

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST 1953

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WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST, 1953.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

ASSENT REPORTED BY MR. SPEAKER.

QUESTIONS.

DAJARRA-CAMOOWEAL RAILWAY.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Acting Premier—

“1. Has the Queensland Government made any definite proposal to the Commonwealth regarding the sharing of the cost of the Dajarra-Camooweal Railway?

“2. If so, what share has been proposed to be borne by Queensland of (a) cost of construction of the line, (b) cost of the additional rolling stock required, and (c) operational losses?

“3. What is the latest estimate by Queensland of (a) the cost of the railway, (b) the cost of additional rolling stock, and (c) the average annual operational loss?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) for Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba), replied—

“1. The Queensland Government has recommended construction of a railway from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters.

“2. It has been proposed that the cost of construction of the extension from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters should be borne by the Commonwealth Government and that construction commencing from Dajarra should be carried out by the Queensland Government Railways. The Queensland Government is prepared to contribute to the undertaking—(a) £200,000, being the cost of the construction of the additional crossing stations and facilities necessary on existing lines in Queensland for the operation of the extension; (b) Three-quarters of the estimated cost of the

provision and maintenance of rolling stock; (c) The proposed share to be borne by Queensland would result in estimated operational losses of £158,000 per annum on the above basis. However, the direct and indirect increase in national assets and income are considered to warrant construction of the railway as a national undertaking.

“3.(a) The estimated cost, as at March, 1953, of construction of the line is as follows:—(i.) Dajarra-Camooweal—Using Australian material, £4,680,000; using part British material, £4,997,000; (ii.) Camooweal-Newcastle Waters—Using Australian material, £10,546,000; using part British material, £11,266,000; (b) £2,300,000; (c) The Queensland Government is unable to estimate the loss for the whole railway from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters, as it has no knowledge of the freights which would be charged by the Commonwealth Government on the section of the line in the Northern Territory. The estimated total average annual operational loss on the section Dajarra to Camooweal is approximately £340,000.”

GOVERNMENT POLICY, SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

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

“1. Will he kindly give a concise statement regarding the recent change in Government policy in respect of soldier settlement in Queensland?

“2. What will be the effect of such change in the case of schemes such as the Wandoan-Taroom scheme upon (a) owners whose lands have been ‘frozen’ but not yet acquired, and (b) prospective soldier settlers who have been approved as such?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando) replied—

“1. Since the commencement of soldier settlement in this State, the cost to establish a settler on a farm has increased to an extremely high figure. Costs of acquisition and road construction have also increased alarmingly. These factors, combined with the position in relation to Loan Funds, have made it increasingly difficult to carry on with the scheme under Principal State conditions wherein the Commonwealth finds only a limited amount of the costs. It is considered the Commonwealth should make a far greater contribution to the cost of conducting the scheme. Under Agent State conditions the Commonwealth finds the major costs of conducting the scheme, including the cost of acquisition of the land, and consequently asks for a greater amount of control, determining the terms and conditions of the lease and collecting an amount equal to the rent. In Queensland 93 per cent. of the State is held as leasehold from the Crown, and full retention

of the control of its lands is most important. Having regard for these matters, the Government agreed on March 17 last to transfer to Agent State conditions, the Commonwealth being advised to this effect, the basis of the proposal being that the functions of the State and Commonwealth be distributed as follows:—(a) The State shall be responsible for acquiring the land, determining the terms and conditions of tenure, and receiving the rent. (b) The Commonwealth shall be responsible for providing the other funds necessary for operating the scheme. On 17 July, 1953, the Acting Prime Minister advised the Acting Premier that as the Loan Council had determined the 1953-54 loan allocations the proposal should not be considered for the year 1953-1954. The Commonwealth had previously been urging the State to change to Agent State conditions. As the Acting Prime Minister's letter indicated a change of policy, all action regarding soldier settlement was deferred pending further favourable advice from the Commonwealth regarding the State proposals in connection with Agent States. Meanwhile any land available as farms is to be balloted for selection under the group provisions of the Land Acts.

“2. These matters are both under consideration by the Government.”

INTERMEDIATE HOSPITAL FOR MENTALLY SICK.

Mr. KERR (Sherwood) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“What progress, if any, has been made in regard to the establishment of an intermediate hospital for the mentally sick?”

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

“Following a survey made some time ago, a plan was formulated for the development and extension of the Mental Hygiene Services. This plan provided for the erection of a ward for ineducable boys as the nucleus of a farm colony at Goodna Mental Hospital, a home for seniles, and an intermediate hospital for the mentally ill. These three projects were given high priority, and placed on the loan programmes for the provision of the necessary money to proceed with them in the last financial year. However, the curtailment of the loan programme in this State by the Commonwealth made it impossible to proceed with more than one of the three projects, and it was necessary to decide which was the most urgent. On the advice of the officers charged with the responsibility for the Mental Hygiene Services, priority was given to the building for the farm colony for ineducable boys, and this building is now nearing completion. The problem of providing accommodation for senile patients is a most pressing one. Some relief has been obtained by the conversion of the Jubilee Hospital at Dalby for the accommodation of 100 senile women. Investigations are at present proceeding with the object of obtaining further temporary accommodation for these patients. A new building

for an intermediate hospital for the mentally ill, though placed on the planning programme, was considered the least pressing of these three projects, as its work is now being performed at four psychiatric clinics in this State, viz., the psychiatric clinic under the direct supervision and immediate control of the Director of Psychiatry, Dr. Stafford, at George street, Brisbane, the psychiatric clinic at the Brisbane General Hospital, where a special ward for male and female in-patients (other than Ward 16), is provided, and patients are treated by psychiatric specialists, the psychiatric clinic at the Toowoomba Hospital, where patients are under the control of a visiting psychiatric specialist and Dr. Henderson, Superintendent, Toowoomba Mental Hospital, and at Townsville Hospital, where there is also a visiting psychiatric specialist. On the staffs of the George street, Brisbane, and Toowoomba clinics there are trained psychologists in addition to the psychiatrists. These clinics are for the care and treatment of persons who are suffering from emotional or mental upsets that could develop and cause patients to deteriorate mentally and necessitate treatment in a mental hospital. In other words, they are intermediate mental hospitals, and are proving very successful in effecting cures in the early stages of these disorders. As an indication of the number of persons using these services I might mention that 166 patients are seen each week at the George street, Brisbane, clinic alone.”

IRON ORE DEPOSITS.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Acting Premier—

“With reference to the following statement attributed to him in the ‘Townsville Bulletin’ of 28 July, 1953, namely, “If there is sufficient iron ore in Queensland, the Government will consider building a small blast furnace at Bowen to produce 60,000 tons of pig iron.”—

1. In respect of each deposit of iron ore in Queensland likely to be suitable for the purposes of such a project, what is (a) the locality, (b) the estimated quantity, and (c) the quality, respectively?

2. What action is at present being taken to investigate known deposits of iron ore and to locate new ones of the kind required for smelting purposes?

