

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1952

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

PRESENTATION AND ANSWER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that, accompanied by hon. members, I this day presented to His Excellency The Governor the Address of the Legislative Assembly, adopted by the House on 11 September in reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, and that His Excellency has been pleased to make the following reply—

“Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen,—

“As the Representative of Her Majesty The Queen, I tender to you and the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, my sincere thanks for the Address in Reply to the Speech I had the honour to deliver at the Opening of Parliament on 19 August, 1952.

“I shall be most happy to convey to Her Majesty The Queen the expressions of loyalty and affection to the Throne and Person of Her Majesty from the Members of the Legislature of Queensland in Parliament assembled.

“I trust that your labours to promote the advancement and prosperity of this great State will meet with success in full measure.”

DATES FOR BY-ELECTION.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF KEPPEL.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of the 10th section of the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867 I this day issued my writ for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Keppel in the room of Walter Charles Ingram, Esquire, deceased. The dates named in the writ are—

Nomination Day—Friday, 10 October, 1952.

Polling Day—Saturday, 25th October, 1952.

Return of Writ—Friday, 21 November, 1952.

TUESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER, 1952.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker—

Building Societies Acts Amendment Bill.
Aliens Acts and Another Act Amendment Bill.

Queensland Law Society Acts Amendment Bill.

Guardianship & Custody of Infants Acts Amendment Bill.

Statutory Instruments Reprint Bill.

MATRIMONIAL CAUSES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

RESERVATION FOR ROYAL ASSENT.

Mr. SPEAKER reported receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor intimating that this Bill had been reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure.

DEATH OF MR. W. C. INGRAM.

REPLY TO MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter from the widow of the late W. C. Ingram, Esq., conveying thanks for the motion of condolence passed on 19 August.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

LOANS SINKING FUNDS.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the operations of the various sinking funds of the State for the year 1951-1952.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

INSURANCE OF SURF LIFE-SAVERS.

Mr. McCATHIE (Haughton) asked the Treasurer—

“Having regard to the excellent voluntary work performed by members of the Surf Life-Saving Association throughout Queensland would he give consideration to my request for an investigation as to the possibility of covering members of the Association under the workers’ compensation scheme of the State Government Insurance Office free while they are performing their official duties?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

“An essential of Workers’ Compensation insurance is that there must be a contract of service between employer and employee. Whilst full time lifesavers and beach inspectors are insured under the Workers’ Compensation Acts volunteers, not being employees, do not qualify for such insurance. The Government is aware of the excellent voluntary work performed by members of Life Saving branches and for many years has subsidised contributions by the public at the rate of 7s. 6d. in the £1. In the past three years this subsidy has amounted to £17,841. In addition, special rail concession fares are allowed club members, exemption from transport fees on motor vehicles used for transportation of members is granted and a subsidy of one-third of the cost of club house accommodation provided by Local Authorities is allowed. The Queensland State centre of the Surf Life Saving Association maintains a comprehensive insurance cover in respect of its active members, providing a payment at death, for accident and loss of time from employment.”

PERISHABLES, SOUTH BRISBANE-SYDNEY
PASSENGER TRAINS.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. Is it a fact that the interstate passenger train, ex South Brisbane for Sydney, on Monday, 22 September, refused to carry consignments of lettuce consigned to Sydney, and on Tuesday, 23 September, refused a consignment of beans for the same market?”

“2. If so, cannot more suitable arrangements be made to obviate the necessity of refusing highly perishable commodities which results in a considerable loss to local primary producers?”

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

“The accommodation for the carriage of beans and lettuce by mail train to Sydney is limited. As from the beginning of the bean season, arrangements were made for a louvred van to be attached daily to the mail train to Sydney and the Committee of

Direction of Fruit Marketing and the Queensland Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries were advised that all orders for the conveyance of beans, lettuce, &c., were to be placed with the Station-master, South Brisbane, at 8 a.m. daily when an allotment would be made. On Monday, 22 September, the bookings were very heavy and it was not possible to despatch more than one louvred van by mail train. However, all agents who had booked space on that day received an allotment, either in the louvred van or in the brakevan. One agent did not book any space but arrived just before noon and acceptance was declined. Three transport lorries also arrived from Nambour and Woombye with approximately 10 tons, of which the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing did not have any previous advice and space for this loading was not available. These consignments were loaded in a louvred van and went forward by Tuesday’s mail train, on which day it was possible to despatch three louvred vans. There is no record of lettuce having been refused on Tuesday, 23 September. When traffic is offering, every possible opportunity is taken to make up the weight of the mail trains to Sydney with louvred vans.”

TRANSPORT OF TOMATOES, BOWEN-BRISBANE.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. Is it a fact that Truck No. 21883, carrying tomatoes from Bowen, ex Payne Bros., which left Bowen on Wednesday, 10 September, and which was due to arrive in Brisbane, Friday, 12 September, did not do so, and could not be located until it was discovered at Clapham Junction on Wednesday, 17 September, at approximately 11 a.m.?”

“2. If so, then will the Railway Department pay any compensation to the owners of the tomatoes, whose loss as a result of the foregoing, was very considerable?”

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

“The facts are not as stated by the hon. member.”

CONDITIONS AT BROOKFIELD STATE SCHOOL.

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

“Will he please advise whether his department has yet made any decision in regard to rectification of the deplorable condition of the Brookfield State School?”

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

“The Department has before it at the present time the question of whether the existing building warrants repair and remodelling to provide accommodation conforming to modern standards or whether a new building is necessary. A decision will be made at an early date.”

TULLY FALLS HYDRO-ELECTRICITY SCHEME.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani), for **Mr. WATSON** (Mulgrave), asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

“1. Is it a fact that the Tully Falls Hydro-electricity scheme is designed to supply (when completed) only sufficient current to meet the demand at that time?”

“2. If so, will he have an investigation made of the North Johnstone River in order that an early commencement may be made with a supplementary scheme to provide the additional supplies of electricity which will be required in North Queensland?”

Hon. E. J. RIORDAN (Flinders) replied—

“1. The Report on the Development of the Tully Falls for hydro-electricity purposes was presented to Parliament in 1949, its serial number being A.58-1949. The investigations disclose that the scheme can be developed to 74,400 kW effective capacity (92,400 kW installed capacity), and the Report includes a plant installation programme based on assumed rates of future load development. According to that programme, the Tully Falls Scheme will not be loaded to its effective capacity until 1980. The intention is to instal seven generating sets. Two will be included in the initial installation, and the remainder will be installed one at a time as required to meet the increasing demand.

“2. There is no necessity to make an early commencement with a supplementary scheme. The actual increase in demand will need to be watched and a decision made by 1973—if the programme is adhered to—regarding the next source of energy to be developed.”

CATTLE TRANSPORTED, NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN WORKS.

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

“1. What was the total of K., K.J., and K.B. wagons of cattle railed to Townsville (all unloading points), Oolbun, and Merinda during the year ended 30 June, 1952?”

“2. How many such wagons of cattle were railed from the Northern Division to stations south of Bowen for the same period?”

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

“1. 5,184 K.; 310 K.B.

“2. 3,801 K.; 241 K.B.”

PAPERS.

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

Balance Sheet of the Public Curator for the year 1951-1952.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council (6) under the Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948.

Regulation under the Explosives Act of 1906 (18 September).

Regulation under The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1951 (18 September).

SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—
RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Debate resumed from 25 September (see p. 470) on Mr. Walsh's motion—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1952-1953 a sum not exceeding £868 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.18 a.m.): One very evident feature of the Government's lack of administration, particularly in recent months, has been the fact that at all times they have evaded the real issues facing them and at no time have they accepted their responsibilities of governing the country. That fact is very evident in the Budget that the Treasurer presented to this Chamber last week. At a time when it is essential that the Government should endeavour to their utmost to cope with the inflationary and other problems that face us today, they make a completely irresponsible approach to the whole question of Budget stability. In fact, the Government place politics first and State and country last. That is always the attitude that the Labour Party takes. When a Labour Government prepare their Budget just prior to the election year, they always keep their eye on the election results.

Mr. Walsh: Is that why we are always the Government?

Mr. NICKLIN: We know why they are always the Government. They represent a minority of the people; but despite that fact they are the Government simply because of their clever adjustment of the electoral boundaries of the State.

This Budget could appropriately be known as the “Elections Mark-time Budget” or the “Trust Funds Raid Budget.” There is no doubt that it is designed to mark time until after the elections next year, and its main feature is a proposed raid on trust funds. After reading it, one can better appreciate the difficulties that the Treasurer had to meet. First of all, he was faced with the elections next year and an expenditure of millions beyond the most optimistic estimate of revenue. Yet he had to get somewhere near a balance in his accounts, and that without imposing any additional taxes or charges for the time being. That is the essential method of a Labour Government in preparing a pre-election Budget, and there is no doubt that

these facts were paramount when the Treasurer drew up this Budget. It must have appeared a herculean task, yet it was not so. It was performed by the simple expedient of raiding trust moneys, in effect by diverting trust money to ordinary Consolidated Revenue expenditure. That, of course, can be done only once. After the elections, the real position will still have to be faced, and faced in an accentuated form because of the postponement of it now.

Mr. Walsh: We shall have a new Federal Government then.

Mr. NICKLIN: Most likely we shall have a new Treasurer here after the next elections.

The Treasurer is like the man who mortgages his home to keep up with his wife's expenditure, in this case it is the consequences of the 40-hour week. One can sympathise with him in his problem, but without in any way agreeing with the evasive tactics he has employed. The 40-hour week has become, for Treasurers, much more than a 40-hour headache. That is very apparent when we look at State finances, particularly in regard to the Railway Department, which must be giving the Minister for Transport more than a headache.

There are three main aspects of the Budget. The first is the obvious decision to mark time on increased revenue or decreased expenditure, or both, until after the State elections. Then, to paraphrase Louis XV. of France, "After the elections, the deluge."

It is interesting to recall that the Premier gave a pep talk to the Labour Lord Mayor and Labour aldermen of the Brisbane City Council, and there is no doubt that he gave some pretty straight talk to them, that he told them to be good boys, to mark time in their actions until after the next State elections, otherwise the State Government would suffer in election popularity in the metropolitan area. It would have been very interesting to listen to the hon. gentleman's pep talk to the Labour members of the Brisbane City Council. No doubt he gave them some very sound advice from the outlook of hon. members opposite. In fact, you can sum it up in the following words, "Now, be good boys until after the election, and then you can do what you like, because we shall not care." Every other interest or consideration, so far as hon. members opposite are concerned, is subservient to one main consideration, and that is the continuance in power of the Labour Party.

Mr. Power: That is most important for the State of Queensland.

Mr. NICKLIN: In the opinion of the Minister. The best thing that could happen to this State of Queensland would be the defeat of the Labour Party.

Let me get to the second main aspect of this Budget, that is, the unfortunate condition of the financial relationships between the Commonwealth and State Governments, which

has provided Labour with a perennial excuse for all its own failures and deficiencies. That fact has been very apparent in recent months when hon. members have been continually harping on the alleged damage the Federal Government have been doing to the interests of the State of Queensland, but at the same time they have not attempted to do anything themselves but dodge their responsibilities and blame the Federal Government.

The third main aspect of this Budget, as I see it, is the determination of the Government to avoid the unpleasant truth that their 40-hour week is the real and only cause of whatever continued inflation, lack of confidence, and unemployment exists in this State at the present time. Let us have a look at the Estimates for the current financial year, which the Treasurer presented last week, and compare them with the Estimates of the previous financial year. They make very interesting reading. First of all, let me compare the first two months of the present financial year with the first two months of the last financial year, and then the total surplus for the 12 months in 1951-1952 and that of the 12-monthly period in 1952-1953, and note the results. We find that in the first two months of 1951-1952 this State had a surplus of £323,636, but for the first two months of the present financial year there was an estimated deficit of £1,063,235.

Mr. Walsh: It does not look too good, does it?

Mr. NICKLIN: It does not look too good, as the Treasurer interjects.

Now let us take the total for the 12 months in those two financial periods. In the 12-month period of 1951-1952 we finished with a surplus of £45,395, but there is an estimated deficit for the same period of 1952-1953 of only £288,319. For the first two months of 1952-1953 the adverse movement was £1,386,871, while for the 12 months it is estimated to be only £333,714! That is rather a remarkable state of affairs. In the last financial year, when we had a surplus for the first two months of £323,636, we ended with a surplus of £45,395, whereas in the first two months of this year we had a deficit of £1,063,235 and we are going to finish the year with an estimated deficit of only £288,319. That is a remarkable state of affairs at the least and, as the Treasurer interjects, it does seem a remarkable state of affairs.

Mr. Walsh: I said, "It does not look too good."

Mr. NICKLIN: I will deal with that aspect as I go along.

Let us compare the expenditure in the first two months of 1952-1953 with that of the previous year. The increase was £2,206,265, or at the rate of £13,237,000 per annum. But for the 12 months, the increase is estimated to be only £6,478,000, although hospital expenditure is expected to increase by £600,000 and interest on the Public Debt by £400,000; and there will be further increases in the basic wage, each 1s. rise costing about £130,000 per annum. But in his approach

to the preparation of his Budget the Treasurer brushed to one side any possible increases in costs due to rises in the basic wage; notwithstanding the movements that we see in the finances of the State, on both the revenue and expenditure sides, the Treasurer still comes and says that his estimated deficit will be £288,319. That statement requires a considerable amount of examination to see whether that result will be achieved, and if it is possible of achievement, how it is to be achieved. In all probability the deficit will be considerably greater than the amount estimated by the Hon. the Treasurer.

Let us now look at the expenditure in the Railway Department and its results. After all, the Railway Department is the biggest business undertaking this State has; and the results achieved there have an important bearing on the finances of this State; if the Railway Department has a deficit or a surplus the effect will be inevitably felt in the general finances of the State. I propose to compare the expenditure with the results on the same basis as I did in regard to the general finances of the State, that is, for the first two months of the past and present financial year and the 12-month period of last year and the current financial year.

	1951-1952.	1952-1953.
	£	£
First 2 months	3,284,367	4,266,699
Total, 12 months	24,053,686 (Estimated)	26,768,840

The expenditure of the Railway Department in those two periods is much greater during the present financial year than it was last year. If expenditure increases in the same proportion as last year it will be £31,146,000, instead of the £26,768,000 at which the Treasurer estimates it, a difference of over £4,000,000. That is a considerable sum of money and must have a vital effect on the budgeting of this State.

Now let us look at the results that have been achieved in the Railway Department in those two periods, i.e., the first two months of the two financial years under discussion and the 12-month periods.

	1951-1952.	1952-1953.
	£	£
First 2 months—		
Surplus	604,317	Deficit 47,488
Total, 12 months—		
Deficit	649,476	Deficit (Estimated) 1,568,840

Last year, a surplus of £604,317 in two months was converted into a deficit of £1,649,376. This year a deficit of £47,488 is expected to end in a deficit of only £1,568,840. These figures are exclusive of interest, and if interest is included—unless there is going to be a very heavy increase in charges by the Railway Department—a greater deficit will occur than that estimated by the Treasurer. Do not let us forget that the Railway Department faces the possibility of three basic-wage increases. Yet notwithstanding the fact that for the first two months in the current financial year the department is away behind, the Treasurer expects to finish the year with a deficit less than that incurred last year. It does not make sense.

Mr. Walsh: What is the remedy?

Mr. NICKLIN: The hon. gentleman is the Treasurer of this State: let him tell us the remedy and how he proposes to meet the position. The very obvious and the only conclusion that can be drawn from these figures is that there is to be some unusual relief from normal revenue expenditure this year. Trust money is clearly indicated as the source of this relief. Let us look therefore at some of the trust funds that the Treasurer proposes to use and no doubt will use during the current financial year to bolster up his budgetary position. First of all, look at the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund and note the expenditure from that fund for the past two financial years and the amount proposed to be taken from it for the current financial year. This was the expenditure from that fund in the last two financial years:—

	£
1950-1951	132,521
1951-1952	48,914

Then we come to the current financial year and we find that an estimated £4,000,000, including £2,250,000 for the Railway Department, is to be drawn from that fund.

Mr. Walsh: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. NICKLIN: There is nothing wrong with it at all, because that fund was created to aid post-war reconstruction and future development of this State, but I should like to remind the Treasurer that when I suggested, during the discussion on the Appropriation Bill, that the cash balances held by the State should be used to meet such a position as this, he said that could not be done.

Mr. Walsh: Do not get your cash balances mixed up. The hon. member for Sherwood made that mistake.

Mr. NICKLIN: It is interesting to note, in connection with the proposed expenditure from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund that during the first two years of the present Government's term of office they spent comparatively little of the money standing to its credit but in the year in which there is to be an election we find a very deep dip into it. On this occasion, £4,000,000 comes out of "kitty" to be spent throughout the length and breadth of the State in an effort to build up the popularity of the Government when they face the electors next year. But it will take a lot more than £4,000,000 if the popularity of the present Government is to be built up; the people of this State are not going to be fooled again by this large expenditure just prior to an election.

