

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 AUGUST 1953

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TUESDAY, 18 AUGUST, 1953.

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

MEMBERS SWORN.

MESSRS. G. F. R. NICKLIN AND
W. B. J. G. SPARKES.

Messrs. George Francis Reuben Nicklin and Walter Beresford James Gordon Sparkes, having taken the oath of allegiance and subscribed the roll, took their seats as members for the electoral districts of Landsborough and Aubigny respectively.

DEATH OF Mr. D. FARRELL.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier) (11.3 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“1. That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of David Farrell, Esq., member for the electoral district of Maryborough, and Chairman of Committees.

“2. That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the widow of the deceased gentleman the above resolution together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss she has sustained.”

Mr. Farrell was elected for the electoral district of Maryborough at the general election on 2 April, 1938. He served through the 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd Parliaments and was re-elected to the present 33rd Parliament.

He was appointed a Temporary Chairman of Committees on 13 January, 1943. He served as Government Whip from 24 April, 1944, to 30 June, 1950. He was Temporary Chairman of Committees from 2 August, 1950, to 28 August, 1950, and was appointed Acting Chairman of Committees on 29 August, 1950, and served in that capacity until 4 October, 1950. He became Chairman of Committees on 10 October, 1950, and held that office to the date of his death on Monday, 17 August, 1953.

I think all hon. members will agree with me that we were profoundly shocked yesterday to learn of the untimely death of Mr. Farrell. I was talking to him late last week and he indicated his desire and wish to join us in the dinner that was being tendered to the Governor-General last evening, and it was very sad indeed to learn that he collapsed on his way to catch the train to come down here to discharge his normal parliamentary duties.

I think all members of the House will agree with me when I say that Mr. Farrell was perhaps one of the best-liked members of this Parliament. Not only was he popular with members of his own party but he enjoyed the respect and confidence of

members of the Opposition as well. He was possessed of a courteous and kindly nature and to my knowledge he never said an unkind or untrue word of anybody and his cheery smile and his pleasant manner will be very sadly missed by us all.

As member for the electoral district of Maryborough he served his constituency conscientiously and well. Undoubtedly he was one of the most diligent members of this House. No problem in the interests of his constituents was too small or too big for him. He was a man of no pretensions. Indeed, it was a common sight in Maryborough to see him cycling along the streets to meet his constituents or to attend to some requirement of that electorate.

In many ways Mr. Farrell was a unique character. To me as a Minister—and other Ministers will bear out what I say—when representations were submitted by him one felt that he had a very close personal and even financial interest in the whole of Maryborough itself, because instead of asking for a concession for Walkers Ltd., or Hynes & Sons, or Wilson Hart & Co., the other large sawmill up there, he would invariably say, "We want this done" or "This will help us." He linked himself with every representation for the development not only of Maryborough, but the surrounding district also. He brought a bustling zest and a deep sincerity to his parliamentary duties that I think was unsurpassed by any other member.

Mr. Farrell was not perhaps gifted with powers of oratory but he possessed a wide knowledge of many problems and he spoke with deep sincerity and conviction on all matters. When he was honoured by the members of this House by being appointed to the office of Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker, he showed that he was an impartial adjudicator in debate, was always firm and rarely was ruffled, and on all occasions was calm in all kinds of situations. He was not, as I said before, of an ostentatious character and because of his modesty, many people felt that he did not perhaps have a wide understanding of parliamentary procedure, which indeed he had. In conversation with him on a point that might have arisen in this House he displayed a knowledge of the Standing Orders far in excess of that of many men who have occupied that important office. In any event, his calm manner in the chair and his impartiality won for him the respect of members of both sides of the House and as a result there was always prompt obedience of his various decisions.

In war, as in peace, the late Dave Farrell served his country faithfully and well. He served four years with the First A.I.F. and was always happy to be associated with returned men at their various reunions. He was appointed to the District Council of the Returned Sailors Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia and attended many of its meetings. He enjoyed being a delegate on the council for his fellow Diggers in Maryborough and the surrounding districts.

Mr. Farrell was born in Eidsvold in 1891 and he moved with his family to Howard in 1905 and lived there, except for his four years on war service, until of course his ultimate elevation to Parliament, when he transferred his residence to Maryborough. By trade, like another illustrious Australian who gave his life serving his country, the late Dave Farrell was an engine-driver. He was an energetic member of several organisations and was secretary of the Howard branch of the Federated Engine-Drivers and Firemen's Union, president of the Maryborough Industrial Council, secretary of the Howard branch of the A.L.P. which he formed, secretary of the Burrum District Medical Association, a member of the Maryborough Hospitals Board, secretary of the local golf club, and auditor of the Howard branch of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. He was a man of intense public spirit who not only attended diligently to his parliamentary duties but also gave lavishly of his time and ability to these and many other organisations.

It can be truthfully said of Dave Farrell that he gave his life in the service of his fellow-men, and knowing him as I did, I know that he would wish for no other epitaph.

I am aware that it is not the desire of hon. members that we should spend a great deal of time eulogising the many qualities of the late Dave Farrell, because for all of us this is an occasion of very great sadness. We realise that it is another indication of the toll that is being taken of public men. We hear much criticism today of the allegedly easy lives of members of Parliament, but any parliamentarian who serves his constituents and his constituency as faithfully and as diligently as the late Mr. Farrell, does so only at a heavy mental and physical cost. He was at all times a very conscientious man, and when we remember that only a few days ago we saw him in this Assembly, we realise how suddenly death can strike one down. Therefore, we meet today with very genuine feelings of sadness especially because the event happened so recently. Very frequently these messages of condolence are moved some weeks, or even months, after the member has passed away, and then perhaps, because of the passage of time they have not the same degree of sadness for us as they do when they are moved just after the event.

We are all genuinely sorry to learn of the death of the late Mr. Farrell, and we extend to Mrs. Farrell and the sorrowing relatives our deep sympathy in the grave loss they have sustained. I suggest that, as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Mr. Farrell, the House might suspend the sitting till 2.15 this afternoon.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.12 a.m.): In seconding the motion of condolence to the widow of the late Dave Farrell moved by the Acting Premier, I should like to associate all of the Opposition with the motion. Like all members of the House, we were deeply grieved and shocked to hear of his untimely

end. I met the late Dave Farrell in this House only last week—in fact, I believe we were the only two members in the House at the time—and at that time he seemed to be full of energy and was looking forward with a great deal of anticipation to the session that was ahead of us. Unfortunately, we do not know what is to be our lot from day to day, and this House and this State have suddenly suffered the great loss caused by his passing.

As the Acting Premier has said, Mr. Farrell filled very many positions in this Parliament, in all of which he was particularly conscientious in carrying out his duties. He was of a very friendly disposition and his sincerity was undoubted. He was, as the Acting Premier has said, liked and respected by every hon. member in this House. As a political opponent he was particularly fair, and we always admired him for the way in which he advocated his cause without in any way introducing undesirable elements into any argument that he might be putting forth.

The late Dave Farrell was a particularly hard worker for his electorate, and all of us who knew him and his activities in his own electorate realised that he was always on the job. No doubt, the great deal of time and energy that he put into his electoral work contributed in some part towards his untimely death, and undoubtedly the electorate of Maryborough owes him much for the great deal of work that he did on its behalf.

As the Acting Premier has said, the late Dave Farrell served his country well for four years in the first World War, and he never forgot his Digger coppers. At all times he took a great interest in their affairs and he was always ready to help any Digger who might have encountered a little bit of trouble or strife. He was a good friend to us also, and we shall certainly miss him much. As the Acting Premier has said, the shock has been greater because his death occurred at a time when this House was in active session.

I conclude by saying that his works and record will speak for themselves. We regret his passing very much indeed and we extend to his widow and family our deepest sympathy and condolences.

Motion agreed to, hon. members standing in silence.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with the desire of hon. members and as a mark of respect to the memory of the late David Farrell, the sitting will be suspended until 2.15 o'clock this afternoon.

I shall resume the chair at 2.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker resumed the chair at 2.15 p.m.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

ASSENT REPORTED BY MR. SPEAKER.

MEMBER SWORN.

MR. G. KEYATTA.

Mr. George Keyatta, having taken the oath of allegiance and subscribed the roll, took his seat for the electoral district of Townsville.

QUESTIONS.

