

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 1951

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

QUESTIONS.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICES.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“1. What is the total number of school transport services?”

“2. What was the total cost of such services for the quarter ended 30 September last?”

“3. Will he kindly supply me with a list of the names and addresses of secretaries of School Transport Committees in the South-east Region of the State?”

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory) replied—

“The information sought by the hon. member entails a great amount of time to compile, consequently it will take a few days to obtain. However, the information will be supplied as soon as possible.”

MOUNT SPEC WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) asked the Acting Premier—

“In view of the importance of Townsville and its strategic position in case of emergency, and its previous great service, and as water is essential in its supply to the services, would he look into the possibility of steel supply to enable the expeditious completion of the Mount Spec water supply for Townsville?”

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

“Yes. Every effort is being made to secure from overseas, a proportion of the steel required for this scheme. Up to the present, it has been impossible to secure delivery of steel ordered from overseas. Negotiations are still proceeding for the importation of 1,000 tons.”

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

“Will he advise if any plans for increasing the water supply from Mount Spec area for the City of Townsville have been submitted by the Townsville City Council? If so, what progress has been made with such plans?”

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

“I assume the hon. member is referring to the proposal to divert water from Swamp Creek into Crystal Creek, the source of supply for the Mount Spec scheme presently under construction by the Council. This proposal was investigated by my department and thereupon the Council decided to adopt the scheme and requested the department to prepare the necessary plans. To enable a definite scheme to be formulated, officers of my department commenced to carry out surveys but the work was suspended in February, 1950, at the suggestion of the Council, because of the wet season. In June, 1950, the Council advised that it did not intend to proceed with the work during the financial year 1950-1951. In September last the Council advised it proposed to carry out the surveys with its own staff. The department has no information as to what progress the Council has made and no plans have been submitted to the Department of Local Government.”

MEAT SUPPLY, THURSDAY ISLAND.

Mr. WORDSWORTH (Cook) asked the Acting Premier—

“In view of the fact that since 30 June last there has been no butcher shop at Thursday Island and, in consequence, a large proportion of the residents (of a place where the incidence of T.B. is abnormally high and a meat supply is of more than ordinary importance) have been without meat for over three months, will he kindly have this matter investigated with a view to some satisfactory arrangement being made to overcome the deficiency?”

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

“Strong representations in respect of this matter were made to the Government by Mr. A. J. Smith, M.L.A., in May last. However, notwithstanding approaches which were made to the owner of the butcher shop (Mr. Cadzow), he would not alter his intention to close the shop and, consequently, the butchering business

ceased operations as from 30 June, 1951. It is understood that Mr. Cadzow was quite willing to lease the butchering premises at a reasonable rental on the understanding that the machinery, &c., was maintained in good repair. Apparently, however, no other person was interested in taking over the butchering business. I have been informed that at a meeting of residents of Thursday Island held on 25 September last, a resolution was passed to the effect that the Thursday Island Town Council be empowered by the citizens of Thursday Island to investigate the possibilities of establishing a butcher shop to supply meat to all citizens on Thursday Island. Whilst it is not practicable to subsidise any such venture the Government would be prepared to render every assistance possible should any residents or organisations on Thursday Island decide to establish a butchering business on co-operative lines. The Government understands that at present meat is being transported from the mainland to Thursday Island by air, but is of insufficient quantity. An approach has therefore been made to both Australian National Airways and Trans-Australia Airlines with a view to ascertaining whether either or both of these services can assist in maintaining an adequate supply of meat and fresh vegetables to Thursday Island from the mainland at least until such time as a butcher shop again commences business on the island. It is very interesting to note the hon. member's enthusiasm and desire for the establishment of a State enterprise when private enterprise has failed to maintain an important service to the community.”

RESUMPTION OF N.U.P.B.A. FARM, ZILLMERE.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny), for **Mr. DECKER** (Sandgate), asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government—

“1. Is it the intention of his department to resume a large portion of the N.U.P.B.A. Experimental Farm at Zillmere for housing purposes?”

“2. If so, in view of the value of the experimental work carried on at this farm, which is subsidised by the Government, and the heavy cost of removal of buildings, will he kindly reconsider this matter in the light of the facts I have mentioned?”

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

“1. Before resumption it was arranged with N.U.P.B.A. that the experimental farm retain all land on which breeding and experimental pens were placed, and the Commission resumed only land which was not so utilised. After resumption N.U.P.B.A. requested that while the experimental farm was at Zillmere it be allowed the use of a piece of land 2 chains by 3½ chains which had been resumed. This request was granted by the Commission. The farm can, and is, carrying on with its activities without interference.”

"2. Zillmere is being developed as an industrial area very rapidly, and consequently the need for housing is ever increasing. The land covered by the farm has been rezoned as an urban area by the Brisbane City Council, and as such the farm could not carry on in its present site for much longer. When the farm was purchased no one would have forecast the phenomenal growth of the city. However, the Government has acquired an area of 200 acres of land at Oxley for experimental purposes, and arrangements have been made to transfer the farm there in progressive stages so as not to interfere with experiments now being conducted. The site at Oxley will be larger than at Zillmere and will give greater scope for expansion."

BEYER-GARRATT LOCOMOTIVES ON GRADES.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Minister for Transport—

"Is it a fact that (a) The loads for Beyer-Garratt locomotives as determined by railway officers are in excess of those considered reasonable by the representative of the makers of these locomotives, and (b) On more occasions than not these locomotives are being stuck on grades due to overloading, and that this sticking is most frequent on the Gladstone-Bundaberg section?"

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

"(a) Nothing is known of any loads considered reasonable by the representative of the makers of the Beyer-Garratt locomotives. The loads now being hauled were calculated by the usual method and were adopted after tests had been made when it was found they could be hauled without undue strain on the locomotive. (b) It is not considered that the cause of any sticking of the locomotives is due to overloading."

ALLEGED CORRUPTION BY LIQUOR INTERESTS.

Mr. TURNER (Kelvin Grove), without notice, asked the Attorney-General—

"Has his attention been drawn to the statement made by Mr. F. L. Edmunds, Field Secretary of the Queensland Temperance League that Queensland was the most corrupt State in Australia and that all political parties received 'blood money' from the liquor interests?"

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton): The hon. member informed me that he was going to ask this question without notice, and my reply is—

"Yes, I have read the statement in the 'Courier-Mail' attributed to Mr. Edmunds and I regard it as a gross libel concerning the people of Queensland.

"It is significant that the Temperance League carried a motion to the effect that Mr. Edmunds's remarks should be regarded as his personal opinion and not those of the League."

In conclusion, I quote a remark from the noted American writer, R. W. Emerson, which Mr. Edmunds might study. It reads as follows:—

"Our opinion of others is a reflection of our own character."

SUPPLIES OF IRON AND STEEL, AND CEMENT.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny), for **Mr. LOW** (Cooroora): I desire to ask the Acting Premier whether he has an answer to the following question, which was addressed to him by the hon. member for Cooroora on 19 October—

"In view of the acute shortage of galvanised roofing iron, plain iron, tank iron, water piping, fencing wire (plain and barbed), wire netting and cement, will he kindly advise—(a) estimated Queensland requirements in tons for 1951-52, giving each item separately; (b) estimated Queensland production; (c) estimated imports from New South Wales and other States; (d) estimated imports from other countries (quantity and cost); (e) estimated deficit for 1951-52; and (f) what action is contemplated to increase supplies to assist home builders and primary producers?"

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

"I have the information sought by the hon. member for Cooroora. It is lengthy and I will table it."

Whereupon the hon. gentleman laid the information upon the table.

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulations under the Diseases in Stock Acts, 1915 to 1950.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO PREMIER.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave of absence for this session be granted to the Hon. Edward Michael Hanlon, member for the electoral district of Ithaca, on account of illness."

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Debate resumed from Thursday, 18 October (see p. 851) on Mr. Walsh's motion—

"That there be granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1951-52 a sum not exceeding £745 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor."

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.14 a.m.): I rise to a point of order. Before this debate begins I should like a ruling from you, Mr. Farrell. In view of the far-reaching effect of your ruling on the 18th inst., which ruling was confirmed by the Committee, namely, that an hon. member is "not in order in referring in the course of the debate on the Financial Statement to an earlier debate in this session," will you kindly state, for the guidance of hon. members debating the Financial Statement this week, whether they will be in order in discussing the finances of this State, in view of the fact that such finances were debated in the present session when Supply was under discussion in this House on 23 August last?

The CHAIRMAN: The debate has been carried on as a general one in which everybody has had an opportunity of taking part. I have already given a ruling on the question of permitting a debate on a matter that has already been decided by the House. I repeat the ruling that I gave before, that an hon. member is not in order in debating a subject matter that has already been determined by the House.

Mr. Nicklin: Then all finances are out?

The CHAIRMAN: Any hon. member will have the right to discuss finances and I shall determine whether he is in order or not. If I am of the opinion that he is getting away from the subject matter before the Committee I shall call him to order but I shall also allow him to make his speech without interruption from other hon. members.

Mr. Aikens: We usually get an open go on the Financial Statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORES (Kurilpa) (11.16 a.m.): It is generally recognised that no more important document is presented to Parliament than the annual statement of receipts and expenditure known as the Budget. It sets out simply and honestly the record of production and settlement in pastoral and secondary industries and the expansion of wealth distribution—in short, a review of the progressive development of the country and a preview of the future in every phase of the State's activity. It is therefore surprising that with such solid scope for discussion the debate to date from the Opposition side, with the exception of the contribution by the Leader of the Liberal Party, has hardly touched the ramifications of the Budget.

At the outset I propose to deal with some of the remarkable submissions made by hon. members opposite. The temporary Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Coorparoo, made a most anaemic contribution and for 90 minutes painfully and ponderously tried to excuse the Federal Government for their niggardly allocation to the States. With the Menzies-Fadden £1 down to less than 9s. on a pre-war computation, no amount of apologising could hide the fact that in a general sense Queensland was badly treated,

especially on an assessment of her requirements based on defence possibilities. All that the hon. member for Coorparoo proved was that the accountant's well-known ability to juggle figures to produce predetermined results could be diverted to the manipulation of words that when analysed gave us nothing constructive. As an example, he talked all round inflation, discussed what he termed demand inflation—which he generously conceded could be controlled—and then displayed his colossal ignorance of our present-day economic problems with this classic—

"When it comes to cost inflation I confess I have not been able to supply the answer nor have I been given the answer as to how it is to be controlled."

What an admission! Was such a statement made because he lacked the intestinal stamina to condemn the people who are at least partly responsible for cost inflation, the present inept Federal Government? He and his colleagues opposed the Labour Government's prices-control referendum and time has proved that Federal control of prices would at least have halted what he has described as cost inflation, which he knows can be alleviated to some extent, if not completely, by a more courageous Federal Government instead of the gutless political accidents misgoverning the country from Canberra at the present time.

One of my colleagues—I think it was the hon. member for Port Curtis—stated that the temporary Opposition Leader went into retreat to study the Financial Statement and prepare a case. If that was so, the retreat became so pronounced that it finished practically in a rout. Did you ever experience such weak reasoning and downright political deceit as this statement he made—

"The Commonwealth Government must be given the credit for their generosity in the financial allocation to Queensland in comparison to other States."

The hon. member knows that the reasons for this was the fundamental honesty of the submissions of the Queensland Government, which is typically in character, while the submissions of other States were obviously padded to allow for haggling. In short, the bulk of the other States submitted a set of faked figures to the Premiers' Conference. Despite the honesty of the works programme submitted by the Premier of this State, we were still cut down, and yet the Commonwealth Government are given credit for generous treatment. I say that if the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer were genuine in their defence-preparation talk, Queensland should have received preferential treatment on that basis alone, instead of a greater percentage cut on the grounds of honesty in submission of figures.

Speaking of honesty in the presentation of figures and budgets, I recall with some degree of reluctance one of my early experiences as an alderman of the Brisbane City Council, when that peregrinating prince of procrastination, puerility, and political perfidy, the founder of the present Liberal Party, submitted a budget only to be told by inference

in open council by his right-hand man, the then Vice-Mayor, Alderman Tait, that they were a set of faked figures. The actual words used during a heated disagreement on the method of preparation of the Budget by the Vice-Mayor to the Lord Mayor were—

“You please yourself, but I would not present to this council a set of faked figures.”

From the bottom of the Liberal ladder to the top, it appears to me as if the structure were riddled with this type of political dishonesty.

Has there been a more complete exposure of the deceit and hypocrisy operating amongst business men in politics—and “The Sydney Bulletin” features a column very appropriately headed “Business and Robbery”—than the present Federal Budget? for instance—

“The bulk of election promises broken.

“The famous, or should it be infamous, ‘Put Value Back into the £’ slogan ruthlessly slaughtered on the altar of political expediency.

“The unholy alliance with the Country Party preventing tangible moves to fulfil this promise.

“The financial starving of the States whilst budgeting for higher taxation, direct and direct.

“The economic stupidity of raising prices to halt inflation and budgeting for a surplus of £114,000,000?”

It was not, as Dr. Evatt says, a blueprint for depression. It was in the blueprint-stage when being devised in the addled theoretical brain of alleged expert economists. It is a depression structure in the course of erection and it either finishes as planned or it crashes into economic chaos.

I will quote from a variety of political and non-political sources to prove the impact such a madhouse Budget has had on public opinion. We must remember that the Federal Government, swollen with ill-gotten wealth, have denied to States concerned with progressive development the right to proceed with legitimate works, most of them with defence potential. Yet we are told that the Federal Government were generous to Queensland.

I wonder why the hon. member for Coorparoo did not eulogise the Federal Budget whilst trying to give it credit for something it did not purport to do. Perhaps this is the reason why “The Melbourne Age” said—

“Reduced to bedrock, the hard core of the Budget is an intention to extract from every conceivable source (postal rates having previously been greatly increased) the the largest possible tribute in the form of increased or imposed levies, with the object of diverting an enormous amount of money from business, trade and industry, as well as from private pockets, into the coffers of the Federal Treasury. What is to happen to the extra ‘haul’ of swollen revenue when it reaches the Treasury has not been explained with any

clarity or certainty. There is no assurance that the process will not turn out to be a roundabout way of putting the money back into circulation, and thereby cancelling or largely off-setting its anti-inflationary worth.”—“Age,” Melbourne, September 28, 1951.

I repeat that that quotation is from “The Melbourne Age” which, by no stretch of the imagination, could be described as a Labour journal.

I quote also the following from “The Argus”—

“The general impression that the Budget leaves on one after a couple of days’ reflection is that the Government, after being unbelievably inactive for so long, has suddenly become extraordinarily active; but in such a negative, paralysing way that its action is still inaction disguised under a new form. Has the same meaningless reversal taken place in terms of pure economics. Has the Government ‘solved’ the economic problem by moving from inflation to stagnation? Has the mountain laboured and given birth to the idea of curing an artificial ‘boom’ by bringing about an artificial ‘bust?’ To sum up: things were getting—had in fact got—into a bad way in Australia; and it now looks only as if they will get worse. It all seems like trying to make a slow clock go faster by clogging the works.—“Argus,” Melbourne, September 29.”

Can anyone suggest that “The Sydney Morning Herald” is a Labour newspaper? A summary from its writings is as follows—

“Repeated warnings from its friends have not deterred the Government from imposing a burden of taxation at which the public is aghast. Attempts to present it as a sound solution with which a courageous (?) Ministry is facing public disapproval are doomed to failure, whether their author be Sir Douglas Copland or anyone else.

“Common sense knows better. The Budget is the offspring of an unholy alliance between an improvident Government and a set of self-opinionated bureaucratic planners, and the result is not only thoroughly unsound economics, but an immense political blunder. The Government, admittedly, has had tremendous economic problems to face; but in its 21 months of office it has done little but allow them to grow larger.”

The following is a quotation from Mr. Hall, Director of the Chamber of Manufactures of New South Wales—

“The depressive effect on the incentive to work in this Budget is terrific. The Budget proposals amount to nothing less than confiscation of our money to take it out of circulation.

“I wonder whether the idea of ‘Government of the people, by the people, for the people’ is not being indecently interred, and whether the Federal Budget is its epitaph.”

On that statement the paper had the following comment—

“One notable admission by Hall was that the 10 per cent. levy would fall proportionately most heavily on the low-income groups, and because of the principle of graduated rates of tax would fall heaviest on any extra income earned by hard work.”

Let me conclude by quoting from “The Sydney Morning Herald,” issued the morning after the Budget was brought down in the Federal Parliament. It had a front-page editorial and had comment also on pages 2 and 3. Under the heading “Federal Budget Will Stun the Nation,” it said—

“Yesterday’s Budget has delivered a staggering blow to the nation. It will depress industry, lessen the incentive to work, undermine public confidence and help to raise costs to a pitch that may well cause sectional unemployment.

“The Government has reversed the principles which it put forward so forcibly when first asking the people for a mandate. It is now asserting that high taxation is a cure for the ills that beset a community struggling to meet rising inflation. This will shock its most earnest supporters.”

I suggest that the shock the Leader of the Liberal Party received tempted him not to make reference to the Federal Budget in his speech.

It is a typical businessman’s traditional practice to do what the Federal Liberal Country Party have done in connection with the Budget—to give the customer, in this case the people of Australia, the least they can for the most they can extract. In the case of Governments represented by the same type of individual, it is to take as much as they can, by direct and indirect taxation, and give the least in return by way of service. History has shown that this is not only typical of anti-Labour Governments but is ruinous to a country’s economy. The people best fitted and most capable of constructive effort in times of crisis are representatives of the Labour Party, and the work of successful Labour Governments in Queensland is proof of that statement.

Gaze at the motley crew in Opposition, a gang of private-enterprise pirates posing as paragons of political virtue, 90 per cent. engaged in some form of production for profit, with the important and responsible work of representing a constituency and, in the larger sphere, the work of His Majesty’s Opposition, just played as a lucrative sideline. The height of their activity or, more correctly, the depth of their actions, if in control of the Treasury benches, would be on similar lines to those of that infamous band who, between 1929 and 1932, when faced with a crisis, slashed and cut in a panic like the present Federal Government. I believe that the temporary Leader of the Opposition would have been better occupied engaging in constructive criticism of his Federal colleagues than in attempting to belittle the solid progressive plan envisaged for this State and as outlined in the Budget.

So much for the hon. member for Coorparoo. Let us examine for a few minutes the speech of his deputy, the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha. Amidst a mass of slanderous and at times unintelligible jargon, I managed to salvage the following gems of mis-spent mental effort. After prating, or, should I say, prattling about Socialists and Socialism, Communists and Communism, and working himself up into a near hysterical frenzy of hate, he said—

“Let us examine the classic example of Russia. In Russia, where Socialism is the governing power and where the Government themselves are a Socialist Government, amenities are almost non-existent, homelife is almost non-existent—”

he was not too sure of himself, so he qualified by saying it was almost non-existent—

“freedom of speech is non-existent.”

That is one thing he is sure of, despite the fact that his source of information could be queried. Then, after referring to the Persian and Egyptian situations, he said—

“Now, however, when England has been weakened internally by a Government that is rotten to the core—”

and he emphasises that phrase with these words—

“and I say that advisedly—”

then proceeds to say—

“These wretched cowardly Egyptians are, according to this evening’s newspapers, wrecking British and United States business houses.”

Dealing first with the statement about conditions in Russia, I wonder on what authority the hon. member based his statements that a Socialist Government are in control in Russia at the present time and that amenities are non-existent, home life is non-existent, and freedom of speech is non-existent. I could, with just as firm a foundation, and basing my opinion purely on the above statement, say that truth is non-existent in the hon. member’s make-up.

First of all, the Government in Russia are a Communist Government, not a Socialist Government. Secondly, free elections in the democratic sense are not held in Russia. The facts, as far as can be ascertained, are that the country is ruled by a dictatorship of the Left, allegedly as harsh, ruthless and extreme in its restrictions on the freedom of the individual as the dictatorship of the extreme Right was in Germany under the Nazi rule of Hitler. The latter, I would remind the hon. member, started as a German People’s Party (and I would remind him further that it is not without significance that the present Liberal Party started as a Queensland People’s Party) to emerge finally as a Nationalist Socialist Party. For his benefit I emphasise that the word “Socialist” is connected here with the Liberal, anti-Labour, Nazi-Fascist Party—as Shakespeare said, “A rose by any other name—” I make no apologies for dealing with the hon. member personally because I have my suspicions that the seeds of Nazism are present in some of the members of the party opposite.

To digress one moment, I might say that I speak with some authority because I was in Germany for a few weeks in 1936 and I travelled through Belgium to the border town of Aachen, on to Cologne, down the Rhine to Coblenz and Frankfurt, and across Germany to Berlin. The Spanish Civil War had broken out and Hitler was near the zenith of his power. I saw many things that made me think deeply—things that shocked me. I saw the frightened look on the faces of the common people, the swank and the arrogance of the uniformed men, and I thought at the time that it could never happen in Australia. When I saw the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha metaphorically vomiting forth his class-hatred and literally spitting venomous lies about Socialists and Socialism in real Hitler-Goebbels style, my mind went back to those days and I saw again the jack-booted steel-helmeted gangster armed stormtroopers who paraded Berlin during the 1936 Olympic Games, and the only difference in my mind's eye that I could discern between those Nazis and the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha was the lack of an appropriate uniform. By his words, arrogance and demeanour he appears in my opinion to be as much a Nazi as any I saw in Germany.

I would further remind the hon. member that some of the people I saw in Germany swanking through the streets graduated, as he did, from the back-door brawl of the knuckle-duster and the truncheon.

Mr. Morris: I still have the King's uniform.

Mr. MOORES: In reference to his statement about the British Government's being rotten to the core, has the hon. member forgotten the war years when the men who organised Britain's industrial might and who literally worked themselves to death—Ernest Bevin was the John Curtin of England in this respect—were Labour men? He has forgotten that whilst Churchill stumped the country and talked—and we must admit that they were morale-building speeches (Mr. Menzies is the Australian replica of Churchill in this respect)—the real work was being done by Labour men, the same men whom the electorate returned after the war with a record majority, because the British people recognised their worth and because they trusted them to legislate for the promised post-war New Order. The same men, with few exceptions, are the leaders of the British Labour Party today. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha complained about the handling of the Persian and Egyptian incidents and used the upsurge of nationalism in those countries to blame the present Government for wrecking the Empire. Presumably immersed in his capitalistic dogma of maintaining the status quo, he has not realised that we are living in a changing world, that over the centuries nations and systems of government have gone through the eternal cycle of birth, rise, fall and decay, and that these processes are still going on irrespective of the actions of Governments of any political colour, which in the face of inevitable change can at best fight only a delaying action.

I will leave the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha with the thought that although the "Courier-Mail" tentatively placed him in its April Fool's Day Cabinet prior to the last election as Secretary for Public Instruction, I feel sure he will agree with me that if he comes back in 1953 he could easily be relegated, on his 1951 Budget speech, to the bottom of the Liberal class.

I think it would be charitable not to mention the nominal Leader of the Opposition or his contribution to this debate, but as I am not in a charitable mood today, I cannot let it pass without brief comment. It must be patent to members of the Committee that the Leader of the Opposition is a spent force. That was evidenced by his handing over to the hon. member for Coorparoo his duty as the leading speaker in reply to the Budget. The hon. gentleman trotted out the old slogans without bothering even to dress them up in modern garb. He blamed the 40-hour week, Communist sabotage, and the Labour Government for all the economic ills of the country. And the remedy? I ask hon. members to listen to this magnificent effort from an erstwhile worthy political opponent. His remedy was more production. What a brilliant effort! He did not have the courage to advocate straight-out a return to the 44-hour week. He said, "We shall have to work harder and longer than we are working at the present time. That will mean"—and I emphasise these words—"a possible reversion to the 44-hour week." Presumably, if we still do not get increased production we can possibly revert to the 48-hour week, and if we do not succeed then we can possibly revert to the 52-hour week, and so on, to make up the alleged deficiency of the 40-hour week. In blaming Communist sabotage for less production, he did not tell us that strikes have been with us and will continue to be with us, as a medium of protest against unjust treatment, oppression and exploitation, whether their leaders are called agitators, I.W.W.s, militants or Communists, and whilst the working-man still fighting possesses his instinct and a resentment against injustice.

On the subject of more production, I remind the hon. member that under the system advocated by him, that is, unrestricted private enterprise as opposed to a planned economy, we should have a recurrence of gluts and dumpings, and of over-stacked warehouses withholding goods to create artificial shortages for better prices. So that in practice, the "More Production" cry is just another of those shibboleths that will not work.

The trouble with the Leader of the Country Party and his colleagues is that they do not know what they want. On the one hand, they preach the perpetuation of a system that produces periodic crises of inflation and depression, gluts and shortages. They enthrone the material god of money and profit as the goal of ambition. They howl "No Government Interference," when things are running along nicely for their selfish sectional interests, but as soon as the wheel turns they squeal and appeal for Government assistance.

Why, the Leader of the Opposition even blamed the Coms and/or the Government and/or the 40-hour week—he could not make up his mind as to the real cause—for shortages occasioned by climatic extremes such as flood, drought, frost, &c. Was prejudice ever taken to such extremes? It is no wonder that the "Courier-Mail" ignored the speech; maybe for once that newspaper and I agreed. I thought it was the most insipid, illogical and childish speech I had heard in two years in this Assembly.

The provision in the Budget of £3,000,000, in round figures, for subsidies on capital works to be carried out by semi-governmental and other bodies eligible for subsidies poses to me two very cogent questions, first, the extent to which a Government, when subsidising local-authority works, should exercise supervision over the subsidised works to ensure that the money is spent wisely in the direction for which it was granted, and second, within the provisions of the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act, when should a Government use their power of veto, or, alternatively, order an investigation into the use or misuse of public moneys?

I am prompted to raise these questions when viewing the activities of the Brisbane City Council over the years and from a comparison of the amount of subsidy paid by the Government to the Council. Figures supplied to me by the Treasury show that the following subsidy payments have been made by the Government to the Brisbane City Council over a 12-year period—

| | £ |
|-----------------|---------|
| 1939-40 | 60,021 |
| 1940-41 | 65,264 |
| 1941-42 | 121,044 |
| 1942-43 | 48,780 |
| 1943-44 | 19,643 |
| 1944-45 | 46,799 |
| 1945-46 | 92,600 |
| 1946-47 | 122,636 |
| 1947-48 | 290,666 |
| 1948-49 | 322,309 |
| 1949-50 | 373,637 |
| 1950-51 | 710,347 |

The figures show that the subsidy has progressively increased, with the exception of the war years, from £60,021 to £710,347—approximately 12 times the initial figure, and for 1951-52 the amount could easily be in the vicinity of £1,000,000.

The Brisbane City Council, with a budget of approximately £19,000,000 for 1951-52, has requested an inquiry into council finances and has indicated with other local authorities throughout Queensland that with their existing sources of revenue they are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to carry on. Not having first-hand knowledge of councils outside the Greater Brisbane area, I propose to concentrate my remarks in this connection on the Brisbane City Council.

In the first place, I suggest that the Government do something in one of two directions: either agree to an investigation to ascertain whether the financial position of the council warrants further sources of

revenue, or order an inquiry into the claims that the present council is not using the money at its disposal to the best advantage of the ratepayers of Brisbane. There is ample justification for the request. It has continually been stated that the financial position of the present council in relation to its restricted sources of revenue is such that it cannot manage much longer to do other than maintain existing services. Its borrowing programme for this financial year was originally fixed at the astounding figure of £6,000,000—which has been cut to approximately one and a third million pounds on the orders of the Loan Council—against a yearly average of £1,000,000 in the six years of the Labour Council from 1934-40. Interest repayments and fixed commitments take the bulk of ordinary revenue so that if the finances are being handled as prudently and efficiently as claimed, an investigation should be sponsored by the Government to ascertain whether the present position warrants alleviation, and if so, in what form.

If, on the other hand, money is being wasted through sheer neglect and inefficiency the Government should exercise their power and, with a view to tightening up the administration, order an inquiry similar to the inquiry begun in 1938-39. I would suggest as a basis for the investigation that—

(1) The present administration's appeal for further sources of revenue be investigated;

(a) Is the existing revenue sufficient and is it being spent to the best advantage?

(b) Are existing charges out of proportion for the services rendered?

(c) Is too much money being spent on non-essential work such as resumptions in connection with beautification schemes and beautification itself while essential works in relation to health, the basic function of local authority work, are not receiving sufficient attention, water supply and sewerage being top priority in this connection?

