yet decent people desirous of taking up permanent residence there are being refused permits. Why did Inspector Martin stop this incapacitated war-service man from making additions to his home and allow these other people to go on?

**Mr. Gair:** The council issued the permits.

**Mr. GAVEN:** The permits were issued by the council and a copy sent to the Bureau Inspector whose job it is to police the permit and see the £50 is not exceeded.

Here is another case, that of a man named Evans, who is desirous of erecting flats. Mr. Evans in his letter stated to me—

“I am writing to you to see if you can do anything for me in connection with the erection of a block of four flats at Walton street, Southport, which I have been trying for since 27 September, 1948.

“I have had the plans approved by the council and they are at the Bureau of Industry at present. All materials have been cut out ready to erect and are at present stacked on the site, bricks as well as timber.

“I want to erect the flats for permanent tenants and if suitable the Bureau can select its own tenants if it is doubtful.”

Here was a good opportunity to issue a permit and to select the tenants, perhaps council employees.

Another case is that of a woman named Mrs. G. M. Harvie, who resides at 16 Church street, Randwick. She bought two building blocks on the Pacific Highway at Burleigh with the intention of building a dwelling house and residing there permanently, and later on three holiday letting cabins on the second allotment. She was refused a permit to build in Burleigh Heads. Yet she can build a home anywhere else in the State.

I do not want to go on and weary the Committee with all the applications that have been refused. I have given a list of some of the permits and their numbers just to give an idea of what is actually happening and to bring before the notice of the Government the futility of the Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Act. It is all very well for the Minister and hon. members to get up and say that these refusals are necessary because of the shortage of materials and that deserving people cannot get material to build homes, but we must remember that this is the Government who

issued a permit to build a quarter-million posh hotel at Hayman Island and that the minimum tariff is £19 12s. a week, a tariff so high that only the bookmaker, waterside worker, and shearer could afford to stay there. There is a continual stream of traffic down the Pacific Highway to Tweed Heads and all classes of building materials are going across the border into New South Wales. Not only are we losing our timber but we are losing workmen who are helping to build up that State at our expense. That is what I am attempting to drive home to the Government. They are not saving building materials by continuing the operation of the Act as at present administered but they are losing them. I should like to take hon. members opposite for a drive over the border into New South Wales. At one place I could show them where a 19-flat building has been erected and in another place where a 10-flat building has been erected. In fact, we can see intensive building operations proceeding there, including houses and igloos. If we go on to Byron Bay we can see boats loading logs for South Australia and New Zealand week after week. Boatloads of fence posts are leaving there, Queensland posts at £40 a 100 whereas they never get more than £5 to £10 a hundred in Queensland. We can see our timber being loaded at Coff's Harbour also. That is why we are short of timber. Our timber is even going to America as well as South Australia and New Zealand. I am sorry that the Premier is not in the Chamber because he visited Southport on 26 April last, three days before the election, and he knows quite well the reactions against the Act. The people on the South Coast are far from satisfied, because these controls are doing no good—neither saving any building materials, nor enabling people to get homes. We are losing our building materials and New South Wales and other places are gaining. We on the South Coast are not asking for preferential treatment. We are simply asking to be placed on the same footing as people in other parts of the State, no better and no worse.

Do you not think that the Government, who have the responsibility of bringing down legislation, should legislate for the whole of the people and not for one section? Is not that only fair and reasonable? The tourist industry is the lifeblood of some places in this State, particularly the South Coast. As things are, I do not think we shall ever get to the stage of catering for the tourists because our material seems to be getting shorter rather than more plentiful.

**Mr. Gair:** Do you suggest a person that is living in Brisbane should be able to get a house on the South Coast?

**Mr. GAVEN:** No, certainly not. I made that clear. If a person in Brisbane had a home and signed a declaration that he was going to permanently reside down there and did not do so, I should be 100 per cent. behind the Government if they prosecuted him.

**Mr. Gair:** What do you suggest they could do once they have the home?

**Mr. GAVEN:** You could prosecute them to the extent of a fine of £5,000 or 12 months in gaol. That is incorporated in your Act and you are aware of it.

Three or four years ago Mr. Harvey, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Ferguson toured the State and made certain recommendations for the improvement of the provision made for the tourist traffic. That report has been filed, and what has happened? We have done nothing about it; we have got no further advanced at all. There is no equity whatever in the present position. It is in direct opposition to the whole of our British Constitution and it is opposed to the common-law rights of man. It is man's inherent right to be allowed to build his own home on his own land. When members of the Government realise what is happening down there I feel sure they will alter their outlook. I have given proof that honest, decent, working people—there is not a toff amongst them—are demanding homes, and surely to goodness the Government will grant them that right, I feel sure they will. The whole position is an abrogation of our democratic principles and a brazen attempt to take away from man his inherent right to build his own home on his own land. Our forefathers built their own homes and tried to develop the country, and they left a heritage of which we might well be proud. We want to carry it on and develop the country.

**Mr. A. Jones:** You say that a person in Brisbane already accommodated who owns land should exercise the inherent right to build on it?

**Mr. GAVEN:** I never said that. These people do not own land in Brisbane.

**Mr. Walsh:** Do the bookmakers you refer to build new homes down there?

**Mr. GAVEN:** No, but they get £50 permits then make the sky the limit and the Government's Inspector Martin has apparently closed his eyes. Why? This is class control exercised over one section of the people. The Act has been described as the Wilful Murder of the South Coast Act. That is what it actually is. I think that any Government who keep such an Act in force are politically dishonest; and I do not hesitate to say it.

**Mr. A. Jones:** You know that the biggest majority of cases you have mentioned erected on local-authority permits and not on Building Control permits at all.

**Mr. GAVEN:** The bookmakers worked under the local-authority permit which it is your inspector's job to control. That is what he is there for. He immediately gets a copy of every permit issued and he has to police it, not the Local Authority, but not the man building shops.

**Mr. A. Jones:** The others—we have nothing to do with them.

**Mr. GAVEN:** The Government's inspector is down there for one specific purpose and he never misses a thing. He is a tyrant. People cannot nail a paling on a fence or

paint a gate unless he is onto him. Nobody can ever build to the extent of £50. I want to know why the bookmakers should have been allowed to go ahead and do so.

**Mr. A. Jones:** We do not give the permit; the council issues the permit.

**Mr. GAVEN:** The council issues the permit for £50 and he is there to see they do not spend over £50. That is his job; it is not the council's job.

**Mr. A. Jones:** They have to submit plans to the council.

**Mr. GAVEN:** Yes, that is correct. He gets a copy of these plans and the application and it is his job to see it is carried out. That is why he is there.

**Mr. Gair:** You wrote and apologised to me for the conduct of your inspector.

**Mr. GAVEN:** It does not matter what argument you use, there is none that can vindicate the bringing in of this Act.

I now wish to say a word or two about the much-publicised Merrimac swamp. I make no apologies whatever for any part I took in connection with the draining of that area. I very sincerely hope that one day the Merrimac scheme will be completed and 7,000 acres of good agricultural land will be brought back into production. I never said that this Government did not provide money for the Merrimac drainage. In my maiden speech I gave credit to the Government for the good work done in my area. On the several occasions on which the council of which I was a member for a long period made application to this Government for money the applications were granted. Nor did the council ever fail to meet interest and redemption repayments. The Government did a good job. They have never yet refused a loan. My interest in the Merrimac drainage is that we have to get a big subsidy to do the job. We came to the Government and asked for a subsidy and the last occasion I introduced a deputation to the Secretary for Mines and Immigration, who was then Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—and I am sure he will bear me out—was in June, 1948. The object was to raise £25,000 and I asked him whether it would be possible to get a 50 per cent. subsidy. If we could get a 50 per cent. subsidy we could put the Merrimac scheme into effect. Any subsidy lower than that would be totally inadequate because the farmers would not be able to meet interest and redemption. The hon. gentleman said, "You come to me expecting my Government to provide a subsidy to help drain private land; to use a racing term, you simply are not in the race. I will help you as much as I possibly can to drain outside the private land. I will give you the maximum subsidy (which at the time was 20 per cent.). When you come inside the area where the private land is you have no possible chance of getting a subsidy from this Government." If the hon. gentleman could have assisted me he would have done so.