3. Regarding iron ore from Heidelberg Station near the Collinsville-Ukalunda road, samples of which were submitted for assay to the Mines Department by the Mayor of Bowen, what in the opinion of the department, is (a) the extent of this deposit, (b) the quantity of available ore of a kind suitable for pig iron production, and (c) the finding of the assay?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation), for **Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba), replied—

“(1.)—

(a) Locality.	(b) Recorded estimated quantity above ground.	(c) Assays.	
		Iron.	Silica.
	Tons.	%	%
(i.) Mount Philp, 35 miles north-west of Cloncurry	10,000,000	52 to 62	9 to 23
(ii.) Iron Range, 20 miles from Portland Roads	5,500,000	58.5	13.5
(iii.) Mount Leviathan (or Black Mountain), Cloncurry	2,000,000	56 to 62	9 to 17½

(The assays shown are not the result of systematic sampling and consequently not representative of the total of each deposit.)

“2. Arrangements are now in train for a detailed geological investigation of the Iron Range area in the near future and thereafter other deposits will also be further investigated. Attention is being paid to the Iron Range area first because of favourable aspects of transport to Bowen.

“3. These samples were submitted without request for assay for any specific minerals. One sample consisting of magnetite and quartz carrying malachite was assayed for gold (10 grains per ton), silver (2 ozs. 18 dwt. per ton) and copper (4.7 per cent.) with results as shown. The second sample was crushed and washed but no mineral of value in possible economic amount was detected. Subsequently an approximate assay of the first sample for iron gave a result of 35 per cent., and it was then arranged for a Government Geologist to inspect the occurrence. That inspection was delayed because of hospitalisation of the guide, but the District Geologist, Charters Towers, visited the locality about a week ago and his report is now awaited.”

MARGARINE QUOTAS.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“1. In reference to quotas of table margarine allotted to factories in Queensland, what are the names of the owners and the locations, respectively, of such factories (a) as at 31 July, 1951, and (b) at the present time?

“2. Which new factories for production of table margarine have (a) been built since 31 July, 1951, and (b) are now under construction?”

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Tablelands) replied—

“1. (a)—

Name of Owner.	Location of Factory.
Nutta Products	Annerley, Brisbane
Meadow-Lea Margarine Co. Pty. Ltd.	South Brisbane
Mensa (Q'ld.) Pty. Ltd. ..	South Brisbane

(b)—

Nutta Products	Annerley, Brisbane
Meadow-Lea Margarine Co. Pty. Ltd.	South Brisbane
Mensa (Q'ld.) Pty. Ltd. ..	South Brisbane
Vegetable Oils Pty. Ltd. ..	Nutta Products, Brisbane
Provincial Traders Pty. ..	South Brisbane
Marrickville Margarine Pty. Ltd. ..	Eta Peanut Products, Brisbane
James Barnes Pty. Ltd. ..	Sydney (Queensland factory not yet established)
Bekkers (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. ..	South Brisbane
Central Q'ld. Meat Export Co. Pty. Ltd. ..	Rockhampton

“2. (a) Nil; (b) Provincial Traders Pty. Ltd.”

CAUSES OF RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

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

“1. What was the total number of railway accidents reported for the twelve months ended 31 July, 1953?

“2. Were departmental inquiries held into all of these happenings?

“3. Where inquiries were held how many findings were on the basis of—

- (a) Track or mechanical defects;
- (b) Negligence by employees;
- (c) Negligence by others than railway employees;
- (d) Other causes?”

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

“The information is not recorded in the form desired by the hon. member and it is considered that the cost of so dissecting it would not be warranted.”

KALAPA-STANWELL HIGHWAY.

Mr. V. E. JONES (Callide) asked the Minister for Transport—

“In reference to the accepted tender of Theiss Brothers for the formation and bitumen surfacing of the Kalapa-Stanwell section of the Rockhampton-Gogango highway (Job No. 54/17/33),—

1. When was the tender accepted?

2. As this section is over black soil and work has not yet commenced, though dry weather is essential to construction, will he take steps to ascertain the reason for delay and to expedite it as much as possible?”

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

“1. 5 August, 1953.

“2. Correspondence took place with the lowest tenderer regarding certain aspects of the job and the letter of acceptance was forwarded as soon as practicable after a satisfactory reply was received. The successful tenderers have been asked to sign the documents and commence the work. The Consulting Engineer for the Shire and the Shire Clerk have been asked and have agreed to carry out engineering and clerical supervision, respectively of this job.”

INCREASED RAIL FREIGHTS, BRISBANE-TOWNSVILLE.

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

“1. Is he aware that as a result of the recent railway freight increase the freight on Darra cement from Brisbane to Townsville was increased from 109s. 4d. to 185s. 4d. per ton, an increase of approximately 70 per cent., and the rate on fibro-cement sheeting increased from 131s. 6d. to 177s. 7d., approximately 35 per cent., and other high percentage rises on other goods?

“2. If so, how does he justify this staggering extra burden placed on North Queenslanders?”

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

“The rate of 185s. 4d. per ton on cement from either Darra or Roma Street to Townsville is less than the ordinary rates which are respectively 194s. 4d. and 192s. 10d. per ton. The special rate of 177s. 7d. per ton, equivalent to only approximately 2½d. per ton per mile which applies on all classes of fibro cement materials from either Gaythorne, Brunswick Street, Newstead, Roma Street or Whinstanes to Townsville, is considerably less than the ordinary rate of 363s. 9d. on the lowest rated class of this material from Brunswick Street to Townsville. The ordinary rate on many other items of this material would be even higher. A continuance of the rates of 1.56 pence per ton per mile on cement and 1.9 pence per ton per mile on fibro cement sheeting previously in force could not be justified, taking into account the fact that as the flow of loading is to the north a large proportion of the wagons have to be returned empty to the south.”

COCONUT OIL IN MARGARINE.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“In reference to the existing ban on the sale of desiccated coconut as a measure of protection of the public health, is any action being taken to apply a similar safeguard in the case of margarine containing coconut oil?”

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

“It is considered there is no danger in the use of margarine, as, in the manufacture of coconut oil, the copra is expressed in two stages at a temperature of 60 to 65 degrees centigrade, and at this temperature the infecting organisms are killed.”

CONSTITUENTS OF MARGARINE; IMPORTS OF COPRA.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“1. Of the 913 tons of table margarine which he stated was produced in Queensland in 1952-1953, what quantity was manufactured from (a) coconut oil, and (b) vegetable oil from Queensland-grown products?

“2. What quantities of copra were imported into Queensland in 1951-1952 and in 1952-1953, stating country of origin in each case?”

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Tablelands) replied—

“1. Information on the actual constituents is not available.

“2. This question should be directed to the Honourable the Minister for Trade and Customs.”

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Regulations under the Weights and Measures Act of 1951.

Order in Council under the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1952.

Audit Inspector's Report on the Books and Accounts of the Queensland Coal Board for the period September, 1952 to June, 1953.

REVIEW OF VALUATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing): I move—

“That the House will, at its next Sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make provision for giving effect to the report of the Board of Review constituted under the Review of Valuations Act of 1952, and for that purpose to amend that Act in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 18 August (see p. 75) on **Mr. Diplock's** motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) (11.29 a.m.): It is a very great privilege indeed to be a member of this Parliament, especially because during its life we shall have a visit from Her Majesty and so have the opportunity of showing her how loyal we are, not only with lip-service but in actual fact. When we remember that this is the first time a reigning Monarch has ever visited this country, we realise how memorable the occasion will be.