The statements on pages 14 and 15 of the Budget speech and on pages 104 and 105 of the Estimates in connection with the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund need to be taken with a great deal of salt. Obviously, the Treasurer's estimate of a deficit of only £228,319 cannot possibly be realised unless Trust Fund expenditure is used to relieve Consolidated Revenue expenditure.

There is no doubt that every aspect of the State's financial position points to the fact that it is impossible for the Treasurer to realise the deficit he estimates unless he uses trust funds very heavily for Consolidated Revenue expenditure.

Let us turn to another trust fund that is available to the Treasurer. I refer to the Unemployment Insurance Fund. On page 11 of the Auditor-General's report we find the following statement:—

“Subject to approval and appropriation by Parliament the balance of the Fund, which was £2,695,591 at 30 June, 1951, may be applied by order in council in such manner as thought fit and proper.”

There is no doubt that the appropriation could be included in Supplementary Estimates that could be issued by the Government next August, after the election, if they get the opportunity to do so. The position now is that although the Treasurer admits that he has failed to make provision for any increases in wages and salaries and that he has made no provision for increased taxes and charges, his expectations for the 12 months are widely at variance with financial results to date. Fancy a Treasurer coming before this Assembly, knowing that he has to face an estimated expenditure of some £700,000 as a result of increased wage charges that may be imposed on the Government, and airily dismissing that large sum of money by saying that he will snatch it out of thin air some time in the distant future!

Mr. Walsh: We might even give some remissions in taxation.

Mr. NICKLIN: Mr. Farrell, that is a pious hope that the Treasurer would like the people of Queensland to believe in, knowing that the Government are to go before those people in the next few months. I should say that the Government, so far from giving remissions in taxation—if indeed they are the Government after the next election, which I doubt very much—will be making increased charges. Looking at the figures I have quoted and taking into account the Government's method of financing the State in this financial year, there appears to be a gap of at least £4,000,000 to be bridged by raiding available trust funds to relieve Consolidated Revenue expenditure.

Let us now look at the attitude adopted by the Treasurer and the Premier over recent months, particularly since last year's Loan Council meeting, and the build-up before the current Budget. Both hon. gentlemen were careering round the State crying that the State was ruined, they did not have a feather to fly with and that they did not have a bob in the Treasury. Let us look at some of the statements the Premier made after his return from the Loan Council meeting in these phrases—5,000 Queenslanders will be thrown out of work by the Loan Council; irrigation undertakings, including the Burdekin Dam and forestry projects, will have to be trimmed; a reduction in the programme for Queensland would seriously interfere with the State's drive for food production. Those were

the dismal prophecies to which the Premier referred. Nobody knows anything about this alleged food-production scheme that the Government are proposing to make. The Treasurer was Little Sir Echo and he echoed those statements about the ruination of the State, and he endeavoured to go one better than the Premier by crying blue ruin and spoke of the alleged deficiencies by the Federal Government so far as the finances of this State were concerned. But we find that at the time the Treasurer and the Premier were endeavouring to mislead the people of this State as to the real issue and were endeavouring to create a feeling of lack of security and lack of confidence amongst the people and bring about conditions that would engender unemployment in an endeavour to gain some political advantage over the Federal Government, the Treasurer and the Premier well knew that the financial position of this State was never sounder than at that time. The Treasurer knew that the cash balance in the Treasury was £10,648,055, he knew that he had £4,000,000 in the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund, and that there was £2,000,000-odd in the Unemployment Insurance Fund but at that very time he was crying out that the State could not carry on its developmental work, and that the Government could not carry out their functions. What an attitude for a so-called responsible Government to adopt! It emphasises my statement that the Government have been adopting right through an attitude of complete irresponsibility in regard to the handling of the affairs of this State.

During the debate on the Appropriation Bill, when it was pointed out by me and by other speakers on this side of the Chamber that the Government had available the cash balances of this State amounting to £10,000,000-odd, the Treasurer said, “Those moneys are not available to us. They are trust funds. They cannot be used.” It is very interesting to note, however, that in this Budget the Treasurer has dug up from somewhere an amount of £9,273,734, which he proposes to use in alleged developmental—

Mr. Walsh: Only with the authority of this Parliament.

Mr. NICKLIN: I did not know that the Treasurer was Mandrake and could pull these millions out of a hat. He is not a magician. Those moneys were at all times available to the Government and now that the Government are facing an election, whereas a few months ago the Treasurer was saying he did not have a feather to fly with, he proposes to use some of that £9,273,734 that he has available.

Mr. Walsh: Only with the authority of this Parliament.

Mr. NICKLIN: Never mind about the authority of this Parliament, or anything else! The Treasurer said on a previous occasion that he had no money to spend. However, he has produced it in this Budget and has added it to the loan moneys made available to him by the Federal Government for the developmental programme that was detailed to us the other day.

The fact that the Government had more money available to them than they told this Chamber about, is borne out by the fact that on examining the expenditure of the various departments, we find that the estimated expenditure of the Treasury Department was increased by no less than £1,300,000. We find that £1,300,000 was transferred from Consolidated Revenue to the Treasury to enable it to pay subsidies to local authorities. If the Government were as hardpressed for money as the Treasurer said they were—and as the Premier time and time again has said they were—how did they have £1,300,000 to transfer from Consolidated Revenue to meet subsidies to local authorities? That is a remarkable reversal of form. The Government have at all times been paying subsidies to local authorities from their loan funds, with very small contributions from Consolidated Revenue. The Government collect their share of uniform-taxation payments from the Commonwealth and in the basis of the formula that was drawn up to calculate the amounts of money the States were to receive, this State included Queensland's State development tax with income tax. That State development tax was collected for specific purposes, one of which was to provide local authorities with subsidies, yet all along this State has been paying subsidies to local authorities from loan funds. Do not forget that last year the Government were able to find £1,300,000, but let us look at the resources from which these subsidies have been obtained. In 1951-1952, £1,308,336 came from Consolidated Revenue and £1,066,759 from loan funds. Now let us take the 20-year period, 1931-1932 to 1951-1952 and we find that only £1,506,322 came out of Consolidated Revenue and £10,402,797 from loan funds.

Mr. Walsh: What is wrong with that?

Mr. NICKLIN: The Treasurer has been getting his share of income-tax reimbursements in accordance with a formula that took into account the money collected by the State in the shape of State development tax, and thus the moneys obtained on that account should have been used to pay subsidies to local authorities. They were collected for that purpose. But instead of using the money for that purpose the Government have, for their own reasons, saved Consolidated Revenue and charged the local authorities' subsidies against the Loan Fund Account. When you consider the ways in which the subsidies have been collected and the great disparity in the allocations as between the city and the country, it certainly makes very sorry reading and shows up clearly the Government's attitude towards the country districts of the State.

Mr. Walsh: You had better read from the Budget, because if you do not I will.

Mr. NICKLIN: I know that the Treasurer does not like to be told these things but he will have his opportunity to reply later on. I hope he will tell us where he got that £1,300,000 that he was able to transfer to Consolidated Revenue in the dying months of

the last financial year. It shows that notwithstanding the fact that the State has been allegedly starved of funds by the Federal Government the State Government were able in the last months of the financial year suddenly to transfer £1,300,000 from one fund to another.

Mr. Walsh: Not allegedly starved by the Federal Government. You know that we have been starved by the Federal Government.

Mr. NICKLIN: I do not know anything of the sort. No Government were ever better treated in the matter of money than the present State Government have been treated by the present Menzies-Fadden Government. The State Government have had a better deal from the present Federal Government than they ever got from their Labour colleagues in the Federal sphere.

Mr. Walsh: In terms of money value?

Mr. NICKLIN: It does not matter how you analyse it—in total amount, terms of money value, or anything else. The present State Government have had a remarkably fine deal from the present Federal Government and have nothing whatever to complain about in the treatment they have received and I shall prove that as I proceed. I have already demonstrated it in the figures I quoted during the debate on the private motion by the hon. member for Rockhampton relating to the Commonwealth and States' financial relationships.

As I said earlier, the financial movements at the moment indicate that the Government will not finish the current financial year with the deficit estimated in the Budget but that it will be a very much greater figure. It will be much greater than at the present time. The Treasurer is facing the position from a very one-sided viewpoint. He has made no provision for any basic-wage increases and merely states that he will look after those things later. The Treasurer, in drawing up this Budget, had only one thing before him all the time, and that was that his Government were going to face an election next year. That being so, he said, "We are going to make this Budget nice and pretty; we shall have to show the State that we have plenty of money to spend, and that we have a big development fund." The Treasurer in drawing up this Budget looked at it from two angles. He said, "If we are beaten, which we are mostly likely to be, we shall leave the other fellows to carry the buck. If by any accident we win, then we shall have three years before we shall have another election and in the meantime we can raid the trust funds and we can impose new charges." If by accident the Government are returned after the next election I forecast that one of their first actions will be to impose increased charges in an endeavour to get increased revenue to carry on.

Mr. Walsh: Under what heading?

Mr. NICKLIN: No doubt the Treasurer has examined every avenue. He has everything lined up. I suppose he has looked very closely into the possibility of increasing the

betting taxes to see what he can get from that source, as well as the possibility of increased land tax, and in addition rail freights and fares will be raised. I prophesy that if the Government remain in office after the election they will accept with bad grace the Commonwealth Government's hospital scheme and save over £200,000, which they will lose this year in hospital charges. Whatever way you look at this Budget, the Treasurer is undoubtedly marking time and not facing realities because of the fortunate position he finds himself in having sufficient funds to tide him over the election period. He is in the fortunate position of being able to paint a pretty picture, and he has said to himself, if after the elections we are returned as a Government, "Let the other fellow carry the baby," or, if the Government party is returned, "We will whack the poor unfortunate taxpayers with additional charges." After all, the Government take a pretty fair whack out of the taxpayers already, as I shall show in a moment. I want to deal now with the Commonwealth and State relations. If one reads the Budget one will find on almost every page some reference to the Commonwealth and State relations, and some reference to how this State has been harshly treated by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Walsh: I never noticed that. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. NICKLIN: In his Budget speech and in his speech on the Appropriation Bill the Treasurer made various misleading comparisons with which I propose to deal. Let us first of all look at his comparison of taxation today with taxation in 1942-1944, which the hon. gentleman said was a fair comparison. How fair was it? On the Appropriation Bill the hon. gentleman compared taxation under the Menzies-Fadden Government with that under the Curtin Government when, he said, "Australia was waging a bitter struggle with the enemy in the Pacific and elsewhere." He said also, "I do not think anybody can deny that my comparison is fair." Let us see how fair he was. Expenditure from revenue on defence, war and post-war services for the period 1942-1944 amounted to £365,647,000, and for the period 1951-1952 and 1952-1953 to £586,855,000.

Mr. Walsh: For defence?

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes, defence, war and post-war services.

Mr. Walsh: Why don't you take the defence out separately?

Mr. NICKLIN: I will tell the Treasurer about defence.

Let us look at the social services for those two periods. For the period 1942-1944 it amounted to £101,267,000 and for the period 1951-1953 to £335,888,000. The expenditure under both those headings amounted in the first period to £466,914,000 and £922,743,000 in the latter period. Do not let us forget—and I ask the Treasurer to take notice of this—that in 1942-1944 the bulk of the expenditure on war was from loan funds, and amounted to £780,009,000.

Now it is all from tax revenues. Yet the Treasurer says that his comparisons are fair! That is how fair they are. He conveniently takes expenditure from revenue and expenditure from loan funds and makes a comparison to suit himself. If you examine all his comparisons you will find they are the same as the one I have quoted.

Then soldier settlement has been omitted. (Government interjections.) If no more money is spent on soldier settlement in this State, whose fault is that?

Mr. Walsh: For every £1 they are spending the State is spending £10.

Mr. NICKLIN: They are trying to dodge their responsibility in this respect by blaming the Federal Government. If we had a soldier-settlement scheme that the Commonwealth Government were prepared to come in on, this State would get the same as any other State.

Mr. Walsh: We do not want the Commonwealth dictating.

Mr. NICKLIN: It is a pity the Commonwealth Government have not a greater interest in soldier settlement in this State; if they had they would exercise greater supervision over it.

That deals with the unfair comparison that the Treasurer used in an endeavour to gain some political advantage over the Federal Government. Every time he has been on his feet he has blamed the Federal Government for the allegedly extortionate amount of taxation they have been taking from the people. The reason why he has blamed the Federal Government for this high rate of taxation is that he is endeavouring to cover up the fact that he is not so bad himself in taking money from the taxpayers of this State. If people care to read the table on page 2 of his Financial Statement they will find it very interesting. There we see that the Treasurer collected £888,091 in land tax last year.

Mr. Walsh: Mostly out of the city of Brisbane—Queen street and Adelaide street.

Mr. NICKLIN: "Mostly out of Queen street"! Then, by golly, the population of Queen street must have grown in the last 12 months. We find from the report of the Commissioner of Land Taxes that land tax this last year is much greater.

So much for the revenue the Treasurer got from land tax! Now let us look at other revenue headings, for instance licences, £314,691, or £34,691 over the estimate, succession and probate duties £1,870,099, or £270,000 over the estimate.

Mr. Walsh: We did not increase the rates.

Mr. NICKLIN: I do not know about increased rates, but a lot of people must have given up the ghost in despair; let us hope they will change the Government in this State in time. I now come to stamp duty, £2,277,307. That is a fairly large slab of money to collect, and it is the one instance in which revenue did not exceed the estimate. Totalisators and betting taxation realised £291,751, or £41,751 over the estimate.

I now come to the real money-spinners as far as the Government are concerned, when I refer to the State transport taxes and the motor-vehicle registration fees. The State Transport Facilities Act returned in taxation to the Government £845,596 or £120,596 over the estimate, and the fees collected by the Government under the Traffic Act are fairly substantial, £114,034. Motor-vehicle registration fees returned the Government £2,573,971. Motor-cars and motor-owners of this State were a real godsend to the Government. Last year they found £3,533,601 for the Treasury, but the Treasurer stands in this Chamber and has the colossal hide to accuse the Federal Government of exacting exorbitant taxation. Fancy collecting £3,500,000 from the motor-owners of Queensland! But, Mr. Farrell, do not forget that the poor unfortunate home-builders of this State got a bit of a hiding from the Government, because during the current financial year, as the result of jacking up the royalties on timber, the Government got an additional £305,235. Where did that money come from? It came from the pockets of the poor unfortunate people who are building homes in this State. The Treasurer is no slouch when it comes to collecting taxes from the people and it is time their attention was drawn to the fact—£3,500,000 from the motor-owners, £305,000 from the people building homes, and all the other taxes, including the additional land tax that he is getting as a result of the increased valuation of the lands of this State. When we see the Treasurer doing what he is doing, he should hang his head in shame for all time for having castigated the Federal Government. In view of his record, I can only say, "Lord help the taxpayers of this State if his Government continue in office."

Let us now examine another of the Treasurer's statements and some of the remarks made by the Premier in their endeavours to build up a case against the Federal Government. In the "As I See It" column of "The Brisbane Telegraph" of 10 September, 1952, the Premier said—

"At the end of January, 1952, the amount of Treasury bills stood at £243.3 million."

He was endeavouring to prove that the Menzies-Fadden Government had used bank credit extensively.

Mr. Walsh: And they did. You are not denying that, surely?

Mr. NICKLIN: Unlike the Treasurer, who makes unfair comparisons, I propose giving the exact figures so that we can have a true comparison of the use of Treasury bills by the Chifley Government and the present Federal Government.

The Treasury bills outstanding at 30 June, 1949, amounted to £123.3 million, and to £178.3 million as at 31 December, 1949. That was under the Chifley Government. By 30 June, 1950, the present Federal Government had reduced the issue of Treasury bills to £108.3 million and they remained at that figure until 30 June, 1951. By 31 January, 1952, the issue had increased to £243.3

million but by 30 June of that year was reduced to £153.3 million. The Treasurer well knows that in the middle period of any financial year there is normally a considerable issue of Treasury bills to meet a temporary lag in revenue. This is, however, only a temporary issue, and it was totally misleading for the Treasurer to use the figure given for January, 1952. The increase of £45,000,000 in 1951-1952 was due solely to the fact that the Commonwealth Government had undertaken to underwrite the State's works programmes. Of a total of £225,000,000, loans provided only £70,000,000 and £155,000,000 had to be supplied from Commonwealth tax revenues. Altogether, the Commonwealth had supplied £314,000,000 for expenditure by the States in 1951-1952. That is not a bad effort, and the Treasurer took his share of that money and said, like the boy with the lollies, "I want more." If they gave him £1,000 million he would still want £2,000 million.

This year it is estimated that of £180,000,000 for the State's works programmes the Commonwealth will have to find £130,000,000, apart from various other contributions. In return for that, what do the Commonwealth Government get? They get only abuse from the Treasurer and all hon. members sitting behind him. I do not know what the Premier and Treasurer would do if they did not have the Commonwealth Government to blame. They would be bankrupt of both ideas and arguments, and it is time the Government realised their responsibilities, and acted like responsible men, not like a collection of irresponsible individuals as they do at the present time. It does not matter how much money is provided by the Commonwealth Government, they cry, "Give us more; give us more." When a generous Federal Government do provide them with ample revenue for the carrying on of the affairs of the State, instead of having the common decency to say "Thank you," they repay the Federal Government with constant abuse.

