

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 14 AUGUST 1951

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Legislative Assembly.

SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT.

Appointed to meet

AT BRISBANE ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST, IN THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1951.

TUESDAY, 14 AUGUST, 1951.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

Pursuant to the proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, dated 6 July, 1951, appointing Parliament to meet this day for the dispatch of business, the House met at 12 o'clock noon in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

The Clerk-Assistant and serjeant-at-arms of the Parliament read the proclamation.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

At noon His Excellency the Governor came in state to Parliament House, was announced by the Second Clerk-Assistant, received by Mr. Speaker (Hon. J. H. Mann) at the bar, and accompanied to the dais.

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

“MEMBERS OF THE THIRTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND—

“You have been called together once more to give your attention to, and make decisions upon matters concerning the welfare of the people of this State.

“Since our last meeting in this Chamber we have heard, with much pleasure, of a real improvement in the health of His Majesty the King. His Majesty, consequently, has been able to decide that the Royal Visit to Australia shall take place in 1952. We may, therefore, now look forward, subject to the usual reservations regarding the world situation and the political position in Great Britain, to seeing the Royal Family in Queensland next April. It should be possible to make the visit a period of relaxation and refreshment that will be remembered with pleasure after it is over.

“International affairs continue to cause anxiety and it is not possible yet to foresee any positive improvement. Still the military situation in Korea may fairly be described as

favourable to the United Nations even though conditions render a decision by military force extremely difficult.

“In our own country a long-threatened danger has come to a head. I refer to the inflationary situation now occupying the attention of Governments and various national organisations. One can but wish them success as a result of their deliberations and express the hope that the people as a whole, and as individuals, will lend their aid in an effort to overcome the evil.

“The receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year ended 30th June, 1951, were £44,722,923 and the expenditure £44,624,761, leaving a surplus of £98,162, instead of the anticipated deficit of £767,825.

“The Income Tax Reimbursement received from the Commonwealth was £14,279,888.

“During the year £17,697,736 was spent from Loan Fund.

“The year's wool sales returned £97 million to Queensland woolgrowers, more than twice the amount for the previous year. Unparalleled prices were paid at the early sales of the season, but later sales showed a return to more stable figures.

“Acreages under crops have been satisfactory. Wheat was sown in approximately 660,000 acres, linseed, 22,000 acres, sorghum, 100,000 acres, and tobacco 3,900 acres.

“An increase in cotton acreage last year followed the importation of additional harvesting machinery and the assurance of payable prices, and it is anticipated that next season will show a further improvement.

“The first test of mechanical harvesting of tea in Queensland was carried out at the South Johnstone Experimental station, with promising results.

“Test plantings have been made in North Queensland of pepper and coffee and results may lead to production on a commercial scale.

“Investigations with jute and other fibre crops indicate that the growing of these crops is not likely to offer any insuperable

difficulties. Practical tests of the mechanical decortication and treatment of jute are being carried out.

"A marked development is taking place in the processing of primary products by grower-controlled co-operatives. This is particularly notable in the fruit and tobacco industries.

"My Advisers propose to set up a Co-operative Advisory Board within the Department of Labour and Industry to give proper advice and instruction to groups of citizens who may seek to establish producers' or consumers' co-operatives. Legislation to this effect will be introduced in the current session.

"Queensland's production of raw sugar for the 1950 season totalled some 879,000 tons, valued at nearly £25 million. This exceeded the 1949 season's value by £883,000 despite the reduced quantity of sugar manufactured. The increased value was due to the higher price received for the sugar exported.

"The Sugar Agreement between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments has been renewed for a further five years to 31 August, 1956.

"The British Ministry of Food has extended the present arrangement for the purchase of British Commonwealth sugar for a further year, that is, to the end of 1958.

"Priorities to ex-servicemen relating to the purchase of cane assigned lands in accordance with the provisions of the War Service (Sugar Industry) Land Settlement Acts expired in December, 1950. A total of 751 eligible ex-servicemen have obtained priority in the purchase of existing cane farms since the inception of this provision.

"The Royal Commission appointed by the Government in March, 1950, to plan the development of the Queensland sugar industry over the next 25 years has now completed its inquiries. The Government will give early consideration to its recommendations.

"Since June, 1950, a further 42 blocks of sheep country totalling 2,698,630 acres and four blocks of cattle country with an aggregate area of 200,285 acres have been made available for new settlement.

"It is anticipated that further blocks will be opened during the next few months.

"An extensive area of cattle lands throughout the State has come into the hands of the Crown because of the expiry of pastoral leases. Consideration as to the best method of dealing with these lands is being withheld until the formulation of Government policy, which may arise from the recommendations to be submitted by the commission inquiring into the pastoral industry.

"A total of 340 farms suitable for mixed farming, sugar cane, and tobacco growing have so far been allocated by ballot to approved ex-servicemen.

"Twenty-five blocks are being balloted for today in the Abergowrie Area of the Ingham district as sugar farms, and, this year, a

further 23 ex-servicemen will plant their first tobacco crops in the Clare irrigation area, making a total of 53 settlers on this area.

"Sixty blocks of grazing land, mainly in the western area of the State, have been made available exclusively for ballot amongst ex-servicemen, who also had the opportunity of competing with the general public for the remainder of blocks opened.

"Soldier settlement will be further expanded by the development of mixed farming in the Wandoan-Taroom area. The Government having decided that the first section be proceeded with, a total of approximately 100 blocks have been designed into areas of approximately 1,300 acres each.

"The Agricultural Bank approved advances amounting to the record total of £2,212,305 during the financial year 1950-51, including £1,593,465 under the Agricultural Bank Acts, £458,315 under the War Service Land Settlement Acts, £134,888 under the Re-establishment and Employment Act and the balance under other Acts administered by the bank.

"The sum of £1,032,974 was approved to ex-servicemen under the Agricultural Bank Acts.

"New ex-servicemen applicants numbering 418 were granted advances totalling £785,828 on land mortgage security, which attracts the three years interest and redemption free repayment term concession, and £75,383 was advanced to 203 existing ex-servicemen borrowers on the same basis.

"Advances amounting to £1,585,662 have been approved by the bank to 332 successful selectors under the War Service Land Settlement Acts since the inception of the scheme in 1947.

"A total of over 3,000 ex-servicemen have been able to settle upon the land as a result of the various forms of assistance provided by the Government.

"During 1950-51 the total expenditure of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission was £1,172,777, an increase of £230,163 on the previous year.

"Officers have been engaged during the past 12 months on the necessary investigation for the Barron-Walsh water-conversion and irrigation works, including surveys, stream gauging, and drilling at a proposed dam site at Nullinga.

"An amount of £150,000 has been provided in the current year's programme for preliminary construction work for this scheme.

"Weirs with a total storage capacity of 28,700 acre feet have now been completed. Nine others are under construction and, when completed, will provide a further storage of 12,690 acre feet.

"The current year's programme also provides for the commencement of construction of the Cunningham Weir on the Dumaresq River near Texas, one on MacIntyre Brook below Whetstone and the Barcaldine Weir on the Alice River near Barcaldine.

