

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 1953

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

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Assent reported by Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS.

EXPENDITURE ON ROYAL VISIT.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Acting Premier—

“1. What amount do the Government propose to spend in connection with the Royal visit to Brisbane next year?”

“2. Do the Government propose to make any moneys available to other towns in connection with the Royal visit to such places, and if so, how much to each, to what bodies and under what terms?”

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

“1 and 2. In order that the Government may provide the necessary services to ensure the maximum comfort and pleasure for Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh during their visit to Queensland, and to provide suitable facilities for members of the general public, it will be necessary to make adequate appropriations. Details of these will appear in the Governmental Estimates when the Budget is being presented by my colleague the Treasurer.”

SURFACING OF AYR-ANA-BRANCH BRIDGE ROAD.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Transport—

“In reference to the bitumen road from Ayr to the Ana-branch bridge, leading to the Rita Island school, as the section between the bridge and the school is less than one-fifth of the whole length of the road in question, will he please give consideration to the immediate bitumen surfacing of such small section while the plant and labour are still at this job?”

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

“A scheme providing for resheeting and bitumen surfacing the section from Ana-branch bridge to the Rita Island school was released to the Ayr Shire Council on 20 August, 1953. The necessary authority to commence this work will be applied for when the Council's approval to the scheme is received.”

ELECTRIFICATION OF SOUTHERN DOWNS.

Mr. MADSEN (Warwick) asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

“1. What is the date of termination of the existing franchise of the Toowoomba Electric Light and Power Company?”

“2. What are the legal requirements regarding the actual termination of such franchise?”

“3. As the present condition of uncertainty is holding up progress of electrification in the Southern Downs, can he give any indication of the Government's intentions regarding this matter?”

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

“1. The existing franchise continues until such time as the Governor in Council exercises his right to acquire the undertaking in the terms of the Agreement between the State Electricity Commission and the Toowoomba Electric Light and Power Company.

“2. The legal requirements with respect to termination of the Company's franchise are contained in the Agreement between the Toowoomba Electric Light and Power Company Ltd. and the State Electricity Commission of Queensland published in ‘Government Gazette,’ No. 37, dated 22 August, 1940, and in an amendment thereto made by Proclamation dated 29 January, 1953, and published in ‘Government Gazette,’ No. 29, dated 31 January, 1953.

“3. The matters referred to by the hon. member are the subject of negotiation. In the meanwhile, with respect to electrical development, the Company is bound by the terms of the franchise Agreement to which the hon. member is referred.”

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Commissioner for Transport for year 1952-1953.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council (2) under the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1952.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 16 September (see P. 397) on Mr. Diplock's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory)—Secretary for Public Instruction) (11.9 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, with a measure of diffidence I should like to make a short observation on the conduct of an hon. member of this House that we had the displeasure of witnessing yesterday. I find that when the hon. member made the statement there was no heat of passion in him and he was quite radical when he made it. He charged the Acting Premier of Queensland with being a black-mailer—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I rule that the hon. gentleman is not in order in discussing that matter. The hon. member concerned has been suspended and the incident is closed.

Mr. DEVRIES: This is the first session of the thirty-third Parliament of Queensland, and my mind goes back to the days when this Parliament was first constituted. In 1859 an order in council was issued declaring that this Assembly should comprise 26 members. From then till 1890 the Queensland Parliament was elected for five-year terms, but from 1890 the term was reduced to three years. As I ramble through the corridors of this building I see the photos of many men who served this State faithfully and well. Many of them were not personally known to us but we have read of their achievements in the annals of history. They were given a task to do and never sought any reward. Those men worked hard so that we might enjoy the free institutions that we enjoy at the present time.

I think we, as a deliberative body, should take stock of ourselves. It has been said that many people get up in this Assembly and talk with their tongues in their cheeks. It is not what you say, but the way in which you say it that matters, some people say.