I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Labour Government upon their return to power, because although I must confess that I feel it is a sad occasion for the people of Queensland, nevertheless it is certainly refreshing to know that on this occasion at any rate, for the first time in many years, the Labour Government do enjoy a majority of the votes of the people of Queensland. That is a very unusual occurrence. However, I congratulate them and I feel quite certain—

Mr. Riordan interjected.

Mr. MORRIS: The hon. gentleman need not be so touchy about it. We all know that for some time the Government did not have a majority, but at least they have one now. I feel quite sure that three years from now members of the present Government will be congratulating us on an even greater victory. I am quite certain, too, that the gentlemen who are at present occupying the benches on the other side of this Chamber would not be doing so if it were not for their renowned and outstanding ability in one direction at least, and that is in gulling the public.

Mr. Moore: Do you think all the people are fools?

Mr. MORRIS: The old saying that you can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time is quite true. The Labour Party has fooled the people only recently, and I will give hon. members an outstanding example of that fact. The election was held in March and within two months, much to the annoyance of the very people who were responsible for the Government's occupying the benches on the other side of the Chamber, they were fooled in regard to the salaries of members of Parliament.

Mr. Moore: Mrs. Morris had something to say about that.

Mr. MORRIS: I quite expected that interjection. The interjector chooses to remind me of a letter that was written by my wife, a letter with which I thoroughly agree. I realise that a member of Parliament has very substantial commitments. No two people agree more wholeheartedly on that point than my wife and I, and we should be quite happy to put before an independent tribunal the evidence that we possess. And that is what all of us on this side of the House seek to do. I feel sure that all our wives are unanimous in believing that only one tribunal is fit to decide a matter such as that, and it certainly is not this Parliament.

Mr. Aikens: When did you decide that?

Mr. MORRIS: That also is quite an interesting interjection. I am asked by the buffoon of the House when I decided that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must refer to the hon. member for Mundingburra in the correct terms.

Mr. Aikens: I would rather be a buffoon than a stinking little Fascist.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Mundingburra will withdraw that remark.

Mr. Aikens: Very well. I suppose I insulted the—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Mundingburra to withdraw his remark.

Mr. Aikens: I withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha to withdraw his remark.

Mr. MORRIS: I withdraw.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn the hon. member for Mundingburra that if he disregards my call to order I will deal with him.

Mr. MORRIS: I want to answer the interjection that has just been made. I was asked when I first believed in the appointment of an independent tribunal. It so happens that there are witnesses in this very Chamber who know that many years ago I was a strong advocate for the appointment of an independent tribunal. I will recall the very sad occasion of the funeral of the late Hon. Harry Walker. It was a State funeral and I went to Gympie to attend it and on the way back I had the privilege of riding in the official car of the present Secretary for Health and Home Affairs. I am not sure what portfolio he held on that occasion. Also in the car were the hon. member for Cooroora and the late hon. member for Maryborough, and in a general way this very question arose of the correct method of approaching the problem of parliamentary salaries. On that occasion—and the hon. members whom I have mentioned and who are now present would quite likely be prepared to support what I am saying—I said that the only satisfactory and honourable method of approaching the problem was to refer it to an independent tribunal. That was years ago.

Mr. Walsh: Your party did not say that.

Mr. MORRIS: As soon as I reply to the Treasurer or any of his colleagues on one point they immediately shift to another, in the hope that I might absorb the whole of the 40 minutes available to me in this debate in answering their stupid, childish, and senseless questions.

Mr. Duggan: If such a tribunal is not appointed and the salary of the Parliamentarian is increased do you propose to take the increase?

Mr. MORRIS: I am glad to have that question, although this is the Address in Reply debate. If Parliamentary salaries are to be increased without the help of a special tribunal then obviously legislation will be required for the purpose and when it is introduced I shall be delighted to approach the question as the occasion requires. (Government laughter.) Now that the Acting Premier desires to discuss the matter here let me take it a little bit further. I challenge him and his Government to make the appointment of an independent tribunal for the purpose of increasing Parliamentary salaries an issue at the forthcoming Maryborough by-election. If they can see any merit in that suggestion, as I believe all reasonable men must, then they will be prepared to abide by the judgment of the people in the by-election. Here, right to their hand, is an opportunity for the members of the Government who boast that they always bend to the will of the people, of ascertaining beyond doubt the will of the people in Queensland on this issue.

Mr. Moore: A seventy-fifth part of the people of Queensland.

Mr. MORRIS: Nevertheless a very important part of the population of Queensland and at the moment the only part that will have an opportunity of expressing itself on this issue. I hope that the members of the Government Party will have the courage to put the question to the test at the by-election. Not all of them are opposed to the establishment of an independent tribunal to determine Parliamentary salaries and so I suggest that the majority of them have the courage to put the issue to the test at the by-election. I invite them to take up the challenge and as the Acting Leader of the Liberal Party in the House at the moment I promise them that my party will answer the challenge.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. MORRIS: Judging from the numerical strength of our political party our supporters far outnumber the supporters of the alleged North Queensland Labour Party.

Mr. Aikens: We aim for quality, not quantity.

Mr. MORRIS: Answering the hon. member on that point I must say that the people of North Queensland have been sadly misled if the hon. member is an example of the quality because the party he represents must be the weakest party in the whole world, and I include some of the small parties in Europe.

Here is an opportunity for the Labour Party to test the feeling of the people on this subject and I challenge them to do so. I leave that subject for the time being.

On at least nine occasions and indeed in the lifetime of every Parliament over the years it has been my unhappy duty to point out to the Government their many sins of omission in regard to their educational system. It is tragic that while the points I have made over the past nine years have been completely endorsed by the Press, supported by the

Queensland Teachers' Union and by the teachers generally throughout the length and breadth of the State, and indeed by some members of the Labour Party in this Chamber, it does appear that the Government are determined not to improve the educational system of the State.

On this occasion I suggest a different method of approach to the problem. I believe there are on both sides of the House members who are very concerned about the tragic state of education in Queensland; and those members would be prepared to serve in the way I suggest. I think that this House or the Government should appoint a select committee to investigate all these matters that have been laid before the public in regard to the weaknesses of education in this State. That select committee should be appointed from members on both sides and it could investigate and recommend to the Government some sound ways to improve our educational system.

Mr. Foley: Have you any constructive suggestions to offer yourself?

Mr. MORRIS: Have I any constructive suggestion to offer? Most certainly I have. I suggest that the Government appoint this select committee and I definitely ask that I be one of the committee, because I have many suggestions—suggestions that I have made in this House year after year—to offer. The suggestions I have made from time to time have been disregarded just as often, but they have been reiterated, as I said before, even by the Government's own members since this House assembled. Most certainly I have suggestions to make. If such a select committee was appointed I believe not only should it investigate the matters directly in relation to the education system of the State but other matters associated with our schools that need much investigation.