ACCESS TO MARIAN WEIR WATER.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“In view of the fact that many farmers who desire to use the water impounded by the Marian Weir for irrigation purposes are prevented from doing so because their properties are separated from the river by other farms on the banks thereof, because they have no means of access to the river, will he kindly advise whether a right to such access can be obtained under existing legislation and, if not, will he kindly introduce suitable legislation for the purpose of remedying such defect?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando) replied—

“A right to access to a stream by a non-riparian owner cannot be obtained under existing legislation. Consideration is being given to the introduction of amending legislation to provide for such access, under suitable safeguards.”

PROPOSED MACKAY-NEBO RAILWAY.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) asked the Acting Premier—

“Referring to his answer to my question on 19 September, 1951, has the investigation by the Bureau of Investigation into the railway from Mackay to Nebo yet been completed? If so, will he kindly lay a copy of the Bureau's report on the table of the House?”

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

“Owing to the short sighted financial policy of the present Commonwealth Government it would be futile to even consider the possibility of providing the necessary finance for a project of this nature at present, and the investigation has therefore been temporarily halted.”

COMMONWEALTH ROAD GRANTS.

Mr. KERR (Sherwood), for **Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Nanango), asked the Minister for Transport—

“In each of the past five financial years, what amount was received from the Commonwealth towards Queensland roads?”

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

“Receipts from the Commonwealth Government during the past five years have been as follows:—1948-1949, £1,316,311; 1949-1950, £1,693,567; 1950-1951, £2,683,763; 1951-1952, £3,141,561; 1952-1953, £2,168,301.”

OCCUPATIONAL CENTRES FOR INEDUCABLE CHILDREN.

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“With reference to my question of 7 November last year regarding the establishment of occupational centres for ineducable children, will he kindly advise progress in this matter?”

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

“Ineducable children fall into two main groups, those in the care of their parents and relatives in their home, and those in Mental Hospitals. The children in Mental Hospitals, by reason of their being grouped together under the care of trained psychiatrists, provide the opportunity for exploratory work for their occupational training. Classes have been established in Ipswich Mental Hospital. Psychologists from the Psychiatric Clinic are observing this work with a view to ascertaining its value and the progress made. A further stage will have been reached with the completion of a building to house 70 boys in close proximity to the farm at the Goodna Mental Hospital. This building is well under way, and will be the nucleus of a farm colony for ineducable boys, where they will receive instruction in dairying and farming. The information and results obtained from these two projects will provide valuable information for the formation of future plans.”

GUARANTEES FOR EXCURSION TRAINS, MOUNT ISA.

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. Is it a fact that the Railway Department regularly provides an excursion train, without a request for guarantee, to convey children from Dajarra and Duchess to the Mount Isa May Day Celebrations?”

“2. Is it also a fact that when this year the Mount Isa May Day Committee decided to hold a combined celebration with the Mount Isa Coronation Celebration Committee on Coronation Day, the excursion train was refused by the department unless the committee put up a guarantee of £57?”

“3. If so, will he explain why his department should give May Day preferential treatment over the celebration of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.?”

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

“1. No.

“2. Yes.

“3. See 1 and 2.”

OVERSEAS INVESTORS, BOWEN STEEL WORKS.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Acting Premier—

“In reference to his answer, on 26 November, 1952, to my question relative to the establishment of iron and steel works at Bowen,—

“1. Has the examination of the report furnished by Professor White relative to a new process for the manufacture of steel been completed?”

“2. If so, will he kindly lay a copy on the Table of the House for the information of hon. members and others who may be interested in this matter?”

“3. If the examination of such report has been completed what action has been taken to bring it under the notice of investors and others who might possibly be interested in the establishment of the iron and steel works in question?”

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

“1. The report by Professor White has been presented to the Committee for examination, and recommendations are being made as to field investigations of natural resources of iron ore in the State as a preliminary to further examination.

“2. As the report is a confidential document, it is not considered desirable that its contents should be made public.

“3. The Premier, whilst overseas, proposed to take the opportunity to bring under the notice of interested parties in Britain, the possibility of the establishment of iron and steel works in Queensland.”

LOANS AND SUBSIDIES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Mr. V. E. JONES (Callide) asked the Treasurer—

“1. Will he kindly supply the figures for 1952-53 relating to loans and subsidies to local authorities, corresponding with those supplied for previous years?”

“2. Of the total amounts of subsidies, respectively, what was the total amount paid from (a) consolidated revenue, and (b) loan fund?”

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry), for **Hon. E. J. WALSH** (Bundaberg) replied—

“The information is being prepared.”

OVERTIME, POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“What was the amount of overtime paid in the Police Department in (a) 1951-1952 and (b) 1952-1953?”

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

“(a) £423,069 for Police personnel, £1,996 for Public Service staff, total £425,065; (b) £131,618 for Police personnel £674 for Public Service staff,

total £132,292. The amounts paid to Police personnel include payment for statutory holidays which attract double time and flat rate payments to Police employed at one-man and two-man stations."

OVERTIME, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) asked the Minister for Transport—

"What was the amount of overtime paid in the Railway Department in 1952-1953?"

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

"Revenue, £1,651,512; loan, £101,096; total, £1,752,608."

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Police Investment Board for the year 1952.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulation under the Sewerage, Water Supply and Gasfitting Act of 1949.

Orders in Council (3) under the Sewerage, Water Supply and Gasfitting Acts, 1949 to 1951.

Ordinances (8) under the City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1952.

Regulations (10) under the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929 to 1948.

Regulation under the University of Queensland Acts, 1909 to 1941.

Order in Council under the Libraries Acts, 1943 to 1949.

Orders in Council under—

The Abattoirs Acts, 1935 to 1949.

The Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1952.

Regulations under—

The Diseases in Plants Acts, 1929 to 1948.

The Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1952.

Regulations (2) under the Health Acts, 1937 to 1949.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 5 August (see p. 24) on Mr. Diplock's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (2.32 p.m.): At the outset I should like to take the opportunity of congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected Speaker of this Assembly. Judging from your record, you have fully earned that high honour and I know that you will add dignity to the position during your occupancy of the Chair in the current session.

The Speech with which His Excellency was pleased to open Parliament is not a very inspiring document but I should like to take the opportunity of expressing to him our appreciation of the down-to-earth manner in which he referred to the problems of development in this State and particularly of his introductory remarks in which he mentions the great need in Australia to find fighters and producers in the near future. His Excellency has shown that he realises the problems that we have to solve and no doubt he has learned of them from his close attention to his duties as he travels throughout the State and meets various sections of producers and the people generally. He has come to know our problems and is deserving of our thanks for the way in which he carries out his duties as the representative of Her Majesty the Queen in this State.

It is easy to see what is going to be the pattern of the speeches of hon. members opposite during this session. They intend to do as they have done in the past, endeavouring to dodge their responsibilities and pass the buck to someone else. Already today, in answer to several questions the Acting Premier has said that the Government would not be able to go on with certain projects in Queensland because the Commonwealth Government would not give them more money, and so on. Is it not time the Labour Government, who have occupied the Treasury benches for so many years now, should accept their own responsibilities and not endeavour to pass them on to somebody else?

I do not propose at this stage to go into Commonwealth-State financial matters. They were dealt with during the debate on the Appropriation Bill when the hon. member for Fassifern showed conclusively that under the Menzies-Fadden Government the increased Commonwealth contributions to Queensland have been proportionately much greater than the increases in wages and the depreciation in the value of the pound during their term of office.

No Government with any sense of responsibility or appreciation of realities of the position today could make the claims the Government make, in view of the fact that despite the Commonwealth Government's taking over certain State functions, such as income taxation and employment, the number of State employees paid from Consolidated Revenue increased between 30 June, 1939 and 30 June 1952 from 29,307 to 43,077; and in 1952-53 the Queensland Government were able to finance a record railway deficit of £4,491,951, and yet finish the year with a surplus of £190,897. Despite this allegedly niggardly treatment, the Government have had 14 surpluses in the past 15 years, so apparently they have not been treated so badly after all by the Commonwealth Government. The Government seem to be very like the Gyppos, who ask for 40 piastres for an article worth only five in the hope that they will get ten for it.

Looking at the Governor's Speech, which after all should be an indication of the Government's programme, we find it is as

barren of legislative promises as the Government's record of achievements in the past. Not a single major item of legislation is listed. This is typical of the contemptuous way in which the Government treat the people of this State. They have come back from the recent election drunk with success because of the large majority they got, and they have been contemptuous of the people, who after all are the masters. Are not the people entitled to know something of the Government's legislative programme when a new Parliament opens? But what do we find? We find mention of a few tiddly-winking Bills but no mention of any controversial subjects such as starting-price betting, salary grabs, or other contentious matters. These things will possibly be pulled out of the hat later on. If the Government had any sense of their responsibility to the people they would let it be known at the opening of the session what their legislative proposals were.