I pause here to pay my humble tribute and express my everlasting gratitude to those citizens who served this great State, and this Commonwealth, so faithfully and well both in peace and in war. I mention in particular a great Queenslander who has passed on, the late Hon. E. M. Hanlon. I well recollect one occasion in June, 1948, when the late Hon. E. M. Hanlon went to Sydney; it was on the occasion of a gigantic industrial upheaval in Queensland. We often hear the Opposition raving and ranting about this socialistic Government of Queensland; in fact, they would have the people believe that this is not only a socialistic Government but a Communist Government. The columns of "The Courier-Mail" in June, 1948, show what the late Hon. E. M. Hanlon was subjected to when he stepped off the 'plane in Sydney. The great Communists of the day, Healy and those fellows, staged a demonstration, and the late Mr. Hanlon was subjected to abuse and derision from those people, to whom I charge members of the Opposition with being closely related. The late Mr. Hanlon said to those people, "I have worked for only one country, Australia, all my life, and when I am hooted by the agents of another country I take it as a compliment."

The late Hon. E. M. Hanlon was not only a parliamentarian but a great statesman in every sense of the word.

A Government Member: He was an Australian.

Mr. DEVRIES: He was a good Australian. There were many things he would have liked to do under his regime in this Parliament, but unfortunately he was not able to do them.

I have listened to many of the contributions to this debate by members of the Opposition. Strangely, the Department of Public Instruction seems to be a very important department in the eyes of the

Opposition because they have said quite a lot in criticism of it. I do not want hon. members opposite to think that I am peeved in any way because they have levelled criticism at my department. I listened to their suggestions but I am disappointed because they have not indicated how the shortcomings of the department, according to them, can be overcome. It is quite easy for them to get up here and say what they think is wrong, but I have yet to hear from them what should be done. That includes the hon. member for Mundingburra, the past-master in political chicanery, the Artful Dodger of the Machiavellian type. So far they have not given me a lead as to how these things can be done, and I should like them to tell me.

Some of their criticism of my department has been very feeble indeed. I should like to remind them that there are 75 electorates in Queensland and that every member of Parliament expects some attention to his electorate. I have no quarrel with that. I should like to see an improvement in schooling facilities in my own electorate, but, in common with other hon. members, I am not able to get all that I want.

Let me remind hon. members opposite that the Government went to the people in March last. We did not present the people with a long list of promises that we would carry out if we were returned; rather did we submit to them a long list of Labour's achievements over 20-odd years. We did promise the people, however, that if we were returned to power we would continue our works programme in accordance with the promises we had made from time to time. As I look at the Opposition, somewhat bedraggled and somewhat short in numbers, I conclude that the people were satisfied with our achievements and that they would not accept the lavish promises of members of the Opposition.

I have in my possession the policy speech of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Coorparoo.

Mr. Aikens: I did not know that they made one.

Mr. DEVRIES: They did, all right. In 1951 my department was subjected to a tirade of abuse, not criticism, but abuse, from hon. members opposite.

Mr. Nicklin: By whom?

Mr. DEVRIES: By the Opposition; it is all contained in this little red book that I hold in my hand. If it was not abuse, I do not know what abuse means—and there is a difference between criticism and abuse. Again I have no quarrel with them there. Although my department has been subjected to much criticism since 1949 I am prepared to say that it has made greater progress over the past two years than it has made for many years past.

The policy speech of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Coorparoo definitely told the people, "If you will give us the power to rule the State

of Queensland we will build all the schools you want, not only primary schools but secondary schools and technical schools, and we will get all the teachers we want," with the proviso, "conditionally that we get the money." After all, there are many things that I should like in Queensland. I am not like the hon. member for Marodian, who said he was sick and tired of listening to Government members pleading that they have not got the money. It is true that if you want all these things they have to be paid for. We have not got the money to introduce all those things that members of this Parliament would like to see done.

When speaking the other day the hon. member for Cooroora said—

"Compare the school-building programmes of those church organisations that are interested in education with the acts of this State Government and all one can say is that the Government's efforts have been poor, miserable, and disgusting."