**Mr. Power:** I wrote to you.

**Mr. GAVEN:** The hon. gentleman said that he could not give us a subsidy to drain private land. From time to time we have tried to find some way out of our dilemma to enable us to bring this beautiful area into productivity and help the nation by exporting goods that would bring money back to this country. On each and every occasion we made a move we found it impossible to do anything about it. When there was a meeting of the Opposition the other day at which suggestions for projects on which to make representations to the Federal Government were invited I asked the party whether we should make representations on behalf of draining the Merrimac area. I make no apologies whatever for my action. I am sure the Labour Government will agree with me that if the Federal Government advanced money to do this job it would be a great help to the State.

**Mr. Power:** Drain private property?

**Mr. GAVEN:** Part would be on private property.

**Mr. Power:** You went to the Federal Government to drain private property?

**Mr. GAVEN:** The Minister's Government have already advanced £7,000 to do the work inside private land. That work has been carried out and the statement of the hon. member for Hinchinbrook is quite correct. The Government have lent £7,000. They have not given any subsidy. That money has been spent. It will take £25,000 to do the work outside—private land—to put in drains and drain the water out into the sea, to erect flood-gates, bridges and large culverts. As I say, the whole work will take the best part of £30,000.

If we could get a 50 per cent. subsidy we could do the job and the farmers down there would be able to carry the interest and redemption payments. That is the whole story of the Merrimac drainage.

**Mr. Aikens:** Do you mean to say that the council is using ratepayers' money to drain private land?

**Mr. GAVEN:** Yes.

**Mr. Aikens:** You should be in gaol.

**Mr. GAVEN:** Lots of people should be in gaol. Quite recently there was amalgamation of shires, which wiped out all benefited areas, the only demarcation being by way of valuation. That is how the private property came into the scheme.

I am happy to know that the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government visited the area, my only regret being that he did not let me know he was coming as I could have taken him over it and explained the whole thing to him. I am glad that the hon. member for Hinchinbrook went down there; I am glad also that the Government are interested in the scheme but as to the charge that this Merrimac drainage work is becoming a political football, I say I do not care who gets the

kudos so long as the money is advanced and the scheme put under way. It is a very worthy one. I can well remember that country as it was in 1923 when virtually half the cattle of the Beaudesert area were brought down there during a period of drought. They came down to an area covered with paspalum and clover feet high. The Merrimac swamp area carried virtually 60 per cent. of the stock from Beaudesert and kept those stock in good condition for no less than nine months. The cost was 2s. 6d. a week agistment and the people who kept the stock were able to get the milk from the animals. After the drought was over they all went back home. Now, because of lack of drainage, that country is a stinking rotten black waste and it is pathetic to see it, especially when one knew what it was before. This area is between Springbrook, National Park and the coast. It is low-lying and by reason of the fact that scrub is being felled in the backcountry the water that used to come down in the wet season by meandering slowly through the scrub now runs off like water off a roof into the spout, bringing with it all the leaf mould and silt from the hill country. The water comes down so quickly that it is building up siltation at the mouth of the Nerang River to the extent of 7 or 8 feet and the water, instead of being able to flow out into the Broadwater and out through Jumpinpin into the sea, is held in a bottleneck by this siltation and is forced back over this beautiful low-lying country and lies there sufficiently long to boil and rot the grass. This little scheme could be put into operation for £25,000 and the whole of the country could be brought back again into production. That is something worthy of the attention of all hon. members in this Committee.

I do not make any apologies for doing my utmost to help rehabilitate this country. I am sorry that we caused bad feeling about the matter. If the Government can help in the scheme they will be well thought of by the people in the area. I say again that I am sorry the Minister did not tell me he was going down there. I should have liked to be on the job with him, so that I could have given him first-hand information. I want to make it quite clear that I was not trying to take the kudos from the Government. The Government have been generous to our people so far as loan money is concerned.

**Mr. Jones:** If you had known he was coming you would have baked a cake.

**Mr. GAVEN:** I wish the Minister who interjects had come down too. In his Address in Reply speech the Minister said that I could not understand that we were short of materials and there was a steel shortage and that sort of thing. I realise that all these shortages exist. We know that in Australia there is a big steel shortage but we also know that Australia can produce the finest steel ever produced in the world at less cost than that produced elsewhere. It can be produced at £16 10s. a

ton. Now we have to tour the world to find the steel required to carry on our industries. Our production has dropped by 1,143,057 tons since the war.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. INGRAM (Keppel)** (7.45 p.m.): First of all I desire to congratulate the Treasurer on bringing this, his first Budget, before this Chamber. I am certain that at the end of the present term all hon. members will be satisfied with his work as Treasurer of this State because we can rest assured that he will look after its finances to the complete satisfaction of everyone concerned.

I want to direct my attention this evening to some statements that have been made by certain members of the Opposition. I will deal first with the hon. member for Chermiside, who during the Address in Reply debate, said, "On my left, only promises. On my right, action." He failed to say, however, that those on his left, the Government, have fulfilled the promises that they have made before every election. What about the action of the Opposition? What about their promises in 1929? Without doubt, it was action, direct action on that occasion. In 1929 they went to the people with a promise of £2 million for ten thousand jobs. They said, "Give every boy and girl a chance!" But what did they do? They sacked thousands upon thousands of the workers of this State. They took money from the washer woman and 1s. a week from the poor little orphans. They sent £2 million to another State, and left the workers in this State in poverty and starvation. These are the people who talk about direct action. This party fulfils its promises, but the Opposition never have and never will.

**Mr. Aikens:** They put you on the track in 1929-32.

**Mr. INGRAM:** I carried my swag on the track, as did thousands of others. I walked 50 miles for a palty 4s. 6d. worth of rations. That is what the Tories did.

Hon. members opposite also accuse the Government of being supporters of the Communist Party and of being fellow-travellers. I hurl that deliberate falsehood back into the teeth of the hon. member for Chermiside. Nobody has fought the Communist Party more bitterly than members of the Australian Labour Party. On every platform we said we did not want the Communist vote. Did hon. members opposite say that? No! They were relying on the Communists for support. The hon. member said the other day that 400 Communist preference votes went to Labour, but he failed to say that in a by-election in New South Wales in the early part of last year—and this appeared in the "Courier-Mail"—the Liberal Party candidate was relying on the Communist Party votes to put him into Parliament.

**Mr. Dewar:** New South Wales is governed by—

**Mr. INGRAM:** The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

No party has fought the Communists more than we have. I go further and say that although the present Tory Federal Government have introduced the anti-Red legislation and say that they intend to sack all Communists, if the Menzies Government know the Communists that supported them, they certainly will not sack them.

**Mr. Power:** They would promote them.

**Mr. INGRAM:** Of course they would.

The hon. member for Callide said that if we wanted to arrest the drift from the country to the city we should have to provide better roads and better facilities generally, and electricity, but he knows full well that these things are available or in the progress of development in his electorate. When I first came into Parliament, hardly any work had been done on these roads but at the present time there are good bitumen roads from Rockhampton to Westwood, from Pink Lily and on the Mt. Morgan Road. There are improved school facilities. In the hon. member's own electorate the school has been enlarged and a school residence erected. Then there is transport for the children equal to anything in the State and indeed everything possible is being done to care for the educational needs of the school children. If the hon. member would be fair he would admit that what I say is correct. I looked after the people in that part of the electorate and I hope he will do as well.

As a matter of fact, the Labour Government are the only Government who have looked after the State in the matter of road works. In the majority of cases local authorities are to blame for the lack of roads because they do not come under the control of the Government. For instance, the Banana Shire Council has not built a decent road whereas the Fitzroy Shire Council have made magnificent roads. The majority of the shires are not worth a snap of the fingers because they do not spend the ratepayers' money properly. Most of them consist of graziers who are only interested in their own places and nowhere else. I know what I am saying. I have travelled the State and I know the road works that have been carried out by this Government.