Let me refer to one of the things not mentioned in the Governor's Speech, the proposed raid on the Treasury by hon. members opposite to increase their salaries. Never in the political history of this State has there been such a disgusting exhibition of a complete disregard of democratic principles as was shown by hon. members opposite in the proposed salary grab. Even before this House assembled—before hon. members were sworn in—hon. members of the Government party started to carve up the spoils, and they could not agree among themselves. They squabbled as to what the amount should be.

Might I remind you Mr. Speaker, that this session comes just after an election and at that election not one single word of this proposed raid on the Treasury was uttered by hon. members opposite. If any one of the hon. members opposite had been asked during the election on whether he would increase parliamentary salaries, would he have said "Yes"? I guarantee not. But now that they are safely returned with a very large majority they hop in for their cut. Is there any political morality among hon. members opposite when they would do such a thing as that—make no mention of such a thing during the election but within a few weeks thereafter do what they have done?

Mr. Speaker, if any alteration in parliamentary salaries is warranted, why not do it the right way? Why not do it the way that everybody else in this State is compelled to take when he seeks an increase in his remuneration? Just as workers go to the Industrial Court, why should not hon. members in this Chamber go to some independent tribunal that would investigate and report on this very important question. If that action had been taken, there would not have been any objection from the public of this State or from hon. members on this side. When we on this side went before the people of this State we gave an undertaking in our policy speech that there would be no alteration in parliamentary salaries or allowances without reference to an independent tribunal. (Government interjections).

But hon. members opposite would not approach this subject in a straightforward way like that; rather would they, now that they are safely ensconced on the Treasury benches, hop in for their cut. They say, "No, we will not do it the proper way; we will make sure of it now." The electors, according to hon. members opposite, are only big mugs.

Government Members: No.

Mr. NICKLIN: The electors in this State are not going to forget this. No single action in recent years has so tended to bring Parliament and parliamentarians into disrepute as this raid on the Treasury contemplated by hon. members opposite. This move is a dangerous sort of move to make at a time like this when democracy and democratic institutions are being challenged all over the world. It should be the object of hon. members of this Parliament to uphold the dignity of Parliament and to offset the tendency that we find in the people at the present time to speak in derogatory terms of Parliament and parliamentarians. This action of hon. members opposite has made a major contribution toward that feeling among the people. (Government interjections).

The attitude of the Opposition is quite clear on this question. (Government interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask hon. members to allow the hon. gentleman to make his speech without interruption.

Mr. NICKLIN: As I was saying, the Opposition's attitude on this question is quite clear: We will never vote for legislation to increase parliamentary salaries unless there has first been an inquiry by an impartial tribunal.

Let us have an impartial tribunal headed by a judge from outside this State. That is the Opposition's attitude, and I take this opportunity of making it known to the public.

Let us look now at the unimposing legislative programme of the Government as recorded in His Excellency's Speech. It is interesting to note that the Governor's Speech contains no mention of any legislation having for its object the tackling of the great problems confronting this State at the moment. One of the greatest problems facing us at the present time is how we can give some practical help to our primary industries to enable them to make the contributions to the economy of the nation that are necessary to maintain it. Our primary industries have a tremendous job to do, not only in meeting the world's demand for food but also in maintaining Australia's economy. If they are not able to play their part in doing that, the people of this State must inevitably suffer, yet despite that we find nothing in the Government's legislative programme to indicate that anything is to be done to help meet that major problem.

I had the pleasure of listening to a very fine address delivered by the Acting Premier at a recent dinner in connection with the Royal National Show and I agreed with the almost every word he said and all the points he made. Unfortunately, fine words and fine

speeches that are not backed by action are of no use whatever in meeting the problems the hon. gentleman mentioned on that occasion. He said that we must build up our primary industry. We all agree with that. He said also that we are losing markets because of the prices of our primary products. We know that only too well. Then he said that we must trade with other countries if we are going to survive. He said too that Parliament must face facts and take action to meet the serious problems ahead of us, yet here we have a legislative programme embodied in His Excellency's Speech, and we find in it not one word indicating that the Government propose to do anything to tackle the problems with which the Acting Premier dealt at that dinner.

An Opposition Member: It was a Show speech.

Mr. NICKLIN: But we do not expect Show speeches from the Government of this State. We want Government leaders to deliver speeches that indicate that the Government are going to do something. We want fine words backed up by acts but unfortunately we cannot see any indication that the Acting Premier and his Government propose to do anything to deal with the problems he so lucidly stated in his speech at that dinner. We want something of real value to the primary producers, something of value in tackling the vital problems ahead of us and in helping to maintain the productivity of our industries.

During my visit overseas I was very concerned at what I heard in London about the future of our primary products there. As a result of what I heard, I feel that there is hardly one of our primary producers who can look to the future with any degree of equanimity.

Great Britain is now receiving ample supplies of food from all parts of the world and she is in a position to bargain, and she is going to prove a mighty good bargainer. If we are to sell our products on the markets of Great Britain, our prices must be competitive. The Acting Premier recognised that in the speech he made at the Royal National Show. Now that the period of government trading is ending and markets are returning to normal, if we are to sell our products overseas, they will have to be sold on a competitive basis. What will prevent us from selling on a competitive basis? Only the costs our primary industries have to bear.

Mr. Jesson: And their inefficiency.

Mr. NICKLIN: We have just heard an interjection by an hon. member opposite about the inefficiency of the primary industries. Mr. Speaker, that is the catchery of hon. members opposite in their endeavour to cover up their own shortcomings. If hon. members opposite were half as efficient in carrying out their duties as the primary producers are, they would be a lot more efficient than they really are. It must be agreed that our primary industries are moving towards greater efficiency and that everyone engaged in them is concentrating his energies in building up that efficiency. But those

industries are carrying such a tremendous handicap in costs that it is impossible for them to reduce costs unless something real and practical is done about it by the Government.

There is no doubt that the most serious problem in the State is excessive industrial costs. Yet at the recent Premiers' Conference this matter was not even mentioned by the State leaders assembled there. No, they were far too busy endeavouring to strip a few bob off the Federal Government to deal with the essential problem they should have been dealing with. That is why, I repeat, I was pleased to see in the forefront of His Excellency's Speech the statement that we shall still, for a long time to come, need to concentrate on farmers and fighters. Unless Australia becomes more competitive with other countries, the end of democracy and democratic institutions in Australia is inevitable. If we cannot sell our products overseas, we cannot continue to exist as a nation. We have to face up to that fact and every Government should be concentrating their whole energies on solving that problem. It should be kept in the forefront of Government programmes, because, if we cannot compete and sell our products overseas, we shall go downhill rapidly. At the present time we are in the unfortunate position that many of our important markets for the export of our primary and secondary products have already been lost and that some of our most important industries still exist at a loss.

Hon. members opposite might ask why we are selling our products overseas at a loss. We are doing it because we cannot eat them or use them and therefore have to do something else with them. We have reached a stage in this country where, because of excessive capital costs, even the opening up of new lands for selection has become an impossibility, except in some cases where conditions are particularly favourable. A semi-developed nation in that condition is nearing the end of its existence as a free people.

I notice that the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation is listening very attentively to me, and from his experience at Peak Downs, Clare, and Wandooan, he should be convinced of the truth of what I am saying. If he does not know about these things, nobody in this House should.

Let us examine the reasons for the condition in which we find ourselves today. The first reason is the fact that, alone among the countries of the world, at a time when we had just completed a devastating war and when we were faced with tremendous shortages, instead of doing what other countries of the world did, that is, roll up our sleeves and "get into it," we decided that it was time to give ourselves the luxury of a shorter working week, which contributed very largely to the position in which we find ourselves today. This is a particularly controversial point overseas. When we discuss these matters with people overseas who are buying our products and point out that we have to get such-and-such a price to enable us to carry on our undertakings, they say,

“Why should we be asked to carry the costs that you have imposed upon yourselves, for example the cost of a shorter working week? We cannot enjoy that luxury over here. We have to work harder to exist, and you cannot expect us to keep on for all time carrying the cost that luxury has added to the cost of your products.” I find that a particularly hard argument to answer. If hon. members opposite know the answer, let us hear it.