I wish to refer in particular to a subject that is not a pleasant one, the poor sanitary service provided at many of our schools. As an example I refer first of all to the Oakleigh State School in my electorate. There is a stormwater drain passing close to the school, but the Department of Public Works will not move, or has not moved, to install a septic system, which would be a simple matter and would obviate the unpleasant features that exist. I was at that school a while ago and I visited a house on the lower side of the school and the grounds surrounding it were in a disgusting filthy mess because the liquid from the sanitary arrangement at the school flowed into them. It is one of the most unpleasant places I have ever seen in Brisbane and it is due to the failure of the Department of Public Instruction or the Department of Public Works to install a satisfactory sanitary system. I think it is a disgrace to any Government that they should allow the effluent from certain parts of the sanitary system to interfere with the life of the community to such an extent that it makes allotments occupied by a man and his wife and children almost impossible to live on.

The other example I wish to give—and there are thousands of them—is the Indooroopilly State School. There has been a great increase in the population in that area and the numbers of pupils at the school also have greatly increased and it has been necessary to build temporary buildings. The latter are so situated that the prevailing winds blow from the E.Cs. at the school right into the classroom and make conditions disgusting for the teachers and children who are forced to occupy those buildings. It is a disgrace to the Government to allow conditions like that to exist in a place like Brisbane. Nobody can truthfully say that those conditions exist because the attention of the Government or the appropriate Ministers has not been drawn to them. Over the years there have been constant approaches by the committee of the Indooroopilly school to the department concerned in an endeavour to get a septic system installed. It is a large school and it is growing every day, and although frequent appeals have been made, nothing has been done. I received a letter a while ago from the Secretary for Public Works telling me it was impossible even to get plans for the installation of a septic system at that school. There again we find a complete disregard for the health, convenience and comfort of the people of Queensland and it is a disgrace to this Government that these conditions are allowed to exist. Again it would be a very simple matter to install the septic system at the Indooroopilly State School because, there too a stormwater drain passes very close indeed to the school ground. The installation would be a matter of no difficulty. When the select committee I suggested is appointed these things could be investigated but there are some suggestions to the Acting Premier for the moment. Evidently he is impressed.

Mr. Foley: I was looking for something constructive from you.

Mr. MORRIS: Do not Ministers of the Crown listen to speeches in this House? I know of at least twenty-four occasions on which I have spoken on the question of education and its weaknesses in this House when the hon. gentleman who has just interjected has been present. I assume, too, that he reads his daily paper and is kept in touch with the opinions of the teachers' unions. The hon. gentleman must have schools in his own area, and he must know of the deplorable conditions, when they exist, at those schools. He must know of them surely, innocent as he appears to be. He must know that this year the five-year-olds have been excluded from attending school, or does he not remember? If he does not know these things he is failing in his duty as a Minister of the Crown. No Minister of the Crown is a law unto his own department. When a Minister of another department brings a problem before Cabinet surely he must give sufficient attention to it to be able to express his opinion, and if the Secretary for Public Lands does not know of these weaknesses he is failing in his duty as a member of the Cabinet.

So much for what I believe are the weaknesses that exist and so much for what I believe is a constructive suggestion for overcoming these weaknesses in the Department of Public Instruction itself.

When I started this speech I spoke of the outstanding ability of the Labour Party to fool all the people some of the time and some of them all the time. It has managed to pull the blinds down over the cleavage that exists within its ranks, not only on the matter of parliamentary salaries but on the question of Communism. I know there are members of the Queensland Labour Party who are as anti-Communist as I am, and that is saying a mighty lot. For instance, I know the Attorney-General hates Communism probably just as much as I, and that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is another strong anti-Communist member in this Parliament. Unfortunately, there are in the ranks of the Labour Party some who are not and who are as much Communist as those two gentlemen I have mentioned are anti-Communist. This cleavage within their ranks is of grave concern to many of the people of Queensland, and I do not think it is evidenced more clearly than in two matters that are concerning most of the people of Queensland at the present time. I refer particularly to the attitude of the Government and of the Q.C.E. to the secret-ballot legislation recently brought forward in the Federal House by the Menzies-Fadden Government. I suppose this is exercising the minds of the people of Queensland just as much as the attitude of the Labour Party to the question of industrial groups. First of all, let us consider for a short time the approach towards secret-ballot legislation.

Mr. Aikens: By saying secret ballot you refer to the controlled ballot?

Mr. MORRIS: I do. First of all we know the position that existed in Australia during the time of the Chifley Government in the Federal sphere. Communists did control unions throughout the length and breadth of Australia and we know there was widespread interference with the ballots of the unions—rigged ballots. Communists were in control in very many of the industrial spheres.

I think we all know that prior to the defeat of the Chifley Government Mr. Menzies brought down a private member's Bill which, had it been carried, would have given unions complete control and power to have secret ballots for the election of their own officers. We all know, too, that this legislation was kept religiously at the bottom of the business paper and that the Labour Government would not allow it to come before the Federal House. Even at that stage there was agitation among unions for the very legislation that was forecast in the Bill introduced by Mr. Menzies, with the result that at a later stage Mr. Chifley was forced to take some action in that direction. One of his Ministers introduced a Bill that was alleged to give back to unionists the control of their own unions, but in actual fact it was 99 per cent. useless because it

only permitted the unionists to obtain secret ballots for the control of their unions if they could prove that an illegal ballot had previously been held. We know that there has only been one occasion when this legislation has been used. I think that it was used by Laurie Short and it took him many months to put its provisions into operation. So that only one union was given the opportunity of throwing out the Communist control that existed. Then, history tells us, the Chifley Government were defeated and the Menzies Government were returned in the Federal sphere. One of the first things the Menzies Government did was to introduce legislation similar to the private member's Bill that had been submitted by Mr. Menzies under the Chifley regime. That legislation made it possible for unions to conduct secret ballots for the control of their own organisations. It put into the hands of the unionists power to get rid of the leaders of their unions, if they wished to do so. History tells us also that since that time upwards of 50 unions have applied for permission to use and have used the provisions given under this legislation to throw out the Communists who were in control. We know that at the time when it was introduced the Labour-controlled Senate blocked the Bill and it was impossible for Mr. Menzies to put it into operation until after he gained control of the Senate after the double dissolution.

The results of that legislation have been spectacular because, throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth, the Communists who had been in control of unions for years and years have been defeated and the unions themselves control their own organisation. That legislation has done more to help Australia and the unionists than any other legislation that has ever been introduced. Its results have been so good that many of the Labour and union leaders are now trying to take credit for the measure that was passed by the Menzies Government. I have extracts from many southern papers in which this legislation is referred to as Chifley legislation when in actual fact it was introduced by the Menzies-Fadden Government. I think books have actually been circulated by certain unions in Queensland contending that it is Chifley legislation. Only last week I believe that the body that we were given to understand controlled the Labour Party in Queensland—recently we have had reason to doubt this—met to discuss this legislation and could not decide whether to support or oppose it. I refer to the Queensland Central Executive. This is probably the most important matter dealing with legislation that has ever been introduced in the past 10 years in either a Federal or State Parliament, yet the Queensland Central Executive of the Labour Party cannot say where it stands on it! The reason why it cannot say where it stands is that on the one hand there is within the Labour Party a section that is strongly anti-Communist and on the other hand there is the section that is strongly in favour of and friendly towards the Communists and is afraid of losing the support of the Communists.

