

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 1953**

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**WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER, 1953.**

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

QUESTIONS.

IRON AND STEEL WORKS.

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin) asked the Acting Premier—

“In view of the oft-expressed policy of the Government to encourage the establishment of iron and steel works at Bowen, will he please make a full statement to the House in connection with the report in “The Courier-Mail” of 15 September that the Government are negotiating with Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. for the establishment of a steel works in Brisbane?”

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

“The statement issued by me did not either explicitly or implicitly foreshadow any change in, or contradiction of, Government policy. It did not refer to steelworks but to the possibility of one of the company’s manufacturing activities being commenced in Queensland. The Government will not lessen its efforts to encourage the establishment of decentralised industries in Queensland, but it must be realised that the final decision affecting any site for any project must obviously rest with the company providing the requisite capital.”

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY, COOKTOWN.

**Mr. ADAIR** (Cook) asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

“In view of the statement by the Commonwealth Minister for Civil Aviation reported in the Press recently, that arising from representations by Messrs. T. V. Gilmore and C. F. Wordsworth arrangements had been made for the Department of Civil Aviation to supply electric power up to 10 kW to the Cook Shire Council for distribution in Cooktown, will he advise (a) whether this amount of power will meet the reasonable needs of Cooktown; and, if not, (b) what action has been taken by the Queensland Government to ensure that the electricity supply scheme at Cooktown will be satisfactory, and to assist the Cook Shire Council in the development of such a scheme?”

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

“(a) I am advised by the State Electricity Commissioner that 10 kW of power will give Cooktown only a severely restricted supply of electricity which will be subject to interruption at any time. (b) The Queensland Government, through its instrumentality, the State Electricity Commission, will ensure that Cooktown receives a satisfactory supply, and we are not all satisfied with the present arrangements. Bulk supply by the Department of Civil Aviation was mooted early in 1950, when the Council sought power from the existing

plant of that Department for street lighting purposes. In April, 1950, the Department stated that it would be agreeable to make bulk supply available for the whole of the township and to install a larger sized plant if necessary for the purpose. Investigation by the State Electricity Commission showed that the scheme would not be economically practicable unless a subsidy was paid on the capital cost of the work to the Council, and in order to ensure that the residents of Cooktown received electricity the Queensland Government agreed to pay 65 per cent. of this cost. Only in this way was the scheme made possible. The Department of Civil Aviation requires to be paid an economic price for the bulk supply—not less than 8d. per unit plus a fixed charge of £220 per annum—and no financial assistance at all has been given by the Commonwealth Government to this or any other electricity supply schemes in Queensland. On the basis of the Civil Aviation Department's offer, which catered for all reasonable needs of the township, the State Electricity Commission prepared plans and negotiated details with the Department on behalf of the Council, and the work of electrifying the township was put in hand. The work was well advanced when, on 4 March, 1953, the Department of Civil Aviation advised that the installation of additional plant at Cooktown had been deferred indefinitely, and no indication could be given of when the general requirements of the township could be met. It was stated that up to 10 kW of power only could be supplied. I do not blame the Department for this decision, but so seriously did we view it at that late stage that on 20 March, 1953, the Premier asked the Prime Minister if he would have it reviewed. An unfavourable reply was received, and the Acting Premier renewed the request, pointing out that Cooktown is a remote and isolated centre where the provision of a service such as electricity assumes very considerable importance, that the State Government has subsidised the Council to the extent of 65 per cent. of the capital cost, and that the provision of plant in the Civil Aviation Department's installation to meet the reasonable needs of the township would be one means by which the Commonwealth Government could assist. No official advice has yet been received by the Acting Premier from the Prime Minister of any review of the unfortunate decision which has led to this, and, pending this, the Council has had no alternative but to make the best of a bad job and arrange to switch on a scheme which will be very unsatisfactory to the residents of Cooktown. Unless a favourable decision is received it will be necessary at this late stage for the Commission to arrange with the Council to buy its own plant and build its own power station. That is the present position, and it will be seen that the Queensland Government has done everything possible to assist the Cook Shire Council in providing a satisfactory electricity supply scheme for Cooktown.'

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—SIXTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 15 September (see p. 369) on Mr. Diplock's motion for the adoption for the Address in Reply.

**Mr. LARCOMBE** (Rockhampton) (11.5 a.m.): The speech of His Excellency the Governor is interesting. It is also informative and pleasing. It reviews in a remarkable manner the constructive work of the Labour Government and the sound progressive nature of Queensland's economy. It is teeming with examples of high production, extensive settlement, of substantial development and excellent advancement generally. The Speech is an outstanding review of Labour government and records the future policy of the Government, the best guarantee we can have of continued energy and activity of progressive administration. The continuance of similar Government policy and administration will be conducive to the further advancement of the State.

Before discussing the contents of the Speech, I should like to make brief reference to the speeches delivered by some hon. members opposite, and I preface my remarks by congratulating the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Condamine and the hon. member for Nash. Their speeches were really of a very high standard and were listened to with interest by hon. members on both sides of the House. Those new hon. members who have delivered maiden speeches during the currency of the debate have made an excellent start, and I am sure they will continue to be very useful members of this Assembly.

The first matter I wish to discuss is the action of the Commonwealth Government in sending troops to Bowen to do ordinary industrial work. In this matter we come to first and fundamental principles. No mid-summer madness or midwinter madness equals or approaches the political insanity of the actions of the Federal Government. It was fraught with terrible possibilities and it was only the common sense of union leaders and unionists in general that prevented in Queensland dreadful catastrophies similar to what occurred in France just recently. A conference such as was held could have been held without sending the troops to Queensland, and there is no doubt that the same results could have been achieved. There was no need for intimidatory or revolutionary action. All that was achieved could have been achieved without the invasion of troops.

The action of the Federal Government has given a stimulus and impetus to Communism. It has caused bitterness and resentment, which is not good for industry or the State. We cannot pass this matter over as a nine day's blunder. It is something that will be to the detriment of Queensland and Australia for many years to come. We can get along in Australia without Nazi-ism, without Hitlerism, and without Communism, and it is about time the Federal Government and their supporters realised that fact.

The sovereign rights of the State were flouted. Not only were troops brought here and engaged in ordinary industrial work, but our railways were seized, a most outrageous action on the part of the Commonwealth Government. And the State was not consulted in the matter! It just received a blunt intimation that the Federal Government intended to take this action. I say that the spirit of Federation was stamped upon and the Canberra dictators did something contrary to the spirit of democratic government and our way of life. No proper recognition was given to Queensland and no consultation to which a sovereign State is entitled.

Further, the actions of the Federal Government have opened up a new and unfortunate chapter in the history of the Commonwealth in that they substituted military dictatorship for constitutional and democratic government. That was a very dangerous precedent and example, one that is repellent and repulsive to the democratic people of this State and Australia generally. Their actions transcended the limits of the shortage of labour itself. I repeat that what was accomplished could have been achieved without the invasion of troops and military dictatorship. There was no justification for over-riding the sovereign rights of the State of Queensland. The policy of the Federal Government and their attitude towards the working people is revealed in all its starkness, and the people of Australia will voice their opinion when the opportunity occurs at the coming election. It might be said that I am bringing this matter forward as a political issue—

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** Let me say in reply to that interjection that we improved our position greatly in the Senate, not only generally in Australia, but in Queensland in particular. It is no use trying to side-step the issue because we improved our position to the extent of 84,000 votes in the Senate election.

As I was saying, it might be said that this is a party-political speech on my part but this is what "The Courier-Mail," an anti-Labour paper, had to say on 2 September, 1953—

"Troops on the Wharf.

"The flying of troops to the Bowen waterfront has given the people of Queensland and all Australia a great shock. They had no warning that this extreme measure was impending. The operation was prepared under cover of the strictest secrecy. It would have been carried out secretly if dislocation of air traffic out of Brisbane had not frustrated that intention.

"To order the Army in time of peace to deal with an industrial emergency is a very grave decision for a Government to take. Before a Government exercises what is its ultimate sanction for enforcing the authority it derives from Parliament and people—use of the nation's armed forces—it should neglect no means of making sure that the people will approve and back its action.

"The Federal Government did not take that precaution. It now has to justify to a startled and alarmed nation sudden military occupation of the waterfront of a small North Queensland port. . . ."

That is a sentiment, a viewpoint and a philosophy that every liberty-loving citizen will endorse. I hope that never again shall we have thrust upon us in Queensland such a shocking contradiction of democracy and such a shocking indication of military dictatorship.

I now wish to discuss the speech made by the hon. member for Marodian, who mentioned the question of costs of industry in particular. As this is an important subject I want to make brief reference to his speech and say that he presented an imperfect and incomplete picture of the problem when he suggested that low wages and short hours were the causes of the trouble. Nothing could be further from the truth. He ignored some vitally important factors, such as inefficient industrial leadership, obsolete plant and machinery, high taxation and high rates of interest, that are increasing costs in industry. To reinforce my assertions by quotations from an anti-Labour authority. I should like to refer hon. members to "The Courier-Mail" of October, 1952.

**An Opposition Member:** Why quote "The Courier-Mail"?

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** For the very good reason that my contention is reinforced and buttressed by an anti-Labour authority. If I had not these quotations from an anti-Labour newspaper to support my arguments, quite obviously hon. members opposite would say that I was permeated with political bias and prejudice and that no anti-Labour authority would endorse what I was saying. However, this is what "The Courier-Mail" said in October, 1952—

"Wharfies not always to blame.

"They (certain employers) have no justification for putting all the blame on waterside workers and carriers for slow clearance of cargo."

On 8 July, 1952, "The Courier-Mail" quoted the present Minister for Labour and National Service in the Federal Parliament, Hon. H. E. Holt, as follows—

"The Federal Labour Minister, Mr. Holt, said today that he hoped to see the day when Australian unions would put the pressure on inefficient and slipshod employers to improve. In the Australian unions there was a growing realisation that it would be out of better production that better living standards would have to come."

Even the present Federal Minister for Labour and National Service found it necessary on that occasion to emphasise the fact that some employers are inefficient.

And then there is high and excessive taxation. What is the good of trying to reduce costs in industry in the face of the taxation burden that has been imposed upon Australia, particularly in the last three years?

**Mr. Dewar:** It is a reduction on that of 1949.

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** It is not. Taxation has increased by considerably over £300,000,000 since 1949. In the last year of the Chifley Government the amount of taxation collected was £504,000,000. It went up in 1951-1952 to £919,000,000, an appalling increase. Last year the amount was £885,000,000 and this year the estimate is £874,000,000.

What is the use of hon. members opposite talking about the high costs in industry when this tremendous load of taxation is crushing trade and industry throughout the Commonwealth? Last year alone, compared with the last year of the Chifley Government, the increase in taxation was £381,000,000, and I am game to wager that by the end of this financial year the amount of taxation collected will be greater than that collected last year, although the estimate is £11,000,000 less.

**Mr. Collins:** By a Government pledged to reduce taxation.

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** I am reminded by the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock that this is from a Government who solemnly pledged themselves to reduce taxation. They said that the Chifley Government were destroying industry and commerce in Australia with their taxation bill of £504,000,000 a year, yet in their second year of office they collected £919,000,000 in taxation in 1951-1952. On the subject of the national income let me point out that economic and financial authorities in Australia have sounded the warning that the burden today is beyond safe limits, that the national income is being robbed of such a large amount by way of taxation that the position is dangerous for industry, trade and commerce in this country.

In passing let me say also that the sales tax is imposing an enormous burden on the cost of living. How can we reduce costs while the sales tax is being constantly increased and the workers seriously affected as a consequence? That great master, Shakespeare, said that the evil men did lived after them and that applies with equal force to Governments and societies too. It will take Australia a quarter of a century at least to emerge from the results of the evil the Menzies-Fadden Government have done over the last three years.

Then there is the question of interest rates. Under the Chifley regime long-term loans could be raised, and were raised and over-subscribed, at 3½ per cent. but today the Federal Government are paying 4½ per cent. and finding great difficulty in getting the money. I know that one hon. member of this Assembly said that the Loan Council fixed the rate of interest but only a political greenhorn would say that. I have attended Loan Council meetings and I know what it does. It fixes the rate at which money can be borrowed but the rate is influenced by predetermining causes, the first being want of confidence in the Federal Government and the second the restriction of financial resources and supplies. These restrictions have allowed the very wealthy people to sit

back and get the very high rate of interest they are getting now. Some of the local authorities in this country have had to pay up to 5 per cent. for their money—a ruinous rate. Do not let any hon. member think that the Loan Council fixes the interest. It fixes only the nominal rate, which has been predetermined in the way I have described. The reasons for the big jump in interest rates are want of confidence in the Federal Government and their artificial restriction of money, leading to its scarcity.

**Mr. Morris:** Rubbish!

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** The Federal Government's action can truly be labelled rubbish and I am sure that the people of Australia will not stand for rubbish. The problem of the cost of living is closely associated with the question of costs in industry, a very important one for the worker, his wife and family.

The State Government have done very fine work with their Prices Branch, to such an extent that the purchasing power of the £ in Queensland over the years has always been better than it has been in any of the other States. We have always had the greatest purchasing power. What is happening now? The benefit thus given to the worker is being nullified by the actions of the Federal Government. The Chifley Government provided a large sum to enable price-fixing to be continued in Australia but the present Federal Government have robbed Queensland of £140,000 and the States in general of £1,000,000. In the first place, the State is being directly robbed of that sum and indirectly affected in having to dismiss a great number of the officers in the Prices Branch with the result that already there has been a rise in the cost of living. All of the advantages of the Federal Budget, so called, are being nullified because of rising prices. There is now no restriction in respect of quite a number of commodities. "The Courier-Mail" reported certain traders as saying last week that there was no obligation to reduce prices to the pre-Budget level if those goods were not controlled. There is a moral obligation to do so, if not a legal one. If the present practice continues it will be necessary to re-impose certain controls if the cost of living is to be held at a reasonable level.

The Federal Government, like the Queensland Opposition, do not believe in price control. They have exerted financial pressure, which is preventing this State from carrying on the very fine work of price-fixing to the degree it did for some time past. Big Business is reaping millions of pounds more than it did. The friends of the Federal Government are reaping a rich harvest. They say there is no obligation to reduce prices to pre-Budget level. They can go on reaping the enormous advantage to them of placing the Menzies-Fadden Government in power. The Commonwealth Budget and its so-called advantages are being nullified every day in the way that I have indicated.

Although State price-fixing has been greatly eliminated, it is still carried on in Queensland and Australia. And by whom? By big business combinations. (Opposition interjections.) Do not talk about competition to me. In the United States, where they have enormous resources and probably the greatest local market in the world, there is no State or National price-fixing and prices are higher than in any other part of the world. That is the result of so-called free competition.

**Mr. Dewar:** That is nonsense.

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** It is nonsense. We want it checked and the way to do it is to change the Federal Government. Let me say further that this action of the Federal Government is giving a remarkable impetus to inflation. Prices are going up and up will go wages also. No matter what the Federal Government might say, up will go prices and up will go inflation.