Of course, we can expect that to come from the hon. member for Cooroora, because he refuses to be guided by educational experts. When he was speaking, I interjected and said "Educational experts are against you on that point," he said, "I am not led by anybody; I lead myself." So we can discount the idea that the hon. member for Cooroora is an educational expert. The hon. member for Mount Coot-tha and the hon. member for Clayfield hold themselves up as educational experts. Quite recently, the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha said that for the past nine years he had been advocating certain things, but when I examined the things he has been advocating I was bewildered to understand what he had been suggesting. It was amazing to see how little his suggestions contained.

I was not in the Chamber when the hon. member for Condamine or the hon. member for Nash were speaking, but I did read their speeches. Members of the Opposition lauded the hon. member for Condamine to the skies because they contended that he had attacked the Government for their failure to take educational facilities to the people who are far removed from the cities. Let us have a look at that statement. I have read the speech delivered by the hon. member for Condamine over and over again, and I could not learn anything from it that we did not know. There is nothing in the speech of the hon. member for Condamine that is new to my department or to myself. I have not sat down in my office to learn what I have learned; I have travelled the State extensively by air, car, and train. We have 1,562 State primary schools throughout the 670,500 square miles of Queensland and 1,013 of those are one-teacher schools. Let us have a look at the position. I agree with the hon. member for Condamine and I do not concede the claim of Opposition members—that he condemned the Government for their failure to do these things.

An Opposition Member: It was criticism.

Mr. DEVRIES: Of course it was criticism. I have no objection to that criticism—they were entitled to make it—but ever since I have been in charge of this department, that is, since 1950, year after year there has been continual criticism from the Opposition benches. That I do not object to. It might be said that I am pleased to have it but at least we should endeavour to be realistic. It is quite easy for the Opposition to say what should be done, but having said it they should also show us how to do it. The Opposition promised that they were going to do certain things for the people or they led the people to believe they would have done these things, but they made the proviso that they would be done "if they could find the money to do them." That is the answer to them. The hon. member for Condamine said that he knew he would be told that what he was suggesting would cost money. That is the answer—that it will cost money.

Now let us refer to some of the criticism of some of the Opposition members. They have criticised the Government and the department because they cannot get a teacher's residence built here, a veranda on a school there, electric light in some other school, and a septic or sewerage system put into another school, and so on. The hon. member for Cooroora has drawn attention to the part church schools play in secondary education in Queensland. I would say right now that I, for one, do acknowledge the part private schools in Queensland have played in the extension of secondary education. I have frequently wondered what the result would be if these denominational schools closed their doors. With but a few State high schools in Queensland we should have been unable to give secondary education to all the children of Queensland. We could not have done so but for the aid of these church schools. I make no apology for what I am saying now and I think it is time we took cognisance of the part church schools are playing in the development of secondary education of the children of Queensland.

If we had to wait until we could establish State high schools throughout Queensland it would be many years, even with the State high schools that the Government propose to establish now. One is to be established at Banyo. I know the hon. member for Murrumba will be interested in this. He was a little peeved because some recognition was not given to the need for building a secondary school at Redcliffe. I appreciate all the help rendered to my department by the council at Redcliffe; indeed, my department is very grateful to the council for the help it has given, but when we talk about establishing a State high school immediately there are petitions pointing out that the school should be here, there, or somewhere else, and urging that such a site is the most obvious place for a school. But for the sake of peace and especially for centralisation the site has to be one that will serve the greatest possible number of the community. We have decided to establish a secondary school at Banyo, and the children

of the Redcliffe Peninsula will be well served by that school. I will refer later to the point that I know is exercising the mind of the hon. member for Murrumba.

The hon. members for Cooroora and Lockyer say, "Look at the fine buildings you are building in State Labor electorates." That is not true.