"Last year the new Theodore pumping and generating station was completed and the necessary machinery installed.

"Included in the programme of development in the Theodore area for 1951-52 are the supply and installation of equipment for the purification of the town water supply and provision of a siphon across Castle Creek.

"The sum of £48,000 has been made available this year for the provision of water facilities on the Channel country stock routes. The cost of this scheme is borne equally by the State and Federal Governments.

"An expenditure of £55,000 was incurred in 1950-51 in providing water facilities on trunk stock routes.

"The first stage planned by the Burdekin River Authority for the development of irrigation is the establishment of 200 tobacco farms at Clare and on other suitable soils along the river upstream from Clare. Approval has been given to the Irrigation and Water Supply Department, on behalf of the Burdekin River Authority, to proceed with construction of a temporary weir, at the diversion dam site, to provide storage for the irrigation of these farms.

"Design is in hand for stage development of the dam at Burdekin Falls, so that water may be made available in progressively increasing quantities, for the generation of hydro-electric power and for irrigation.

"Good progress has been made with the construction of the access road from Ayr, through Clare, to give access to the temporary weir and to serve the farms being developed along the river. It is anticipated that a gravelled road to the Burdekin Falls dam site, to give access from Mingela through Ravenswood, will be opened by June, 1952.

"The flooded state of the Burdekin River in 1950 prevented work on the three remaining river pier caissons of the Burdekin Bridge in the deeper channel of the river. The sinking of these caissons is, however, now in progress. Expenditure on the bridge in 1950-51 was £188,919.

"My Advisers are fully seized with the importance of developing North Australia, and believe that this is so truly national in character and of such magnitude and import to the security and prosperity of Australia that it should rank high in its claims for Commonwealth aid. Developmental expenditure of this kind might well come under the heading of the Defence vote.

"In 1950-51, expenditure in reforestation works exceeded £1 million for the first time, and the acreage of plantations grew to approximately 50,000 acres. Young softwood plantations, established by the Forest Service, are already making substantial contributions to industry, and yielded over 12 million superficial feet of logs during the year.

"More than half of the total log output of 400 million superficial feet was from Crown forests.

"Our secondary industries are expanding and true unemployment is practically non-existent. A record number of factories—

4,490, employing 88,963 persons—had an output last year valued at £175,180,000. That figure is 13 per cent. above the previous record.

"The continued buoyancy of the metal market was reflected in the increase in the total value of the State's mineral production which approached £16½ million, as compared with nearly £12 million in the previous year.

"All previous records for coal production were surpassed by the year's total output of 2,320,800 tons, valued at £3,562,500. During the year the work of coal exploration was carried out further by drilling operations on the West Moreton, Callide, Styx, and Burrum coalfields.

"My Advisers are desirous that the coal resources at Blair Athol should be exploited in the interests of coal-hungry Australia. They have proposed to the Commonwealth Government that it should, together with the Governments of Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia, or these Governments in association with Power and Traction Finance Company Ltd., an English financial group, form a commission or corporation for the joint large-scale development of this great field.

"Although the search for oil in the central district by Shell (Queensland) Development Ltd. was abandoned, associated companies in the Roma district have continued their programme of geological and geophysical research.

"My Advisers are pleased to be able to say that the provision of electricity in the State has been so wisely planned and developed that it has been possible to meet a consumer demand which has nearly doubled since the end of the war in 1945. That rate of increase was proportionately greater than in any other Australian State, or in other countries for which comparative statistics are available.

"The total estimated cost of work which the Commission and public electric authorities have in hand amounts to approximately £25 million. Of this amount £11,600,000 already has been spent. The expenditure for 1951-52 is expected to be £7½ million.

"Most of this development is assisted by Government subsidy up to 65 per cent. of the capital cost, in the case of Western Queensland undertakings, and up to 33½ per cent. in other parts of the State.

"The greater part of this expenditure is being incurred in the expansion of generating facilities and extension of supply in rural areas.

"The work in hand includes five new major steam generating stations, two to serve the area of supply of South-Eastern Queensland, and one each to serve the Wide Bay, Capricornia, and Townsville Regions, the Tully Falls Hydro-Electricity Scheme, 10 new electricity supply schemes at present under construction to serve small Western Queensland townships, and extensions and improvements to many existing schemes in all parts of the State.

"It is expected that the three steam generating stations, to serve regional board areas and most of the Western Queensland schemes, will be commissioned in the current financial year.

"Everything has been done to avoid power rationing, and the authorities concerned with power supply in South-Eastern Queensland have taken steps, with the full support of the Government, to install two 10,000 kilowatt packaged power plants, as an emergency measure, to relieve the position until major works are completed.

"It is pleasing to report that the disturbances to home and industry resulting from power shortages in other States have been avoided in Queensland.

"My Advisers recently sent the Minister for Transport (Honourable J. E. Duggan) overseas to expedite railway rolling stock contracts and to inquire into modern transport developments in the United States and Europe.

"During the year 43 new locomotives, 11 brake vans, 1,905 wagons and two rail motor trains were placed in traffic. In addition, 33 locomotives have been delivered from overseas and are in course of assembly.

"Orders placed and yet to be delivered comprise 69 steam and 21 diesel electric locomotives, 5,446 wagons, nine air-conditioned trains, 18 suburban cars, 12 long distance sitting cars, 47 brake vans and six rail motor trains.

"Authority also was given for the construction of 20 brake vans at Ipswich Railway Workshops.

"Tenders will close on 31 August, 1951, for 1,000 coal hopper wagons, and will close on 18 October for the supply of 12 diesel electric locomotives.

"The 21 diesel electric locomotives ordered last year will be utilised for the haulage of the nine air-conditioned trains now being constructed. The first of these modern locomotives and trains should be in operation in the latter half of next year. The standard of the trains will bear favourable comparison with any operating on other Australian systems.

"The trains will operate on the "Sunshine" route to Cairns and to the west from Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville.

"Major works in progress include preliminary work on the electrification of the Brisbane suburban railways, the construction of a deviation between Kabra and Moongan to eliminate the rack section of the Mount Morgar line, the new Callide coalfield railway, reconditioning and regrading of the Etheridge railway between Almaden and Mount Surprise, and the strengthening of the Hughenden-Winton line.

"Approval has been given to a survey for regrading and re-locating, where necessary, the railway line between Westwood and Emerald and between Emerald and Barcaldine, including the Drummond Range section, to increase train loads.

"Total expenditure in the past year by the Department of Main Roads under all

headings, including works for other departments, the Burdekin River Bridge, and miscellaneous expenditure other than Main Roads was £5,885,957 compared with £4,487,918 for the previous year.

"The Government in conjunction with the Harbour Boards is planning improved wharfage accommodation and the deepening of harbour approaches where required.

"Consultations already have taken place with the Harbour Boards at Townsville and Cairns with a view to carrying out improvements at these ports.

"Two suction dredges are being built for service in Queensland ports, and one should be delivered during the financial year 1951-52. In addition, tenders have been called for a bucket dredge and three powered barges for use in this State.