Mr. Walsh: The Country Party Premier of Victoria does not think he has had enough from them.

Mr. NICKLIN: Let the Treasurer look after his own side of the business.

We turn now to the basic-wage increases that the Treasurer does not worry so much about. Speaking on the Appropriation Bill, he said that May, 1949, was the last month in which a quarterly adjustment was made prior to the Chifley Government's defeat. That will be found on page 66 of "Hansard" for the current session. In his Budget speech he gave details of the basic-wage increases and again gives May, 1949, as the last increase under the Chifley Government.

Mr. Walsh: I gave the figures as published in the Tory Press.

Mr. NICKLIN: Fancy the Treasurer quoting the Tory Press as his authority! For 364 days out of the year the Treasurer refuses to go to the Tory Press and on

one day of the year, the day he delivers his Financial Statement, he quotes it as an authority! There were further rises in August, 1949, and October, 1949, and the Chifley Government were not defeated until December, 1949.

There are other aspects to be considered. The first is that wages were pegged until 1946 and the Treasurer knows that. There was nothing to give an impetus to automatic wage increases until the 40-hour week began to operate as from 1 January, 1948. If one looks at the figures—and I shall quote some later—one will see that the impact of the 40-hour week made a terrible difference to State finances. After the defeat of the referendum in May, 1948, the Chifley Government abolished subsidies on food and clothing and abandoned price controls. That had another serious impact on prices.

Mr. Walsh: You do not think that they would continue subsidies when the people had turned down price control?

Mr. NICKLIN: Just wait a moment. Let us look at these food and clothing subsidies. In 1945-1946 the total subsidies paid by the Federal Government amounted to £12,984,000; in 1947-1948, after wage pegging had ceased, a sum of £35,031,000 was required for subsidies; and in 1948-1949 the sum was estimated at £45,000,000. The Chifley Government abandoned subsidies after the defeat of the referendum and the only expenditure during the year was £14,820,000, a reduction by the Chifley Government of £30,180,000. That shows that prices cannot be pegged unless wages are pegged, and even then some subsidy is required.

Let us go on from there. In December, 1950, the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration awarded a special prosperity basic-wage loading of £1 a week. The Federal Government have no power to interfere directly with decisions of that court. Does the Treasurer contend that the basic-wage increases would have been less if a Labour Government had continued in power after December, 1949? Of course he does not! He knows that the basic-wage increases would have continued, irrespective of what Government were in power.

The Treasurer has been howling about the way he has been treated by the Federal Government, but an examination of the allocations that have been made will show that the States have been well treated. And Queensland has been particularly well treated in the allocations made to it by the Commonwealth Government. Let us compare the years 1948-1949 and 1949-1950, when the Chifley Government were in power, with the years 1950-1951 and 1951-1952 under the present Federal Government. In 1948-1949 the income-tax reimbursement received by this State amounted to £8,832,622, the allocation for roads was £1,326,000, and from loans £10,618,115. In 1949-1950, still under the Chifley Government, the income-tax reimbursement was increased to £10,230,827, the roads allocation to £1,700,000, and the loans

allocation to £11,959,000. Then there was a change of Government and a change in the treatment of Queensland.

In the first year of the Menzies-Fadden Government, that is, 1950-1951, the income-tax reimbursement was increased from £10,000,000 to £14,279,888, the roads allocation jumped from £1,700,000 to £2,461,000, and the loans allocation from £11,000,000 to £19,630,000. In 1951-1952 there were still further increases. The income-tax reimbursement increased to £19 million, the roads allocation to £2,950,000, and the loans allocation to £23,321,000. How can the Treasurer, or any other hon. member opposite, sustain the argument that this State has not been fairly treated by the present Federal Government? There is no comparison between the treatment that this State received from the Chifley Government and the treatment that it has received from the present Federal Government.

Mr. Wood: But the £1 is worth only 2s. today.

Mr. NICKLIN: I will buy all the £1's the hon. member has for 2s.

In every post-war year to 1950-1951, Queensland underspent its loan allocations by substantial amounts. In 1951-1952 the allocation was overspent by £300,000, but in a peculiar way, which calls for some explanation from the Treasurer. However, I will guarantee that we shall not get it. In the ten months to April, 1952, an amount of £16,632,232 loan money was spent in this State, whereas in the last two months of May and June £7,030,226 was spent. That was a remarkable expenditure. In the first 10 months of the financial year the average monthly expenditure was £1.6 million and in the last two months, May and June, it suddenly jumps to £3.5 million. Can any member of the Cabinet tell me that any new loan works were started during those two months? What explanation is there for this sudden increase in the rate of loan expenditure in the last two months of the financial year? There is silence on the Government side of the Chamber. I challenge the Treasurer to give us an explanation of the sudden increase in loan expenditure. I know that he will not tell us, but I should say that the constant criticism of the Government by the Opposition on the score that the Government were not spending all their loan money had some effect on their rate of loan expenditure.

Mr. Power: Entirely untrue.

Mr. NICKLIN: Can the Attorney-General tell us where the money went? I should say that he is dumbfounded like the rest of us. It was impossible for the Government to spend that amount of money as legitimate loan expenditure in the two months May and June. Therefore, something else must have happened with it. Apparently some of the Loan Fund was transferred from one account to another and possibly used against advance payments for materials coming forward, or it may have been used to pay for some of the railway material coming forward. However the money was used, Parliament is entitled to some explanation

and I challenge the Treasurer to tell us how the money was expended at this remarkably increased rate in the last two months of the financial year. I repeat that it was impossible legitimately to expend loan money at that rate and it must have been expended in some other way. This Chamber is entitled to some explanation about the increased rate of expenditure, but I venture to say it will not be forthcoming.

An Opposition Member: It is one of their old tricks.

Mr. NICKLIN: It is an old trick, but one that should not be tolerated. After all, Parliament is the custodian of the State's finances, and we are entitled to know where this money has gone and what it has been used for.

Apart from the figures that I have quoted, the statement regarding "the financial overlordship of the Commonwealth" set out at page 13 of the Budget is nonsense. The Commonwealth has offered to restore full taxing powers to the States. I dealt very fully with these matters during the debate on the Private Members' Day, and I do not propose to reiterate my argument here. It is all tommyrot to say that the Commonwealth Government are exercising any overlordship over the States, least of all the State of Queensland. Do not let us forget, as I have already said, that the Commonwealth has offered to restore full taxing powers to the States and that the States could abolish the Loan Council if they so desired. If it is not functioning as the Treasurer should like it to do, then let him take action under Section 105A of the Commonwealth Constitution, which provides for its abolition. He will not do that because he knows that his only hope of getting loan money for the State is to remain a member of the Loan Council.

In the concluding paragraphs of the Budget speech the Treasurer attributes loan difficulties to a lack of confidence and the absence of a common-sense fiscal policy. If there is any lack of confidence in the people subscribing loan money to the Government in this State and the Commonwealth, hon. members opposite, and the Treasurer in particular, must accept their responsibility, because if anybody has made a material contribution to the creation of a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of the people who lend money to the Government it is the Treasurer himself, who has created it by his irresponsible statements about loan raisings generally. If there is any uncertainty or lack of confidence on the part of the people of this State about subscribing to loans, that uncertainty or lack of confidence has been wilfully and designedly created by the Treasurer and his Government in an endeavour to gain a political advantage over the Federal Government.

I want to deal now with the Railway Department, which, as I said, has a vital effect on the State's finances. When we look at the affairs of the department, we find that they do not engender much confidence as to the future financial position. In 1951-1952 the Railway Department showed a deficit of £3,508,244, which was an all-time record,

despite the writing down of capital indebtedness by £28,000,000 in 1928-1932. Let us compare some of the deficits of that department. We find in 1931-1932 that the Moore Government deficit amounted to the trifling sum of £5,238.

Mr. Walsh: After writing off £28,000,000 of the capital indebtedness and transferring that liability to the taxpayer.

Mr. NICKLIN: Doesn't the Treasurer get the advantage of that £28,000,000 now?

Mr. Walsh: Of course he does not. The taxpayers have always shouldered that liability.

Mr. NICKLIN: The actual results are not taken into account?

Mr. Walsh: Where is the benefit to the Treasury?

Mr. NICKLIN: Let us look at the position of the department in 1942-1943, when it had a record surplus of £5,923,949. That record surplus in nine years has turned to a record deficit of £3,508,244. What is particularly important is the fact that since 1931-1932 the capitalisation of the Railway Department has increased from £35,540,000 to £59,809,000, after writing £28,000,000 off the capital indebtedness. One would think that with this huge increase in capitalisation there would be railways all over the State, and that new railways had been built to certain parts of the State where they are urgently needed. On the contrary, we find that notwithstanding that tremendous increase in capitalisation the lines open to traffic have actually declined from 6,498 to 6,491 miles. The reason for the increase in capitalisation is that renewals and replacements are charged to the Loan Account. And do not let us overlook the fact, which is particularly important, that since the war rail charges have been increased on six different occasions, and very substantial increases they have been too. Yet the financial results show a disastrous state of affairs, not only to the Railway Department but also in their effect on the finances of the State.

There is no doubt that one of the main reasons for the condition of the finances of the Railway Department has been the impact of the 40-hour week from 1 January, 1948, which was felt not only by the Railway Department but by all other forms of transport. It has meant tremendous overtime payments alone in the Railway Department. Their extent is revealed in the following figures:—

	£
1946-1947	428,812
1949-1950	1,279,421
1950-1951	1,312,916
1951-1952	1,661,511

What is going to be the result of the forthcoming financial year? A further increase. It will pay all hon. members to look at Table I. on page 45 of the Treasurer's Statement, which gives a very clear picture of what is happening in the Railway Department. We find that for 1942-1943 the return on capital indebtedness, after the reduction of

£28,000,000, was £14 7s. 11d. and in 1947-1948 it had declined to £1 7s. 10d. In 1948-1949 there was a return of £2 10s. 11d.; but since that date there has been no return whatsoever on the capital indebtedness of the Railway Department; in fact, in 1949-1950 there was a debit of £10,106, in 1950-1951 there was a debit of £98,665 and for 1951-1952 there was a debit of £1,649,376.

Mr. Walsh: I have heard you applauding the administration of the Railway Department in this Chamber.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Treasurer is again making one of his unfair comparisons. If members will look at the picture presented in that table they will see the tremendous impact the 40-hour week has had on the finances of the Railway Department, and the tremendous overtime payments that have been paid over the last few years.

On page 36 of the Treasurer's Statement we find this remarkable statement,—

“The economic rescue of Queensland, which the Government successfully undertook in 1932.”

Mr. Walsh: That is true.

Mr. NICKLIN: What a wonderful statement! Do not let us forget the fact that I have quoted when we consider the period from 1932 to the present time when the Labour Government allegedly came to the economic rescue of Queensland. Let us not forget that the depression basic wage of £3 14s. remained at that figure for four and three-quarter years under Labour, and the Queensland public servants were the only Crown employees in the British Empire who had not had their salary reductions, imposed by legislation, restored to them. That was in 1938, six years after the “economic rescue” of Queensland started. We have the railway results I have given the Committee. Motor registration fees increased by 68 per cent. in 1950 and by a further 50 per cent. in the first half of this year. We have the Treasurer's own statement on 1 February this year—

“The upward trend in maintenance costs might necessitate a curtailing of further main roads for 12 months to two years.”

Economic rescue? I ask you. As far as major developmental projects are concerned, Labour has produced nothing since 1932 except programmes. Finally, despite a grab of millions of trust money, the Treasurer is still budgeting for a deficit of £288,319 and has made no provision whatever for basic-wage increases. May I say in conclusion, that if Queensland life-savers had the same ideas about a “rescue” as the Treasurer, a visit to Queensland beaches would be a very hazardous way of spending a holiday; the greatest danger would be from the rescuers.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (12.46 p.m.): The Treasurer has every reason to be pleased at the presentation of his first Financial Statement. It revealed a surplus of £45,395, £9,198 above the estimated surplus, and thus kept intact Labour's proud record of surpluses. This success was achieved, in spite of the great difficulties experienced in the past twelve months. The task of balancing

1952—R

the Budget in the face of the growing inflation, called for skilful handling of the affairs of the State and that such a degree of success was achieved reflects great credit on the Treasurer, the Premier and the members of the Cabinet for the way in which they have managed the departments under their care. Credit must be given also to the officers and employees of the various departments under their control. This success is more than a personal triumph for the Treasurer, the Premier and other Ministers; it is a success for the Labour Government and the Labour Party as a whole—a success for Labour's policy and administration, a policy that is designed to give the greatest benefit to the greatest number of our citizens and a policy that has succeeded in doing that. It is a policy that fosters the interest of the people engaged in secondary and tertiary industries and results in the growth and development of cities and towns. It is a policy that has given our primary producers and people of the outback more encouragement and practical help than the opponents of Labour ever dreamt of.

It was amazing, Mr. Farrell, to observe the reaction of “The Courier-Mail” to the Budget presented by the Treasurer on Thursday of last week. That paper was very cautious in its criticism. It did not damn the Budget, neither did it praise it, being content to term it an election Budget. If that is all the criticism that the organisation of the anti-Labour parties in this State can offer, it is clearly an indication that it is a good, an excellent Budget. I am positive, after listening to the Leader of the Opposition this morning, that the Opposition expected something entirely different—perhaps a “Dismal Budget” or a suicidal Budget—the name given by sections of the Tory Press of Australia to the Budget delivered by Sir Arthur Fadden in the Federal House. But the sound position of cash balances and investments dispels that thought. The total cash balances stand at £10,648,055 and investments at £8,306,881, of which £5,373,557 is invested in Commonwealth loans, which shows not only a confidence in the progress of this nation but a desire to help that progress. I would point out that an amount of £2,800,000 is in fixed deposits and £133,324 in extended deposits. The Loan Fund disbursements, totalling £23,662,458, show how wisely this money has been spent in the sound development and progress of our State.

The Railway Department heads the departments with a loan spending of £6,448,189, which is only to be expected. I was rather disappointed at the criticism by the Leader of the Opposition of this very important department of State. He seemed to base his whole opposition to the Budget on what he contended was the inefficiency of the Railway Department. I have listened to debates in this Chamber in which the Estimates for the Railway Department were discussed and I have heard hon. member after hon. member on the Opposition side praising the department and the efficiency of all its officers, from the Commissioner down to the humblest man on the lengths. I have heard

them pointing out how the work of these officers has enabled the department to benefit Queensland, the people engaged in primary industries in particular. If credit is given where it is due, it must be admitted that had it not been for the excellent service rendered to this State by the Queensland Railways we should not have been in the good position in which we are today. It is to be regretted that for political reasons on an occasion such as this we should have criticism of a department that has rendered such excellent service not only to the nation but to democracy in general, as is proved by the fact that the wonderful job they did during the war years has earned for them congratulations and praise from leading men on the Allied side all over the democratic world. I feel, therefore, that any criticism levelled at the Government through the Railway Department can be dismissed as mere piffle.

The loans and subsidies granted to local bodies and hospitals boards amount to £4,541,084, while public buildings and land settlement and development benefited to the extent of £2,281,755 and £2,271,722 respectively.

The Treasurer expects that this year Consolidated Revenue will amount to £6,144,121 more than last year and expenditure to £6,477,835 more than last year, leaving a deficit of £288,319, and the Treasurer has very correctly pointed out where the chief responsibility for the deficit lies.

The Leader of the Opposition went to great lengths to try to impress upon hon. members that the present Federal Government had been over-generous to the State, that we had received more in money from them than we did from the Chifley or Curtin Governments. Perhaps that is true, but everyone, even the youngest housewife, knows that money has not the same value today as it had when the Chifley and Curtin Governments were in office. We all remember that the present Federal Government succeeded at the election on the cry that they would put value back in the pound. They said that the Ben Chifley pound was worth only 10s. If that is so, on a true basis of comparison the Sir Arthur Fadden pound is not worth 5s.

The Leader of the Opposition decried the Chifley and Curtin Governments for what they had done for the State, but I challenge him now to dispute the figures that I propose quoting to prove that the Menzies-Fadden Government have treated Queensland unfairly. This State has received £15 10s. 5d. a head from the present Federal Government by way of tax reimbursements, while the South Australian Government received £20 4s. 9d. or £4 14s. 4d. a head more. The Western Australian Government received £24 13s. 9d. a head of population, which is £9 3s. 4d. greater than the amount allocated to Queensland, and the little island State of Tasmania received £16 10s. 6d. or £1 0s. 1d. more than Queensland.

The Opposition may say that I have not mentioned New South Wales and Victoria,

and it is true that I have not. I have omitted them because there cannot be a true comparison between Queensland and New South Wales or Victoria. Anybody with a sense of fairness would know that Queensland is in a vastly different position from that of the other States because of her sparse population distributed over the vast areas of the State, whereas New South Wales and Victoria have greater populations and smaller areas, so that costs of administration are relatively less.