Mr. CHALK: I rise to a point of order. That is not a correct interpretation of what I said and I ask the Minister to withdraw the statement that I said, "in Labour electorates."

Mr. DEVRIES: It is in "Hansard." I should hate to think that I am misrepresenting anyone, but that is beside the point. Take the hon. member for Toowong, and here I might say that I feel sure the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha should be grateful to me for once in his life—

Mr. Morris: I have been many times.

Mr. DEVRIES: Because we are establishing a secondary school at Indooroopilly in the electorate of the hon. member for Toowong. That is not a Labour electorate, and I hope, as time goes on, to establish a secondary school at Southport. It is my belief that Southport has a greater claim than any other part of Queensland to a secondary school, but these things do happen.

Then the hon. member for Marodian complained that secondary education was not being taken to the children outside. I have travelled a great area of the State. I went from Brisbane to Birdsville, through Boulia, and did a round trip of 4,000 miles. I stayed at one cattle station there and when I told visitors from overseas that it had an area of 8,000 square miles, they looked at me in bewilderment. They could not believe that this State was so enormous. I took the Director of Primary Education with me so that he might become conversant with some of the difficulties confronting the Government in getting education out to the children far removed from the city areas. I have no quarrel with the city representative who works the parish pump. Many good things have come from working the parish pump, as the hon. member for Clayfield will know, because he works it overtime.

During the tour to which I have referred we had the opportunity of seeing children who were being taught by correspondence, and when hon. members talk about great schools in the city and the benefits enjoyed by the children there, I ask them to think of the West a little and try to visualise some of the difficulties of the people out there.

Here I congratulate the hon. member for Cunningham upon his contribution to the debate. I believe that if he follows in the footsteps of his predecessor, Mr. McIntyre, the Chamber will be honoured by his presence. He, like the hon. member for Condamine, pointed out that it is impossible today for the children in country areas to obtain a

secondary education because their parents either cannot afford it or their isolation prevents it.

Let us see how far I have gone in meeting the problem. I represent an area of 100,000 square miles. Throughout the North-Western region there are 36 State primary schools. There are no State secondary schools in my electorate and there are only 89 teachers for approximately 3,000 children in the region. I have not even got a high top at any State school in my electorate, but I am hoping that in 1954 I shall be able to establish a high top at Longreach and so give students an opportunity of going from primary school to a secondary education and matriculating there to the University without having to come to Brisbane. But do not let us run away with the idea that the high top will cure the evil, because there is a tendency on the part of parents to send children to colleges. Sometimes I think that if we called our State high school by some other name it would be much more attractive to parents. Such names as the Brisbane Boys' Grammar School, the Church of England Grammar School, or the Brisbane Boys' College, or Nudgee College sound a little better than "State High School." They are colleges. It cannot be denied that the success at the State high school are equal to the successes gained in any of the denominational schools, and nobody can cast any reflection—

Mr. Morris: Nobody has ever suggested it.

Mr. DEVRIES: I have attempted in the far North-west of Queensland particularly at Cloncurry and similar places, where a boy or a girl gains a scholarship pass, to allow that pupil to remain at that State school and for the department to supply secondary correspondence lessons. We have even gone so far as to ask the head teacher at the school to supervise work of the scholarship-holders and, if need be, to give the head teacher extra remuneration. It is disheartening, Mr. Speaker, to find that no child has availed himself or herself of that opportunity. What more could the Government of Queensland do? We want to take education to the children. It might seem fantastic when I make the statement, but of the 10,000 apprentices under my control throughout Queensland, the percentage of passes by apprentices who have taken lessons by correspondence is slightly higher than the percentage of those who have had the opportunity of attending a technical college. There is nothing wrong with correspondence lessons—

Mr. Hiley: I take it that you are not suggesting from your line of argument that the correspondence opportunities at Cloncurry and Mt. Isa should be looked upon as the acme of attainment? You will still build high schools there when you can?