"Additional berthage accommodation for shipping is planned for the port of Brisbane including twelve hundred feet of wharfage to be built by the Government.

"A total of 4,000 students is enrolled at the University of Queensland. The University has now 11 faculties—Arts, Science, Engineering, Agriculture, Commerce, Law, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Medicine, Education, and Architecture. In addition, there is a Department of External Studies.

"The provision of staff is still the major problem of the Department of Public Instruction. Since the introduction of the emergency scheme, 137 student teachers have been admitted. As a result of the Government's decision to regard all approved Secondary Schools as Junior Training Colleges, 44 additional teacher scholarships were awarded in 1950-51.

"Prompt attention has been given to providing additional classroom accommodation in schools by the Department of Public Works.

"In addition, a contract has been let to an English firm for the supply of 95 pre-fabricated buildings, providing 160 classrooms.

"Forty-three new sites, each of approximately 20 acres have been acquired for Post Primary School purposes.

"The secondary educational needs of smaller communities are met by secondary departments attached to primary schools where such are justified. Additional secondary departments have been opened at Atherton and Tully this year.

"One of the main problems in technical education is the provision of accommodation to meet the rapidly expanding demand. The number of apprentices is increasing and the percentage of boys leaving school to enter apprenticeship has also increased. Apprentices in 54 trades receive technical instruction.

"With the recent increases granted in apprentice wages, Queensland has given a lead to all other States. The general apprenticeship training scheme in this State has no equal in Australia. The vast correspondence scheme which enables almost every

apprentice wherever he resides to receive some technical training is being used as a pattern in other places.

"The Technical Correspondence School has an enrolment of over 4,000 students and 207 subjects are available in the 60 courses provided. The students include apprentices, junior farmers, personnel from the Armed Forces, Commonwealth Reconstruction and Social Services trainees, and prisoners under sentence. Instruction papers are sent to all States of the Commonwealth, to New Guinea, and the Islands. Three Agricultural Science students, two of whom are Chinese, reside at Sibu in Sarawak.

"A committee has been appointed, under the chairmanship of the Director-General of Education, to inquire into the desirability of establishing a Conservatorium of Music.

"The special train, known as the Jubilee Art Train, which was provided by the Queensland Government as part of the Commonwealth Jubilee celebrations, is continuing its nine months' tour of the coastal and out-back regions of the State. Its visits have been widely appreciated.

"The State String Quartet gave 58 public performances in 1950 at evening and lunch-hour recitals to audiences totalling a little over 9,000. In addition the quartet visited 52 large schools in country areas, from as far north as the Atherton Tableland to as far west as Longreach and Muttaburra. To these schools, pupils from neighbouring smaller schools were brought for the performances.

"The Queensland Symphony Orchestra, which the Government subsidises to the extent of £10,000 a year, gave six free concerts in Brisbane during 1950, and two series of concerts for schools. On their country tour the orchestra travelled as far north as Townsville and to Longreach and Barcardine, giving free evening concerts and afternoon concerts for schools.

"Following the successful tour by a State Opera party to country towns in 1949, a second tour was arranged in May of this year. Operatic performances were given at 16 of the larger country centres.

"New scholarships have been awarded under the scheme, to commence on 1 August, 1951. These comprise five full time, and 10 part-time awards each having a tenure of two years.

"My Advisers are pleased to record that despite difficulties, new hospital buildings were completed in many country districts in the past year.

"The completion of the State's most modern hospital at Townsville marks a major advance in the development of the policy of providing complete base hospital services and facilities for all parts of the State.

"New nurses' quarters were completed at such widely separated parts of the State as Atherton, Taroom, Charters Towers, Roma, Gympie, Mount Isa, Ipswich, Monto and Kileoy, and additions were made to hospitals at Maryborough, Cairns, Gympie and Murgon.

"Good progress has been made with the erection of the new mental hospital at Charters Towers to provide for the northern division of the State. Upon its completion a commencement will be made with the erection of a similar institution for Central Queensland.

"The construction of the new hospital at South Brisbane to provide six hundred and fifty beds has been given urgent priority, and should now proceed without interruption.

"The interest of the Commonwealth is being solicited in a proposal by my Advisers for the establishment of an aerial medical service for the native population of the Torres Strait islands, the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the Peninsula. The health of the natives in this vast area of such strategic importance in this country, with its proximity to the endemic disease-ridden countries of the East, is as vital to the rest of the Commonwealth as it is to Queensland.

"Maternal and Child Welfare Homes, similar to those in Brisbane and Toowoomba, are soon to be opened in Ipswich and Rockhampton, and later in Townsville.

"Progress in the campaign to control tuberculosis is being made. A chest clinic will be opened in George street, Brisbane, in the immediate future.

"The expenditure by the Public Works Department, during the year, on new buildings, acquisition of sites, and the maintenance of public buildings, totalled £1,638,604.

"For the year 1951-52 every endeavour will be made to meet urgent building requirements for State Departments. However, results will be determined by the extent of labour and materials available.

"Since commencing operations in July, 1946, the Valuer-General has completed the valuations of 26 local government areas embracing nearly 70,000 valuations and covering an area of 30,500 square miles.

"New homes built in Queensland in the 12 months ended March, 1951, totalled 10,309, a record figure for any 12 months. At 30 June, 1951, the Queensland Housing Commission had 1,178 houses in various stages of construction and had approved of the erection of a further 4,371.

"Tenders have been accepted for the supply and erection of 3,386 imported houses.

"Urgency of the housing problem and the need for supplementing the local home construction programme has caused the Government to send to Europe the Minister for Housing (Hon. P. J. R. Hilton) to speed the acquisition and despatch of a greater number of prefabricated homes.

"During the year ending the 30 June, 1951, the Fair Rents Court dealt with 2,263 applications for the fixation of fair rents, including those of a number of large metropolitan business premises.

"Throughout the State there are under investigation 153 local authority water supply works (including extensions to existing schemes) estimated to cost over £4½ million.

In this category are also 59 sewerage works estimated to cost nearly £5 million. Eighty-five water supply and 11 sewerage schemes, estimated to cost more than £4½ million have been fully planned but not yet commenced, and 62 water supply and 25 sewerage schemes, costing £3,600,000 are under construction.

"The funds of estates at present controlled by the Public Curator are over £8½ million and more than 77,000 wills are held on behalf of testators.

"The new business written by the Life Department of the State Government Insurance Office during the year ended 31 December, 1950, was for sums assured totalling approximately £5,700,000 in respect of 9,720 policies, a record for the office.

"As a result of the year's trading, the Life Fund has increased by £653,876 to a total accumulation of over £8 million. The office is again allowing the substantial profit distribution of 33½ per cent. on renewal of fire insurance premiums and granted 33½ per cent. profit distribution on marine insurance premiums paid during the year ended 30 June, 1950.

"During the year just ended, substantial increases in benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act were granted, but it will not be necessary to make any increase in premium rates to meet this increased expenditure.