On top of that, we have had the bullying attitude adopted by the Federal Government in withdrawing hospital-benefit payments covering patients in public wards in our hospitals. They are prepared to pay a subsidy towards the cost of sick patients who are able to pay for treatment and nursing in private hospitals or in the private wards of public hospitals, but in their hatred of the worker they are refusing to contribute towards his hospitalisation by refusing to help the Queensland Government continue this humanitarian service, and it is to the credit of this Government that they have accepted the challenge thrown out by the Commonwealth Government and have in effect said, "We will carry on this work so long as we can. You may make it hard for us, but we hope you will not make it impossible."

A varied and extensive public-works programme, involving the expenditure of £30,425,734, will go a long way towards maintaining and developing this State. That is why the Opposition are disappointed with this Budget. We are sincere in our efforts to develop this State and it cannot be adequately developed unless we maintain full employment. Rural development, irrigation and water supply are being well catered for. Members of the community have learned to expect this treatment from a Labour Government. Much money has been set aside for the improvement of transport and harbour facilities and it is significant, Mr. Farrell, that six harbours, from Brisbane to Cairns, are being developed at a cost of £340,870. I hope that people outside the metropolitan area will note that the greater part of this amount, £183,370, is to be spent on ports other than Brisbane, and of that sum £97,250 is being spent on the development of Gladstone harbour to cope with record shipments expected at that port. The estimated tonnages of coal and pyrites to be shipped from Gladstone justify the Government in allocating that sum to Gladstone.

With work to be done in connection with building, mining and industry generally, the Government's programme should result in a balanced economy for the State. This has been the aim of Labour Governments since 1915. Our policy of helping local authorities has been continued and those people who are prone to criticise the Government for their allegedly miserable treatment of local authorities would do well to study the Treasurer's Financial Statement, where they would find that last year £6,156,854 was made available to local authorities and semi-governmental bodies, and of this sum £2,372,095

was a straight-out gift by way of subsidy. Provision has been made this year for subsidies to local authorities and semi-governmental bodies amounting to £6,269,520, an increase of £112,666 on last year.

On page 29 of the Financial Statement hon. members will see a table of the rates of some of the more important subsidies granted to local bodies. For instance, a subsidy of 50 per cent. is granted on sewerage works. That means that any local authority in any part of Queensland that is willing to give its people the benefit of a sewerage scheme has to find only one half of the total cost. The other half is provided by the Government. The subsidy on water schemes varies from 20 to 50 per cent., on general works from 15 to 33½ per cent., and on cottages for old-age and invalid pensioners it is 50 per cent.

Some few years ago, when I was visiting Mareeba, I was very impressed by the type of cottage that the Mareeba Shire Council had erected, with the help of a subsidy from the Government, for the old people of Queensland, not necessarily residents of the Mareeba shire. It is very pleasing both for me and the ratepayers generally of Ipswich to know that the Ipswich City Council has availed itself of the generous help provided by the Government's subsidy to build cottages for old people, both single and married. I feel that if local authorities throughout the State would take advantage of the facilities offered by the Government to house our old people, it would be of great advantage to the pioneers in their last days.

Hostels for waiting mothers at approved C.W.A. centres attract a subsidy of 50 per cent. No-one can fail to be impressed by the work of this worthy organisation, and by the help it has received from various local authorities and from the Government as the result of these subsidies. The work that it is carrying out so very efficiently could not even be attempted without the Government's subsidy.

Library facilities also attract a subsidy of 50 per cent. as do aerodromes in country centres, whilst electrification attracts a subsidy of 33½ per cent. generally, with 50 to 65 per cent. in western areas. That is another demonstration of the practical way in which this Government are prepared to help outside districts.

The following table sets out the amounts that have been given to local authorities in this way:—

	£
Sewerage	6,285,317
Water	2,864,660
Electricity	3,064,399
Roads, Streets (including kerbing and channelling) and Bridges	3,546,541
Drainage	951,093
Buildings	246,420
Miscellaneous	1,142,359
Harbour Beards and Brisbane Harbour	658,594
	<hr/>
	£18,759,383

It is quite evident, therefore, that there has been a full appreciation by local authorities of the need for amenities such as water supply, sewerage and electricity, and I take this opportunity of expressing the gratitude of the citizens of Ipswich, as well as the Ipswich City Council, for the very generous help that the Government has given.

However, the aid given to local bodies by the Government does not end there. We must take into consideration also the cost and the maintenance of our main roads. The construction and maintenance of main roads by the Main Roads Department has saved the local authorities of this State many thousands of pounds. In the last twelve months local authorities have borne only 5.29 per cent. of the cost of construction of main roads, amounting to £22,038,694. Their share of the maintenance cost, amounting to £10,498,053 over the same period, is only 23.73 per cent. It must be obvious that but for this generous aid from the Government local authorities would have been seriously handicapped and the ratepayers would have had to go without many of the essential services and amenities that are now enjoyed by many thousands of people.

The paragraph in the Budget relating to the State Government Insurance Office indicates clearly that that office is continuing to give excellent service to the people and this excellent service was demonstrated very clearly quite recently in an answer to a question asked in this Chamber by the hon. member for Sherwood. Being anxious to help certain financial interests that he represents, the hon. member was prompted to ask the question because of a paragraph that had appeared in the paper that morning, which indicated that coal-owners in New South Wales had been able to reduce the price of coal by 1s. 6d. a ton because of the drop in insurance premiums for workers' compensation in that State. I propose to read the answer given by the Premier because, following the usual unfair practice of the Press in this State, it neglected to publish the answer in full and published only parts of it, so as to make sure that any credit that should go to the Queensland Government for caring for the industries and the people in this State should not be given to them. This is the answer—

“The premiums charged for coal mining in Queensland are—underground workers: injury, 93s. 6d. per cent., silicosis 30s. per cent.”

Silicosis includes diseases contracted through inhaling dust, diseases of the lungs, and so on. The answer continues—

“Total, 123s. 6d. per cent. Surface workers: injury, 60s. per cent.; silicosis, 30s. per cent.; total, 90s. per cent. as compared with £17 per cent. charged in New South Wales.”

Then hon. members opposite will tell you how efficient private enterprise is, although here in Queensland a State insurance monopoly provides a service for 90s. per cent. that in New South Wales costs £17 per cent.

The answer goes on—

“£17 per cent. charged in New South Wales until recently when the rate was reported to have been reduced to £11 per cent. This rate applies to underground and surface workers alike. It will be seen that the comparison is very favourable to Queensland and consequently the statement by the hon. member regarding the premium being obviously excessive is not in accordance with fact.”

If private enterprise could give the same service to the coal-owners in New South Wales as the State Government Insurance Office can give in this State the coal-owners in New South Wales should be able further to reduce their coal prices considerably and thus help consumers generally. That would be a benefit to everybody.

Mr. Walsh: There is no monopoly in New South Wales.

Mr. DONALD: No, not a State monopoly, but perhaps what amounts to a private-enterprise monopoly.

The sum of £7,360,076 required this year for education, which is an advance of £1,299,265 on the previous year, is an excellent investment for the State. There is no better investment for the community than money spent on education because it will return rich dividends to the community in the form of an enlightened community. Educational problems are everybody's problems and not the problem of the Department of Public Instruction alone. When this is generally recognised it will be better for all. Every encouragement should be given to the men and women who voluntarily give their services on school committees and school welfare committees.

I again thank the Premier for his reference to the continued record production in coal-mining in Queensland but although it makes very pleasant reading there are indications that the position is far from satisfactory. Lack of immediate orders, dismissal of mine workers, and the closing of collieries portends worse things to come, but I sincerely hope that the trend in that direction will be arrested and that it will not be as serious as it is feared at the moment.

The table appearing on page 34 of the Financial Statement relating to the basic-wage increases is worth examining. It shows very clearly how successfully the problem of inflation was dealt with by Federal Labour Governments first under the leadership of the late John Curtin and later under the leadership of the late Ben. Chifley.

Under those Governments full employment was achieved probably for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth and it was maintained.

The cost of living was almost stationary. What a pity the policy that made this possible was rejected by the Australian people! I refer to the defeat of the referendum, followed by the defeat of the Chifley Government. However, we learn by mistakes and that mistake will be rectified at the first opportunity.

The Budget is an answer to the protests and statements made by our opponents and presents a true picture of the progress made in the period under review. The progress made in the period it covers has been real and of great benefit to the people. It outlines the allocations for public works and development for the ensuing year. This is really a revival policy designed for the development and economic progress of the State. It is an honest attempt, despite its criticism by the Leader of the Opposition, to provide full employment for all. That was fully emphasised by the Treasurer. Consequently it will have the approval of the people generally.

In contradiction of the criticism by the Leader of the Opposition is the editorial appearing in “The Telegraph” last Friday night expressing the opinion that the Budget was a sound one and emphasising that it was dishonest to say or for anyone to contend that it was designed to catch votes at the next election. The Leader of the Opposition tried very hard to make it appear that the Budget was a document designed to do so, but he failed dismally to establish his contention. Obviously the leader-writer of “The Telegraph” cannot be claimed as a supporter of the Government party and the paper itself cannot be said to be an organ of this party. Yet it admits quite freely that that charge can hardly be established. That editorial established the fact that the success of the Labour Party in the past, and its success in the future, has been due to its honesty and its ability to honour all promises it has made. Unlike other political parties in Australia, it has no need to make any sugar-coated promises to win an election. Labour will win the next election, and let me assure hon. members opposite that that win will not be an accident but a direct result of the approval of its policy by a majority of the people.

During various debates this Session there has been a great deal of talk about depression. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber who have issued a warning of this inevitable event have been called pessimists by hon. members opposite. Hon. members opposite have confidently claimed that there will not be another depression in Australia, and have labelled themselves optimists. Anyone who honestly thinks we shall not have a depression in the future is undoubtedly an optimist. In fact, he is a super-optimist because as long as the economic system is based on the capitalistic form of society we shall have our periodic periods of prosperity, followed by a depression.

Having said that, I intend to prove that while the system of capitalism prevails such happenings are inevitable and to show hon. members that depressions can be avoided if a sane system of society supersedes capitalism. It would be futile for anyone to attempt to deny that there is among our people a general dissatisfaction with our present social and economic system. It is expressed in many ways and it is clearly

apparent to all. The most obvious objections come from its economic defects, the unequal distribution of wealth and income, recurring depressions, accompanied by mass unemployment, with its resulting poverty, and all the privations and misery that go with it. The exploitation of the producers and consumers by monopolistic interests, plus its sinful waste, are all universal features of the capitalist system.

The political power arising from ownership of wealth stultifies political democracy. Even with a Labour Government in office, it tends to subordinate public policy to the interests of private gain. With its treatment of the worker as a mere instrument of production, with its glorification of the pursuit of wealth and its reverence for money as a standard of success, the present system of society degrades human desire. It inevitably tends to encourage and strengthen selfishness at the expense of public-spiritedness, and individualism at the expense of co-operation.

Some defects of the capitalist society can be reduced, or even eliminated, but attempts to cope with them upset the balance of the system and tend to raise new and often more serious obstacles to the improvement of human welfare. Depressions can be largely prevented but only at the price of retarding economic progress, and monopoly can be checked only by putting back the clock of industrial development. All remedial measures require a positive Government policy, which interferes with the working of a private-enterprise system. However, repeated intervention must lead to a planned society; but planning is a technique that may have a widely different social meaning and purpose; it may lead us to one of three destinations: democratic Socialism, which is very desirable, or to the extremes of Fascism or Communism. Therefore, it cannot be undertaken without clear knowledge of the difficulties in the way.

Socialism is not a dogmatic creed or a panacea. It aims at the replacement of profit-seeking by conscious planning and co-ordination of society within a democratic political system. This means, in the economic sphere, the transfer to the community of resources and industries essential to the general welfare, a distribution of income related to the services rendered to the community, the recognition of a worker as a human being and the enlargement of his status in industry, and the adoption of such planned and orderly controls over other parts of the economy as may be required.

It implies, in the political sphere, that the transformation must be accomplished by true democratic methods, and that the socialist system must be constructed to fit into a democratic framework. This condition, I believe, is necessary if the gains in the social and economic spheres are not to be outweighed by the loss of the personal and political freedoms that are as much a condition of full life as are high living standards and social security.

Socialism entails neither the elimination of private property nor complete equality of

incomes, nor does it imply a police State. Under Socialism planning would aim at stability of employment while preserving economic progress, at reducing inequality and poverty while maintaining individual incentive, at orderly development while upholding individual liberties.

The essence of Socialism is the belief that social planning for the general welfare can, by increasing opportunity enlarge individual freedom, by reducing waste exploitation and inefficiency increase economic progress, and by offering effective incentives encourage initiative. In expressing this belief I am mindful of the difficulties in the way and the problems to be overcome, but honestly believing that we have much to gain by the implementation of a socialist policy.

The most glaring evil of the capitalist system has been its inability to prevent depressions and mass unemployment every few years. That this characteristic of the system is expected to recur in the future is obvious from public discussion, comments in the Press, and the frequently expressed business fears. People are undoubtedly right in their assumption that another depression will come. Nevertheless, it is now recognised that even under capitalism much may be done by means of public works and other policies to ease its worst effects. However, the policy of the present Federal Government is such that the people of Australia cannot with confidence expect much if any assistance to be rendered to the community generally from that source.

Although admittedly programmes of public works by the Federal and State Governments represent an honest attempt to deal with the problems of depression, and be a big improvement on the policies applied in previous slumps, they are at the best palliatives and have many unsatisfactory features. Socialists maintain that the best solution lies in the gradual transformation of the capitalist society into the socialist society. Under Socialism depressions can be prevented. It is not necessary to wait until they arrive before dealing with them. Socialists insist that full employment can be maintained by democratic methods, which at the same time advance economic progress and minimise social hardships.

Depressions in Australia have in the past arisen from both external and internal causes. The immediate causes have usually been external. The capitalist cycle of boom and depression in Australia has, in the past, coincided with similar movements in other capitalist economies. Usually the boom has collapsed in other countries first and the depression has spread to Australia from overseas. The next depression will probably be no exception. What happens is that crises overseas lead to curtailed demands, reduced prices for our exports, and in turn lower incomes for our farmers, thus reducing their demand for the commodities produced by Australian industry. It is thus that depression spreads throughout the economy.

Australian Governments, Federal or State, cannot prevent these overseas happenings. All they can do is to alleviate their effects

on the Australian economy by intelligent planning of Australian agriculture in boom times, in conjunction with inter-governmental long-term contracts for the sale of our major export products; price-stabilisation schemes, price guarantees, or other policies to maintain the income of primary producers, and by any measures that will enable Australia to maintain her capacity to obtain necessary imports from abroad despite a temporary drop in export income.

While it is important to recognise the importance of overseas causes of depression in Australia and to take adequate measures to deal with them, it is equally important to take account of the causes within Australia herself, for however adequately overseas influences are dealt with, the internal causes will continue to produce depression if nothing is done about them.

Depression would occur in Australia even if overseas influences were entirely eliminated. The more Australia develops industrially the more important the internal factors will become. Ultimately, depression in Australia, like slumps in all capitalist countries, arises from the unco-ordinated activities of profit-seeking firms. During a boom period the rapid exploitation of the more obvious industrial possibilities occur without regard for the less profitable forms of development, which must also take place if the boom is to be maintained. The result is that the boom does not last and depression ensues.

An analysis of the internal causes of depression suggests the remedy. The solution is the continual establishment of new industries as labour is released from the older, over-expanded industries. This would not only maintain employment and prevent depression but also raise living standards by the production of new goods. Depression would not then merely be dealt with after it occurred. It would be prevented from occurring. Economic progress, instead of being halted every few years by serious depressions, would be continuous.

If the solution to depression is so simple as this and offers such great advantages, why has it not been tried? The answer is that the establishment of new industries has been left to private enterprises. Though it is generally believed that this is just what private enterprise is good at—enterprise, the testing of new ideas, the establishment of new industries—is this really so? Let each hon. member ask himself that question. If he takes time to examine it and answers it truthfully, his answer must be "No."

Certainly, at the beginning of a boom new ideas are tried out in large numbers, new products are produced and enterprises are established. The boom is largely fed by the demand which is created for these new products, but as the boom continues, industry finds itself with less time and inclination to develop production of further new products. This means that when demand for the main products of industry is satisfied, there is not enough production of new goods to maintain employment and satisfy consumers.

Lack of enterprise is the most significant business characteristic in the later stages of the boom and when depression comes, of course, business enterprise is almost non-existent. This implies that if the required new industries are to be established, the Government must take a hand.