Mr. DEVRIES: I am not suggesting that this system is the beginning and end of such education, but at least we want to give

such children that opportunity. I know that study by correspondence is not an easy thing; I have had a little experience of it myself and I know the difficulties. The Opposition are accusing the Government of refusing to take secondary education to the boy or girl whose parents are unable to send their children to the city. That is the start I propose to make.

Mr. Pizzey: You have had nearly 30 years at it.

Mr. DEVRIES: It is going to take a lot of time.

Mr. Hiley: You still propose to develop more high-school tops where you can?

Mr. DEVRIES: Where it is possible to have a high-school top we propose to do it. I want to be fair and table my cards. If you are going to establish a high-school top, the teacher you ask to teach secondary subjects must have a degree, not that I say that a person with a degree is a better teacher than one who has not a degree.

Mr. Aikens: Sometimes he is worse.

Mr. DEVRIES: I am not entering into that question. There is a grave shortage of secondary teachers throughout Queensland. We have dozens of teachers holding degrees teaching in primary schools and time after time protests are made to me that we are wasting the time of our teachers with degrees by having them teaching in primary schools. What is the good of secondary education if primary education is not on a sound basis? I say that places like Windorah, Jundah, and Boulia are as much entitled to have teachers with degrees as schools in the city area. I am hoping to establish a high-school top at Maleny, in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Pizzey interjected.

Mr. DEVRIES: I might do it in the electorate of the hon. member for Isis too. I will do it in every electorate where it is possible, if we can provide the accommodation and the teachers.

A very important subject with which I wish to deal this morning is Gatton College. I heartily agree with what has been said by the hon. member for Marodian; I should like to see three or four agricultural colleges spread throughout Queensland. However, that takes money. It might be interesting to see just what it costs to run Gatton College. Our appropriation for 1952-53 was about £206,000. I can remember an interjection by the hon. member for Mundingburra in 1951 when I was talking about Gatton College. He said, "It would appear to me that you are turning out scholars and not farmers." That is just what has been happening at Gatton.

The Press has intimated that I am going to clean up Gatton. As a matter of fact, I

believe my photo is in "The Toowoomba Chronicle" in this connection, and according to that paper I said I was going to clean up Gatton.

Mr. Morris: You said that in the House.

Mr. DEVRIES: I did not say it, and it is untrue if they say I did. What I did say was that I was going to make a lot of alterations at Gatton. Even the Country Press came to me yesterday and said, "You are going to clean up Gatton?"

Mr. Morris: You said that in the House the other day.

Mr. DEVRIES: I did not say it. If the hon. member refers to "Hansard" he will see what I did say.

The fees at Gatton are £61 a year; that is all we seek and that is all the student pays. State scholarships are tenable at this college as at State high schools, grammar schools, and other approved secondary schools. A reduction of £12 12s. per annum, the amount of tuition fees, is made in the case of all scholarship-holders. In addition to this reduction of £12 12s., scholarship-holders whose parents are in receipt of an income not exceeding the basic wage, or one-fifth of the basic wage for each dependent unit of the family, receive the following—

First Year	..	£52 per annum.
Second Year	..	£65 per annum.
Third Year (Extension Scholarship)		£84 per annum.
Fourth Year (Extension Scholarship)		£104 per annum.

Mr. Hiley: Does the £61 per annum that you mentioned cover full board as well?

Mr. DEVRIES: The £61 covers the following items—

		£	s.	d.
Tuition fees	..	12	12	0
Board and lodging	..	30	0	0
Laundry	..	6	0	0
Medical	..	1	10	0
Sport	..	1	0	0
Guarantee (Textbooks)	..	9	18	0

And now let us see what it costs per annum to feed the students at Gatton College. I will itemise it because the hon. member for Coorparoo some time ago questioned my statement that it cost the Government £10,000 a year for meat alone at Gatton College. I know that the hon. member for Coorparoo, being a good accountant, was staggered when he learned that the figure I quoted was correct. The expenditure on food includes butter, £3,746 2s. 2d.