The Labour Party is sitting on the rails because one section of it is afraid of losing the support of the Communists, who are always behind them when there is an election. We all know that from 85 to 90 per cent. of the Communists always support Labour candidates. If it were not for that support, the Labour Party would not have had a majority even at the last election. It is because they are afraid of losing the support of that section of the community that members of the Labour Party are afraid to express their opinion. If they had the average amount of guts, they would say, "We believe in this legislation. It has done more to help the moderate unionists in Australia than any other legislation ever introduced."

Mr. Sparkes: You could apply that to the abattoir, which is right at our door.

Mr. MORRIS: Exactly. You could apply it throughout Australia, because everywhere you can see the benefit that has accrued to unionism as the result of this Menzies-Fadden legislation.

I go on to the next point that I mentioned, that is, industrial groups. Here again, the difference of opinion within the Labour Party is such that its members cannot make up their own minds where they stand on it. One section wants to help the Communists whilst another is against the Communists. One section is afraid of losing the support of the Communists. You need only to look at the history of industrial groups to find that in Queensland the system is active but is receiving quite a considerable amount of opposition from certain sections of the Labour Party. In South Australia we find that the Cameron group has been successful in forcing out the industrial groups altogether. In New South Wales and Victoria there are breakaway movements within the Labour Party throughout those States because of the industrial groups.

No party has the right to hold the reins of office in a country unless it will say where it stands on these issues. Hon. members opposite know that on two occasions their own leader in the Federal sphere, Dr. Evatt, has gone to court and fought bitterly for the Communists. He has also stumped the country fighting against a referendum that was designed to outlaw Communism. He fought that referendum and protected Communism in the same way as he protected it in the court.

As I have said, members of the Labour Party themselves do not know where they stand. Half of them would like to get at the throats of the other half because of their attitude on these matters. How can they rule the country when they cannot make up their own minds on them? For the same reason they cannot save the money they get from the Federal Government. They have poured it down the sink at Peak Downs and in every other project they have handled, simply because they cannot make up their own minds. It is no good some of them saying they are not in favour of the Communists. Some of them

loudly oppose the Communists, but a previous Labour Prime Minister, the late Hon. J. B. Chifley, said on one occasion—

“ . . . as to whether the Government intends to declare the Communists an illegal body, the Government has previously indicated that it does not propose to place bans on any class of political philosophy or thought.”

That was his friendly attitude towards Communism. We all know that the late Mr. Chifley was friendly towards Communism and we all know that Dr. Evatt is friendly towards Communism. Those of the Labour Party who are active against Communism are in the minority.

Mr. Hilton: What has Churchill done in England?

Mr. MORRIS: I am talking of Queensland and of Australia, and I say that members of the Labour Party in Australia have not the guts to get out and fight Communism. They are afraid of the people in their own ranks who want to shake the hands of the Communists and keep the Communists beside them, even though they realise that Communism is probably one of the greatest menaces in this country. One of the Labour leaders in the Federal House, Mr. Eddie Ward, not only said that he did not believe Communism in this country was an issue, but some years ago he said that Australia should begin to think along Soviet lines in post-war planning.

At the moment the Government have the power and for the first time for many years they can boast that they represent the majority of the people but they are so weak and so lacking in guts and ability to get down to a real basis on which to tackle the problem that after the next elections not only will they not represent a majority of the people but they will be over on this side of the House.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba) (12.7 p.m.): It is a pleasure and a privilege to join with other hon. members in the debate on the Address in Reply. This is no mere formal motion. There is not an hon. member on either side of the House who does not sincerely feel that it is a privilege to be associated with a motion to reaffirm our loyalty to the throne and person of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen. On this occasion the Address in Reply is being debated in the memorable coronation year and I do not think that any Australian worthy of the name is not proud to belong to the British Commonwealth of Nations. Her Most Gracious Majesty brings to her high office all that is great in womanly dignity and in charm, and we assembled here wish her a long and successful reign, one that will bring peace, prosperity and plenty to the British Commonwealth and to the world in general.

I join with other hon. members in offering my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the high office that you hold. You have shown during your occupancy of the Chair that you have all the

characteristics necessary in a good Speaker—firmness of decision, quickness of action, fairness and justice, and all hon. members feel that under your guidance the dignity and decorum of the House will continue to be maintained.

I am pleased to see so many new hon. members on this side of the House. It is interesting to observe the variety of occupations from which they are drawn, which is an indication of the wealth of talent that is available to the Australian Labour Party. For instance, one is a school inspector, another a public servant, others a railway clerk, a guard, a lengthsmen, and a Crown land ranger—men drawn from all walks of life and all capable of contributing their fair share towards the government of this country. There is also one new representative on the Opposition benches, a capable, sincere and highly-respected primary producer. We wish all the new hon. members, whether on this side of the House or the other, success during their stay here, and so far as the new seven Labour representatives are concerned, may their stay here be a long one!

This year has seen, unfortunately a further decline in the relations that should exist between the Commonwealth and the State and it is to be deplored that no longer can they meet as equal partners in financial debates. When deliberations are held today between the Commonwealth and the States the States do not approach the Commonwealth as equal partners but really as servants going to a dictatorial master. We have seen the prestige of Premiers' Conference decline to such an extent that now every State Premier or Treasurer who goes to Canberra knows that the decisions that will be arrived at there are predetermined, that they are made before ever the conference is held. That reduces the conference to an absolute fiasco, whereas it should be a place of serious, solemn and useful deliberations.

Mr. Sparkes: Then you would say that the State should take back its taxing powers?

Mr. WOOD: I shall deal with that matter in a moment. We have arrived at the position that the Prime Minister or the Federal Treasurer could quite easily ring the State Premiers and Treasurers on the phone and in a couple of minutes convey to them the decisions arrived at by the Commonwealth in Canberra. The sooner we get back to the position where the State has its full sovereignty and is in a position to take full responsibility for everything that happens in the State, the better for the States and Australia. The sooner we have the abolition of uniform taxation the better for the States and the Commonwealth. But as I said last year, let us be certain, when those powers are restored to the States, that they are real powers and that we are not in a position in which the Commonwealth decides to take so much meat off the bone and pass the bone back to the States without any meat on it.

This State in particular and all the other States in Australia in general cannot be fully self-governing States until this system of

uniform taxation is abolished. This State and the other States are being continually told by the Commonwealth Government that they must curtail their expenditure, that less and less money must be spent on development work. It would be refreshing to see the Commonwealth Government who hand out this advice give some practical demonstration of their sincerity by restricting their own expenditure. We will judge their sincerity when we find some evidence that they are willing to set an example that the States may follow instead of merely urging them to do what they suggest.

Mr. Muller: To what items do you refer?