Coming to the matter of taxation, what is the use of talking of keeping down costs with taxation in three years amounting to more than £2,522,000,000? Words fail one when one tries to describe that enormous taxation, which has been fleeced from the people in three years. It represents an increase of more than £1,133,000,000 in three years. Yet hon. members opposite talk with their tongues in their cheeks about reducing the costs of industry. Taxation has to be reduced before you can reduce the cost of living and industry in Australia. There again the rate of interest comes in and it is leading to a higher cost of living. The sales taxation for the last year of the Chifley Government amounted to £42,425,000 and for the last year of anti-Labour Government it amounted to £89,066,000, or an increase of approximately £47,000,000. The present Government were pledged to reduce taxation, but what are the facts? For the three years 1947-1948, 1948-1949, 1949-1950, under the Chifley Government, the sales tax amounted to £116,182,967 and for the last three years of the present Government it amounted to £241,694,488, an increase of £125,511,521. Yet hon. members talk about reducing the cost of living and the costs of industry! In view of those figures it is absurd and ridiculous. It is time they took up this issue with some of the Federal members of their party who have rebelled, realising that their seats are in danger. Surely they are not all "Yes" men to everything the Government do? They should speak out, as the hon. member for Warwick did, and say what they think of the Federal Government when they believe they are wrong.

**An Opposition Member** interjected.

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** The Federal Government have not the slightest intention of handing anything back. Just fancy their handing back the taxing powers! There is not the slightest possibility of their doing so. They are not game to do it. We know quite well they will not hand back anything they can tax. Any moneys they can get they will hang on to like tremendous leeches.

Now let me pass to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. It was noted for its significant omissions rather than its definite statements. He accused the Government of misleading the electors, of neglecting the country, and of other things, but he did not explain why the Opposition suffered such a crushing defeat at the last elections. He did not explain why the Opposition lost three seats in North Queensland nor did he explain why the Opposition have been in a political wilderness not for 40 days and 40 nights but for almost 40 years and 14,000 nights. That has been the record of the party opposite, and the people of Queensland tell them plainly by their votes why they have no confidence in them and why they have confidence in Labour's administration. I can explain one of the reasons why hon. members opposite have remained in Opposition. They are too reactionary and conservative. As "The Courier-Mail," points out, most of their policy is nagging the Government and "The Courier-Mail," which is their own paper, some time ago told them to think up something constructive and not always be denouncing the Government. Hon. members opposite are always trying to open the door of advancement with the rusty key of the dead past. They are not modern or up to date. I recollect that away back in 1929, when the anti-Labour parties were returned for a brief period to the Treasury bench, Mr. A. E. Moore, the Premier of the State at that time, and Mr. Godfrey Morgan mounted two splendid horses and rode down the street: very fine horses and very fine men, but they were out of date. "Go back to the horse" they said and back to the 48-hour week and to the old basic wage, back to no arbitration. It was back to all the obsolete and out-of-date things. We find that economically, industrially and politically hon. members opposite are yearning, turning and twisting to the past. They are always thinking in the terms of that well-known song "Turn back the Universe and give me yesterday." That is the political refrain of hon. members opposite. They should show the spirit of modern leaders and realise that the days of the horse are nearly over, also that the days of the 48-hour week are gone and the days of low wages are gone. Until they realise these things, they will, as "The Courier-Mail" told them, make no progress in the State of Queensland.

I wish to refer to another aspect of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. He has been for years talking about being gerrymandered out of power by the Labour Government of Queensland and yet the day before the 1950 elections he expressed his confidence that Labour would win the following day. Mr. Wadley, the then President of the Liberal Party, had this to say early in the year, according to "The Courier-Mail"

"A swing of 300 votes on the 1950 result would be sufficient to give the combined Country-Liberal Party a comfortable working majority."

So hon. members opposite contradict themselves. They twist and turn from moment to moment. One moment they say the Labour Government are gerrymandering them out of the opportunity to govern and the next

moment they say a change of 300 votes would give them control of the Treasury Bench. What contradiction! What absurdity! That second argument is the greatest tribute to our electoral policy.

**Mr. Kerr:** You will never do the same again.

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** The hon. member could have spoken to me 12 months ago when my majority was down to about 250 and he pointed the political bone at me, but today I have a larger majority than he has, and he ought to keep quiet now.

Let me now refer to a report in "The Brisbane Telegraph" of 6 March of this year, the day before the election, in which the Leader of the Opposition is credited with having said, "An amazing political upset in the elections will take place tomorrow."

**Mr. Jesson:** He was right.

**Mr. LARCOMBE:** Of course he was in one sense, but the revolution engulfed him, not the Government. He went on to say that he hinged his speech on 13 reasons. That is a very unlucky number. He gave his audience 13 reasons to show why he and his party would be returned to power the following day, but he ignored the words of warning of the Shakespearian soothsayer, "Beware the ides of March." Although the dates do not correspond exactly, the ides of March on the Roman calendar are very close in March to the date of the last State election. I hope the Leader of the Opposition is a better leader than he is a forecaster.

Now let me give some of those figures for which hon. members have been asking. Let me give some of the State election results, figures relating to this amazing upset. The Labour Party polled 322,286 votes and the Country Party 110,451. The Liberal Party polled 138,356 votes, so that the Labour Party polled 183,930 votes more than the Liberal Party and 73,479 more than the combined Liberal and Country Parties. Further, Labour enjoyed a majority of 40,594 votes over all other parties. Now we can end this political piffle about minority rule. Again we have come back with 50 members on this side while hon. members opposite number only 25. As an old member of this party it did gratify my sight to gaze upon these 50 members when Parliament opened, especially when I recollect that in the early days Labour was a despised party. We were despised because of the power of money, because of the power of vested interests. On the point of vested interests, I recall that on one occasion Lord Macaulay said that if the law of gravitation had interfered with vested interests the world would not have accepted it. The money power would have persuaded the world that it was wrong. Notwithstanding all the adverse criticism, notwithstanding the forecast of 1914 that if Labour got into power grass would grow on the streets, and the wheels of industry would be hushed, Labour was returned and has held office for nearly 40 years in the Queensland Parliament and is returned now with 50 members on this side while the Opposition come back with just half that number. If

the number of members on the Opposition benches continues to fall in the same ratio, it will not be long before there are none on that side and 75 on this side.

The results of the election were marvellous and show what the Government achieved notwithstanding the distortion and misrepresentation of Labour policy that took place. Labour Governments have governed in Queensland from 1915 to 1953, with the exception of one break, and during the last half-century that is a record unparalleled in Australia and unexampled in the world; it is a magnificent endorsement of the leadership, the policy and record of Labour and is a smashing reply to the critics of the Government who denounced us up hill and down dale most unfairly.

I intend giving the Senate figures because they show the prestige of Labour, not only in Queensland but in Australia. The Labour Party polled 2,323,968 votes and the Liberal and Country Parties combined, 2,039,938, so that Labour had a majority of 284,030 in the Commonwealth. Here are the Queensland figures for the 1953 Senate election; the Liberal-Country Party polled 322,214 votes and the Labour Party 299,268 showing that the combined Liberal-Country Party had a 22,946 greater vote than the Labour vote. But do not let us speak too soon. In 1951 the combined Opposition parties polled 366,760 votes and the Labour Party only 259,070. Labour was down by 107,690 votes in 1951 and only 22,946 down in 1953, which shows that Labour gained 84,744 in the two years and the Opposition lost 84,744 in the same period. Now, Opposition members have had the Senate voting figures.

I want to say something about the speech made by the hon. member for Fassifern, who gave us a few lessons in the gentle art of buck-passing in relation to the butter question. The hon. member for Fassifern is constantly attacking controls but he wanted strong hard-and-fast control in regard to margarine. Let us have free competition with regard to butter but clamp down on margarine, says the hon. member for Fassifern! There must be no free market for margarine. Let me say that hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for Fassifern, have made a clumsy attempt to conceal the fact that butter-producers in Australia today are holding indignation meetings throughout the continent denouncing the Federal Government. Did not the hon. member for Warwick do the same thing and did he not show that the Federal Government repudiated an agreement and dishonoured their promise? No Government had promised so much and repudiated so much, said the hon. member for Warwick. He must be taught a lesson, says the hon. member for Fassifern and, according to "The Brisbane Telegraph" of last month, this great believer in freedom of competition, the hon. member for Fassifern, wanted to bring the hon. member for Warwick to heel.

I want to further point out in regard to the butter dispute, that the hon. member for Fassifern said it was the action of the State Government two years ago that

caused the trouble; there would not have been trouble today if the Federal Government had stood up to their obligation and responsibility. They broke the subsidy agreement and substituted a new one and the result was that there was a higher price for butter with a lower consumption, and consequently margarine got a move on. If the Federal Government had stood up to their responsibilities the price of butter would not have been largely increased—the Federal Government's subsidy would have kept it down—and there would have been no margarine problem. Therefore, the hon. member for Fassifern has failed in his attempt to pass the buck to the Labour Government for the present dissatisfaction of dairy producers.

In conclusion, I say that the Speech of His Excellency the Governor is very informative reading. It will please every Queensland who wishes to see Queensland progress and make the most of her natural resources. It shows a surplus for the year, it shows an increased tonnage of sugar, a record wheat crop, increased meat production, an advance in irrigation, splendid assistance by the Agricultural Bank, and excellent Forestry work. Those are all matters dealing with primary industry. Secondary industry, too, is revealed as showing splendid progress.

(Time expired.)

**Dr. NOBLE** (Yeronga) (11.47 a.m.): It is my privilege for the fourth time as a member of this Assembly to pledge my loyalty to the Throne and to the person of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and to join not only with the members of this Assembly, but with the people generally, in hoping that her accession to the Throne will usher in a new and a more glorious Elizabethan era than the first one, and that the power for good and influence of the British Commonwealth of Nations in the world's councils will become even greater than it has been.

We in Australia are indeed fortunate to have as our Governor-General at the present time Field-Marshal Sir William Slim. As I listened to his speech on the occasion of his being welcomed here, I felt that he was a man of infinite wisdom, experience and knowledge, and that his presence in Australia would benefit greatly our people as a nation. As I listened to him I was very grateful that the Prime Minister of Australia at the present time was the Right Hon. Robert Gordon Menzies, because it was he who realised what a great benefit this Governor-General would be to Australia. When the opportunity presented itself to procure his services, he immediately set in train the processes by which Sir William Slim eventually became the Governor-General of Australia. I thought on that occasion, too, that if another party had been in power in Canberra, perhaps we should not have enjoyed the services of such a great international figure as Sir William Slim.

I should like also at this stage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to congratulate Mr. Speaker on his re-election as Speaker of this House. I have always found him impartial in his decisions.

To the electors of Yeronga who have returned me once more as a member of this Assembly, I tender my thanks. I trust that I shall serve them as well in this Parliament as I did in the last.

At this stage I should like to voice the alarm that a large number of people in this State and that I too feel as a result of action of a non-elected body of men, the Queensland Central Executive of the Australian Labour Party, in its unwarranted interference not only in State Government affairs but in the aldermanic affairs of this city. What right has any non-elected body of men to take upon itself the task of governing? That is what this body definitely did, because it forced the aldermen of the Brisbane City Council to withdraw a decision they had made, and by similar pressure forced members of the Labour Party in this House to alter something that they intended to bring forward in this Chamber. I wondered as the weeks went by whether its attitude was altogether genuine and whether it thought that the people of the State and the city in particular felt very strongly about the matter and that it should put on a good show. After all the fuss and bother about what it was going to do if the elected representatives of the party would not follow its dictates, we find that instead of the sum of £400 being accepted the sum of £300 would find favour with it, and in the case of the Brisbane City Council, instead of £380, the sum of £250. It is only a matter of degree. As I understood the matter in the first place, the Q.C.E. was fighting its elected representatives on a principle, but the principle seems to have been lost sight of for the moment. Apparently, having put up a show and having demonstrated to its elected representatives that it was the real master in this State, it is now resting content. This is not the first occasion on which the Q.C.E. or the executive of the party has interfered with the government of the country. I well remember the time when the Federal Government were passing the Communist Party Dissolution Bill through the Federal House. The Labour Party was fighting the Bill tooth and nail and Senator McKenna was called before the executive of the Federal Labour Party. From the time that he went before the executive the whole attitude of the Federal Labour Party towards the Bill changed and he made the unequivocal statement that the members of the Labour Party had to follow the dictates of the central executive of the party. After all, it is a socialistic party working for the establishment of a supreme economic council, and after all, too, the Q.C.E. in Queensland, with its socialistic dreams, must be able to form some idea of what the supreme economic council really is.

Recently I was at an evening gathering where I had a talk with a business leader of the State and he said to me, "When are you going to beat the Labour Party? You will find it very hard to beat." I did not answer him at the time, and he went on to say, "It is a very conservative party. As a matter of fact, for years it has put through some skilful propaganda and people who

really vote Liberal have expressed the opinion that it is a very conservative party.' As a matter of fact, we in this House know that its aim is socialism. Only the other day the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, speaking in this House, said that the time was approaching when we should soon have more Socialism—butter shops and the like. The people say that they are a very conservative Government, that they do not hurt anybody, nor do they legislate on matters of great moment. They say that their legislation is innocuous and that they follow a policy of drift. Where is this policy of drift getting them? It is really the policy of the Labour Party. It does not hurt anyone but it does not lead to any progress in the State.

Let us look for a moment at the administration of their various departments. Take the Railway Department for a start. Can anyone say that they have made a success of running the railway system in this State? They have been talking about closing down certain branch lines and their deficit is something like £5,000,000. I was amazed the other day when the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation, Mr. Foley, waxed eloquent about our efficient railway service and what the Labour Party had done for the railways. He waxed eloquent about our roads also, about the roads that had been built in particular, and went on to point out that in his lifetime he had lived to see great development in the building of roads. He said that at one time there were no roads in the State. But the hon. gentleman is not in the first flight of his youth and possibly if we totalled up his years it would be found that he had lived for the greater part of the history of the State. When he was a boy there were no motor-cars—they were the days of the horse and the buggy—and consequently there were no roads. It has only been the advent of the motor-car that has made Governments go ahead with the formation of roads suitable for motor-cars. As a matter of fact, this Government have been in power in this State for as long a time as motor cars have been known. They have been more or less in power throughout the whole of the motor era. I have heard some people refer to the Government as the gasoline Government—that they are all gas and explosion but nothing was happening.

Let us deal with the matter of education. Have they made a success of education in this State? They cannot provide accommodation for the numbers of children who are seeking accommodation. Last year they had to cut down the number of pupils by making the age of entry six years. They have not built one teachers' training college and they have not encouraged young people to take up teaching. The more you go into the question the more you realise what an utter failure the Government have made of education in this State.

Let us come to the Public Service. Have they been successful administrators? The public servants themselves say that the State Government are the worst employers in Australia.