Let me give some particulars of the cost of road construction between 1932 and 1949. The Main Roads Commission spent on permanent works in that period no less a sum than £12,872,618 and on maintenance road-work £6,276,526. The amount allocated to local authorities for permanent works was only £624,212 and on maintenance only £1,565,125. Therefore it will be seen that the cost borne by the Main Roads Commission for permanent works was 95.2 per cent. and for maintenance 75.1 per cent. Then hon. members opposite have the audacity to say that the Government are not treating local authorities fairly in the matter of finance. When they were in power they gave nothing to the local authorities. They had no Main Roads policy, no subsidy or anything else. Let me give some details

showing the expenditure on public roads in various parts of the State. Here are the details:—

—	Per- manent Works.	Main- tenance Works.	Total.
	£	£	£
Rockhampton to Mackay ..	660,000	122,000	782,000
Mackay to Townsville ..	1,242,000	297,000	1,539,000
Townsville to Cairns ..	887,000	339,000	1,226,000

Therefore in the Northern part of the State the Government have spent £2,789,000 on permanent works and £758,000 on maintenance work, a total of £3,547,000. That does not include expenditure by local authorities. Yet the Opposition have the cheek to say that the Government are not expending any money on main roads in the northern part of the State.

The hon. member for Mirani made the statement that this Government have not built a mile of railway line in the last 30 years. That is a ridiculous statement. I am quite satisfied that it is high time that the Opposition devoted some of their time to learning something about the affairs of this State. Since the Government came into office in 1915 they have built railway lines as follows:—

	Miles.
Southern Division ..	409.99
Central Division ..	393.32
Mackay Division ..	131.49
Northern Division—	
Bowen .. ..	108.94
Great Northern Rail- way .. ..	263.41
Cairns Division ..	303.64

The Government were also instrumental in starting the uniform-gauge railway from Brisbane to the border tunnel, a distance of 68.82 miles, and the work was almost completed when the Tory Government came into office in 1929. Yet hon. members opposite have the cheek to say that this Government have never built one mile of railway. At present a deviation is proceeding on the Kabra-Mount Morgan railway to eliminate the rack system on the Razorback. This deviation, which is 7 miles, should have been undertaken years ago, in the days of the old Tory Government when materials were cheap. The Razorback has been a bottleneck for a great number of years and has greatly reduced trainloads. The deviation will accelerate the traffic and increase loading on this branch line.

Furthermore, surveys are being completed for the construction of a line to the Callide coalfield, and the Government will build that line, which will serve privately-owned coalmines. That is much better than allowing private enterprise to construct it. The Opposition say that we are a Socialist Government but here is an instance where this Government are constructing a branch railway to enable private enterprise to market its coal more expeditiously and cheaply than at present. The Opposition would make greater appeal to the people if they told the

truth instead of deliberate falsehoods. The other day the hon. member for Mirani accused the Government of having closed railway lines.

**Mr. Evans:** So you did.

**Mr. INGRAM:** We closed only one small branch from Qunaba to Pemberton in 1948, a distance of 6.49 miles.

**Mr. Evans:** What about the branch line from Mingela to Ravenswood?

**Mr. INGRAM:** It was the Tory Government who pulled up that line. That shows that the Opposition will make any statement so long as it deviates from the truth.

**Mr. Evans:** In the last six months the Government have pulled up six loop lines. (Opposition interjections).

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber. I hope the hon. member will be permitted to continue his speech in silence.

**Mr. INGRAM:** Mr. Chairman: I thank you, but their interjections do not affect me. I know that when one speaks the truth it hurts the Opposition.

The hon. member for Isis spoke of teaching the other day and he criticised the Government and said we were not doing justice to our teachers and that our school buildings should be more modern. I point out for the information of hon. members that since 1932 we have spent £3,155,025 on the construction of school buildings throughout the State. Several fine modern buildings have been completed recently, and many teachers' residences have been erected in places where there was no residence before. It is only right that when there are 30 or 40 children in a place a residence should be erected for the teacher. These things were never done in the time of the Tory Governments. It has taken Labour Governments to do these things. In my own electorate three new residences are being erected at the present time. The Government have also provided school transport for children throughout the State, which indicates that they are looking after the interests of the children as well as the parents.

A great deal has been said about teachers and their salaries, and amenities and conditions. I will quote the salaries paid to teachers many years ago under the old Tory regime which they have in mind when they say that there is nothing like the "good old days." In 1898 the Tory Government were in power and at that time a pupil teacher worked for 12 months for nothing and the pupil teacher, first-class, was paid £20 per annum; in 1899 the second-class teacher received £30 per annum; in 1900 the third-class teacher received £45; in 1901 the fourth-class teacher received £70; and in 1902, after passing five examinations, the teacher would receive £102 per annum and after three years on this salary he would receive only £122. After two years on £122 he would get £140. He was then in Class III., Division I., and he would remain there until he passed two

other examinations. Often the teacher did not bother to go in for the examinations because there was no incentive to do so. That is how the teachers were treated in the good old days. I know a teacher who at the age of 30 was receiving £142 per annum, but under the present Labour Government he is receiving £650 per annum. I am quoting these things to show the facts of the position and to indicate what the teachers are receiving under the Labour Government compared with the miserable pittance they received under the old Tory regime. If the Opposition got into power tomorrow they would endeavour to revert to the bad conditions that operated before Labour took office.

**Mr. Evans:** They would not.

**Mr. INGRAM:** They would.

I am sorry the hon. member for Roma is not present this evening. He criticised our Queensland hospitals and virtually accused the Government of responsibility for the shortage of nurses. He also condemned hospital administration. The hon. member does not know what he is talking about and if he was well advised he would not make such statements.

I will give the Committee the salaries paid to nurses under the Tory regime just prior to Labour's coming into office in 1915. The figures are as follows—

	Per week.	
	£	s. d.
Matron .. .. .	2	10 0
Sister .. .. .	1	16 3
4th Year Nurse .. .. .		16 8
3rd Year Nurse .. .. .		15 0
2nd Year Nurse .. .. .		12 6
1st Year Nurse .. .. .		8 4

**Mr. Sparkes:** What did they get in 1916?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I will not warn the hon. member again. The hon. member who is speaking should be allowed to state his case. The hon. member who is interjecting will have his opportunity later.

**Mr. INGRAM:** As an illustration I will quote the small hospital at Mt. Morgan. Under Labour Government today, in addition to board and lodging, uniform allowance, laundry and one month's holiday leave on full pay, the staff receive the following salaries—

	Per week.	
	£	s. d.
Matron .. .. .	9	3 0
1st Year Sister .. .. .	5	9 0
2nd Year Sister .. .. .	5	14 0
3rd Year Sister and there- after .. .. .	6	3 0
1st Year Nurse .. .. .	2	4 3
2nd Year Nurse .. .. .	2	10 0
3rd Year Nurse .. .. .	2	15 0
4th Year Nurse .. .. .	3	1 6

The staff are on a 40-hour week. They do not work round the clock, as they did under the Tory regime. For the information of the Committee I will give the number on the hospital staff just prior to Labour's advent to office in 1915: one doctor, one sister, 16 nurses, one laundress, two assistant

laundresses, two housemaids, one cook, one assistant cook, one seamstress and one secretary, a total of 27 employees.

**Mr. Evans:** For how many patients?

**Mr. INGRAM:** At that time the population of Mt. Morgan was 14,000 whereas today it is only a little over 5,000. The following are the staff employed at the present time, when Labour is in office: two doctors, eight sisters, 21 nurses, five wardmaids—I emphasise that in the time of the Tory Government there were no wardmaids who help the nurses to bring food and other things to the ward—six housemaids, two kitchenmaids, one cook, three laundresses, one seamstress, six male employees, a secretary, and two clerks, a total of 58 employees.