If other sources of revenue are necessary to permit the council to expand its services, and if so what form should it take?

The suggestions in this regard have been many and varied. One is a share of the petrol tax, another a share of vehicle registration fees and another a visitors' accommodation tax.

The second line of investigation could embrace whether the city services have been managed carelessly and inefficiently and if so the devising of remedies to ensure tighter control. I would suggest that matters requiring investigation, amongst others, could be—

(1) The cost of resumptions and work at Long Pocket;

(2) The cost of resumptions and work on the Southside river drive;

(3) The cost of resumptions on the Southside Square beautification scheme;

all on the basis of value for money expended;

(4) The illegal action in connection with an advance of £50,468 12s., the cost of 69 vehicles, to Hunter Bros.

I observed in this morning's Press that it is stated that this money was a loan, not an advance. That is only playing with words, as the money was lent to the council at £3 5s. 0d. per cent. and then re-lent to Hunter Bros. at £3 17s. 6d. per cent.

The other line of investigation could be—

(5) The waste of money in connection with street-name signs.

This contract was let in 1948 for approximately £10,000, but the erection has been so haphazard that in some areas new wooden signs erected by the council are alongside the new pipe-and-metal nameplates; thus two signs are on each corner and in some instances the council street sign has a different name to the one erected by the contractors.

(6) Investigation of waste in connection with contracts for bitumen emulsion street-surfacing with river gravel which has been so extravagantly used that the surplus has been washed or worked by traffic into the water channelling to be subsequently swept up and dumped.

(7) The allocation of assistance by way of labour, money and materials to help contractors in difficulties.

The activities of Chesterfield and Jenkins and Partridge & Co. could be investigated in this connection.

and finally—

(8) Investigation into the excessive cost of flat conversions to accommodate overseas technicians who are using the council as a convenience and leaving for other jobs.

There are many other matters that could be investigated and that I could discuss, but I feel it is wise that I should leave them to the Estimates. I strongly urge the Government to sponsor an investigation along the lines I have suggested and what Labour aldermen have exposed and disclosed at recent council meetings.

Mr. KERR (Sherwood) (11.55 a.m.): I cannot say that I listened with interest to the speech of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat; there was one important fact he failed to state and that was the person who wrote the speech for him. We are not supposed to read our speeches, as the hon. member knows very well. He engaged in a tirade of abuse of the Federal Government. In refutation of his statements I point out some of the things the Federal Government have done since they have been in power. They have lifted petrol rationing, budgeted to draw off surplus moneys, restricted capital issues and restricted overdrafts. (Government interjections.) There has been evidence of that in the sales during the last couple of weeks and the hon. member for Nundah has had a benefit in that direction during the last fortnight. They reduced income tax. Taxes today are infinitely less than they were when the Curtin Government were in power. We are engaged in a war and if we are to defend this country we must have our stockpiles. Is not all this drawing off the surplus moneys?

If you make a comparison between the Treasurer's Budget of 1951-52 you will find that he has drawn off 20 per cent. of the Commonwealth Government revenue—he has frozen 20 per cent. of it. What have they done here in this State? Nothing at all. The Federal Government have increased the Federal Aid Roads grant direct to the local authorities, which can spend their money as freely as they like. We recognise the danger that threatens the whole western block against the Communist-controlled world. We are preparing our defence to meet a danger that might arise; and in that respect the Federal Government are doing a very fine job. It is far better to be fully prepared to avert war than to do nothing and invite war.

I am sorry to have to defend the Federal Government against these false accusations; after all, because of their splendid record, they do not really need any defence. They also brought in child endowment for the first child. The hon. member who just resumed his seat would make out that they have done virtually nothing. Other hon. members on that side adopt the same attitude. They tell these atrocious lies for political purposes and they deliberately forget the benefits conferred on the people by the Federal Government.

Mr. Aikens: They reduced the worker to the point of starvation.

Mr. KERR: They have done nothing of the kind. The people of Australia were never better off in the whole of their history.

Mr. Aikens: You have to win the Casket to buy a pound of rump.

Mr. KERR: That is too ridiculous. The Menzies-Fadden Government have increased soldiers' pensions, age pensions, invalid and widows' pensions, and established a health scheme that previous Labour Governments were fiddling with but in which they could not get co-operation from the people or the medical profession.

The Queensland Budget we are debating is the first prepared by the Acting Treasurer, and follows more or less on the lines of previous Budgets. For last year, 1950-51, the surplus was £98,163, as against an estimated deficit for this year of £767,825. I do not blame the Acting Treasurer for this great difference. He was not Acting Treasurer when the deficit for the year just closed was announced. The Government of the day knew very well they were going to get a £2,000,000 grant on account of the coal strike and the increase in the basic wage. They knew that at the time this expected deficit was disclosed, about this time last year. All that money has been received, and still we show a surplus of £98,163. Actually the surplus should be about £1,250,000 in excess of the deficit for last year. Where has that money gone? There has been some profligacy somewhere in Government departments. They seem to have adopted the rule that they must spend whatever they put on the Estimates. The Government must have known that this £2,000,000 was forthcoming. Actually they had more authority for saying

it was going to be available than they had for any of the other figures contained in the Estimates for the year just concluded, and they have misled the Assembly to that extent.

This year they expect a deficit of £36,197. Last week I asked the Acting Treasurer what provision had been made for increases in the basic wage during the current financial year, and he told me that an amount of £40 a year had been provided in the Estimates for public servants and Crown employees, exclusive of employees of the Railway Department. Last year the increases in the basic wage amounted to 3s. That was reimbursed as part of the Federal Government's grant of £2,000,000. This year the Acting Treasurer is providing only £40 on account of public servants and Crown employees, and he admits that he has made no provision whatever for railway employees.

Mr. Walsh: Because they have been provided for already.

Mr. KERR: There is no provision for them.

Mr. Walsh: How do you know?

Mr. KERR: I am fairly sure. Actually, one cannot possibly tell from the Estimates for 1951-52 what the position is, because an aggregate sum is given for receipts and an aggregate sum for expenditure. At least we should be provided with details showing how the expected surplus is made up, but the Acting Treasurer dodges the issue by giving aggregate figures.

Mr. Walsh: I cannot help it if you do not understand it.

Mr. KERR: Nobody could understand the Acting Treasurer's figures. We appreciate that he must be a bit green in his job, but he has some very capable officers behind him and they should be able to see that he does not get too far off the rails. I should say that instead of providing only £40 the Acting Treasurer should make the allowance from £50 to £60 for each person in the Public Service. There are 29,365 public servants and Crown employees, exclusive of railway employees, who number 26,255. Actually, there are in all 55,620 Crown employees and public servants to be provided for. There has been an increase of 2,000 Crown employees in 12 months. If these 55,000 people get an average of another £20 that would make £1,000,000, and therefore I say that the Treasurer's estimated surplus of £39,000 this year looks a bit "dicky." In arriving at the £40, the hon. gentleman averaged the increases over the period in which the different increases took place. I grant him that, but I still say that he is underestimating expenditure, because our leading economists in this State have predicted that 1952-53 will be the greatest inflationary year of all time.

Mr. Walsh: You expect a deficit?

Mr. KERR: I expect a deficit. I qualify that by saying that from the Financial Statement presented one cannot glean from the figures what the railway expenditure will

be. The Treasurer gives the estimated revenue but he does not give the estimated expenditure. The hon. gentleman blushes (Laughter) and things must be pretty bad if he blushes.

Mr. Walsh: Imagine me blushing!

Mr. KERR: It is pretty hard, I will admit. On the other hand the Federal Budget produced by the Commonwealth Treasurer is a striking example of what we should do in these times.

Mr. Walsh: Why apologise for it?

Mr. KERR: I am praising it. I want the hon. gentleman to take a lesson from it. The Treasurer will absorb every penny he can get.

Mr. Walsh: Taxation is more than double what it was under the Chifley Government.

Mr. KERR: He will build up expenditure and bring down revenue and then go to the Loan Council and the Premiers' Conference and say, "This is the sorry story we have to present to you." I would point out to him that the Prime Minister of Australia is not in the kindergarten, nor is the Federal Treasurer. The officers behind the Prime Minister and the Treasurer are pretty shrewd, capable and efficient men, and they could size up our position, as they have their fingers on the pulse of things.

Mr. Walsh: They do not determine policy.

Mr. KERR: No.

Mr. Walsh: The same officers are there as when the Chifley Government was there.

Mr. KERR: Not having provided in railway expenditure for any increase in the basic wage—and the Treasurer has said it himself—can only lead to one thing, namely, that there will be a heavy increase in freights and fares during the current year. That fact stands out and cannot be denied. Of course, I may be anticipating events, because the Treasurer does not tell us a word about that in the Financial Statement.

Mr. Aikens: You will be happy if the State goes broke?

Mr. KERR: Don't be silly! The hon. member is silly enough now, without making a silly statement like that.

It is within the bounds of possibility that there will be a deficit this year, unless rail freights and fares are substantially increased, and it will be as great as the deficit in 1931-32. The Government will be getting £19,000,000 from the Federal Government in taxation reimbursement and other grants, and that is the limit that has been fixed, and the Treasurer cannot expect to get more money from them. The Government, therefore, will be up against a pretty stiff proposition unless they increase railway fares and freights.

Mr. Devries: Who was it who said, "£2,000,000 for 10,000 jobs"?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman is on my deaf side. (Laughter.)

In all humility and seriousness, I ask the Acting Treasurer to give us a detailed list of the estimate of revenue and expenditure for the current year, in the same way as he has done for the year that has just concluded. We should then be in a position to—

Mr. Walsh: Are you saying that we can anticipate a flood or a cyclone?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman has anticipated a cyclone. He expects to have a surplus of £39,000, but he will not give us the details of it. I think this Committee is entitled to that information.

Mr. Aikens: You will not be any the wiser even if you do get it.

Mr. KERR: That may be so, but in all sincerity I suggest that the Acting Treasurer should do as I ask.

During this debate the Acting Treasurer has had a few cracks at various members in respect of interest rates. The interest rate on public loans has been increased for one specific reason, that is, that no Government could hope to obtain money from the public unless they did increase the interest rate.

Mr. Walsh: You explain why!

Mr. KERR: I will explain it to the best of my ability. The present rate of interest had to be struck, otherwise no Government could have obtained money from the public, who could have done better on the Stock Exchange. If the interest rate had not been increased, the States would probably have been short of loan money. The Government cannot have it both ways, and in any case the present rate is not extravagant; it is reasonable and in keeping with the times.

Mr. Walsh: You think the farmers should be charged a higher rate of interest?

Mr. KERR: There will be no necessity to charge the farmer a higher rate of interest. He has already borrowed his money at a much lower rate of interest than that at which the present loan is being floated. If the Government expect to make a profit out of the borrower from the Agricultural Bank as the result of the increase in the rate of interest, more shame on them! That money has already been borrowed at a fixed rate, and the Government are not entitled to charge an increased rate. There would be no justification whatever for doing such a thing.

Another reason for the increase in the interest rate is that as a rule only people with a small amount of capital are investing in Commonwealth loans. Big companies go outside the Commonwealth-loan field today when they are investing any money; they go into the industrial-share field, where they can get a much better return on their money. That has had some bearing on the amounts that have been subscribed to public loans. The Acting Treasurer himself has referred to the Railway Department as a business undertaking, but I shall have something more to say

about that later on. The increase in interest rates for small investors is justified from that angle alone, because they have to endure the increased cost of living and anything that they can get in the way of an increased payment for the use of their money is justified.

Mr. Walsh: The next loan will be fully subscribed and over-subscribed. The financial sabotage of the last loan will be very evident.

Mr. KERR: The interest rate on the next loan might be greater.

Mr. Walsh: No, it will be the same rate.

Mr. KERR: My personal view is that if a bank charges say, 6 per cent. people will still borrow money from the banks. The cost of all interest rates must eventually disclose itself in the cost structure and an increase in interest rates on Commonwealth loans or public money for governmental purposes is justified but I cannot see that there is any justification for an increase in the rate simply to draw off surplus money. If I borrowed £5,000 from my bank in the past and I wanted £4,500 today I could still go to the bank and get it, except that the rate might be higher. Eventually the extra cost goes into the cost structure, which becomes inflationary. That is my personal view. We have seen inflation in this country in the past three or four years and we have tried all sorts of things, including price-control. The people would not have a unified price-control by the Federal Government.

Mr. Aikens: They would now if they had a chance to vote for it.

Mr. KERR: Whether they would or would not I am not prepared to say. There may be something in what the hon. member says. I have not discussed this matter in any shape or form and I express now only my own personal opinion. The position will have to be stabilised sooner or later in order that the people may know where they stand. Today we have a basic wage of about £10 a week and if the cost of living should rise by £2 a week in the ensuing 12 months the basic wage will go up to about £12 and the cost will have to be absorbed in the price structure. That will not be to the advantage of the working man, although he is better off today than he has ever been. It is my personal opinion that we must stabilise things now before they get worse and the only way to do it is by a system of unified control of some sort. I should say, abolish all State price-fixing and replace it with a Commonwealth judicial price tribunal, and then, taking things item by item, it will be feasible to have price-control. Prices must be pegged and wages also should be pegged. I know that if I were to put the suggestion to my electors they would say, "Kerr, your suggestion is right; we are right behind you."

Mr. Walsh: Peg wages and peg prices?

Mr. KERR: You cannot do the one without the other and personally I would fight any attempt to peg wages and not peg prices. That would not be equitable.

One of the greatest tragedies of our economic life has been the establishment of the 40-hour week. That, too, is my personal view. It is affecting our internal economy to an extent that it has been a major influence in the inflation to which we are subjected today. We must all realise the danger confronting the western bloc of nations. We see week by week some new problem breaking out, which demands that we should steel ourselves in order to save what there is left of the British Empire. It is up to every citizen who appreciates the fact to make some sacrifice of the social advantages which have been won over the last 10 years and during the last two wars and face up to them in a manly and British way.

Mr. Aikens: You want only the workers to make a sacrifice.

Mr. KERR: I do not want to do anything of the kind; I want the sacrifice to be evenly spread. There is a way to do it, if we had the will to do it.

The state of affairs in the liquor trade has been raised at different times in this Chamber. Some hon. members opposite have spoken very freely on this matter and quite a lot of things they have said contain a great deal of merit. I want to make a comparison between those who own the freehold of hotels with the owners of city buildings and the poor humble owner of a cottage for which he gets a little rent. There is no restriction by way of the Fair Rents Court on what breweries charge their hotel tenants in the matter of rent. The sky is the limit. Yet the owner of a city building must go to the Fair Rents Court for any increase in rent to his tenant and in some cases his investment returns are, if he is lucky, three to four per cent. Then take the landlord, the owner of a small cottage, who also has to go to the Fair Rents Court and is restricted by legislation as to what his income shall be. There is no restriction on the rent of a brewery-owned hotel. None at all. As a licensee's sales go up, up goes the rent, and there is nothing to stop it. I ask: is that right and fair? I will denounce it from the treetops.

Mr. Walsh: How many hotels are owned by the breweries?

Mr. KERR: Quite a number.

Mr. Walsh: How many?

Mr. KERR: Several hundreds.

If you apply the theory that the rent must be increased as the turnover increases, what about all these people who occupy offices in the city? Is their rent in accordance with their income?

Mr. Walsh: Why didn't your Government amend the Act?

Mr. KERR: You have been in office for 30 years and you passed the Act.

Mr. Walsh: When your Government were in office you did nothing about it.

Mr. KERR: I do not want to be sidetracked by the Acting Treasurer.

If it is fair to allow the breweries to be the sole arbiters of the rent charged for hotels they own, it should be equally fair for the small landlord to be the sole arbiter of the rent of his cottage. Why this discrimination? If a secret ballot was taken in this Chamber or of the people of Queensland, it would be found that the majority would be in favour of what I am contending and the Labour Party would for ever hang its head in shame.

It seems extraordinary to me that these things go on. I was caught on the hop today, but I have said all I wanted to say as forcibly as I could in all sincerity, and at the dictates of my conscience.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (12.26 p.m.): The Financial Statement is a document in which we find much to interest us. The financial position of the State is set out clearly and there is much interesting detail of the Government's activities over the past 12 months.

It is pleasing to note that there was a surplus of £98,163, as against an estimated deficit of £767,825. This is the 12th surplus in the past 13 years, which reflects credit on the Government. While we are pleased at the surplus, we must be concerned with the reasons why we have shown a surplus. Were it not for the £2,000,000 grant the estimated deficit would have been a reality but increasing expenditure in all forms of activity demands that the Government must have a reallocation of funds from the Commonwealth. All the States are dependent on the Commonwealth allocation to meet their financial commitments, and the increasing costs to the State demand a greater grant. The amount received by Queensland by way of the income-tax reimbursements, States grants, and the special grant, amounted to over £14,000,000, 44 per cent. of the total moneys available to the Treasurer of the State. If this State is to carry on, and if we are to meet our financial commitments in regard to work already in hand and work we intend to carry out, the State must receive a greater amount from the Commonwealth. The Treasurer indicates this need in his Budget.

Under the Uniform Taxation Scheme we know the States have to go cap in hand to the Federal authorities for moneys to carry on their activities. With the ever-increasing costs of the States, it is essential that a new approach be made to the arrangement between the States and the Commonwealth for the allocation of funds.

On the point of increasing costs, I might mention two departments that are essential to the welfare of the people of this State and whose expenditures have risen considerably. For instance, the Department of Health and Home Affairs shows an increase of £1,085,000, from £6,730,000 to £7,815,000. The Department of Public Instruction is one that should be expanded to the fullest because

it can provide a great service for the rising generation and do much to shape the citizen of the future. Expenditure in the Department of Public Instruction was £183,000 in excess of that for the previous year, the amounts expended being £4,693,000 in 1949-50 and £4,876,000 in 1950-51.

I should like to refer briefly now to defence expenditure. In the Acting Treasurer's Financial Statement we find the following—

“On this occasion last year, the Acting Premier, as Treasurer, made reference to the disturbed international situation. Since that time, the position can be said to have further deteriorated to such an extent as to seriously affect the continuity of the progressive development of the State's resources. The generally accepted necessity of expediting the defence requirements, it will be agreed, can have a retarding effect on normal development. Expenditure on defence requirements also produces an inflationary pressure on the economy because of the fact that such expenditure increases incomes whilst producing the quantity of goods and services on which incomes can be spent.”

Hon. members will remember that on this question the Leader of the Opposition tried to intimidate hon. members on this side. I know he would have liked some hon. member of the Government to interject and say, “We do not believe in defence and we oppose any expenditure on the defence of the country.” It is just so much waste of time for hon. members opposite to try to intimidate hon. members on this side on this question because no political party has a greater recognition than the Australian Labour Party of the need for defending this country. Again, any Government who spend money on defence cannot help meeting with the approval of the Australian people.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Do you agree with the hon. member for Windsor on national service?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, but I do not propose debating that now.

It is interesting to note that while the present Commonwealth Government have increased taxation, using the need for defence as an excuse, our sister Dominion of New Zealand has taken the opposite course. There the defence expenditure has been increased and taxation has been reduced. The present Commonwealth Government's approach to the problem is lopsided. On the one hand, the Menzies-Fadden Government are bellowing that defence is essential, and we agree but then they say that one means of controlling the inflationary spiral is to increase production. Now, we find that while they use the defence cry as a means of impoverishing the people by increasing taxation, at the same time they are interfering with the production of the Commonwealth by taking men out of essential industries.

This question of defence must be approached from the wide, national point of view. No Government would be justified in upsetting

the balanced economy of a State purely for the purposes of defence. A large country like Australia might be 25 or 30 years—

Mr. Sparkes: Do you not think it should be defended?

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course I do. I feel just as much anxiety over our defence problems as does the hon. member for Aubigny. I think we have responsibilities, but I cannot see that the Federal Government are doing the right thing by taxing the people of Australia to the extreme because of their defence programme and interfering with the economy of the country in the matter of production. They say that we have responsibilities to the Old Country. We as Australians are expected to provide foodstuffs that England so badly needs. On the one hand the Commonwealth Government say that we should increase our production, and on the other we are being taxed because production has fallen. What is the real effect of the defence programme that the Commonwealth Government are putting into operation? Has it not a vital effect on the production of this country?

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Do you not think the defence programme is necessary?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, I think a defence programme is necessary, but why have the Commonwealth Government committed themselves to such a definite defence programme, knowing that they have no possibility of putting it into effect without interfering with the economy of this country. It is ridiculous to think that that Government could possibly spend this huge sum of money set aside for defence requirements without interfering with the economy of the country. They have not looked at our defence requirements in true perspective. How can you say it is real defence if you are going to weaken the country by taking men out of industry and production to give them two or three months' military training? I remind hon. members that in the 1914-18 war, in which Australia was called upon to play her part, we had little or no military training in operation at the time, but who can say that Australians were lacking in fighting ability? On the contrary, it can be said that the Australians who took part in that war were the equal of any other military men from any other nation. They had no military training. That shows the fallacy of the Government's defence programme. It cannot be denied that the thousands who went to the 1914-18 war had little or no previous military training. They did not fall down on the job. It was said that the Australian was the greatest soldier on the battlefields of France. When Australia was drawn into war and Australian manhood were expected to shoulder rifles, they did so without military training. I ask: in the times we are passing through at present, when every country is requiring increased production, how can the Commonwealth Government justify an interference in the production fields of this country to give men two or three months' military training? The benefit would be lost to them in another two or three months. The Commonwealth Government cannot at present

justify their huge taxation increase on the grounds of defence and at the same time let our production dwindle. We have to approach the question of defence—and the Commonwealth Government will have to do it—from another angle. It is hard to understand why we in Australia have to bear this huge defence expenditure when a sister Dominion can reduce her taxation and nevertheless increase her defence measures. How can we be true to the Mother Country if we interfere with production in Australia and so deny her foodstuffs that are essential to her requirements?

For every man who is taken from the field or the factory for the purpose of military training, this country's production must be reduced accordingly. I believe that the Federal Government have panicked badly in their attitude towards defence. They have panicked to such an extent that they do not know where they are going. Willy-nilly, they are offering tempting wages to members of the defence forces in order to get them away from industry. As a member of the Australian Labour Party, no-one has a greater realisation than I of the defence requirements of this country, but on the actions of the present Federal Government, one would think that Australia was going to be embroiled overnight in a war. I know that the Menzies-Fadden Government, being the warmongers they are, together with the people whom they represent, are praying for war, because it is from wars that those people garner their huge profits. We had experience of that during the last two world wars, when thousands of men became wealthy overnight because they exploited the war effort of this country. We still have those people in our midst—people who support the Menzies-Fadden Government on the question of war—who would love to see another war and would love to see the world thrown into another blood-bath so that they would be in a position to accumulate more wealth. Even America, democratic though she is, is becoming sound economically as the result of her war effort. Prior to the Korean war there were 6,000,000 unemployed in America, but as soon as the Korean war started, America was placed on a semi-war footing, with the result that she now has no unemployed at all. Many men in America are making a lot of money out of the Korean war.

If we allow the Commonwealth Government to interfere with the economy of this country as they are doing by their attitude towards defence, we shall be worse off, in the final analysis, than we are today. I believe that the Commonwealth Government are not tackling the defence of this country properly. On the contrary, they have used our defence requirements only as a means of placing further burdens on the people by means of increased taxation.

Many members of this Chamber have used this debate to attack the Federal Government, and I believe this is a good opportunity for me to make some pertinent comments on the Menzies-Fadden Administration. As you know, Mr. Farrell, the Menzies-

Fadden Government were returned on false promises. Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden promised the people the world if they were returned to power, but what have they given the people? The people of Australia are only just beginning to realise—and in the next few years they will realise fully—what a tragic mistake they made by returning the Menzies-Fadden Government to power. We are now experiencing the effects of the present inflationary spiral that has resulted from the inactivity of the Menzies-Fadden Government. Not one thing have they done to try to curb the inflationary spiral that is destroying the very foundation upon which this democracy rests.

Mr. Pizzey interjected.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is no use the hon. member for Isis trying to place the responsibility on anyone else. It rests on one political party and one political party only, that is, the present Federal Government. What do the Menzies-Fadden Government propose to do? That is what the people of Australia are wondering. Is this inflationary spiral to be allowed to continue indefinitely? It is increasing at such an alarming rate that our whole economy is becoming affected. As an example, only two days ago an increase was announced in the basic wage and another one is forecast in the near future. Can that be allowed to go on? Can this inflationary spiral be allowed to continue, with big increases in the basic wage every few months? Where is it to end? One person has already said that it will end in 1952. And what then? What will happen in 1952? Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden cannot tell you, but I will tell you what will happen. I do not claim to have any great store of political or financial prescience but anyone with common sense can tell you that a depression follows an inflationary spiral. The Menzies-Fadden Government have shut their eyes to such a happening because they have no horrors of a depression. When a depression comes the man with £1,000 in his pocket is not affected to the same extent as a man with £100 and so Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden and the financial institutions they represent are not concerned about a depression. They should be concerned, as we are concerned, at this inflationary spiral, which is undermining the economic stability of our country.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member has an opportunity of getting up and telling the Chamber what he thinks and while I appreciate his high purpose in trying to help me I can tell him that I do not want his help. I am trying to tell the Chamber that the Menzies-Fadden Government should do something about the inflationary spiral, otherwise we shall have an unbalanced economy. An increase in taxation is not a solution of the difficulty. The Acting Premier of this State made some very sound suggestions for its solution in the paper today and they should be carried out because unless we have effective control of prices and effective wage-pegging, and what is most important of all,

control of exorbitant profits, the present difficulties will continue. Despite the high cost of living, and the big increases in the basic wage, all commercial and financial institutions in the country are making profits much above the pre-war level.

Let us for a moment consider the effect of the high basic wage on the commercial houses. I say positively that not one commercial house, not one employer in the State, would be concerned if the basic wage went to £25 a week.

Mr. Ewan: But the primary producer would.

Mr. GRAHAM: He would not. Every increase in the basic wage is passed on to the consuming public. We have positive proof of that. Therefore it matters not to the employer if the basic wage is as high as £25 a week but it matters a great deal to the employee, to the employee on the basic wage and subject to the basic wage adjustments, and to every wages man in industry, because every increase lessens his spending capacity because it tends towards a decline in the value of the Australian £1. That is something that Mr. Menzies said he would rectify but has made no attempt to rectify. The Australian £1 has now declined to half its face value, so that the man on the basic wage or the average man in industry has spending power equivalent to only half the amount of his actual wages. Under the price-fixation system every employer is allowed to pass on every increase in the cost of production and so every increase in wages is passed on to the cost of the goods.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

Mr. GRAHAM: Will the hon. member for Aubigny please shut up, or I shall have to appeal to you, Mr. Clark. I know that it is the purpose of the hon. member to try to get me off my bike and, to some extent, he may succeed. However, I come back to my point.

Every increase in the basic wage is felt by the employee only, not by the employer who is allowed and is able to pass on the increase. Every commercial house passes on the increase in the sale of its commodities, whether they are clothing, boots or hats and the housewife and every individual must pay that increase. Today we see that the price of bread has increased by $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per 2-lb. loaf. Why? Because of the increase in the basic wage. If the employer has to pay the increased basic wage to his employee he must increase the price of his commodity correspondingly. I return to my original point that despite all increases in the basic wage and the inflationary spiral, more profits are being made today than previously. Every commercial house is showing a greater return on its financial transactions. Take T. C. Beirne & Co. Ltd., or any other softgoods firm, or any banking institution and show me one that has shown a loss.

Mr. Morris: What about poultrymen?

Mr. GRAHAM: You know that if it were not for the drought, that if wheat production in Queensland was normal, poultrymen would be paying 7s. 9d. a bushel for wheat instead of 16s. 9d. The hon. member is using that argument to cloud the issue. Do not get away from the point, that until we have some form of price-control, and control of profits and wage-pegging, the inflationary spiral must continue.

It is significant that every State Government have made an earnest and direct appeal to the Commonwealth on price-control. They cannot all be wrong. An earnest appeal from every State, irrespective of political colour, was made to the Federal Government on price-control. The States have proved by experience that State price-control is ineffective and that the only effective price-control is that which is administered by the Commonwealth Government. Until the Menzies-Fadden Government show that they are big enough to approach this inflationary problem from the right angle we shall see the evil growing and growing until a crisis is reached, and there will then follow what has followed every inflation, a period of deflation. Many hon. members opposite are shareholders in such firms as McWhirters, Allan and Starks, Finney Isles & Co., who are all holding sales to convert their present stocks. Why? It is very evident that they fear what is going to happen. Many firms have built up their stocks in the last few years and because of high Federal taxation and the fear that the workers will not have the money to make their usual purchases and they will be left with thousands and thousands of pounds of stock on their hands, they are holding sales to convert their stocks into £ s. d. As sure as the sun rises in the morning, we in Australia are heading for the worst depression we have ever had, because of the ineffective control of the economic position by the Federal Government. Until that Government attack the present spiralling inflationary tendency courageously the economic position will remain unsettled.