Mr. Hiley: First of all, how many students are there?

Mr. DEVRIES: The average number of students for 1952-53 was 476.

Mr. Chalk: What about the staff?

Mr. DEVRIES: Never mind about the staff; I am talking about students now. Let me give the list—

	£	s.	d.
Butter	3,746	2	2
Cheese	516	2	4
Milk	2,454	2	4
Bullocks	9,948	16	2
Sheep	4,772	4	6
Groceries	5,367	8	5
Bacon and Hams	102	0	4
Fruit and Vegetables	3,195	1	8
Bread	1,694	1	2
Freight and packing	1,462	19	1
Total	£33,258	18	2

That is the cost of feeding an average of 476 students.

Mr. Morris: Does that include some of the food produced by the college itself?

Mr. DEVRIES: That is what it costs to feed the students and I am not concerned just now about where it is produced. We have a big staff at the Gatton College and we sell meat to them. We get the following income—

	£	s.	d.
Sale of meat to college staff	4,711	19	4
Sale of hides, skins, tallow, etc. ..	915	12	2
Board charged to staff	4,412	19	6
Total	£10,040	1	0

Taking the average number of students for 1952-1953 at 476 and the net cost of feeding them at £23,218 17s. 2d., it works out, in round figures, at £50 per annum.

Mr. Aikens: For food alone?

Mr. DEVRIES: Yes.

Mr. Hiley: How many weeks are there in the academic year?

Mr. DEVRIES: Forty. It costs us £50 a year to feed each student and all that we ask in return from him is £61 per annum. Is it any wonder that people would like to see more of these colleges! Why should I send my boy to a denominational school and pay 53 guineas a term to reach the junior level when he can go to Gatton College and get his junior for £61 a year?

Mr. Chalk: Whom are you condemning?

Mr. DEVRIES: I am not condemning anyone at all. I am replying to the criticism of hon. members opposite. They want more of these colleges throughout Queensland and I do not blame them for that but I think the time has arrived when we must turn out more farmers and fewer scholars from Gatton College. I am not suggesting that the farmers should not have a junior or senior education. A farmer today must be above the standard of intelligence that prevailed in the time of Dad and Dave; he must be an intelligent fellow today.

I intend to deal with this matter in due course. I am going to make an alteration at Gatton to see that more farmers and fewer scholars are turned out there. I did not think that was the position when the hon. member for Mundingburra made his interjection but I think so now. I am not going to continue a policy that will allow the city boy and even sons of doctors from New South Wales to gain admission to the Gatton Agricultural College so as to reach the junior standard of education at a cost of £61 a year.

Mr. Aikens: Without any intention of ever becoming farmers?

Mr. DEVRIES: That is so.

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

Mr. DEVRIES: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Ithaca, and members of the House, for the courtesy extended to me.

I am not going to clean Gatton up, but I am going to make some alterations. No Government can survive unless their public servants carry out Government policy properly. I am not in any way reflecting on the present principal. I might appreciate his abilities as a veterinary science man; he has very high qualifications. But this is a big business; it is costing the Government £200,000 a year to run the college. Do not forget that for the year 1952-53 I may have to write off a debt of £8,000 on the college.

I am going to issue a series of directions and I tell the hon. member for Marodian that I shall see that the boy from the country gets the first preference. Let us see what happened last year at Gatton. When the capacity for absorption of Gatton was about 360, to my amazement I found that the principal had accepted enrolments of 600.

Mr. Chalk: With the approval of the Director of Secondary Education.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEVRIES: What if he did?

Mr. Chalk: interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to observe my call to order. I should also like the Minister to address the Chair.

Mr. DEVRIES: With the approval of the Director of Education, unknown to me of course. Let us see where the enrolments were coming from. Sixty boys were refused admission to Gatton at the commencement of this year. Those 60 boys were sons of farmers and because doctors' sons from Wagga and the Northern Rivers of New South Wales were admitted, they—

Mr. Chalk: It is your own administration.