Mr. WOOD: That is a pertinent question. It is no good my saying that expenditure can be restricted unless I suggest some means by which it can be done. I will do so. One of the largest votes of the Commonwealth Government and one that is used as an excuse for the restriction of the advances to the States is the defence vote. I will deal with this at some length. Let me state clearly that with the rest of the Labour Party I believe that no Australian worth while would cavil at the making of all necessary preparations for the adequate defence of Australia. I say that no Australian is worth his salt if he is not prepared to play his part in seeing that his country is adequately defended. But let us once and for all get away from this idea that has grown up in the Opposition ranks that because £100,000,000 or £200,000,000 is spent on defence it must be sound expenditure. When ever any speaker on this side of the House raises this question he is told that the fact that a large sum is spent on defence shows that that expense must be justified. It is useless accepting the mere statement that there is a big appropriation for defence unless we analyse the way in which the money has been spent. I say there is no Government departmental expenditure in any State and no other Government departmental expenditure in Australia that we would accept as casually as we do the terrific defence expenditure. I consulted the Commonwealth Year Book in the library and I find that in 1944-45, at the very height of Australia's war effort, the expenditure from Revenue, Trust and Loan Funds on defence and war and repatriation services was £460,690,000—and that was when Australia had three A.I.F. Divisions, the 6th, 7th, and 9th, and two militia divisions, the 3rd and 5th—a tremendous fighting force for a nation of the size of Australia. At the same time we had an efficient Air Force and a Navy that played invaluable parts in our protection. For that £460,000,000 Australia maintained a fighting force that most people believed was far beyond its capacity to bear. Included in that £460,000,000, too, was the expenditure on price-stabilisation subsidies, post-war reconstruction payments under Lend Lease—I think about £90,000,000—and the expenditure for supply and shipping. We all realise that since 1945 there has been a continual decline in the value of money and that the £460,000,000 spent then would be worth a

great deal more than the same amount today. The last financial year £215,000,000 was spent on defence in Australia.

Mr. Muller: Less than half.

Mr. WOOD: Less than half, but without doubt I would say quite definitely with less than one-tenth of the results. Do not forget that in the war years there is tremendous wastage that is not found in peace-time defence expenditure. One bomb could destroy valuable installations, petrol and ammunition dumps, or sink a cruiser or a destroyer. One retreat in battle could mean the abandonment of millions of pounds worth of equipment. This is expenditure not met with in peace-time defence problems but all of these things were covered by the peak war-time expenditure on defence of £460,000,000.

The question I am posing today is one important to the people of Australia: is the land of Australia receiving £215,000,000 of benefit from this defence expenditure? If it is, the expenditure is fully justified. There is only one aim of defence expenditure and that is to provide armed services that will make this nation safe from aggression and if spending £215,000,000 last year has created the position that we have an Army, a Navy and Air Force that can make us feel safe, no-one on this side of the House will cavil at the expenditure of one penny. But have we reached that position? Is there any hon. member in this House who can say that Australians could feel reasonably safe for a week if they were attacked by a major power. Is there any hon. member opposite who would be so bold as to say that if we were the victims of a major assault by an aggressor nation we could resist it unaided? True it is that we have a small permanent army, an increasing number of national service trainees, and a small C.M.F. unit. We have also a small Air Force and on the authority of Air Force officers—and I repeat this—apart from her squadrons in Korea, Australia could not put into the air today 12 operational aircraft.

Mr. Dewar: You leave out Malaya.

Mr. WOOD: I will include Malaya. I defy the Opposition to tell me that we could put 12 front-line modern operational aircraft into the air.

Mr. Dewar: Are we in a better position than in 1939?

Mr. WOOD: I think from memory that in 1939 the expenditure was about £15,000,000 whereas today it is £215,000,000 and too complacently we accept the assurance that the money is being spent on defence and do not even take the trouble to inquire for ourselves whether the money is wisely spent.

It is not so very long ago that I had in my home a young lad; I think he was a trainee in the University squadron. He attended a three weeks' course in Toowoomba. He was flown to Toowoomba in an aeroplane and was flown back. He was equipped. He was an intelligent, keen and alert lad and he spent three weeks at this course. He

complained to me bitterly that his only training was in filling in useless forms and that all he learned in the three weeks was the way in which forms should be filled in. He said that the same thing was true of every one of his mates. This state of things can be duplicated in every camp in Australia and I say without any equivocation that if we make a searching inquiry into the way in which our defence vote is spent we shall find that without reducing the efficiency of our services we could save enough money to give the States the money they require for their development.

It has been said we have our commitments overseas. We have, but I suppose it would not be the equivalent of a mixed brigade group that we have spread over Korea. We have had three Korean battalions, which have done a marvellous job for a small force. Anyone who has followed the task that they carried out will readily admit that in no way did this Korean force suffer in comparison with the Australian forces of the 1st and 2nd World Wars, but I think the expenditure last year on the Korean force was something like £20,000,000, which would account for only a very small fraction of the total war expenditure. Are we satisfied, too, that the lads who are being trained are supplied with the most up-to-date equipment, or do we still find in many of the camps that they are trained with obsolete equipment that would be scrapped if an emergency hit this country?

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Are you questioning the efficiency of their training?

Mr. WOOD: In many ways, yes.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Let us have the details.

Mr. WOOD: I advise the hon. member to talk to some of the lads who are being trained. It is strange that hon. members opposite can come into this House and criticise any expenditure, but the moment an hon. member of this side, while admitting that it is right that Australia should be defended, says also that it is right for the people of Australia to ensure that full value is obtained for expenditure, he is subjected to a storm of criticism from hon. members opposite. I repeat that if it costs £400,000,000 a year to provide adequate defence for Australia that is not too high a price to pay, but surely we in Queensland have a right to insist that full value is given for the money expended when we realise that we are refused assistance for our own defence developmental works because of the large appropriation for defence by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Give us details. You are on generalities all the time.

Mr. WOOD: This one is not a generality. We all remember that some time ago the Opposition bitterly assailed this Government when they attempted to see that the Commonwealth Government honoured their promise to the dairymen. We remember the bitter attacks

that were made when the Commonwealth Government threw upon the States the onus of bearing the increased cost and repudiated their own promise to see that the right thing was done by the dairymen. How silent are these same hon. members today when we see flagrant repudiation by the Menzies-Fadden Government to those same dairymen. With the exception of only one man on the Opposition there has been complete and servile silence at this gross repudiation of promises. One hon. member opposite did speak courageously. I refer to the hon. member for Warwick. No matter how much I disagree politically with the hon. member for Warwick, I will concede to him his thorough knowledge of the dairying industry. He has no superiors in this House in his knowledge of the dairying industry and its problems. He attacked the Federal Government courageously and unequivocally for their gross betrayal, and then I understand he was taken to task—

Mr. Aikens: By the hon. member for Fassifern.

Mr. WOOD: Not only the hon. member for Fassifern. That self-appointed expert on railways, the hon. member for Lockyer, went even further when he said in this House, "At least we can say that when the position was fully explained to the hon. member for Warwick he was prepared to admit that he was wrong." I will concede to the hon. member for Lockyer all the qualities he has, but I will never concede to him the authority to explain fully to the hon. member for Warwick the adversities, difficulties and problems of the dairying industry.