After all, do not let us forget that prominent leaders of the Labour Party foresaw the dangers this decrease in production and increase in costs have brought to this nation, and I again quote the late Hon. J. B. Clifley in this connection. I have quoted him previously in this House but his words are so pertinent and so true that they are well worth re-quoting. When he was addressing a gathering at the Lithgow Trades Hall in 1948 he said—

“If the industrial production of Australia is not maintained and greatly improved, one must expect economic disaster. . . . Costs have necessarily risen following the 40-hour week and they will continue to rise.”

Unfortunately, Mr. Clifley's predictions in that respect were fully borne out, and we are suffering today as a result.

I desire also to quote the Acting Premier, who in his statement at the Royal National Show said—

“Costs are multiplying so rapidly that wage-earners will find it impossible to afford many foods vital to the health of themselves and their children.

“It is a cycle which, unless promptly and effectively arrested, may have disastrous effects on the Australian economy and bring tragedy to thousands of homes.”

I agree entirely with that statement of the Acting Premier; in fact, I should improve on it by substituting the word “will” for the word “may”. Where he said it “may have disastrous effects,” I should say that it “will have disastrous effects.”

This vicious costs spiral from which we are suffering at the present time and which, if we do not check it, will inevitably have disastrous economic results on this country of ours, was set in motion, as I said at the outset, by the shorter working week. It was accelerated by the prosperity loading on the basic wage, and our self-propelling basic wage makes it certain that the process of national self-destruction will continue unless Governments—and by “Governments” I mean both State and Federal Governments—face up to the fact that something definite must be done to bring to an end the present industrial lunacy and to substitute something more sane and practical, something that will preserve the competitive powers of the Australian nation.

We have the spectacle here every day of go-slow on the wharves, the costly turn-round of ships and the consequent increase in freights on our products for overseas

markets. The primary producer cannot be blamed for that. What are the Government prepared to do about it? Are they prepared to discipline the wharf workers? The Acting Premier said that we should have to discipline ourselves. Let him do some disciplining of these men who are costing the primary producers of Australia £25,000,000 in the slow turn-round of ships. I agree with him that there must be discipline but what is the use of uttering fine words if they are not backed up by action? What is the use of talking about disciplining this, that, and the other unless appropriate action is taken? Is the Acting Premier prepared to take action to discipline these industrial renegades who are costing this country a tremendous sum of money? Our arbitration courts either cannot or will not do anything about disciplining these men who are completely disregarding their awards and conditions, which are the best in the world. What do the men on the wharves give in return for these splendid industrial conditions? No return whatever.

Mr. Riordan: That is a reflection on the court.

Mr. NICKLIN: It is not a reflection on the court. If the court has not got the necessary power to deal with these industrial renegades who do not obey the dictates of the court, the court will have to get the greatest possible power for this purpose; and let the Government back the court in the matter. We stand for arbitration but we do not stand for a travesty of arbitration. There is no use in hon. members opposite talking about taxes and costs and saying that they are our present trouble when in fact they are only the result of our trouble. Taxes and costs are a result, not a cause, of the present inflation, which has come about because of a wage system that is entirely divorced from economic considerations and is particularly rife because of the go-slow-ism in our midst at the present time.

When the Premier came back from New Zealand in December, 1950, he said, “Wage increases are always offset by price increases. If workers can be assured of effective price-control, I am sure they would have no objection to wage-pegging.” Only three years ago the Premier recognised the danger, and it is far greater today, because wage costs have risen in Australia much more than in any other free country and world competition has become fiercer. When we read of world competition in the sale of our products, primary and secondary, and see that it is becoming fiercer day by day we realise that something must be done about it. Is there not some responsibility on hon. members opposite to do something about it? I believe that when the Premier returns from overseas he will confirm the statement he made when he came back from New Zealand three years ago.

The present position is far too serious to be used for party political purposes. In two articles the Acting Premier contributed to “The Brisbane Telegraph” in July last he

said that the situation has grown so serious that we cannot as a nation afford to pass the buck any longer. He said also, "This is an issue above politics." I agree. But the Acting Premier wound up by saying, "The position calls for courageous action by the Federal Government," which in itself is a classical example of buck-passing. Have not hon. members opposite, and the Government, any responsibility in this matter? Of course they have. Why do they spend all their time and energy, as they have been doing, in dodging their own responsibility by endeavouring to pass the buck to the Federal Government. They realise that one great difficulty is that under the Commonwealth Constitution, the Federal Government have severely limited powers in industrial matters. For that reason they alone cannot handle the present deplorable situation. I suggest that there should be another Premiers' Conference at an early date to discuss the destruction of Australia's competing power, which has already brought us to somewhere near the end of the road. Let the leaders of the various Governments get round the table with the Commonwealth Government and tackle the greatest problem that is facing us as a people today. That would be in marked contrast to what has happened at conferences in the past—each one trying to get a bigger cut. Let us put aside that aspect of party politics and get round the conference table and endeavour to solve the tremendous problem that faces us, and that, if not solved, will ruin this fair land of ours.

Such a conference should be actuated by motives of patriotism and national self-preservation. After all, it is self-preservation to endeavour to solve this problem, which will ruin us if we do not overcome it. The conference should be actuated solely by the indisputable fact that Australia must compete or perish. If we do not as leaders keep that fact to the forefront we are not fit to occupy our positions. Power to compete is the condition of our survival as a nation. Do not let us forget that. If we do, the end is not far away for our Australian way of life, of which we are so proud.

Let us, when tackling this major problem, forget our party squabbles and differences of opinion. After all, the nation should be above party consideration and we should think of Australia and her future and the future of the children who are coming on to take our places. It is a glorious heritage that we have but we shall lose it if we do not solve this problem and make it possible for us to compete on the markets of the world with our products, a state of things that at the present time is being denied to us by the excessive industrial cost that has been piled onto the primary producers. These people have been enabled to carry on up to the present by great sacrifice. But this nation should not be built up on the sacrifices of one section. If sacrifices are necessary, they should be made by the whole of the people. There is, however, no need for any great sacrifice by any section if we all get together and pull our weight and tackle the problems that are ahead of us.

His Excellency recognised the danger when he made that statement at the beginning of his Speech and it is up to us to do something about it during this session of Parliament. That is why I say that I am disappointed, and so are the majority of the people of this State, at the innocuous programme of legislation presented to us in the Governor's Speech for our consideration during this session—and that coming on top of the action of hon. members opposite in regard to legislation that is going to be produced in the future but of which no mention has been made in the Governor's Speech.

In conclusion I would point out that each and every member of the Opposition will give all help to the Government if they are willing to tackle this major problem facing us at the present time, that is, the control of industrial costs, which would enable and assist our primary products and our secondary products to compete on the markets of the world to the advantage of the economic position of this fair land of ours.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (3.12 p.m.): To preface the remarks I make in this speech I would sincerely thank the electors of Bremer for returning me to this Parliament unopposed. I regard this tribute from them not so much as an indication that they are satisfied with my services but as a command that I should continue to give of my best to all sections of the community and to make improvements where necessary. I give them my assurance that I will make an honest endeavour to do just that.

I offer my sincere congratulations to the mover of the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Condamine, who gained the distinction of winning this seat for Labour at his first attempt, in spite of the fact that it did receive good and faithful service from Mr. Allpass during the time that gentleman was in this Parliament.

During the course of the hon. member's speech he traced the history of the development of public education in Queensland, the United Kingdom, and to some extent in the United States of America. The men in control of the Department of Public Instruction in Queensland must have been very pleased indeed to read what the hon. member had to say, although he did not refrain from criticising what he believes to be a weakness in our educational system in Queensland. As the hon. member is an experienced educationist—it can be truthfully said that he is an expert in education—his criticism cannot be lightly thrust aside. His criticism was constructive and I have every confidence that it will receive the consideration it so rightly deserves. Another prominent and a very efficient educationist, Mr. Wombold, the president of the Teachers' Union and the present headmaster of the Bundamba State School, has agreed with much that the hon. member had to say.

My sincere congratulations go also to the seconder of the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Nash, who had no difficulty whatever in retaining this seat for Labour. He is a worthy successor of that grand old man

of Queensland politics, Tommy Dunstan. Every man who has had the honour and privilege to sit in this Chamber with Mr. Dunstan held him in the highest esteem and has benefited by having been associated with him. I wish him—and I feel sure that every hon. member in this Chamber joins with me—a long and comfortable voluntary retirement. It was pleasing indeed to see his successor paying him such a glowing tribute. Gympie has given to our State and national Parliaments a number of outstanding parliamentarians and I feel confident that her latest choice will join the ranks of the illustrious.