Hon. members will notice that slave conditions do not exist in the hospitals of today, after the advent of Labour to power, but in the good old Tory days nothing but slave conditions existed. Why, in 1929-32 the Government of the day reduced wages of the nursing staff by 10 per cent. and they even sent an inspector up from Brisbane to tell the hospital committees that they did not have to buy rump steak and eggs for the patients, as beef steak was good enough for them. In view of all that they have the cheek and the audacity to say they looked after the interests of the people of this State.

**Mr. Dewar:** By how much did Scullin reduce pensions about the same time?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. INGRAM:** Furthermore, it was a Labour Government who abolished hospital precepts so as to give local authorities more money to provide better roads, streets and footpaths for the people, but local authorities did not avail themselves of the opportunity and wasted their money. The Moore Government promised the abolition of hospital precepts but did not have the guts to do it. Since Labour assumed office we have not had the spectacle of nurses collecting in the streets and selling art-union tickets to get sufficient money to pay their wages. We are looking after the interests of the people as they should be looked after. In the good old Tory days the Government were asked month after month for £1,000 or more to pay staff salaries. Today that does not operate, thanks to a humane Labour Government.

The hon. member for Norman, on Thursday night last, said that the Government did not give assistance to the mining industry. Nothing is further from the truth, because a Labour Government are the only Government to assist the mining industry in this State. They gave Mt. Morgan thousands of pounds to reopen when the mines were closed down. Were it not for a Labour Government there would be no railway line to Mt. Isa to help the great Mt. Isa mines. Hon. members opposite opposed the building of that line tooth and nail. The Government have helped the mining industry in other directions. I refer to grants in

aid of prospecting development, by way of shaft-sinking, provision of pumping, winding and treatment plants, and improvements to roads and tracks. Technical advice by qualified geologists and mining engineers is made available. Free assays of prospectors' samples are made by a Government assayer at Cloneurly, and by the Government analyst at Brisbane. A free determination of specimens is made at the Geological Survey Laboratory.

With regard to prospecting assistance, the rate for a single man is £1 10s. a week and for a married man £2 10s. a week. In 1949-50 the prospecting grants to prospectors amounted to £24,886 and for the financial year 1948-49 it was £21,354. Those figures show that this Government have given all the assistance possible towards the encouragement of the mining industry and the statements made by the hon. member for Norman were an absolute falsehood. That hon. member also said that we should give Queenslanders a bit of a chance in establishing themselves and getting good positions. It is a great pity that the Lord Mayor of Brisbane did not give consideration to this matter before getting importations from overseas.

I intend to quote things that have happened and still are happening—things that have been done by the Tory Party in the Brisbane City Council, which the Liberal Party supports. In the last 12 months, the Brisbane City Council has brought men from the United Kingdom, the Continent, and other States of the Commonwealth to fill the top positions in its services. In salaries alone, the council pays to fewer than 20 engineers from overseas, and men from other States, the hefty sum of £16,156 a year. I am quoting now from a Press report, which goes on to say—

“Almost £100,000 of ratepayers' money has been put out for the housing of these people.

“Meanwhile, while extravagant sums are being used by the Council for this type of work, 51 men are expected from overseas, in addition to those already here.

“Following are the properties purchased by the Council, the cost of conversion to date, and the full estimated cost of converting them to flats—

South Brisbane Town Hall: Cost of converting, £8,118.

Austral Street, St. Lucia Flats: Purchase price, £8,410; conversion, £5,547. £2,865; fencing, £25.

Jordan Terrace, Bowen Hills: Purchase price, £8,410; conversion, £5,547.

Melvie Flats, New Farm: Purchase price, £7,500; cost of conversion (to date), £309; (estimated final cost of conversion is £6,000); stamp duty, £76.

Bayview, Clayfield: Purchase price, £13,145; conversion to date, £1,532. (Full estimated conversion, £9,000.)

Ascot Flats and Kapiti Flats, Windermere Road: Purchase price, £5,000. Estimated cost of conversion, £3,000; stamp duty, £52.

“In addition, flats at the corner of Swann and Moggill roads, Taringa, were bought by the City Council for £4,000, and it is estimated that conversion costs will be £3,500; stamp duty, £41.

“The City Council purchased another property in Chatsworth road, Coorparoo, for £5,500, and in this instance, conversion costs are expected to be £6,000; stamp duty was £55.

“The cost of the interviewing officer's trip overseas in connection with their employment of non-Australians will cost the Council another £1,622 (estimated), but little can be achieved by this trip other than to overload an already top heavy Council. The same information could have been got in mailed reports.”

I point these things out to show hon. members the inconsistency of the Liberals when they get up in this Chamber and say we should give preference in employment to Queenslanders. Their own party in the Brisbane City Council is doing the reverse. It is spending hundreds of thousands of pounds to import people from overseas and put them in good positions. As this Press article says, there should be a notice on the Brisbane City Council's door, “No Queenslanders need apply!”

I am very pleased to have had the opportunity of saying a few words tonight and contradicting statements made by hon. members opposite about this Government. It has been their practice ever since they have been in Opposition, to criticise this Government not only in this Chamber but on the platform. They deal not in constructive criticism, but in destructive criticism in an effort to win control of the Treasury benches.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Treasurer once again on his Financial Statement, and I feel quite sure that at the end of his term everyone in this State will be highly pleased with its results.

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS (Whitsunday)** (8.19 p.m.): In making my contribution to this debate, I too wish to deplore the fact that this Government have budgeted for a deficit in the forthcoming year. Under normal circumstances, one would have thought that rather strange, considering the prosperity that appears to be prevalent, but knowing that the Government are past masters at the art of propaganda, I am quite satisfied that after the Premiers' Conference, where the Premier did everything possible to make things difficult for the Prime Minister, and in the belief that a Federal election was on the horizon, the Treasurer no doubt received his orders, and the deficit is nothing more nor less than a piece of political propaganda.

I listened with interest to the speech by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I congratulate him on it. He advocated the vacation by the Commonwealth of certain fields of taxation in favour of the States and although there may be a great deal of merit in the suggestion and it will work well in many States, I fear that in Queensland it will be a case of “Lord help the people if it

comes to that." Unfortunately we have had the unhappy experience in years gone by, prior to the adoption of the uniform system of taxation, that Queensland always was the highest-taxed State in Australia and if we revert to a system of taxation imposed by the State we shall find ourselves in that position again.

Perhaps I am wrong in saying that provision for the deficit is a piece of propaganda. There may be other motives for it, such as plain inefficiency for which the Government are renowned. This inefficiency is to be found in almost every move by the Government and was never so pronounced as in the recent reallocation of sugar-mill peaks throughout Queensland. Perhaps I am wrong again in saying that it is due to inefficiency. There may be a deeper and more ulterior motive for this reallocation of mill peaks but I leave that to hon. members to decide. However, I take this opportunity of protesting against the treatment meted out to the cane-growers in Mackay and district in the recent reallocation, treatment meted out by the Government through their agents, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. I know that the Government have endeavoured to pass the buck by saying that the decisions were those of the Central Board and not of the Government themselves, but it is well known that all decisions of the board in connection with matters submitted pursuant to Section 12A must be confirmed by the Governor in Council and that was done in this case.

**Mr. Collins:** That is untrue.

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** The Premier announced on 28 March that the Government had approved of the report and the recommendations of the Central Board and took full responsibility for the recommendations contained therein. They must stand condemned in the eyes of fair-minded people for their partiality in handing out peaks to one section of the industry at the expense of the remainder. I intend to prove the hypocrisy of the Government who have at all times said that they stand for the working man and as helpers of the man on the lower rungs of the ladder, as friends of the farmers.

I go further and say that this so-called Labour Government are the greatest capitalist party and the greatest Tory Party who have ever occupied the Treasury benches (Government laughter and dissent.) This is a Government who nurse monopolies and crawl to vested interests. They should hang their heads in shame. If some of the spirits of the old Labour leaders were with us tonight I guarantee they would be sitting on this side of the Chamber. (Renewed interjections). This hand-out to the monopolist C.S.R. Company, in the recent redistribution of peaks, at the expense of the co-operative and semi-co-operative mills, must stand for all time as a blot on this Government and a blot that will not be wiped out easily. I know that all these statements will be contradicted by speakers who will follow but I intend to give facts and figures, which I

am prepared to lay on the table of the House, that will speak for themselves and cannot be refuted.