Mr. Sparkes: I suggest you have a yarn to the hon. member for Warwick and learn something about it.

Mr. WOOD: I ask the hon. member for Warwick frankly whether the position was fully explained to him and if so, whether he did admit that he was wrong. The hon. member for Warwick is courageous enough to state his own attitude.

The only other question with which I wish to deal is one that was raised by both the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha. It is the question of the salaries and allowances of members of Parliament and it is one that I am not going to evade.

I was amused by the statement of the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha that it was much to the annoyance of the people of Queensland that shortly after the election the State Government brought up this matter of salaries. As has been said by hon. members on this side of the House, it was not to the annoyance of all people in the State, because the hon. member's own wife, who must be, on her letter, an intelligent and highly estimable woman, took an absolutely opposite view to that expounded by the hon. member himself. It is all right for the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha to say that there is complete unanimity between them on this question, but nowhere in her very forthright

and very sensible letter did the writer say one word about a tribunal. Mrs. Morris had this to say—

Mr. Dewar: Let us leave the lady out of it.

Mr. WOOD: I should leave the lady out of it if I had anything to say to her discredit. Anything I say of Mrs. Morris will only reflect my admiration for her. I shall not say anything that would humiliate her. If I thought it would, I should not say it. I repeat that I have only the highest respect and admiration for a woman who has the courage to write these things, immediately following a vicious Press statement by the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha himself. I will now quote the letter—

“So few people realise that a politician’s work is not only when the House is in session.

“The phone rings incessantly; there are callers at all hours of the day and night; there are numerous meetings day and night; Saturdays are given up to fetes,” and so on. She then details quite truthfully the very onerous duties that fall on the wife of every member of Parliament. She goes on to say—

“It is inconceivable to the ordinary person just how much money goes out of the house into the pockets of the electorate.”

I agree that everything in that letter is perfectly correct, as will all members on this side of the House and of the Opposition who are frank. However, it is to be greatly deplored that the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha frankly and blatantly outlined the plans for the Maryborough by-election and issued a challenge, which was foreshadowed in this morning’s “*Courier-Mail*,” to fight the Maryborough by-election on this question. There is plenty of time to talk about the Maryborough by-election. There is not much ethics in a party that will blatantly issue its challenges and disclose its plans for the Maryborough by-election before the funeral of the late hon. member has been held.

The Leader of the Opposition was not long back from overseas before he jumped on this band wagon and tried to get a bit of cheap popularity by allying himself with the vicious attacks that have been made on this Government in the columns of “*The Courier-Mail*,” couched in intemperate language that was matched by the Leader of the Opposition. The hon. member said that the Government were making a raid on the Treasury to raise their salaries. I should like to remind him that any expenditure incurred by the Government is paid for by the Treasury—our ordinary salaries are paid by the Treasury—and it is very intemperate language, language that is used in an effort to get political advantage out of a political situation, to say that an attempt to raise the salary of a member to a standard that will enable him to carry out his duties efficiently, is making a raid on the public purse.

After all, payments by the public Treasury cover a very wide field. The hon. member himself has just returned from a well-deserved

trip overseas, the cost of which came from the public Treasury. No-one in his right senses would suggest that the expenditure of that sum of money—and I know that with his usual honesty he would keep it down to the irreducible minimum—was a raid on the public Treasury. Yet we find that immediately the hon. member returns to Australia he rushes into the Press with statements of that sort. Nor did he stop at that. He spoke about “hopping in for their cut.”

I put this to the Leader of the Opposition: let us suppose that the matter is submitted to a tribunal—I shall deal with the subject of a tribunal later—and the tribunal recommended, as it easily could, an increase of £1,000 a year. Would that be a raid on the Treasury—because someone else said it should be given? It would be the same thing. If an independent tribunal made that recommendation and it was accepted by the Government, would the Leader of the Opposition say that the Treasury was being raided simply because it was done in that way and the same result achieved?

Let the Opposition be perfectly frank in this matter. There is not one hon. member on this side of the House who has no other means of income than his salary who is not struggling his hardest to pay his way. More than one member of the Opposition quite frankly in the lobbies and corridors down below give every encouragement to the idea of an increase. I am not going to name them unless it is necessary to do so. If an hon. member has another source of income and says that he is opposed to the increase, I must, although I disagree with him, respect his views. On the other hand if hon. members in private conversations in the lobbies and corridors say that such an increase is long overdue and then come into this Chamber and speak against it they are worthy of nothing but the deepest contempt. That point cannot be made too plainly. We must respect the opinion of any man who is genuinely opposed to the increase, but hon. members cannot talk one way in private and then come into the House and speak as hypocrites just for the sake of gaining political notoriety.

Let me in the brief time at my disposal justify the proposed increase. The proposal falls into two sections, a proposal to increase salaries and a proposal to increase allowances. The first proposal, the increase in salary, has met with very little criticism, because it is nothing more than a wage adjustment comparable with that of public servants since the last salary rise in 1950. We concede to every man in every industry his right to wage adjustments and the projected increase in parliamentary salaries is nothing more than a wage adjustment. Therefore, on that score, there cannot be any fair criticism of the proposal. Hon. members do not come into this House in order to acquire wealth. I know from my experience with hon. members on this side of the House, and for that matter on the other side too, that they come into the House with a desire to serve the State of Queensland to the extent of their capacity.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

Mr. WOOD: It is annoying to find that this wealthy grazier from Aubigny should treat this matter so lightly and with his usual buffoonery while I am endeavouring to put the case from this side of the House which so far has not been put to the public. If he had any sense of fairness at all he would listen at this first public attempt in this House to justify the projected increases.

Hon. members in this House are actuated by a desire to serve but they also feel that they have a right to serve efficiently and not be in the position where, through the discharge of their public duties, they are forced into a state of insolvency. There is hardly a private hon. member in this House who has no other source of income than his salary and who has a family to raise, who is not finding his financial position going back and back every fortnight, no matter how frugal he may be in his private life. We have no desire to covet other peoples' possessions—their homes or their motor-cars, but we do feel that we have a right to a decent living. I can only speak from my own personal point of view and as one who lives a moderately frugal life. I know that if all other members of this House are in the same position theirs must be a very precarious one.

Let us come to the question of allowances. Members of the public, in the main, have a very false opinion as to the allowances that we receive as members. First we receive a postal allowance, which is adequate. The next is a telephone allowance which, in the main, does not cover our ordinary electoral requirements. The only other allowance is the living-away-from-home allowance, £65 a year in my case; which spread over the year represents 25s. a week. That, I repeat, is the only other allowance we get as members of the Assembly. There is not a member of Parliament who could live away from home on any thing like 25s. a week. During the session, like other Country members, I live here and when the House is in recess, in order to discharge my duties conscientiously I come down here every week. The allowance of £65 is, I suppose, to compensate me and other members in a varying degree for having to live away from home. There is no allowance—contrary to the opinion of many of the public—for work in your own electorate. We have a statutory exemption from taxation of £100. It is not an extra allowance; £100 is exempt. In Victoria that ranges from £300 to £600 a year. There is no State in which members receive a smaller statutory exemption than Queensland.