The Labour Party has every reason to be proud of the success it achieved at the polls, particularly the support received in rural areas, which demonstrated beyond doubt the people's approval of Labour's policy, legislation, and administration. No longer will the members of the Opposition be able to assert that we are a minority Government, or are governing without a clear mandate from the people of Queensland. That doubtful honour goes to the present Commonwealth Government, for at the last appeal to the people the electors recorded a vote of no confidence in that Government, as they received only 44.3 per cent. of the votes recorded at the recent Senate elections.

Only 15 Government Senators were elected, whereas Labour succeeded in returning 17. Had the election been fought on a House of Representative basis, the Labour Party would be the Government of Australia today, for in the Senate election that party led in 64 electorates, and anti-Labour Parties in 57.

The Government having received the endorsement of the electors, the policy outlined by the Premier in opening the election campaign will be put into effect. Should circumstances prevent its implementation or curtailment to any extent, these circumstances will be beyond the control of the Queensland Government, but not beyond the control of the Commonwealth Government. For confirmation of that statement let me quote the leading article which appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of Friday, 17 July, headed "We are lagging":—

"Queenslanders who want to know more about their State will welcome the appearance of the Queensland Pocket Year Book for 1953, just issued from the Government Statistician's Office. But there is a shock in it for them. It reveals that in the five years from June, 1947, to June, 1952, Queensland made slower growth in population than any other State. Its population increased by only 11.9 per cent. Western Australia's shot up by 19.7 per cent., Tasmania's by 17.5 per cent., and South Australia's by 14.5 per cent.

"This is a consequence of Queensland's taking relatively fewer migrants than the other States. Other States have been able to employ more migrants because they have big developmental undertakings in hand; New South Wales and Victoria, the Snowy River scheme; Tasmania, its new hydro-electric unit, its newsprint enterprise, and aluminium project; South Australia, the

Leigh Creek-Port Augusta railway, which is to get coal for a giant power-house at Port Augusta.

"Western Australia has attracted big industrial enterprise—the Anglo-Iranian Company's £40,000,000 oil refinery going up near Fremantle, and the steel rolling mill projected by the Broken Hill Company at Kwinana for using iron ore from Yampi Sound.

"Nothing like this has come to Queensland or is even in prospect, and it is getting no Commonwealth help for big development as most other States are.

"Mr. Gair and his Government, no doubt, can say that they have tried to interest the Commonwealth in developing the irrigation potential of the Burdekin. There is also the Dajarra rail link waiting for Commonwealth help. Unless the Federal Government gives Queensland a fairer share of Commonwealth capital works in the next budget the charge of neglecting this State will be hard to answer."

That, Mr. Speaker, is a severe condemnation, but nevertheless a very truthful one, of the Commonwealth Government and at the same time a very unpalatable one for the opponents of Labour in Queensland, coming as it does from the mouthpiece of the political parties that form our present national Government.

Take any of the projects mentioned by "The Courier-Mail" in the article quoted and it will be admitted by any unbiased person that almost without exception similar projects could have been undertaken in Queensland with greater advantage to our nation, particularly from a defence and security viewpoint.

It is now freely admitted by almost everybody that if we are to hold and develop Australia we shall have to increase our population at a much faster tempo than we have done in the past. To achieve the desired result it is recognised now more than ever before that we shall have to have the help of people from overseas, because Australia's development, her greatness, and many of her achievements, are due in the main to those courageous people who left the British Isles, their homeland, many years ago to settle in Australia. Their pioneering spirit, their grit and determination and their general capacity could be emulated by their descendants and new arrivals with benefit to all concerned.

While it is desirable that we should attract to our country people from abroad to help us with our tasks, it is also very desirable that any migration scheme should be carefully planned and properly organised and that each migrant should be carefully screened. If we can give gainful employment to any person who is out of employment—and they are numbered by the millions in the continents of Europe, Asia and America—it is wise and fitting that we should do so, but to bring anyone no matter how high his qualifications, to Queensland and have no useful employment to offer him is a cruel sin that cannot be justified under any circumstances.

If he is out of employment and destitute, it is wiser and certainly kinder to leave him with his kith and kin than to induce him to travel many thousands of miles and leave him still destitute and without employment on his arrival in this country. Australia cannot afford to have any further unemployed demonstrations by people who have been induced to leave their homes and attracted to our shores by promises of full employment and economic security. We must also take into consideration our own people who are land-hungry and unemployed and because of this it is imperative that we should pursue a vigorous land-settlement policy.

The Burdekin scheme, when it is operating, will be very helpful in this direction. Its building, unlike the Snowy River project, will not inundate any established settlement nor extensively flood good agricultural or pastoral land, yet its capacity will be greater. The Burdekin project has, as I think all hon. members know, a threefold purpose and each one in itself will be worth many tens of thousands of pounds each year to Queensland and the Commonwealth. As a flood-mitigation project alone it will prevent untold loss of production annually, in addition to preventing dislocation of transport which too frequently, results in serious economic loss, not to mention the extensive inconvenience and damage caused to producers along the banks of the river and the great loss caused by erosion. Its value as an irrigation project has at this early stage been demonstrated by the substantial contribution already made to production in North Queensland. The farms being worked at present give some indication of the possibilities of the scheme when it is completed. Its potentiality as a source of energy for the generation of electric power and lighting is beyond question. On completion it will provide a continuous daily output of not less than 5,400 acre-feet over the worst drought period. This is the equivalent of 2,700 cubic feet or 17,000 gallons a second, which is sufficient for the generation of 80,000 k.w. at a 50 per cent. load factor and for the irrigation of 350,000 acres per annum without restriction. Therefore, the people who can be attracted to and settle in this area are assured of protection against the ravages of both flood and drought and in addition will be able to enjoy all the benefits and advantages made possible by the availability of electricity.

It is estimated that when full development is attained the population in the area will have been increased by approximately 50,000 persons. This addition to our northern population will increase considerably the production of foodstuffs, strengthen our economy, add to our security, and aid our defence considerably.

As it is readily admitted that the North is the most vulnerable part of the Commonwealth, it is essential that its open spaces should be filled by vigorous, prosperous and contented people, and it is the duty of Governments, both national and State, to encourage and assist people to settle there. The success of the sugar industry in North

Queensland has proved how wrong were the critics of the North when they contended vociferously and at great length that industry in North Queensland could not be sustained by white labour alone.

The claim of the Burdekin scheme is equal, if not superior, to that of the Snowy River project, and from a defence point of view it is much more valuable. If we are to hold the North we must develop it, and if we are to develop the North we must people it. No enemy lies to the south of Australia. Our security is not threatened by an invasion of penguins from the Antarctic, but we are continually being informed by our daily Press, by periodicals, and by people who are in a position to know, of the grave danger that threatens us from the North. Hon. members will remember that the Governor-General struck this note of warning at the welcome that was tendered to him last night. If it is correct—and I see no reason why we should disregard this warning—it is extremely foolish to pursue the policy of strengthening the back door and leaving the front door wide open, thereby giving an open invitation to those who may feel so inclined to challenge our right to hold this sparsely populated territory.

I can agree with "The Courier-Mail" that this policy is extremely hard to justify. Surely the lesson of World War II has not been forgotten or overlooked by our national legislators? No longer does our isolation give us adequate protection from an aggressor nation. The war in the Pacific taught us a lesson that we must never forget, that is, that we could never hope to repel an invader in any future war without considerable help from some outside friendly nation in addition to the aid that will be given promptly and efficiently by our Mother Country.

As our greatest need for security in war-time, and for full employment and prosperity in peace-time, is more people in our country, it naturally follows that the best result would be obtained by placing those additional people in a locality where there are few people at present, instead of sending them to swell the already densely populated parts of our Commonwealth.

I fully realise that a large part of Australia is extremely dry, having an average annual rainfall of less than 10 inches, and for that reason will remain largely uninhabited, perhaps for many years to come. I am aware also that much development and settlement have yet to be undertaken in the more favourably situated portions of our Commonwealth. It is to these favourable parts of our nation that the additional population should be going.

While we yearn for peace and loathe war, we should be very foolish indeed to ignore the possibility of a further challenge to our right to hold this land within the next two decades. In the meantime, it is imperative that we take the necessary steps to plan and organise, not only to meet this possible challenge, but to justify our right to the exclusive possession of Australia. This is another matter that was mentioned by our

new Governor-General during the course of his address in reply to his welcome by the Acting Premier last night, so that it cannot be disregarded as being mere flapdoodle. Our initial requirement is additional Australians who will apply themselves to the task of developing our country's resources and helping in the expansion of its economy. The more successful we are in this direction the less we shall have to fear from any future invasion by an aggressor.