In the Mackay district we have eight sugar mills, five of which are co-operative, two semi-co-operative, and one proprietary. Altogether there are 2,114 suppliers in the area, with an average assigned area of 69.4 acres and an average peak in tons of sugar of 60.1 in 1929, 78.5 in 1939, 93.2 in 1949, an average peak under the reallocation for 1950 of 108.6 tons; and for 1953 it will work out at 116.9 tons of sugar. As a comparison let us take the four C.S.R. mills, namely, Hambleton, Macknade, Goondi and Victoria. Altogether they have 775 suppliers possessing an average assigned area of 83.2 acres, or on an average of 13.8 acres more per grower than growers in the Mackay district. The average peak per grower in the C.S.R. mill areas in tons of sugar works out as follows:—1929, 157.4 tons of sugar, against Mackay's 60.1 tons; 1939, 176.7 tons against Mackay's 78.5 tons; 1949, 207.2 tons against Mackay's 93.2 tons and in 1950, 216.3 tons against Mackay's 108.6 tons.

Some may say that past production in these areas warrants this increase but I want to point out that this is not so because if past production is taken into consideration, as it should be, it strengthens the Mackay case, or the case for the Mackay mills.

Here, I will give you figures showing peak and production for the period 1929 to 1938, the period for which the 1929 peak operated. Mackay Mills, average peak per grower 60.1 tons of sugar, average production per grower 66.6 tons of sugar or a surplus of 6.5 tons of sugar per grower. The C.S.R. mills for the same period had a peak of 157.4 average tons per grower and their production for the same period was 154.4, a loss of 3 tons of sugar per grower, that is, 3 tons of sugar per grower below the peak. Do not forget that for almost the whole of this time there were great restrictions in the industry. Export sugar was selling as low as £7 11s. 3d. a ton. In fact, for the whole of the period the highest price for export sugar was £9 17s. a ton; and of course it could not be produced for that figure.

Then we come to the next peak period. In 1939 new peaks were introduced and these operated until 1949. There again we have a ten-year period, from 1939 to 1948 inclusive. In this period the Mackay mills had an average peak per grower of 78.5 tons of sugar, and produced per grower 75.7 tons of sugar, showing an actual loss of 2.8 tons of sugar per grower. The C.S.R. growers in this same period had an average peak of 176.7 tons of sugar and their average production was 150.3 tons of sugar, or 26.45 tons of sugar down on their peak. Most of these years were, of course, war years, and the shortages of manpower, materials, equipment and fertiliser played a devastating part in production. The Mackay district was possibly affected by manpower shortages to a greater extent than elsewhere, as the percentage of enlistment in

the Mackay district was the highest in Australia on a population basis. Notwithstanding that the district was almost able to produce its peak. This proves the advantage of having this vast number of growers who struggled along during the war years, the wives of many cutting cane and the children driving tractors, and who did a mighty job with so many others in Australia over that period in keeping up production.

Then we come to 1949, when new peaks were issued. The Mackay mills had an average peak per grower of 93.2 tons of sugar and the average production per grower was 116.3 tons of sugar; approximately 23 tons of sugar over-produced per grower. The C.S.R. mills for the same period had an average peak per grower of 207.2 tons of sugar.

Their production for 1949 was 203.6 tons of sugar; therefore, even in 1949 they could not reach their peaks. As a matter of fact, over this period of 21 years the Mackay growers have produced 26.8 tons of sugar over their peaks, whereas the C.S.R. mill growers have produced on an average of 33 tons of sugar less than their peaks. Of course, figures for the 1950 crop are not available, but on estimate, if the whole of the crop is harvested, which at the present time appears to be very doubtful because of the wet weather that has prevailed throughout the year, it is problematical whether this crop will be wholly taken off, but in any case the crop will be much in excess of that of 1949. As a matter of fact, the 1950 peak for the entire Mackay district has already been exceeded by the district in 1939, 1948, and 1949. Four of the Mackay mills have previously exceeded their 1950 peaks on at least three occasions and three mills at least twice, and the other mill has exceeded it once. Going a shade further, I point out that five Mackay mills have previously produced their proposed 1953 peaks on at least two occasions, and the remaining three once. Goondi mill has never produced its 1939 peak, by almost 700 tons of sugar. Hambleton has exceeded its 1949 peak once, Macknade has exceeded its 1950 peak only on one occasion—in 1949. Victoria mill has never yet reached its 1950 peak.

Is there any fair-minded person in this Chamber who can give any justification whatever for this hand-out to the C.S.R. Company at the expense of the mills in the Mackay district, and other districts too, for that matter. I have not gone into the details of other mill areas, but I understand that discrimination in them is somewhat similar. Some members of the Government may endeavour to rebut this statement by saying that on the percentage basis, the Mackay mills have fared very well to get these increases from the 1949 to the 1950 peaks. That may be so if one works on percentages one finds that the Mackay mills as a whole got an increase of 16.4 per cent. and the C.S.R. mills received 7.7 per cent.

**Mr. Collins interjected.**

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** Two wrongs do not make a right. Their past production warranted it and their 1949 peaks were too low in any case, as I have proved by the figures I have given.

What is the reason for this preferential treatment for the C.S.R. Company? I can only answer that anybody's guess is as good as mine. I do not suggest there has been a big rake-off by some person or persons.

**Mr. Collins:** What are you suggesting then?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** One could not blame the cane-growers if they got that impression. Most of the co-operative mills, as any person who knows anything about the industry is aware, have been paying a bonus from 5s. to 10s. a ton on cane produced.

If those co-operative mills can show this profit, would not the C.S.R. mills show as good a profit? Of course they would. Mr. Forgan Smith, chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, attempted to provide an excuse—but it was a lame one—when he said there was not much room for further expanding the sugar industry at Mackay and that the land was not available. What utter rot! The 2,114 cane-growers in the Mackay district have a total assigned area of 146,905 acres and in answer to a questionnaire forwarded to the Central Board at its request these growers applied for an additional 92,040 acres. This area could have been put into production almost straight away because the majority of the people had sufficient equipment and in addition to this, there were others already in agricultural occupations throughout the district who asked for increased or new peaks. This was particularly evident through the Andergrove, Seaforth, and Rise and Shine areas, in addition to the other main growing areas throughout the district.

I have purposely refrained from referring to the 1953 peaks because I wanted to say that the Mackay district has been badly treated up to the present year's peaks. When one looks at the 1953 peaks the position is very much worse. The Mackay mills made application to the Central Board for 312,900 tons of sugar as a peak. This was not considered to be excessive, seeing that they had produced 237,370 tons in 1939, 236,284 tons in 1948 and 245,881 tons in 1949, and that all the mills had placed orders for thousands and thousands of pounds' worth of plant and equipment to improve their mills and to step up the crushing rate to enable them to handle the increased crop. What did we find? Instead of the 312,900 tons they requested, they are to receive 247,200 in 1953. The C.S.R. mills have made application for 213,040 tons of sugar when their highest previous production was 158,289 tons in 1948, 157,843 tons in 1949 and 149,452 tons in 1939, and what did they receive? They got 212,000 tons virtually all they asked for. Of course, we all know that there is a big piece of ground to be opened up in the Abergowrie

area and that the Victoria mill will practically duplicate its mill to handle approximately the 40,000 tons of sugar additional peak that is being handed out to it. Of course, Victoria is a C.S.R. mill. Why was this land singled out when there were hundreds and hundreds of applications right through the whole cane-growing area for increased assignments or new assignments and increased peaks? Again, all I can do is say, "Why?" Your guess is as good as mine.

At the mill-peak appeals hearing held in the Teachers' Building in Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, at which there was a packed house, the chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, Mr. Forgan Smith, said to Mr. Livingston, of the Herbert River Cane-Growers' Executive—

"As you know, the qualification for assignment is the title to the land. Owners would have to make application for their individual assignment."