Three possibilities are open to a Government. They may offer special inducements to private enterprise, they may apply compulsion to private enterprise, or they may establish the new industries themselves. Let us assess the merits of these three approaches. It will not be enough for a Government to wait until a depression occurs and then set about the establishment of new industries, because depression spreads rapidly once it starts and this would be a totally inadequate approach. The Government need to look ahead and plan for the establishment of the new industries exactly when they are required. Suppose it is decided to induce private enterprise, by subsidy or guarantee against loss, to establish the required industries. The Government must determine what kinds of industry are likely to prove most successful, and they must then induce private firms to establish these possibly unfamiliar industries, with agreement upon the amount of subsidy or guarantee. As the Government alone have a sufficiently comprehensive knowledge of economic conditions, they must be complete masters of the situation and determine the time and rate at which the new industries are to be established. Private firms must be ready and willing to co-operate with the Government even if at the time this is against their private interests.

The requirements of such a policy need merely be stated for the difficulties to be apparent. It is easy to imagine how difficult and ineffective such a dual control would become, with the Government finding the money and determining the policy and private enterprise carrying it out. Maintenance of employment under such conditions, though theoretically possible, would rest on very shaky foundations. Some difficulties might be overcome if the Government were to apply compulsion and this would be necessary for the success of the policy if negotiations with private enterprise broke down.

The large-scale compulsory direction of resources as a normal peace-time policy would almost certainly be resisted by private industry. It would have to be enforced, but such a system would not be democratic; in fact, it could even be described as Fascism.

In view of the serious difficulties of the inducement and compulsory policies there is at the very least a very strong case for the third method, that is, for the Government to establish the required industries. Put at its lowest, one might ask with justification why the Government should pay large subsidies to private industries at the expense of the community to induce industry to do the things the Government could well do themselves. Moreover, the fact that the Government would combine the responsibility for determining general economic policy with the execution of particular measures, would greatly reduce the difficulties of timing and

co-ordination that would be inevitable under divided control. Most significant of all, however, is that unemployment would cease to be a serious danger if the level of production of the economy was continuously adjusted to changing needs within the framework of an overall plan. There might be errors of judgment in directing resources to different uses, but the problem of depression and unemployment would simply cease to exist. Its solution would come automatically as a result of socialised planning for higher standards of living.

Measures to maintain full employment under capitalism either fail to provide an acceptable solution to the problem of unemployment or they introduce into the capitalist system elements of planning and control that disrupt its proper working. In the last resort, these policies, to be effective, would lead to such a degree of planning that the capitalist system would disappear.

Capitalism, therefore, cannot provide any adequate remedy for the problem of depression unemployment. Even if it could, capitalism would still stand condemned because of its inability to achieve maximum production. In a capitalist society, the aim of each firm is to make the highest possible profit. Profits are the main motivating force behind the system.

It is argued that in the search for profits, capitalists direct the productive resources of the community into the industries where they will be of most use in fulfilling the wants of the people. It is said that if there is a big demand for an article, prices and profits in the industry concerned will be high and this will encourage firms to produce it. If, on the other hand, demand is slack, profits will be low and production of that article will be discouraged. So long, it is contended, as nothing is done by company taxation, price-control or other means to interfere with the capitalists' search for profit, the system will automatically achieve maximum production of the things people want. However, this comfortable theory does not work out in practice. Maximum profits do not necessarily mean either maximum production or production of the things people most want. It is characteristic of capitalism that production of luxuries occurs while basic needs are left unsatisfied. There is no need for me to quote examples of this. We see it every day in the week, every week in the year, and year after year.

In many other ways the interest of private profit clash with public interest under capitalism. Advertising and high-pressure salesmanship, which waste resources in persuading people to buy what they do not really want, the neglect of unprofitable social needs of culture, education and art, the destruction of beauty and the creation of ugliness have characterised private enterprise in the building of our towns and cities. We have seen also the cost to the community imposed by reckless farming through soil erosion, the failure of private industry to assume the unprofitable responsibility for the training of skilled workers, and the adulteration of products.

Is there any necessity for me to remind hon. members of this evil? In every Parliament in every democratic country of the world, session after session legislation has to be enacted to ensure that people receive unadulterated commodities. The last report of the Health and Medical Services of this State contains a list covering six pages of people who were prosecuted for adulterating our food and our liquor. Not only is the food necessary for life adulterated, but the clothes we wear, the very homes in which we live and the factories in which we work have felt the effects of this evil. All these things are examples of the inevitable conflict between private and community interests. A system based on private profit is fundamentally incompatible with the production of the right things in the right quantities.

Even in what it does produce the profit system is restrictive and inefficient. A firm usually has a choice between selling a relatively small output at a high price, and selling more at a lower price. Given the conditions of modern industry it will usually pay a firm to sell little at a high price and restrict production accordingly.

The relatively small population of Australia means that production of important commodities must be in the hands of one, or a few firms, if modern large-scale methods are to be used. Low density of population means that local markets all over Australia are easily dominated by one or two local firms. Under these conditions a large degree of monopoly is inevitable.

One common fallacy in discussion on monopoly is its identification with large-scale production. In fact, through the growth of the trade association, monopoly has spread throughout Australia and embraces both large and small firms. All these tendencies are accentuated by the well-known phenomenon of interlocking of directorates and ownership of firms.

In a socialist economy it would be possible to enjoy the benefits of economic progress without the disadvantages of private monopoly. It is often argued, as if something profound and decisive were being said, that Socialism would merely mean the substitution of government for private monopoly. This is merely a play upon the word "monopoly." There is all the difference in the world between a monopoly run privately for the purpose of maximum private profit and a monopoly operated by the community in the interests of the community. Even on the absurd assumption that a socialised industry would restrict output and charge monopoly prices just like a private industry, at least the monopoly profit would accrue to the community in the form of reduced prices or something else, or reduced taxation, not to the advantage of any private individual or group.

In fact, however, prices in a socialist society would be determined on whatever principle is believed to be most in the community interest. For example, price might be equal to cost of production, approximately defined. Provided

the efficiency of public enterprise is no less than that of private enterprise, it is certain that under public enterprise prices would be lower and output higher than under private monopoly. This proviso, of course, is of vital importance. It would be possible for a defender of capitalism to admit all that has been said and yet prefer private ownership of industry. He might feel that the socialised industries would be less efficiently run than private industries and that this loss of efficiency might be so great as to outweigh the gains from the elimination of private monopoly.

This view is often advanced simply because the seriousness of monopoly is not appreciated. In many cases it rests on irrational prejudice against public ownership and enterprise. If we cast prejudice aside, it will be admitted that not all private enterprises are efficient and not all Government enterprises inefficient. The true situation is that some public concerns, such as the State Government Insurance Office in Queensland, the Public Curator's Office, the Commonwealth Bank, the T.A.A., are highly efficient, while others are less efficient, and while some Australian industries are highly efficient, some are notoriously inefficient. There are all degrees of efficiency in public and private enterprise and there is no decisive balance in favour of private ownership.

It would be interesting at this stage to tell hon. members of the success that followed the nationalisation of industries in Great Britain and here I quote from an Old Country newspaper as follows:—

“What are the plain unvarnished facts?”

“Electricity—The British Electricity Authority in its report for the year ended 31 March, 1950, announced that its surplus for the year totalled £7,163,236. Last year's surplus was £4,391,634.”

The coal industry of Great Britain, before it was nationalised, was almost in a state of bankruptcy and year after year the production was getting lower and lower, and hardly sufficient to keep the industries of Great Britain going. Since the industry was nationalised, it has been revived and has increased its production in the aggregate and per man employed.

This report goes on to say—

“Coal—In the year ended 31 December, 1949, the National Coal Board earned a surplus of £22.7 million of which £13.2 million was earmarked for compensation payments, leaving a net surplus of £9½ million.”

There may be some confusion about what is meant by compensation payment and I would explain that it is compensation paid to the former owners of the coal-mines and not to people who may have been injured in the course of their occupation in this industry.

The report further states—

“Cable and wireless reported a profit for the 15 months ended 31 March, 1950, of £1,887,334 out of which it was proposed to pay a dividend of £1,500,000 leaving a net surplus of £387,334.

“Cotton.—The Raw Cotton Commission, which buys and sells all raw cotton imported into Britain, reported provisionally that for the year ended 31 July, 1950, it had earned a net surplus of just under £10 million (£9,940,558).

“The Gas Council, which took over Britain's gas industry on May Day, 1949, published its first annual report this week. After compensation payments of £6,300,000, and in the face of steeply rising costs, it still showed a profit of £2,663.

“The Bank of England continues to show a comfortable surplus under public ownership, as it did under private.

“Transport.—In the year ended 31 December, 1949, the British Transport Commission made a surplus of £25.7 million. After paying £43.9 million in compensation and putting £2.6 million on one side for buying back British Transport Stock at a later date, a net deficit of £20.8 million was sustained.

“Out of these eight nationalised concerns, six are making a profit, and if Lord Salisbury applies to them all the same tests he would apply to private enterprise he will see that their combined surplus—without the Bank of England—is £72,147,000. That is what private enterprise would report as net profit, out of which dividends would be paid.”

An Opposition Member: What paper is that?

Mr. DONALD: That is an influential newspaper from the homeland.

However, Socialism implies much more than the nationalisation of particular industries for particular reasons. Socialists aim at a change in the character of the economy from one in which industry is mainly privately owned to one in which industry is mainly owned by the community. Full employment cannot be maintained, nor can monopolistic restrictions on production be eliminated, without public ownership of very much more than a few key industries and public utilities. Socialism embraces no less than the planning of industry as a whole to achieve community objectives relating to employment, production and distribution.

A comparison of the relative efficiency of individual industries under private and public enterprise does not do justice to the case for Socialism. The enormous advantage which the socialist society possesses of being able to prevent depression and organise industry for the community advantage, relegates this question to a secondary order of importance. The ability to continually transfer resources to new forms of production, which a socialist society possesses, would enable it to maintain permanent full employment. Permanent full employment, and the means used under Socialism to achieve it, would result, in turn, in an expansion of production uninterrupted by periodic depressions, a steady increase in the production of old and a steady flow of new types of products. A socialist society would encourage increased production in a way that is impossible under capitalism, by

an organisation of community-owned industries undreamt of by those who merely want to nationalise a few industries and leave the greater part of private enterprise untouched.

I conclude by reading a poem written many years ago by Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, entitled "Who is a Socialist?"

"Who is a Socialist? It is the man
Who strives to formulate a plan
To better the earth's conditions. It is he
Who, having ears to hear and eyes to see,
Is neither deaf nor blind, when might,
 rough shod,
Treads down the privileges and rights
 which God
Means for all men, the privilege to toil,
To breathe pure air, to till the fertile
soil—
The right to live, to love, to woo, to
wed,
And earn for hungry mouths their meed
of bread.
The Socialist is he who claims no more
Than his own share from generous
nature's store,
But that he asks, and asks too, that no
other
Shall claim the share of any weaker
brother
And brand him beggar in his own
domain
To glut a mad, inordinate lust for gain.
The Socialist is one who holds the best
Of all God's gifts is toil—the second
rest,
He asks that all men learn the sweets
of labour,
And that no idler fatten on his neigh-
bour.
That all men be allowed their share of
leisure,
Nor thousands slave that one may seek
his pleasure,
Who on the Golden Rule shall dare
insist—
Behold in him the modern Socialist."

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Clayfield) (3 p.m.): I listened to the Treasurer's Budget Speech, as I do each year, with the closest attention. I feel that it is the most important speech delivered in Parliament. It must be very gratifying to any hon. member who can rise in his place, have a speech printed before it is delivered, and have the House adjourn immediately after the speech is delivered. That indicates the importance of the speech; and I feel that each one of us will consider the points of the speech that are of particular interest to him.

While I compliment the Treasurer on the preparation and delivery of the speech, I regret that it has been clouded the way through by a blanket of propaganda. There is a real fog of propaganda all through the speech. I might indicate to the Treasurer that gradually that fog is drifting and the blanket the Government have been trying to

bring down before the people all the time is gradually getting threadbare; at last people are beginning to see through it.

As you can imagine, Mr. Farrell, I am particularly interested in two aspects of the Budget.

Mr. Walsh: One is irrigation.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: As the Treasurer says, one is irrigation. I am pleased that the Treasurer was able to say that the Government are alive to the important part that irrigation plays in rural production. I am also pleased to see provision in the Estimates for the Department of Public Instruction of such a large increase in that vote, and it is indeed pleasing to notice the transformation of the scene relating to the library activities of this State. In 1944-1945 the Estimates required only £3,607 for "Library Services," in 1945-1946 that amount rose to £4,306, and in this year's Estimates it is delightful to see that the Treasurer has provided £73,400.

Mr. Walsh: You be careful; you will get into trouble with your members over there.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: If the Treasurer could only contain himself, he would have something to attack me on before very long. He should forget all about the trouble I might get into with my members. The parties on this side of the Committee try to be fair and if they comment on any statement the Treasurer has presented their remarks are decidedly fair. I wish to point out that in 1947, when I saw that this vote for libraries was no more than £4,306, I made a special feature of drawing the attention of hon. members to the need for the development of library services in this State.

A Government Member: You take credit for it?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I take some credit. The Government's attention was drawn to the need for an increase in the spread of knowledge to the people after they have left school. Because of that and because of the splendid work done by our State Librarian, who has been a real organiser for the improvement of knowledge after school years, it is delightful to see the sum of £73,400 on the Estimates instead of £4,306 only six or seven years ago.

Mr. Walsh: You are very pleased about that, anyhow.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I am very pleased about that.

My other point is irrigation, and I centre my remarks round that on account of the statement made by the hon. member for Balonne in his speech on the Address in Reply. I am sure the hon. member is within the precincts of the House and I hope that before I get fully onto that subject he will return to the Chamber. On that occasion the hon. member described me as a member who was careering around the country looking at weirs. Some of his friends wanted to know what I knew about weirs. I let that pass, but he persisted in saying that when I returned I

didn't say what was true. That is the part of the statement that I object to. I have to tell the hon. member a few things, but I will wait until he returns to the Chamber. Meanwhile, I must say that in any comments I make on irrigation I criticise only Government policy. I do not criticise the officers of the Government, who I think are doing a first-class job. When I praise I praise Government policy. I endeavour to be fair. Any remarks I make are not reflections on officers of the Public Service. I pay tribute to the co-operation that I have had from the highest to the lowest of them, particularly on the engineering side.

The hon. member for Townsville in his speech on the Address in Reply paid an excellent tribute to Sir John Kemp whom, in my second reading speech on the Burdekin River Development Bill in 1949, I credited with being the No. 1 Public Servant in that respect. I pay my tribute to Sir John, who, like his colleague, the Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply, Mr. Nimmo, has passed the retiring age for the Public Service but remains in it because he can still be of service to the State.

Mr. Walsh: Because the Government realise the value of their services.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I feel sure that gentlemen who are still in the Public Service after having passed the retiring age are working in the best interests of the State, and all credit is due to them for what they do.

I am concerned about the engineering staff. This State has some tremendous undertakings. In 1949, when irrigation appeared to be developing on very good lines, we had a very competent Commissioner and an excellent staff in the commission, but the Government suddenly decided to advertise in the Press of Australia—and the advertisement appeared in "The Brisbane Courier-Mail" of 10 September, 1949, as well as other Australian papers—calling applications for the positions of Chief Engineer and Deputy Chief Engineer for the Major Dams Branch and four other engineers for the Major Dams Branch of the Co-ordinator-General's Department. It appeared that Government policy was to be that all major works should be taken out of the hands of the Commissioner and carried out by the engineering staff of the Co-ordinator-General's Department.

This was a complete failure because the Major Dams Branch and the Bridges Branch of the Co-ordinator-General's Department did not get the engineers for whom they advertised, and it was agreed ultimately, after 37 applications had been received—only five engineers were appointed from outside the Public Service—that they would establish the Engineering Branch of the Co-ordinator-General's Department by amalgamating the Somerset, Major Dams and Bridges Branches. That policy rather handicapped our irrigation activities, and it appears now that if any major dams are to be built the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply will be building them.

Mr. Jesson: What about the hon. member for Balonne now?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The hon. member for Hinchinbrook is terribly anxious to hear me start on the hon. member for Balonne, and now that hon. member is in the Chamber I repeat that I should not have taken any notice of his remarks had he not said that when I returned the story I told was not true. The hon. member for Balonne wanted to know what I knew about weirs and I propose telling him something of what I know about weirs, and I will start in his own electorate. Although I have been careering round the countryside, to use his phrase, I augmented the knowledge I gained by my careering through correspondence.

Mr. Jesson: Is "correspondence" the right word?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I should like to say to a little apple-faced man, "You are very naughty, Georgie Porgie."

I repeat that I augmented the knowledge I had gathered from travelling round this State visiting weirs and projects by communicating with some 100 shires in this State. So that there will be no misunderstanding in the mind of any hon. member, I point out that I wanted to get from the shire offices an official statement of what the local people believed was the most desirable thing in the storage of water in their respective shires. I could have asked any hon. member about his own locality, and no doubt I should have received a very full reply, but I have on record now some 80-odd replies from the shires of Queensland telling me what the men on the spot think is necessary in their particular areas to develop greater production through the further storage of water.

Take the hon. member for Balonne's shire first. The letter I received from the shire clerk at St. George was possibly the most interesting of all. He told me about the Balonne, Wallum and Moonee Rivers. He said—

"It is generally conceded that no inland river offers such possibilities for water conservation and irrigation farming as the section of the Balonne River for a distance of 40 miles upstream from St. George and for a similar distance downstream from the town."