When you come to Works and Housing there is no need to say much. We are all familiar with the housing scandal of last year and the mess that was made of the prefabricated housing scheme. No matter what angle of administration you look at you find that they have failed lamentably.

We have a health scheme that was introduced by the Menzies-Fadden Government and is recognised throughout the world as being a very excellent one. What was the attitude of this Government? They went out of their way to impede the implementation of that scheme in this State. I was informed that the secretary of the Public Service Union approached the Government with the idea of having a group system established in the Public Service under which a certain amount would be deducted each week from their wages to cover contributions to this fund, but this Government refused to co-operate with the Public Service Union, and refused to come into the group scheme. The secretary of the Public Service Union was keen in the matter but this Government, because the scheme was introduced by the Menzies-Fadden Government, and fearing it would bring kudos to the Liberal-Country Party, refused to co-operate with the union on this very important matter.

**An Opposition Member:** They have it in New South Wales.

**Dr. NOBLE:** Yes, they have it in New South Wales. This scheme is regarded throughout the world as being a most excellent one. One of the reasons why Labour members in this and the Federal sphere are decrying the scheme is that they realise if it is a success it will sound the death knell of socialised medicine in Australia. The Labour Party is striving to introduce socialised medicine in Australia; and such a scheme would destroy an efficient medical service to the people. (Government interjections). It would take away the doctor-patient relationship and lower the standard of health. Sir Earle Page is in England at the present time looking into the scheme there, which is almost bankrupt and under which people go through the hands of the medical officers like sheep through a race. There would be no actual competition in a completely nationalised scheme.

**Mr. Moore:** That is another indictment of your colleagues in the medical fraternity; that is the second one you bunged on.

**Dr. NOBLE:** Competition plays a very big part. The more competition a man has, the better the service he will give, whether he is a doctor or a politician. It is a wonder to me, in view of the service it gives, that the Labour Party has been returned year after year. (Government interjections). I repeat that it is because the Labour Party realises that the success of this scheme in Australia would sound the death knell of socialised medicine that it is opposed to it.

Now to mention politics in the Federal sphere. For the last three years I have sat in this Chamber I have heard nothing but denunciations of the Federal Government.

As a matter of fact, it has been these repeated denunciations of the Federal Government by this Government that gave them such a very fine majority in the last election. They did not get back because of their own qualifications but because through their propaganda over the last few years they have been denouncing the Federal Government at Canberra.

Now let us think for a moment of the economy of Australia when the Federal Government took office. There was then an acutely spiralling inflation in Australia and this after all must have been a legacy from a Labour Government.

Nobody can deny that. Soon after they took office we had the Rt. Hon. Mr. Chifley, in a speech in Parliament House, saying that he was very concerned about this spiralling inflation, and adding, "I would ask you to take measures that will stop this inflation, whether such measures are popular or unpopular." It must be conceded that a Federal Government who took these measures would be unpopular, but realising this to the full, the Menzies-Fadden Government took these measures for the good of Australia in order to stabilise Australia's economy. Even at a time of rapidly expanding economy and when there were thousands of people coming to this country, despite these two grave handicaps and despite the fact that to stop inflation at any time is a tremendous task, the Federal Government can claim today to have been largely successful and say that inflation in Australia has been definitely checked.

Mr. Menzies, the Prime Minister, realised only too fully when he submitted a plan of campaign that would stop inflation how unpopular this plan would be. After all, the people who would be hurt most would be those who would naturally vote for him, big and small business people and importers and the like. He realised they would be hurt for the time being when this legislation was implemented, but he realised too that it was for the good of this country, which at the time was on the verge of great expansion. He realised that our economy must be stabilised. He knew his action would be unpopular but took it courageously and the people of Australia today realise that his action has been successful and are now beginning to praise him for all the plans he has brought forward at Canberra. Look at the last Budget in the Federal sphere and its taxation reductions, which now make Australia the envy of the whole world! I feel certain that at the next election the people will realise the great job the Menzies-Fadden Government have done.

For a moment let us look at the state of things that existed in Australia when this Government took over. In those days supplies of everything were short. One could not get baths or stoves or iron for a roof. If one went into a grocer's shop groceries were brought from under the counter. Those were the days of shortages. Are there shortages at the present time, and are there not now ample goods of all kinds to meet the needs of the consuming public? Those were the days of shortages of coal, when factories were

able to work only half-time, but today coal is at grass. In those days petrol rationing was in force and the then Federal Government said it would be quite impossible to abolish petrol rationing as they would be unable to store enough petrol and still acquire enough petrol to keep motor-cars moving. Today, although the number of motor vehicles on the road has increased by hundreds and thousands, we find no shortage of petrol. We have a statesman in the person of the Rt. Hon. Robert Gordon Menzies as Prime Minister of Australia today. Mr. Menzies enjoys repute that is of world standard. When he speaks overseas people listen to him and take note of what he says. We must realise that but for him we should not have in this country overseas investments as they are coming in today. It is because overseas investors realise that as long as Mr. Menzies is in power in Australia there will be no Socialism in Australia, but with a change of Government, with a party in power that has the avowed objective of Socialism, one can easily understand that the capitalists over in America would ask: why they should send money to Australia to have it taken by these Socialists? If the Menzies-Fadden Government do go out of office at the next Federal election it will be a great calamity for Australia, because overseas investment will dry up immediately.

Now let us see what they have done for the defence of the nation. No-one can claim that they have not done a great job in this direction. When the war ended we had the Americans occupying those islands to the north of Queensland. It was a very fine thing to feel that we still had the American Army, Navy and Air Force at this fortress at our front door to help in the defence of this country. But when Dr. Evatt became Minister for External Affairs for Australia he would not allow the Americans to stay there. He said that they could go, and they did go, taking with them their armament, their air force, their navy and army, leaving just the bare base as it was before they went there. The Menzies Government, however, realised that these islands had to be fortified and the result is that we now have there a great fortress, so that we know that Australia can be defended as a result of the action of the present Federal Government. I was surprised yesterday to hear the hon. member for Windsor saying that the soldiers and sailors of Australia used powder puffs and lipstick. That is a terrible thing to say and we should have recorded in "Hansard" how strongly we feel about such statements in this House.

**Mr. Kerr:** In other words, he said they were queens.

**Dr. NOBLE:** That is so. Again, no-one can deny that the Federal Government have done an excellent job in connection with land settlement. All those States that became agents of the Commonwealth Government have been very successful in settling returned soldiers on the land.

**Mr. Foley:** What have they done in Queensland?

**Dr. NOBLE:** I was waiting for that. The present Queensland Government have always resisted any good action from Canberra. For months and months before the last election, they refused to come into the new free-milk scheme. Because of the obstinacy of the Queensland Government, in refusing to allow Queensland to become an agent State, the soldiers of this State have suffered. While £12,500,000 has been spent in Western Australia and £8,500,000 in South Australia, we find that only a little over £1,000,000 has been spent in Queensland on settling returned soldiers on the land.

**Mr. Foley:** But they are agent States. We spent the money ourselves here.

**Dr. NOBLE:** All this Government needed to do was to allow Queensland to become an agent State and probably the soldiers here would have had just as much spent for their benefit. I venture the opinion that if the returned soldiers of Queensland were asked whether they thought Queensland should become an agent State in order to benefit from the Commonwealth scheme they would say that we should do so.

**Mr. Foley:** Kent Hughes has made the offer, and we have accepted it.

**Dr. NOBLE:** Again, the Federal Government have not been backward in connection with atomic research. They brought to Australia the best atomic physicists they could possibly get at the time to ensure that this Commonwealth should be in the forefront in atomic research. Through their legislation they have brought peace to industry, they have introduced the secret ballot for the election of union representatives and as a result of this legislation the Communists have been largely chased out of industrial unions. Despite all these things, all I have heard here from hon. members opposite during my three years as a member of this Parliament has been disparagement after disparagement. This Government know what the Federal Government have done, and if they had been honest they would have been praising the Menzies-Fadden Government for their services.

I have mentioned shortages. I have mentioned that it was impossible to get a stove, a bath, or roofing iron. I have mentioned also that they encouraged inflation by introducing the 40-hour week. Even the late Mr. Chifley said in the Federal House that he was alarmed at the effect the 40-hour week had had on the economy of this country. Whether we believe in the 40-hour week or whether we oppose it, there is no doubt that it has played a big part in the inflationary spiral of this country, and it was introduced by a Labour Government.

And then we have the action of the Labour Government in the Federal sphere with regard to banks. They were going to nationalise the banks of Australia and so upset the stability and economy of Australia. Furthermore, they were going to do wonderful things in regard to health matters, but they did nothing. Then we had girls in Australia

who were wanting to go to Japan and Mr. Calwell saying they could not go and dragging them back. There was their failure to do anything in New Guinea; one has only to talk to planters up there to realise the mess they were making with their legislation in connection with the natives. There was no defence programme. In fact, one cannot point to any decent thing done by Labour in the Federal sphere. When we compare the legislation introduced by the present Federal Government we realise just how odious was Labour in its term of office in the Federal sphere. I said before that Labour was responsible to a large extent for inflation in Australia and I say that the position has become stabilised to a great extent since the Menzies-Fadden Government took over.

**Mr. Rasey** interjected.

**Dr. NOBLE:** The hon. member should be quiet. He was talking about queens yesterday.

**Mr. RASEY:** Mr. Clark, I rise to a point of order. Do I understand that the hon. member for Yeronga suggested that I referred to the Queen yesterday, in some way or other?

**Dr. NOBLE:** I did not say that. I said that the hon. member said that our soldiers used lipstick and powder-puffs.

**Mr. RASEY:** I rise to a point of order. I am informed by a colleague that whilst I was speaking on the telephone a few minutes the hon. member for Yeronga attributed some remarks to me. He now repeats them and I ask for a withdrawal. Anything said about those things was not said by me and I ask for a withdrawal of the remark in relation to me.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I will withdraw the remark. I did hear the hon. member mention that soldiers were being provided with lipstick and powder-puffs.

**Mr. RASEY:** I definitely made no reference to soldiers and lipstick. That is an untrue statement and it is a scandalous thing for the hon. member for Yeronga to attribute to me. I deny that I said it and I ask for its withdrawal because it reflects upon my attitude and my patriotism.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Clark):** I ask the hon. member for Yeronga to accept the denial of the hon. member for Windsor.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I accept his denial.

**Mr. RASEY:** If he was a decent man he would withdraw it.

**Dr. NOBLE:** It is my mistake. It was the hon. member for Mackay.

**Mr. RASEY:** I ask the hon. member to apologise for the remark he attributed to me.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I will withdraw the statement.

I was getting onto the reasons for inflation in this country and I had mentioned the introduction of the 40-hour week and the automatic wage increases associated with the C Series Index. Further reasons were the prosperity loading granted in 1950, the phenomenal wool prices in 1950-51 and the clamour by the State Governments for more and more funds to use on public works. The 40-hour week was introduced by a Labour Government's action. It was an election promise; the Communist-controlled unions in those days forced Labour Governments of Queensland and New South Wales to introduce the legislation to save their hides. It is interesting to note that the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, in its last judgment, has decided to wipe out the quarterly automatic increases in the basic wage. Those increases have always seemed to me to be wrong. I have always held the view that the harder a person works the more goods he produces and thus the less is the cost of those goods. The result is that the cost of living goes down and his wages are reduced; in other words, the harder a man works the less he receives. On the other hand, if he loafes the cost of living goes up, the C Series Index goes up, and his wages go up. The automatic increases in the basic wage were, in fact, a premium on sloth rather than a premium on industry.

When the £1 a week prosperity loading was granted, Judge Foster said that the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration should not have to deal with the economy of Australia, that its real duty was to deal with industrial matters. I thought that was a very important statement, because at times I think that the court usurps the powers of the Government. In my opinion, the whole of Australia's arbitration system should be reviewed. I should like to see a non-party convention examine it and bring it into line with modern trends. At such a convention, industrialists, employers, union representatives and the like could be asked for their advice. Another question that could be thoroughly examined is that of conciliation commissioners. I think it is wrong that one man alone should have the power to settle and decide very important matters.

**Mr. Devries:** Do you think conciliation commissioners are beneficial?

**Dr. NOBLE:** I am not an industrialist. The whole matter should be looked into by people more competent to judge than I am.

One thing that is very important to all of us—at least to those on this side of the House—and to the great majority of people throughout Australia, is that we should at all costs maintain our personal liberty. If we are to retain our personal liberty, it is essential that the rights of private property be maintained. As the rights of private property form the basis of the capitalistic system, if we are to maintain our freedom as individuals we must at all costs maintain some form of the capitalistic system.

**A Government Member:** Who is interfering with it?

**Dr. NOBLE:** There are three classes who are opposed to the rights of private property, and thus they are opposed to the capitalistic system. Being opposed to that, they must of necessity be opposed to the freedom of the individual. The first of these three classes are the Communists. They make no bones about it. They avow openly that if they ever get control of the government of this country, as they have in the U.S.S.R., they will immediately do away with the rights of private property.

The second group is composed of the bi-partisan socialisers, who hope by some miraculous means to bring about the complete welfare State yet at the same time preserve individual liberty. They too are seeking the destruction of the rights of private property.

The third class opposed to the rights of private property and individual liberty are the leaders of industrial Labour, who, by continually waging warfare on private management, private enterprise and private property, are slowly working towards the destruction of private property and individual liberty. The menace of Labour leadership is all the more a menace because I feel certain that these people have convinced themselves—and they have convinced others—that they are apostles of a democratic way of life. They too think that they are opposed to Communism and think that they are actually opposed to its sister National Socialism. All that their members have to do is to get on a street corner and rant and talk about democracy and exploitation of the workers. It is all right for them to denounce profits which after all are the lifeblood of private enterprise, and attack and undermine management and authority, which is so essential to private enterprise. All they need to do is to damn investment and banking which is essential to sustain profit and enterprise. All they need to do is to educate their followers to bring about the destruction of private property, enterprise and management. All they need do, as I say, is to get on the street corner and rant about these things. By so doing they are undermining the right of private property.

When I was in New South Wales recently I saw an article in a paper written by a Labour senator, that was a denunciation of the General Motors-Holden Company because it had made a large profit in the manufacturing of motor-cars in Australia. Some years ago there was no motor-car industry in this country. No-one would invest his money in an industry in this country for the manufacture of motor-cars yet this company has done it and it is employing thousands of people in Australia. It is building an Australian motor-car. Now we have a motor-car industry in this country and if we should be the subject of an attack from overseas we have the means of manufacturing the armaments we need.

Then we come to the subject of the banks. How can we socialise the banks unless we get rid of private property and so damage the liberty of the individual?

Before I get off this subject I should like to speak to the young man in the community who would like to own his own business, who wants to support himself, and to own his own home, who wants to be free of control and excessive taxation. Such people form the biggest proportion of the people in this country and people who want these things must believe in the capitalistic system. They realise that unless they can have these things their liberty will be damaged and destroyed. For that reason we as a Government and a people should take care to see that the present system is maintained.