"The Public Service maintains its high reputation for loyalty and efficiency in the administration of the Acts of Parliament, implementing Government policy and providing, within the limitation of manpower and materials, for increasing public requirements as the State development expands.

"During the previous session the Public Service Acts were amended and salaried officers of the Departments of Main Roads, Electricity Supply and Transport became officers of the Public Service as from 1 February, 1951.

"The estimates for the current financial year are in the course of preparation and will be submitted to you as early as possible. During the session you will be invited to give consideration to the following, among other measures:—

A Bill to amend the Co-operative Societies Act of 1946.

A Bill to amend the Fish Supply Management Acts, 1935 to 1951.

A Bill to consolidate and amend the Law Relating to The Sale of Seeds, Fertilisers and Other Agricultural Requirements.

A Bill relating to the Conservation of Soil Resources and the Mitigation of Erosion of Soil.

A Bill to amend the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1948.

A Bill to consolidate and amend the Law Relating to the Inspection of Machinery.

A Bill to amend the Weights and Measures Acts, 1924 to 1931.

A Bill to amend the Mining Acts, 1898 to 1948.

A Bill to amend the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1951.

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

His Excellency then left the Chamber. Mr. Speaker left the Chair at 12.30 p.m., resuming it at 2.15 p.m.

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE.

ABSENCE OF THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that the Clerk of the Parliament is attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Tasmania and during his absence the Clerk-Assistant will perform the duties of the Clerk.

PANEL OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN.

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

James Clark, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Fitzroy;

Eric Paul Decker, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Sandgate;

Frederick Dickson Graham, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Mackay;

Duncan Macdonald, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Somerset;

Ernest Joseph Riordan, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Flinders.

BY-ELECTIONS—NEW MEMBERS.

WARREGO.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that, following my issue of a writ on 23 January, 1951, for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Warrego, the said writ has been duly returned to me with a certificate endorsed thereon by the Returning Officer of the election on 3 March, 1951, of John Joseph Dufficy, Esquire, to serve as such member; and that on 6 April, 1951, before me, as Speaker, John Joseph Dufficy took the oath of allegiance and subscribed the roll of members.

Mr. Dufficy was then introduced and took his seat.

KEDRON AND BULIMBA.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House—

1. That, during the Recess, in accordance with the direction of the 10th section of the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867, I issued my Writ on 16 March, 1951, for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the Electoral District of Kedron in the room of Bruce Pie, Esquire, resigned; and that the said Writ

has been duly returned to me with a Certificate endorsed thereon by the Returning Officer of the election on 14 April, 1951, of Eric Gayford Lloyd, Esquire, to serve as such member.

2. That, pursuant to the Resolution passed by the House on 27 February last, I issued my Writ on 16 March, 1951, for the election of a Member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Bulimba; and that the said Writ has been duly returned to me with a Certificate endorsed thereon by the Returning Officer of the election on 14 April, 1951, of Robert James Gardner, Esquire, to serve as such Member.

Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Gardner were then introduced, took the oath of allegiance, and subscribed the roll.

PAPERS.

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

Sixty-sixth Report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Stock.

Thirtieth Report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Government Inscribed Stock.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under the Inspection of Machinery Acts, 1915 to 1946 (22 March).

Regulations under the Petroleum Acts, 1923 to 1950 (12 April).

Order in Council under the Roofing Tiles Act of 1949 (31 May).

Regulations under the Public Service Acts, 1922 to 1950 (22 March, 12 April).

Regulation under the Public Safety Act of 1940, and the Public Safety Act of 1940 Repeal Act of 1945 (21 June).

Order in Council under the Burdekin River Development Act of 1949 (14 June).

Regulation under the Public Accountants Registration Acts, 1946 to 1949 (19 July).

Proclamations (2) under the Public Works Land Resumption Acts, 1906 to 1940, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1951, and the Abattoirs Acts, 1930 to 1949 (2 August).

Regulation under the Irrigation Acts, 1922 to 1949, and the Irrigation Acts Amendment Acts, 1933 to 1949 (5 April).

Regulation under the Irrigation Acts, 1922 to 1949, and the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission Acts, 1946 to 1949 (12 July).

Order in Council under the Irrigation Acts, 1922 to 1949 (12 July).

Proclamation under the Fish Supply Management Acts Amendment Act of 1951 (3 May).

Order in Council under the Factories and Shops Acts, 1900 to 1945 (17 May).

Order in Council under the Labour and Industry Act of 1946 (24 May).

Rules of Court under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1932 (4 June).

Regulations under the Fish Supply Management Acts, 1935 to 1951 (2 August).

Proclamation under the Farmers' Assistance (Debts Adjustment) Acts, 1935 to 1945 (24 May).

Regulation under the Navigation Acts, 1876 to 1950 (22 March).

Regulation under the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1951 (3 May).

Order in Council under the Post-War Reconstruction and Development Trust Fund Act of 1943 (24 May).

Regulations (5) under the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929 to 1948 (10, 17, 31 May, 7 June).

By-laws Nos. 556 to 568 under the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1946.

By-law under the Pharmacy Acts, 1917 to 1939 (22 March).

The Islanders Regulations, 1951 under the Torres Strait Islanders Acts, 1939 to 1946 and the Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Acts, 1939 to 1946 (5 April).

Regulations under the Hospitals Acts, 1936 to 1946 (19 April).

Regulation under the State Children Acts, 1911 to 1943 (3 May).

Regulation under the Nurses and Masseurs Registration Acts, 1928 to 1948 (14 June).

By-laws under the Pharmacy Acts, 1917 to 1939 (28 June).

Regulation under the Traffic Act of 1949 (5 July).

The Tuberculosis Regulations of 1951 under the Health Acts, 1937 to 1949 (12 July).

Regulation under the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1948 (31 May).

Orders in Council (2) under the Supreme Court Act of 1921 (5 April, 10 May).

Orders in Council (44) under the Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948.

Proclamations (2) under the Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948 (17 May, 21 June).

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

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

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

OPENING DAY.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.38 p.m.), who was received with Government cheers, said: I move—

“That the following Address be presented to The Governor in reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this the second session of the Thirty-second Parliament of Queensland:—

“May it please Your Excellency,—

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

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

I doubt whether anyone could derive greater pleasure from moving that motion than I do. A little more than 17 years ago I began work in the correspondence section of this House, where my duties were to handle the correspondence of many hon. members who are still sitting in this Parliament. Naturally, of course, the great majority of them were members of the Parliamentary party which has been most enduring. For 11 of my 17 working years I was in close contact with the functioning of Parliament, hence the pleasure I derive from moving Parliament’s Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency. Labour has maintained its political ascendancy in this Parliament because of the wisdom of its legislation and its progressive policy. Its leaders have been chosen with great discretion and have earned the loyalty and affection of the people of Queensland.