As I said previously, the people of Australia will have years in which to realise the great mistake they made in returning the Menzies-Fadden Government. Sir Arthur Fadden said the Budget was not very pleasant, but I do not think anybody in Australia got a greater shock than Sir Arthur Fadden; he got such a shock that he collapsed. He has awakened to the fact that he has done something he should not have done. His Budget will not solve the present unstable economy that we are faced with. Even the people who support the Menzies-Fadden Government have said that they have done wrong. I also believe he has done wrong.

An Opposition Member: What is your solution?

Mr. GRAHAM: I have told the hon. member my solution. The Federal Government should face the position with courage and do the things that are necessary to stop this inflationary spiral, instead of merely playing with it. Every financial institution

and every economist, with the exception of Copland—has said that increasing taxation is not the solution. I could quote authorities from other countries who have said the same thing. Increased taxation has a retarding effect on the incentive of the people. The hon. member for Aubigny, who is engaged in primary industry, has curtailed production because of high taxation. It applies equally to the employer as to the employee. We had the experience in Queensland that the employee refused to work overtime because he did not see why he should work excessive hours and have the greater part of the extra money taken from him in higher taxation. (Opposition interjections.) It has been proved time and time again that high taxation destroys incentive and if there was ever a time when the people needed incentive, it is now. If there was ever a time when we should strive to increase production and step up our financial resources, it is now. With world conditions as they are, we are sitting on the top of a powder bomb. If war occurred, we should want fully-trained men and we should need food. (Opposition interjections).

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Clark): I regard some of these interjections as interruptions; and the hon. member for Aubigny is one of the worst offenders. I hope I shall not have occasion to call him to order again.

Mr. GRAHAM: If ever there was a time when we should be looking to our production, it is now. How can we increase incentive when we have a Commonwealth Budget that is interfering with the economy of the States—a Budget that was brought down with the specific intention of further impoverishing the useful people of this community? The Federal Budget is not honest because it has attacked the wage-earners. Apart from direct taxation, we are being fleeced by indirect taxation. The Menzies-Fadden Government, who have no sympathy with the working-class, have deliberately set themselves out to take as many pennies out of the pockets of the workers as possible. With that object in view they have taxed razor blades, baby powder, and ice-cream. Is there no other way by which the Government can get money than taxing these things?

I do not think it needs much from me to convince the people of Queensland, indeed of Australia, that the Labour Party has been their salvation during their occupancy of the Treasury benches over the last 50 years and it ill becomes hon. members opposite to attempt to discredit the Labour Movement, in either Queensland or the Commonwealth. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha and others of the Opposition have endeavoured to discredit Labour's control of government in Queensland, finding great joy in branding us as a socialistic party; but I do not think the Labour Party has ever denied that suggestion, because our policy is designed to uplift humanity. We have had control of government in Queensland for many years, despite the attacks made upon us by the Opposition. Despite the scurrilous statements made by

hon. members opposite, we still have the support of the people. For many years we have proved that we are keen to uplift the human race, and have shown that our policy is designed to do that. By the implementation of that policy we have given the people something that makes life worth living.

The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha said that England was never worse off than she has been under a Labour Government, but he and others like him have very short memories when they make that assertion, because the study of ancient history discloses just how little was accomplished under the old Tory regime in England. It was not until the Labour Party became a strong political force that there was any uplifting of the conditions of the people in Australia or of England. If political control of England was ever lost to the Labour Party we should soon see a deterioration in the living standards of its people, because the policy of the anti-Labour forces is to impoverish the people. Thank God, the wage-earner has found in the Labour Party a political force that will look after his interests, much to the discomfort of the anti-Labour forces. It ill becomes the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, who I do not doubt comes from a working-class family, to attack the Labour Government in the way he has done. I remind him of such men as Andrew Fisher, T. J. Ryan, Forgan Smith, and the present leader of our Government, the Hon. E. M. Hanlon. It cannot be said that those men have not done a great deal for humanity. The Labour Party can stand up and take all the kicks thrown at it by the anti-labour forces, because we, its members, know that our actions in the past and our future intentions are calculated to uplift the human race. And whilst we have men who subscribe to the policy of the party and whilst there are people in Australia who support the party the people have little to fear. That cannot be said of anti-Labour forces. Through the years prior to the advent of Labour in the Federal sphere anti-Labour forces had ample opportunity of doing something to uplift the human race, but, as in the Old Country, they exploited the working class down through the years.

We in Queensland have made great progress under Labour and whilst we do not live in the past we must not forget that we must look to the future. We in Queensland have a great State and with proper development can go on to greater things. The Labour Party is working towards that end and has laid down a policy the implementation of which must improve this State.

One might ask: what can we do to improve this State? As a northern member I am particularly interested in that part of the State. We have seen great development take place in southern Queensland and I may be permitted to say that we have seen too much development in the South compared with the North. Not that we do not desire the South to develop, but we also desire to see the North of this State develop. The Government are not always to blame. One of the causes for the non-development of the North of Queensland is lack of population; the lack of industrial

development in that part of Queensland can be laid at the door of private enterprise. Even today people are coming to Brisbane to live—to the southern part of the State—because of the opportunities provided by private enterprise. Industries have been established down here and many people are coming from the North to live in Brisbane because of the greater opportunities of employment. If we are to develop North Queensland we must look for new industries to establish up there.

What can we do to develop the industrial possibilities of the North? The sugar industry has been the predominant one in North Queensland and I want to say that I am concerned at a finding of the recent Royal Commission that inquired into the ramifications of the sugar industry, to the effect that little or no development can take place in the industry for many years. The commission said that no new mill should be built in North Queensland until 1975; in other words, for 16 or 17 years the industry has to remain more or less static. Whilst the commission might have good grounds for coming to that decision we should look towards the opening up or the creation of new industries in North Queensland.

I have said in this Chamber—and so have other hon. members—that Blair Athol offers great possibilities. I do not think much new ground can be broken in regard to that coal deposit, because the possibilities of Blair Athol are well known to both this and the Federal Government. However, I believe that something will have to be done very soon about the development of Blair Athol. I know that it will not be possible in the immediate future to build a railway line direct from Blair Athol to the coast, but this Government and the Commonwealth Government should co-operate immediately in laying down some definite policy for the future development of the field. Even if a scheme was agreed upon to-day, it would take at least five or six years to build a rail connection direct to the coast. I believe that the time will arrive when such a rail connection will have to be built, because without it Blair Athol cannot be developed properly. This Government are at present providing better facilities for the transporting of Blair Athol coal by strengthening the existing railway line from Rockhampton, but in order that Blair Athol's potentialities may be developed to the full, a direct rail connection with the coast will eventually have to be built. The coal deposits at Blair Athol are sufficient to provide for many years, not only Queensland's requirements but those of other countries, if direct access is built to the coast. I appeal both to my own Government and to the Commonwealth Government to take some immediate steps to lay down a definite policy for the development of Blair Athol. As I have just said, even if work under a definite scheme was begun immediately, it would take many years to build a railway line from Blair Athol to the coast.

I suppose it will be thought by hon. members that I am pressing a claim for Mackay in this regard, and as a matter of fact I

do not think any more suitable place than Mackay for a port for Blair Athol could be found. However, I will leave that matter to the experts to decide. If Blair Athol is to be included in the plans for the defence of this country, some immediate steps will have to be taken to exploit its coal deposits so that at least some progress can be made within the next few years.

In addition to Blair Athol itself, some consideration must be given to the potentialities of the country that lies between it and Mackay. If coal was the only potentiality of the area, we might wonder at some hesitancy on the part of any Government, but between Mackay and Blair Athol lies country that, in addition to having huge timber and mineral resources, is eminently suitable for closer settlement. If a rail connection between Mackay and Blair Athol was built, an immense closer-settlement scheme could be implemented that would settle thousands of migrants in that part of the State.

When we are considering such things as this, we must remember that the sugar industry, which at present is by far the largest industry in North Queensland, employs thousands of men, but for only three or four months of the year. As soon as the crushing season is finished, vast numbers of men are thrown on to the labour market, and under the present system each of them becomes the recipient of Social Service benefits, which are a direct charge on the Commonwealth Government. Would it not be much better to bring about closer settlement in the North and thus give those men another avenue of employment? As I have said, the sugar industry is the greatest industry in North Queensland, but in the past few years, as I am sure the members for Mulgrave and Mirani will agree, the crushing season has been getting shorter and shorter, as the result of mechanisation and improved efficiency.

Mr. Watson: That is not true.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member should know that even this year some of the mills crushed for only 14 weeks.

Mr. Watson: There is no unemployment in the sugar industry today.

Mr. GRAHAM: In Mackay, as soon as the mills cease crushing, upwards of 700 men go onto the Social Service benefit. Ask the hon. member for Mirani whether that is not so. The same is true of the other sugar areas of the State. We shall have to develop new industries in the North to absorb these purely seasonal workers. They do not want Social Service benefits; they only want continuity of employment.

Mr. Watson: They don't want work.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not going to accept that statement from the hon. member either. As soon as a mill has no further use for them they become unemployed. Do not tell me that the men in the sugar industry want work for only half the year.

Mr. Watson: They do not want the work for fear of having to pay extra taxation.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member talks with his tongue in his cheek. How can he justify higher taxation and then say that the men do not want continuity of work for fear of paying high taxation? Can anyone tell me that a man wants to rear a family of two or three children on the Social Service hand-out? There are hundreds of men in Mackay who would be glad of the opportunity of a job as soon as the mills ceased crushing. Unless something is done to establish new industries in the North the present difficulty will continue. There is plenty of room for the development and expansion of new industries and who is going to do it?

Mr. Watson: Not the Government.

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course not the Government, because as soon as the Government step in to do things then it is State enterprise or Socialism. Private enterprise has had the opportunity of developing the North. We have had a decline in population in both the North and the West. Why? It is only because of the lack of industries, and insecurity consequent upon the lack of employment, and so the people have gone away. In the last two or three years hundreds of sons of sugar farmers have entered the medical, dental and other professions; very few have remained in the sugar industry. The sugar farmer has done so well for himself that he is able to educate his son to become a doctor or a dentist, or join some other profession. The cane-growers have not made sugar farmers of them. Why should not some of them have remained in the industry?

There is an obligation on this and every other Government to do something for the North, to develop the North. The population in the North and the West will decline unless something is done to develop and expand industries there. Private enterprise has a responsibility in this connection too. It cannot continue to fall down on the job as it has done for years.

Mr. Evans: The Government have been in power for over 20 years and it is time they started to do something.

Mr. GRAHAM: We had to give private enterprise the opportunity of trying to do something. The State Government brought in State enterprise. That was a definite attempt by the Government to do something. Even if it failed, to a certain extent it showed that the Labour Party was prepared to do something, which private enterprise today is not. If, in the final analysis, we find that Northern Queensland, as time goes on, is becoming devoid of population and industry because of the lack of private enterprise, we can "pass the buck" back to private enterprise for having failed to accept its obligations. There is a responsibility and there is a great opportunity for private enterprise in and around Mackay by the opening up of the Blair Athol and Nebo coalfields. The sooner we start that work, the better it will be for Queensland and Australia as a whole. It is wrong to see such a valuable asset more or less undeveloped, as it is, and not being utilised.

My time is about expired, but I should like to conclude on a particular note.

Mr. Sparkes: Lay off the Government.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not going to lay off my Government, for I am very proud of the fact—not only because I am a member of the Government but also as a citizen of this State—that we have had such a Government in power for years. It is a sore point with hon. members opposite that we are the Government and that we have the confidence of the people. We can, with confidence, go to the people on our achievements, and say, "That is what we have done" and come back again as a Government. That is a sore point with hon. members opposite, who have occupied the Opposition benches for so many years, and who will stay there a little longer. While the Government continue to do for this State as they have done and as they are continuing to do, we need have no fear of not being returned to power.

The Treasurer has aptly summarised the principal features of the Budget in his concluding paragraph in which he says—

"The Budget for the past year was balanced."

That has been a feature of Labour Budgets—

"There is every prospect of budgetary equilibrium being attained this year"—

That is something that the people of Queensland can confidently look forward to—

"The State finances are suffering from inequitable distribution of Commonwealth grants."

That is a factor which cannot be denied by the Opposition—

"A record number of houses was completed last year. This year will see further substantial relief in the housing shortage.

"The mileage of roads, main, developmental and other roads, increased last year by 308 and will be still greater this year.

"The regional electricity board have already expended £11,600,000 of a £25,000,000 programme."

And so the Budget goes on showing what has been accomplished, and the Acting Treasurer finally states—

"The result achieved and the funds at the disposal of the Government for a continuation of its policies and purposes give much cause for satisfaction and I feel confident that the Budget which I have outlined to you will in a large measure contribute to the development of the State and the wellbeing of its people."

I heartily concur with those sentiments.

Mr. COBURN (Burdakin) (2.39 p.m.): A little over 30 years ago the Government of this State appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the possibilities of establishing iron and steel works at Bowen. The report of that commission was very favourable indeed to the project, nevertheless Bowen is still without its iron and steel works. Since that time a series of inspections have been made and voluminous reports have been furnished but the only fact accomplished was

the recording of the importance of establishing such an industry. This afternoon I hope to place before the Chamber data that will not only arouse the interests of hon. members but will attract the attention of those industrialists who might be attracted to this area and bring about the development that Bowen could very well have. When I speak of Bowen, I mean the zone that includes Proserpine, Bowen, Collinsville and Scottville. They form a unit of industrial development, than which no place in Queensland outside the metropolis has better prospects. It is situated in a very bountifully endowed area, whether viewed from the point of view of mineral wealth or agricultural resources. The soil in Bowen includes grey-clay alluvial flats and sandy loam adjacent to the Don River, covering 20,000 acres. Most of the hinterland of Bowen which extends about 50 miles inland, and embraces Scottville and Collinsville, is undulating cattle-grazing land.

Bowen farms have produced between 35 and 40 per cent. of the total Queensland crop of tomatoes and between 75 and 80 per cent. of Queensland's tomato exports. There are other crops, including the famous Bowen mangoes, which many members have sampled, so that they know how palatable they are. Tobacco has yet not assumed very great proportions but it has aroused the interests of farmers in that area, and it is hoped that in the near future that there will be a big extension of that crop.

The climatic conditions at Bowen would be attractive to the working people. The annual average maximum temperature is 83 degrees F. and the annual mean minimum temperature 67 degrees F. The average rainfall is 40 inches, and the climate generally, especially on the coastal area and in Bowen, is very good indeed. The prevailing winds are northerly, and help to temper the heat of summer, and provide the relief that is desirable in a warm climate. In winter-time the climate could not be excelled.

The water supply of any area that seeks to develop its heavy industry must be adequate and I feel constrained to touch briefly on this aspect of potential development in Bowen. The Bowen Water Authority obtains a water supply by means of spear pump from the sand beds of the Don River, three miles away. This is the largest single water spear in Queensland. It consists of a steel pipe 4 feet in diameter and goes to a depth of 31 feet into the sand. The last 6 feet of the pipe is slotted and louvred and contains an inner pipe electrically controlled by a remote control pump. The water table ranges from 6 feet to 8 feet below the sand, and in the dry times about 22 feet of water-logged sands are tapped by the spear which is able to draw 460,000 gallons a day. The storage capacity is 270,000 gallons. With the present installation and storage capacity, industry could be supplied throughout a normal season with 300,000 to 400,000 gallons a day. If more water is needed additional pumping plant and storage would be required. The present capacity is about 30,000 gallons an hour.

A survey made by a Brisbane firm of consulting engineers two years ago indicated that the total availability of water from the Don River and adjacent streams would be about 2,500,000 gallons a day, made up from these areas—

| | gallons. |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Don River | 800,000 |
| Inverdoona | 700,000 |
| Three Delta Areas | 745,000 |
| Euri Creek | 200,000 |

The Local Government Department in Brisbane estimates that about 1,000,000 gallons of water would be available from the Don River sources. Several of the places I have mentioned are farming areas and therefore would require water for irrigation. This estimate of 1,000,000 gallons is reserved entirely for industrial purposes because in arriving at it the experts have taken into consideration requirements for both domestic use and irrigation. The water is soft and palatable and has been declared to be chemically suitable for human consumption.

Bowen is very well served with communications also. It has a good aerodrome, conveniently situated, and it has a daily service by A.N.A. from Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. There is also a flying-boat base, which was used by the B.O.A.C. flying boats but it is now out of commission, although it could be used at any time.

Bowen is well served by railways, being on the North Coast line—perhaps it is better known as the Sunshine Route—and is thereby connected with all important centres, both north and south. A branch line runs to Collinsville and is used for coal haulage and passenger traffic.

Although our roads are formed, they are perhaps not so good as we should like them to be, but I am pleased to say that they are improving. The town of Bowen is connected with Mackay, Townsville, and Collinsville, by what might be termed third-class roads which in the wet season are absolutely impassable. Ten bridges are being constructed between Bowen and Home Hill at present, the one over the Don River being a very imposing structure estimated to cost in the vicinity of £30,000.

I feel it more or less redundant to sing the praises of Bowen as a harbour because it is considered by all good judges to be one of the best on the Queensland coast. The bay is landlocked and it is an all-weather port with very good approaches. The present depth of the channel and the basin is 20 ft. It is now being dredged to a depth of 25 ft. l.w.s.t., the main spring tide being from 8 to 10 ft. and the neap tide from 4 to 8 ft. The present depth of water, all reckoned at l.w.s.t. is—

| | Feet. |
|----------------|-------|
| No. 1 berth .. | 20 |
| No. 2 berth .. | 25 |
| No. 3 berth .. | 23½ |
| No. 4 berth .. | 23 |

All depths are off wharf at 15 ft. Berths 1, 3 and 4 are being dredged to 36 ft. and berth No. 2 to 28 ft.

At Bowen there is a wooden pier of 666 ft. of wharfage on either side with a width of 70 ft. The jetty has sheds with a total floor space of 10,500 square feet and is capable of providing storage for 1,950 tons of sugar.

The concrete pier has 500 ft. of wharfage on either side. It is served with four lines of railway tracks. A travelling bridge transported type of electric crane spans the 80 ft. pier. This crane is capable of coaling or bunkering vessels at the rate of 75 tons an hour on either side. Unfortunately, there are no installations for the loading or unloading of fuel oil.

Today Bowen is an important watering and coaling station for ships. During the year 1948, 1,820,050 gallons of fresh water, at a cost of 3s. a thousand gallons, were supplied to ships, and 49 vessels were loaded with 8,543 tons of bunker coal. The harbour facilities at this port were specially designed for the handling of bulk coal for export. Raw sugar is shipped from Bowen from the Proserpine and Inkerman sugar mills and in addition frozen meats, hides, tallow and skins are handled from the Merinda meatworks. Although the actual number of vessels using the port of Bowen has declined since 1945 it is noted from statistics supplied by the Bowen Harbour Board that the average tonnage has increased, except for 1950.

The labour position is an important aspect of potential development. Male labour could not be readily available in large numbers except in the season when the meatworks at Merinda and the sugar mill at Home Hill are not operating, that is to say, normally from about January to June. Female labour would be more readily available as very little is being absorbed in secondary industries in the district. An important primary industry of Bowen is mining. Gold, of course, is mined mainly outside Proserpine at the Dittmer mines; graphite comes from Collinsville and the production in 1949 was 85 tons. It is known that a seam of graphite exists at Cape Upstart but it has not been sufficiently prospected to allow of our knowing what the potential value might be. Magnesite, about which I shall have more to say later, is got from Mount Pring. Lead, zinc and bismuth are mined to a small extent. Phosphate is available on Holbourne Island, 20 miles north-east of Bowen. Copper and silver-lead deposits have been prospected but not mined and 1,000,000 tons of economically workable limestone is available at the water's edge.

The secondary industries of the district are only on a very small scale. There are one cokeworks, two collieries, one boat-building establishment, one meat- and fish-preserving works, one tailoring and ready-made clothing establishment, one salt works, and three wood-working establishments including cabinet-making and joinery, and three sawmills. The cokeworks have come into prominence during the last 12 months. The Bowen cokeworks is the principal cokeworks of Queensland, and production was 20,000 tons in 1949, and

18,300 tons in 1950. From the 1949 figure 14,000 tons and from the 1950 figure 12,000 tons were sold to Mount Isa Mines Ltd., the remainder being distributed to other foundries and users in Queensland. The works employ on an average 31 men.

The Collinsville State coalmine, on which the development of Bowen depends, produces 500 tons of coal a day from an 18-foot seam; the reserves of the field are estimated at not fewer than 420,000,000 tons. The Queensland State Government, I am pleased to say, have prepared plans for the full mechanisation of this mine at an estimated cost of £500,000. Output will be increased to probably 1,200 tons a day. According to the report the Secretary for Mines and Immigration has made available, there are 194 men underground and 133 above the surface at present.

Mr. Foley: That tonnage is twice as great as Blair Athol.

Mr. COBURN: I did not make the comparison. The Bowen Consolidated mine at Scottville, which is 3 miles from Collinsville, produces 400 tons a day and there are proved reserves of 80,000,000 tons. The mine employs 120 men. That company is at present engaged in the electrification of the mine, and it is considered that the output will be increased to 550 tons a day, which I have been reliably informed, would be the maximum capacity of the present shaft sunk 360 feet to the Bowen seam. Mount Isa Mines Ltd. recently acquired a major interest in this mine, and the people of Bowen, Scottville and Collinsville look forward to development there on a greatly expanded scale.

A meat and preserving works is situated at Merinda, 4 miles from Bowen in a northerly direction, and during the season it employs approximately 320 hands. I should like to quote figures showing the output of these works, because they have a direct bearing on a suggestion that I shall make later on regarding their use. The average figures from 1945 to 1949 were as follows:—

Cattle treated, 30,692 per annum.
 Packs of frozen meat, 144,470.
 Weight of frozen meat, 7,459 tons.
 Hides, 676 tons.
 Tallow and oil, 616 tons.
 Manure and fertiliser, 510 tons.
 By-products, 192 tons.

The proposal to extend the Bowen-Collinsville railway line to join up with the Great Northern line at Pentland, thus joining with Cloncurry and Mount Isa, is strongly supported by people in the Bowen zone. The area that would be served by such a railway line is excellent country without road and bridge facilities, and at present supplies between 16,000 and 18,000 head of cattle a year to the Merinda meatworks. I understand that because of the lack of adequate transport, a further 10,000 head of cattle that could be supplied cannot be absorbed in meatworks treatment.

Reverting to mining, gold is mined mainly at Dittmer, near Proserpine, but in addition many small shows are worked by prospectors.

Mr. Power: Gold mines all over Queensland are closing down today because of the low price of gold.

Mr. COBURN: My object this afternoon is to point out the resources that exist in this area so that those who are interested in industrial development can use them as they think fit. Production in 1945 was 4,000 ozs. According to the prospectus of Dittmer Gold-mines Ltd., filed with the Registrar of Companies in Queensland, the ore value in reserve is estimated to be in excess of £850,000, of which £300,000 is deducted for mining haulage and treatment costs, and 57,600 oz. is the estimate of the gold to be won.

Magnesite is a surprising mineral and is one of which the average man probably knows very little. It surprises one to learn how really valuable it is to industry. Sixteen miles from Bowen, behind Mount Pring, which is very close to the North Coast railway line, a Melbourne syndicate began open-cut mining in 1949 on a 3-foot seam of magnesite, which is estimated to contain 40,000 tons of ore. The ore is at present being treated at a factory that was recently erected near the saltworks at Bowen. Magnesite plays a very important part industrially in the manufacture of building boards, and imitation marble and tiles, and in the processing of paper, rubber, glass, enamel, and porcelain. It is used also in the manufacture of toothpaste, milk of magnesia, epsom salts, antacid powders and alkaline fluids. It reminds one of the advertisements for things that clean one's boots, one's teeth and one's clothes.

Close to the magnesite deposits a mountain of red oxide is reported and not far away there are quantities of asbestos waiting to be treated by this same plant established by the Melbourne firm in Bowen. The red oxide will be ground into powder to form the colouring material for paint, and the asbestos will be a component of fibrolite board and for use in packing boilers. When the factory of Mack's Chemical Industries is fully developed it is reliably stated that no fewer than a hundred persons will be directly employed. It is further stated that Mr. George McFarlane, battery manager and Government assayer at Tennant Creek, and Mr. Angleson, from Pennsylvania, representative of an American company, recently explored the Mt. Pring district. Mr. McFarlane is reported to have said that he combed the country about 1935 and noticed quicksilver, silver-lead, monazite containing thorium which was radio-active and zaratite, a nickel mineral.

Recently a Melbourne firm railed a rotary furnace to Bowen for the purpose of treating lime obtained from Bull Mountain, a few miles south of Bowen. The firm will also probably produce hydrated lime and agricultural lime, and work other deposits that are said to exist on its leases.

The foregoing touches lightly on the recent mining development but all indications point to the necessity of an intense mining survey, which no doubt would lead to the discovery of minerals in payable quantities some of which would provide the basic material for locally established industries.

Soon after my election to Parliament I drew the attention of Mr. Casey, then Minister for National Development in the Federal Government, to the existence of the valuable and varied mineral wealth in the Bowen hinterland and asked him to make a geological and geophysical survey of an extensive area. He promised it would be done after the conclusion of the mineral investigation of the Cloncurry area. And I was informed only last week that an expert from the Division of National Development will visit the Bowen area in the very near future for the purpose of making the investigation. I hope to have the privilege of accompanying him on his survey.

So much for what has been done. What can be done? It is my opinion that Bowen could and should be the Newcastle of North Queensland, and I hope that sufficient interest will be aroused so that it will come to fruition. Because of the current shortage of hard coke in Australia, which seems likely to continue, estimated at about 326,000 tons per annum by 1955, a proposal to increase the coke-making plant in North Queensland is being investigated both by the Commonwealth and State Governments. In fact, I understand that the report is now in the hands of the Minister ready for release at any time.

Certain investigations have been carried out on the feasibility of establishing a new coke works in either Bowen or Collinsville. A possible capacity of at least 60,000 tons per annum has been suggested as the minimum size for the new cokeworks. It will, however, first be necessary to complete the mechanisation of the Collinsville coal-mine.

A great thing for Bowen would be a steel and iron works. Because of the proximity of Bowen to the Collinsville coal-field, with its abundant reserves of good coking coal, the possibility of establishing blast furnaces, steel works and mills should be worthy of consideration.

Away back on 18 February, 1920, the then Premier of Queensland, the Hon. E. G. Theodore, announced that the Queensland Cabinet, after taking into account and giving full consideration to all the facts bearing on the question, had decided on Bowen as the site for the proposed State steel and iron works. It was intended to install a 350-ton blast furnace and 460-ton open hearths. The blast furnace included one 36-inch blooming mill, one 28-inch rail and structural mill, three merchant mills, a rod mill, a nail mill, a sheet mill, and a fish-plate mill. The coke-oven plant was to consist of 60 ovens complete with a by-products plant for the manufacture of sulphate of ammonia, benzol, &c. Its capacity was to be 130,000 tons of iron and steel per annum, and the estimate of the total cost was between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000. The original site chosen for the

works was at a place called Mt. Bramston on the shores of Port Denison, two miles south of Bowen.

The scheme progressed far enough to have a general manager and Mr. J. W. Brophy was appointed to that position. Leases of ore deposits at Yampi Sound were obtained by the Queensland Government, the idea being to blend this ore with iron-ore obtainable in the Cloncurry district and to back load steamers with coal from the Bowen coalfield. Unfortunately the scheme never reached fruition, and Queensland did not acquire her steel industry.