Before I close I should like to say a few words about the Bill that passed through the House only the other day whereby members of Parliament have to apply to the Clerk of the Parliament before they can get the rise in salary. So far as that part, about going to the Clerk of the Parliament, is concerned it does not really matter. You take the salary or you do not take the salary and both amount to the same thing. However, it should not be the province of a member of Parliament to have to go and apply to the Clerk of the Parliament. The second part of the Bill, that he cannot claim any subsequent increase, is nothing but sheer blackmail. Call it by any other name, it is still blackmail. The Acting Premier, in introducing such legislation into the House—I felt that he did not want to do it and was forced by members of the party—is only a blackmailer. I think it besmirched his good name.

**Mr. FOLEY:** I rise to a point of order. I think the language of the hon. member for Yeronga has used is quite unparliamentary. I object to application of the term "blackmailer" to the Leader of the House.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr. Clark): I ask the hon. member for Yeronga to withdraw the term.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I believe that it was blackmailing legislation. I say this is blackmailing legislation and the person who introduces blackmailing legislation is a blackmailer.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word "blackmailer."

**Dr. NOBLE:** I am very sorry. I regard it as blackmailing legislation and I regard the person who introduced it as a blackmailer.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I refuse to withdraw.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I warn the hon. member for Yeronga that if he does not withdraw the term "blackmailer" I shall have to name him.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I am very sorry. I have a very high regard for the Acting Premier but this was blackmailing legislation and he brought it in.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word "blackmailer". I warn the hon. member that if he does not withdraw it I shall have to name him.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I am very sorry. I regard this as blackmailing legislation, and if you introduce blackmailing legislation you are a blackmailer.

#### NAMING OF MEMBER.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I name the hon. member for Yeronga for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

**Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba—Acting Premier) (12.27 p.m.): I appeal to the hon. member for Yeronga to withdraw the term. This Parliament is happily free from the need to take the action of suspending members from the service of the House. I think generally common sense prevails; and even if common sense does not prevail I think there is laid down a procedure that should be followed—a definite parliamentary form. You have rightly ruled that the term is unparliamentary and offensive and you have asked the hon. member to withdraw it. I appeal to the hon. member to do so. There is an obligation on all of us to uphold the authority of the Chair, and there is also an obligation on all of us to argue the merits and demerits of a case without being personally offensive. I think the English language and the vocabulary of the hon. member, with which he is well endowed, should be sufficiently extensive to enable him to castigate as severely as he likes me or members of the Government or their policy without breaking the rules of the House. I appeal to the hon. member to again consider your request, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and withdraw in compliance with it.

**Dr. NOBLE:** I feel very sorry about this matter of observing the decorum of the House, but I feel very strongly about this legislation, and I cannot withdraw.

#### SUSPENSION OF MEMBER.

**Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I think the House should take into account the degree of the offence committed by some members. We do expect higher standards, probably, because of the education of the hon. member, who knows full well what he is saying. It cannot be said the use of the term has been occasioned by the heat of the debate. It was spoken calmly and deliberately. I have appealed to the hon. member for the acceptance of your request but it would appear to be a flagrant disregard of an instruction from the Chair and as I have appealed to him and I think made a reasonable appeal to him and he has ignored it I move—

"That the hon. member for Yeronga be suspended from the service of the House for seven days."

Question—That the motion (Mr. Duggan) be agreed to—put; and the House divided.

AYES, 40.

|             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| Mr. Adair   | Mr. Kehoe        |
| " Baxter    | " Keyatta        |
| " Brosnan   | " Larcombe       |
| " Burrows   | " Lloyd          |
| " Collins   | " Marsden        |
| " Davis     | " McCathie       |
| " Devries   | " Moore          |
| " Diplock   | " Moores         |
| Dr. Dittmer | " Rasey          |
| Mr. Dohring | " Riordan        |
| " Donald    | " Roberts, F. E. |
| " Duggan    | " Robinson       |
| " Eastment  | " Taylor, J. R.  |
| " English   | " Turner         |
| " Foley     | " Walsh          |
| " Gardner   | " Whyte          |
| " Graham    | " Wood           |
| " Gunn      |                  |
| " Hilton    | <i>Tellers :</i> |
| " Jesson    | " Brown          |
| " Jones, A. | " Byrne          |

NOES, 22.

|            |                     |
|------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Chalk  | Mr. Munro           |
| " Coburn   | " Nicholson         |
| " Dewar    | " Nicklin           |
| " Fletcher | Dr. Noble           |
| " Gaven    | Mr. Pizzey          |
| " Heading  | " Roberts, L. H. S. |
| " Hiley    | " Sparkes           |
| " Kerr     | " Taylor, H. B.     |
| " Low      |                     |
| " Madsen   | <i>Tellers :</i>    |
| " Morris   | " Aikens            |
| " Müller   | " Bjelke-Petersen   |

PAIRS.

AYES.

NOES.

|            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| Mr. Cooper | Mr. Evans      |
| " Dufficy  | " Plunkett     |
| " Power    | " Jones, V. E. |

Resolved in the affirmative.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (12.39 p.m.): I join with other hon. members in congratulating the mover and seconder of the motion before the House on the able way in which they carried out those duties. I congratulate you also, Mr. Clark, upon your promotion to the position of Chairman of Committees.

The recent election, which resulted in an overwhelming majority for the present Government, is in itself a good augury for the progress and development of this rich State. Notwithstanding that fact, the results are not entirely free from what could possibly be described by some people as unsatisfactory features. This Parliament at the present time contains a very weak Opposition who have not accepted their responsibilities as part and parcel of any democratic system of government. They are quite content with their small number—in the last couple of elections their numbers have fast been diminishing—to coast along and not take any active interest in the government of this State. They think they can apologise for their apathy, indifference and lack of enthusiasm by merely saying to the public, "We are not the Government." It would be a very bad thing for democracy if States were governed along such lines, with disinterested, apathetic Oppositions; to a large extent the government of this State is developing towards that condition.

As a member of this Government party, perhaps hon. members opposite will say to me "What have you got to growl at?" I am only speaking from a personal point of view and if I were selfish and not concerned with the future of the State I should be happy to know that we had such a weak, helpless and ineffective Opposition. I personally express my appreciation to the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite for the part they played in my election with a very substantial majority. I definitely and sincerely believe that had the Leader of the Opposition and other members from that side not addressed meetings in my electorate in support of my opponent, and had they not come to my electorate in such a more or less unenthusiastic and dispirited way and advocated my defeat, my majority would have been considerably reduced. To that extent I am grateful to hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for Cooroora, to whom I honestly believe I owe at least 500 of my majority.

There are other factors that have played a very important part in the heavy defeat of the Opposition at the last election. Not for one minute do I believe that there was any dishonesty or scandal or anything like that, things that history tells us often bring about the defeat of Governments. For instance, I remember an old Irishman once telling me that Ireland would have had Home Rule many years ago but for Parnell's association with a lady. I do not for a moment attribute the defeat of the Opposition to any such cause, but I do believe that notwithstanding the inherent honesty and accepted integrity of the Leader of the Opposition, he could not live down the fact that he was associated with the most treacherous party that has ever sat on the Government benches of an Australian Parliament, and I refer particularly to that treacherous crowd who at present occupy the Treasury bench at Canberra. As I have said, I give credit for 500 of my 3,000 majority to the hon. member for Cooroora, and I give Sir Arthur Fadden and the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies credit for at least another 2,000. I fully appreciate the fact that I suffer many disadvantages and handicaps, but I was very fortunate in that my opponent and those who supported her were associated politically with these men in Canberra, who bolted in 1941 and who would undoubtedly bolt again if another crisis occurred.

It is a great pity that our Australian proverbs have never been recorded. From time to time I have heard some very good ones. I remember being particularly impressed by one that a contributor to the Sydney "Bulletin" asked to have recorded in the "Aboriginalities" column. I was only a child at the time but it impressed me so much that I can still remember it. It read, "If your neighbour quotes the Bible, brand your calves early." I remember another bush proverb that says, "Never trust a bolting horse the second time." In 1941 Menzies and Fadden bolted from their responsibilities, and it would be a good thing for Australia if the electors remembered

that at the next Federal election. It was unfortunate that they did not remember it at the last one.

There is no doubt that the Menzies-Fadden Government have set out on a policy of abandoning this part of Australia to any invader who casts covetous eyes upon it. They have made up their minds that they will appease any nation that invades Australia by sacrificing Queensland. They will bury their heads in the sands of the other States like an ostrich.

The Liberal Party held a convention recently, and I am very pleased to be able to say that present at that convention were a few genuine Queenslanders and Australians who realise the truth of the things that I am saying about the Federal Government. Only yesterday the hon. member for Windsor quoted a resolution that was carried at the Liberal Party convention. If this tragic and treacherous Government at Canberra continue in office, it will mean that within the next 15 to 20 years this State will be surrendered to the Japs or to any other coloured race that invades us. At the moment Queensland is not so well represented at Canberra as it was prior to 1939. The lessons of 1939 to 1945 have been forgotten by these men in the South, the very people who are responsible for the defence and the development of this country.

Hon. members opposite may persist in defending them although they know they have betrayed Queensland and Australia. They know that they have misplaced their loyalty, and I am being kind to them in saying that, but having attached themselves to such a Government they feel that they cannot desert them now. However, I warn them of the day when the Menzies-Fadden Government will hand over Queensland, if they continue in office.

**Mr. Muller:** To whom will they hand it over?

**Mr. BURROWS:** Hand it over to the Japs, the same as they were willing to do in 1941. The hon. member should know better than anybody else the truth of that old proverb, "never trust a bolting horse twice." They bolted in 1941 and they would surely bolt again.

**Mr. Muller:** I would rather have a bolting horse than a jib.

**Mr. BURROWS:** The sooner the hon. member bucks the Menzies Government the better it will be for his own peace of mind, advancement and prosperity, and for the happiness of his children, if he has any.

**Mr. Lloyd Roberts:** Who were the bolters?

**Mr. BURROWS:** Let us examine the record of Mr. Menzies; if you like, go back to 1914. It is a matter for regret that a man like the Leader of the Opposition here should sacrifice so many useful years of his life in the service of such an unworthy cause as that espoused by the party to which he

has attached himself. He often reminds me of Goldsmith's description of a politician—that he was born for the universe, then changed his mind and gave up the party for mankind. I think the Leader of the Opposition is one who has compromised himself irrevocably and in spite of his inherent honesty and loyalty now finds himself trying to defend these people. Where has it led him? It led to a decisive defeat at the last State election as well as a number of previous State elections. It is indeed regrettable to see a man waste his life on such an unworthy cause. I maintain that the fact the Opposition in this State have degenerated to the extent they have is a matter for regret by any person who is concerned for the good government of this State.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Give us something constructive.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I will try to talk about something that will be of benefit to the State; I appreciate that the word "constructive" is foreign to the policy of hon. members opposite. I draw the attention of the public and the House to the attitude of the Federal Government who are determined to shut up the Callide coal-mine. I read in the paper some few weeks ago that the agreement with the Victorian Government on Callide coal had been suspended and the Victorian Government had refused to accept further supplies. The Press is just the tool of this Fascist organisation at Canberra. I use the word "Fascist" deliberately because Mr. Menzies has just paid his respect and homage to one of the leaders of Fascists in Africa, Dr. Malan. No doubt Mr. Menzies was thanked for the way his Government heavily subsidised African coal to the disadvantage of the Queensland coal industry in an effort to stimulate the economy of the State of which Dr. Malan is Premier. I have figures that show how much the present Federal Government paid on subsidies for coal imports. If these subsidies were not paid, the imported coal would not be able to compete with the Queensland product.

**An Opposition Member:** It made the wheels of industry turn down there.

**Mr. BURROWS:** It helped to turn the wheels of industry, but it turned them in reverse; they went backwards. During the last three years over £3,000,000 has been paid in subsidies on imported coal or to those persons in the southern States who elected to use imported coal in preference to the Queensland product. Mr. Menzies was responsible for that.

Hon. members will remember that some three years ago Callide reached the stage at which it was willing to supply coal in unlimited quantities to the southern States, and many owners were on the point of seeking contracts for deliveries when the agents for the African and Indian coal-suppliers approached the Federal Government and the Federal Government announced that if the consumers in the southern States were prepared to use African or Indian coal

in preference to Queensland coal, a substantial subsidy would be paid. In other words, approximately three years ago the Menzies-Fadden Government, in order to stimulate production and the economy of countries outside Australia, paid a very substantial subsidy on imported coal. This was to the detriment of producers of coal in Queensland and as a result the Callide coalfield in Queensland was particularly hard hit. Public reaction at that time forced that Government to compromise and I do believe they honestly thought all the contracts in the South had been tied up, so they offered to pay a subsidy on Queensland coal so long as the coal was taken in the South. To their surprise the contractors in Queensland obtained an order for 600,000 tons of coal, delivery to be over a period of three years. Notwithstanding that the subsidy offered and accepted on Callide coal was approximately one-third of that offered and accepted on imported coal, Callide coal was able to compete economically with the imported overseas coal. However, the Federal Government were determined to put every obstacle in the way of development of this field and notwithstanding that they had committed themselves to the payment of approximately 30s. a ton Senator McLeay, the Minister for Shipping, a willing tool in the hands of the agents for the overseas exporters, came out with the pernicious and lying statement that he could not allot ships for the shipping of coal from Gladstone to Victoria because the port of Gladstone was unable to accommodate these ships. That was a monstrous lie and the thing was deliberately planned for the purpose of defeating deliveries in fulfilment of the Queensland contract. It was some months before it could be corrected. As a result, during the first year of operations the contractors were able only to supply somewhere about 90,000 tons. In the course of time they approached the Victorian Government and pointed out that if delivery was to be at the rate of 200,000 tons a year on the three-year contract, as implied—and I use the word "implied" advisedly—it would be necessary to step up deliveries if the full 600,000 tons had to be delivered within the prescribed time. The Victorian Government very sensibly and very decently accepted the argument put forward by the contractor and agreed to take deliveries for the remaining part of the contract in quantities in excess of the 200,000 tons per annum and as a matter of courtesy informed the Federal Government to that effect.

I have here a copy of a letter sent by the Victorian Government to the Minister for National Development on 4 September, 1952. It reads—

"Confirming my telephone message, I have to inform you that, at a conference held in the Premier's Office, on 19 August, 1952, at which the Premier, Minister for Transport, Chief Secretary, Chairman of the State Electricity Commission, Mr. Foristal (Treasury), Mr. Lingford, Mr. Thorn and myself were present, the necessity to increase the intake of Callide coal to build up a reserve stock to meet any short supplies due to industrial troubles that may arise and to make the position

secure during the miners' Christmas vacation when supplies would be curtailed, were stressed by the Premier.