Speaking further on this Abergowrie area, Mr. Forgan Smith said, "We could not give a blanket assignment for an area of land such as this." Those were Mr. Forgan Smith's words and they were evidently his opinion when he spoke them on 27 February, 1950. However, on 28 March, exactly 29 days later, the Premier announced that the State Government had approved the report and recommendations of the board. What happened during those 29 days to make Mr. Forgan Smith alter his opinion? Again, your guess is as good as mine. But the tragedy is that there are too many of these cases and a section of the cane-growers of Queensland are getting the rough end of the pineapple while somebody else is getting the juice.

With this sort of thing going on, I believe that the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board should either be done away with or be reconstituted. In its present form it is the greatest example of Socialism and dictatorship that it is possible to find. Hundreds of cane-growers throughout Queensland have assignments of less than 15 acres, and this dictatorship control has laid it down that no increase in peaks or assignments will be given to growers with assignments of less than 15 acres. Where is the justice in this? Are they not the people who should be looked after more than anybody else? These small people, who have been scrapping and battling for an existence for many years, have been thrown to the wolves, while larger assignments and peaks have been given to the bigger growers or to people with no assignments at all. By what authority can this board do such a thing? Have these people no redress whatsoever? Hitler and Mussolini at their very worst could not have been harder than this! These are the people who could and would help to produce the export target of 600,000 tons of sugar. This target will never be achieved under the present set-up unless the people in the Mackay district continue to over-produce, as they have done in the past. They have been the mainstay of the sugar industry and it is they

and the people in other mill areas who have shown the green light that has made the target of 600,000 tons even a possibility. But this dictatorship is not helping. Price-control has been lifted from all other properties, but has it been lifted on cane farms? Of course it has not! The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board lays down who will grow cane, where they will grow it, what mill they will send it to, what prices they shall be allowed to receive if they sell their farms, and who will be allowed to buy them.

Where is there any justice in that? Why is this measure of control not applied to a dairy farm, a fruit farm, to any property at all, if it is to be applied to a cane farm? Is it fair that this measure of control should apply only to cane farms? It is strange that it should and it can be taken as a warning by all primary producers that this dictatorship in control may be extended to other industries. I cannot understand why the sugar industry should have permitted it to come about.

Take the case of a cane-farmer who wants to sell his farm. It is only right that ex-service men should get a priority in obtaining a farm but why confine the exercise of that right to the sugar industry? Why not apply it to all farms? For some unknown reason the sugar industry was selected for the operation of such a principle. Today, the cane-grower who wants to sell his farm must publicly advertise the fact, giving all particulars connected with it. The advertisement must appear in the paper for six weeks before the farm can be sold to anybody other than an ex-service man. That provision actually defeats its purpose because there are many people who rightly say that they will not disclose the price and other particulars in connection with a property they desire to sell. I know that in some cases a fictitious value has been put on a farm and after the expiration of the six-weeks period it was sold on the black-market. If an ex-service man came along in the meantime seeking to buy it he would be told by the vendor that he had changed his mind that he was not going to sell. In other cases people have taken others into partnership with them, purely as a blind, because they are waiting for the operation of that part of the Act to cease. Quite a number of ex-service men themselves are realising that in view of this special provision the good farms are not coming onto the market for sale and as quite a number of ex-service men are now being placed on cane farms they do not require this special provision to be continued. As a matter of fact, at a meeting of the Returned Soldiers' League in Mackay in 1949 a motion was carried to the effect that the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board be informed that the ex-service men did not require this Act to be continued. Let me point out that in these circumstances it is the vendor of the farm who is in trouble because the cane may have reached a certain period of growth. A period of six weeks must elapse before he can sign a contract of sale and after the purchaser has signed he is notified by the representative of the Central Board, in most cases the local

C.P.S., that he must attend at a certain place to answer questions in connection with the purchase of the farm. He is asked all manner of questions and I am satisfied that even the Gestapo could not do a better job in this connection than the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board does. Then the property must be valued and that amounts to considerable expense, perhaps between £15 and £25.

It is not always convenient for a valuer to go out perhaps 50 or 60 miles. Many of these men have waited for two or three weeks. I know many ex-service men who have bought two or three farms and paid two or three valuation fees because the board has knocked the proposed sale back, as it believed the price was too high. Then these ex-service men have bought other farms and gone through the same formalities again. I know one of these men in the Mackay district who had paid three valuation fees and finished up without a farm but was lucky enough subsequently to draw a sugar block in the North. It would not matter so much if the board took notice of these valuations but it does not. It really takes no notice of them whatsoever.

**Mr. Walsh:** Do not the growers' and millers' representatives decide it?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** Will anyone tell me that anybody sitting on a board in Brisbane can tell the value of a farm? The board instructs an approved valuer to go out to the farm under offer. Would not that approved valuer's valuation be a better measure of the value of the farm than that of the board? Of course it would. I have one or two valuations in my possession. Here is an example of one. The cane farm was bought by an ex-service man named Joe Lamb. It had a 300-ton peak and Lamb was buying it for £2,100. This valuer, Mr. Drayman, is one of Mackay's approved valuers, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that he has valued at least 500 farms. The total area of the farm was 111 acres. The council valuation was £120, while the cultivation and assignment were valued at £800, the equivalent of about £8 an acre. The total value of the land was £920. The crop was valued at £329 10s., fencing at £50, water supply, including well, engine and a couple of 1,000 gallon tanks, at £162, four draft horses £15 each, a pony £4 10s., improvements, including a house insured for £800, £810, and a wash-house and bathroom, £42 10s. The total value of the improvements was £1,003 and the plant and equipment £303. One appreciates that he could not buy very much plant at £303. This plant included a Fordson tractor, which was sold later for £80. The total valuation was £2,832 7s. It was sold, as I said before, for £2,100, but the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board knocked the sale back as the price was too high. Then, after a lot of mucking about, it agreed to pass the sale at £2,000. Do you think the board would be sufficiently good enough judges within £100 when it had already authorised the farm to be valued by an approved valuer? This just illustrates its inconsistency.

I could bring evidence of dozens of cases like this. Here is one that is perhaps in reverse and indicates how entirely inconsistent the board is. You cannot pin it down on any matter of valuation. As a matter of fact, it will start talking to you about £6 10s. or £7 a ton of peak, plus the value of the crop. That is absolutely ridiculous, because you could have two farms, one alongside the other, with perhaps identical ground, but the improvements may be entirely different, yet the board is going to try and work it out on the same basis.

**Mr. Aikens:** One might have a big home and the other a humpy.

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** Quite correct. I will quote you something that is an absolute disgrace. A farm was recently sold at Baker's Creek, 7 miles from Mackay, with a bitumen road leading to it, for £12,000. That was in February, 1946. It had an assigned area of 185 acres and a peak of 171 tons of sugar, which is near enough to 1,200 tons of cane. The sale of this farm was carried out by a very reputable firm, Henry L. Black, of Mackay, who have been established since 1881. The valuation of the property included—

	£	s.	d.
Land .. .. .	1,138	5	0
Clearing and Assignment	5,700	0	0
Crop .. .. .	1,539	0	0
Citrus Trees .. .. .	12	0	0
Fencing .. .. .	245	0	0
Livestock .. .. .	420	0	0
Buildings, &c. .. .. .	2,389	15	0

I might mention there were three houses on this property.

	£	s.	d.
Plant and Equipment .. .. .	1,075	19	0
Water Supply .. .. .	272	12	0
Portable Tramline .. .. .	200	0	0
Total .. .. .	£12,992	11	0

That was sent down to the Central Board at £12,000 and it was knocked back because the price was too high.

**Mr. Evans:** Was a soldier buying it?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** I do not think so. I do not know whether he was a soldier or not. On a figure of £12,000, with a 1,200-ton peak, it virtually worked out at about £10 a ton of peak; and there was a bitumen road to it. That is not the end of the story, because in January, 1949 another firm of commission agents sold it for £14,500, and in-between times one of the houses had been moved off the property, so instead of having three houses there it had then two houses.