I regret that because of ill-health our Premier, the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, is unable today to be in his usual place in this House. He has come to be regarded as perhaps one of the finest Queenslanders of our time, and I am sure that every hon. member in this House, and in fact every Queensland, will join with me in wishing him a speedy recovery and an early return to office so that he may continue the excellent work that he has done in the past.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LLOYD: Since the opening of the last session of this Parliament, four by-elections have been held in this State and in all of these contests supporters of this Government have been successful.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LLOYD: The Premier and his Government are indeed to be congratulated on achieving those successes. I feel, however, that in the last two by-elections, that is, the one at Kedron and, perhaps even more the one in which the hon. member for Bulimba was returned, the people set the seal of approval on the Government and demonstrated the high public esteem in which they are held.

In the Kedron by-election, to which I should like to make brief reference, we witnessed perhaps the most extraordinary campaign that has been engaged in by any political party in this State. Slanderous attacks were made on individual members of this party, and no regard was paid to the truth. Those remarks apply not only to the Kedron by-election but also to the Bulimba by-election. The Liberal Party had apparently decided that it had no chance of defeating this Government on policy alone, and descended to tactics that I am sure the whole of the people of this State regretted. I can feel nothing but regret that men of their standing in the community should resort to such tactics. I cannot let this opportunity pass without making some short reference to lists that were held by the Liberal Party during the Kedron by-election. Every precaution is taken under the State Elections Acts to prevent irregularities in the compiling of our electoral rolls, and the police canvass that is carried out is much more efficient and covers more territory than the paid canvass that is carried out by the Commonwealth Government in compiling their rolls. Under our State law a person who changes his permanent place of residence must notify the Electoral Office and any individual or organisation can challenge the enrolment of any person who it is thought should not be on the roll. No advantage of those provisions was taken by the Liberal Party at that time. Instead, attempts were made on the day of the by-election to intimidate electors who were endeavouring to exercise their franchise.

Whilst I was listening to the Speech of His Excellency this morning, I wondered how many people in our community appreciated fully the improvement that has been brought about in our standard of living. That improvement has run parallel with the emergence of Labour as a major social force in the world. It has run parallel also with the decline of the early Liberal teachings. Despite the fact that it is generally recognised today that those early Liberal teachings of a laissez-faire economy are the root of our present political ills, we still have many people in our community who think that they should be revived. Those people, however, whilst they attack this Labour Government’s policy and say that it will destroy the liberties of the individual and prevent enterprise by the individual, are not at all concerned for any of the liberties of the individual. They are concerned only for their own liberties, they want only opportunities to exploit the public and to profiteer at the expense of the public. However, a Labour Government are in power in this State and

I am sure that none of that freedom or that licence will be given to any privileged section in the community.

During the past year Australia has seen the passing of several fine Australians, men who played a very important part in the growth of the Labour movement in this country. I refer first of all to a former Prime Minister, the late Leader of the Federal Labour Party, Mr. Chifley. No man ever endeavoured to do as much as he did for his fellow men and no man showed more clearly that he had the courage of his convictions in his endeavour at all times to do what he thought was right. In this Parliament, too, we have lost two very fine Queenslanders in the late Speaker of this Assembly, the Hon. S. J. Brassington, and the late hon. member for Warrego, Mr. Harry O'Shea. In them this Parliament lost two very fine Westerners, two men who accomplished a great deal during their lifetime. I can only hope that my colleagues and I shall prove ourselves worthy to carry on the traditions that they began and that we shall be as worthy as they were of their places in this Parliament.

I should like to refer now to the the threat that Communism is undoubtedly making against our democratic way of life. There have been times during the history of the world when a sense of crisis has prevailed amongst the people and I believe that that sense of crisis is very evident amongst the people of Australia today. During our 50 years of nationhood we in Australia have passed through three wars, two of world-wide implication. On another occasion we were faced with an economic struggle for survival and I feel that one would be thoughtless and fantastic if one did not recognise the threat of Communism today.

It is my belief—I may not be very accurate here, but I believe it—that since 1944 a new concept of warfare has been carried on against the democracies by the Soviet Empire. That reminds me of happenings when I was stationed at an aerodrome in the desert in 1942 when the resistance movement sprang up in Yugoslavia, headed by Mihailovich, who was assisted by the Communist leader Tito. I remember that in 1944 the supplies of which I speak were being forwarded not to the leaders of the democratic forces of such countries, but to the Communist leader. In 1944, when the defeat of Fascism was assured, the Communist forces of Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece were turned not directly to defeating Germany but towards the defeat of any other resistance movement that might have been getting in its way.

It is my belief that there are a number of people in the community who, while expressing themselves hotly against Communism, do very little to prevent its spread. Indeed, there are quite a number of people in business, not only in this country but in the other democracies of the world, who demand the right to trade with any country with which they wish to trade, regardless of whether or not they are supplying much-needed materials to the Soviet Empire.

Amongst our newspapers too we have also the supposedly anti-Communist campaign but not so long ago I saw that the "Courier-Mail" had a photographer on a street corner at the same time as one of the big shots of the Communist party in this country. The resulting photograph was spread across the front page of the "Courier-Mail" the next morning, giving to that Communist very greatly needed publicity. You never see a Communist anywhere who refuses to have his photograph taken, because he knows the importance of publicity and appreciates the fact that he needs publicity. In the last Labour Day celebrations in this city this Government made a very valiant attempt to prevent a march of Communists through the city. The "Courier-Mail" the next morning pictorially presented the attempted march by them across its front page. It was certainly done, not in an attempt to illustrate that anti-Communist action but in an attempt to create strife in the trade-union movement in some way or another and damage the Labour party.

The Australian Labour Party has, for a number of years, been fighting a lone battle to defeat Communism. We have been told that Communism is spreading strongly throughout our trade union movement, yet action taken by the Queensland Labour party has in many cases defeated the Communists within this very movement. It is not only our trades union movement into which the Communists are endeavouring to infiltrate, but every other association and organisation within the community. It is a fact that at the present time Communists are endeavouring to spread their influence in such organisations as progress associations in this city and it is necessary for these associations to take similar action to that taken by the Australian Labour Party to defeat the influence and spread of Communism. It is my definite belief that Communism will never be defeated by any Act of Parliament. The key to its defeat lies only in the spirit of the people themselves. If, however, it ever becomes necessary to introduce legislation to ensure that defeat, let us be careful that we do not relinquish any of the freedoms normally associated with our democracy.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LLOYD: We cannot hope to retain our democracy by fighting a war of reaction against our own people or by handing to this Parliament or any other Parliament power to decide the innocence or guilt of any person. Immediately we do that, immediately we hand to the Parliament of any country totalitarian control, we make the loss of thousands of good Australian lives in the last war against Fascism futile. In the United States of America the Bill of Rights was incorporated in the American Constitution to prevent the Parliament of that country from usurping the functions delegated to their courts of law. For a similar purpose the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was introduced into the Charter of the United Nations. Australia was a signatory to that Universal

Declaration of Human Rights. The only nation which dissented was, of course, the Soviet Empire, the totalitarian power.