Economists have informed us that Australia can double her population and still maintain full employment with adequate standards of living for all. According to the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, a population of 15,000,000 in Australia would at least treble our industrial output. The question arises: can we achieve the required population by natural increase, that is, by a surplus of births over deaths? If we examine the position we shall find that in the 10 years before World War II. Australian mothers were not bearing enough children to replace us in the next generation, let alone increase our numbers. Although Australia is a very young nation, some 165 years old, we are unfortunately, not a nation of young people. Each census since 1901 has clearly demonstrated a worsening position in this respect, as the following table clearly shows—

Year.	Percentage of total population.	
	Children aged under 15.	Aged 65 or over.
1901	35.1	4.0
1911	31.6	4.3
1921	31.7	4.4
1933	27.5	6.5
1946	24.4	7.8
1950	25.0	8.5
The forecast for 1975 is ..	22.0	12.0

It will be seen from the table that over a period of 75 years the percentage of our population under 15 years has dropped by 13 per cent. and that of the people 65 years and over has increased by 8 per cent.

Figures have disclosed that for the calendar year 1946 Australia had the highest natural increase in population, the highest number of births, and the lowest infantile death-rate ever recorded in this country. The birth rate was the highest for 23 years, at 23.68 per thousand. These encouraging figures were largely due to the greater number of marriages, perhaps the result of the war and post-war conditions prevailing at that time but personally I am inclined to think that it was because of the great sense of security felt by the Australian people as the result of full employment. However, the statistician's estimates from 1946 onwards are very disturbing, as they reveal a decreasing percentage of people under the age of 15. This reflects the conditions of the depression years when the birth rate was so low that the generation to which we should now look for good reproduction rates is itself deficient in numbers.

The 1947 census showed that the increase in our population from 1933 to 1947 amounted to only 14.34 per cent., compared with an increase of 21.97 per cent. during the shorter interval between the census of 1921 and the census of 1933. The annual rate of increase of the population in Australia during the present century has averaged 1.52 per cent., but results from year to year have deviated widely from this figure. Since the census of 1933 the rate has fallen to the alarmingly low level of .96 per cent. per annum.

This sharp decline in the nation's natural reproduction rate bore out earlier forecasts and showed in cold figures the result of the low birth rate of the depression years, whose bitter harvest we are still reaping. Those years of misery and want cost Australia many thousands of children who would today be approaching the marriageable-age group on whose fecundity the nation's strength and security should largely depend.

According to the Commonwealth Statistician, Australia had 644,100 boys and girls in the 15 to 19-year-old group in 1949. This number has fallen to 516,000, a loss of 127,000 young Australians who could have made so great a contribution to the welfare of their country.

What is the significance of these tragic figures? Their significance is that the population of this vital pulsating young country is slowly but inexorably moving into the upper age groups; that Australia, only a very young nation, is becoming senescent in the midst of a world demanding the capacity for swift adaptations and the vigour of youth.

While we can all agree that the Australian-born babe is our best immigrant, we are forced to admit that Australia cannot expand its population rapidly enough by its own efforts. While an assisted plan of encouraging natural increase by improved social services is essential, encouraged immigration schemes offer the only other solution to Australia's serious population problem.

However, immigration is at best only the counterpart of the most important phase of population-building—natural increase. Any immigration policy, therefore, must be intimately related to those phases of Government policy that are directed towards stimulating the birth rate and lowering infant mortality in Australia itself. It must further be related to the whole social-service programme of greater economic security and a higher standard of living as an inducement to young Australians to rear larger families.

There are at least two things that must be made perfectly clear to intending migrants, first to the British people and then to other people who desire to become good Australian citizens. The first is that we want and will welcome to our shores good healthy people who desire to become Australian citizens by adoption. The second is that we will not mislead any intending immigrant by encouraging him to leave his homeland to come to Australia until there is reasonable assurance that gainful employment awaits him. To succeed, too, any

immigration plan must have the support and good will of the Australian people. These assurances, therefore, are equally important and must be given to the workers in Australian industries and to the Australian people generally.

It is not my intention to comment on or criticise the migration policy of the Federal Government; I rely upon the condemnation of that Government contained in the leading article of "The Brisbane Telegraph" of 25 July:—

"Migration Cut Shows Lack of
Sound Planning.

"Federal Cabinet's decision to halve Australia's immigration programme is to be deplored. It is typical of the Government's timid approach to every major problem it has faced in the last couple of years. Instead of adopting positive measures it takes the line of least resistance. This country will not be developed as rapidly as it should be while such a negative policy is pursued.

"It is stated that the reason for Cabinet's decision to cut the immigration programme is to provide a breathing space to digest those settlers already admitted. Yet just six months ago the Migration Minister (Mr. Holt) said that any migration programme short of 150,000 for the years immediately ahead would cause stagnation in Australia's development. How can these two statements be reconciled?

"The Federal Government virtually has thrown in the towel when the first difficulty in the absorption of migrants has arisen. This difficulty is of its own creation. It would never have occurred had migration been planned on a sounder basis and had the Government attacked causes instead of effects in dealing with the economic crisis which has developed in the last 12 months.

"Had action been taken to stimulate production instead of to stop spending as a means of curbing inflation the present problem would have been averted. If the flow of migrants is checked it will be extremely difficult to start again. By constantly changing its policy, and by its failure to plan effectively for the absorption of migrants already admitted, the Federal Government is not going to encourage other people to think that this is a land of opportunity.

"There is no limit to the expansion of food production in Australia. Why, then, reduce the intake of migrants? Why not exercise greater selectivity and bring in the types needed for primary industries? Give them a chance to develop the millions of acres of land going to waste in Australia.

"This country has the resources for a population of at least 20 millions. That vision of the future will be achieved only by drive and vigour and bold planning. The present Government is showing no signs of having the courage or capacity to do the job that is needed."

That leading article, taken in conjunction with the leading article in "The Brisbane Courier-Mail" of 17 July, or each article

alone is sufficient justification for the electors of Australia to dismiss the present incompetent national government and replace it by a Government from a party that has saved Australia not only once but again and again. When the next opportunity comes I feel sure the people will not only dismiss that government but we shall see the spectacle of these two papers, which have shown so very clearly in their leading articles that the present Federal Government are not worth supporting, asking the people of Australia to support them.

A few words on another of the projects mentioned in the leading article of "The Courier-Mail," which I have already quoted, the railway line from Leigh Creek to Port Augusta. Every hon. member will agree that the money that has been spent and is to be spent on that line could have been spent to greater advantage, not only from the security point of view but from an economic point of view, in Queensland. Along that line will be carried coal that is to be used to generate electric energy in Port Augusta. It is doubtful whether the building of that line will benefit everyone in the State of South Australia, small as it is compared with the State of Queensland, it certainly will not benefit anyone or at least very few of the people outside South Australia. If the money that has been and is to be spent on that line had been used by the Commonwealth Government to give this State the same liberal financial assistance to build the railway line talked of for years, a railway line from Dajarra to Camooweal, that line would have assisted the economy of this nation—and not only that, would have made this nation more secure in war. It would have provided a means of transport that does not exist at present. It would have enabled people to settle in the North, which is recognised as wonderful cattle country. Along such a railway line would come the best beef cattle in the world to provide the best beef not only for the people of Queensland but for the Commonwealth of Australia and, in addition, to fill the hungry stomachs of the people throughout the world.

Again and again we hear it said that if we are to have universal peace we must see to it that no nation has starving people. It is our duty as well as that of every other nation, to see that the people of all lands are fed and it is a shame that money should be spent on a line that will be used almost exclusively for the transportation of the lowest grade of coal that has ever been mined in the Commonwealth to-day, while the Commonwealth Government are neglecting their duty to build a line that would give this nation an opportunity to supply hungry people with the best beef that can be produced in the world.

I come now to the question of margins and there can be no doubt that there is little chance of industrial peace or co-operation until the important question of marginal increases is satisfactorily settled. It cannot be denied by anybody who has given any consideration to the matter that the trade unions have a very strong case. It is only

natural that our tradesmen, our skilled artisans, should be annoyed that their margins for skill have been whittled away gradually. It is only natural that they should be annoyed at the thought that the margins they have won have not been preserved and that the court has not seen fit to compensate them for the time they spent in serving apprenticeships and acquiring necessary skill. I know from experience that the trade unions have an unanswerable argument and I am confident that sooner or later they will win.