He went on to say—

"This stretch of the river flows through flat country with a fall of approximately 1 ft. to the mile. The land on each side varies from sandy loam to black soil and is splendid for practically every kind of crop or produce that can be grown under the climatic conditions of South-western Queensland."

"The section of the river in question varies in width from 80 yards to 100 yards throughout, with high banks ideally suited for weiring."

Mr. Walsh: Good prospects.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: It has been prospected. I want the hon. member for Balonne to refer me to the speeches he has made in this Chamber urging the Government to expand agriculture by irrigation along those 40 miles on each side of the St. George.

Mr. Walsh: Are you supporting the hon. member for Balonne?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I am supporting any scheme to produce more food from this country for the world's markets.

The shire clerk goes on to say—

“The weir was first proposed by the council as a town water supply for which purpose a low-level structure would have been sufficient, and in view of the opportunities which the site provided for a high-level weir the council prevailed upon the Government to proceed with a high-level structure and establish an experimental project and the project was commenced in 1948. It is anticipated that the weir will be finished about next February and possibly it may be possible for you to arrange to be present when the official opening takes place.”

I replied that I should be delighted to be present. In the very centre of the electorate represented by the hon. member for Balonne there appear to be wonderful opportunities for the greater expansion of agriculture through irrigation and I sincerely hope that the hon. member will take as much interest in irrigation as I do in that centre.

I do not know whether the Waggamba shire is wholly within the electorate of the hon. member for Balonne or whether part is in the electorate represented by the Secretary for Public Works and Housing. I had an interesting letter from the shire clerk of that council telling me about the McIntyre River, Callandoon Creek, and the Weir River. It was surprising that that shire should write to me saying, “I attach a copy of a letter to the Treasurer. The council asks that you will assist in making personal representations on their behalf.”

Mr. Hilton: You wrote it.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The shire council was anxious to get the help of a local member to influence the Treasurer on its behalf. When it could not get help locally the council tried another means of getting it. All the council wanted was my help to get £10,000.

Mr. Walsh: You wrote to the council in the first place.

Government Members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I notice that the hon. member for Warrego is not in the Chamber and I should have liked him to hear how the people of Cunnamulla also wanted my help. The Paroo Shire Council in a letter to me said—

“Some years ago, just after the war, this council engaged the services of Mr. Jack Mulholland, M.E. M.Sc., Consulting Engineer, Union Bank Chambers, Queen Street, Brisbane, to undertake a preliminary

survey and submit a report in connection with its proposal to weir the Warrego River at a point, approximately 4 miles south of Cunnamulla, for the purpose of providing irrigation for proposed small farms to produce fodder, vegetables, etc., to make the district more or less self sufficient in these commodities.”

“The scheme submitted by Mr. Mulholland, which appeared to be most practicable and which, incidentally, cost the ratepayers in the vicinity of £600 to prepare for submission to the Government, has been lying dormant on the departmental files ever since.”

Apparently the people in the distant parts of this State want the co-operation of all members of Parliament to help them in proving the facilities for agriculture in their various districts. If I had the time and the Standing Orders were the same as they were in 1911, when an hon. member could go on speaking indefinitely, I might exceed the time taken by Joe Lesina.

I have many cases to refer to, but I desire to refer particularly to that of the Rosenthal shire, with headquarters at Warwick. If hon. members want me to read the letter that I wrote, I shall be only too pleased to do so. However, the Rosenthal Shire Council wrote to me and said—

“A couple of years ago the Irrigation Department sent Engineer Brownsdon to test Sandy Creek, seven miles from Warwick, for a weir up to 100 feet. I am aware that this blueprint is in the Irrigation Department. This scheme was devised to impound a big supply back seven miles for the purpose of feeding the Condamine right down to Cecil Plains, where there is a weir. It was designed that the river would provide the means to irrigate the rich territory on the way down, and the water stored would be fed down the river. It is not too much to say that the Sandy Creek scheme would also prove an auxiliary to the Warwick City Water Supply in a serious drought period.

“I wish you would join with our member, Mr. Madsen, in this scheme. He knows what I feel on the matter. Perhaps you might ask the question in the House, ‘When might the Government get on with the scheme?’”

These letters have come from all parts of the State but, as I say, I have not the time to deal with many of them. The people in the South Burnett district, too, are weir-minded. More weirs are wanted in the Kingaroy, Nanango, Murgon and Kilkivan districts, because that food-bowl of Queensland needs a constant water supply to increase its output of agricultural products.

Mr. Walsh: You had better get on with the Budget.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Treasurer wants me to get on with the Budget, but I think I am perfectly justified in discussing, in this debate, the attitude of the State Government today compared with that of the State Government of only a few years ago.

For example, let me quote what the Secretary for Public Lands said in 1946, as reported on page 1,521 of "Hansard" for that year—

"It is easy for me, or any other hon. member, to put forward grandiose schemes costing many millions of pounds and taking from 10 to 15 years to put into effect, but what we are mainly concerned about, after all, is the practical and correct approach to irrigation. If you have £250,000 and you can build 30, 40, or even 100 weirs throughout the State I am satisfied that this State could be transformed."

The policy of the Government in 1946 was to build weirs, plenty of weirs, and to keep quiet about grandiose schemes.

Mr. Foley: We built seven of them last year.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I have great difficulty in hearing the interjection above the noise in the Chamber. I can say that I have worked in the closest co-operation with the Minister and he has worked in co-operation with me, too. I am thankful for the information that he has been able to give me from time to time.

I have another scheme here, and this will interest the hon. member for Isis because his shire, like all the others, is only too happy to let me know what it proposes. This is a letter in relation to that area—

"A scheme was prepared by the Irrigation Department about the year 1937 for the erection of a weir in the Burnett River, some miles above the present Walla-ville Bridge, for the purpose of irrigating cane lands in the Isis area. The scheme at that time was estimated to cost approximately £1,000,000 and on that account principally, was not carried any further.

"The scheme did not embrace the whole of the cane lands in the area but would have assured the district of a reasonable harvest no matter what seasonal conditions obtained."

The clerk of the Kolan Shire Council has sent me a list of 11 streams that the council thinks could be weired to give increased agricultural production from the area.

Mr. Walsh: Why not leave the hon. member for Isis to look after his own electorate?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: He is looking after his electorate, but at the same time he is happy to co-operate with me as the specialist on irrigation.

The shire clerk at Mt. Perry writes to me as follows—

"I believe this Mingo Gap was examined for such a project a few years ago. Consensus of opinion here is that a weir here would serve most of the adjacent country between here and Walla-ville. This is a personal note from a complete stranger but I feel that you are doing a grand job by interesting yourself so. Trust that your efforts bring good results and good luck."

The Fitzroy Shire Council has sent me a list of 12 streams that it thinks could be weired profitably. Now I go to the electorate of the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation himself. He will be pleased to hear that the clerk of the Emerald Shire Council has written to me on this subject. He writes as follows—

"The Department of Irrigation and Water Supply have almost completed a weir about 2 miles above the town on the Nogoia River and it is known as the Selma Weir and the Minister for Lands and Irrigation (Hon. T. A. Foley, M.L.A.) made a public statement at Emerald on Labour Day that the Nogoia Gap scheme would be proceeded with in the near future and this would irrigate 75,000 acres of country adjacent to the Nogoia River in the Gindie, Springsure and Rolleston area.

"However, I would like to see you drop in on a visit and look the area over for yourself. You are assured that every endeavour will be made to ensure that you see the district and its possibilities."

I hope after the next election, if I am returned to this House by the Clayfield electorate, to go out to the Emerald district and have a look at the Nogoia dam scheme.

Mr. Walsh: The Minister will be pleased to take you out.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Treasurer seems to be very disturbed. I am sure he will be pleased to know that I am perfectly sure that the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation will be only too happy to give his co-operation.

Mr. Foley: As a matter of fact, we are working on those schemes now.

A Government Member: Did you get a letter from the Wambo Shire Council?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I have a very interesting letter from the Wambo Shire Council, which indicates that the hon. member for Aubigny is doing a splendid job for the people of the district who desire to store water. I was speaking of the co-operation I have had from the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation. He suggested to me that I get a book from the Parliamentary Library "Out of the Earth," written by Louis Bromfield. There is a quotation in that book that should be driven home to every member of Parliament. It is—

"The State is like a tree. The roots are agriculture, the trunk is the population, the branches are industry, the leaves are commerce and the arts; it is from the roots that the tree draws the nourishing sap, and it is to the roots that a remedy must be applied if the tree is not to perish."

That is written of the State and it is a very apt quotation to make when one is speaking about the State developing its potential wealth by increasing the availability of water for agriculture.

The Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation might be pleased to know also that the Bauhinia Shire Council sent me a scheme for the weiring of five creeks. Likewise, the

hon. member for Gregory will be pleased to know that the Barcaldine Shire Council thinks that the Alice River is suitable for the construction of a weir on a spot about eight miles from Barcaldine. It states that although this work has been approved it is understood that it is likely to begin within the next few months. I sincerely hope it does.

I will now proceed to the Far North, because these letters extend from the Redlands in the South right up to Mossman in the North. I was very interested to get a letter from the Herberton Shire Council, whose clerk forwarded to me a letter signed by 55 residents of the Wondeela district. It says—

“ . . . we would like to suggest that an investigation be made into the practicability of a weir on North Nigger Creek, approximately one mile upstream from Mr. J. B. Long's property ‘Cliffdale.’ ”

I submit that as an illustration of information gathered that I am sure is helpful. My investigations have been taken seriously, and may be helpful to the Minister inasmuch as I may have saved the State considerable expense in having his officers go out to obtain this information.

Mr. Foley: The trouble is that many of these recommended sites may not be suitable when investigated.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Minister rightly interjects that many of the sites may not be suitable. I agree with him but if we can bring to a locality that has the capacity to produce more food an appreciation of the development of water storage and water distribution we are serving a very useful purpose in this Parliament.

I want to touch a little on major dams, and I want to make this point: while I agree with what the Minister said in 1946, that what we have to concentrate on is the development of small storage before we can go in for grandiose schemes, I make it perfectly clear that I believe that weirs and major dams must go together. We must have major dams just as we must have weirs. The cost of major dams is such that they can only be developed gradually as other irrigation schemes. I was in Theodore and I made some comments about the possibilities of the Dawson area, and I was staggered to read that the Secretary for Public Lands, when replying to those comments, said—

“The Government fully appreciates the Dawson Valley potentialities and would develop them as soon as possible, but the Dawson Valley was much less attractive than the Burdekin and the Mareeba projects.”

I am afraid that because of the Minister's comments the hon. member for Mackenzie is going to find it very difficult to obtain support in the Theodore and Dawson Valley districts. While I like the hon. member for Mackenzie very much indeed, I fear that he will not be in the next Parliament.

A Government Member: Yes, he will.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The people of the Dawson Valley and of Theodore particularly very much resent the suggestion by the Secretary for Public Lands that a major dam undertaking, in respect of which you have a soil analysis and all the other necessary technical knowledge, should be just brushed aside because it has no political possibilities. The Dawson Valley scheme could have been proceeded with years ago. We are talking of spending £70,000,000 on the Burdekin which is just another irrigation project that is progressing steadily, and we are taking it in our stride as a national undertaking.

Mr. Foley: Give us figures of the comparative cost per acre-foot for a weir as against a large dam.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I will make this point very clear—and I am glad the Minister has brought up this question of the charge on water—

Mr. Walsh: The cost per acre-foot of a weir as against a dam.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I am not going into that question because I am not competent to say what is the cost per acre-foot in every case but I am satisfied that every weir would have a different cost per acre-foot. I am not competent to give that information and I have no hesitation in saying so. Only technical officers are competent to do so.

I have quoted those instances of local authorities to bring to light the feeling that prevails throughout Queensland amongst those gentlemen, who give their services voluntarily to local authorities in the hope of improving their districts.

I make here a point on the cost of water. I have much to say on the cost of water delivered by the Irrigation Department to the Burdekin tobacco farmer at £4 an acre-foot, in comparison with the cost of water in other irrigation projects further south. My belief is that water, like a railway, should be a public utility. It is the responsibility of a Government to make water available as they make the railways available to the people who wish to use it, and those who use it should pay for the amount they use. In an irrigated area, such as the Burdekin, water is delivered through channels to the farms. In an area where there is a weir and the water is not metered, at this stage of our development the policy is that farmers can pump incessantly without any charge. What I cannot reconcile with this is that the farmers on the Burdekin tobacco area are charged £4 an acre-foot for their water, which means they are up for at least £100 on each crop, whereas the farmers who grow tobacco at Dimbulah pump their water stored in the weir and pay nothing for it, consequently the farmers at Dimbulah are £100 better off than the farmers on the Burdekin.

Mr. Foley: The farmer on the Burdekin has not to invest in a pump. The water is brought right to his farm.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: Having mentioned the Burdekin, I have to say something about

the position at that undertaking. I say unhesitatingly that not one more returned service man should be settled on a Burdekin irrigated tobacco farm until the economic success of those already there is assured. I say that advisedly because I have been in the area and heard the case presented by the farmers.

I was surprised at the remarks the Premier made immediately after my visit. I was at Clare during one week and the Premier followed me a few days afterwards and according to the report in "The Townsville Bulletin" of 16 July the Premier, while at Clare, met representatives of the Burdekin River Tobacco-growers Association, who placed before him their financial difficulties and problems. The Premier said they were pleased with the help they had received at all times from the bank, meaning the Agricultural Bank, but that it would seem that a conference as suggested would be of great benefit. The position, apparently, was so alarming that the Premier immediately ordered the manager of the bank and Director of Agriculture to fly there post-haste and have a conference.

Mr. Walsh: No, he simply asked that they might go.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: They were asked all right, and left immediately. The Premier very kindly offered to let me see the officers' reports after the Treasurer had passed it on to him. If I saw it, I would treat it with confidence, but I am anxious to know about it. When I find returned soldiers on settlements in financial difficulties I say quite definitely that it is bad policy to keep putting on additional men to suffer similar difficulties as time goes on. Let us get the position of the men there stabilised. Let us satisfy ourselves that they will make an economic success of their job before we put more men on. We do not want another Beerburrrum at Clare. The report that the farmers gave the Premier indicates that they are all hard up, so much so that when I went into the town of Ayr and told a friend that I had been to Clare, the first statement he made was, "They are all broke, aren't they?"

Mr. Walsh: Tell us everything that the business people at Ayr told you.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: That was the only statement made when I mentioned that I had been to Clare. I did not want to discuss the private affairs of the men at Clare with the townspeople of Ayr.

Mr. Foley: Would you like to have one of those farms with the assistance already granted to each and every settler?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: We learn from experience and I propose quoting one instance about which I think the Minister might know. One man said to me, "I was one of the first men there. I have produced £15,000-worth of tobacco. I believe I have paid off half my indebtedness and I cannot get a penny piece from the Agricultural Bank. I had heard from another settler that he had tried five times to see the manager of the Agricultural Bank, but his own statement to

me was, I came to see the manager of the bank, tried twice and could not see him, so I gave it up and went home."

Mr. Walsh: Did you say he made £15,000?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: He said he had produced £15,000-worth of tobacco. The inquiry that I have no doubt is being made into the financial relations between the farmers and the bank should reveal that a change in those financial arrangements is necessary.

Section 10 of the Act provides that the term of any advance shall be a term fixed by the bank, not exceeding 30 years, and exclusive of the assistance period as defined in Sub-section (1), but the arrangement I found up there had been made with one man, who showed me a letter he had received from the bank, was not in those terms. He had received an advance of £4,430 for what one might call the buildings, including the house, stock shed, stringing shed, and curing barns, the installation of irrigation equipment, the installation of electricity, and so on. That amount was repayable in 20 years. He also had £1,625 advanced for what might be described as plant. This was repayable in seven years.

Mr. Walsh: They would not get those amounts or terms from the private banks.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Act enables the Agricultural Bank to give them 30 years, but the bank requires a first mortgage, with a bill of sale over the plant and a continuing crop lien, which means that all the moneys must go to the bank, which takes out its due first.

Mr. Foley: In the case to which you refer they put no equity in themselves.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I am not concerned with that. The point is that an Act of Parliament has been passed by this House, in agreement with the Commonwealth Government, for the settlement of ex-service men on the land. The Government have a responsibility to do something for those men and the least we should expect is that the terms shall make it practicable for the settler to come out of it all economically sound.

Mr. Walsh: The Commonwealth are not helping the men, except with the allowance.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Treasurer knows the extent of the Commonwealth's liabilities.

Mr. Walsh: Not in the Clare settlement, except the allowance.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: If there is a loss, he knows that the Commonwealth has to pay half of it.