I was very pleased to hear during His Excellency's opening Speech to this Parliament that this Government are determined to carry on their active programme of developmental works. I agree heartily with the Government's attitude that the defence of this country is irrevocably tied to the development of the North of Australia. Defence is not simply a matter of marching men. It is also a matter of hard work, of development, and of population. We must do more than marshal our present resources. We must seek to multiply them. Whilst we in Australia cannot provide a subsistence for our present population, it would be impossible for us to endeavour to continue our present immigration policy, and at the same time it would be a catastrophe if that immigration policy had to be curtailed. If we are to provide a subsistence for this additional population we must supply the water and the power they need and build roads and railways, together with all the other normal services required for the opening of our lands. In the Far North vast areas are closed to settlement because of a lack of those services.

The provision of those services must be accepted as just as important in national defence as the recruiting of our armed forces. An armed unit on one part of our coastline would be of little advantage and could do little to prevent consolidation of an invader on any other distant part of our shore line. Our only defence would be in the air and our Air Force at present is pitifully weak. An armed unit, in order to be effective, must be mobile; and there can be no mobility without good means of communication. There can be no excuse for the procrastination that the State has witnessed on the part of the Commonwealth Government in their attitude to the Burdekin dam project, for example, nor can there be any excuse for their attitude to the exploitation of the vast potential resources of coal in Queensland. I have figures here that show that up to the end of June this year 567,027 tons of coal were imported to Australia and the subsidy paid was £2 9s. a ton, a total of £1,389,216—an immense sum that could have been used to much better advantage for the building up of coal resources and helping this nation expand its own coal production.

I would suggest that it is time the Commonwealth Government established a co-ordinating authority between the State Governments concerned and themselves to investigate the developmental work required in the interests of national defence. By creating this development we should be absorbing more population and improving production. It is unfortunate that the production of our basic commodities has fallen compared with that of pre-war times. We have been told that it is because of the drift to the city away from the land, and we have been told that it is because the younger generation lack the initiative and the ability to work. I do not believe that the younger generation lack either

the ability to work or the necessary initiative to build up this country and its future. We were told the same thing 10 or 15 years ago, yet nobody today can truthfully say that the men who fought at El Alamein or on the Kokoda trail were not at least worthy of the men who fought during the first World War.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LLOYD: The Government are to be commended for the excellent work they are doing to create the necessary development in our rural areas. They are to be commended for their policy to help ex-Service men to settle on the land. More than 3,000 ex-Service men have been settled in Queensland and helped in some way by the State Government. No fewer than 340 blocks of land suitable for sugar and tobacco-growing and mixed farming have been allotted to ex-Service men. Perhaps the greatest result has been at the Clare project where eventually 200 settlers will be growing tobacco. I was glad to note from the speech of His Excellency that 100 blocks of land suitable for mixed farming will be thrown open for ex-Service men in the Wandoan-Taroom district.

The policy of the Government in providing water and power in rural areas is showing good results. The vision of past Governments in carrying out a policy of decentralisation of electricity and the setting up of regional electricity boards has had a very good effect. Consumers are now using twice as much power as they did five years ago but the electrical systems established through these various regional boards have been able to cope with this additional demand. It is a striking tribute to this Government that despite this great additional load on our electricity undertakings this State has been able to avoid the rationing of power that we have seen in other States. It would be a very great pity indeed if, through lack of loan moneys from the Commonwealth Government, the work this Government have planned for the ensuing year had to be curtailed. The Queensland Government are to be congratulated upon being able to show such an excellent surplus as the Treasurer has disclosed and upon having achieved such wonderful results over the past year.

I should like to pay tribute to the devotion and loyalty of the many State public servants who have helped this Government to carry out their policy of development. From time to time we have heard a great deal of criticism of our public servants, but it is my firm belief that in the troublous times ahead of this State the public servants of Queensland will continue to display this loyalty and devotion to their work and that when we emerge from those troubles this Parliament will owe a debt of gratitude to them.

Economic crises of the past have proved that no country can flourish unless its people have the necessary purchasing power with which to buy the products of industry. It is unfortunate that at this stage in our development the people of Queensland, indeed of Australia, are being robbed of that essential purchasing power by rising prices. It

is also unfortunate that in our community we should have one or two small sections whose greed is compelling our home markets to compete with high export prices in order to ensure adequate supplies for home consumption. It would seem to me that the time is not far off when the consumer will be unable to pay these abnormally high prices that are being demanded for goods. In the home-building industry in particular that time is very close. With the present trend of rising costs in the home-building industry we have reached the stage at which a man who wishes to provide a home for his wife and family needs to have at least £1,000. Even with that amount of capital, he will find, by the time he has bought his land, paid a deposit on his home and bought his furniture, that he is in debt to the extent of at least £2,000, and there are many working men who may never recover from that position.

One aspect of the home-building industry to which I should like to make special reference is the "spec." building. I appreciate the fact that many of the "spec." builders in this State are competent tradesmen who are endeavouring to build suitable homes for the workers and their families. Many of these builders take pride in their work and they are capable of building good homes, but there is a small percentage of "spec." builders who have never been tradesmen, who have crept into the industry for the purpose of making money for themselves. These men are incompetent, they are using poor materials and building sub-standard homes which will cost the occupier a great deal in maintenance within a few years after their construction. Some further supervision over this type of building is needed.

The Government are to be congratulated upon the fact that in the past year a record number of houses have been completed in this State. At the present time the State Housing Commission has 1,178 homes under construction, 4,371 approvals have been given, and it has made arrangements to import 3,386 prefabricated homes.

The commission has not received the credit due to it for the part it has played in home-construction in this State. Homes it has built can be bought at a much lower price than those built by private contractors; homes built by day labour are costing much less than those built under private contract. The commission offers to prospective home-buyers a lower rate of interest than that offered by any home-finance organisation in this State. It also offers a free insurance policy if the borrower is under 40 years of age.

The Queensland Housing Commission has undertaken very many large home-building projects, some of which are in the Kedron electorate. The fulfilment of those projects has been accompanied by a variety of problems in addition to that caused by the scarcity of materials. In pre-war years in the Stafford electorate very few homes were to be seen but today, thanks to the policy pursued by the commission, Stafford is a thickly-populated suburb. Pre-war schooling accommodation was limited but today there is a modern school on one of the outstanding sites

to be found in the metropolitan area. In addition to what it has done it proposes to erect another four hundred homes in that district. At the beginning of next school year the accommodation at the Stafford school will be inadequate and the school will be unable to cope with the intake of children.

A similar position arises at Grovely and Mitchelton. At Grovely a large home-building project is in train and the Mitchelton State School has been found to be inadequate to meet the intake of children. The Government have approved of the erection of a new school there and I venture to suggest that within a year or two it will be necessary to have yet another school erected at Grovely itself. I introduce this subject to indicate the problems that are to be faced and the services to be provided as part and parcel of the large building ventures undertaken by the commission. Such services are required as transport, the reticulation of water, gas and electricity, telephone facilities, fire brigade and ambulance services. It is not sufficient to build hundreds of homes for otherwise homeless people unless those services are provided. The commission has done a remarkable job in the past and its operations are valued by the residents of the areas in which it has undertaken home construction. It is my belief, however, that some sort of a miniature townplanning organisation should be incorporated in building schemes so that the State Government, the Commonwealth Government, and the semi-governmental organisations also can plan ahead, order the necessary materials, and provide services such as road-making to prevent accidents, drainage and other services to prevent the outbreak of disease amongst the people occupying the homes that are built.