But while I am confident that this will happen, I must refer to one section of the community that has no trade union to fight for it. I refer to the aged, the invalid and the widows who receive Commonwealth pensions. I know that this Parliament can do nothing for them but there is one section of this community's pensioners whom the Government can help. I refer to those who are in receipt of coal and shale mine workers' pensions. Should the Commonwealth Government do the right thing and increase the pensions paid to the aged, to the invalid, to widows, and those in receipt of Services pensions, I hope legislation will be produced into this Chamber, not to preserve the margin between the basic wage and the miner's pension, for that has been denied us, but to ensure that there shall be no delay in making the necessary adjustment between the Commonwealth age pension and the miner's pension, so that the miner-pensioner will suffer no loss of income.

The balance sheet of the fund discloses that in the year 1952 assets totalled almost £500,000 and that £460,000 had been wisely invested. I suggest to the tribunal that it might invest some of its money in either building or acquiring homes at the seaside to which the people who receive miners' pensions could go for an annual holiday. I do not suggest for a moment that these pensioners should be boarded free but I do think that some small charge, even if it is only 5 per cent. of the capital outlay, would make it possible. I know that people will say the suggestion is unworkable, that it is Utopian, that it is a stupid dream that cannot be put into operation, but I have no difficulty whatever in recollecting that when the coal-mine workers asked for a pension scheme over 10 years ago the same argument, that it was a silly Utopian dream that industry could not afford to carry and that it was just impossible and futile to make such a suggestion was put forward. Now after over 10 years of operation, the coal and shale mine workers' pension scheme has proved to be one of the best superannuation schemes in Australia. That being so, I feel confident that my suggestion for a holiday home is equally capable of being put into operation so that these old people might have some chance to have a holiday at the seaside.

As to the location of such homes, I suggest that the near North Coast would be most suitable, as it is the most centrally situated for the great majority of mine workers. Once the scheme is put into operation, once one home is provided, I am sure that the success that would flow from it would justify

the building of other homes. That would not, I feel sure, require the introduction of further legislation because I think our law gives the tribunal ample scope to do as I suggest and provide a home to start off with on the near North Coast to accommodate these people in the near future.

Mr. SKINNER (Somerset) (3.51 p.m.): In rising to speak in this Address in Reply debate, I am deeply conscious of the fact that in making my first speech on the floor of this House in the first session of the 33rd Parliament of Queensland I am commencing the first chapter of a new role in my life, to serve the citizens of my electorate and the State and the Commonwealth as a whole.

It is an honour to have the opportunity of making this speech in the year of the Coronation of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The oath of allegiance and service that I, with other members of this House, took on that historic Coronation Day should, I believe, be the guiding light by which we should steer our courses if we are to honestly and sincerely honour the confidence placed in us by the people of our respective electorates when they returned us as their representatives in the Parliament of Queensland.

I join with my colleagues in extending to you, Mr. Speaker, sincere congratulations on being re-elected to the high and honourable office of Speaker of this Assembly and I feel sure that you will continue to guide the debates in this House in a reasonable and successful way, maintaining the decorum of this Assembly.

I take the opportunity too of congratulating the Premier through the Acting Leader of the House on the magnificent results recorded in favour of his party at the recent elections on 7 March. I have no hesitation in stating that I believe the people judged with candour and recorded their votes as an expression of confidence in the splendid record of service given to the State by his Government and their predecessors.

One has to look at the development and history of this State in retrospect to realise the tremendous achievements made in its economy, production and development. I am reminded of a statement one often heard during the recent election campaign when members of the Opposition pleaded with the people to take the control of government from Labour and hand it over to Labour's political opponents on the ground that they were the only people capable of serving the interests of the people and this country effectively. As the representative of an electorate that comprises every field of production—pastoral, agricultural, dairying and industrial—and having been in direct personal contact with the people of that electorate, I can express their opinion that no Government could have served the common interests of the people so efficiently and so well as have the successive Labour Governments of Queensland over the past two decades.

I believe that certain basic features of government are essential to the progress of

the State and I would mention the availability of land to persons desirous of occupying it, the provision of adequate and permanent water supply, efficient and reliable means of transport, up-to-date facilities to cater for the health of the community and maintain hygienic standards of life, and educational facilities available to every section of the community, whether metropolitan or rural, the encouragement and/or development of secondary industries on a decentralised basis, and the provision of amenities of life in the country areas equal to those enjoyed in the metropolitan or city areas.

All those things have been or are in the process of being expanded and provided for the people of this State under Labour's legislation. Queenslanders, I believe, need have no fear that population, closer settlement and further progress will not follow. One thing alone—and I shall refer to it later—is, I believe, retarding progress and development today, and its effects will be felt within the next few years. However, I should first like to enlarge somewhat on the basic principles of government that I have enunciated.

The foresight and planned legislation of Labour Governments in regard to its land policy have given preference to leasehold over freehold tenure. This does not meet with the approval of everybody in Queensland as a whole, but I believe that the Government are to be congratulated on their policy because it ensures, first of all, protection against monopolies and that all the arable lands of this State will be used to the best advantage for closer settlement and the production of essential primary products to an extent that will meet the requirements of our own ever-increasing population and provide a surplus for export so that credit balances may be built up on the overseas markets to enable us to purchase or import from those countries commodities essential for the development of this country that we are unable to produce at the present time.

By the provision of finance for large-scale developmental works such as the Burdekin, Clare and Dawson Valley irrigation schemes, and by the construction of 30 weirs on various watercourses throughout the State, 103,000 acres are being irrigated and they produce 30 per cent. of the total production from all arable agricultural land. The construction of bores and tanks on stock routes throughout the State and projects that have been established for water conservation and flood prevention, such as the Somerset Dam, which is now nearing completion, are all indicative of the Government's policy of progress and development in primary production and an encouragement to people in this State who are engaged in those industries.

I believe that the major means of transport in this State is provided by our State railways system. Since 31 July, 1865, when the first railway line was built from Ipswich to Grandchester, 6,560 miles of railway line have been provided and they have materially assisted in the development of this State's resources. I believe that the railways will

continue to be our major means of transport for primary products and for other goods produced in this State. In recent years there has been a complete overhaul of our railway system and our rolling stock; modernisation has been the keyword in the reorientation of that service.

Progressive development in our Department of Main Roads since its inception in 1920 has resulted in the construction and maintenance of over 20,000 miles of main roads. Here again, the factor to which I referred previously and on which I will enlarge later, is unquestionably retarding progress and development.

Successive Labour Governments have built up a health service that is second to none in the Commonwealth. It is, in fact, unsurpassed and no opportunity should be lost of congratulating the Government on their stand in providing and maintaining free hospital service for the people of this State. The Government also provided additional health services in the maternal and child-welfare clinics, the State school medical and dental services, and they have subsidised funds required to operate and maintain 85 ambulance centres throughout the State, as well as hospitals for the treatment of tuberculosis and Hansen's disease. The Government have helped tremendously in the maintenance of industrial hygiene. It must therefore be acknowledged that the Labour Government have made a real humane approach towards the problem of health services for the people of Queensland.

We can well be proud of our educational facilities too, which have been progressively expanded and improved. Educationists from overseas have been impressed by the educational system here and on their return to their own countries have absorbed it into their own educational systems. That is a glowing testimony to the efficiency of the educational service in Queensland. We do not contend that our system is perfect by any means but at least it can be said that we achieved what we set out to do. We have improved the standard of education and we have given help and encouragement by providing education on the basis of equality for every child, irrespective of the economic means of his or her parents. Our system embraces all phases of education, primary, secondary, industrial, and rural, and supplies a means of matriculation for every faculty of the Queensland University.

We have established regional electricity boards, which provide electric power for household consumption and for improved methods in industry, not only in the manufacturing field but in the agricultural field as well, notably in the dairying industry. This facility has been the means of providing an amenity for the rural areas of the State.

When we bear in mind the fact that the Government have provided these educational facilities, the health facilities, the improved transport services, and electric energy, it will be seen that they have encouraged the people to remain in rural areas so as to contribute towards the production of the foodstuffs and

commodities that are essential to maintain a production standard that will keep pace with our ever-increasing population. It must be admitted that the Government have done an honest job in that connection. The people in the country have been given some incentive to remain there and carry on production.