It is essential to have adjacent to the site of any iron and steel works good coking coal as well as an adequate supply of limestone and good water. Bowen possesses all of these requirements. From observation of the position at Port Kembla and in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, it appears that it is economically possible to operate a steel industry with long-distance sea transport of iron ore if the other essentials are available in close proximity to the steel works, and if further the steel works are situated on a tidal waterway. In close proximity to Bowen there are available all the essential raw materials that are necessary. A supply of a medium volatile high-ash coal is available at the Bowen coalfields, 50 miles from Bowen. It is a bituminous coal of a hard-coke short-flame type and a good coking and steaming coal, suitable for the use in the production of iron and steel. The reserves are large and assured. It has been established that the total coal available exceeds 420,000,000 tons. That is confirmed by the Secretary for Mines and Immigration. The State coal-mine at Collinsville has actually proved a ten-year supply. The present output is 900 tons per day, but when the plans that are being prepared to mechanise the mine are completed and put into operation, the output will be 1,600 tons a day, and with further mechanisation an output of 3,000 tons a day has been envisaged. This output could be increased to any extent, given further mechanisation and additional transport facilities. It has been said that the Bowen coalfield contains 1,000,000 tons of coal in broad seams from 12 to 18 feet thick, eminently suitable for mechanisation.

Limestone, another essential for the establishment of an iron and steel industry, is to be found at many points on the north coast of Queensland. Deposits that have been explored at Ben Lomond, about 10 miles across the harbour from the town, contain about 1,000,000 tons. The geologist's report included a statement that as a flux it cannot be excelled. This outcrop is capable of being worked at the water's edge and of being lightered from the workings to the steel works at Mt. Bramston. These deposits were last surveyed and reported on in 1918. Then in the Reid River district, on the Great Northern Railway west of Townsville, there are extremely large deposits of limestone, particularly near a spot called Calcium. The geologist's report in "The Queensland Mining Journal" for July, 1928, states that the deposits in this area are distributed over an

area of 32 square miles to a thickness of 100 feet and contain enormous quantities of limestone.

The Premier of Queensland, in 1949, stated that there are huge deposits of iron ore in Queensland. At Mt. Philp in the Cloncurry district is the largest known deposit in Queensland. Mt. Philp is a range of hills situated about 2½ miles from Ballara, a railway station 35 miles south-west of Cloncurry and 63 miles by rail to Cloncurry via Malbon Junction. The ironstone of the mountain is chiefly hematite, with magnetite occasionally present, the main impurity consisting of free silica. Iron-ore analyses reveal from 52 per cent. to 56 per cent. iron, and from 19 to 23 per cent. silica. The amount of available ore has been variously estimated from 60 million tons to 120 million tons. According to the Chief Geologist of Queensland (Geological notes on the Cloncurry, Camooweal, Burketown, Boulia, Area, Publication No. 265 published in 1920) there is at least 10,000,000 tons of easily-mined ore and another 10,000,000 tons more or less carrying an overburden, making an estimated total actual available tonnage of about 20,000,000 tons. The probable quantity of ironstone in the lode might be a further 20,000,000 tons and the possible quantity an additional 20,000,000 tons.

A splendid working face has been naturally exposed at one spot quite free from overburden, to which a short extension to the main line could be constructed. Further south and north, other precipitous faces are exposed at higher levels where the ironstone could be quarried very cheaply and from which mechanical devices could convey it to trucks below. Great natural facilities for cheap mining exist at Mt. Philp.

Mt. Leviathan is a permanent landmark outside the town of Cloncurry. It is a large ironstone mass containing a high percentage of iron and silica. Composition of the ore is shown by analysis to range from 56 per cent. to 62 per cent. iron and from 9 per cent. to 17 per cent. silica. Geological survey revealed that the deposit contains a total of 2,000,000 tons.

An interesting aspect of the siliceous nature of these ores is that it might be possible to convert the blast-furnace slag into slag cement, a valuable by-product for which there would be a large demand in Queensland.

There are other small deposits of iron ore in Queensland at Biggenden, Iron Island, and at Iron Range, but none of these are large, and although it is said that the deposit at Iron Range is of high-grade ore, it is said to be banded with schists and not easily workable on a large scale.

Cloncurry is approximately 600 miles from Bowen and it might prove almost as costly to bring iron ore from Cloncurry to Bowen as from, say Yampi Sound to Bowen. In any case it should prove just as practicable to bring iron ore from Yampi Sound to North Queensland as from Yampi Sound to New South Wales.

I was interested in the speech delivered by the hon. member for Carpentaria, during which he gave a description of Point Norman and Point Parker, two ports upon the Gulf of Carpentaria that could be developed. The railway running from the Cloncurry area extended to either of these two ports would make it possible to cheapen considerably the cost of hauling iron ore from that area to the Bowen area.

The possibility of obtaining iron from New Caledonia might also be kept in mind, particularly if good coking coal could be back-loaded in the ships. It is understood that there is a large demand for coking coals and for hard coke in New Caledonia.

From the review of the iron and steel industry made by the Division of National Development in September 1950, it is seen that the present gap between Australian production and Australian requirements is of the order of 1,500,000 ingot tons of steel. Australia's economy at present is dependent in a major degree on imported steel, supplies of which have been seriously restricted by recent international developments. There can be no doubt that there is plenty of room in the Australian market for a new iron and steel works.

It has not been possible for me, from the sources of information available in this State, to ascertain what would be the minimum economic size of a steel works suitable for location in North Queensland, but, assuming that a blast-furnace capable of producing 500 tons of pig-iron a day was feasible, 125,000 tons of iron ore per annum would be produced which would be a substantial and useful contribution to the nation's economy. Expansion to 5,000 tons a day would not seriously upset the balance of the market as it is now or as we should know it to be in the future.

Shortly after my election to Parliament, I forwarded data to the general manager of Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. in an effort to induce that company to become interested in Bowen with the object of establishing a steel and iron works at that centre. In his reply to me, he indicated that the company is not at present interested in the establishment of an iron and steel works in Bowen, or any other place in Queensland for that matter, because commitments already made by the company for the expansion of existing plant at Newcastle and Port Kembla will keep the company fully occupied for very many years to come.

I was also approached by a representative of an English company interested in the possibility of establishing a steel and iron works at Bowen, and negotiations from this source are still being pursued. Apart from Newcastle and Port Kembla, Bowen in Queensland is the only site in Australia where good coking coal is located in adequate quantities at or near the coast, and, with Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. fully occupied with Newcastle and Port Kembla, it might be an extremely useful and interesting development if some other company or authority were to evince interest in the possibilities of Bowen.

Mr. F. E. Roberts: What do you mean by an authority? Do you mean the State?

Mr. COBURN: I am not particular who does it, so long as it is done. The companies interested in steel and iron production and manufacture in overseas countries should be approached by our State and Federal Government representatives there and their interest aroused by presenting to them data that might result in their grasping the opportunity that Bowen presents for the establishment of industries. Queensland could, in this way, make a most valuable contribution to the development of the basic essential industry of this country, and even if the start made was small, concentrating perhaps on the production of rails for instance, the results would be of great value. The current deficiency of rails in this country this year alone has been estimated at 67,000 tons.

The capital cost of establishing a steel and iron works would probably be considerable. In a recent estimate, in 1948, £20,000,000 was mentioned, and the construction would no doubt involve some diversion of resources from essential projects, but in the long run the increase in the productive capacity for the production of iron and steel would more than offset the temporary disadvantage.

One important advantage that should be kept in mind is that the development of the iron and steel industry in Queensland, unlike any expansion of Newcastle or Port Kembla, would not throw any further weight on the already overburdened coal industry of New South Wales but would provide its own coal.

Another important advantage of an iron and steel works is that it would bring about desirable decentralisation and populate North Queensland because of the stimulation of other industries essential in the provision of food and clothing and the raw materials required for the new Newcastle of the North, which Bowen will become. The development of the Bowen coalfields as a result of the establishment of an iron and steel industry might result in increased production of the coking coal that is so urgently required in Australia. In the development of the new coalfield it might be possible to get away from the long unhappy association with the New South Wales coalfields and build up a new mechanised industry with modern amenities and better relationships between miners and mine-owners. Considerable housing would be necessary. As Bowen is surrounded by fertile country and is favourably situated and an ideal place wherein to live, no difficulty should be encountered.

Another industry that could be extended in the Bowen area—it is already in existence—is the salt industry. The Bowen salt-works produce at the present time 10,000 tons annually by solar evaporation. A considerable increase could be made in this tonnage, because the salt gathered contains 99.7 per cent. sodium chloride. Most of the salt produced is used at the Merinda meatworks and the Ross River and Alligator Creek meatworks at Townsville. Employment is given to

40 permanent men and 120 casuals during the harvesting operations. The Bowen Salt Company owns an additional 3,000 acres that it has not developed, possibly on account of the necessity for duplication of expensive harvesting machinery, which deteriorates if it is not in use for the greater part of the year.

North of Bowen, 29 miles along the railway line, is the small settlement of Guthalungra. This district offers wonderful prospects in the matter of salt production. I think that the people of Queensland will hear much more of Guthalungra in the next few years than they have heard in the last 100 years. There are extensive salt pans in the area and they are declared to be more suitable for the production of salt than those in the Bowen area. I have been in communication with a southern firm interested in the production of salt and it is hoped as a result of the information made available to the members of the company that in the near future a saltworks will be established in this area. Two experts from Geelong have made a comprehensive survey and it is believed that their interest is closely connected with salt production. I am optimistic enough, because of the knowledge I possess, to predict that when I speak during the Address in Reply debate next session I shall be able to announce that a new salt industry has been established in the Guthalungra district. Railway and port facilities are at hand to ship large quantities of salt, a commodity that is in great demand both on the local and overseas market. A Brisbane tanner announced only the other day—and no doubt hon. members saw reference to it in the daily newspapers—that he would be forced to close his works because the supply of salt, essential in the tanning industry, was not obtainable. Unlimited opportunities for expansion exist and I feel certain that this opportunity will not be missed by people interested in industry because they are acquainted with the resources of the electorate I represent.

Then we have the canning of fruits. The district produces prolific crops of fruits and vegetables, and for the four years from 1945 to 1949 the enormous quantity of 3,125,000 packages of those commodities were exported, chiefly to southern markets. More intensive cultivation by the use of fertilisers and irrigation, and the addition of immense quantities of tomatoes, pineapples and mangoes from the Ayr-Home Hill district, where the productivity is almost unlimited, should make possible the local canning of tomato pulp and juice, pineapples and pineapple juice and mango juice and mango chutney, fruit salad and other products. Ways to have the processing undertaken locally could undoubtedly be found.

Earlier in this speech I quoted the number of hides that were obtained each year from the Merinda meatworks. Livestock in the Wangaratta shire at March, 1949, totalled 139,292 cattle and 5,451 horses. The yearly average of cattle treated at the Merinda meatworks for the last five years was 30,692 head. The hides from the bodies of the present kill alone could more than support a leather-tanning industry, a boot- and shoe-making industry

and a leather-goods industry. If more hides were required, only 117 miles away are the two great meatworks of Ross River and Alligator Creek in Townsville. It is estimated that a small tannery could treat economically about 500 hides a week or 25,000 a year, so I suggest that there are opportunities there also for the establishment of a tannery.

I suggest, too, that opportunity exists for establishing a soapworks in the Bowen area. We have the necessary tallow and oils on the spot. On one occasion the Premier said to me, "If you want to establish industries in your area, concentrate on those that can be built up from the things that are on the spot." That is what I am doing in this speech. The meatworks at Merinda have a yearly output of from 600 to 800 tons of tallow and oil. If a greater output was desired, supplies could be obtained from the Ross River and Alligator Creek meatworks.

There is opportunity also for the establishment of a fertiliser plant. From 400 to 725 tons of manure and fertiliser have been produced annually by the meatworks. Fertiliser could help in greater production of fruit and vegetables in the area, which in turn could be processed by a local factory.

A fish-treatment plant also could be established at Bowen. This is rather a vexed question with the residents in my area. I have not the necessary time to tell the story now, but I hope to be able to do so on some future occasion. Efforts to establish the fishing industry in Bowen have been unavailing because the Fish Board has so far refused to establish a depot at that centre. Local professional fishermen say that the depots at Mackay and Townsville are too far away for their needs, and it is thought that the establishment of a freezing plant at Bowen would be of great value to the fishing industry. Fishermen would then use the virtually virgin fishing grounds off Bowen, which have been neglected because of the necessity to haul the catch a long distance either to Mackay or Townsville. In rough weather, too, it would be much easier to get in and out of Bowen than it would be to make the long trip from and to Townsville or Mackay. If a Fish Board depot was established at Bowen, it is certain that between 25 and 30 boats would operate from the port, and probably at times during the mackerel run, the whole Townsville fleet of 80 boats would base themselves on Bowen.

The setting up of a plant suitable for handling fish would be beneficial for both the northern fishermen and the Brisbane fish consumers. Bowen is approximately 600 air miles from Brisbane, which is approximately 3½ hours' flying time. The air freight on fish is less than 5d. a lb., which would be 2d. a lb. more than the rail freight. With the establishment of a treatment plant to process sharks—we have them there in thousands—the marketing of skins, liver oil and meat-meal would be a possibility.

I come now to the subject of glass manufacture. On one occasion in this House, when I was speaking to the Premier, Mr. Hanlon, about the development of industries

in the North, he told me a story about a sample of sand that had been sent to him from Bowen. He was only a young man in politics then and not so wise as he is today. He said the sand appeared to him to be almost identical with sand he had seen in Belgium as a soldier in the 1914-18 war, which was used to make some of the finest glass in the world. He sent the sample that had been sent to him from Bowen to one of the glass-manufacturing firms of Australia, but he got no report on it, and he was wondering whether it was so good that the firm did not wish to make a report because they did not want competition in glass manufacture with their own establishment.

Samples of sand taken from Whitsunday Island were sent to the State Department of Labour and Industry for analysis. They appeared to be pure and offered every possibility of making glass of a high standard. Samples were also sent to the Australian Glass Manufacturing Company. I hope that as a result of the report on these samples of sand there will be good prospects of establishing glass manufacturing plants in those areas. There are extensive beaches of sand on Whitsunday Island.

A big demand exists in North Queensland for cotton goods such as shirts, and underwear, and even a medium-sized factory established at Bowen would be of considerable benefit to the residents of North Queensland and would absorb untapped sources of female labour. Adequate supplies of raw cotton could be obtained from Ayr and Home Hill which have been declared by the Department of Agriculture and Stock to be the most suitable districts for cotton production in Australia. During the war when they wanted cotton in large quantities and quickly they chose an area on which they could depend, and that was the Lower Burdekin, which could still become one of the greatest producers of cotton in Australia, if not in the world, and from that source only 60 or 70 miles distant there could be obtained raw cotton for an industry to supply shirts, underwear and cotton goods.

In August 1950 samples of clay were forwarded to the State Department of Labour and Industry for analysis, the result of which is not yet known. A source of excellent fire-clay exists at the State coal-mine at Collinsville, and the Bowen coke ovens were built from firebricks made from this material. The small brickworks at Collinsville ceased producing after the coke ovens were built. It would not be very costly to re-open the clay pit and install a new kiln.

Apart from the need for the large quantity of firebricks for maintenance of the ovens, particularly the floors, a considerable quantity is required up and down the coast, from Cairns to Rockhampton, for boiler installations at power-houses, sugar mills and meat-works.

At present all these establishments must obtain their supplies of firebricks from Brisbane, with high costs for transportation and handling.

Mr. Power: Do you suggest that the Government should start these industries?

Mr. COBURN: I do not care who starts them so long as they are started. If the Government can operate them efficiently, well and good. I have no objection to anybody's starting them so long as they are worked in the interest of the country.

Mr. Power: Do you believe in State enterprise?

Mr. COBURN: I believe in industries that are efficient and are good assets for the country.

We have possibilities, too, of manufactures from bagasse and molasses. There is a large sugar mill at Proserpine, one at Home Hill, two at Ayr, and one at Giru, from which arise bagasse and molasses, the two main by-products of crushing and processing sugar-cane. These by-products are of value as raw materials for certain commodities, and I will give a brief description of their principal uses. Bagasse, which is the fibrous residue of the sugar-cane, was originally regarded as a worthless material but is now extensively used as a fuel in sugar mills. It is of considerable economic value in this respect as 3 tons of it has a fuel value equal to 1 ton of coal. In some mills, however, bagasse supplies exceed the fuel requirements and the surplus has become a nuisance, the dumping of the waste entailing a large expenditure.

The general consideration of possible uses for bagasse includes building materials, hard or soft wallboards, insulating material, and building bricks when mixed with cement or clay. Other uses are in the manufacture of paper and newsprint and cellulose derivatives such as artificial silk and plastics. It is reported that in 1948 nearly 1,000,000 gallons of molasses were burnt by the sugar mills in North Queensland and the suggestion has been made that the burning of such large quantities resulted from lack of transport to southern distilleries. As a potential demand exists for industrial alcohol for the manufacture of industrial commodities such as synthetic rubber and nylon, serious thought might be given in the near future to the setting up of a distillery or distilleries in districts where sugar mills are established to tap this source of vital raw material.

The establishment of works to produce superphosphate at Bowen would be of considerable benefit to the sugar areas in North Queensland. Sulphuric acid could be produced from pyrites from Mt. Morgan or zinc concentrates from Mt. Isa and could be used in the production of ammonium sulphate or superphosphate. The deposit of rock phosphate on Holborne Island, 20 miles from Bowen, about which little is known, would be of great interest in this connection. The necessity for increased supplies of chemical fertiliser arise from the fact that by 1953 Queensland will have put more than another 50,000 acres of sugar lands into production. This additional acreage will bring the total of sugar lands under production to 320,000

acres, all of which will require annual treatment with chemical fertilisers. Although a project is in hand to produce superphosphates at Cairns the demand at least might be great enough to warrant the development of this industry at Bowen as well as at Cairns.

A recent Press report suggests that the establishment of another sugar refinery in Queensland has had consideration from interested persons. Bowen appears to be one of the most likely locations for a new enterprise of this kind as it has all the essential elements required for sugar-refining. It is close to the sugar mills operating at Mackay, Proserpine, Home Hill and Ayr, and not too far from other sugar mills in North Queensland.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BROWN (Buranda) (3.39 p.m.): We have had an excellent presentation of the financial position of this State placed before the Committee by the Acting Treasurer, but the debate has disclosed that the Opposition have not been able to criticise the financial administration of this Government effectively, or discuss the finances of this country.

The time has arrived when we should be able to gather some new methods of finance. I am satisfied that the financial methods of today have failed in many ways and it is because of that failure that we have our depressions and other financial ills. The Financial Statement sets out the plans of the Government as far as they can formulate them with the limited amount of money placed at their disposal through the agency of the Commonwealth for the State's development. This work is more than a Queensland matter: it is a national matter. We should be getting a bigger share than any other State to enable us to develop the northern area. These are national questions. Queensland would only be getting something to which she is entitled if she got help to carry out a national work that would be helping to develop the great Australian Commonwealth. I believe we are entitled to more than we are getting and to more than a proportion according to population.

According to the Budget, we have had record railway takings. Some of our friends on the Opposition side—I think the hon. member for Mirani was one—said that he was opposed to the electrification of the suburban railways. I believe the electrification of the suburban railways will be a wonderful thing for the whole State, as well as for Brisbane. People have been squealing about the lack of engines and carriages, but when electrification takes place in Brisbane much rolling stock will be available for other centres. We must remember also that the people of Brisbane and suburbs are entitled to have means of transport that will enable them to reach their places of business in less time than it takes them to get there today.

Mr. Aikens: And camel caravans for the people in the country, I suppose.

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member knows as well as I do that that is not correct.

They have been saying that the carriages in Brisbane are wonderful. They are comfortable enough, but what is wrong with sending these carriages out to the country when we get electrification in the city?

Our hospitals service also is referred to in the Budget. There is no doubt it is doing a wonderful job. I was pleased to note that the expenses went up greatly during last year, to £3,033,937 out of a total income of £7,815,350. I do not complain, because the Government are spending money on hospitalisation for the benefit of the people. It has been left to Labour to bring about the present system, which has been the means of extending the average span of life.

The other day, I think the Leader of the Opposition made reference to the increased expectation of life when speaking of the pensions system and said that if people were living longer they should be able to work longer. I interjected, "Thanks to Labour Governments." Labour Governments laid the foundation on which the extension of the life-span was built. Labour has done everything to encourage research to bring about this objective.

The Labour Party has often been accused of being unable to handle finance successfully. We had a break from Labour administration between 1929 and 1932.

Mr. Power: And we shall never forget it, either.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think anyone who was living in those days will forget it. We contend that the Labour Party can not only govern but also finance the State's activities much better than any other Party, and we are not alone in that belief. A few years ago, when the Moore-Barnes Government were in power here, we had such personalities as Sir Stanley Bruce, who was then Prime Minister of the Commonwealth—

Mr. Ewan: You are wrong. Scullin was in power.

Mr. Walsh: When?

Mr. Ewan: When Moore was in power.

Mr. Walsh: How do you know? You would not know.

Mr. BROWN: At a Loan Council meeting on 1 February, 1932, Mr. S. M. Bruce, who was then Assistant Federal Treasurer, said that the deficit in Queensland was larger than it should be, that the State was retreating rapidly and that it was heading for a very large deficit.

Mr. Walsh: Of course, he said that about the Moore Government?

Mr. BROWN: Of course he said it about the Moore Government. Men of that type were prepared to give credit where it was due, and that was all the credit they were prepared to give the Moore-Barnes Government.

If we go further and read pages 448 and 449 of "Hansard" for 1930, we find that

the Hon. A. Moore, who was then Premier of Queensland, was not satisfied with the team he had because he said—

“I give credit where it is due, and state quite frankly that, owing to the non-expenditure of loan money available by the late Government, Queensland was placed in a better position than any of the other States.”

He had lent that money to the other States and allowed our own people to starve, but I suppose he was guided in that by his Cabinet.

Another tragic Treasurer was Mr. Barnes, who, in 1929-30, budgeted for a deficit of £176,142 and actually showed a deficit of £723,185. And we were criticised 12 months ago because the then Treasurer, the present Acting Premier, budgeted for a deficit of £70,000! Again, in 1930-31 he budgeted for a surplus of £3,268 and actually showed a deficit of £842,044!

Again in 1931-32, the estimated deficit to October was £1,871,159, and the revised estimate for the Loan Council meeting in January was £2,320,000. The actual deficit for the 10 months to 30 April was £1,650,125. And they talk about finance! And they say they know all about finance, and that the Labour Party does not know anything about it! They are the so-called business men, but we have to get ordinary laymen to take over the Treasury benches to show them what to do. It is very important that we should get money to carry out developmental work in this State. And as I said before, any developmental work, particularly in North Queensland and the Northern Territory, must be regarded as a national matter. Because we are charged with that responsibility, we should get a bigger share of the money available from the Commonwealth than the other States, who have no development works of a national character. If our developmental works are not hampered by the lack of finance we shall be able to give full employment to the whole of the people of Queensland. When we have full employment we have a happy and contented people, and, what is more, we will do away with a lot of ‘isms,’ such as Fascism and Communism. We must keep our people in employment.

A reference to the Treasurer's Financial Statement gives an indication of the developmental work on hand, and shows a proposed expenditure of £28,370,510. A big portion of that will be spent in the northern part of the State, and for that reason this expenditure becomes a national question, and this State should be getting more from the Commonwealth Government, irrespective of whether they are a Tory Government or a Labour Government. Running one's eye down the list of works proposed, one sees the Burdekin high-level bridge, housing, water facilities on stock routes, Brisbane harbour and port development, mining, land settlement and forestry, and mosquito eradication. I do not think the £290,654 to be spent on mosquito eradication will be wasted, although much of that money could be wasted in and around Brisbane, because I am satisfied that Brisbane

could be rid of mosquitoes if we had a supply of soft water. The provision of soft water would not present insurmountable difficulties and if we had an all-purpose water we could do away with the tanks in the Brisbane area, because I venture to say that more mosquitoes are bred in Brisbane tanks, in and around the back-yards of houses in Brisbane, than anywhere else in Queensland. What is more, it would mean a big saving to the people, because a tank goes with every house erected. A tank and tankstand would probably cost £30 to £40. If the people had a soft town water supply they could do away with their tanks and make the unpleasant sight of a tank in the backyard a thing of the past. Somewhere about £70,000 or £80,000 is given to the Brisbane City Council year after year for the purpose of eradicating mosquitoes from the Greater Brisbane area, but a good deal of that money is wasted, because the Brisbane City Council should be able to give its ratepayers an all-purpose water. That would result in the saving of such very scarce materials as galvanised iron and rivets used in making tanks. It would also mean a tremendous saving to people, who are today paying from £25 to £35 for water-softeners. If the council would provide an all-purpose water supply, the people would not have to buy water-softeners and the metal that is used in their manufacture could be diverted to better purposes. I have been told by the man who is in charge of Brisbane's water supply that the cost of providing an all-purpose water supply would be only 3d. for every 1,000 gallons treated.

The Government are to be congratulated on the expansion that has taken place in secondary industry during the past year, in which the number of factories increased by 411.

Mr. Low: All in the city.

Mr. BROWN: It does not matter where they are.

Mr. Low: Of course it does.

Mr. BROWN: If they are all in the city, it shows that the people of Brisbane have more go in them than the people of Cooroora. The Government have given financial help to many of these projects, and it is very heartening to see that they are continuing to give it to anybody who is prepared to go into industry.

Much has been said during the present session of Parliament about the harbours and ports of this State, and I am quite prepared to agree that we need some bucking up in this respect. The Government realise that something should be done but because of the lack of materials and the shortage of dredges, we are not able to cope with the present needs of the State. However, what do we find the Brisbane City Council doing? They are building a new road along the south side of the river, which I believe is to be called Chandler Drive. The trees that were growing along the bank of the river where the road is being built have been felled and pushed into the river, and great branches

are sticking out above the water line. Workmen are filling in that part of the river with all sorts of rubbish at great expense to the ratepayers, and it is my opinion that before very long the Harbours and Marine Department will have to dredge the lower reaches of the river, because the rubbish that is being tipped into the river where the new road is being built must eventually be deposited there. There should be more co-ordination between the Government and the Brisbane City Council and other local authorities. The branches of these trees extend 30 to 40 feet out over the water and are a menace to small craft in the river reaches.

The Government have made wonderful strides in the last 12 months in establishing a record in home construction and I venture to say that in the next 12 months it too will be broken. This is a tremendous task and it is strange that although we can buy prefabricated houses from Sweden and other overseas countries a tremendous housing shortage already exists there. A total of 1,219 dwellings were completed in Queensland last year compared with 1,011 the previous year, and 1,178 houses were under construction at the close of the year, compared with 943 at the close of 1949-50. It is pleasing indeed to know that in this respect things look a bit brighter and that we are likely to get more houses in the ensuing 12 months than we have been getting.

The Government are helping the people to finance their homes. This House passed a Bill whereby on the death of the breadwinner the widow would get her home free from any further commitments. That security was assured to her by means of an insurance scheme. Is it any wonder that the Housing Commission is inundated with applications for homes? It arises from the fact, too, that lending agencies outside, such as private insurance companies and banks that finance house construction, have asked for increased deposits, even up to 40 per cent., which means that a person who wants to build a home to cost £2,000 has first of all to provide a deposit of £800. How can the working class provide that large amount? On the other hand, the Government say to the worker, "Pay a deposit of 10 per cent. on the security of the home and you can, by taking out an insurance policy, give added security to your widow on your death in that she will get the home free from any further commitments." The Government must be commended for that. The rate of interest is only 3½ per cent. compared with 4 per cent. and 4½ per cent. charged by outside agencies.

I come now to the subject that has always been close to me, the State Government Insurance Office. It has created a record in transactions in all departments. What a wonderful institution it has been for the people of Queensland! In the Fire Department alone the establishment of this office has been responsible for a saving in premiums to the people of Queensland of over £14,000,000. That amount is worth having. A fire risk that costs 5s. 4d. today cost £1 before the advent of the State Government Insurance Office. That fact alone will take a

lot of explaining away by the Opposition. The Opposition cannot point to one case in which that office has not paid a claim on its due date, nor to a private insurance office where that rate can be obtained today. Nevertheless, the State has written business at this rate for a number of years and after the first year's premium has returned to the insurer a bonus of 33¼ per cent.

The State Government Insurance Office is playing a big part in the development of the State. A number of members of the Opposition are members of local governing bodies and consequently know that it is easier for local authorities to get a loan from the State Government Insurance Office than anywhere else. The office has lent many millions of pounds to local government and is a regular contributor to Commonwealth loans.