**Mr. Aikens:** The same farm peak?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** The same farm peak entirely.

**Mr. Walsh:** The same crop?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** The crop in 1946 was 2,235 tons, and I understand the crop in 1949 was not as high. On this occasion the board that knocked it back at £12,000 three years earlier passed it at £14,500 with a house taken off the property. What have hon. members to say about that inconsistency?

The hon. member for Mourilyan in his maiden speech in this Chamber made reference to sugar land as being sold at £300 an acre. Later he made another reference to the same thing. Of course it was a ridiculously misleading and dangerous statement to make. When people in the South read of this sort of thing it looks ridiculous. In all fairness, if the farmer sold at this figure or anywhere near it he should have made it perfectly clear and been perfectly frank, when he said at so much an acre, that it included all improvements. He should have made it plain that it included tractors, trucks, cars and everything on it. But he did not say that. I doubt seriously whether any land in any sugar area is bringing anywhere near that figure.

I have referred to a property whose price in the first instance was considered excessive by the Central Board and later was passed at a higher figure. This property is only seven miles out of Mackay, connected with a bitumen road. It could be said it was in a Mackay suburb. This farm was submitted at a valuation of £12,000. There were 185 acres of assignment. I do not know the full area of the property but it is about 300 to 400 acres. It was sold at £12,000, including all improvements, such as these three houses and every bit of plant, and including the crops it worked out at £65 an acre. If an hon. member wishes to compare the figures for the land itself, the land is put at £1,138.

**Mr. Aikens:** You mean £65 an assigned acre?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** That is what it works out at. Taking the land at £1,138 and allowing another £5,700 for clearing, cultivation and assignment the land alone works out per assigned acre at £37.

**Mr. Aikens:** It might be swamp country.

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** It is not. Now let us take the other valuation, at Gargett with a 300 ton peak. Altogether there are 111 acres. The whole of this property, including the house at £800 and every bit of plant and equipment, was submitted at £2,100. That works out at £19 an acre.

I will now give the committee another valuation. This is a large property, with a total area of 199 acres, 92 of which are assigned, situated in the Mia Mia area. The council valuation of the land was £700. The total for clearing, cultivation, assignment—24 acres of rich creek flats at £22 an acre—was £528.

There were 23 acres of good forest land at £20 an acre, making a total of £460, 38 acres of second-class forest land at £15 an acre, making a total of £570. There was a

total of £1,558 for clearing, cultivation, assignment, &c., and any man who knows anything about land will know that the grubbing and clearing of this land could certainly not have been done cheaper. The highest price of the land is £22 an acre and the lowest £15 an acre and if you take the £701 council valuation plus the clearing, grubbing and assignment, &c., you get a total of £2,259, which on 199 acres works out at an average of £11 an acre. And if you go further and take the whole of the equipment with it, and on this one there is a crop valued at £2,684 5s. and fencing at £25, a water supply at £114 and an orchard at £40 10s., and a dwelling house—

**Mr. Jesson:** Has somebody gone broke?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** Nobody has gone broke. This property has been handed down from father to mother and son and the son is on it at the present time. I was saying that the dwelling house was valued at £916.

A Government Member interjected.

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** I can only tell the hon. member these things; I cannot give him the brains to understand them. The total valuation was £8,599 6s. which means that taking the whole lot, including the furniture in the home, the whole property worked out at £43 an acre.

**Mr. Aikens:** Per assigned acre?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** Not per assigned acre. That value would be about £86.

**Mr. Byrne:** What is the average production?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** I can give the hon. member that, too. It was a place with a peak of 124 tons of sugar—near enough to 858 tons. In 1937 it produced 1,217 tons, in 1938 1,287 tons, in 1939 1,432 tons, in 1940 1,470 tons, in 1941 1,015, in 1942 981 tons, in 1943 839 tons, in 1944 879 tons, in 1945 670 tons, in 1946 935 tons, in 1947 643 tons, and in 1948 1,060 tons. In other words, there was an average production of 1,044 tons over 12 years. The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board approved of the sale.

To summarise the whole position, I think it is time that this Government appointed a commission to inquire into the activities of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and this reallocation of peaks.

A Government Member: And the co-operative mills?

**Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS:** The hon. member need not worry about them, because I am satisfied every co-operative mill would welcome the inquiry.

A commission should be appointed to inquire into this matter and into the reallocation of peaks; not a white-washing commission, which is the usual set-up, but a commission that will go into this matter and decide why these people with assignments of perhaps 10, 12 or 14 acres are not entitled

to increases in their peaks. To tell you the truth, my own candid opinion is that the Central Board intended to lift these small growers up, but after giving this big hand-out to the C.S.R. Company it discovered that there was not enough left to distribute all round. It fell down on the job and some poor fool had to get the axe. It looks as if the poor little fellow with an assignment of less than 15 acres was the one to get the axe. That is a crying shame and this Government must take full responsibility for it, because the Central Board is their set-up. As I said before, the Government are entirely responsible, as the board's decisions must be confirmed by the Governor in Council, particularly those under Section 12A of the Act.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR** (Balonne) (9.16 p.m.): I should like to add my congratulations to the Treasurer for the excellent Budget that he has brought down. From listening to the Opposition, one would think that it was a disastrous Budget, but I believe that as time goes on it will prove quite satisfactory to all concerned. When we take into consideration the difficult times through which we are passing, it would appear that Opposition members are speaking with their tongues in their cheeks when they condemn the Financial Statement. I have been listening to members of the Opposition for many years, and I have come to the conclusion that they all come here with the full intention of being "knockers."

**Mr. Sparkes:** Why be nasty?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** By that I mean that they come here with the express intention of pulling the Government to pieces on every occasion—

**Mr. Sparkes:** Every time you come in here you want to be nasty.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** When I look round this Chamber and consider the financial position of hon. members opposite, it would appear that Queensland has been very good to them and I do not think they have any reason for squealing. Many of them came to Queensland broke but today they are very wealthy. To me, that is proof that we have here a good, sound Government. My friend on the left mentioned the hon. member for Aubigny. We all know that he came to Queensland broke—the rabbits in New South Wales sent him broke—yet he is one of the wealthiest men in Queensland today. That is not a bad advertisement for Queensland. You can carry your swag into Queensland—

**Mr. Aikens:** And drive a Rolls Royce out!

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** You can drive not only a Rolls Royce, but quite a few motor-cars. That is proof that Queensland is an excellent State. Such a thing is not peculiar to one member of the Opposition, but

has happened in many instances. The collective wealth of Opposition members today would amount to many hundreds of thousands of pounds, probably millions. (Opposition laughter). Although they have done well in Queensland, they have not a good word to say for Queensland or its Government.

The Queensland Labour Government have been in power for a number of years and with the exception of the period 1929-32, everyone has done pretty well.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I am not going to deal with those years; they are years that I want to forget.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** During those years I carried my swag and could not get a job in Queensland. I wanted to work.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I was regarded as a good shearer.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I want to warn hon. members that if an hon. member interjects again while another member is speaking I shall name him.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I carried my swag from outside Sydney almost to Julia Creek and could not get a job during 1929-32.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

#### NAMING OF MEMBER.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I name the hon. member for Aubigny for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

The House resumed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I have to report that I have named the hon. member for Aubigny for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier) (9.22 p.m.): I hope the hon. member for Aubigny will regret his continual interference and repeated disregard of the authority of the Chair when there have been requests for order. I know that frequently he endeavours to be facetious. Still, I hope that he will make amends for his conduct.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) (9.23 p.m.): What does Mr. Speaker want me to do?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Apologise for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

**Mr. SPARKES:** I apologise for it.

## SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—  
RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Debate resumed from 24 October see page 850) on Mr. Gair's motion—

“That there be granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1950-51 a sum not exceeding £643 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I had said that I regarded Queensland as being a very good State. I had said that I carried my swag from Sydney to Julia Creek during the period 1929-32 when the Moore Government were in power. We do not want to go back to those days and despite what hon. members opposite may say, the people of Queensland are satisfied with the Labour Government. If they are not satisfied with the way in which they are governed they are not obliged to remain here. Whenever I have had the opportunity of addressing a meeting of shearers, drovers, road workers or other people and I have come in contact with a Communist I have tendered the same advice to him—that if he is not satisfied with the government of Australia he is not obliged to remain in the country. And I now extend the same advice to hon. members opposite if they are sincere in their belief that Queensland is a bad State, that it is not being governed properly although they have done pretty well here, then let them get out too.