"It was finally agreed and directed that the receipts of Callide coal by the State Electricity Commission be stepped up to a minimum intake of 20,000 tons monthly. Gardiner & Warner Pty. Ltd. and The Australian Steamship Owners' Association were advised and requested to arrange accordingly.

"During the first twelve months of the currency of the Callide Agreement, only 90,000 tons (approximately) were received."

No reply was received to that letter. Delivery continued, and on 26 June last the Commonwealth Government wrote to the Victorian Government repudiating liability for subsidy amounting to some £50,000 odd. They said that the subsidy could not be paid on any delivery in excess of 200,000 tons in any one year, and that was the cause of the hold-up at Callide. The Victorian Government, as was natural, said they could not take any more coal until the matter was adjusted. But the Press was very careful not to publish the fact that the Commonwealth Government had repudiated their obligation to pay the subsidy! The total amount of subsidy paid on Callide coal for the period was £476,000, but at the same time £2,009,881 had been paid on Indian coal and £618,052 on African coal to Victoria. In addition to that, well over £1,000,000 has been paid by way of subsidy on foreign coal by the Federal Government to South Australia. They exploited every opportunity of hindering the delivery of Callide coal but made no attempt whatever to harrass the importation of foreign coal. Needless to say, apart from a moral obligation, they had no legal standing for the repudiation, and when the facts were put before the Prime Minister he had no alternative but to pay the arrears of subsidy and resume payments on future deliveries. The result has been that Callide is in production again and deliveries are being resumed. I repeat that ever since Callide was opened the Federal Government, just as the fox terrier barks and causes bigger dogs to fight but never does anything useful itself, has been at the heels of the Callide men and taking advantage of their control over shipping and big balances in the Treasury to subsidise competitors of Callide for the purpose of shutting down a Queensland industry. I venture the opinion that if Callide had been in South Australia or New South Wales there would have been an entirely different story to tell.

In an effort to make sure that Callide would not develop, the Commonwealth Government during the past two years have turned to the development of what is regarded as uneconomic seams of coal in western New South Wales. Many people believe that at Newcastle and at Wollongong and other places round Sydney there are unlimited supplies of coal. It is true that 200 years ago there was a great deal of coal there, but much of it has been taken out since that time. As I am not an authority on these matters,

I refer to the report of the Commonwealth-New South Wales Joint Coal Board, which says—

“It must be realised that the State has now passed beyond days of abundant coal of high quality available from the outcrop or shallow cover in close proximity to Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong.”

It is true that there is a big quantity of coal to be mined in the western part of New South Wales but the deposits are expensive to work and I again refer to the Coal Board's report in these words—

“These mines with the very generous assistance of the Federal Government . . .”

Generous assistance is absolutely denied to Queensland coalfields. The people of Victoria get a subsidy on Callide coal for the making of cheaper electricity.

**Mr. Pizzey:** What about roads?

**Mr. BURROWS:** It was more than paid back in sales tax and petrol tax and all other taxes.

**Mr. Pizzey:** The State Transport Act?

**Mr. BURROWS:** The State transport tax has been collected at Callide and the money has been expended on roads and that the hon. member knows full well. He and his colleagues tried to tell the people at Gladstone that this was not so; I am grateful that they tried to mislead the people and that the people were not misled, because my majority was greatly increased.

The Joint Coal Board, backed very strongly by the Federal Government, are endeavouring to develop the coal seams in the western part of New South Wales in order that the Callide field can be put out of production. The number of fields that can be worked economically is limited. In 1947 they were being mined at a cost of 14s. 6d. a ton. From an economic point of view that is a good figure but when an attempt was made to develop the uneconomic seams as well as the economic ones, we find, according to the Joint Coal Board's report, that it was costing 60s. 10d. a ton at the colliery. Callide coal costs less than £1 a ton at the colliery.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Give us the transport costs.

**Mr. BURROWS:** Callide coal transported to Gladstone costs less than this New South Wales coal produced at the mine and then that coal has to be carted over the Blue Mountains and put over the wharves in Sydney. The hon. member for Isis may be able to conjugate a verb better than I can, but I do not agree with him in respect of his knowledge of coal. In fact, I doubt whether he knows the colour of coal. I want to emphasise the fact that if the Federal Government would only stop interfering and meddling with the affairs of the coal-producers of Australia, Queensland coalfields would enjoy an era of great prosperity. Some hon. members opposite in 1948-49 accepted a payment by the banks of two guineas plus expenses, which was offered to anybody who would get up on the stump and preach the anti-nationalisation policy. I remember that

this House was meeting at the time, and on some days the Opposition benches would be almost bare because hon. members opposite were cashing in on this £2 2s. a day and hiring themselves out as public speakers. The hue and cry was, “They will nationalise the banks, and they will nationalise everything!”

Let us see the attitude to nationalisation of Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden, and as a witness against them I bring forward not a prejudiced Labour man but Sir Bertram Stevens, a former Premier of New South Wales. Hon. members, particularly the hon. member for Toowong, will know that he is recognised as a very sound accountant. Only last week he was giving evidence before the Public Accounts Committee of the Federal Parliament, and he was quoted as follows—

“The coal industry was being steadily nationalised under the duress of financial aid, Sir Bertram Stevens claimed before the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee.

“He said that this was being done by means of subsidy, price stabilisation and Government-finance ownership.”

He went on to say that the Auditor-General indicated that the capital cost of coal-mining and related companies fully owned by the Commonwealth amounted to £8.23 million. Further on he pointed out that the Federal Government had already appropriated £13.46 million for the purpose of nationalising the coal industry.

The expenditure of £13,000,000 on developing uneconomic mines in New South Wales could not be quarrelled with if coal was not available in Queensland in unlimited quantities and at a low cost. However, because of the hatred with which the Federal Government regard this State, they are determined to use the resources of the Federal Treasury to kill struggling industries in this State.

Before concluding, I should like to refer to a subject that was raised by the hon. member for Yeronga, who in my opinion, made one of the most premeditated attempts to be suspended that I have ever seen in this House.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. BURROWS:** Prior to his suspension this morning, he referred to the suspension by the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration of quarterly basic-wage adjustments. The hon. member has been able to avail himself of the best educational facilities in the country but his political bias and prejudice made his remarks rather crude. He said that the court had removed from our legislation the system of quarterly adjustments in the basic wage. Such a statement is too ridiculous to comment upon. No court can remove from our legislation anything that is honest. The hon. member for Yeronga was delighted because the suspension of quarterly adjustments in the basic wage would deny the workers the opportunity of having their wages adjusted in accordance with variations in the cost of living.

The hon. member said also that the Federal Government, not the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, had introduced the 40-hour week. I voted for the 40-hour week and I am not ashamed of it. The hon. member for Yeronga voted for it too but today he gets up in this Chamber and denies the fact. I sincerely hope that the hon. member knows his medicine better than he knows his politics.

(Time expired).

**Mr. CHALK** (Lockyer) (2.36 p.m.): At the outset I should like to join with other hon. members in expressing on behalf of myself and the electors of Lockyer our loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. I am sure that every Australian listened with pride and satisfaction to the Coronation festivities, happy in the thought that they belonged to the British nation. I am sure that all of us look forward to the visit by Her Gracious Majesty to this country early next year. It will put the finishing touches to the historical Coronation proceedings and will be remembered by all the children of this country.

I should like to make passing reference to the service rendered to the people by His Excellency and Lady Lavarack. Every hon. member is aware of the numerous demands made on the Governor of the State and we very much appreciate the fact that Sir John and his good lady make it convenient to find time to visit the northern and western parts of Queensland. The people in those areas are entitled to visits from His Excellency and Lady Lavarack because it brings forth a spirit of appreciation and makes them feel that they are really part of the State.

Before making some observations in respect of several matters that I propose to discuss at length, I should like to make passing reference to the speeches that have been delivered by some hon. members in this debate. I particularly pay a tribute to the excellent address by the hon. member for Cunningham. I am sure that every fair-minded hon. member will agree that in his maiden speech the hon. member proved himself to be a worthy successor to Mr. M. McIntyre and I am sure also that his experience as a primary producer, especially in the wheat industry, one that calls for our sound consideration at the moment, together with his years of experience in local government, will prove advantageous not only to the people of Cunningham but also to the State as a whole.

I want to make it perfectly clear that we on this side of the House are willing always to give credit where credit is due therefore I say that I believe that the speech by the hon. member for Condamine was one that every one was pleased to hear from the Government side of the Chamber. It did give an indication that some new thought was coming from the back-benchers of the Labour Party. I believe that if we can get further contributions of that kind from the

hon. member for Condamine, we can expect to find inside the ranks of the Labour Party men who are prepared to express their thoughts.

I wish also to make a few comments on the speech delivered by the hon. member for North Toowoomba. We all know that it is usual for that hon. member to take the Menzies-Fadden Government to task. That is his right; we do not deny him that; but on this occasion—I do not know whether it was because his remarks coincided with the visit of Field-Marshal Slim, the Governor-General of Australia, to this State—we found the hon. member coming into this Chamber and holding himself up as a military authority, as a field-marshal, on the defences of this Commonwealth. I do not want to say any more than this: I believe that the defence of this country is in the hands of military men with very high qualifications and that the men who are controlling the defence of this country in the Army, Air Force and Navy are men without political bias; therefore the affairs of this country are in the hands of people who will not be influenced by political bias and who will do all they possibly can to make certain that the future of this country is fully protected, and that your rights and mine, Mr. Speaker, are safeguarded. I do say to the hon. member for North Toowoomba that I deplore his attack on the measures taken for the defence of this country. I believe that if the hon. member spent his time in doing something in the interests of his electors he would be making a better contribution to the welfare of this State than he does by attacking the Menzies-Fadden Government because of what they are doing or not doing.

There is another thing I want to say to the hon. member. On this occasion—and very rarely does he do it—he attempted to draw a red herring across the trail in regard to the hon. member for Warwick and myself, in that he attempted to make some political capital out of a reference the hon. member for Warwick made to the butter industry and something I said in this Chamber. I remind the hon. member of this: in 1946 he represented country constituents, primary producers, and when he and I went to the poll in 1947 the people who sent me back to Parliament had the right to vote for me or for the hon. member for North Toowoomba. They had their choice. He had an opportunity to extoll his virtues to them, and what happened? It is not for me to parade it, but everyone knows that in 1947 the hon. member was sent back to school. I do think that he would be doing a service to his electors and the people of Queensland generally if he concentrated on looking after the interests of the people who sent him into this Chamber.

It is not difficult for us on this side to distinguish the part of the Governor's Speech that he prepared himself from the part that was prepared for His Excellency by his Government advisers. His Excellency's contribution to the Speech was on his usual high standard and his phrase that we shall need to

concentrate on farmers and fighters for a long, long time was a very well-timed and forthright expression. On the other hand, the Government's contribution this year was a very dismal one. Instead of setting out in the Governor's Speech the programme ahead of this State—for the next 12 months—and after all that is what we and the people of Queensland expect in the Governor's Speech—we find that it is notable for what it omits. It indicates to us that 11 Bills were to come before this Parliament but not one of those Bills concerned a matter of major importance. But that is typical of the contemptuous way in which the Labour Government treat the people. I do not deny that the Labour Government can come into this Chamber and say that they hoodwinked the electors at the last election so that they were returned with an increased majority and that the Government outnumber the Opposition by 2 to 1. They can certainly tell the people they were returned with a majority. We do not deny it on this occasion. We accept the figures, but I would remind the Labour Premier and his colleagues that it may be well to remember the old saying, "You can fool most of the people some of the time, and some of the people most of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time." And if the legislation we have seen going through this House in the past couple of weeks is an indication of what Labour intends to do now that it has a very large majority this Government are heading for a fall in the very near future.

During this motion on the Address in Reply it is usual for rank-and-file members to take advantage of the opportunity of working the parish pump and before dealing with one or two matters related to the State that I hope I shall have time to develop at length, I should deal with a few items of special interest to the electors of Lockyer. Firstly, I have something to say to the Secretary for Public Instruction. In His Excellency's Speech there was reference to a demonstration of loyalty to Her Majesty arranged by the school children on the occasion of Her Majesty's Coronation, and quite rightly so. The Governor's Speech was an ideal place in which to make reference to that. We all know that the day on which the school children assembled in the showgrounds in Brisbane will be remembered by them for all time, but there is something that will be remembered by the children of Lockyer for quite a long time. I do not blame the Minister personally for this, but I do blame his department for the niggardly attitude adopted by his department to the request made by me on behalf of the children of the Lockyer electorate for permission to take half an hour or so off from their school-time to view replicas of the Crown jewels that were being shown in Gatton. This is the point: the city children had an extra day's holiday to attend the Coronation festivities in Brisbane, and rightly so.

The Brisbane children had the extra day on the Wednesday, but the children in Lockyer had no opportunity of attending the demonstration I have mentioned. I do not

know whether the Minister had the opportunity of seeing the display or of hearing the address arranged by the Arts Council of Australia, but I and other hon. members did see it and I do not think any one of those who saw it would say that it was not worth while. When the department was requested to allow these children to have time off in order to go down, accompanied by their school teacher, to hear the address, the request was refused. I was told in a letter that they could go in their own time. This display was in Gatton from noon on the one day until about 3 p.m. the following day. Did the Government expect the parents to bring children in from outlying districts after half-past 3 in the afternoon, at a time when they are usually milking or doing something else, or early in the morning to see that display? I was disgusted, and the attitude of the department is a disgrace and blot on its record.

**Mr. Devries:** Who made that decision?

**Mr. CHALK:** The Director-General, I take it. I can produce to the Minister the letter that tells me that it could not be done, and it is signed by Mr. H. G. Watkin, Director-General of Education.

**Mr. Devries:** Signed by him personally?

**Mr. CHALK:** I take it that it is. I have only a copy. The original was sent by me to the people who made the request, the Gatton Chamber of Commerce.

**Mr. Devries:** What is the date of it?

**Mr. CHALK:** 29 August, 1953.

**Mr. Riordan:** The juvenile mind.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am pleased the Secretary for Mines and Immigration made that interjection. It indicates what the hon. member thinks of the children of Queensland. If he does not look after his own electorate, I cannot help it, but I am going to do all I can to protect the children of my area and to speak for them when I believe I should do so.