Altogether the Office is doing a wonderful job. Its Workers' Compensation Department is worthy of mention. No other workers' compensation insurance system in any other State can give a similar benefit. The office is the forerunner of progress in this business. Every case is treated on its merits. It has a dual purpose in view. Firstly, its premiums are based on the risk of the industry concerned and because of the adoption of that principle we have the best and soundest institution of its kind in the Commonwealth. I am one who believes that the workers' compensation premium rate should be a flat one. It does not matter whether the worker is a bank johnny, or a railway employee or an accountant, or an auditor, or navying, all these are workers in industry. Therefore, they are interwoven with one another and their rate of insurance should be on a flat basis. Moreover, a big saving could be effected to the State Government Insurance Office if that basis was adopted. Something should be done in that respect because workers' compensation is a payment to some poor unfortunate worker who might meet with an accident in industry. What does it matter whether an injured worker met with the accident in a mine, in an office or in a shop, or in going to or coming from work, as long as his employer has paid the premium? The great basic industries, such as sawmilling and timber-felling, are highly rated, but they should be on a common level when it comes to premiums. Under the Moore Government regime—(Opposition interjections)—hon. members do not like this but it is true nevertheless—conditions were very bad. The premiums should be kept as low as possible for these heavy basic industries because without them we could not carry on other industries. Industries are all interwoven and there should be a flat rate just the same as there is a flat fire-insurance rate in Brisbane of 3s. 3d.—whereas it used to be about 14s. 6d. Today it is 3s. 3d. for the first year and 2s. 2d. for the second year. We had a precedent for what I suggest in war-damage insurance also. It did not matter where you lived—Cunnamulla, Sydney or Cape Yorke—the rate was the same, although nobody can reasonably say that the people of Cunnamulla or Birdsville ran the same risk as the people in Sydney, Cairns or Townsville.

The other day the hon. member for Aubigny said, "You are passing this Bill because you have a few crooks in business."

Mr. Sparkes: You are out of order now.

Mr. BROWN: I am saying what the hon. member said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. BROWN: Unfortunately the necessity for these laws is brought about because of the actions of a few crooks. The vast majority of people are honest, but a few crooks create all the trouble. If the people were to give expression to that great command—"Love thy neighbour as thyself"—and that spirit was extended internationally I am satisfied we should not have any wars and we should therefore eliminate the necessity for the great waste brought about by the preparations for war.

Mr. Sparkes: How you treat your neighbour depends on who he is.

Mr. BROWN: If the hon. member treats his neighbour as he would like to be treated himself, he will find that his neighbour will treat him in the same way. There is no doubt that laws are made by man simply because somebody has done something that is wrong, something that does not comply with our natural laws, and because we have a monetary system that compels people to turn to evil. For instance, we boast that we can buy a motor-car for £800 and sell it for £1,200 and we say we have made £400. We have not made £400; we have taken it from the other man. We have taken £400 that we did not earn, and therefore we are not entitled to it.

Again, not one country in the world has escaped the necessity of introducing a Pure Foods Act. They have all been forced to do this because some of the producers of food-stuffs adulterate them so that they will keep, or for some other reason, caring nothing for the effect this will have on the people who eat them. All they are concerned about is getting more money, and the sooner we have a change in our monetary system the better.

I think it was the hon. member for Mirani who, speaking about main roads, said the other day that it will be necessary to retrench. The Federal Government have seen fit to set about retrenching 10,000 of their employees. Victorian Government are retrenching theirs and some of the big employers of labour throughout the Commonwealth have also started to retrench. All business people say that money is tighter now than it has been. It must be tighter because the people are not getting so much to spend. If we are going to save this country, we must develop it, and to develop it we must work. We must provide work in order to enable the people to earn the wherewithal to buy the necessaries of life.

I did not hear all that the hon. member for Mirani said, but the effect of his words was that the Main Roads Commission should

spend more money on roads outside the Greater Brisbane area. After hearing that, I made inquiries and obtained from the Main Roads Commission a return relating to main roads, State highways, secondary roads and tourist roads in the Greater Brisbane area. This return discloses that of the revenue derived from the registration of motor vehicles in this State, approximately one-third is expended on roads within the Greater Brisbane area. Nothing like one-third of the money is spent in the Greater Brisbane area because we have only a small mileage within its boundaries under Main Roads Commission control. I will read particulars of the lengths of road in the Greater Brisbane area under the jurisdiction of the Main Roads Commission—

| Road. | Status. | Miles. |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| Main Gympie Road .. | Main Road .. | 7-78 |
| Bruce Highway No. 49 .. | State Highway | 0-03 |
| Brookfield .. | Main Road | 6-46 |
| Lockyer-Darling Downs No. 15 .. | State Highway | 5-13 |
| Brisbane-Toowoomba .. | Main Road .. | 3-82 |
| New England Highway No. 9 .. | State Highway | 0-46 |
| Brisbane-Mt. Lindsay .. | Main Road .. | 9-34 |
| South Coast Road .. | Main Road .. | 5-21 |
| Capalaba .. | Main Road .. | 7-55 |
| Moggill .. | Main Road .. | 9-20 |
| Kingston-Logan Village | Main Road .. | 0-85 |
| Samford .. | Main Road .. | 6-35 |
| Waterworks Road .. | Main Road .. | 3-65 |
| Aspley-Clear Mountain .. | Main Road .. | 2-65 |
| Coopers Plains-Rochedale | Main Road .. | 6-25 |
| Salisbury Connection .. | Main Road .. | 0-80 |
| Upper Mt. Gravatt- Capalaba | Secondary Road | 2-70 |
| Enoggera Waterworks- Mt. Nebo | Tourist Road .. | 7-50 |
| | | 85-33 |

In other words, there are about 85.33 miles of main roads in the Greater Brisbane area under the control of the Main Roads Commission. I am not complaining because the people want good roads; I think there should be more than there are and more done by our people who use the roads. We have all seen these great heavy trailers that go over roads that were not built to carry their weight and their owners are costing the State thousands and thousands of pounds because they are breaking up road surfaces. People take their trailers over roads before they are set and they are cut up to such an extent that it is necessary to go over their construction again. I think it should be of interest to country people to know that we have only 85.33 miles of main road in the Greater Brisbane area.

Much has been said during this session about butter—

Mr. Sparkes: You are making heavy weather of it.

Mr. BROWN: I am not. It is interesting to learn from the latest Commonwealth Year Book that last year we had the biggest production of butter since 1942-43—a total production, I think, of 109,278 boxes.

Mr. Gaven: Not as great as 1939.

Mr. BROWN: No, but the greatest production of butter since 1942-43. We hear much of people leaving the country and of

herds diminishing in number, and so on. However, according to the Year Book again, we now have more cows and heifers in the dairying industry than we have had since 1945-46.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: There were more in 1942-43 than there are now.

Mr. BROWN: I am not going back to 1942-43. I said that we now have more than we have had since 1945-46. If that is so, the dairying industry cannot be doing too badly.

Mr. Power: Try to buy a farm and see how you get on.

Mr. BROWN: As the hon. gentleman says, try to buy a farm and see if you can get one.

Further, in my opinion the 40-hour week did the farmers a lot of good, but unfortunately many people who are on farms—and some of them are in this Chamber—are too thick-headed to see it. In these days machinery does a large amount of work on farms, and although I admit that it is difficult for any farmer who cannot afford to buy milking machines to compete with the man who has them, the 40-hour week can be worked on farms if the job is handled systematically.

Mr. Sparkes: Who told you that?

Mr. BROWN: I should not expect the hon. member to tell me anything.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope members of the Committee will give the hon. member for Buranda an opportunity to develop his arguments without further interjections.

Mr. BROWN: I think it was the hon. member for Marodian who said that the 40-hour week would increase wages to £11 5s. a week. Then the hon. member for Southport—

An Opposition Member: He would not be right.

Mr. BROWN: He was right, and he was prepared to give the Mother Country all our surplus butter. That was not what the president of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation said. If the hon. member for Southport is not very careful, he will be getting his walking ticket, in the same way as Charlie Russell got his.

The following is an extract from an April 1950 issue of the "Courier-Mail"—

"We are not worrying about the Motherland or any other land," the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation president (Mr. C. H. Jamieson) said today. "All that concerns us is the price.

"Let them cut out butter rationing tomorrow if they like, but give us a price adjustment."

"Mr. Jamieson was speaking at the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation Central Queensland District annual conference."

I think the hon. member for Southport was quite right. We owe the Mother Country a lot, and we cannot afford to have men such as the president of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation saying "We do not care for the Mother Country." You can never get anywhere with sentiments like those.

A great deal has been said on the subject of beef and I am satisfied that something will have to be done, and done very quickly, about the price of beef. In 1933 some hon. members in this Chamber were prepared to break all the laws of the land, including the working of men at less than the award rates. I have it here in this report that I hold in my hand.

An Opposition Member: Who said that?

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member may have been associated with it, too—I am referring to the hon. member for Aubigny. It is just as well to remind ourselves of these things because sometimes the people have very short memories. This happened in 1933 and the report is headed, "Plenty of work; ringbarking time; men not available." The report is as follows—

"According to Mr. W. B. J. G. Sparkes (Opposition, Dalby) this is an ideal season for ringbarking."

You will remember that the Moore-Barnes Government were thrown out of office for their "ringbarking." The report goes on—

"The bountiful rains have caused a strong supply of sap to ascend the trees, and this will render operations more effective than in normal times. There is plenty of work available for men willing to undertake ringbarking throughout the country districts. He states, however, that the depressed condition of the cattle industry does not warrant payment of the union rate of £3 5s. a week without keep."

Mr. Sparkes: What was the price of beef then?

Mr. BROWN: I am not concerned about the price of beef. I am concerned about what the hon. member said. If he is a truthful man he must have thought that what he said was right.

The report goes on—

"Mr. Sparkes said that he had ascertained that stockowners were prepared to employ 500 men in the ringbarking at from 30s. a week to £2 a week (free meat provided). He and his neighbour alone, were prepared to give employment in ringbarking to 60 men at £2 a week (free meat provided)."

I want hon. members to follow this part very closely—

"The men, however, were not allowed by the union to accept such work except at the award rate of £3 5s. a week, without keep."

Mr. Ewan: There was no award then.

Mr. BROWN: It is a funny thing that the hon. member for Aubigny could refer to it. The report goes on—

“The meat allowance was an important concession, as men engaged in country work made meat their principal item of food. Owing to the union refusing to allow unemployed men or youths to accept work at these rates the men remained a burden on the country, the owner failed to get his ringbarking done at an opportune time, and the State lost the consequent gain from these improvements.”

If we carried on as the hon. member for Aubigny would like us to carry on, we should return to the state of affairs that existed in 1929-32.

I hope that the Government will go ahead with their developmental programme. I know that they will because it has always been the slogan of the Labour Government, “What Labour has promised, Labour has done.” I hope the time will never come when we shall see at our border towns and border crossings notices headed “Warning” that were issued by the Government of the day represented by the present Opposition. This “Warning” notice, which was signed by “H. E. Sizer, Minister for Labour, Brisbane,” and dated “7th May, 1931,” read—

“People entering Queensland in search of work are hereby warned that at present there is a surplus of labour in every centre of the State and that they proceed into Queensland at their own risk.

“The Government can only hold itself responsible for feeding Queensland’s own unemployed.”

As long as there is a Labour Government in Queensland, such a warning will never be posted on our border; and in any case the occasion for it will never arise, for people will continue to be satisfied with the administration of the Labour Government.

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) (4.36 p.m.): I was very pleased to learn when the Acting Treasurer presented his Budget that the operations for the financial year 1950-51 closed with a surplus of £98,163 and it is pleasing to note that in presenting his Estimates for 1951-52 the Acting Treasurer has again budgeted for a surplus and has indicated that he hopes it will be £36,197. That is an indication that he feels confident that during the year we have entered upon the State will be capable of meeting its commitments. Political opinion on this side of the Chamber differs as to how certain moneys allocated should be spent, nevertheless every hon. member, whether he is a member of the Labour Party, a member of the Opposition or any of the Independents, believes that it is in the best interests of the State that at the end of any financial year we should have a surplus. Times are difficult enough at present, when we can budget to pay our way, but the moment any State budgets for a deficiency that State is heading for trouble. Therefore I do respect the Acting Treasurer in the stand that he has taken in budgeting for a surplus in the financial year we have entered upon.

Having said one or two things that might be termed complimentary I now want to refer to the very evident hymn of hate that occurs right through the 28 pages of the Budget against the Federal Government. Why the Acting Treasurer could not go past the third paragraph on the first page of his Budget before indicating that he intended to be at daggers drawn with the Menzies-Fadden Government at Canberra and that it was his intention, because of his political hatred of that Government, to fight them at all times during the period he was in office. In other words, because of that hatred, the Acting Treasurer proposes to throw aside all sound reasoning, and to do things that are ill-advised and harmful to this State. I feel certain that the people who do study the Treasurer’s remarks will be very concerned at the views he has expressed.

It is not my intention to examine the Budget figures in detail, since I believe that has been very capably done by the Leader of the Liberal Party who on this occasion was given the opportunity of leading the debate on the Budget from the Opposition benches. I do recommend to every hon. member, irrespective of where he sits in the Committee, to read two or three times the comments made by the hon. member for Coorparoo.

This morning I listened to the hon. member for Kurilpa giving what I believe was a Dunstan House reply to the remarks of the hon. member for Coorparoo. I am certain that if anybody will read the speech of the hon. member for Coorparoo in conjunction with the speech of the hon. member for Kurilpa, it will be very evident that the attempt made to belittle the sound reasoning of the former failed. However, at this stage of my remarks, I wish to point out that the Acting Treasurer has squealed all through his comments about the action of the Menzies-Fadden Federal Government, but he cannot deny that it was the present Federal Government who kept this State solvent. That is a very important point.

Mr. Walsh: What is your basis for that statement?

Mr. CHALK: I give the Acting Treasurer credit for knowing his Budget, and his interjection is merely an attempt to hoodwink the people of Queensland, because he knows very well that the special grant of £2,000,000 took Queensland out of the position where it would have to report a deficit. The Acting Treasurer knows as well as I do that the recent grant from the Commonwealth taxation pool is £2,740,296 greater than the amount given when it was administered by Mr. Chifley and Dr. Evatt the previous year. He also knows that during the last financial year he received virtually twice as much as he received three years previously—again under his beloved Labour Government at Canberra. I am sure that if on this occasion Dr. Evatt was at the head of affairs in Canberra and he had handed out the same amount of money to the Treasurer that the Menzies-Fadden Government handed out, the Acting Treasurer would

have had the Northern Command Band playing tunes of praise to the Federal Government when he was presenting his Budget. Unfortunately for him—and I say “unfortunately,” advisedly, because of the position the Treasurer finds himself in—Menzies and Fadden have made this money available to the people and the people are aware of that fact, and give credit to Menzies and Fadden—not to the Queensland Labour Party.

The present Queensland Government know as well as I do that if they took over their old taxing powers tomorrow, they would be in a very bad plight indeed. It is all very well for the Acting Treasurer to refer to the shortcomings of the Menzies-Fadden Government while at the same time taking all the plums coming to the State and endeavouring to make the people of Queensland believe that his Government are responsible for all these good things. I repeat that if Dr. Evatt had been at the head of affairs in Canberra today the commentary on the Budget would have been entirely different. I am prepared to say also that the figure would have been different because, if we are to judge from their past performances, the Federal Labour Government would rob Queensland of much of the money to which she is justly entitled.

I know that when discussing the Estimates we shall be given the opportunity of mentioning many things that are discussed during this debate, but we on this side never get any indication of what Estimates will be brought up for discussion. As I know that certain hardy annuals are brought forward by the Government because they can use them for propaganda purposes, I propose passing over them and dealing with other more important matters. I am prepared to take the risk of passing over many departments that I am confident will be discussed because this Labour Government will have a trumpet to blow about them.

The first of the matters that I feel certain are not likely to be discussed during the debate on the Estimates is road transport. Here I wish to make it clear that I agree that the person who uses the roads must pay for them, and I am confident that Mr. Anderson, the present Commissioner of Transport, is administering his department in accordance with the Government's policy. There is no doubt whatever that it is this one-eyed policy of the Government on transport matters that is doing more to hamper development than anything else.

In my electorate—and I know this applies to many other areas—primary producers, timber millers and industrial concerns are experiencing considerable difficulty in getting railway trucks to take their primary produce, sawn timber, and the other products of industry to market. I realise that there is an acute shortage of railway wagons, but these people in the country, who are producing, are experiencing considerable difficulty in getting their goods to market.

Because this Government simply worship their dilapidated railway system they are not prepared to give an opportunity to people who are prepared to cart their own goods to

market to do so, irrespective of what harm they might do to the primary producer, the small businessman or the industrial concern. The Government have repeatedly refused to give primary producers permits to cart their own goods.

Mr. Larcombe: That is not true.

Mr. CHALK: I will cite two or three instances that I ask the hon. gentleman to investigate. If I am wrong I invite him to tell this Chamber so.

Mr. Walsh: You are speaking in general terms.

Mr. CHALK: I will give instances; there are others on this side of the Committee who could give instances too. I know that whilst the Acting Treasurer was a member of Cabinet the Road Transport Facilities Act was his baby and we know what happened to him at a subsequent election. I do not know whether the Act is being administered today on the basis on which the hon. gentleman set it up or whether there has been a change of policy on the part of the Labour Party, but apparently the Government have changed their policy since the hon. member was a member of Cabinet. We have only to read Press reports to see the political somersault the Government are taking because the Acting Treasurer has re-entered Cabinet. He should not to try to come in on this issue unless he is absolutely certain of the points I propose to raise.

Mr. Walsh interjected.

Mr. CHALK: There are many things that I could bring up. As for the Casket, I said what I had to say and I took my medicine. I am prepared to say what I have to say in this matter and I give the Acting Treasurer the opportunity to prove I am wrong.

Mr. Walsh: Somebody led you up a lane.

Mr. CHALK: I took my medicine and that is all there is about it. Repeatedly I have made representations to the Commissioner for Transport for permits for people to bring goods to Brisbane and I want the Committee to remember that in every representation I have made to him I have requested that the permit be issued not at a reduced price but at the fee laid down by the State Transport Facilities Act. I have asked on every occasion for a permit at the fee laid down; there has been no quibble about price. Because of the Government's policy they are not prepared to allow primary producers, sawmillers and others to carry their own produce to market when they cannot get rail trucks. I have said—and I repeat it—that these people are prepared to pay the fee.

There is one point I want to make clear—and this is why I termed the Government's policy one-eyed—and it is that within the Lockyer electorate three or four timber trucks pass through the township of Gatton daily en route to Ipswich, carrying anything up to six and seven logs each, to be sawn by

a mill there. I have nothing against that; I believe it has to be done. But in the township of Gatton there is a sawmiller who does not want to haul his logs to Ipswich or Brisbane. He is getting his timber and cutting it into lengths for five houses that are being built in Ipswich and three in Toowoomba and he wants a permit to cart his own timber from his own mill to the sites where it is urgently needed.

Mr. Walsh: What is the sawmiller's name?

Mr. CHALK: It is the Gatton Sawmilling Company. The hon. gentleman can investigate the matter if he so desires. This sawmiller has asked for a permit, and I have interviewed the Commissioner for Transport, who has promised to look into the matter again. However, instructions came to the police at Gatton and were passed on to the Gatton Sawmilling Company to the effect that it would get no more permits. Yet this timber is urgently needed! If it is good enough to allow one sawmilling company to cart logs to Bundamba, surely it is good enough to allow this small industry in the heart of my electorate, which is trying to build up employment in the area, to cart its timber to the sites where it is urgently needed?

Mr. Nicholson: The man who is carting logs is carting a good deal of waste material.

Mr. CHALK: As the hon. member says, the man who is carting logs is carting a certain amount of waste. All that this man wants to cart is cut lengths of timber that are ready to be assembled on the site.

There is room in this State for both rail and road transport, and the sooner this Government wake up to that fact the better. I believe, too, that the quicker this Government separate the portfolio of railways from that of road administration, the better it will be for the State. If those two things are separated and put under different ministerial heads competition will be created between the two departments, and everyone must admit that competition is the best thing to develop trade.

Mr. Sparkes: It is much better than strangulation.

Mr. CHALK: Unfortunately, these two departments are today administered by the one Minister. Of course, I do not know whether any strangulation is taking place—I do not profess to have an insight into the present ministerial set-up—but on every occasion when a road-transport permit is sought, consideration is given to whether it will affect the railways.

I should like to say something about the amount of money this Government have reaped as the result of the introduction of the State Transport Facilities Act. Those of us who have read the Budget know that during the last year £660,000 was received from this road tax. If any person who thinks a little about the affairs of this State was asked where he thought that amount of £660,000 went to, it would be quite logical for him to say that

it should go back into the roads of this State. It goes, however, into Consolidated Revenue. I know that if the Acting Treasurer replies to me he will have something to say about the amount of money spent on main roads, but that money comes from a special loan fund and therefore cannot be placed in the same category as the money that is collected under the Act I have mentioned. I have always believed that the money collected as the result of this charge should be used to help local authorities. We all know that local authorities today are finding it virtually impossible to carry on financially. It is correct, of course, that almost every local authority in Queensland is helped by loan money, but the more loan money made available to a local authority, the more it has to pay in interest. As a matter of fact, it will not be very long before many of the smaller shire councils will find themselves in the position that the rates they collect will be swallowed up in meeting the redemption and interest on loan moneys that are made available to them. The result will be more amalgamations and the wiping out of many local authorities. Perhaps that is what the Government desire. Therefore I sound a note of warning to local authorities not to rush too far into debt and not to bring about unnecessary amalgamations.

Some time ago certain amalgamations took place in an area that I previously represented and local authorities were swallowed up in city areas. They are now very concerned about their basis of representation. The system of aggregate representation over the whole area was continued, but unfortunately the councils became city or town local authorities, with the result that people living in the outlying areas must whistle for their improvements. I urge the shires that are operating extensively from loan funds to think carefully about the position, lest they should wreck their councils and future generations.

I come now to a matter of great importance to my electorate, one that concerns the immediate North Coast as well. I refer to the extension of electricity for farming purposes. It has exercised the minds of quite a number of hon. members on this side of the Chamber because the progressive young members here are keen on doing all that they possibly can for their electorates in the extension of electricity supplies. The City Electric Light Company of Brisbane and the Toowoomba Electric Light Company are being continually asked by hon. members on this side to extend the electricity into their respective areas. I am not criticising the services already given by either of these companies, because I appreciate their difficulties with shortage of staff and material; my complaint goes deeper than that.

At the present time it is the policy of the Government to subsidise the cost of certain installations carried out by regional boards while refusing to subsidise the cost of installation of electric facilities for farms and homes on farms in country electorates.

Mr. Walsh: Do you want the Government to subsidise private interests?

Mr. CHALK: I knew that the Acting Treasurer would come in. The Government are prepared to subsidise the cost incurred by regional boards and if it is good enough to use the taxpayers' money for this purpose, it is good enough to use some of it to subsidise the cost of installations in an area like that represented by the hon. member for Murrumba, myself and others. If the Acting Treasurer is sincere and game enough let him take over the Brisbane City Electric Light Company and the Toowoomba Electric Light Company tomorrow and put into operation the policy that he advocates. He knows full well that if the Government did so the operations would not continue to be the sound financial concerns that they are today. If he is sincere in what he says, let him step into the breach and take over these concerns and then we shall see exactly how soundly he can conduct them.

The point I want to impress on hon. members is that if it is good enough to use the taxpayers' money to subsidise installations in those areas where regional boards operate, it is good enough to say to the people in my electorate and in the electorates of Murrumba and Cooroora, who want electric light, "We will provide something rather than call on you to sign guarantees up to £100 in many instances for the next six years." That is what is exercising the minds of many people in my electorate. They want electric light and are prepared to do all they can to get it. The companies I have mentioned are prepared to go to their limits to provide it, but immediately a length of line is arrived at, the capital cost is so great that it must be guaranteed by someone. Therefore, the people of the area are asked to guarantee the cost, not the Government, as in the case of regional boards. I leave it to the people to judge whether what I have advocated is sincere or insincere.

Mr. Walsh: Do you want to repudiate the agreement with the City Electric Light Company?

Mr. CHALK: I know that when it suits the Government they will take it over and they will not bother about repudiation.

Mr. Walsh: You want the Government to repudiate their agreement with the company?

Mr. CHALK: The Acting Minister is the last man in this Chamber I would take seriously in that direction.

I want to discuss a matter that is of very vital importance, both to city dwellers and producers in my area. I refer to that very essential food commodity, the potato. I know that some hon. members opposite would like to ask, "Where do you get it?" but I want to tell them why they have not got it. For some time it has been well-nigh impossible to procure potatoes in most parts of the State. Those that have been obtainable in the last few months have been of Tasmanian origin. Hon. members will agree that in a primary-producing State like Queensland there is something radically wrong in its administration when we cannot produce

potatoes in bountiful quantities and that they are not being marketed so that housewives can get them. It is possible to grow potatoes in one's backyard. Therefore there is something radically wrong when we possess soil of great fertility but potatoes are not on the market today. It is my desire to acquaint consumers with a few facts relating to the potato-supply position so that they will be able to judge for themselves whether it is the potato-grower, whether it is the merchant, or whether it is this Labour Government who are responsible for the position the potato industry is in at the present time.

It will be remembered that at about this time last year there was a big rumpus about potato prices. They were pegged in certain States, including Queensland. While Queensland fixed the price of potatoes at 4½d. a lb. to the consumer black-markets were in existence.

Mr. Power interjected.

Mr. CHALK: The Minister interjects that black-markets existed in the Opposition.

Mr. Power: I did not say that.

Mr. CHALK: He was the very Minister controlling the position and the very Minister responsible for the industry's being in the position it is today. He is the last man who should come into this debate; he ought to hang his head in shame. Many growers last year—I am prepared to admit—did break the law. They will tell you themselves they sold the potatoes on the highest market, but on this occasion there are not many of them in the industry today to do it, because rather than run the risk of severe penalty they said, "On this occasion we will only grow so many spuds, or get out of the industry altogether." It was the action of this Government that brought about this position first of all. Price-control has definitely had one effect on the potato-producer. Not only has it made him cautious but it has also made him decide to reduce his acreage. The result is that this year the crop is down. I am prepared to admit that seasonal conditions have had something to do with that reduction in supply, but I will read a couple of sentences from a statement by the chairman of the Potato Board, Mr. T. J. Ford, which appeared in "The Queensland Times" of 16 October—

"Reports on this year's potato harvest indicate the crop will be rather poor."

That is a sorry plight for Queensland. It is an indication that the crop will be a small one, and it is very important to the consumers of Queensland that all the potatoes that are now being produced should stay here. That is very important, because on the words of the chairman of the Potato Board, the crop this time will be a very small one. It is essential that we keep them and not allow them to be black-marketed over the border. While potatoes are now being harvested in Lockyer, for every one bag that is reaching the board, five are being sold on the black-market; they are going over the border. I am prepared to go further and say that for every one that reaches the board five go over

the border on the black-market and another two are sold on the black-market within this State.

A Government Member: Do you believe in that?

Mr. CHALK: If the hon. member will listen I will try to give him a few words of what I believe. I believe that this Government are responsible for the potato failure. The cry of the Government has always been that the Potato Board is to blame. I heard one hon. gentleman on the front bench interject that when I started to talk about potatoes; he said the Potato Board was to blame. Just as in the butter crisis this Government tried to pass the buck to the Butter Board, so they are now trying to pass the buck for the potato shortage to the Potato Board. However, I want to assure the people of Queensland that the board has been and I believe it is today trying to play its part in helping all sections of the community; but it is because of the stupid handling by this Government and the stupid price-fixing that the board finds itself in the very awkward position it is in at the present time. Too long have this Labour Government tried to bind the primary producer; for too long have they tried to make the primary producer the bunny.

Industrial unions, by their unity and strength, have been able to force the hand of the Government on many occasions, but the farmer, because of his humble nature, has taken the kick, but I can assure the Committee that the primary producer is now ready to fight for his just rights, and he will challenge the Government at the next election. Just as we refer to the last straw that breaks the camel's back, so the last piece of legislation put through this Chamber has broken the farmers' endurance and caused them to rise as they are doing today.

The average potato farmer has faith in his board, and he believes in orderly marketing, but he does not believe that a Government, because they wish to pander to the masses, those in the city in particular, should force him to sell his potatoes at a price that is determined in Queen street by people many of whom do not know what a potato is.

Mr. Walsh: Why have a board?