Mr. Walsh: Not on that. It has nothing to do with the Commonwealth Act.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I am not going to pursue that argument. The Treasurer can find out, as I have done, the extent of the Commonwealth's obligation under the War-Service Land Settlement Agreement. I have

those details but will not pursue that line of argument any further, except to say that the Commonwealth and the State Governments came to an agreement, and the reward they were to give these men for serving this country was to help them settle on the land under sound economic conditions. That is all I want. I want to see them economically sound before the Government continue this policy. I was closely associated with the Beerburum settlement at the end of World War I. and I do not want to see a repetition in the Burdekin area of what happened there. The Burdekin is a major dam undertaking and consequently will take a long time to develop.

I want to conclude my remarks by a quotation from the book I referred to earlier, but I want the Chamber to realise that as a metropolitan member I just don't dabble in these irrigation undertakings to irritate the Government. I have in my electorate a large number of electors who earned their living from the land and are as interested in my activities as any hon. member representing a country constituency could expect his electors to be interested in his activities. My electors are men who made a success of their undertakings; most of them have retired from their properties but still take an intense interest in the development of agricultural and pastoral pursuits and are pleased to see that their representative in Parliament is also interested in the most vital thing that effects this country—getting more produce out of the soil.

I conclude by quoting what were described as the living thoughts of Thomas Jefferson taken from the book suggested to me by the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“The agrarian class is first in utility, and ought to be the first in respect. The same artificial means which has been used to produce a competition in learning, may be equally successful in restoring agriculture to its primary dignity in the eyes of man. It is a science of the very first order. Young men choosing their academic education with this, as the crown of all other sciences, fascinated by its solid charms, and at the same time, when they are to choose an occupation, instead of crowding the other classes, would return to the farms of their fathers, their own or those of others, and replenish and invigorate a calling now languishing under contempt and oppression.”

Those are the thoughts that prompted me to continue my activities in the expansion of irrigation and water storage so that from what we as a Parliament are able to do in this fine State greater produce will flow from its soil to the markets of the world.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (3.55 p.m.): We have just witnessed a remarkable exhibition by the hon. member for Clayfield, who spent most of the hour allotted to him in this debate by reading letters of congratulation and thanks that he has received from many places and many persons in Queensland. Many of the letters were undoubtedly solicited, and it shows just how much he is

appreciated when he could finish reading the letters in about 40 minutes. If I were to stand up in this Chamber and read all the letters of thanks and congratulation that are regularly showered on me by Queensland people from all walks of life and all strata of society for the things I have done, not only for them but for the State—for the useful people who really matter in this community—this Parliament would have to hold a special session to enable me to do it.

However, I do not intend to deal with the hon. member for Clayfield; that is not the purpose of the remarks I propose to make this afternoon. I may not occupy the full hour allowed me in this debate, but what I have to say will be very pertinent and to the point, and I think will impress all those who listen and all those who read my remarks in “Hansard.”

Early next year, in about March or April, there is to be a State election and, I understand, an election for the Federal Senate. Consequently, we have been reading in the Press recently that the great exodus from Canberra and from Brisbane is again about to begin. Canberra and Brisbane politicians are putting away in mothballs their cutaway coats, their striped pants, their gardenias, and their spats, and they are hiring or borrowing clothes that will make them outwardly resemble an ordinary man. They are packing their ports with smelling salts, mosquito repellents and ice-cold southern beer, and they are all aboard the great bandwagon for North Queensland. We have seen them come for many years. We see a few dribble up during our salubrious winter season, but we see the great majority of these peripatetic, perambulating politicians from Canberra and Brisbane coming to North Queensland just prior to an election. When we hear they are coming we go out in the dark of the night and dig a big hole in the backyards of our homes and plant our valuables in it, and then we go out and prepare to meet the southern politicians. We wine and dine them at civic receptions, public functions, afternoon teas and cocktail parties, because we in North Queensland are the soul of good manners and hospitality, although we know that the moment they board the train or the plane back to their beloved Brisbane or Canberra they say to their valets, “Pass me the smelling salts, Egbert, old boy, I have had a most exhausting and enervating trip among the semi-savages of North Queensland.”

And now they are on their way again. The flight from Egypt to North Queensland is on again. Even Ming Menzies is on the way up this time because, as I mentioned earlier, there is to be a Senate election about next March and a State election about next April or May.

When these people come to the North they tell us what they propose to do; they tell us that they are seized of the need to develop North Queensland and to attract to that part of the Commonwealth the population that it so urgently desires. They tell us,

too, that they have suddenly realised that North Queensland is the open door to the Commonwealth through which enemy hordes will pour. They tell us that they must establish North Queensland as the first defence bastion of the Commonwealth, and then they tell us that out of the goodness of their hearts and their political magnanimity, they might be able to dole us out a few pounds for some public works. I have no doubt that on his next tour to North Queensland Ming Menzies will tell us that the Commonwealth Government are going to extend Garbutt aerodrome and spend a couple of million pounds on that job. The Labour Party politicians, that is, of the State variety, will go up in ministerial cars followed by a retinue of servants and officials and miscellaneous hangers-on and they will climb on the northern bandwagon and thump the drum of the Burdekin Dam, blow the trumpet of the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme, tootle the tin-whistle of the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation scheme, and tinkle the triangle of the Burdekin Bridge.

I realise that in order to develop North Queensland we must have public works but it is useless to build bridges and erect new public institutions if we do not make provision to attract and hold the population thus adequately and economically using all the public institutions that are being built and we can only hold and populate North Queensland if we provide opportunities of permanent employment for the people in the North. At the present time most of the work in North Queensland is seasonal work and the Government, when they care to deal with North Queensland, will hand out some scraps from the well-laden southern table, perhaps in the form of subsidies to local authorities and other semi-government bodies, to provide a measure of employment during the slack season. But that is not enough. When these public works are finished, when this capital expenditure, which has been necessitated as it were, has ceased there is only seasonal work for the workers in the North. Consequently we then have to go cap-in-hand to the Government in order to get them to make another start on public works or in giving subsidies to local authorities and other semi-governmental bodies so that they may provide a measure of employment for the workers in the slack season.

Everyone knows that there is only one way in which North Queensland can be properly developed and only one way in which it can attract and hold the increased population that is necessary not only for its own safety but for the safety of the Commonwealth also and that is to establish in North Queensland secondary industries based on the primary industries there that will provide full employment or near full employment for all the people and workers in the North.

Already we have in North Queensland many great primary industries. We have the sugar industry but our sugar goes South to be processed. We have the meat industry but most of our cattle go South. We have the wool industry but all our wool either goes

South or overseas to be processed. We ship from North Queensland 300,000 hides a year that could be or should be processed into leather and leather goods in North Queensland. We have maize, peanuts, tobacco and other crops but all these are simply used as a foundation for secondary industries, either here in Brisbane or further south. In other words, North Queensland provides the great primary produce that is necessary to maintain a population in Brisbane and in the southern States of Australia in permanent or almost permanent employment, when they should be used in North Queensland to build up and provide permanent or near-permanent employment in the same industries in the North. Those truths are fundamental and no-one needs to have them impressed upon him. There is no need for me to stress them. They are simple, honest and plain truths that can be understood by the feeblest mind in this Chamber.

But what is happening. In the past Ministers have come to North Queensland. We heard the tarradiddle from the Premier recently, we heard from the Secretary for Labour and Industry, we have heard from them all. They manage to come up our way in the salubrious months of the year and they stand up and say to the people of the North, "We believe in the establishment of secondary industries in North Queensland but unfortunately we cannot compel the industries to come to the North. We can only make the suggestion that they come to the North and establish themselves there."

Everyone knows that that statement is not true. Words to that effect were uttered the other day by Mr. Colin Clark, who until a few months ago was the Grand Panjandrum of the Government in all things financial and economic. He was the idol before whom the Government abjectly genuflected. When he was the Government's financial adviser his words were pearls of wisdom. In fact, they were like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable, but as soon as Mr. Clark was either sacked or left the employ of the Government for reasons best known to himself and the Government, he is branded the moment he speaks as some species of a ratbag or imbecile.

Mr. Clark said in Townsville the other day that the Government always just conveniently forgot that they had the power to compel the decentralisation of industry. He says that this Government have and always have had the power to compel industries to go to other parts of Queensland other than Brisbane, yet they have never exercised that power. They have always said the contrary, that they do not possess that power. I am prepared to believe Mr. Colin Clark before I believe the statements of any responsible member of the Government on that point.

It is not enough for us in Northern Queensland, and in fact all the rest of the people of Queensland, to know that not only do the Government fail to compel industry to be decentralised, and not only do they fail to compel those who wish to establish industry to go outside Brisbane in order to establish

industry—that would be bad enough if that were the only sin of which the present Government are guilty—but this Government go out of their way to cripple existing North Queensland industries. That is a rather serious statement to make but I am going to tell you of the way in which the Government set themselves out to deliberately cripple existing North Queensland industry and to deliberately deprive a huge group of North Queensland seasonal workers of the employment that is rightly theirs by bringing the raw material right down to Brisbane in order to provide almost permanent employment for the workers in the particular calling concerned in Brisbane.

I have gone to a bit of trouble to take out the figures. If hon. members will remember, this morning the Minister for Transport answered a question that I asked him last Thursday with respect to the number of cattle from North Queensland that come down to Brisbane to be slaughtered. In his speech on the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Haughton said that meat-workers in North Queensland were very concerned about the future of their industry. I am very pleased to know that the hon. member for Haughton is at least becoming concerned at the things that concern the meat-workers in Northern Queensland. I am going to digress and I am not going to make any attack or any comment on the hon. member for Haughton, but I just want to point out that in his address on the Address in Reply he touched very delicately, like a butterfly on a tender or fragile bloom, on the real reason why the meat industry in Northern Queensland is being strangled. He said "I suggest that something be done to eliminate the present tapering rates." I am going to deal with the tapering rates as they apply to the North Queensland meat industry and I am confident that every hon. member will be impressed by what I have to say and what I propose to say.

In Northern Queensland we have three big meatworks, excluding the small meatworks at Cairns, Ross River, Alligator Creek and Merinda, at Bowen. I suppose they employ nearly 2,000 men between them and these men are very fortunate if they have a four-month season; so for the other eight months they are thrown on the unemployed market and have to find whatever work they can, usually from local authorities, semi-governmental or governmental bodies, to carry them over the slack period. I heard the hon. member for Murrumba state that the seasonal worker does not require any work in the slack season, but that hon. member does not know what he is talking about. I tell the Committee that the difference between the pay rates for the seasonal meat-worker and the pay rates at the abattoir for a permanent meat-worker is only 6 per cent. The seasonal meat-worker gets only a 6 per cent. increase in wages over the permanent meat-worker. So the hon. member for Murrumba and others would have us believe that the extra 6 per cent. for that short period of four months is enough to compensate them for the eight months in which they are unemployed.

This year in North Queensland the season was particularly poor. This was mainly owing to the drought in the North West, consequently we have nearly 1,500 meat-workers in Townsville who will be lucky if they receive 12 weeks' work this year; and those at Merinda will not be much better off. For the fact that they had a small season this year and that even in an unusually good season they work only four and a-half or five months, we can lay the blame and the guilt, not on the Federal Government and the restriction of loan money not on the Communists, not on Mr. Menzies, not on the drought, not on any particular favoured staking horse of the Government, but at the door of the Queensland Labour Government itself because they go out of their way and deliberately entice the north-western graziers, in particular, to send their cattle past Townsville to Cannon Hill for slaughter. In other words, this Labour Government, realising that they must have cattle at Cannon Hill to feed the Brisbane people and the Sydney people and the Melbourne people, and that they must have cattle there to keep the Brisbane meat-workers fully employed, go out of their way—as they have for years—to entice North Queensland cattle to be railed past the North Queensland meatworks to come to Cannon Hill for sale and slaughter.

I am not going to quote rail freights from the various big trucking centres in North Western Queensland. A lot of cattle are trucked from Dajarra and Kajabbi, which points are west of Cloncurry, and a lot are trucked from Julia Creek and Gilliat, points east of Cloncurry. I will take the rail freight from Cloncurry which would be the central trucking point for the purpose of the observations that I wish to make. These are the figures: from Cloncurry to Townsville, a distance of 480 miles, the freight is £47 per K wagon. At the same rate the freight for a K wagon from Cloncurry to Cannon Hill, a distance of 1,330 miles, should be £131.

If the freight weight on a K wagon from Cloncurry or any other western centre to Cannon Hill were based on the same rate as the freight rate from western loading points to any of the northern meatworks we could have no objection, because the graziers have a right to sell where they like. But although the freight rate from Cloncurry to Cannon Hill should be £131, the same rate as is charged for cattle trucked to the northern meatworks, we find that the freight rate per K wagon from Cloncurry to Cannon Hill is only £80, a rebate, concession, enticement, inducement or subsidy—call it what you will—of £51 per K wagon on northern cattle that are railed past the northern meatworks to Cannon Hill. It costs £47 per K wagon for the first 480 miles of the journey and £33 per K wagon for the last 850 miles of the journey—a subsidy, I repeat, of £51 per K wagon on every K wagon of northern cattle railed to Cannon Hill for sale, and it is done to find employment for southern men and workers, to boost the

population and prosperity of Brisbane in accordance with the policy of this Queensland Labour Government.

The hon. member for Aubigny, or anyone who knows anything about trucking cattle, will tell you that the average number of good fat cattle in a K wagon is 17, and a subsidy of £51 per K wagon from Townsville to Cannon Hill works out at a subsidy of £3 a beast. This Labour Government say to the north-western grazier in Queensland, "If you rail your cattle not to the Townsville or Bowen meatworks but to Cannon Hill to provide employment for Brisbane workers and prosperity for Brisbane we will subsidise you to the extent of £3 a head." These are the figures. I got them from the railway office and they are absolutely authentic: £51 per K wagon, a subsidy of £3 a head of cattle, if the cattle are railed past Townsville.

An Opposition Member: Cheap meat for Brisbane!

Mr. AIKENS: Cheap meat for Brisbane, employment for Brisbane workers, more homes in Brisbane, more aggrandisement of this great big, dirty, rat-infested city, more votes for Labour politicians, more everything for Brisbane, and seasonal work and semi-starvation for the workers of North Queensland. That is completely in accordance with the policy of this Queensland Labour Government.

The Minister for Transport answered a question I asked this morning and gave certain figures. It is not very often I quote facts and figures. It is not very often I stick so meticulously to the truth (Laughter) and it is because these are facts that the members of the Government are writhing in their mortification. The Minister for Transport today supplied this House with astonishing figures. I do not know that any hon. member bothered to cross to the table to read the reply the Minister gave to me on the question I asked him last Thursday, but they will see it in the copy of the Votes and Proceedings laid on the table tomorrow morning.

Last year, in round figures, 5,000 K wagons of cattle were unloaded at all points at Townsville. That includes butchers' cattle and cattle that went there for sale to be re-shipped to northern parts of Queensland for butchers' supplies, and includes Merinda. I will include the KB wagons in the number of K wagons. This does not make the case any worse or better. In the same reply the Minister admitted that no fewer than 4,042 K wagons of North Queensland cattle that should have been slaughtered in North Queensland this year—a poor year—which would have supplied work for northern meat-workers and should have supplied money for northern industries and businesses trucked at various points on the north-western railways last year came south of Bowen, most of them, we know, to Cannon Hill.

Taking an average of 17 cattle per K wagon, it means that 68,000 North Queensland cattle were railed last year from loading

points on the North Queensland railway for Cannon Hill, and, with a Government subsidy of £3 a head, it means a gift or subsidy of £204,000. When all is said and done, it does not matter whether the Government find their money out of their hip pocket, side pocket, fob pocket or waistcoat pocket, the fact is that in order to get these 68,000 North Queensland cattle to Cannon Hill the Government gave £204,000 last year, which means that this Government subsidised the North Queensland graziers in order to induce them to send 68,000 North Queensland cattle that could have been and should have been slaughtered in North Queensland, to Cannon Hill to provide prosperity, business, money and employment for the people of Brisbane.

Mr. Low: When did you wake up to this?

Mr. AIKENS: I woke up to this a long while ago, but I was doubtful whether the hon. member ever woke up to it and I was doubtful whether many other hon. members woke to it. The northern people are awake to it, the A.M.I.E.U. is awake to it, and the meatworkers are awake to it because I have met them in conference. We have discussed it publicly. It has been one of our sore points for a long time.

Mr. Ewan: Are you aware that if those cattle were killed in the North they would not let the Brisbane people eat them?

Mr. AIKENS: I am not concerned with whether the Brisbane people ever eat them. I should not have mentioned this but for the fact that the hon. member for Haughton so delicately touched on the matter in his Address in Reply speech. He came and went like a feather dancing down upon the wind. He said, "I think something ought to be done about the tapering rates." In case hon. members do not know what the tapering rates are as they affect the meat industry, in case they do not know how much this State Labour Government, who go north and who will go north in the early months of next year, telling us the same old sob stories, are prepared to give to boost Brisbane, I thought I had better explain the position. In the early part of next year there will be more ministerial cars in and around Townsville than there are K wagons and hon. members of the Government will all be telling the old, old story that "We really wish we could do something to establish industries in the North. We really wish we could do something to find permanent employment for the people of the North. We really wish that we could decentralise industry and population." How many times have we in the North heard that? As a matter of fact, I think that the Ministers have had it put into a phonograph record and merely put the needle in the right groove. They go up and engage in this slobbering hypocrisy, telling us they would like to see industry established in North Queensland and population directed to and held in Northern Queensland for the benefit of Northern Queensland and the defence of Australia, yet here is only one case—I could quote a score if I had the time

and opportunity—where they not only do not try to expand or help establish industries but do all they possibly can to cripple an existing industry. Here is where they do not try to increase the number of men employed in those northern industries, where they do not try to turn seasonal work into permanent work in Northern Queensland, here is a definite case where they deliberately, and with malice aforethought, do all they possibly can to have those northern industries so emasculated that they will just be able to give the workers there enough work each year to keep them on the verge of starvation.