The housing requirements of Australia have placed a heavy demand on the timber resources of Queensland. Last year Australia was forced to import 250 million superficial feet of timber from Finland, Sweden, Austria, South America and New Zealand, which dominion is now reaping the reward of the vigorous reforestation policy introduced many years ago. Within a very short period, New Zealand should be able to provide the whole of Australia's softwood requirements.

This Government are to be congratulated on the part they have played in reforestation work in Queensland in an attempt to preserve the timber resources of this State. The acreage of plantations has been increased to 50,000, and a definite policy of natural regeneration of our forests has been embarked upon. During His Excellency's Speech he referred to the fact that more than half of last year's total log output of 400,000,000 super. feet came from Crown forests. All that timber has been milled by private enterprise, which has done absolutely nothing over the years to help in the preservation of our timber resources. Although it pays royalties, at the same time it has reaped all the profits. I am certain that private enterprise itself is well aware of the present position and of the fact that in the very near future the whole of Queensland's timber resources will have

been used up unless some very definite action is taken. It was found necessary in Czecho-Slovakia some years ago to replace, tree for tree, all the timber that was milled, with the result that that country has now attained stabilisation in its timber resources. It will be necessary for us to adopt a similar policy in the preservation of our timbers to protect the future generations in this State.

Another aspect of this matter to which I should like to refer is the fact that the only taxation rebate allowed by the Commonwealth Government for reforestation expenditure is in respect of shares called up in reforestation companies. I do not know whether any reforestation companies are operating in Queensland. Whilst the millers have been operating along the coastline of this State they have been quite comfortable, but now they are finding that they have to go further inland. If they had the incentive of some form of taxation rebate, I am certain that they would be prepared to undertake reforestation projects on their own behalf. As an example, I quote a miller I know who has planted 120,000 pine trees, but he has had to do that out of income upon which he has already paid taxation. Very few men in the sawmilling industry can afford to wait 20 or 30 years for a return on their capital outlay.

We must in the very near future alter our previous ruthless policy in the cutting of our timbers. Although such a policy has brought quick returns, it has resulted in soil erosion and the siltation of our rivers. With scientific planning along our waterways, roads and railways, the cost of maintenance would be considerably reduced.

Before I conclude, I should like to refer briefly to the Royal tour next year. I am sure that every Queenslander is very happy that His Majesty's health has improved sufficiently to allow of a visit by Their Majesties and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret in 1952. I am sure, too, that that visit will be a happy and memorable one for the Royal visitors, and that all Queenslanders, in their expressions of devotion and loyalty, will give evidence of their continued allegiance to the British Commonwealth.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

I thank hon. members for their very patient hearing, and assure them that whatever I have said, I have said in all sincerity. I assure them, also, that at all times I shall appreciate any advice and help that they as men older in years and wiser in experience may give me.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) (3.14 p.m.): I deem it a pleasure and a privilege to have the opportunity of seconding the motion that has been so ably moved by the hon. member for Kedron.

I regret very sincerely that the death of my old friend, Harry O'Shea, made necessary the by-election at which I was elected to this House. No-one regrets his passing more than I do. Not only Western Queensland but indeed the entire State lost an able and eloquent advocate when Harry O'Shea passed

on to his reward. While men like him, men like Mr. Chifley and Mr. Brassington pass on, the Labour Movement must go on forever. Consequently, I now have the privilege of seconding this very important motion.

Mention of the Warrego by-election reminds me that the campaign was more intensive than any other campaign that had occurred in that electorate for many years. Not only the Leader of the Opposition but a number of his followers, as well as members of the Federal Tory Government, including the Deputy Speaker and Senator Maher, a former member of this Parliament for many years, took part in it. However, this heavy influx of Country Party speakers into the electorate helped me considerably.

As I said before, it was an intensive campaign. The visiting anti-Labour speakers using the radio and very efficient public-address systems. Even people in such isolated centres as Hungerford, Thargomindah, and Eulo, places rarely visited by members of the Opposition party, were compelled to listen to their policy or perhaps it might be more correct to say their lack of policy. It all tended to give me an excellent majority, indeed a record majority. Stated briefly, it can be said that the more the electors were compelled to listen to Country Party speakers, the more they liked the Labour Party. Consequently Labour got a record majority.

The Leader of the Opposition did make at least one valuable contribution to the campaign, and it was that certain information which he published proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the Warrego roll was at least 99.8 per cent. accurate. You will agree, Mr. Speaker, that is as close to perfection as anything of human origin could be. It is unfortunate, however, that the hon. member for Roma appears to be completely out of step with his leader, for judging by recent Press reports he is still chasing some ghosts in the South-West whose names, it is alleged, appear on the Warrego or some other western electoral roll. I suggest that the hon. member for Roma and his colleagues could be more profitably occupied by trying to convince their colleagues in the Federal House to abolish the Wool Sales Deduction Act. I would suggest respectfully, too, that hon. members opposite endeavour to convince their Federal Leader, Sir Arthur Fadden, that by referring to wool-growers who are giving a very valuable service to this State as people who should be rearing goats rather than sheep, he is only indulging in a cheap unmerited sneer against those people and doing something that is not in keeping with the tradition of the West or the services that wool-growers and other people living in the pastoral areas contribute to the economy of this nation.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUFFICY: I have no intention to dwell at any great length on the sins of omission or commission of our political opponents, for recent by-elections in this State have demonstrated very clearly what the electors of Queensland think of them and

I am one who is willing to accept the verdict of the electors rather than endeavour to force my own views upon this House.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUFFICY: Therefore, I will not endeavour to criticise the statements of Sir Arthur Fadden or hon. members opposite, for I prefer that they receive their just deserts at the hands of the electors, particularly as they have demonstrated their opinion so effectively in recent by-elections.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUFFICY: I want to deal more or less briefly with matters of far greater importance than those I have briefly referred to. I was particularly pleased to observe in His Excellency's Speech mention of the recent Royal Commission that was appointed by the Government to inquire into pastoral land settlement in this State.

That is a matter in which I am particularly interested. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was for a period a member of that Royal Commission and long before that I was particularly interested in land-settlement matters. That interest was stimulated by the fact that in my youth I was the victim of a shocking mistake in such settlement made by a Government prior to the advent of Labour in this State. The Government of the day, in their wisdom or unwisdom—I say unwisdom, advisedly—believed that an area of 160 acres situated approximately 20 miles from a railhead, with no transport at all and remote from markets, was an adequate living area. My parents were settled on the land under a Government scheme that necessarily failed because it was ill-conceived, and the circumstances under which those unfortunate people were settled made success impossible.

Mr. Ewan: Where was this place?

Mr. DUFFICY: At Byrnestown, within a few miles of Gayndah. If the hon. member doubts the accuracy of my statement I refer him to the official records that show that my parents were among the original settlers in that part of the country. Further, for the information of the hon. member, seeing he does not know very much about the history of this State, the land in question was a resumption from Wetheron Station. That shocking land policy was implemented by a Government who claimed to know something about land matters but whose political successors have demonstrated their absolute ignorance of them.