Mr. CHALK: Because we believe in orderly marketing—and the Acting Treasurer knows as well as I do that boards can do good, because he has been on some. Of course, the type of board he wants is one that can be dictated to by his Government. So long as it will kow-tow to the Government, it is all right.

The point I make is that the producer does not believe that his price should be controlled. If it is good enough to buy tomatoes at 3s. a pound down the street, he fails to understand why he should be told that he can get only 4½d. for his potatoes. When Tasmanian potatoes were brought in here recently, the Queen Street control said they could be sold at 4½d. a pound, but when the Queensland potato comes on to the market the price is 4½d.

Mr. Aikens: And 1s. a pound for sweet potatoes.

Mr. CHALK: Sweet potatoes are bringing 1s. a pound, yet the English potato brings only 4½d.

Mr. Walsh: They decontrolled onions.

Mr. CHALK: I knew someone would come in on onions, and I wanted that to happen. You can buy onions in Queen Street, indeed almost anywhere in Queensland to-day, but you could not buy them when they were controlled.

Mr. Walsh: At what price today?

Mr. CHALK: Let the Acting Treasurer answer my question first; then I will answer his.

Mr. Walsh: At what price?

Mr. CHALK: The Acting Treasurer is not man enough to answer my question.

Mr. Walsh: They are getting Japanese onions, imported by the Menzies Government.

Mr. CHALK: I do not want to say the Acting Treasurer is a fool, because I know he is not, but his argument is of the type that would be advanced by someone who is either blinded politically or does not want to admit the truth. The point is that onions are available today, and at a cheaper price than when this Government controlled them. That is because when they were controlled you could not get them and the black-market price was 2s. a pound.

Mr. Walsh: I paid 2s. a pound last week to my storekeeper.

Mr. CHALK: Then the Acting Treasurer was caught. He says he paid 2s. a pound last week for his onions. I say more fool he. I gave him credit for more sense. The point is that onions are available at a cheaper price than when price-control operated.

Mr. Walsh: That is not true.

Mr. CHALK: Judging by the statements made by Ministers, the Labour Socialists of Queensland are going to wage war against the potato-grower—

Mr. Walsh: And that is not true, either.

Mr. CHALK: I know, Mr. Farrell, that I cannot discuss recent legislation but I am going to say that very shortly we shall have the terms of the present Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act implemented against the producers. On 15 October, the chairman of the Potato Board, Mr. Ford, is reported in "The Queensland Times" as having said—

"The Potato Board had brought before the Government department details of the illegal state of affairs that existed covering the sale of potatoes but without avail." In other words, the board stated that it had brought before the Government details of offences it knew had been committed.

"It was the responsibility," said Mr. Ford, 'for the Government through the Prices Branch to see that the law was

enforced and that the fixed legal price of 4½d. a lb. for Queensland potatoes and 4¼d. a lb. for imported potatoes was adhered to.'"

Let us see what the Acting Premier and the Minister in control of price-fixation had to say. They carefully manoeuvred round the points raised by the chairman of the Potato Marketing Board. This board, which the Government are saying is wrong, was prepared to do the right and decent thing and I challenge the Acting Treasurer to bring forward any instance in which the board has not obeyed the law. Both the Acting Premier and the Prices Minister issued statements. Mr. Lacombe said—

"After conferring with the Prices Commissioner, Mr. Fullagar. . ."

I thought the Commissioner of Prices never had anything to do with the Minister!

"The Prices Minister, Mr. Lacombe, said today that only full co-operation by the board, retailers and purchasers could stamp out black-marketing in potatoes."

Is that all this Government can do—pass the buck, put the onus onto the board. Continuing, the Minister said—

"The Potato Board must exercise its full powers to see it received potato deliveries."

In other words, the board had to force the growers to send potatoes in. The Minister said further—

"Retailers must refuse to pay prices which would not allow them to sell at the lawful price.

"Purchasers must refuse to pay hawkers or shop retailers above the lawful price.

"Purchasers must report attempts at overcharging."

That is the viewpoint of the Prices Minister and that is all he has to say. He passes the buck to the board and makes the board responsible for getting potatoes; he makes the retailer sell at the fixed price and he asks the housewife not to buy from the hawker and says that if you pay a high price you must run in and tell the Commissioner of Prices. Anybody with common sense will agree that this Government are hiding behind the board.

I know that you will not permit me, Mr. Farrell, to deal with the amending legislation that we passed last week, but I believe that I shall be in order in discussing the Minister's statement. The Minister said that the board must exercise its full power to demand potatoes from the grower, and I am fortified in my argument that I am permitted to repeat those words, because the Acting Premier said in this Chamber that the amending Bill merely required the board to give effect to the powers bestowed on boards by the original Act. I propose to discuss the original Act of 1946, so that I shall refer to the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1946. What will happen if the board orders a producer to supply potatoes—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed along those lines.

Mr. CHALK: If I cannot do it that way, I will make an attempt to do it in another way.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to dictate to me how I shall run this Committee.

Mr. CHALK: I know you do not really think that I would attempt to do that. However, I shall develop my argument along these lines: the Act of 1946 commands the Potato Board to get its produce from the producer. If the producer will not supply his potatoes, the Board can summon him. If the board summons the producer for not sending in his potatoes to the board—and I believe that this is what will happen—who will fight the case?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member does not obey my call, I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Lockyer!

Mr. CHALK: I still feel that what I want to say comes within the ambit of this debate, and if you listen to me, Mr. Farrell, I am sure that you will agree with me. I am wondering what will happen if there is a court case. It will be conducted under the Act to which I have referred. However, if the board does take action it will be fighting the producer. Who composes the board? The board is composed of producers—the board uses the producers' money—and if a court action did occur it would be a case of producer versus producer, not Government versus producer. That is the point that I want to drive home today. If the board institutes a prosecution against a producer, it is the producer who finds the money for the board, and it is the producer who finds the money for his own case.

Mr. Walsh: The High Court says that the board has that power.

Mr. CHALK: The Acting Treasurer tries to shelter behind what the High Court says is the board's power.

Mr. Walsh: That is a fact.

Mr. CHALK: I know it is a fact, but this Government prefer to hide behind the board and to make the board fight the case, because the Government will have nothing to lose. The Acting Premier has just entered the Chamber and he is laughing. I challenge him to go before the potato-producer and laugh at him in the same way as he is laughing in this Chamber.

Mr. Gair: Do you know what I am laughing at? I am laughing at your statement about smelling ink—

Mr. CHALK: I knew that the Acting Premier was not big enough to get past the point of smelling ink. I assure him that I should prefer the smell of ink to what he smells of at the present moment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CHALK: The board represents the producer, and it feels that it should not be forced to do what the Government are forcing it to do. Still, I have the assurance of certain members of the board that they will carry out the law. On the 16th of this month the Acting Premier said that prompt action would be taken to compel the marketing boards to provide supplies for the needs of the people. In other words, he threatened these boards. I invite him to threaten them as much as he likes, even to wiping them out and putting in his own members. And then see what happens!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have been very patient with the hon. member and I will not tolerate a repetition of his defiance of my ruling.

Mr. CHALK: I thank you, Mr. Farrell, for being tolerant. You said that you had been very patient. I am prepared to admit that you have been tolerant, if you want it that way. I am fighting the case for the potato-growers.

Mr. Graham: And making a bad job of it.

Mr. CHALK: I leave the hon. member to the potato-growers. I am prepared to allow his constituents to judge him, just as I am prepared to allow mine to judge me.

Mr. Walsh: You will not be the Liberal member next time.

Mr. CHALK: The Acting Treasurer would like to think his statement was true. He is a cunning politician. He came back in Bundaberg. I came back in Lockyer and I shall stay in Lockyer. That is what I have to say to him.

I have tried to make a few points relating to the potato famine in this State. I say to the people in Queensland that the potatoes are almost ready for harvesting in the Lockyer and other areas, and the indications are that a considerable quantity of them will leave this State because the price available for them outside Queensland is much greater than that within the State. That is the first point I make.

Mr. Graham: Shame on the people for selling them!

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member always sold his labour on the highest market, and the highest market he ever got for it was when he came into Parliament. He will never get another job as good as that. The producer is entitled to get the highest price he can command for his commodity. Price-control for the potato-grower has been a curse. It has been proved to be ineffective and it hampers the Potato Board in orderly marketing. I know that the Government will not follow my suggestion but I will make it to them. The Acting Premier has walked into the Chamber again. I say to him that even at this late stage the Government can ensure potatoes for every person in Queensland if they will immediately lift price-control. Then potatoes will flow into the city of Brisbane. I know that he will immediately ask,

“But at what price?” Although the fixed price is 4½d. a lb. potatoes are selling in many places at 1s. a lb., but if the Government would only lift price-control the price for potatoes in Queensland would drop to between 6d. and 8d. a lb. within the next couple of weeks. If price-control is continued there will be very few potatoes in Queensland this year and even less next year.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (5.35 p.m.): Today and during other periods of this debate I have listened to many regrettable speeches in the interminable dog-fight of the Liberal-Country Party with the Labour Party, and seen political expediency put before political principles and insensate political ambitions before the needs of the people. As the representative of the only genuine workers' and farmers' party, the North Queensland Labour Party, I intend to say something about the action of Mr. Maguire, the ex-Chief Electoral Officer, with respect to our party, but I will deal with first matters first.

The late Speaker said there was no such thing as a North Queensland Labour Party. That reminds me of the fellow who on seeing a giraffe for the first time said, “There ain't no such animal.” I want to tell this Chamber and the people outside just what we are and how we came about, and the things for which we stand. First of all we were the Hermit Park Branch of the Australian Labour Party. We were formed in 1932 and we became one of the biggest and most influential branches of the A.L.P. After the 1932 election there was considerable discontent among members of the branch because members of the Labour Party were drifting away from the policy and platform of the A.L.P., and the way in which members were drifting away from the principles of Labour. We saw also many men elected to this Parliament as Labour representatives who in their heart were Liberals. If Liberals were in control of this Parliament as long as the Labour Party then these men would have been in the Liberal Party, not the Labour Party. They joined the Labour Party not for any good they could do the people or the Labour Party they were supposed to represent, or for the good they intended to do for the State, or the workers, or the farmers, but purely and simply for the good they could do for themselves. They were purely and simply go-getters, opportunists and careerists of the worst type.

It is not my intention to be personal, bitter, or rancorous, or to castigate any individual but merely touch on the details of the formation of our party. When this discontent became apparent in the Hermit Park Branch of the A.L.P. the Q.C.E. decided to wipe out the malcontents and I was the first to go. I was expelled as a member of the Hermit Park Branch of the A.L.P. Then they set themselves out to get Arthur Murgatroyd. But World War II. intervened and the Q.C.E. instructed the Branch to refuse admission to two members who they considered collaborators with the Communists.

Mr. Devries: You expelled yourself.

Mr. AIKENS: I have at all times, particularly in the brilliant speech I delivered here in 1944, told why I was expelled from the Hermit Park A.L.P. and I do not intend to repeat my previous statements. Everyone in Townsville knows the facts and everyone who knows me knows why and when I was expelled.

The Hermit Park Branch decided to stick to those two members and challenged the legal rights of the Q.C.E. to refuse them admission. I again mention that I was not then a member of the branch. Suffice it to say that the Q.C.E., when it could not get its own way, deregistered the branch. It is significant that these two men whom the Q.C.E. charged with being Communist collaborators afterwards left the Hermit Park Branch of the A.L.P. and have been accepted back into the A.L.P. by the Q.C.E. that expelled them. At that time our party was in control of the Townsville City Council. When we were rid of these two individuals we got rid of some of the other deadwood from the tree, as it were, and we were able to expand and set up branches and groups of the North Queensland Labour Party throughout North Queensland. Today we have become the solid and influential political party that we really are.

When we set out to form the North Queensland Labour Party it was first of all necessary to decide the things for which we stood. The first duty of any working-class party is to protect the interests of the workers, the farmers, and the useful people from all those who batten and fatten upon them, and if I may say so, to protect the little people, as they have been affectionately called on more than one occasion, from all the big people who exist merely to exploit them. During the war and since we have seen the shameless exploitation of the little people—in northern Queensland at any rate—by the big people. During the war we saw the man-power call-up for the military service and the C.C.C., and we saw men who had political connections and men who were connected with some of the big-shot families, walking round Townsville in uniform for the whole duration of the war, many drawing their military pay and at the same time their pay from the firms that had employed them. While this was going on working-class sons and husbands were conscripted, either into the military forces or into the C.C.C., and sent up to the steaming jungles of Bougainville or New Guinea or the South-East Pacific, or they were drafted into the C.C.C., who sent them to Darwin or other places. We saw also the huge black-market that operated in all materials, particularly in liquor. We saw the big lorries loaded with black-market grog going to the Americans, operated by men who have since boasted they cleared £1,000 a day on the black-market in liquor in North Queensland. At the same time the little sly-groggers who sold a bottle of plonk to the Yanks without a license were sent to gaol for three months without the option. We saw the shameless and shocking seizure of property from working-class people, and how the big people were treated when their property was seized for the duration of the war. We saw hotels and business premises

seized by the Curtin-Chifley Government—and the payment made to these people for the use of those buildings was to the extent of hundreds of pounds a week, while the workers who had their life savings seized, as on one occasion a worker with 27 acres of land that he had saved up and bought in order to care for his future had it seized by the Curtin Government, who paid him 2s. 6d. a week for the 27 acres—we saw these hotels and business premises on which the Government had spent considerable sums on additions and alterations handed back to the owners after the war improved in value. Whereas when the workers wanted their land handed back in its original state or wanted compensation for damage, the Commonwealth Government seized their land and their homes for all time and turned the workers out.

Mr. Sparkes: What Government?

Mr. AIKENS: The Curtin-Chifley Government. I am glad the hon. member interjected. Since then the case of the little men has been represented to the Menzies-Fadden Government and that Government have endorsed and condoned everything the Curtin-Chifley Government did, so that to us they are both tarred with the same brush in that regard.

We saw the huge profits made by the big fellows and firms and we saw them getting away with open and blatant black-marketing, and we saw the little storekeeper who charged an extra halfpenny or penny on a commodity, such as a dozen matches, hauled before the court and heavily fined, and we realised it was necessary to set up in North Queensland some political party that would at least fight the battle of the people affectionately termed the little people.

In setting up a party we had to make a momentous decision: from what quarter where our funds were coming from? We know the funds of the Labour Government in the main, come from the breweries. I do not take any notice of the denial of the Attorney-General today. Anyone who looks at the Liquor Act passed a few years ago by the Labour Party will realise that even if the legal advisers of the breweries drew it up they could not have done a better job for the breweries than the Labour Party has done. The Labour Party is chronically broke between election times, but when an election looms—no matter how often—the Labour Party can go out and mysteriously put its hands on £40,000 or £50,000. It does not come from the workers or from the trade unions, because most workers and trade unions have, to use the vernacular, given the Labour Party away. We had to decide—and we made the decision without any hesitation—that there were certain firms, persons, and organisations from which the North Queensland Labour Party would, under no consideration, accept any donation. Some of those people have sent donations to our funds and we have just as promptly sent those donations back to them.

In order to place our party on a sound footing, we had to decide just what our industrial viewpoint was and what our political viewpoint was. We realised, of

course, that there must be a solid industrial foundation for any working-class organisation, and we believe in arbitration for the settlement of industrial disputes. But, because the members of the Industrial Court are human beings and because human beings are subject to error, and because there is no appeal from a decision of the Industrial Court, except to the same Industrial Court—an appeal from Caesar unto Caesar—we realised that the working-man must always retain his right to strike, but that right to strike must be exercised very carefully and only as a last resort.

It has always been amusing to me, when an industrial dispute has occurred, and the workers have gone out on strike, to see some men going into work scabbing on their mates. I have always been amused by the activities of the industrial scab because I have never yet seen the industrial scab who has refused to take the higher wages and better conditions won as a result of the strike. Usually he is the first one to rush in and claim the benefits won by his mates upon whom he so joyously scabbed. The industrial scab always reminds me of the man who was standing outside a pub many years ago when I used to drink. It was a Sunday morning and I was going in to try and get a bottle of beer. He said, "I would not go into an hotel on Sunday, Tom, I would not break the law, but if you are lucky enough to get a bottle in there for yourself, will you bring a bottle out for me?" That is the attitude of the industrial scab. He does not believe in strikes. He is prepared to scab on his mates, but when the strike is won he wants everything the strikers have won for him.

We also believe that Parliament should live up to its responsibilities and not hide behind the Industrial Court in other matters, that Parliament should have the courage to fix the basic wage and the standard working hours. At present the Industrial Court Acts has a very convenient front for the Government in those two directions.

In the sphere of international politics, we believe that every worker and every decent citizen in the world, whatever country he belongs to, sincerely desires peace. We believe also that in the world today there are two great opposing forces, American predatory capitalism and Russian Communism. Our party sees no reason why Australia should link itself up to either of these forces. The members of our party are 100 per cent. Australian and we believe that peace can be achieved, with freedom and justice for all, through the framework of the United Nations, a peace that will allow every person in every country to live his life as he thinks it should be lived and in accordance with his conception of freedom and democracy.

I am not going to touch on my beloved subject, the development of the North—I just have not got the time—but I will deal with it in a future speech. I wish to say that we have seen our slogan, "A square go for the North," blatantly stolen by members of the

Liberal-Country Party and even by members of the Labour Party, but Kipling once said—

"If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools . . .,"

and we take consolation in the fact that the people of the North are not fools, they will not be gulled or beguiled very long by the pretences of the Liberal-Country Party or the Labour Party with regard to the development of the North. Northerners know that the only people who can and will provide for the effective development of North Queensland are the party that owes its first allegiance to the North, the party that represents the North Queensland people.

I want to deal today in particular, because it comes within the purview of this debate and because the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government, as well as the Acting Treasurer and Acting Premier, will be very interested in what I am about to say, with municipal matters. I want to deal with what we believe to be the correct function of a council controlled by representatives of the working class as we represented the working class in Townsville from 1939 to 1949. I believe that as municipal affairs are closest to the people they naturally take the greatest interest in them; and we believed when we took control of the Townsville City Council back in 1939 that the first thing to be done was to provide the essential amenities of civilisation for the people who lived in the outlying suburbs. Just as we believe that the first job of a Government is to provide the amenities of civilisation for the people who live in the sparsely populated areas of the State. In the outlying suburbs of every town you will find the homes of the young married people; in the older suburbs the people are more soundly established and firmly entrenched and enjoy these facilities. The young people go to the outlying suburbs to make their homes and rear their children and you will find that the great proportion of people in the outlying suburbs are young married people and children. We believed that we should break away from the old idea of first of all demanding that there should be enough people in an area before that area was supplied with water and electric light. We said and it has been our policy and I commend it to the Government that we would give water and light and other amenities to the sparsely populated suburban areas of our city to encourage development and to encourage more people to go there and that later on we should be able to give them all the other facilities they required. In defiance of the by-laws of the council—and we were not concerned with the legality or the illegality of anything we did—and in defiance of the Local Government Act, we ran electric light and water out to Aitkenvale, Pimlico, Oonoonba and Stuart, and other parts to give these amenities to the young people there, and encourage the development of the outer areas. This policy we pursued until the people turned us out of office in 1949.

I want to deal with the electricity position of our city. In Townsville we had the finest

electricity set-up in the State. Our charges were the lowest and our service the best of any provincial town in Australia. In addition we established a sales department that gave the people an opportunity to buy electrical equipment at the cheapest possible price and on the easiest possible terms. Unfortunately that has been swept away by the formation of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board, which has jacked up the rates for electricity until people can hardly afford to pay them. Many poor people have had to switch off the electric light and are stumbling around with hurricane lamps. The Townsville Regional Electricity Board is building—and God knows when it will be finished—a huge power station on a shifting-sand foundation on Murder Island that cost hundreds of thousands of pounds for the foundations alone. It only needs the combination of a high tide and a stiff north-easter and there will be no power-house left. T.C.A. representatives on the board, not content with the staggering increases imposed and not content with wiping out the benefits we gave with regard to the purchase of electrical appliances, is crying for more increased charges in order to justify its attitude on this matter. If I could be humorous I would say that the other day the board, which has transformed this once fine electricity set-up into a costly undertaking—we used to make a few thousand pounds profit yearly on our undertaking but the board made a huge loss of £60,000 last year—celebrated last year's staggering loss and the huge increase in electricity rates by granting Mr. Kelly, the chairman, from Ingham, an increase in the chairman's salary of £250 a year.

With regard to water, we were able to temporarily save the Townsville people from a water famine by the construction of the Aplin Weir against strong opposition of those who support the T.C.A. and the A.L.P. We pushed on with the Mt. Spec Scheme. I went back to Townsville from this Chamber on one occasion to make a sixth vote against the five on the council at that time who were opposed to the Mt. Spec scheme. We accepted the recommendation of the then Premier, the late Hon. F. A. Cooper, to push on with the Mt. Spec scheme, and again it is significant that three of our aldermen—Hamilton, Coreoran and Illich—who bitterly opposed the Mt. Spec scheme, have left our party and have scuttled back to the A.L.P.. When the T.C.A. went in in 1949, it made a boast to the people that it would complete the Mt. Spec pipeline in 18 months. However, I think it has built about 3 miles of it and it is not even a quarter of the way to Mt. Spec. These men have been in power for 2½ years, and I advise the Acting Treasurer to have a look at the loan commitments entered into since by the Townsville City Council in connection with the Mt. Spec scheme.

I am mentioning these things to give the Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government some idea of what is going on in Townsville. It was suggested by one or two previous speakers that perhaps

the Government might hold an investigation into the affairs of the Brisbane City Council, but a much more pressing investigation would be one into the affairs of the Townsville City Council.

Let me give hon. members a couple of instances of what this council did. I know hon. members will find it hard to believe, but it is true. The T.C.A. Council constructed a road into the Mundingburra area, and after the last heavy wet season, as the result of the construction of that road, a swamp was formed in the yards of a couple of score of houses in the Mundingburra area. Instead of rectifying the damage that it had caused, the council issued an individual order under the Health Act on every householder in the area, calling upon each of them to pump the water off his property or off his allotment or fill it in, otherwise he would be prosecuted immediately. The residents of the area came to me in considerable distress, and on one Sunday morning we held a combined meeting and mapped out a plan of campaign to attack the council on its outrageous and unjust order. The council, of course, heard of the meeting and heard that I had been there, and on the Monday it sent out pumps to pump the water away from the properties, and on the Wednesday it sent out an individual notice to each householder withdrawing the original threat of prosecution.

Reverting to Townsville's water supply, I was able to help the council to get 40,000 feet of 4-inch piping for water reticulation in the Armstrong-Garbutt Estate area. I knew that that piping had arrived in Townsville last November, but when a deputation of residents of the area called on me at my home in about May, they told me that the council had not only not made the pipes available, but had discontinued the water-carting service to them, thus forcing them, and their wives and their families, to walk half a mile with all the domestic implements they could pick up to a tap in Gill Park in order to get drinking and domestic water. I wondered what had become of the 40,000 feet of 4-inch piping, so I immediately made an investigation and found it stacked at the Hume Pipe Coy's works at Aitkenvale, where it was waiting to be cement-lined. A very courteous and efficient officer of the Government was there and he told me that he was working on a priority for the cement-lining of pipes for many local authorities in North Queensland. I asked him if a priority had been given in respect of the Townsville pipes, and he said no.

At the Aitkenvale Pipe Works I found this 40,000 feet of 4-inch piping covered with weeds and grass, the result of the rain of the previous December. I also found that the council had made no application for priority in the cement-lining of the pipes and I then immediately got in touch with the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, got a priority and passed it on to the council with a stinging letter of rebuke. Neither the contents of that letter nor any

reference to that incident or to the Munding-burra swamp incident ever appeared in the columns of the Townsville daily paper. Whether the council has put an iron curtain round the Press or the Press has put one on the people we have not yet been able to ascertain. That just shows what can happen if the people misguidedly replace the aldermen who are pledged to the welfare of the ordinary people with people who are bound to the Liberal-Country Party.

I am going to suggest that the Government should take a leaf out of the book of the North Queensland Labour Party and adopt one of the major planks of our platform, that is, to give the first consideration to the women and the children. When we were in control of the council we did that because we believed that if you looked after the women and children, the men—or the bucks as they are sometimes called—can always look after themselves. They have their unions, lodges and various organisations, whereas the women and children in the main are disorganised and at the mercy of all who are out to exploit them.

I want to stress that we did many things in defiance of the law. We were not concerned with the law; we were only concerned with the interests of the people. Our first job was to install in Townsville one of the finest municipal libraries in Australia and it stands as a monument for all time to the North Queensland Labour Party. It includes a free lending library and reference library where students whose parents cannot afford to buy them textbooks for their education can peruse them free of charge to fit themselves for higher and better positions in life.

When the ice shortage came about, with its famous or infamous queues for ice, we again in defiance of the law built a municipal iceworks that turned out 500,000 blocks a year, which helped to relieve these shocking queues and gave the people of Townsville the ice they so urgently needed. The iceworks cost us—and this is something the Government might listen to—£19,000, in addition to the land on which the iceworks stood, which is valued at £2,000. Yet quite recently the T.C.A. aldermen who were elected in 1949 sold that magnificent £21,000 asset of the people of Townsville for a paltry £5,000. They rejected all offers to lease the iceworks, so that at the end of the period of the lease the people who owned the iceworks would still have the property. They sold the £21,000 asset of the people of Townsville for a paltry £5,000 and one of the T.C.A. aldermen admitted that he had arranged the sale. Of course, he unctuously said that he had accepted no commission in connection with it but I want to say quite frankly, as I have already said from the public platform, that I do not believe him.

We also established the municipal fruit and vegetable mart, which brought down the prices of fruit and vegetables for the people of Townsville and today fruit and vegetables are sold cheaper in Townsville than in the capital city or in any other city in the State.

When some people of Townsville say that the municipal fruit mart sells fruit and vegetables at the same prices as the stores up the street, we say that is the wrong way to look at it and that it should be that the stores up the street really sell their fruit and vegetables at the same prices as the municipal mart. If anyone wants to see how the Townsville fruit and vegetable mart operates and what good it has been to the people of Townsville he has only to compare the prices of fruit and vegetables in the shops up the street during the week when the municipal mart is open with the prices charged by the same shops at the week-end when the municipal fruit and vegetable mart is closed.

Mr. Nicklin: What percentage of profit does it make?

Mr. Aikens: The Townsville Municipal Fruit and Vegetable Mart makes a profit from £750 to £1,000 a year. Some fruit and vegetable shops in Townsville have two price tickets, one for their fruit and vegetables when the municipal mart is open and a higher-price ticket for when it is closed.

We also established—and it is unique in local government affairs—a rest room for the mothers of Townsville, quite free, with all facilities and a free stroller service for children. Strollers are taken out free of charge. We even have double strollers for twins. All those amenities were there for the convenience of the women and children. In addition to that we established a municipal child-care centre, which cost several thousand pounds. We gave to a committee that was set up to conduct that child-care centre the use of the municipal roof garden, and equipped it, and handed it over free of cost to the committee to conduct. We also subsidised it to the extent of some two hundred and fifty pounds per annum. The committee that ran it is comprised of excellent women, women who did an excellent job without cost. Many of them are political supporters of the Liberal Party and Country Party. That child-care centre was run on pure socialistic lines; only the women who worked in it and who conducted it had any say in its operation. When I told one of these excellent women, when installing the centre, that its whole set-up was along socialistic lines and I explained what Socialism meant—that those who run it would be the only people who would have any say in the control of it—she replied, “If that is Socialism it is right up my alley.” (Laughter).

In establishing these amenities and facilities for the people of Townsville we placed the interests of the people first. When we did all these things there was, of course, violent opposition, from the Liberal-Country Party element in Townsville and violent opposition from the A.L.P. element. At that time the Local Government Act contained no provision for local authorities to do all these splendid things, so we had to do them in defiance of the law. The Liberal-Country Party element of Townsville ganged up with the A.L.P. element and petitioned the Government to dissolve the Townsville City Council because we were doing these splendid things for the

people we represented. It was on that occasion that I made the famous statement in the Townsville City Council, which was published in "The Townsville Bulletin," that "If the present Labour Government dissolves the Townsville City Council because of the things we have done for the people, and because we have lightened the impact of war on our civilian population, I want to tell them right here and now that blood will flow in the streets of Townsville" and they did not have the guts to interfere. Instead of closing down these things we set up the Government passed legislation validating everything we did and giving every local authority the right to do the things we did on our own initiative and of our own volition.