Those are our only monetary allowances. Now let us look first at the expenditure that entitles a member to make his claim for an increase in his allowance. I shall exclude all such things as donations to sporting bodies, churches, charitable organisations, schools and the many organisations that seek help from their local member. We come first to the expense of travelling within our electorates. Even in the metropolitan area an active member is on the move all the time in order to do his job properly, and a car should be

necessary. If he is fortunate enough to be able to buy a car, his expenses are considerable; and if he does not own a car he still has heavy expenditure in taxi fares and payment for other means of transport. The cost of travel in your own electorate is a logical claim for allowance.

There is also the very important question of travelling throughout the State. No member can be a really capable member of this Assembly unless he knows the problems and the requirements of the State as a whole. If a member is to prove a capable representative in this House he should know this State inside and out. What chance has the ordinary member of travelling if he has to pay his own way? One reason why we say we are entitled to some increase in allowance is that members should be able to visit other parts of the State in order to see for themselves the problems that exist there. We have heard a lot about Peak Downs for instance. I have not seen the Peak Downs scheme, and the main reason for that was that I could not afford to go there. I have seen some parts of the State but there are other parts that I have not visited, for the reason that my allowance is not large enough to enable me to do so. I do contend that in order that a member may be able to carry out his job efficiently he should have the opportunity of visiting all parts of the State in order to familiarise himself with its problems.

In addition to those allowable expenses a member has various jobs in his own electorate he does not always make public that make a heavy drain on his purse. Quoting my own position, because it is the one I know best, I think that all fair members of this House and all fair members of the public will agree that £65 a year would represent only a very small percentage of the legitimate expenditure that I would incur in carrying out my job as a member.

(Time, on motion of Mr. Gunn, extended).

Mr. WOOD: I thank the House for its courtesy and the hon. member for his kindness to me. I am particularly grateful to him because I want to deal with the question of a tribunal, a phrase that nauseates me by its constant repetition, "We believe that an increase is warranted but we do not know how much. Let us put it to an independent tribunal." The Leader of the Opposition, in his speech said, "They intend to do as they have done in the past, endeavouring to dodge their own responsibility, and pass the buck to someone else." Would not referring the matter to an independent tribunal be doing just that? I agree that the appointment of a tribunal would be an easy way out. I am quite convinced in my own heart that if members of this House submitted their case to a tribunal and members freely volunteered the information at their disposal, that tribunal, composed of fair-minded men, would grant greater increases than those that have been projected. I think hon. members opposite will agree that is a reasonable statement.

But Parliament is the highest tribunal in the land. Ever since Parliament in Queensland has been Parliament it has been the sole authority to determine this question. I have never believed in evading the issue because it might be a difficult one. Why should the Government take a course simply because it is an easy face-saving course? Yet that is the course recommended by hon. members opposite. But should we save our face by passing on our responsibilities to someone else? Heaven only knows that governments in Australia today pass too much of their responsibilities to outside organisations. That has been one of the constant cries on the creation of boards, setting up bureaucracies, and shearing Parliament of its authority and giving the making of the decision to someone else.

Let us look at this question of a tribunal. It has been done in the Commonwealth case. Let us see what the Nicholas Report was and the result of the investigation. As a result of that report some Federal members of Parliament had their salaries and allowances increased by £1,150 a year. Where was the complaint then from members of the Opposition? I am not disagreeing with it—I am prepared to accept the findings of that tribunal—but when as a result of that tribunal the salaries and allowances of Federal members were increased up to £1,150 a year there was not one word of protest. Do not let us fall for this nonsense. The Nicholas Report was presented to the Federal Government. They picked the eyes out of it. They took the parts with which they agreed and took no action on the other parts. You will remember that in that report certain recommendations were made about the postage allowances, and taking away the privileges of the gold pass. On receipt of the report the Commonwealth Government took the parts that suited them and rejected the other. There we see the hypocrisy of having a tribunal. Let us be perfectly practical in this. No Government in the world, when setting up a tribunal on any question, would set up a tribunal that it knew would be bitterly opposed to them. That is practical. That is common sense.

Mr. Evans: Is that what you would have done?

Mr. WOOD: It is no good burking the issue. The hon. member for Mirani can act quite innocently; he knows that whereas Governments do endeavour to pick high men of repute and men of standing and training there is no indication anywhere in which a Government have deliberately chosen a tribunal that they knew would be definitely opposed to them. Let us recall this too. A tribunal would generally consist of a judge of a Supreme Court, because a judge of the Supreme Court, by his office, should be one of the most unbiassed men in the State, and probably top public servants. But then Parliament places itself in this position: when setting up a tribunal to decide the salaries of hon. members the members of the tribunal are men whose salaries are in the main fixed by this Parliament.

That is the fair outline of the position. Then there is this situation. If the tribunal is set up, is there anything compelling this Parliament to accept the findings of that tribunal? Was there anything that compelled the members of the Federal Government to accept in full the findings of the Nicholas Report?

Finally, there is the point that no matter what that tribunal does it is still the responsibility of this Parliament to pass the legislation. It is still our responsibility to take the step that makes it legal. We might amend the findings of the tribunal, we might discard them altogether; it still comes back to this supreme authority in the State, the Parliament of Queensland, to pass the legislation that will bring about such a change. Do not let us have so much nonsense about a tribunal. We could take the easy way out and hand it to a tribunal, but in doing that we are depriving this Parliament of an authority that it has always held and it is my belief that the less authority we take from Parliament the better it will be for Parliament in the long run.

In conclusion, let us be fair about the matter. If we feel one thing in our hearts, do not let us try to gain political capital by saying in this House something that is in direct contrast to what we have said in private.

Consider the case of a private member. Cabinet members, because of their extra heavy responsibilities, justly receive extra payment. But the core of Parliament is the private member on either side of the House. You will not have a strong Parliament unless you have strong private members. That being so, let us ensure that the private member is in such a position as enables him to carry out his job efficiently without having to be niggardly through being forced into the intolerable position of finding himself getting further and further back pay by pay. One hon. member who left this House recently publicly stated his own sad experience during the three years for which he was here. He was sincere, as have been other hon. members opposite who have spoken on this matter. I believe that all men in all forms of industry and commerce should receive such remuneration as will enable them to raise their families decently. We are not asking for anything more. We have not asked for great wealth. We have not even asked for the opportunity of saving something each year. The one motive prompting those hon. members of this House who have been in thorough accord with the suggestion that has been made, has been to place a member of Parliament in such a position as will enable him to do his job efficiently, to represent his electorate and his State honourably and to hold his head up in the world.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Dohring, adjourned.

ORDERLY MOVEMENT IN CHAMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Before the House adjourns I ask hon. members to co-operate with me in maintaining the dignity and decorum of the House. I draw the attention of hon. members to Rule 24 which says—

“A member shall not pass between the Chair and a member who is speaking”

There has been a tendency on the part of hon. members on both sides to break that rule frequently. I ask hon. members to conduct themselves in such a way as to maintain the dignity and decorum of the House.

ADJOURNMENT.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Question put; and the House divided—

Resolved in the affirmative under Standing Order No. 148.

The House adjourned at 1.2 p.m.