Some time ago the Secretary for Public Instruction, rightly so again, made some reference to the Warwick Central School. He said, "Personally, if I was a teacher I would not suffer the conditions at Warwick for two minutes." I do not know what has happened at Warwick since—I hope the matter has been rectified—but I should like to draw the notice of the House to the circumstances existing at Forest Hill, and I am pleased that the Secretary for Public Works and Housing is in the Chamber. At Forest Hill, 80 children are being taught in one classroom. There are two teachers endeavouring to teach four classes. There is no scholarship class there this year. Last year there was, and next year there will be 20 children in the scholarship grade. This room is only 40 feet long, and at one end there is the 1st grade chattering and learning how to spell "cat" and various other things. Is it right that children reaching scholarship grade should be expected to try to complete

their State school education under such circumstances? The Secretary for Public Instruction wrote to me some time ago and said that the matter was being looked into and I believe the Minister did that on this occasion. He said he would see what could be done, but the next thing that happened was that the Secretary for Public Works and Housing informed me—or at least his department did by letter—that the department could not provide the lousy partition to go between these two classes. I say deliberately that we see hundreds of thousands of pounds being spent on new schools in other areas. I am not asking for anything great, but simply a small partition to enable the children of Forest Hill to get a satisfactory education, but we are told that because of the Commonwealth Government's niggardly attitude towards Queensland no money is available for this work. I think that is a clear indication of the depth to which the Secretary for Public Works and Housing and his department will sink when, in reply to a letter asking—

**Mr. Hilton:** Do you say I informed you?

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. gentleman's department.

**Mr. Hilton:** Speak the truth. You said I did.

**Mr. CHALK:** The Minister must accept responsibility for his department because if he does not I do not know who does.

**Mr. Hilton:** You never wrote to me on the matter.

**Mr. CHALK:** I wrote to the Secretary for Public Instruction.

**Mr. Hilton:** You never wrote to me.

**Mr. CHALK:** I knew better. The hon. gentleman's department has told me that that was the position. I am not going to pursue that matter any further, except to say that if he or his department wants somebody in the area, some A.L.P. branch, to get credit for the partition, for goodness' sake, give us the partition and let him give credit to whom he likes.

**Mr. Hilton:** Have you ever written to me on the matter?

**Mr. CHALK:** No. After all, I must write to the Secretary for Public Instruction. Get out of that one! It is a matter concerning the Secretary for Public Instruction, and not the Secretary for Public Works.

**Mr. Hilton:** Courtesies that are being extended to you will be withdrawn.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am pleased you have said that. It indicates your attitude.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I should like the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair.

**Mr. CHALK:** I will. Is it right for the Minister to make the statement he has just made to me? In other words, that is a threat, not to me, but to my electors. It is a threat.

**Mr. Hilton:** You tell the truth.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am telling the truth and I give the Minister the opportunity of denying it. However, I am prepared to get past that one because I have another matter about which I am certain we can raise the blood pressure of the Secretary for Public Works and Housing. We all know that approximately two years ago a suggestion was made in this House that a number of prefabricated homes would be erected at Harlaxton in Toowoomba, which is in the Lockyer electorate. I asked a question as to the cost of these homes. They are now in the course of erection. A great deal has been said about their construction and whilst I believe that a tremendous amount has been said about prefabricated homes in the Brisbane area, I defy anybody to prove that any Housing Commission settlement in the metropolitan area depicts a greater abortion than this one at Harlaxton. Firstly, we had the commission—and I want to be careful in what I am saying or I may be suspended—by tactics very close to robbery taking over certain land from certain people in Toowoomba. What happened to those people is history. That land was taken from them.

**Mr. Aikens interjected.**

**Mr. CHALK:** It was resumed at the Government's own price.

What has happened since? According to the Minister's reply to a question by me the other day, a contract for 150 prefabricated houses now in course of erection was let in July, 1951. Two years have passed, but not one of those homes has been completed, not one of those homes has been let to anybody. I defy the Minister to prove in this Chamber that more than 80 of those homes are beyond the stage of merely having concrete stumps put in. In other words, 80 homes are in the course of construction, some of them being nearly finished, while the other 70 are only concrete stumps. In the first place, the type of home being erected has been condemned by every reasonable-minded person who has seen them. The timber being used is not suitable for the range country on which the homes are being erected. It is imported pine and will not stand up to the weather. Already a number of these homes are warped and a number of the uprights are split, but the project is still going on.

All these homes are scattered over a paddock on which no roads have been built. In addition, there is as yet no water on the site, but to make the position quite clear I intend to explain what has happened in regard to the water and the electricity. I know that the Treasury has made available to the Toowoomba City Council a loan with which to put in the water, and I know that the work is now under way. I know also that the Toowoomba Electric Light Company is putting in the electricity, but when I asked the Minister a question in this House the other day—and that was directed to him—he said that the reason these homes were not being occupied was because the

Toowoomba City Council had not provided the water and the electricity. Surely the Minister knows that the Toowoomba City Council has nothing to do with the installation of electricity! Or does he? That is an indication that his department does not know what is going on in this project.

Let me, however, pass that point and deal with the most important point. According to the Minister, the cost of these homes to date has been £239,872 and an amount of £17,916 is being held as retention money. To date, therefore, the Minister says that an amount of £257,788, less retention money, has been paid to the contractor. I cannot find out whether that amount includes anything for some of the material that is stacked on the ground and is deteriorating there. The whole point of the matter is that if there is any value in what is on the ground, I believe it is no more than £17,000.

And so we have the position that 80 homes are virtually complete and, on the figures provided by the Minister, they have cost at least £3,000 each, without the cost of the land, the cost of bitumen streets, which the council insists must be put in, the cost of water, the cost of electricity and the cost of fencing. At a conservative estimate, therefore, this Government are squandering up to £3,250 on the building of each home at Harlaxton. The same-sized home in hardwood is being built in Toowoomba at a price of £2,200 and I defy the Minister to deny that. So far we have 80 homes on which £1,000 each of the people's money has been squandered—£80,000 has been squandered on this project alone. Is it right for the members of the Government party to get up and talk about the niggardly attitude of the Federal Government, of the small amount of money that they give to the State, when we have this indication of wasteful spending by this Government? The quicker the Federal Government pull in the amount of money that they make available to this Government the better it will be, not only for Queensland but for the Commonwealth as a whole. The whole position at Harlaxton is a farce and the Minister knows it. He also knows that he has been building homes there for two years and what have we got? Nothing that anyone can be proud of; only a debt of £3,200 on each home. If this thing is allowed to continue—another 70 homes are to be built there—the cost will be colossal. If the Government sell them, the person who buys them will be absolutely robbed and if the houses are rented on a cost basis it will be a downright shame that the Government should deal with the worker like that. If they are going to base the rental of the homes on the cost of them, heaven help the persons who rent them.

I know that there are some hon. members who would be disappointed if I concluded my speech without some reference to the Queensland railways. Twelve months ago I argued about the design of the diesel-electric locomotives that were being imported from America. On that occasion the Minister attempted to belittle me in the eyes of the

public. I based my arguments on the design of the first British diesel locomotive that had already arrived in this State. I do not care what has happened but the fact remains that today we are buying streamlined engines. I also argued about certain technical points in respect to the new diesels and again I was scoffed at.

It would be interesting to know where the diesels are at the present moment. They are in the Ipswich workshops, some of them now having attention to bogies. When I made my inquiries the Minister retorted that I was not an engineer and that if I was a salesman I was one probably only one from instinct. The fact remains that the two things that I mentioned twelve months ago have come true.

I referred also to rail costs and I advocated an inquiry into the administration of the State railways. We did not get an inquiry but we got an increase in freights and fares and an increase in the railway deficit. I believe that it could have been avoided.

The Governor's Speech made glowing reference to the development of Queensland by the use of diesel electric locomotives. I am not going to deny that there has been development in this State but the Governor's Speech made no reference to the increase in the railway deficit despite the fact that the Railway Department of Queensland is one of those things that could bring about the insolvency of the State. We must impress that upon the people of Queensland.

**Mr. Jesson:** Utter nonsense!

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. member for Hinchinbrook says that it is utter nonsense. I emphasise this: the Minister for Transport, whenever an occasion arises, goes to the State of New South Wales and quotes what is happening in that Labour-governed State as some indication of what ought to happen in Queensland. It is interesting to quote what is happening in New South Wales under the present Labour Government. In the year 1950-51 the railways in that State showed a deficit of £6,417,431; in 1951-52 the deficit was reduced to £2,000,000 and the 1952-53 figures indicate that the deficit has been reduced to £1,450,000. So in three years we have a reduction in the deficit on the railways in that State from approximately £6,417,000 to £1,450,000 while ours has increased from £1,000,000 to £4,500,000.

**Mr. Devries:** How many railway employees were dismissed in New South Wales?

**Mr. CHALK:** I knew the Minister would ask how many people were dismissed. I put it to this Government that it is a question of running the economy of this country, and if it is a question of transferring men from one section of an industry to another, is it not better to save the economy of the country by transferring those men instead of pandering to them as we are doing? (Government interruption.)

Now I am tempted a bit further. The position in Queensland is this: we have had an indication through the Press during the last week or so that the Minister for Transport let his hair down in Caucus on the discussion on salaries and we had an indication the other day of what he can do, when the Minister again let his hair down during a debate. I do not say that he is not entitled to do that, but let him let his hair down when it comes to the administration of the Railway Department and let him face up to his responsibilities. Today there is too much appeasement of the railway employees by this Government, and the Minister knows it.

I want quickly to touch on another matter. I asked the Minister for Transport how many railway accidents had happened in Queensland during the last 12 months, and the Minister, for his own reasons—and I leave everyone to judge them—said he could not supply me with the information because it was not compiled in the form that I wanted it. I want to give the Minister the figures. I will not give them in a way that will disclose the source from which they came, because the Minister said that any railwayman who talked to me was a traitor to this State.

**Mr. Devries:** He never did.

**Mr. CHALK:** He did. I challenge the hon. gentleman to disprove it.

The point is that I asked how many accidents occurred in this State and I asked how many accidents happened for which railway employees were responsible. There have been 34 accidents during the last 12 months that were classed as major accidents. I asked also what action had been taken against anyone who might have been responsible. In six of the accidents responsibility was sheeted home to the department. What happened to the people responsible, I cannot say, but what I want to say is this: these inquiries have been closed to the public. Why? They have been closed so that the public will not know that the Railway Department is responsible for these accidents so that the liability of the department will not be disclosed and claims for damages thereby substantiated.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdakin) (3.15 p.m.): Before embarking on a discussion of matters connected with the motion I, with other members who preceded me, would give expression to my loyalty and allegiance to the British throne and express my pleasure at the accession of Our Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. I am sure I am voicing the opinion of all when saying that we fervently hope her reign will be a long one, and that in it we shall enjoy peace and prosperity. We might even progress to an extent comparable with the progress made in the reign of the Queen Elizabeth of the 16th century.

The interest the Governor takes in Queensland is well known to all and greatly

appreciated, I am sure. His Excellency moves frequently about the State, making himself conversant with its requirements and doing what he can, by his expressions of opinion, to further its welfare. We hope he too will live long to fill this important office with credit to himself and benefit to our State.

I am pleased also to have Mr. Speaker re-occupying the Speaker's Chair in this Parliament. His is a very high and honourable office and we know he will fill it well and I am glad to have the opportunity of extending my congratulations to him on having the confidence of his party in him expressed by his re-appointment. To you, Mr. Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees, I would say that you are very favourably regarded and it was with distinct pleasure that I learned of your being appointed to the office of Chairman of Committees. I regretted deeply the passing of our former Chairman of Committees, the late Mr. David Farrell. He too on all occasions did whatever he could in a friendly way to help me by his advice. I have been very appreciative of that.

I listened with very keen interest to the speech made by the hon. member for Condamine when moving his motion. Particularly was I interested in the part relating to education in this State. I agree with everything he said. You will remember that in this House suggestions similar to his were made previously by the hon. member for Isis and myself. We who have been school teachers, observant teachers, know the requirements of the department and we pass on these suggestions, always in the hope they will be helpful. There is no pleasure in trying to embarrass any person. The object of every one of us should be to do all we can in the interests of the children of this State.

I know that the Minister and hon. members would be very disappointed if I did not say something about the Bowen hospital. Of course, there is the man who when about to tell a story says, "If you've heard this one before stop me." Hon. members have heard this one before but they must continue to hear it until there is a new hospital in Bowen, for on every opportunity I have I must, on behalf of the people of Bowen, advocate to the fullest extent the building of a new hospital in that area.

**Mr. Jesson:** The Army nearly knocked it down recently.

**Mr. COBURN:** I wish they had. If they had, it would have had to be rebuilt.

There are two reasons why there must be a new hospital at Bowen. It is not suitable for the purpose for which it was established, because of unsatisfactory design and the risk of fire. You can do what you like to this hospital, you can improve it, put extensions on, paint it, or repair it, but you do not achieve what is necessary, that is an alteration of design. The design is all wrong, and anyone who has been to the institution will readily agree that my statement cannot be

refuted. When it was built originally it was intended to accommodate 12 patients. The average daily number of occupied beds last year was just in excess of 20. There is no provision enabling patients to be treated as they should be. Cases of all kinds are herded together. I do not say these things with any intention of being in any way disparaging of the doctor or nursing staff.

**Mr. Aikens:** Do you mean the contagious and non-contagious are together?

**Mr. COBURN:** All classes of cases, surgical, medical, infectious, and even mental are herded together. There is a very fine section for maternity cases, and if the rest of the hospital were in keeping with that maternity section I should not be giving expression to these opinions today. The convalescent and the dying are accommodated side by side. There is no possibility of segregation, because no provision has been made for it in the design of the hospital. Male and female cases are separated by only a few feet of veranda space. There is no privacy and under conditions like those the conversation that goes on is a free-for-all, a community affair, and very often things that should not be seen cannot be concealed, because of the situation of the wards. We find children lying close to the moribund cases aware of sights that must appal them, sights that must have an adverse psychological effect on them that will last throughout their lives. I have spoken before about the situation of the operating theatre and the closeness of the morgue to the kitchen. The department has tried to brighten up the place by painting it and repairing a few boards, but the most important fact is that the design of the place is wrong and because of that fact the institution cannot give the medical treatment that should be given.

I have mentioned the fire risk. It is an old wooden building situated on a high hill on wooden blocks.

**Mr. Jesson:** It is a beautiful site.

**Mr. COBURN:** It is the best site in Queensland, and we do not want to lose it.

**Mr. A. Jones:** Then you have something.

**Mr. COBURN:** We have, and we are very appreciative of the fact that we have. We have a splendid brick nurses' quarters that anybody would be proud of, and we have a good maternity section. I am not complaining about these things. I give full credit to the Minister for having provided them. I am concentrating on the things that are wrong and need rectifying.

At a public meeting in 1949 the superintendent of the fire brigade made a statement about the vulnerability of the hospital. He said—

“The Bowen hospital building, with regard to the possible menace of fire, is badly situated on the crest of a hill with only one access road and on the calmest day gets a spiral breeze which would fan a fire.”

Some people say that the town should be called Blowin', not Bowen. Although these breezes have a direct effect on a fire that may break out at the hospital, it is good for the members of this House to know that Bowen is one of those places where breezes are prevalent.

The superintendent of the fire brigade went on to say—

“It is a building of weather boards on 2 feet 6 inch blocks which form a draught and this, together with the lay-out of the building, would carry flames right through the walls. 500 feet of hose would be needed to carry water from the nearest town main to the furthest building, and 300 feet from the special hospital main.”