I regret that the interjection caused me to drift from my line of thought. Reverting to the question of land settlement, may I say this: in a State such as ours, the question of land settlement must be approached with due regard to the circumstances that exist in various parts of the State, such as rainfall, accessibility of markets and other factors. It must be obvious to anyone who considers this question for a moment that a policy that may achieve maximum production on the coast would be completely unsuitable in Western Queensland. I therefore congratulate the

Government on appointing a commission to investigate the whole problem of land settlement in Queensland. In my opinion closer settlement is inevitable on the coastal belt, which enjoys a rainfall of 30 inches or more. The increasing population, coupled with the demand to step-up our dairying and general farm production, must inevitably bring about closer settlement in that area. I include in that area Taroom and Wandoan, about which we have seen a good deal in the daily Press recently. I repeat that in that area, in which closer settlement is the logical thing, we must have general farming and dairying pursuits.

In what might be regarded as the intermediate strip, the area between the coastal belt and the more or less arid parts of the Far West, we have an entirely different problem. It cannot be denied that in that area there is a considerable tract of land suitable for closer settlement and this closer settlement would result in far greater production than we are achieving today.

When we get into the Far West, however, we have an entirely different problem again. There we have a considerable tract of country capable of carrying only one sheep to 10 or 12 acres, and some parts of which I have knowledge could carry no more than one sheep to 20 acres. Whether or not it is in the best interests of production to subdivide that country at this stage of our development, I am not prepared to say, but the Royal Commission to which I have referred is charged with the responsibility of investigating it.

There are several other matters greatly in need of investigation, one of them being the decline in the population of the western parts of Queensland. I do not want hon. members to take my word for it that there is this decline. A comparison of the census taken in 1947 with that taken in 1933 will disclose that the population in many of our western areas certainly has declined.

That is a particularly serious matter and the commission I have mentioned is charged with the responsibility of finding the reason for it. Many reasons have been given as to why the population in Western Queensland is declining. Our political opponents have said that it is because of the neglect of western areas by this Government. I deny that, and I submit that there is no evidence at all to prove that there has been any neglect by this Government of western areas; certainly there is no evidence to prove that any action of this Government has been responsible for the decline in population in Western Queensland. To prove what I say, I might point out, for the information of this House, that the first town in Queensland to be completely seweraged was Quilpie, a town that is approximately 620 miles west of Brisbane; the first place outside of the metropolitan area where a sewerage pipe was laid was the township of Quilpie. The first three towns in Queensland to be completely seweraged were Quilpie, Cunnamulla and Charleville, and I defy contradiction of that fact. All those towns are situated in the Far West of this State.

In Charleville we have one of the most efficient base hospitals to be found anywhere in Queensland. It is well-equipped, well staffed and capable of adequately caring for the medical needs of the district. Places such as Morven, Thargomindah and Cunnamulla are in a similar position. So far as medical services are concerned, those towns compare favourably with towns in other parts of the State. We also have a very efficient Flying Doctor service based on Charleville, and it is interesting to remember—and I have this on the authority of Dr. Vickers, who is providing such a marvellous medical service for Western Queensland—that this Government are the only Government in Australia to subsidise the Flying Doctor service.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUFFICY: No other Government in Australia subsidise the service. The Queensland Government have subsidised the Flying Doctor service in this State very generously over the years and the service is doing a magnificent job for western people. I suggest that the medical facilities provided and amenities given in South-Western Queensland equal those to be found in most parts of the State, and most of those facilities have been provided by the Government. No suggestion can be made, therefore, that the fall in population that has taken place in the West can be attributed in any way to neglect by the Queensland Government. There may be other reasons—I do not know, and I do not want to anticipate the report of the Royal Commission on Pastoral Lands Settlement on this matter—but I do suggest that such a wealthy part of Queensland which pays a tremendous amount in Federal taxation, should receive some consideration from the Federal Government.

When the wool sales deduction tax was introduced, the Federal Treasurer estimated that it would provide the Federal Government with revenue amounting to £103,000,000 per annum. In actual fact, the amount obtained as the result of that tax was £108,000,000. As you know, Sir, the legislation governing that tax provided for the payment of 20 per cent. of the gross earnings of a wool-grower, without any regard whatever to the unavoidable and necessary expense incurred in earning his income. You will know also that the value of the wool produced in Queensland in the last financial year was approximately £100,000,000 and it needs only a simple calculation to realise that under the Wool Sales Deduction Act, which is merely a polite term for describing the raid that the Commonwealth Government made on the finances of the wool-growers, the wool-growers of Queensland paid something like £20,000,000 in taxation in the last 12 months.

I suggest that that part of the country from which that wool tax was derived has received little or nothing in return from the Commonwealth Government, and that, if there is any neglect of the western part of Queensland, it is by the Commonwealth Government rather than by the State Government. We have read quite recently in the Press that the Flying Doctor service in Queensland is appealing for £20,000, but I have not read

anything to the effect that the Commonwealth Government are prepared to subsidise that service, which is helping the far western parts of Queensland so admirably, despite the fact that they have collected approximately £20,000,000 in taxation from that area. Nor have I read or heard of any suggestion that the Commonwealth Government will help station-hands, boundary-riders and other bush workers in western Queensland by subsidising the erection of hostels for the housing of their children in towns where proper schooling facilities are available. Surely a Government who get £20,000,000 in taxation in one year from one section of the community are in duty bound to give something to that district in return? The facts are that the only amenities and facilities that the people of the West have had at any time have come from the State Labour Government, not from the Commonwealth Tory Government, despite the fact that the Commonwealth Tory Government have had a tremendous revenue because of the prosperity of the wool industry—and the cattle industry too.

Let me illustrate my point. About 12 months ago the amount paid to the State Labour Government in respect of pastoral leases amounted to an average of 7d. a sheep. It would be a little more today. However the amount paid in tax to the Commonwealth Government by the wool-growers would not be less than £1 a sheep. There you have the wide difference—£1 a sheep to the Commonwealth Tory Government and 7d. a sheep to the State Labour Government, yet the State Government are charged with neglecting the West.

There is much more that I could say about western conditions and about the need for urgent improvements there, but I will not do so now. Because the people of the West enjoy reasonable amenities—they had sewerage before many other parts of Queensland had it—and because their hospital facilities are good I do not want anyone to run away with the idea that the conditions there are perfect. They are far from that. Improvements are required in connection with roads. We have our housing problem too, which unfortunately is not peculiar to that area. At a later stage I may have an opportunity of discussing these matters.

In conclusion I desire to refer to the illness of the Premier and to express my sincere regret that his state of health made it impossible for him to be in his place in the House today. I am sure that hon. members on both sides join with me in wishing him a speedy and complete recovery. (Hear, hear!)

Debate, on motion of Mr. Nicklin, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando—Acting Premier): I move—

“That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 11 a.m. tomorrow.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.51 p.m.