I want to refer to the aldermen of the Townsville City Council at the present time and a remark made in this Chamber by no less a person than the hon. member for Aubigny, the Liberal-Country Party Whip in this Chamber. We can take any utterance from him as being quite authentic and quite well-founded and true. Speaking in this Chamber of the election of the T.C.A. aldermen at the last municipal election he said, "Of course, they call themselves the T.C.A. but they are really our mob." I am pleased to have this utterance from no less a person than the Whip of the Liberal-Country Party—that the T.C.A. aldermen, although they claim to be unassociated with any political party, are members of the Liberal-Country Party. Their activities since they have been on the council have proven up to the hilt to the people of Townsville that they are members of the Liberal-Country Party, because they have a typical Liberal-Country Party outlook. In addition, to the selling of the municipal iceworks, or almost giving away the municipal iceworks, they are contemplating—I doubt whether they will have the guts to put their ideas into effect—selling the municipal fruit and vegetable market and handing the library over to a private concern. Worse than that, they are contemplating handing over the control of the municipal child-care centre and the municipal ladies' rest room to a semi-political association closely allied with the Liberal Party. The Townsville women will be up in arms if the T.C.A. aldermen do that because they will know that before they will be able to enjoy the facilities and conveniences of the child-care centre and the ladies' rest room they will have to first belong to this political party.

This Liberal-Country Party group in Townsville, which masquerades as the T.C.A., went into power in 1949 with the promise that they would solve all the problems that then beset the people and they would reduce the rates. They have already jacked up the general rates by 50 per cent., and jacked up the water rates, the sewerage rates, and the cleansing rates.

In addition, they made a promise that they would complete the uncompleted sewerage scheme in Townsville. I doubt whether in the 2½ years they have been in office they have connected up 15 or 20 pedestals. There is something I suggest the Secretary for

Health and Home Affairs may cause immediate investigations to be made into. I received information—and I believe it to be true—that the council does not propose pumping the sewage from the big sewerage well near the drill hall in North Ward to the treatment works at the mouth of Ross River, but running the sewage underground to the Sister Kenny Park where it will sink through the sand into the sea. Children play in the Sister Kenny Park, citizens walk up and down in the park; and it will be a lovely day for the citizens of Townsville when men, women and children walking in the Park will be compelled to paddle in the sewage being discharged from the pump-well near the drill hall.

When the T.C.A. took over away back in April, 1949, the fine municipal baths were almost completed; they were going to complete them in three months but it took them 18 months, during which time the cost increased by about £50,000. They were going to build Rooney's bridge across the Ross River. Townsville is in a particularly invidious position in regard to road transport to the southwest. There is only one road bridge from Townsville leading in that direction, a low-level bridge over the Ross River at the meatworks. Our council decided to build a high-level bridge at Rooney's. As a result of my representations as a member I was able to get the £20,000 loan allocation necessary to the council, but before we were able to start the job we were thrown out of office and the present council promised to have the job done in six months. They have been there for 2½ years and they have not driven the first pile; I doubt if they ever will.

I want to deal with the particularly pressing problem of Ross River erosion, which has been mentioned on several occasions. We believe the first step to be taken in the prevention of Ross River erosion to protect the homes and properties of our people, particularly in the Hermit Park area, is to arrest the dangerous sweep that has developed between Aplin's Weir and the meatworks bridge. I was able to arrange with the Government to allow the council to borrow sufficient money to start erosion-prevention work on that dangerous sweep. We received assurances from the Main Roads Commission that it would play its part from the end of the bridge up towards Aplin's Weir. I do not know whether this is legal, but the present council has taken money specifically loaned to it for the prevention of Ross River erosion and used it for another purpose. Nothing has been done and it appears nothing will be done by the T.C.A. council to remove from the people the spectre of the Ross River flooding that must occur and will probably occur again in dangerous measure if something is not done to arrest the erosion.

I want to make particular mention of the material shortage. One of the reasons why the T.C.A. aldermen were able to inveigle the people of Townsville into removing us from office and replacing us with them was the statement they made that they could get all the materials necessary for the carrying out of Townsville works. They said they were business men, that they had business

associations in Brisbane and that, through those business associations, they could get all the steel, timber, concrete and other materials necessary to carry out the outstanding works of the Townsville City Council. They entered into an agreement with a chap down here to pay him 5 per cent. commission on all council materials bought in Brisbane presumably whether he had anything to do with the purchase of those materials or not. So that this chap in Brisbane gets a 5 per cent. rake-off on all council materials bought in Brisbane. Naturally, of course, he has got his rake-off from the materials that he has been able to buy or that he has been able to say he helped to buy, but this business council has not been able to get one-quarter of the material necessary for the work that needs to be done in the city of Townsville and in the Townsville area. Indeed, at all times, ever since they have been in office, these aldermen have been hanging round my neck asking me to help them to get the materials they told the people of Townsville I could not get when I was an alderman and that they could off their own bat if they were elected.

I received from the Treasurer the other day a list of the loan commitments and of the indebtedness of the Townsville City Council, particularly the indebtedness in connection with interest and redemption for which that council has made the people of Townsville responsible in the last two and a half years. Of course, I know the people of Townsville are looking forward to next May when they can throw out this group of T.C.A. "no-hopers" and false-pretencers who occupy the council chamber at the present time, but nevertheless I believe that if something drastic is not done it will not be the elected representatives of the people of Townsville who will be running the Townsville City Council, it will not be the elected representatives on the Townsville Regional Electricity Board who will be running that board because, if you look at the commitments they have made, when you look at the interest and redemption for which they have become liable in the last two and a half to three years, you will realise, as we realise, that the bailliff will probably be in and he will be running the city of Townsville and the Townsville Regional Electricity Board.

I suggest to the Government that at the earliest possible opportunity they have a complete investigation and overhaul made of the finances of the Townsville City Council to see whether or not the present T.C.A. aldermen have achieved what we believed to be impossible, to see whether or not they have reduced a prosperous financial city to the verge of bankruptcy in two and a half years. That is a very serious statement to make, yet I make it as a responsible citizen and a responsible member of this Parliament.

As I have said on more than one occasion, I believe that a local authority, being elected by the people, is a self-governing body and, unless circumstances are particularly extraordinary, the Government should not interfere with the workings or functions of that

self-governing body. If we are going to have democracy, we must believe that once the people elect a council or any other similar body they, the people, shall only have the power either to replace that body or call it to account. But I believe that an extraordinary set of circumstances has arisen in Townsville. I believe that the time has come when the Government should face up to their responsibilities, because we must remember that every loan raised by the Townsville City Council is guaranteed by the Government and the interest and the redemption on that loan money are also guaranteed by the Government. I believe that the Government should make that investigation without delay.

During our period in Townsville, we were able to do several things that cut right across the policy of the Government and get away with them. Everyone knows that in a local authority area most of the park lands and reserves are Crown lands simply vested in the shire council or city council for recreational purposes. Every time the local authority wants to do anything with these parks, somebody opposing the Council writes to the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation and more often than not the Minister exercises his veto. We believe that parklands should be owned by the council itself, and should not be Crown land vested in the council. The council should have full power of control over such land. Early in 1939, before the Pimlico area was fully developed, because of our long-sightedness, our foresight, vision and courage, we bought at Pimlico 25 acres of land for £25 an acre. Similar land is now selling for £500 an acre. We established Gill Park. We bought some 11 acres of land at Aitkenvale, and we bought the small park near the station, in conformity with our policy that the park lands of Townsville would be owned and controlled by the representatives of the people of Townsville and not the Government, and so that no Minister of the Crown should be egged on to interfere with the proper functions of the council.

Quite a lot has been said about the resumption of the Pallaranda lands. I know that many promises were made to the council, many promises were made to the people of Townsville, with regard to the opposition that might be offered to the resumption of the Pallaranda lands. When the test came—let it be remembered that I applied the test twice in this Chamber—of the four hon. members representing Townsville, I was the only member to stick to his word and oppose the resumption of the Pallaranda lands. The Government have gone on with the resumption of the Pallaranda lands, Mr. Keyatta interjected, if the hon. member for Townsville disagrees with what I have said, I suggest that he look up the division lists in "Hansard", or, better still, look at the division list published in "The Townsville Bulletin."

Mr. Keyatta: That is not in accordance with fact.

Mr. AIKENS: I will reply to the interjection.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: If the hon. member says it is not in accordance with fact, I refer the hon. member to the pages of "Hansard."

Mr. Keyatta: You are just a skite. If you can shout I can shout.

Mr. AIKENS: If we are to have a resumption of land in Townsville for residential purposes, I appeal to the Government to do what was suggested by many public bodies, and by the Townsville City Council of which I was a member. Quite a large area of land is held by the Queensland Meat Export Company at Ross River, for which that company has no use whatever. It holds the land as an area on which to run cattle before they are slaughtered at the meatworks. The company does not use the land now, as it uses more often than not the old aerodrome reserve on the other side of the Bowen road. The land I speak of is fine land, right adjacent to water and light connections and should be resumed by the Government for residential purposes in Townsville. I doubt where there is an organisation in Townsville that has not at some time or other put forward this suggestion to the Government. I was the first to put it forward because the A.L.P. at Oonoomba, when I was a member of the A.L.P., put the proposal to me, and I put it to the Government. It is a fine area of land, high and dry, held by the Queensland Meat Export Company for no useful purpose whatever, and it could be, and should be, resumed by the Government and cut into residential blocks.

I think I have dealt exhaustively and thoroughly with the party I have the honour to represent in this Parliament. As I said, our beginnings were small, so also were the beginnings of the Labour Party small. At the last State elections, much to the consternation of the Labour Party, our candidates, although some ran for hopeless seats, got no fewer than 8,000 votes in North Queensland. At the next State elections our Party will poll probably 18,000, or maybe 80,000, votes in North Queensland. I think that the greatest compliment ever paid to me personally was paid to me by the citizens of Townsville at the last municipal election—

A Government Member: When they kicked you out!

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. member says "When they kicked you out." They did kick us out and they elected a full T.C.A. team, with of course Alderman J. S. Gill as mayor. However, in that election, when both the members of our party and the members of the A.L.P. were wiped out of office, I polled almost twice the votes of the top A.L.P. man, and I polled more votes than four other A.L.P. candidates combined. That shows my personal standing with the people of Townsville, and the opinion that they hold of me and of the members of our party, who were next in the voting after me at the last municipal election.

If anything is to be done for North Queensland and if anything is to be done for the workers and the useful people of North Queensland, who, I repeat, have been affectionately called the little people of North Queensland, is it not obvious that the only people who can do the things that need to be done are the people who belong to them and live among them, and the people who honestly and sincerely represent them? First and foremost, we are members of the working class; we represent the working class—the workers, the farmers, the little traders and the small men who are always battling for existence against the exploitation of the big men. Secondly, we are genuine, 100 per cent. Australians and North Queenslanders; we owe no allegiance to any other body, either inside the country or outside the country. Our first duty, as we see it, is to do for the people we represent those things that we should expect them to do if they represented us.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (7.42 p.m.): I have listened very attentively to the debate on the presentation by the Acting Treasurer of the Financial Statement. It is pleasing to know that we finished the year with a credit balance of £98,163 instead of the expected deficit.

The speeches of the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition strongly criticised the Budget and drew attention to its weaknesses. The credit balance the Government were able to show was the result of the special grant of £2,000,000 received from the Commonwealth Government. If that grant of £2,000,000 had not been made available, this Government would have been in very serious financial difficulties.

It is regrettable that there should be strained relations between this Government and the Federal Government. When all is said and done, we should all work for the betterment of the nation rather than for the betterment of an individual State. If we were all able to do that, I am sure that Australia would progress much better and develop much quicker than she is at the present time.

The financial position of any State, or of the Commonwealth as a whole, is a very important matter. We find that the Financial Statement before the Committee shows that various Government departments have spent considerable amounts in excess of those that were appropriated. For instance, the Department of Health and Home Affairs overspent by £1,085,330. Of course, changing conditions were partly responsible for a portion of that, but it has always been my opinion that the Golden Casket Art Union was instituted in the first place to provide funds for our hospitals. But only £1,000,000 of a total turnover of about £4,000,000 from the Golden Casket is used for the purpose for which the Casket was established. A greater proportion of the takings should be used to help the hospitals, which was the original purpose of the Golden Casket.

The estimated expenditure of the Railway Department for the year was exceeded by £1,721,906 but of course, as it is one of the biggest employers of labour in the State, every increase in the basic wage and in costs generally would account for a part of this big sum. The department has increased fares and freights considerably in the last 12 months and it is noticeable that the country is always called upon to carry the greatest burden in increased fares, while the city is asked to bear little or none of it at all. The general increase in fares and freights is not evenly balanced over the entire State and I therefore suggest to the Minister for Transport that a thorough investigation should be made into the administration and efficiency of the Railway Department with a view to a check on all rising costs before any further increases are made. He should not be content to accept the increased charges as being inevitable but he should first of all see whether the department is being efficiently run. That is a very important thing because it is unreasonable to expect the people to pay additional charges, which eventually have a bearing on the cost of living, until he is satisfied that all is well with the department.

I desire to repeat, for the purpose of recording it in "Hansard" lest it should be forgotten, that during the war years and since railway men have not been able to take their annual leave. A considerable amount of leave has been accumulated over those years and I venture to say that it represents an undisclosed liability on the Railway Department amounting to at least £1,000,000. I know perfectly well that some of the employees who have quite a number of years' service to their credit have a considerable amount of accumulated leave due to them, amounting in some cases to three and four months. This is an important matter for the Treasurer because most of the annual leave was earned while many of the employees were on lower salaries than they get today but with the increased promotions that have occurred since then and with increased classifications the cost of giving the accumulated leave today has increased because it will have to be based on present-day salaries and wages. Therefore it will be seen that day by day, month by month, and year by year the amount of annual leave and costs are continually mounting. Every time there is an increase in the basic wage the total cost continues to grow. It would be advisable for the Minister for Transport and the Treasurer to look into this important matter because it is an undisclosed liability of considerable dimensions and the Government will be required to liquidate it in the interests of the railway men in the course of time.

The Minister for Transport should also give early and favourable consideration to a serious matter, namely, the maintenance of the rail-tracks. Thousands of sleepers are required to put them into a condition safe for travel. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in getting sufficient sleepers for the purpose, but men engaged on this work say it is impossible to keep the track safe

and efficient unless sleepers are made available at an early date. I noticed when travelling to Brisbane this morning that maintenance men were withdrawing sleepers from beneath the rails, but their condition had deteriorated and they were in such a state of repair that they could not be termed sleepers.

I have advocated for some considerable time the issue of daily return tickets from the country. The Minister some 12 months ago agreed to do this, but he has only issued return tickets, without giving any concessions whatever. The country people want daily return tickets at a concessional rate. The only advantage they have at present is that they can buy return tickets at a single-fare rate each way, which prevents them from queuing up to buy another ticket on the return journey.

There is another matter in connection with the railways that requires attention. The Commonwealth Government make concessions to the age and invalid pensioners. These folk must be down to bedrock before they become eligible for the pension, therefore their claim for some concession on our railways, similar to that given in New South Wales, is justified. A concessional rate to these old folk would be greatly appreciated, as they could travel from point to point to visit their friends in their declining years. I advocate that the Government should issue concessional tickets to these old people so that they can enjoy the last days of their lives.

Last week I asked a question of great importance to the Railway Department, namely, the amount paid to people who use the railways to transport goods, parcels, luggage, etc. that are damaged or lost in transit. Many substantial claims are lodged but the department always pays the least possible amount for damage or loss. No increase has ever been made in the amount paid under this heading, despite the fact that fares and freights have increased and the value of the £1 has depreciated. Early consideration should be given to the bringing up to date of the amounts paid by the Claims Branch for damage or loss in transit of goods, parcels and luggage. The amount paid at present is only nominal.

Another grievance is the long delay that takes place in paying claims. If you have anything broken or damaged in transit or if you lose something, the system of investigations by the department is such that you are lucky if you get a cheque up to 12 months afterwards. I believe that investigations should be speeded up and determinations made much quicker than at the present time, and the amount paid for the loss of the goods should be determined on a comparative basis.

The expenditure over the estimate for the Department of Public Instruction was £183,039. I am not surprised at that because I believe that the amount made available for public instruction is far too little and that much more should be made available, because we should spare no effort to provide our

children with the best possible education so that they may become equipped to follow any calling they desire.

I notice that the Department of the Treasurer expended £385,732 over the estimate and I should like the Treasurer to explain the following, which appears on page 4:—

“The expenditure of £385,732 under the heading of the Treasurer, in excess of the estimate, is explained by the writing-off of £456,000, being portion of the debit balances of certain trust funds.”

I hope the Treasurer will be able to give us some information on that. If there has been any writing-off I should like to have full details. I know a local authority that has an outstanding debt I recently asked the Treasurer to write off, but he could not see his way clear to do so.

Much has been said about houses, and it is to be noted that most of the houses erected are in the city areas. I suppose there is a greater demand in the city, but I hope to see the day when everybody will have his own home—when everybody will be properly accommodated and our standard of living will be higher.

Mr. Keyatta: That is the policy of the Government.

Mr. LOW: I hope it is their sincere policy. Overseas firms have been responsible for bringing a considerable number of houses to this State. These companies are allowed by the different nations to do so to accommodate our people, yet those countries suffered the brunt of the war. It makes one wonder whether we are pulling our weight out here. I should like to see the people of Australia face up to their responsibility to a greater extent. We have the raw materials, but we lack the energy to get the job done.

I should like to see the Government do much more in the country in the way of residences for their own employees. If you go to any town throughout the State you will find, in many instances, that the local policeman, the school teacher, the C.P.S. and other public officers who are not able to get suitable accommodation. Many of them finish up in broken-down houses that are not in keeping with the prestige of their position. If the Government only built homes for the public servants they employ throughout the State, it would relieve the housing position for people who are engaged in business or in industry.

Mr. F. E. Roberts: Do you think the Government should give preference to Crown employees?

Mr. LOW: The Government could build houses for Crown employees, thus making other houses available to the people. It does not matter whether the house is built for the Crown employee or the private person; the fact that a house is built means that one more is made available for use. I do appeal to the Government to build more houses for their own employees, especially for those stationed in permanent positions in country centres.

I make an appeal, too, on behalf of the primary producers of Queensland for a reduction of 50 per cent. in the registration fees payable on their motor trucks, tractors or trailers. Those people who work or cultivate or use the land for farming, other agricultural pursuits, or the raising of stock, do not use the roads as much as other people do. They use their vehicles mainly for carrying their produce from the farms to the nearest railheads or markets. This concession of a 50-per-cent. reduction in registration fees is in operation in New South Wales, and if it was extended to this State it would help our primary producers greatly. It is long overdue, it is very desirable, and it would help primary producers considerably in their present battle with rising costs and prices.

It is my firm belief that the time has arrived when this Government should make an approach to the Federal Government for the removal of the barrier that compels a member of a State Parliament to resign his State seat before he is eligible to contest a seat in the Federal House of Representatives or the Senate. At present, if he is successful in the election, he proceeds to the Federal capital and takes his seat. If he is defeated there must be an election for the State seat that he resigned. Some years ago this State Parliament passed an act that provided for this. Later the Federal Government passed an Act vetoing the move and this State eventually repealed its legislation.

Mr. Walsh: We can do nothing about that. You will have to amend the Commonwealth Constitution.

Mr. LOW: No. All that needs to be done is for this Government to ask the Federal Government to remove from the statute book the Act put through the Federal Parliament disqualifying a State member from contesting seats in the Federal House or Senate without first resigning his State seat.

Mr. Walsh: I thought you were referring to the Public Service.

Mr. LOW: No. Anybody in the State Public Service can contest a State seat, and if elected by the people must resign his position in the service but if defeated can immediately return to the position he held. I think the proposal is fair and reasonable.

Mr. Walsh: He would get leave of absence.

Mr. LOW: That is so. I do not see why a State member of Parliament should not have the same privilege. If he did it would save the State considerable money in the holding of a by-election. When you examine the position, members of Parliament might be termed high-ranking public servants as we receive our salaries from the Treasury. I think that an approach to the Federal Government at this juncture would possibly meet with success. State members do not enter Federal politics because they are unwilling to leave something in the hope of getting something else.

Mr. Walsh: You will not get any Federal Government to alter that decision.

Mr. LOW: I think it would be an advantage to the Commonwealth and the nation.

Mr. Walsh: Billy Hughes had a go at it to get Frank Forde out.

Mr. LOW: I had a look at the legislation, but must say that times have changed and I believe that if the Government made an approach they would receive a different reply. This is something I have been thinking over for years. If the barrier was removed many good State men would make their way to the Federal capital and give Canberra a different outlook. No matter whether a Labour, Liberal, or Country Party Government are in power at Canberra, if we could put a few more State men into the Federal Government we should find that the problems we are confronted with in the States would be dealt with more sympathetically.

Mr. Burrows: Did Charlie Russell prompt you in making the suggestion?

Mr. LOW: No. I take full credit or blame that is coming to me for the suggestion. I think the idea is right and just and in the best interests of the nation.

Mr. Walsh: I think you are right too.

Mr. LOW: I am pleased the Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government is in the Chamber as I wish to refer to the report of the Department of Public Works for the year ended 30 June, 1951, in which the under secretary on page 1 says—

“In Queensland, classroom accommodation has been provided for all pupils attending schools, and not at any time did the position arise that there was an acute shortage of classrooms as it is known occurred in other States of the Commonwealth.”

I should like to say that that is a deliberate lie and is deliberately untrue. I refer to the position that exists at Woombye where 60 children have been sitting on a veranda for 12 months. Is that adequate and proper accommodation? If Mr. Lyons thinks that it is fair to put forward such a statement when 60 youngsters have been sitting on a veranda without protection for 12 months, I am ashamed of him and I lodge my emphatic protest. That is by no means the only place, and I think it is very regrettable that a document such as that should be sent to the House and out to the general public. When I read it in “The Telegraph” and again in “The Courier-Mail,” I was absolutely astounded. I hope the Minister will take him to task, because we can prove that in many instances children are not adequately provided for and are sitting out on open verandas. If he had to put up with some of the complaints emanating from the parents of these children I am sure he would change his tune and realise his responsibilities.

I noticed also in “The Telegraph” that someone from the electorate represented by Dr. Dittmer, a man named Henry Bateman, honorary secretary of the Broadwater and District Progress Association, drew attention

to the existence in his area of similar conditions to those that I have just mentioned. That is another example of the “rough stuff” that is put over by the Department of Public Works of this State.

I remember an occasion in this Chamber when the Hon. H. A. Bruce, who was then Secretary for Public Instruction, said that all provisional schools had been taken over by the Government and I remember saying to him, “I am very pleased to hear that.” However, during the recent recess I visited a little school that was previously in the Gympie electorate but is now in my electorate. It was at a place known as Wilson’s Pocket, and if ever I ran across a deplorable show, it was there. I took action immediately and reported the matter to the Secretary for Public Instruction, who in turn took the matter up with the Department of Public Works. I am pleased to say that arrangements are now under way to erect a new school building on a suitable site. On the occasion of my visit to Wilson’s Pocket I said to the people, “If you do not get anything else, you will get a new school.” Hon. members will get some indication of the condition that the school was in from the following statement:—

1. The school building was in a very dilapidated broken-down condition and urgently in need of repair and painting.

2. Four windows were broken.

3. The back and front-door latches were broken, with the result that the school building could not be locked.

4. The front veranda and railings were dangerous.

5. No proper hat-pegs were provided. Nails were driven into the wall to support hats and bags, most of which were on the floor.

6. The spouting, guttering and down-piping were badly rusted and in a terrible condition.

7. The tank was leaking badly and was beyond repair.

8. The drainage from the building was unsatisfactory.

9. The boys’ and girls’ lavatories were very old and ready to tumble over. The cabinets were in a deplorable condition and there was definitely no privacy.

10. The boys’ urinal consisted of a tin placed behind a sheet of iron. It was very bad and a shocking disgrace.

11. The fences were in a bad state and the children’s horses were allowed to roam about the playground area.

12. There was no proper playshed at the school.

Mr. Devries: Do you know whether an inspector had visited that school?

Mr. LOW: A Works Department inspector had been there on several occasions and had promised to have these things attended to. Further, a clinic sister had been there on two occasions over a period of two years, and she had also reported the matter to the Department of Health and Home

Affairs and had asked for immediate attention. However, up to the time that I arrived, nothing had been done. The position was so serious that the cabinets in the lavatories were in such a broken-down condition that the school committee had to run a raffle to buy two lavatory cabinets, which cost £5 10s. They were in the school room—the day I arrived there.

A Government Member: Who won the raffle?

Mr. LOW: I do not know who won the raffle. I know that the Secretary for Public Instruction is trying to do his best for country children in bringing premises up to date but the trouble is with the Department of Public Works. The Secretary for Public Instruction has no control over that department and like the rest of us he can only make a request and depend on the good graces of the Department of Public Works to have it carried out. I cited the case at Wilson's Pocket because it was a very serious one. The parents were very upset. This is a pretty important district and I appreciate what the Secretary for Public Instruction has done in the matter but I am very disappointed that the Department of Public Works had not previously given the proper accommodation for the 25 little tots who attend the school.

Earlier the Secretary for Public Instruction intimated that his Estimates would be considered by the Committee this year and I hope that he is serious. He can learn more about his own department from criticism offered in good faith than in any other way and I hope we shall have an opportunity of discussing his Estimates.

Mr. Devries: I shall have an answer for all your complaints.

Mr. LOW: Then I look forward to a discussion of his Estimates.

There is a matter I should like to bring under the Minister's attention while it is fresh in my mind and it is the fact that the Gympie High and Intermediate School is not gazetted as a rural school and for some reason unknown to me children in that district do not get the same transport concession when attending that school for rural education as is given in other parts of the State. I understand the reason is that the school is not classified as a rural school although rural training is provided. On investigating the matter I find that children in the outlying parts of the Gympie district have to pay their own fares one day a week in order to get vocational training. For instance, from Coondoo the return fare is 2s. which is paid by the welfare league; from Neusavale it is 2s., which is paid by the parents; from Cedar Pocket, 2s. 6d. also paid by the parents, and from Beenham Range it is 3s., again paid by the parents. There are also many other schools affected in the same way. If the parents cannot afford to pay the fares the children do not get any vocational training.

Mr. Burrows: How do they go to school?

Mr. LOW: They go to the primary school in their own district but I am speaking about vocational training, which is given at the Gympie High and Intermediate School one day a week. They go by the regular bus service or by the local cream van. If the school were classified as a rural school as well as a high and intermediate school the difficulty might be overcome.

It is my intention to submit the whole facts to the Minister as soon as I have sufficient time, in the hope of overcoming this unsatisfactory position. I was approached by the people of Tin Can Bay and I made certain representations to the Minister. There are 11 children at Tin Can Bay who desire to get vocational training at the Gympie High and Intermediate School. There is a regular bus service between Tin Can Bay and Gympie, 34 miles each way, and the return fare is 5s., but the department will not accept any responsibility in the matter, therefore 11 children are deprived of vocational training. That is an unfair burden on children in country centres. The whole of the transport associated with vocational training in the Gympie District should be inquired into and its problems satisfactorily solved. When all is said and done, the vocational training received by country children in rural schools stands them in good stead in the years that lie ahead.

I want to touch on one other school matter, and I will reserve the remainder of my comments on the Department of Public Instruction to a later date. I want to make one more plea for the provision of proper playsheds for country schools. I make this plea sincerely because country children should have a playshed and a rest-room where they can eat their lunches in clean, healthy surroundings. On many occasions when a similar request has been made to the Department of Public Instruction it has been referred to the Department of Public Works, which has said "No." This unsatisfactory position has been continued for some time. I have a dozen or more of such applications in my own electorate. Maroochy River School is an urgent case. In one instance at Traveston it is approved that the area underneath the school should be concreted and the sand and gravel for the purpose were delivered, but 12 months have elapsed and nothing has been done. The children, in the meantime, have kicked the sand and gravel about until very little of it remains. I hope that the Minister will look into this matter because his approval would give satisfaction to country children as it would enable them to rest and lunch under conditions they are justly entitled to and that will bring their conditions up to the standard of industrial workers employed in industry. No children should be deprived of adequate conditions for rest and lunch in their leisure hours at school. If a proper playshed and rest-house cannot be provided, the area under the School should be concreted or asphalted irrespective of the cost.

It is pleasing to note that tonight we have received information that the Federal Government have agreed to pay the subsidy on butter from 1 July last.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LOW: We are all glad when a promise made is kept.