“Such lengths of hose would minimise pressure, and gravitation being impossible pumping would be necessary. Hoses would also hinder any vehicle transporting patients from the hospital. The fire brigade board rates the hospital as No. 1 fire risk in Bowen and wishes to see it replaced with a fire-resistant building.”

**Mr. Dewar:** Haven't they done anything about that hospital yet?

**Mr. COBURN:** I should not be speaking if they had; I will continue to speak about this hospital until these dangers are removed. The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs has said that a 4-inch water main direct to the reservoir was installed in the hospital grounds and 12 fire extinguishers had also been installed. We know that under present conditions they are essential, but the very necessity for their being there is an indication of how great the fire risk is. The Minister further says that the board has worked in close harmony with the fire brigade and that everything recommended by the fire officer has been done. I think that what the Minister says is correct but I understand that the fire brigade board did ask for a toboggan ladder so that in case of fire in the institution it would be able to slide the patients down, because it knew of the insurmountable difficulties to be encountered in removing them from a burning building.

It is remarkable, Mr. Speaker, that there has been an incessant demand for a new hospital at Bowen. All the unions in Bowen and all the business people and the housewives of Bowen have demanded a new hospital but no new hospital has been built. The Government seems to be ready to provide money for the doctor's residence and they seem ready to provide money for the nurses' quarters and for a new morgue and a new laundry, but for some reason or other they will not go so far as to provide the money for the new hospital, the thing that is most urgently needed.

**Mr. A. Jones:** You cannot be pressing it.

**Mr. COBURN:** Perhaps I am not pressing it, but I have brought it before the Minister at every opportunity and I have got to the stage when that hon. gentleman has admitted to me the necessity for a new hospital. On previous occasions it was the shortage of

materials and manpower that prevented it, but now that difficulty has been overcome it is a shortage of money, and so it goes on interminably and Bowen has not got its new hospital. I hope that the hon. gentleman will come to Bowen. I wrote and extended an invitation to him to come up and he replied politely and said that it would be a pleasure to do so but at that time he was deeply engrossed in other work and the election campaign was not far off and he did not find it convenient to come. I hope that he will come in the near future when the opportunity presents itself and when he does I will do my utmost to show him the hospital as well as the beauty spots of Bowen, and I hope to be able to make his trip to that seaport a happy one.

**Mr. Jesson:** Will you take us all?

**Mr. COBURN:** I should like to take the hon. member for Hinchinbrook, as he is not very popular in Bowen because of something he said about their all being Communists up that way.

There is another matter that has greatly agitated the minds of the people and that is the serious erosion occurring at Queen's Beach, which is a beautiful spot. It is one of the ideal spots in Queensland; the Bowen people are very proud of this place and have done everything they could to make it an attractive tourist resort. There is serious erosion of the beach, particularly near the Boat House and the Ozone Hotel. It is feared by some that the sea might break through and link up with the harbour. I do not know whether that fear is well-founded. I understand that the officers of the Department of Harbours and Marine do not subscribe to it, and of course we concede that those men know their business and we do not think that will happen, but there is no gainsaying the fact that if the sea did break through it would make a new waterway that would separate Horseshoe Bay and Rose Bay, two of Bowen's most attractive seaside resorts, from the town. If that happened it would be necessary to spend a considerable sum of money in building either bridges or causeways across the new waterway to give the people of Bowen access to two of their most attractive resorts.

**Mr. A. Jones** interjected.

**Mr. COBURN:** They do not agree. They think certain works can overcome the danger with which they are confronted. It will be necessary to build a wall for the full length of the beach. An experimental wall was built there some two years ago, at a cost I understand of £5 a foot, and it has withstood all the ravages of the huge waves that roll in. It is thought that a wall should be built and that the old wall should be used as a firm foundation.

I suggest to the Treasurer that he give serious consideration to constituting a Queen's Beach Trust. We already have the Burdekin River Trust and the Don River Trust, both of which were established for the purpose of saving our agricultural lands from erosion by those two rivers. It is

just as important to save our valuable foreshores as it is to save our alluvial soils adjacent to rivers.

**Mr. Jesson:** Who will pay for it?

**Mr. COBURN:** I will explain that.

**Mr. Jesson:** The Burdekin River Trust is done for nothing.

**Mr. COBURN:** It is not done for nothing. A benefited area is declared, and the people in that benefited area provide 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. of the cost of erosion-prevention work and the Government provide the remaining 66 $\frac{2}{3}$  per cent. by way of subsidy. Anybody who has seen the beneficial effect of the work that has been done on the banks of the Burdekin River would not be foolish enough to say that the money had not been well spent. There was some very serious erosion on the banks of the Burdekin, and thousands of acres of the best agricultural land could have been destroyed or irreparably damaged. They have been saved by the work of the Burdekin River Trust, and there is no reason why our valuable foreshores could not be saved in exactly the same way. I suggest to the Treasurer that he take a line from the establishment of the Burdekin River Trust and the Don River Trust and establish a Queen's Beach Trust. A benefited area could be declared, and the people in that area would find one-third of the cost and the Government would provide the other two-thirds by way of subsidy.

Another very important matter that I have mentioned in this House previously is the establishment of an iron and steel works at Bowen. Since I came into this House in 1950 I have never missed an opportunity of bringing before members of this Parliament, and the people of Queensland, the excellent opportunity that exists at Bowen for the establishment of an iron and steel industry. In one of the first speeches that I made in this House I dealt with the scheme in detail to show what could be done. When I revived this advocacy after it had been as dead as the dodo for almost 30 years I gave the House details of the natural resources that existed in abundance in close proximity to or within easy distance of Bowen. I also gave the contents of a report by a special commission away back about 30 years ago and I told of all the other advantages, apart from the natural resources, that exist at Bowen to make it an ideal place for the establishment of this iron and steel works.

The Premier of Queensland (the Hon. V. C. Gair), the Deputy Premier (the Hon. J. E. Duggan), the Secretary for Mines and Immigration (the Hon. E. J. Riordan), Mr. L. Short (Federal Secretary of the Ironworkers' Union), and Mr. H. G. Peebles (State Secretary of the Ironworkers' Union) have all by their recent statements confirmed what I said in 1950 and which I have repeated on many occasions since then. The Premier, before his departure for England to attend the Coronation, is reported to have said—

“During his visit overseas he would try to interest investors in the establishment of

an iron and steel works in North Queensland. He said he believed that geological surveys would show that Queensland had workable iron ore deposits. These could be used with Queensland's acknowledged coal deposits in the establishment of an iron and steel industry."

When I read his published statement I wrote to the Premier and congratulated him on the statement he had made and on the desire that he had, that when he went abroad he would interest investors in Bowen. He acknowledged that letter and said that nobody was more eager than he to see an iron and steel works established at Bowen and Bowen become the Newcastle of North Queensland.

"The Townsville Bulletin" of 29 July, 1953, published this report of a statement by the Acting Premier, Hon. J. E. Duggan—

"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. Such furnace, he said, would use coke produced at the Bowen State Coke Works. It would take 60,000 tons of coke to produce 60,000 tons of pig iron.

"Mr. Duggan said that a parliamentary report on ore deposits at Iron Range in Cape York Peninsula, was now being used by a committee set up to examine the prospects of establishing an iron and steel works in Queensland.

"The committee was also examining the overseas 'Suess' process for converting iron into steel—a system which, it is believed, would reduce the capital outlay for establishing a steel and iron works and the cost of converting iron into steel.

"Mr. Duggan said the committee had proposed that a complete survey of the State's iron ore resources would be made."

**Mr. Riordan:** They are being made.

**Mr. COBURN:** They are, and they know that in Bowen too. I can assure the hon. gentleman that the people of Bowen are appreciative of what he personally is doing towards the development of industry in their area.

**Mr. Riordan:** It shows that I have no bias.

**Mr. COBURN:** That is right, and it is appreciated by them and by me too. I am glad to know that I have such an influential Minister behind me in this matter.

The report in "The Townsville Bulletin" continues—

"In order to provide for the continued operation of a steel works huge quantities of iron ore would be needed.

"In addition to Iron Range which is close to Portland Roads Harbour, Queensland has other apparently large deposits of iron ore at Mt. Leviathan and Mt. Philip near Cloncurry.

"The Queensland Government about 30 years ago had iron ore leases at Yampi Sound but, when proposals at that time

for an iron and steel works at Bowen fell through the leases were sold back to the Western Australian Government."

The Secretary for Mines and Immigration, in a speech broadcast on 30 August, said—

"Queensland could have another Newcastle at Bowen by the establishment of a steel industry.

"It would foster the growth of other valuable industries and open the back country for closer settlement and consequently greater food production.

"The existence of greater tonnages of iron ore would have to be proved before such a new industry could be maintained.

"The Government are now acting quickly to test the extent of iron ore deposits at Iron Range in the Cape York Peninsula, near Portland Roads.

"We hope the results of this work will assure us of suitable reserves for this is ideally situated as regards transport of the ore by sea to Bowen."

Again I say, "Hear! Hear!" to that statement. I appreciate it very much. I am glad to know of the keen interest that the Minister has in this project at Bowen.

"The Brisbane Telegraph" of Monday, 31 August, 1953, contained the following statement:—

"Finance should not be a stumbling block to the establishment of the steel industry on a large scale in Queensland," the Federal Secretary of the Ironworkers Union, Mr. L. Short, said in Brisbane today. His comment follows a broadcast talk by the Minister for Mines (Mr. Riordan) indicating the importance of a steel industry if it were established at Bowen.

"Mr. Short said that his union generally would be delighted to hear of the possibility of the establishment of a steel industry especially in Queensland.

"He said that Australian steel was of a very high quality and was produced at a lower cost than in many other countries. With all its natural resources Australia was importing steel. Not long ago there was a tremendous lag in orders. It would be wonderful if the industry could be expanded to the stage when Australia could export large quantities of good quality steel. If the Federal and State Governments gave the necessary financial assistance there was no reason why it should not be of great economic value to the country and, naturally, it would provide employment for many more workers. On behalf of his union he promised that all assistance for the smooth running of the industry would be given; it was members of the Ironworkers Union who were largely employed at the steel works.

"The State Secretary for the Iron Workers' Union, Mr. H. G. Peebles, had also guaranteed that the Queensland Branch would do everything possible to assist in the establishment of the steel industry in Queensland."

Only recently, when I asked a question of the Acting Premier, he was constrained to ejaculate, "They will erect an iron statue to you." I am glad that he has a full appreciation of the efficacy of my agitation in this matter, and that he thinks my consistent advocacy is worthy of the recognition he suggested. I am unmistakably convinced, apart from the statements I have just quoted, that the people of Queensland would be wholeheartedly behind any venture for the establishment of an iron and steel industry at Bowen—I do not think there is any question about where it should go, if one is established. Who then is there left for me to convince? Believing as the Bard of Avon, the eminent William Shakespeare, so beautifully expressed in his immortal play, "King John," that—

To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,  
To throw a perfume on the violet,  
To smooth the ice, or add another hue  
Unto the rainbow, or with taper light  
To seek the beauteous eye of Heaven to  
garnish,

Is wasteful and ridiculous excess—

I will not waste any time in endeavouring to add strength to a case that in itself is already strong enough to arouse in me the hope that before many more years have passed we shall see belching forth from the high chimney stacks of the Bowen Iron and Steel Works great columns of smoke.

On 20 August I sought to ascertain from the Secretary for Public Instruction whether, in view of the present growing importance of the agricultural, dairying and grazing industries of the Burdekin Valley and the outstanding importance of increasing population and production in the North, he would give favourable consideration to the establishment of an agricultural high school and college in a suitable position in North Queensland. The Minister informed me—

"The Government are satisfied that the agricultural college at Lawes amply provides for the State requirements for instruction to a higher standard as represented by the diploma courses and that there is no immediate demand for an additional agricultural college to be established."

The Minister's reply is subtly worded. It expresses the truth but it deceives because only the man deceiving would read into it the relationship to the instruction being provided and the man deceived would infer nothing about the number who have to be instructed. Ample provision is made for instruction up to the diploma courses; we do not doubt that.

The hon. member for Marodian a week later, on 27 August, asked a question of the Minister and was told that the number of pupils enrolled this year at the Agricultural High School and College at Lawes was 564 and that the number refused enrolment because of insufficient accommodation was 60. Sixty young men desirous of being

trained to go on the land cannot get admission to our only State-controlled agricultural college.

**Mr. Devries:** How do you know how many are being trained to go on the land?

**Mr. COBURN:** If they want to go to an agricultural college they would not want to be aviators. What would they go to an agricultural college for? They want to do something on the land and we want them to go on the land. Further than that, the whole position is that the Minister himself has told us that 60 could not be admitted to that agricultural college because of lack of accommodation.

**Mr. Devries:** I will tell you the story later.

**Mr. COBURN:** I will read a circular letter—

"Queensland Agricultural High School and College.

"Reservation for Students Accommodation for 1954.

"Dear Parent or Guardian,

"At the commencement of this present year the number of applications for enrolment received far exceeded the accommodation available. In consequence it was necessary to refuse a large number of applications. Some limitation to student numbers, considerably below total applications for re-enrolment and new enrolments may, therefore, be expected for the coming year.

"Under these circumstances, it is imperative that definite advice be available with respect to accommodation required for present students who will be re-enrolling in the coming year. This information is required at an early date so that appropriate attention can be given to applications for new enrolments.

"Accordingly, all parents are requested to complete the attached form and to return it to this office as soon as possible and not later than the 30th September, 1953. Unless a definite application for reservation of accommodation for 1954 is received, no guarantee of accommodation for that year can be given, even though the student concerned may have been enrolled at the commencement of this year with the intention of undertaking a course of longer duration than the one year.

"Your co-operation in this matter will be appreciated.

"N. W. Briton,

"Principal."

**Mr. Devries:** You would not have known unless the hon. member for Aubigny gave you that.

**Mr. COBURN:** It does not matter how I know; the fact is that I know. What does it matter where I got it? The question is; is it the truth or is it not the truth?

**Mr. Devries:** You are not interested in it.

**Mr. COBURN:** Of course I am interested. I represent one of the greatest agricultural districts in Queensland. Because I am the representative of the people there, I am going to do my utmost to get for them what they are justly entitled to have. And the Minister tells me I am not interested in agricultural development in this community!

**Mr. Devries:** You are not, because the hon. member for Aubigny gave it to you.

**Mr. COBURN:** Because I happened to mention to the hon. member for Aubigny that I was going to speak on the agricultural college and he was not going to speak on it, he gave me something, not to help me but to help all the boys in Queensland who wish to enter the agricultural college.

**Mr. Devries:** You do not know the first thing about it.

**Mr. COBURN:** There is the statement. Let the people of Queensland be the judges. This agricultural college should be established on the Lower Burdekin. Having suggested that, I feel that it devolves upon me to give reasons why that should be the site of this college.