We hear from time to time in this Chamber quite a lot about the Communists and the Labour Party. On the last occasion on which I spoke I declared myself, and I believe every member of my party did also, as to my attitude against the Communists. I mentioned on that occasion that there were men in this Chamber tonight who have gone out into the highways and byways, not only of Queensland but other parts of the Commonwealth and fought the Communists. I ask any member of the Opposition to stand up in his place in this Chamber and tell us what he has done to fight the Communists. I have not seen anybody standing up. As I have said, we have members on this side of the House who have gone onto the jobs wherever they may be and fought the Communists, not only verbally but knuckled up to them out on the grass. I have yet to hear any member of the Opposition who is anxious to link us with the Communists say he has done that. My friends the hon. member for Barcoo, the Secretary for Public Instruction, the Secretary for Labour and Industry, the hon. member for Warrego, the hon. member for Bundaberg, and the hon. member for Windsor have gone out and fought the Communists, but I do not know of any occasion on which any member of the Opposition has gone out and taken them on. I am going to say, too, that no-one can class me as being quarrelsome. I prefer sidestepping an argument or a brawl. I have not shown that I am quarrelsome, but I am going to issue a challenge to any mem-

ber of the Opposition, particularly those who interject and especially the hon. member for Chermiside, that if at any time they are prepared to go out and fight the Communists I am prepared to go with them.

**Mr. Dewar:** Give Menzies a go.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** If the hon. member cares to go wherever the Communists are congregated, I will go with him. He cannot sidestep that. Let him hold a meeting with the hon. member for Kedron and I will go with them.

**Mr. Dewar:** Then you would be with us at the double dissolution.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I shall be with the hon. member when he goes out and holds his meeting with the Communists. I have heard the hon. member interject about the Communists; in fact, I have heard a lot of interjections about the Communists. As I have said, I am not quarrelsome and I would rather sidestep an argument than engage in one, but if the hon. member for Chermiside will go out to where the Communists congregate I will go with him. If he wants to go out to the waterfront I will go with him. We will see then who is game to stand up to the Communists and who is not. I am sure that every member of my party will be prepared to go with him.

At different times I have heard a great deal said about the development of the North. The North needs to be developed. I have lived a good deal of my life in the North, as a few years ago I shore right through the North. The North never appeared to me to be such a bad place as they would have us believe. While the North, from the angle of defence, needs some strengthening, I cannot agree that it is the terrible place that they would have us believe. I believe this Government are doing everything possible, without any aid from the Federal Government, to make the North safer than it is at present. I do not think there is any doubt at all that the Premier was promised support from the Federal Government for his Burdekin scheme. A definite assurance was given to him and it looks now as though this State would have to carry on and build the dam itself. I am quite satisfied that this State will build the Burdekin dam, which will be of great benefit to the northern part of Queensland.

When I sit and listen to statements by hon. members opposite about the North and what they say has happened, I wonder whether they ever gave any thought to the West. There is no argument, in my opinion, but that the West is the backbone of Queensland. I would say that the inland areas of the States are the backbone of those States, because it is in those areas that the wealth is produced and it is from them that the city derives its living. You will find, if you take figures over a period of years, that when the inland areas of this State are flourishing the cities are flourishing likewise, and when the people in the inland are having “a bad trot” it is reflected in the cities.

**Mr. Aikens:** The ports live on their back country.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I agree with that. I believe that the wealth is produced there and that the coast areas live on the inland areas. As I pointed out, if the inland areas are flourishing the cities also are having a prosperous time.

I am not going to agree that this Government have not been sympathetic with the inland areas or the shire councils in the inland areas of this State. I told the Chamber on a previous occasion how this Government have given money to the shires by way of loans and subsidies and the shires have not been able to spend it. That has not happened in only one or two shires; it has happened in many. I do not think anybody can fairly accuse the Government of being miserly with the shires in the inland areas. Some would argue that with manpower and machinery shortages they cannot spend the money. I agree. I know that to be correct and so do members of the Opposition, but they are not game enough to admit it. But I cannot agree that the inland areas or the shire councils in the inland areas have not been reasonably treated by the Government. In my own electorate—and I do not want to flog it; I have told the Chamber about it before—I know of the money that has been spent. I know that in St. George the Government are building perhaps one of the best weirs in Queensland, with an overhead bridge. We have been unlucky on account of the heavy floods for 12 months, but now it is getting towards completion. The weir will back up the water for about 11 miles. I could continue to enumerate what the Government have done in the inland shires. Hon. members opposite who criticise the Government for niggardliness and miserly treatment of local authorities do not speak the truth.

I suppose my next submission to the Committee will draw howls of lament from members of the Opposition. However, that will not prevent me from putting forward my proposition. It is time the Government considered rentals for Crown lands. In the circumstances this would be only right. A chairman of a shire, when commenting on a proposal to put shire rates up, said that local-authority rates are today only a little bit higher than they were when graziers were getting 1s. and 1s. 3d. a pound for wool. Today they are getting 10s. a pound. As I have contended, it is time the Government considered the rentals for Crown land. Today prices for primary products have reached an all-time record. Probably such prices will never be heard of again in our lives. I knew the hon. member for Aubigny would not be in favour of my suggestion. Today these primary producers are getting 10 times as much for the wool as they got a few years ago but they pay only the same rentals and local-authority rates as they did. If they were fair they would be prepared to pay 10 times the amount of rental they pay now. Of course, they would not do that.

**Mr. Brown:** The rent should be on a sliding scale.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** Yes. When prices were going down the rentals would be

reduced and when prices were increasing the rents would increase. The Government are entitled to a share in the prosperity of the industry. Today they are not getting it. I have not been in this Parliament so very long but during that time I have had to go to the Premier on two occasions to ask for relief for starving stock and for dairy-men. When they are in trouble they want Government aid but when prices are increasing they would not have the Government enjoy any of their prosperity. There should be some system by which rentals increased during periods of prosperity such as the State is now enjoying. This will have to be done. The chairman of the shire council to which I refer, in the discussion I had with him, said that the graziers were squealing because of the increase in council rates. He pointed out that the rates should be increased as things had increased in price and the council had to pay ever so much more to meet its commitments than two or three years ago.

He said that if we put up the rates we should be the worst in the world but they are getting ten times as much for their product today as they got before. We never thought that we should live to see the day when wool would reach its present level and we never thought we should see the day when shearing would be at the price at which it is today.

**Mr. Sparkes:** What is worrying you?

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I should certainly make more money if I were back shearing than here.

**Mr. Sparkes:** What are you moaning about?

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I am well satisfied. I am doing all right and I do not think anybody is doing better than I am. I have no fault to find with the Labour Government. The hon. member is doing better than I am doing and I am doing all right. The hon. member never thought he would see bullocks at £40 and wool to over 200d. a lb.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I am not moaning.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** And I am not moaning. The hon. member is moaning about the Government all the time and saying nothing is right about the Government. I believe it is necessary that this Government, in any other direction where the producer is getting a benefit, should get a share of the money. We have heard squeals and wails from the Opposition about the Government and what the Government have been doing but when we look round we see that hon. members opposite are doing all right and they are not going without. They are doing all right for themselves and I really think they are only trying to "knock" Queensland. I believe that on the presentation of the next Financial Statement we shall find that all the things they have said about the Government will have been proved false and the next Financial Statement will be a better one than that now before us.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.45 p.m.