I do not propose to deal with the other industries. I have made this case and I repeat that this Government subsidise every bullock, every spayed cow, every beast that comes to Cannon Hill from North Queensland, to the extent of £3. And yet they will tell you they believe in the development of North Queensland, they believe in finding permanent work for the people of North Queensland, and their hearts will bleed next Christmas at the sight or spectacle of hundreds of workers in Townsville walking the streets looking for work, but they will not tell that the Northern workers will be doing that because 68,000 head of cattle should have been killed there this season alone. In other years the number would be still greater. That 68,000 head of cattle would have provided the meat-workers of North Queensland with another three or four months' employment. That 68,000 head of cattle killed in the three northern meatworks would mean another three months' work for those meat-workers, but because they came down here and were subsidised by the Government the northern meatworks were deprived of three months' work that was really theirs.

Mr. Ewan: Have you read the *Abattoirs Act*?

Mr. AIKENS: I do not want to read any Act to know what ails North Queensland and what should be done to solve the problem in North Queensland.

We have heard a great deal recently about the new diesel-electric trains that are going to run from Townsville to Mount Isa, from Brisbane to Cairns, from Brisbane to Cunnamulla, and from Rockhampton to Longreach, and in fact all over the place. We have heard the optimistic prognostications of the Minister for Transport in which he suggests that several hours might be cut off the running time of certain journeys, that travel in these trains will be very salubrious and congenial. I am not going to condemn diesel-electric trains but I want to say that anybody who believes that a diesel-electric train or a "straight" electric train or a train powered by atomic fission can cut the time between here and Cairns or between Townsville and Mount Isa or between Rockhampton and Longreach, or between Brisbane and Charleville to any great extent while the dangers of the present antiquated method of crossing trains at unattended staff stations exist is not only an optimist but a first-class dill. I know that what I am about to say will be interesting

news to all hon. members. Once again I am not going to depart one hair's breadth from the truth; there will be no exaggeration and embellishment.

Let us take the North Coast line from Brisbane to Cairns. At various points along that long line of about 1,100 miles there are stations manned by station-masters or night officers, and by staff officers, and consequently when two trains are booked to pass at one of these stations the staff officer or the night officer or the station-master—for the purpose of this statement call him the officer on duty—attends to the crossing of the trains. If he sees that the down train is coming first, he pulls the signal for the down train and he leaves the danger signal for the up train, he brings the down train in either on the loop or on the main line, and he throws the signal back again. When the train from the other direction comes in, he takes off the signals for the loop or the main line and allows that train to come in. He has taken the staff or ticket or the line-clear signal from the train already in and he will have prepared the authority for the next section for the train crossing. He hands up the authority to the up train or the down train, as the case may be, and he allows it to proceed, and he fixes the authority for the other train and allows it to proceed on its way and consequently very little time is lost and the passengers and the train crew are not exposed to any danger.

I am glad that the hon. member for Mackenzie is in the Chamber. He, like me, is an engineman of long experience. I will tell hon. members what happens on the Queensland railways when two trains have to cross, as they cross hundreds of times a day, and that includes the night, at what are known as unattended staff stations. They are simply stations where there is no officer on duty. At many of these unattended staff stations there may be a gatekeeper, usually a woman, sometimes the wife of a lengthman who is working on that length. That gatekeeper, of course, can have nothing to do with the crossing of trains or the handling of the staff and ticket, and the staff- and ticket-working is the safe working without which there would be rear collisions and head-on collisions all over the place.

Just think of what will happen to this diesel-electric train, because what will happen to it happens 20 times a day to the steam Sunshine Express and hundreds of times a day to every other train in the Queensland railways. The driver of a down train and the driver of an up train will receive instructions on a properly printed form at the preceding stations that they are to meet and cross at an unattended staff station, say Deeragun, which is in the Townsville district. It might be a fine, sunny day, it might be a dark night, it might be hot, it might be cold, or it might be raining. The weather or the visibility does not matter when the Railway Department wants to save a few lousy pounds and in doing so endangers the lives of the train crew, endangers the whole

capital value of the train and endangers the life of every passenger who travels on the train.

This is what happens: a mail train is to cross an up train at Deeragun. The mail train may be going to Cairns. All trains that run out from Brisbane are down trains, so that the mail train from Brisbane to Cairns would be a down train. The exact number is 241 down. When the down mail train gets near Deeragun, the driver and the fireman may see that the up train is not in sight. The up signal at all unattended staff stations is always at clear, and the down signal is always at danger, so that when the down mail train gets to the home signal at Deeragun it must stop, because the down home signal is at danger. Then the railway rules and regulations provide—and don't laugh at this, because it is true—that whether it is light or dark, wet or fine, irrespective of weather conditions or the time of the day, the fireman must leave the engine of the mail train and walk into the station, a distance of, say, 400 to 500 yards. If it is night he must stumble along with a torch light. Then he must throw the up home signal at danger and then stumble back another 400 or 500 yards to the down points of the loop, unlock the points of the loop, and wave the driver in with his torch. The driver is still standing with his train at the down home signal, and alone on the engine pulls the train down the line past the points of the loop and pulls the train into the loop with only himself on the engine, although there is a specific railway rule that no engine must be moved on the main line unless the driver and the fireman are on it. Then the fireman has to lock the points behind the train, give the staff to the guard and, if it is a long train, walk another 300 or 400 yards back to the engine.

I hope I have not bored hon. members with this long description, because I want them to realise that at every unattended staff station, if the down train gets there first, the fireman has to walk nearly a mile. He has to walk 400 or 500 yards to the station, another 400 or 500 yards back to the train, and then the full length of the train in order to get back onto the engine. Consequently this is what the engine-men have been doing for years. I did it myself when I was an engine-man and when I was a fireman, and my firemen did it when I was the driver. They do not bother to go to the station to throw the up home signal at danger. You cannot blame them. You cannot blame them for saving themselves an 800-yard walk over rubble in the middle of the night or when it is raining. The fireman goes to the points, holds them down and lets the down train into the loop. Of course if the up train came while the down train was going into the loop it naturally would stop short of the loop and no accident would occur but if the up train should overshoot the loop it would smash into the side of the down train and then the Railway Department would "go" both the driver of the down train for not sending his fireman to

the station and throwing the up signal back and they would also "go" the driver of the up train for over-shooting the loop. Yet, the Railway Department knows that this thing has been going on for years. It closes its eyes to it. It knows that if the rules and regulations as they apply to the crossing of trains at unattended staff stations were carried out as they are laid down in the rule book, no train in Queensland would run on time. The Brisbane mail would get to Cairns not less than eight hours late on each trip and the Cairns mail would get to Brisbane not less than eight hours late on each trip too.

Mr. Morris: How many crossings are there?

Mr. AIKENS: I do not know but I should say one every 14 miles. There is a crossing station at every 7 miles but usually every second one is manned. Sometimes the manned stations would be only one in every four. The train crew would be told probably that they would have to attend to three or four unattended staff stations ahead.

I am pointing out that the Railway Department made these rules in order to save the payment of a few lousy pounds at these sidings and that it knew when it made the rule that it could not be carried out. You just ask yourself how long it would take to walk 400 yards, that is, 400 yards up, 400 yards back and then another 300 yards—say a total of 1,200 yards altogether. How long would it take you to walk 1,200 yards in the night-time? And this is the minimum time. There is no accounting for the time taken by the up train, which may come in later, cross the down train, and get away. The Railway Department has shut its eyes to the fact that the engine-driver, fireman and guard have been shortcutting this rule in order to save time and save themselves unnecessary labour and unnecessary walking.

I am going to tell you what happened the other day in the Townsville area, and this could have happened to a mail train and it could happen to one of the new diesels loaded with passengers. It actually happened in the Townsville area between Deeragun and Purona. We all knew that it would happen sooner or later. It could happen to a mail train but fortunately only two goods trains were involved, the down train and the up train—I think 156 was the up train but I forget the number of the down train and in any case it does not matter. The down train got to Deeragun first. The fireman, knowing the usual rule, went ahead, held the points and the driver took the train over the loop points and into the loop. As I have said, this could have happened to a mail train. The driver then walked to the fireman's side of the engine to drop the staff and when walking back to the regulator and sector, which is on the other side of the engine, his foot slipped on the steel apron plate between the tender and the engine. He fell back and crashed his head on the apron plate, knocking himself unconscious. The train carried on

through the loop. The fireman was at the points. The guard had got down from his van to take the staff from the fireman, the train went on through the loop and on to the main line and met the up train head on.

Luckily it was a moonlight night, the up train on the road was coming on a a straight stretch of road and vision was unimpaired. The driver on the up train, saw the down train coming at him. He blew his whistle, put on his brake, and brought his train to a standstill. There was the down train with the unconscious driver on the footplate careering along and it crashed into the stationary up goods train on the main line. We have all been for years hoping and praying that this would not happen to a mail train, but it really did happen in the Townsville district between two goods trains.

The Railway Department knew that the driver was not at fault; it knew that the fireman was not at fault and it knew that the guard on the down train was not at fault, because they knew that all the drivers, firemen and guards have been doing the same thing on every section of the railways ever since this rotten by-law was introduced, but there were few derailments and accidents happening elsewhere at that time. The next week the then Commissioner, Mr. Moloney, made a statement to the Press that it was the human element that was at fault. Word was sent up to the Northern Division and the unconscious driver was dismissed from the service. The guard was reduced to a shunter for several months because he did not stop in his van and did not apply his Westinghouse brake immediately his train went out on the main line and bring it to a standstill. The moment anything happens, the department runs its thumb through every regulation in the book to find some little pinpricking rule on which to prosecute. That is what the Railway Department did in this instance.

Mr. Low interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: They did what the hon. member for Cooroora suggests. They looked through the rule book and they found a rule that made it an offence for the guard to jump out of his van.

Mr. Low: When the driver jumped off his engine the guard should have been in his position in the van to apply the Westinghouse brake.

Mr. AIKENS: What a great pity, when Mr. Moloney retired from the commissionership of the Queensland Railways, that the Government did not know that the hon. member was an applicant for the job! He would have made a typical Commissioner for Railways. He is just the sort of official they want—to let the men do all these things, let them save all the time, let them carry the department on their backs, let them do all

they can to get the trains to run to time, and the moment they make a slight error come down on to them like a ton of bricks. I commend the hon. member for the position of Commissioner when it next becomes vacant. He will make the sort of Commissioner that the Labour Government have always been looking for.

The driver naturally appealed and the Railway Department, because it was afraid of the consequences, instructed its representative on the Railways Appeal Board, to break it down a little, with the result that the driver has now been reinstated, but he must do three years as a fireman before he can be put back in his original position as a driver. Work it out for yourselves. What would have been the result if in that incident there was involved the up mail train and the down mail train, if after steaming through the siding the down train met the up mail train travelling at speed about half a-mile further on? That risk has been going on all the time and the department knows it.

Every person who enters a passenger train today takes his life in his hands because of the wretched cheeseparing policy of the Railway Department in the working of unattended staff stations.

I did not know that the hon. member for Cooroora would interject, but this is the thing that goes on. The department introduced this pernicious and dangerous system in order to save a few pounds. We all know that the administrative officer is exempt from all punishment; he cannot even be questioned; he is like Caesar's wife, above suspicion, only the rank and file are punished. Incidentally, this has something to do with diesels. I do not know whether the hon. member was responsible for it but I would suggest that he had something to do with it at any rate. This is an extract from "The Railway Advocate," a very reputable journal published by the Australian Railways Union.

Mr. Walsh: The member for Cooroora was a member of the A.R.U.

Mr. Low: I was a member of the clerks' association.

Mr. AIKENS: You were a member of the Railway Salaried Officers' Association.

Mr. Low: What is wrong with that?

Mr. AIKENS: It is just the organisation I would expect the hon. member to belong to.

This is what "The Railway Advocate" has to say:

"Stabling Duggan's Diesels.

"For weeks tradesmen and assistants were engaged partitioning off portion of the runningshed at Mayne for the stabling of diesel locomotives.

"A number of employees are still engaged installing a huge tank for the storage of diesel fuel at the only suitable

location on high ground about two hundred yards away, the fuel to be conveyed to the diesel stable by pipeline.

"At least a thousand pounds was spent on the partitioning work. It is finished now, but was found to be insufficiently lit and cramped—anyhow, considering the number of steam locomotives to be accommodated at Mayne, the taking of part of the running shed for the diesels only accentuated the longstanding problem of shortage of stabling room for the regular "iron horses."

"Immediately the partition job was completed and found unworthy of Duggan's diesels, orders came to dismantle the whole thing. Down came a thousand pounds' worth of material and craftsmanship.

"The builders are now constructing a nice roomy, suitable, well-lit diesel shed on a nice suitable location near the Mayne carriage shed, where there is also ample room to install the fuel storage tank alongside. But the tank is staying where it is, not now two hundred yards from the diesel stable as originally planned but three or four times that distance, with the pipeline to pass under many sets of rails. Some say the tank might as well be given the removal treatment too, because something serious has gone wrong with its present foundation, and the tank has now a drunken sailor's list to starboard.

"It is rumoured the whole show was the particular 'baby' of a recently retired high Railway administrator.

"One consolation for those who blundered is that there was a small saving on the show; the claim by the men concerned in building the partition in the loco-shed (backed by the Union) for a small extra allowance for working in soot and grime whilst erecting the 'white elephant' was refused."

There is a typical example of how the Railway Department operates today, how it always has operated and, until something radical is done to alter it, always will operate—a cheeseparating, niggardly, lousy, pinchpenny policy in regard to the rank and file. It makes the guards, drivers and firemen risk their lives and the lives of the passengers to cross trains at those unattended staff stations to save a few lousy pounds a year for the payment of the necessary staff, and at the same time they pour down the drain hundreds of thousands of pounds in stupid blunders such as the one I quoted in regard to the stabling of the diesel locomotives at Mayne. I could have got instances of other blunders that every year cost the Railway Department and the people not only £1,000 but hundreds of thousands of pounds but, I know that I am casting pearls before swine; I know that I am wasting my time talking to the Labour Government; I know they are superlatively ignorant of these things and take all their advice from the railway administrative officers. Many of them would not know a buffer beam from a cow-catcher.

They sit in their palatial offices in Anzac Square and elsewhere and in between morning and afternoon tea and going down for a spot with members of the chamber of commerce and other exalted bodies work out how the Railway Department is to be run.

We had a magnificent example the other day in the run we took in the new rail-motor to Kuraby. Can anyone believe that any railway administrative officer in his right senses would have designed such a rail-motor for traffic in a tropical area? I really believe that that rail-motor will have to be taken off the line, even in Brisbane. Imagine a rail-motor with the whole of the front part of the rail-motor closed in. In the driving unit the driver's cabin is completely sealed off by a blank wooden wall with a door at one side. Of course, the door is always kept closed when the motor is in motion, so that no breeze can enter the passenger compartment from the front. The side windows can be opened only seven inches at the bottom. There are no fans or cooling appliances. There is no air-conditioning. There is nothing except the seven inches to allow the breeze to come in. The passage between the driving unit and the ordinary coach is sealed off by heavy block curtains. Believe it or not, the windows at the front of the trailer are sealed—not sealed open but sealed shut—and the only breeze that can get into that unit is what can get in through the 7-inch opening at the bottom of the window. That is the sort of thing that goes on in the Railway Department and has always gone on in that department.

I started off to deal with the way in which the Government used the Railway Department in order to crush northern industries and I finished up on the diesel locomotives. Perhaps I have gone a little further than I intended but I sound this note of warning. Some may think that perhaps I am a bit of a scaremonger. What every driver, fireman and guard in the Queensland railways feared would happen as the result of crossing trains at unattended staff stations happened when two goods trains met head on on the main line, between Deeragun and Puroona. That will occur again unless something is done to man these unattended staff stations. I hope, not only for the sake of the train men concerned but for the sake of the passengers, particularly the women and children who might be travelling on the train, that such a smash never occurs again. In addition to causing them to risk their lives, probably suffering death or serious injury, even if they come out of the smash alive, the Railway Department, like the hon. member for Cooroora, will be on them like a ton of bricks and there will be at least one rule, if not more rules in the book of rules, that will save the administrative heads of the department from blame. As I said, I do hope for the sake of the train men and passengers that such a smash as the one I referred to never recurs, but it will occur and must occur if something is not done to man unattended staff stations in Queensland.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 4.55 p.m.