**Mr. Riordan:** What about Flinders?

**Mr. COBURN:** They have not the development schemes on the Flinders that we have on the Burdekin. At the present time the greatest development scheme ever undertaken in Queensland is well under way in the Lower Burdekin Valley. This scheme is so colossal that it is estimated by the Government that at its completion it will have cost £70,000,000. The report of the Burdekin River Authority, published in December, 1951, states that the final expenditure of £51,000,000 on irrigation development will make possible production of a gross value estimated to be of the order of £16,000,000 a year, which is almost as great as the irrigated production from the whole of Victoria. Many thousands of trained farmers will be required to achieve this huge production and facilities will have to be provided now to train and fit them for the great national work in which they will become engaged.

Dealing with the training of settlers, the Burdekin River Authority said in its report—

“No matter how carefully the engineering and agricultural aspects of the project are investigated and planned the success of the irrigation development will rest ultimately on the shoulders of the individual settlers. The early difficulties of many irrigation areas in southern States can be attributed in no small measure to the inexperience of settlers in irrigation farming. It is well-known that a good farmer will succeed where a neighbouring poor farmer under similar circumstances will fail.

“The late Mr. H. Dare, formerly Water Conservation and Irrigation Commissioner, New South Wales, and Commissioner, River Murray Commission, has quoted the development of the

Coomealla Irrigation area as a striking example of the difference which training and experience in the application of water and the other essentials of irrigation practice make to the irrigator. The settlers of the Coomealla area were drawn, for the most part, from the Mildura district which had been settled under irrigation for about 40 years. The rate of progress was amazing and within a very short time, orchards and vineyards, which continue to flourish, had been established with only a fraction of the financial assistance given to settlers elsewhere. Full regard will be had in the development of the Burdekin project to the selection of suitable settlers and to the provision of training, advisory and demonstration services.

“It is planned that similar care in the selection and training of settlers and assistance by means of extension services should be continued as other areas are opened for development.”

There we have a clear indication from the Burdekin River Authority, which comprises of such eminent men as Sir John Kemp, Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, Mr. W. H. R. Nimmo, Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, and Mr. H. N. Smith, Commissioner for Electricity Supply, of the necessity for sound training if our great irrigation development schemes are to succeed. Thousands of farmers will be needed in the Burdekin Valley in the years to come if the £70,000,000 project now being undertaken is to meet with the success for which the Government hope, and yet this Government, prepared to spend £70,000,000 are not willing to establish an agricultural high school and college within the area to fit and train the men who will be responsible for the conduct of that whole scheme when it comes to fruition. It is another classic example of spoling the ship for three h-pence of tar. I ask the Secretary for Public Instruction to have another look at this matter and consider the importance of the Burdekin Valley and its future prospects.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. BROWN (Buranda) (3.55 p.m.):** For the seventh year in succession it is my privilege to take part in this debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor a month ago.

**Mr. Aikens:** You will be here for years to come.

**Mr. BROWN:** I hope I shall. I hope that the people of Buranda will do as they did on the last occasion and increase my majority, which has increased from 613 to 2,594, and this with fewer names on the roll. That increased majority shows the confidence of the people of Buranda and has backed up the statement I made after the 1950 general election that the people of Buranda would still have Brownie here.

**Honourable Members:** “Good old Brownie!”

**Mr. BROWN:** I am pleased to hear "Good old Brownie."

I extend congratulations to all hon. members who have been elected to positions of trust and responsibility in this House to you, Mr. Speaker, particularly, although I have extended them to you personally. On this occasion, however, I want it recorded in "Hansard" that I am extending to you my congratulations on your being re-elected to the high and honourable office of Speaker of this Assembly. I extend to my friend and colleague, Jim Clark, congratulations on his election as Chairman of Committees. I do not wish to say anything about His Excellency because I have already subscribed my name to the roll and tendered my allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen. Without making a mouthful of it, that is sufficient.

I have noticed that the Opposition during debates in this House this session have had very little to say about the recent general election; they are keeping away from that subject altogether. They are licking their wounds but their wounds will not be healed by the time of the next general election. I have taken out a few voting figures that I should like to place before this House to show the great confidence that the people of Queensland have in the Labour Party. If we are to take cognisance of statements made by the Opposition from time to time, that we go to the country without a policy and depend on what we have been doing for the people of Queensland generally—and that is the Opposition's cry at election time—let me say that the people have endorsed what we have done, and we shall continue doing what we have been doing. The vote for the Labour Party at the last general election totalled more than that of all other parties, together with informal votes. The Labour Party got more than the whole lot put together. What an endorsement from the people of Queensland!

We find that the total votes cast were as follows:—

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Labour Party .. ..  | 376,740  |
| Liberal Party .. .. | 170,685½ |
| Country Party .. .. | 115,828½ |
| Others .. ..        | 18,379   |
| Informal .. ..      | 7,872    |

**An Opposition Member:** Where does the half come in?

**Mr. BROWN:** I am very pleased that question has been asked. We all know that the member for Lockyer belongs to both the Liberal and the Country Party, and it would not be fair to give to either of those parties the whole of the votes cast in his favour. I decided, therefore, to split the number of votes received by him and credit half of them each to the Country Party and the Liberal Party. I do not think I could be fairer than that.

I have also included in the figures for the Liberal Party and the Country Party the number of voters on the rolls for the electorates in which their candidates were returned unopposed. I refer to the electorates of Barambah and Landsborough for

the Country Party and Clayfield for the Liberal Party. I have given them credit for the whole of the voters on those rolls, because I think that is the only way to arrive fairly at the number of votes cast for each party. It might be said that these people did not have a vote, but they did. You, Mr. Speaker, issue a writ and the Electoral Office calls for nominations. Any person in Queensland who is over the age of 21 and is eligible to be on the electoral roll is entitled to get a nomination form and have it signed by the required number of electors. After doing that, he can submit the nomination, together with his deposit.

We find that there were 11 electorates in respect of which there were unopposed candidates. Silence indicates consent, and it is only right that the parties represented by those unopposed candidates should be credited with the whole of the votes in each of the electorates concerned. The true position cannot be arrived at in any other way, and I am claiming for the Labour Party the whole of the votes of the electors on the rolls of the eight electorates in respect of which Labour candidates were returned unopposed.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Did you credit the Liberals with 10,700 for me?

**Mr. BROWN:** Yes, and I credited the Country Party with the total number of votes possible in Landsborough and Barambah. That is the only fair way of getting at the true position. The total number of votes cast against the Labour Party—and I am including the informal votes—was 312,765, whilst the total number of votes cast for the Labour Party was 376,740, giving the Labour Party a majority of 63,975 over all the other parties combined, including the informal votes. It is something that is worth while recording and it is a clear indication that the great majority of the people support the Labour Party.

From time to time the Leader of the Opposition and others, including the hon. member for Toowong, have referred to what they called the good old Labour Party of days gone by. I have been in the party for a long time, ever since I was a boy in short pants—and that was not yesterday—and I can say that the party is just as sound today as ever it was. Therefore there is no need to refer to the good old Labour Party of days gone by as being one superior to the party today. Hon. members belonging to the party opposite did not see fit to join what they call the good old Labour Party of their day; rather did they oppose it tooth and nail. We have a record of their actions in the debates in this House. The Labour Party has been responsible for putting many Acts on the statute book of this State. It was vigorously opposed by people swearing allegiance to the political parties opposite, people like the hon. member for Toowong, who speak of the good old Labour Party and failed to join up with it. They are not likely to join up with it now but it is well to have these facts reported in "Hansard" so that the people will know

them. I hold in my hand a copy of the Constitution and Rule Book of the Queensland Labour Party dated February, 1913.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Does it contain the socialistic objective?

**Mr. BROWN:** Of course it does. The hon. member can see it for himself but I will not let him take the book away.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** I have a copy of the Liberal Party's constitution and you can have a look at that too.

**Mr. BROWN:** The Liberal Party has no constitution. During last session or perhaps the one before it was said by our opponents that the Labour Party had changed its objective but nothing is further from the truth. It has been amended from time to time but it still means the same thing. Let me read the objective from the Constitution and General Rules of the Queensland Labour Party before it was amalgamated with the Australian Labour Party. It says—

“The securing of the full result of their industry to all the wealth producers by the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, to be attained through the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State and local governing bodies.”

Now let me quote the objective of the party as contained in the Constitution and General Rules published in 1951. The latest one has not yet been printed. The objective of the Labour Party is the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange. So we have not altered in any way. When I hear these people talking about the great old Labour Party and when I remember some of the things they said and did against the stalwarts of the Labour Movement—the men who created the movement—it makes me sad to think people will act in that way. It shows that some things have not advanced very much since 1913. I remember the speeches that were made against us. At that time we were called Socialists, and we had to fight them all the way through. I do not mind them calling me a Socialist, because I am a Socialist; I make no bones about it. I believe in the real brotherhood of man. I believe that it is only through Socialism that we shall be able to bring the people together as one big family.

I am one who believes that the single tax, is the correct method of collecting taxation. During my maiden speech six years ago I said that I believed in unification. I am a believer in unification; I think that too is something we shall have to bring about. We shall have to get the States together and we shall have to become Australians rather than Western Australians, Victorians, South Australians, New South Welshmen, Queenslanders, or Tasmanians. As soon as we become a nation we should have had that as our objective; if we did, we should have advanced more quickly than we have.

It may be asked: would I do away with State powers. If we study the matter in a proper way, we shall find that only two forms of government are required in any country—they are national government and local government. There is no reason why we cannot divide Australia into provincial-council areas and give the local bodies powers to raise the wherewithal to do their part by public loans. I think it is vested interests that are keeping Queensland back. The large capital lies in the southern States, and they can say that Queensland will not get this or that. We want that state of things altered.

I go further in this matter of unification. I contend that the unification of nations and a world-wide Government to deal with international affairs should be our ideal. If we had that we should eliminate the great expense incurred in the production of armaments and preparation for war. All these things could be settled by arbitration by the international Government. When I brought this matter up before I was castigated and criticised by the hon. member for Fassifern, who said that I was a man who would have to be watched, and that I was a dangerous man. I am still of the opinion that the amalgamation of nations and the formation of an international Government is the only way to bring about a permanent peace in this world. We today are frightened of our near neighbours, millions of people of different colours. Why should we be frightened of them? They do not want to come and take this country, nor do we want to go over there and take theirs. Anyway, we have no right to do it. They are human beings just as we are. They are part of the population of the world. They are part of the handiwork of the Great Creator just as are we and we should concede that these people should have the right to have some say in what they are going to do, what we are going to do, and what everybody else is going to do. If each nation send a delegate to an international conference on the lines suggested I believe it would go a long way towards bringing about the abolition of war, war that causes so much turmoil and trouble and brings in its train nothing but waste, not only of human beings but of physical energy in the production of war weapons. Instead of putting human energy into that sort of thing we should put our energy into production of food to help those who cannot help themselves. If we did that, it would be something worth while.

I am not alone in these views. If hon. members want to do so they can read the issue of “The Courier-Mail” of some 18 months ago reporting the visit of a notable gentleman who addressed the Rotary Club in Brisbane. He said much the same thing. His statement about this international Government was received with honour and advertised in the Press. This is the only way to bring about a peaceful world. There cannot be peace in the world while there is the big power of money overriding the will of the people in every country in every possible way.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Is not that the objective of the United Nations?

**Mr. BROWN:** The United Nations is only a small extension of the Woodrow Wilson plan of the League of Nations. I want an extension of the United Nations to include the total nations of the world but that cannot be done while we find conditions as they are today.

**Mr. Kerr** interjected.

**Mr. BROWN:** We must aim at getting the majority of people in each country to send along their delegate and have the ideal realised. That is the only way but it cannot be done at present because people like hon. members opposite are so weak and so individualistic.

In His Excellency's Speech we find certain passages that are worth quoting. The Leader of the Opposition and others of our opponents have mentioned one of them—that since the 40-hour week was established the State is going backwards. Nothing is further from the truth, and they know it. It is not the 40-hour week that is stopping production, it is the fact that certain employers of labour will not get out of the rut and buy up-to-date machinery or give the workers decent conditions. But there are some decent employers and many improvements have taken place since the introduction of the 40-hour week on 1st January, 1948.

In his Speech His Excellency points out—

“Notwithstanding restricted credit and general shortage of money for industrial investment, secondary industries have continued to expand. The number of factories has increased by 142 to the new record figure of 4,918. The gross value of factory output increased by the very large sum of £33,830,884. Significantly, 65 per cent. of our factories are located in places other than the metropolitan area.”

There we have proof that the people are not all congregated in the metropolitan area; there are some in the country as well.

We all admit that coal is a basic industry because it is the source of our power and when dealing with coal production His Excellency said—

“Coal production was a record for the State, totalling 2,742,236 tons valued at £5,905,377.”

All this took place under the 40-hour week. Today the hon. member for Port Curtis told us how coal is being imported from other countries and subsidised by the Commonwealth Government while we are unable to sell Queensland coal. If that imported coal had been produced in Queensland our production would have been still higher—and that under a 40-hour week. As we adopt scientific methods of production we must realise that with those faster methods of production we must have shorter hours of labour in order to employ the whole of our

people in useful production. I am of the opinion that scientists and inventors are too far ahead of the people today and unless something goes wrong with atomic research we shall have even greater generation of electricity because I believe that through the application of atomic energy we shall be able to obtain electricity much cheaper and with a much smaller labour force than is possible today.

Recently the Federal Treasurer read his Budget in the Commonwealth Parliament. It has been rightly called the half-a-crown Budget.

**Mr. Kerr:** You ought to read the analysis of it.

**Mr. BROWN:** That is all right, but we must realise that although the basic wage has gone up during the last 12 months by something like £1 or even more the poor unfortunate age pensioner is to receive an increase of only 2s. 6d. a week. On the other hand we find that the wealthy are going to get infinitely more—millions of pounds more—because of the lifting of certain goods from tariff protection. In my opinion this was not the Budget of the present Federal Government but the Budget of the banks and big financial institutions behind them. I am surprised that the Opposition should talk about this Budget.

**A Government Member:** They have not worked.

**Mr. BROWN:** I know that some of them have worked. I am surprised at these young men who should have better vision and who should be able to see further than they see. Because this Budget is the Budget of the banks and big financial institutions. According to Press statements the Federal Government are giving £80,000,000 of relief to certain classes of people but the poor old age pensioner, the returned soldier pensioner, and the invalid and the widows get a miserable 2s. 6d. a week increase.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Are you going to impose entertainment tax?

**Mr. BROWN:** In reply to the hon. member for Isis as to whether I favour the imposition of the entertainment tax, let me say that as I get sufficient entertainment from the Opposition in this House I do not need to go to any other entertainment. (Laughter). It is the best entertainment one can get in the land. When I look across at the Opposition benches and see the nigger-boys and nigger-minstrels, the giggling Gerties, and the nude nudies, why should I have to go to any other place of entertainment?

Debate, on motion of Mr. Devries, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.28 p.m.