Mr. Burrows: It is long overdue.

Mr. LOW: The Queensland Government at long last agreed to pay the dairy farmer 3s. 1½d. per lb. for his butter and now we find that the Federal Government have come along and met their obligations in full.

Mr. Burrows: They never did anything of the sort. That is a lie.

Mr. LOW: I am surprised that hon. members representing country constituencies seem to be a bit "crooked" on them. I do not know whether they want it or not. We knew the Federal Government would honour their promise. (Government interjections.) We were very confident in that respect.

This afternoon the hon. member for Lockyer dealt with the very important matter of electricity. Everybody knows its great benefits in rural areas. It enables the country dweller to have many amenities, it halts the drift to the cities, it eases the farm-labour problem, and it increases production. I have often heard the Secretary for Mines and Immigration say, both inside and outside the House, how generous the Government have been in providing subsidies for the expansion of electricity in rural areas.

Mr. Power: Not to private enterprise.

Mr. LOW: The Minister has referred to south-eastern Queensland. The area of 10,000 square miles from Gympie to Coolangatta, and the area round Toowoomba, are controlled by the City Electric Light Company. We do not receive any subsidy in that area for the extension of power lines into rural districts.

Mr. Power: We have no power to subsidise private enterprise or to interfere with their franchises.

Mr. LOW: What I should like the Minister to consent to is this: the City Electric Light Coy. is doing a remarkably good job under difficult circumstances. I am always writing asking it to extend lines here and there, but I realise its difficulties. If the Government could devise ways and means whereby they could subsidise the consumers instead of the company it would be a great help to the rural producer. I think also that the Federal Government should help in some way in connection with the financial obligations incurred in the extension of electricity to rural areas. If there is one thing the country people want today it is electric light and power, not only for the farmyard but for the home as well. The installation of electricity in the home would help the womenfolk to overcome household drudgery and give the children a good light by which to do their homework. The acute shortage of lamp glasses

and candles and kerosene has been a great inconvenience to country people and the advent of electricity would be an exceedingly great amenity for them.

Mr. Power: As a result of the action of the Commonwealth Government in making us reduce our own programme by 16 per cent. we have to restrict the extension of electricity to many parts.

Mr. LOW: I am sorry the State Government have picked on electricity for any restriction because it is essential to get those power lines out as soon as possible. The State subsidy in regional-board areas is 33½ per cent. and in western areas 65 per cent. I do not begrudge them that but I should like to see a consumer subsidy to help in the extension of electricity in the City Electric Light Company's franchise area and then all the rural dwellers would be on the same footing.

As to the advantage of subsidies, I quote an extract from the eighth annual report of the State Electricity Commissioner—

"The application of Government subsidy to rural electrification does not abolish the necessity for guarantees.

"It will permit the carrying-out of works which would otherwise be sub-economic and will reduce the amount of the guarantee required. It will not, however, enable rural extensions to be carried out irrespective of their economic justification."

I should like to ask the Minister for Mines and Immigration, who administers electricity matters, whether he agrees with guarantees.

Mr. Power: You give notice of the question and I will answer it in my Budget speech.

Mr. LOW: If he agrees with guarantees, and I think he must, I remind him that I know of a number of cases in which the City Electric Light Coy. has asked the people for a guarantee before undertaking an extension. In those areas there have been Government-owned residences but it has been discovered that although the company asks the private individual to subscribe to a guarantee the Government will not accept any responsibility. If there happens to be a school residence, a railway gatehouse or some other residence owned by a Government department, the City Electric Light Coy. cannot ask the department concerned to accept any responsibility for a guarantee, but it does expect private people to submit to a guarantee. In some places the proportion of Government buildings is fairly great, and if the Government accepted responsibility for a share of the guarantee the burden would be lightened all round and the extension would become economic. At the moment many of these extensions are "touch and go" proposals and one has to do a good deal of talking to induce the farmers to accept them.

Mr. Power: You have a guaranteed price for wheat, butter and other things. Is not the City Electric Light Coy. entitled to a guaranteed price for its electricity?

Mr. LOW: I am not altogether opposed to the guarantee system; I am merely pointing out the Government's inconsistency in the matter of guarantees.

Mr. Power: The Government are not asking for a guarantee; private enterprise is asking for that.

Mr. LOW: And the regional electricity board is asking for a guarantee.

Mr. Power: That is not a Government concern. You do not know anything about it.

Mr. LOW: If regional boards are not Government concerns, I am a Dutchman. If they are not Government concerns, why does the Minister always brag about what they are doing? Why does he take credit for that? If there is any credit to be had, he takes it and if there is criticism he avoids responsibility. I hope the Minister will give some consideration to working out a scheme for subsidising the consumer.

Mr. Power: I can tell you now that I have no intention of recommending to Cabinet that private enterprise be subsidised.

Mr. LOW: It is not a matter of subsidising private enterprise; it is a matter of subsidising the consumer.

Again, why should the country people be called upon to pay 10 per cent. more for their electric light and power than the people in the city areas?

Mr. Power: Why should we pay 16s. 10d. a bushel for wheat in the city?

Mr. LOW: I do not advocate setting the country against the city but I do believe in a fair go for the country, and while you have to pay 10 per cent. more for your power in the country you will never have decentralisation of industry. You could never expect people to go to the country and pay 10 per cent. more for their power than the people in the city and compete on a fair basis.

Mr. Power: On the South Coast. They are paying 10 per cent. more than Brisbane. You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. LOW: While that differential rate applies there can be no decentralisation of industry. I hope, too, that the charges for electric light and power will be made uniform. The establishment of electricity extensions in country centres is long overdue. Why cannot we establish a fund whereby the Government will pay the surcharge? If the Government will not do anything worth while, what is the good of them?

Government Members interjecting.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Riordan): Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr. LOW: Why cannot we establish a fund whereby the difference in cost between the city and the country rate could be paid by the Government, to offset the 10 per cent. extra being charged in the country? We could then extend industries into the country and thereby take out of Brisbane

population that is coming from the country and accumulating in the city. Not only that, but we find that electric-light companies and regional electricity boards are granting special concessions at cut rates to industrial undertakings in the cities. Shall we ever get out of this mess?

Mr. Power: They are giving it in the country, too. Be fair.

Mr. LOW: If industries can be established in country areas we shall get the population out there. I want to mention also that the railway freight schedule is loaded against decentralisation, as it is designed to build up the big cities. There should be a uniform price for electricity and a uniform price for petrol and oil, and railway classifications should be reviewed so that industries established in the country can compete with industries in the cities, and then there would be a drift to the country rather than from the country to the cities. Substantial extensions of electricity supply to country districts are extremely urgent. We should get electricity to the rural areas quickly and at a reasonable rate, otherwise there will be great dissatisfaction amongst country people. Furthermore, it would arrest the drift from the country to the city. At present as one moves around one finds that 80 per cent. of the people on farms are middle aged or ageing people; the country is completely drained of young people who will not put up with the conditions of the lantern and the candle. In properly planned countryside development, electricity is important and should help in developing a district. A district should not be expected to popularise and help to develop electricity. I trust that the Minister will give serious consideration to the points I have brought under his notice.

The Acting Treasurer as hon. member for Bundaberg, is interested in the road to Bundaberg, so also is the Chairman of Committees, the hon. member for Maryborough, and I make the plea to them as well as to the hon. member for Gympie to do everything they possibly can to have the "missing link" section of the Bruce Highway constructed from Brisbane to Gympie. There is a distance of 20 miles between Eumundi and Skyrings Creek that is a nightmare to the motorist and a blot on the Government. Despite repeated representations progress has been slow and I appeal to those hon. members to put their weight behind this matter, because it affects their constituents who use this road and would be pleased to have this missing link completed. It is a distance of about 20 miles past Eumundi. It has been there for many years, but I hope it will not be there much longer.

Quite a lot has been said in this debate about the brewery industry, and I was interested in the statements of the hon. member for Sherwood this morning about the extortionate amounts that were being charged to people who are operating hotels on behalf of breweries. It would appear that the harder these people work, the more rent they have to pay. That is no encouragement to those people and is likely to prevent the

building up of hotel standards generally. We heard quite a lot from the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt and other speakers about the distribution of beer supplies. However, one matter that must be given serious consideration is the standard of board and accommodation that is offered by hotels to the travelling public. Hotel proprietors find that the amount they are allowed by the Commissioner of Prices to charge for board is not sufficient to enable them to employ enough staff to give the travelling public proper service. They feel that they are being badly treated, and from the information I have been able to get and the documents I have been able to peruse, I find that in many respects that is quite correct and that there is an urgent need for a better system under which publicans will be able to make a charge that will give them a reasonable return for services rendered.

So many matters concerning the whole of the workings of this industry have been raised in this Chamber, that I think it would be advisable to have a Royal Commission or a court of investigation into the brewery industry with a view to providing better and more up-to-date board and accommodation for the travelling public, and to putting the industry on a proper footing.

(Time expired.)

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Clayfield) (8.43 p.m.): I am rather surprised that so few members of the Labour Party have spoken on this debate. I think I am the fourth consecutive member opposed to the Government to speak. I, with my physical disabilities, shall probably be the last speaker this evening, but I am always ready and always prepared. I shall probably take my full hour, and by the time I get to the more important subjects the majority of members will probably have returned to the Chamber.

At the outset, I should like to say that I listened with the respect that is due to such an important statement when the Acting Treasurer presented his Budget Speech. It deals with the allocation of £52,000,000 and is an important one and should be listened to in silence and with the respect that is due to such an important deliverance.

I was pleased to see that in one of the first paragraphs, reference was made to the world situation, although I thought it was to some extent reluctantly expressed. I quote the following paragraph—

“The generally accepted necessity of expediting the defence requirements, it will be agreed, can have a retarding effect on normal development.”

On the very same day that the Acting Treasurer delivered this important speech, I went home and listened to the radio and heard that the Australian troops had that day formed the spearhead of an attack in Korea that might be the major battle for the decision in the war in which we are now engaged. I am afraid that a tremendous number of Australians overlook the fact that Australia is at present engaged in a war. If this attack had taken place in the years 1914-18 the papers would have been full of headlines about it but today only passing reference is made to the fact that we are engaged in war.

I want to reply to something that the hon. member for Mackay said today and I hope that he returns to the Chamber before I make my remarks in that connection. I think he showed a blissful ignorance of the true facts of the situation. On the other hand I want to congratulate the hon. member for Windsor for his forthright statement that he, as an individual, was solidly behind the universal and national training service that is being carried out at present. As the Treasurer continued his Budget speech after making his acknowledgment of the necessity for defence requirements, he unfortunately continued to criticise the Federal Government, and his striking statement in that connection is to be found on page 27, where he says—

“The economic position in Australia calls for resolute action and we have been waiting anxiously for some time for evidence of the awareness of the Central Government of its responsibility in that matter.”

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs would have been well advised to sit down at his radio on Sunday night to listen to the important address by the Archbishop of York. He was talking on the situation throughout the world and the need for Governments to co-operate. He said, “Co-operate or perish.” I looked through the Financial Statement for one sentence, just one sentence, that showed willingness on the part of this Government to co-operate with the Federal Government in their preparedness for the defence of this country. In passing I should like to say that I am disappointed—it has been referred to by other hon. members—to find that of recent years there has crept into the Labour Party a bitterness and an adoption of the doctrine that no good can ever be done by anybody opposed to it. When I was quite a boy—

Mr. Moore: When we were young together.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I trust that when the hon. member was young he was taught the right things of life. In my neighbourhood in my boyhood days my friends and school mates were sons of the president of the Q.C.E., Richard Sumner, and through them I got to know something of men in Labour politics in my early years. I learned to know something of David Bowman, of William Hamilton, and William Demaine. In the hearts of those men was a very human feeling towards their fellow-man. They demonstrated the true spirit of what the Labour Party was in those days. Unfortunately, the feeling of bitterness and hatred has so increased that that human element and that human feeling demonstrated by the founders and leaders of the Labour Party has disappeared. It is necessary to draw attention to that drift and lack of co-operation.

I have no parish pump to work in such debates as this and Address in Reply. My electorate is the whole State of Queensland and my interest centres round the wider developmental works, and I am always particularly interested in the programme of works

set out by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works and the work being done by the various departments. As is well known, I specialise in one or two subjects, and in passing I wish to make one more reference to the Treasurer's remark about the world situation and the absence of any statement of willingness to co-operate with the Federal Government in defending ourselves against possible dangers. Everybody in this country, and Queensland, is aware of the danger that may befall us, and everybody is aware that North of this continent of ours are teeming millions of people who do not enjoy our way of life. An association with which I am well proud to be associated, the Library Association of Australia, is interested in establishing in Australia under U.N.E.S.C.O. a Library Seminar on which might be represented, all the South-East Asian countries so that they will learn something of the Australian way of life and we shall learn something of their ideals and ambitions. If I asked the Minister now if he knew anything of the ideals and ambitions of life of the South-East Asian countries, he would have to acknowledge that he did not. Likewise, they do not know anything about us. If we could, by the dissemination of knowledge, understand the aims and ambitions of one another, do you not think that would tend to peace as much as defence? Therefore, the Library Association aims by that peaceful method at getting the peoples of South-East Asia and ourselves to understand each other.

I must say something about the foolish comments of the hon. member for Mackay, who referred to preparations for the defence of this country, particularly emphasising its effects upon economic development. He made some very wrong statements about the first A.I.F. He would have members believe that the first A.I.F. was formed suddenly out of men with no military training and sent to war, and they turned out to be the best soldiers in the world.

Mr. Lloyd: Was it not a fact?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The hon. member for Kedron is still very young and still too young to have even read his history. (Government interjections.)

Mr. Lloyd: Do not forget the Empire Air Training Scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: When they have finished I should like to tell them something. When a gentleman comes into this House representing 10,000 people or more you would expect him to know something of the history of the State for at least 50 years.

Mr. Lloyd: Do not forget the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I tell the hon. member for Kedron as I would tell the hon. member for Mackay—

Mr. Moore: You do not suggest that he does not know anything about war?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: He does not know anything about the history of the A.I.F.

Mr. Moore: He has a brilliant war record.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I know he has. Will you not keep quiet? I want to tell the hon. member for Kedron that if he agrees with the hon. member for Mackay in his statement this morning he was quite wrong. The hon. member for Mackay was so blissfully ignorant that I feel sorry for him. Had he been aware of the fact he would not have made the statement he did this morning. He made the statement that led us to believe his impression was that the first A.I.F. was formed from men who were totally untrained when the war broke out and that they went to the war and did a good job.

Mr. Lloyd: Is not that the fact?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: No. The nucleus of the first Australian Division was formed from men who were trained under the compulsory training system introduced by the Fisher Labour Government in 1912. Now go back and learn your history. If the hon. member wants confirmation of that let him go to Brigadier Moriarty, the General Manager of the Southern Division of the Railways in Queensland, who was a product of the compulsory training scheme and who came to my battery and after I was wounded took over my command. Members who make rash statements should read their history.

I was interested to read the annual report of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, but before referring to it I wish to refer to some of the amounts that are being spent on public works. As the Committee knows accompanied by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition I visited the Snowy River early in the year, and at the suggestion of Sir John Kemp I went up to see what Queensland was doing in the hydro-electric scheme. I and those who went with me were delighted to see such a splendid scheme in operation. Our request to this Government is to push ahead with it at full speed. Under it every unit of electricity is sold before the scheme is brought into operation and that being so, it is bound to be an economic success and I support it. The moment it is completed I suggest that the Government shift their materials, men and technicians to the Herbert and get another scheme going there.

Mr. Power: What about the Burdekin?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Burdekin is very small compared with the Tully scheme. The most urgent need is to get the greatest quantity of electricity generated for all those places in the North that need it so badly.

I should like to pay tribute to Mr. Anthony, who so kindly showed us over that undertaking and gave us a fund of information. I feel that he will be greatly missed by the Cairns Regional Electricity Board but I am glad the Government are obtaining his co-operation in the Tully scheme. I have no doubt his time will be well occupied in Brisbane and it is very kind of him to offer his co-operation.

I notice from page 20 of the Financial Statement that £3,250,000 is to be spent on

soldier settlement, rural development, and irrigation. That is a vast sum of money, but I am so keen on the expansion of irrigation that it has my full support. No doubt the Nullinga dam will be included in that amount. I went to Dimbulah to see what this project really was. Although the Co-ordinator-General had estimated about 18 months ago that the cost of the dam and subsidiary works would be in the vicinity of £4,600,000, the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation tells me that the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply is reviewing these costs because, obviously, they may be increased considerably and it is estimated now that the cost will be £6,000,000. That is a lot of money, but just as I pointed out that I support the hydro-electricity scheme because it is economically sound, I want to support every irrigation project that can be shown to be economically sound or justified by economic circumstances.

At the commencement of the session I asked one or two questions about weirs up there. I emphasised that this dam is estimated to cost in the vicinity of £6,000,000. Up there I saw the Bruce Weir, the Leafgold Weir, and the Solanum Weir. I wanted to know how much they would cost in relation to the benefit they would give and the number they would benefit. The Bruce Weir had cost £44,927, it was holding 700 acre-feet of water and would serve 180 acres or 18 farms. That did not seem too bad, but the Leafgold Weir would cost £110,000, it would hold only 320 acre-feet of water and serve only 12 farms. That is £9,000 a farmer. It is estimated that the cost of the Solanum Weir on Eureka Creek will be £77,464, but the Minister did not give me the actual figure although it is estimated that it will hold 150 acre-feet of water and is to serve 7 farms. It is further estimated that 11 farms growing tobacco can be served. Those two weirs would represent about £10,000 a farmer, which is a lot of money.

There seems to be some discrepancy in the opinions of high Government officials about the accomplishments of these weirs and dams. I particularly refer to Nullinga because when I picked up the seventh annual report of the Bureau of Investigation I glanced through it and found that the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works had made one estimate that seems to be far in excess of a previous estimate by the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply. For instance, the commissioner in his report said that there were 40,000 acres of irrigable land on which you could grow tobacco. Only 8,000 acres of tobacco are grown in one year because it is a rotation crop and is not grown on the same land each year. Sir John Kemp, as chairman of the Bureau of Investigation, says that the tentative soil map accompanying the report shows that there are some 50,000 acres of land suitable for tobacco, other crops, and pastures; a further 60,000 acres suitable for pastures, some crops and possibly tobacco, with an additional 50,000 acres possibly suitable for pasture production, but this latter area would require some experimental work to formulate a satisfactory husbandry programme.

My complaint is that experimental plots are not put down. We propose spending large sums of money but we have not yet established experimental plots on the areas to be irrigated to prove that they will be an economic success. I urge upon the Government that before they go before the people with these large programmes costing millions of pounds that they should produce, as any business house would produce, a statement proving that the money will be well spent. The difficulty, as I have pointed out, is that we have to find out what we can grow in these areas that will sell in other parts of the world. It is obvious—and I have told the Committee this before—that vegetable growing on irrigated land is the most profitable of all crops, as vegetables produce 10 times as much as dairying. But for your vegetables you have to have a nearby market. If prices remain high they might be flown to the cities, but that state of affairs will not always continue. I am talking about the growing of vegetables 1,000 miles from the city, and Brisbane is the nearest city with a large population to absorb the output. Those people who suggest the use of irrigated areas must prove that the crops that will be grown on them can be sold in other parts of the world. Tobacco, for instance, can be sold elsewhere, but it is being grown here because Australia is producing nowhere near her normal consumption. Sometimes I wonder, when these large sums of money are voted for these undertakings, whether we have got away from the idea that the first essential is co-operation with the Federal Government in the defence of our country. I sometimes wonder, too, to what extent tobacco is necessary for the defence of Australia. However, I will leave that for other people to determine. As far as I am concerned, it is a pure luxury. I have never been able to touch it, so consequently I know nothing about it.

Mr. Gair: Soap is a luxury to some people. It is rarely used by them.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: When the Acting Premier makes an interjection, humble members such as I listen very attentively because we expect words of wisdom from so important a personage. However, as I was not talking about soap, but about tobacco I shall have to ignore his very important interjection!

I should like to refer now to page 20 of the Financial Statement, which deals with irrigation and water supply. I am glad that the Government have displayed such a keen interest in the development of this department. I am glad, too, that the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation is in the Chamber, because there one or two points in the Financial Statement that I should like cleared up. For instance, the hon. member for Mackenzie gave us an address the other day on the need for developing the Nathan Dam. A few days ago, however, I read something of a deputation from people in the Taroom district who were becoming concerned that the building of the dam at Nathan Gorge would flood a tremendous area of good country. As a matter of

fact, somebody has told me that the water that would be backed up by the Nathan Dam would come right into the town of Taroom itself. I cannot understand why, after this project has been under consideration by the Government for 25 years, it should suddenly be discovered that the building of this dam would back the water right into the town of Taroom. This country needs irrigation and it needs major dams that will supply water to produce food for the peoples of the world—

Mr. Gair: You opposed the Burdekin scheme.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I have never opposed the Burdekin scheme.

Mr. Gair: Of course you have; you and Fadden, and the rest of them.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I shall have something to say about that shortly, because it comes into the sequence of the paragraphs in the Financial Statement.

I hope that before very long we shall have a very clear statement from someone in authority, either the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works or the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, on the actual storage of water in Nathan Dam, so that we shall know whether the statement that it will destroy a great area of good country is true.

Sometimes good land must be submerged in the interests of the country. When I came down from Mt. Kosciuszko and looked at the township of Jindabyne at the foot of the hills in the river area and knew that something like 31 square miles of land would be flooded in the interests of the Snowy River hydro-electric scheme, I realised how sometimes it is necessary to flood good land for the ultimate benefit of all the people.

On the subject of the Burdekin scheme, I again refer to the annual report of the Bureau of Investigation because it carries two conflicting statements by two very important people. The first by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, as chairman of the bureau, set out on page 3, which says—

“By this means it is proposed to have sufficient water available for pumping from the river to enable the establishment of upward to some 800 farms on the left bank of the river between the diversion dam site and the present irrigation settlement at Clare, and at an early date to generate hydro-electric power.”

Then we have the Assistant Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, Mr. F. B. Haigh, in a paper delivered to the recent Conference of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, wherein he says—

“The Burdekin Project will initially provide for the production of tobacco and possibly sugar-cane, but production of irrigated pastures for beef fattening is expected to provide the major part of development in this area.”

On the one hand Sir John Kemp says 800 farms, whereas the man who knows more about irrigation in Queensland than anybody

else says that the major project must, of necessity, be irrigated pastures for cattle-fattening—and I believe he is right. I believe that the whole Burdekin scheme started on that proposal of fattening cattle to supply the markets with prime beef.

Mr. Nicklin: At £4 an acre-foot?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: If they are asked to pay £4 an acre-foot they would not be able to fatten cattle there, because at least they will require 100 acres, and as pastures take approximately the same amount of water as is required for tobacco cultivation, instead of costing £72 for 10 acres the cost will be £720 for 100 acres, and as it will be able to fatten only one beast to the acre, the water will be very expensive. They would be very dear cattle, and I am sure the Government will review that charge.

I want to make reference to a remark made the other day about the charge for water to the Burdekin settlers. The Minister has been very kind in giving me a good deal of information about the progress of the first 10 farms, but I am concerned about the progress of the whole 30 that are there. I am concerned about the repayments. The Minister showed me the repayments made by the first 10 after two years of operations, but I want some more information about the success or failure of the last crop of tobacco, because I am quite sure that the Secretary of the Tobacco Growers' Organisation there would not write to “The Delta Advocate,” as he did on 4 September last, setting out the costs, if things were all right. He estimated the water right at £100, the land rent and rates at £50, interest at £300, depreciation £250, redemption £450, and average taxation £250, a total of £1,400.

The article goes on to say that this leaves the average Clare farmer £300, about half the basic wage, to meet his personal expenditure for 12 months. There is such a wide discrepancy between that statement and the success one would assume the farmers on the Clare estate had had as shown to me by the Minister, that I cannot understand it.

Mr. Turner: You do not accept that statement, surely?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The signature to that statement is Mr. E. A. Shadforth, hon. secretary of the Burdekin Tobacco Growers' Association. I am sure that if that statement was incorrect he would know it would be refuted. He has his own reputation to preserve. I am only showing the great discrepancy between his own statement and the Minister's of the success of the particular farmers. What is quite evident is this—and I feel I was justified in moving the disallowance of that regulation—that this Government determined how successful these farmers were and fixed the water charge at a high rate because they were successful. That is the wrong angle from which to approach returned-soldier settlement.

There is one more point I want to touch on. I want to bring to mind all the publicity that was centred round the channel country

in South Western Queensland before the last election. The columns of the papers were filled with the possible development of the channel country, but strange as it may seem, since that election we hardly ever hear of it. In fact, the only mention of it in the Financial Statement is that £22,500 will be spent on water facilities on stock routes this year, and that seems to be all the interest that the Government are taking in the channel country. When I think of defence I think also of the commissariat, because a army marches on its stomach, and the peoples of the world have to have food, and armies cannot fight without food. If this war develops, and it may develop—I do not think we as Queenslanders are sufficiently aware of the fact—there will be no time to worry about raising armies in a hurry. Conditions have changed since 1914-18. The hon. member for Mackay may not know it, but war may be upon us in no time and we should not have eight months to train, as we had in those days. This country needs food. The Bureau of Agriculture and Economics states that even if this country's population increases to 10,000,000, as we expect it will do, and food production does not increase Australia will be an importer of basic foods. That is a very serious state of affairs.

The first thing we want, and an important thing, is the production of beef. Consequently, I take my mind back to the report of the Royal Commission that inquired into the proposals for the establishment of additional abattoirs and meatworks and matters pertaining to the livestock and meat industry. That report is one of the most valuable documents that our library possesses because it gives a very detailed and comprehensive report of the possibilities of developing the greater production of beef cattle. The report emphasises that the natural area for the production of store cattle is in the northern part of the State. There are something like 11,000,000 acres for perhaps 1,000 miles down the Cooper in that south-western country that in favourable seasons produces the food for the cattle that enables them to be fattened in one season, if they can be got there. The Co-Ordinator-General, in referring to that, emphasises that it is not possible to get steel rails. I think, in view of the world situation—in view of the 15-year agreement with the British Government—the paragraph I read in "The Courier-Mail" on 13 October that Queensland exported 60,000 tons of the total Commonwealth beef and veal export of 69,000 tons, emphasises that Queensland is playing a very important part in this matter.

Mr. A. Jones: Was that in "The Courier-Mail"?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: Yes. If the hon. member likes to read it, he can have it.

Mr. A. Jones: You can halve it if it is in "The Courier-Mail."

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: Supposing I do, Queensland still plays the major part in the production of beef to meet this 15-year contract. Consequently I feel there is need

for close co-operation, as I emphasised at the beginning, between this Government and the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland-British Food Corporation, because we are all in this together. I do say that we are all of the English-speaking race and we are in this together, and if steel rails are hard to get it should be the responsibility of the whole Commonwealth of British nations to work together to build that railway from the North to the South.

Mr. Gair: We shall not get it by saying that the British Government are rotten to the core.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The British Cabinet on Friday will probably be different.

A Government Member: What difference will it make to Australia?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: It probably will not make any difference. I did not say any word about the Cabinet being rotten to the core. My remarks suggest co-operation between people, irrespective of political differences. I am trying to make suggestions to the Government that I think are helpful. This channel country, which is lying idle, can fatten cattle in one season if the means of transport are available. Store cattle could leave the North between April and July and if there was a railway they could be brought to the cattle country in a favourable season and they could be fattened in that one season and killed and shipped. The responsibility lies in the hands of anybody who is in power; consequently there is an opportunity for the Queensland Government to initiate a move that not only brings the Commonwealth Government into this but the British Government too so that they may work together to get more food for the people of the British Dominions.

My first concern is the defence of the country and a greater understanding by the people of the need for that defence. I think too, there is room for a greater understanding by this State Government of the need for closer co-operation with the Commonwealth in defence.

Mr. Gair: The State Government are willing to give the Commonwealth Government unlimited co-operation.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I am glad to hear that, because I feel sure if it is made available in the preparation for defence we shall not have the hon. member for Mackay making such foolish speeches as the one he delivered today.

There are many subjects on food production about which I could speak, but I have a certain physical disability and I do not feel able to continue any longer. Consequently, with the remarks I have made urging this Government to co-operate more fully with the Commonwealth Government especially in the development of beef-cattle bringing in the British Government through the Queensland-British Food Corporation, conclude my remarks.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.