It can be proved beyond doubt that the features I have enunciated are essential to the progress and development of a State and they have been progressively built up by sound progressive legislation, legislation born of the minds of people drawn from all ranks and walks of life and formed into a composite body in the members of the Labour Government and the Labour Party. We have shown no preference to class or creed and therein I believe lies the continued success of Labour Governments in this State.

I should like now to touch briefly on one State enterprise that is of vital importance to the electorate I have the honour to represent and to the State as a whole too. I refer to the timber rehabilitation and reforestation that is taking place in the State of Queensland. Private sawmilling interests over the years have rapidly reduced the available supplies of softwood timbers on freehold lands in this part of the State. In 1917 the Labour Government laid down and carried out a policy of regeneration of our softwood forests. They accepted the responsibility of maintaining or building up our forests to ensure a plentiful supply of softwoods for the development of the State in the years ahead.

It is interesting to note that over one-third of the total pine plantations in Southern Queensland are situated within the electorate I represent and over 200 people are directly employed in reforestation projects in the Somerset electorate and other large numbers are dependent for their economic security on indirect association with the forestry projects there. It would be difficult for me or anyone else to assess the timber wealth that has been taken from this area by private enterprise, but one fact is evident: private enterprise makes no contribution whatsoever, directly or indirectly, to reforestation of freehold lands. The entire responsibility has been accepted by the Labour Governments and the work is carried out on Crown lands.

Unfortunately, however, reforestation work has not yet reached the stage when it can absorb all the available labour in the Somerset electorate. All the available arable lands are occupied either for dairying, agriculture or pastoral production and the establishment of some form of secondary industry is urgently required in this part of the State so that useful and gainful occupation can be provided for the surplus manpower that is becoming available in that area through the closing down of the private sawmills scattered throughout the electorate. This would retard the flow of population to the metropolitan area.

It is unfortunate that transportation costs have prevented the development and production of coal in the Brisbane Valley. There

are coal deposits in that area that I have seen and they could be worked by the open-cut method, because they carry a shallow overburden, in some cases not more than two feet, but it has been stated by people who are interested in mining that the cost of the transportation of this coal to the Maryborough district prevents its development because coal can be hauled to Maryborough and Brisbane much cheaper from the West Moreton field. That is a tragic thing for that part of the State, because if the coal was developed it would provide useful employment for the people in that area.

The reticulation of the Brisbane Valley with electricity is far from being completed at the present time but I am hopeful that the projects now being constructed by the Wide Bay and South Burnett Regional Board, in conjunction with the Southern Electric Authority, will soon be completed and they will provide electricity for the areas southwards in the Brisbane Valley as far as Benarkin.

Reticulation from the two projects of the Wide Bay and South Burnett Regional Board and the Southern Electric Authority will reduce greatly the area in need of supply. I am hopeful that with the rapidly approaching completion of the hydro-electric project at Somerset Dam generating costs there will be so low that the 3,500 k.w. available from that project pumped into the transmission lines traversing the Brisbane Valley not only will help in easing of electricity rationing and prevention of blackouts in the metropolitan area but will also offset the construction costs of power lines in these areas so that in the very near future there will be complete reticulation of the Brisbane Valley area, particularly those areas at present without electricity.

I am also conscious of the urgent need of secondary-school facilities in the Brisbane Valley and I draw attention to the topography of the valley, the distances between the provincial centres, and the unsuitability of the existing railway services. The latter is due mainly to the fact that the Brisbane Valley line terminates at Yarraman and the railway line from the north terminates at Nanango, leaving a gap of approximately 16 miles between the two terminals. The present rail services are such that it is not possible for children in the Brisbane Valley who want secondary education to make a daily return journey to the only available centres existing at the present time, Ipswich and Kingaroy, which are approximately 130 miles apart. I heartily support the remarks made by my colleague, the hon. member for Condamine, on secondary education and I strongly urge my Government to give serious consideration to the establishment of a high school at Toogoolawah.

If it was possible to establish this institution in time for the commencement of the 1954 school year it would serve the children of the Brisbane Valley from Linville down to Esk and thus parents would not be saddled with the ever-increasing costs of sending their children to boarding schools in the metropolitan area. I believe the cost of

having a child attend any such schools today is in excess of £75 a quarter and if two or more children in one family are getting secondary education the cost on the parents is very burdensome. Secondary education is just as essential in the rural areas as it is in the metropolis because the improved methods of farming require a much higher standard of education than was necessary say 10 or 20 years ago.

The Brisbane Valley is fairly well served with rural-school facilities but I am hopeful that favourable consideration will be given in the near future to the establishment of a rural school at Yarraman to serve the children in the outlying parts of that district.

One aspect of education that is giving me a great deal of concern is the difficulty experienced by the people engaged solely in rural activities in some of the smaller provincial centres of the electorate in maintaining the average daily attendance at one-teacher schools necessary to keep the schools open. The difficulty is due to natural development. Families settled in such an area originally and now that their children have grown up it is found that there is not enough land for those children, with the result that they have to go to other areas to settle and rear their own families. The average daily attendances thus are decreasing rapidly but I feel confident that in order to alleviate the position and to ensure that primary educational facilities will be available to all children favourable consideration will be given by the Government in the very near future to the establishment of area schools in the Brisbane Valley, with adequate road transport serving them.

I believe also that there is reasonable argument for the expansion of hospital services in the Brisbane Valley. To support that need we have our population figure, together with the concentration of workers in forestry areas and the fact that the existing hospitals at Esk and Nanango, as well as being approximately 70 miles apart, require some modernisation and expansion. At present it is impossible to provide sufficient space at these hospitals to meet the needs of the people. Of course, many problems would have to be overcome but I am confident that the Government will give attention to these matters so soon as finance is available to enable them to give the greatest possible benefit to the greatest number of citizens.

I am of the opinion also that one way of providing temporary hospital service in certain isolated areas would be to establish out-patients' departments at suitable places, to be served by the resident doctors at the existing hospitals at Esk and Nanango, with the aid of sisters or trained nurses. This temporary service could be introduced without the expenditure of a great deal of money on construction. Construction costs are heavy today and any large schemes for the construction of centres could only mean a terrific increase in our loan indebtedness, which in turn would result in adding to the heavy burden of taxation already borne by the

people. These centres could be operated in conjunction with existing Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigades and so provide a reasonable service for the people of the area. It is unfortunate that many of the provincial centres of the Brisbane Valley have no resident doctor.

When we consider transport we find a great problem confronting us because of the fact that when the main road was built through the Brisbane Valley low-level bridges were constructed at some of the major river crossings. Moreover, many miles of the Brisbane Valley Highway between Toogoolawah and Blackbutt Range have not a bitumen surface. A grave problem thus confronts the people dependent on road transport because these low-level bridges, those at Cooyar Creek, Wivenhoe, and Murrumba over the Brisbane River in particular, have seriously dislocated movement in the wet period and whole communities have been isolated for periods up to 17 days. I am hopeful that the overtures that have been made and will be made again to the Government for the construction of high-level bridges will receive favourable consideration when finance becomes available.

I have specifically referred during the course of my speech to one thing that is retarding and preventing the immediate undertaking and completion of certain projects, projects that I believe will provide the amenities of life so necessary to stem the flow of population from country or rural areas to the cities. I refer to the absolute disregard and lack of sympathy with the problems confronting Queensland displayed by the Commonwealth Government in their refusal to undertake any financial obligation for certain projects in this State, and the general restrictions of loan moneys made available by the Federal Government to this State. All these things have been responsible for retarding large-scale developmental works in this State and are hindering progress. I do not think one can be blamed for saying that there appears to be a long-range policy by our political opponents at Canberra to financially embarrass a successful Labour Government in Queensland to a point where they would destroy their popularity with the electors of this State. I think that is the policy being pursued by the Federal Government today because they are deliberately embarrassing this State by refusing to finance large-scale development works, some of which have been referred to previously by speakers during the course of this debate.

In conclusion, I want to make this point: I believe the Federal Government appear to have lost face with one section of our community in particular. They have not seen fit to introduce legislation to improve the lot of our age pensioners, widow pensioners and invalid pensioners to ensure that their standards of life progress equitably with the increases that have taken place in the basic wage or the economic and living standards of the people in the community.

I thank members of this Assembly for giving me a tolerant hearing, and like my colleague the hon. member for Condamine, I realise that I shall not get such a patient hearing in the future. I hope I shall, but as I presume that I shall be participating in the debates as time goes on, I am prepared to take my share of criticism from the other side of the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Morris, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.25 p.m.