Mr. DEVRIES: I know it is; that is why I say I will tighten it up. I owe some responsibility to this Government.

Mr. Chalk: You will be commended.

Mr. DEVRIES: I am not sitting on my chair and taking things as they come. For three long years I have had criticism and I have not flinched under it, nor have I complained about it. It is time someone became interested in the expenditure of Government funds, so I had to tackle this matter with the object of putting it on a sound basis. This is what I propose to do at Gatton. I will issue six definite instructions, and if effect is not given to them by the principal it will be just too bad for him.

Mr. Chalk: Do you say the principal does not carry out instructions?

Mr. DEVRIES: I am saying that if the principal of the college does not give effect to these six directions it will be just too bad for him.

Mr. Chalk: Do you insinuate that he is not?

Mr. DEVRIES: The hon. member should not attempt to put in my mouth anything that I am not saying, because the hon. member for Toowoomba will deal with him in his own good time.

The first thing I propose to do is to issue an instruction that the total enrolment shall not exceed the number enrolled in 1953.

The second direction—and this is in accordance with the promise I gave to the hon. member for Marodian—is that first preference shall be given to students who have passed the Junior public examination and who wish to proceed to the diploma course. Those are the boys we want to enrol at Gatton, the boys who want to come from the Junior university examination and take the diploma course.

Mr. Chalk: Nobody will deny that.

Mr. DEVRIES: But we have not been getting it. That is all there is to it. Direction No. 3 is that in enrolling students in the high-school section preference shall be given to students from areas where no facilities for secondary education exist. The hon. member for Marodian was concerned about this matter and I too am concerned about it.

Mr. Hiley: A very good suggestion.

Mr. DEVRIES: I do not think we should continue to have Gatton College as a boarding-school in which a boy could go for his Junior university examination and have no interest in the land—the boy, as the hon. member for Marodian described him, who was going to thump a typewriter in the city.

Direction No. 4 is that no places shall be offered to students from other States in the high school until all applications from Queensland have been considered.

Mr. Chalk: Hear, hear!

Mr. DEVRIES: The 60 boys who could not gain admission to Gatton College could not do so because enrolments had been accepted from other States of the Commonwealth. We will alter that.

Direction No. 5 is that a limited number of students from the northern districts of New South Wales shall be accepted for entry to the diploma course. The college at Gatton is able to provide courses in crops grown in an area of summer rainfall such as those districts.

Direction No. 6 is that students be accepted under the Colombo Plan and from New Guinea and the Pacific islands as at present.

Mr. Hiley: Is there a limit there?

Mr. DEVRIES: There are not very many.

Mr. Morris: There is a limit under the agreement?

Mr. DEVRIES: There is no limit. Our enrolments under the Colombo Plan are not very heavy. That does not worry us. In accordance with the Colombo Plan, we are bound to honour the obligation that has been undertaken by this State.

That is the position of the Gatton Agricultural College and High School.

Mr. Morris: You have not made any reference to the financial side of it. Are you going to alter the fees, too?

Mr. DEVRIES: The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha should direct that question to the Premier because it is a question of Government policy.

Mr. Morris: I was not trying to criticise.

Mr. DEVRIES: The hon. member should not direct a question involving Government policy to me. It is not within my province to forecast or even suggest what future Government policy might be.

Mr. Hiley: Is not this Government policy, the six points? You made a case about the cost and we have a great deal of sympathy on the evidence you presented.

Mr. DEVRIES: What does the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha suggest?

Mr. Morris: My interjection was not by way of criticism. I am most interested.

Mr. DEVRIES: What would the hon. member suggest?

Mr. Morris: I suggest you increase them to the point where you will not be losing money on that programme and then you can extend your colleges elsewhere because you are not losing money.

Mr. DEVRIES: I am surprised at the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha. My Government believe that this is a contribution to the food-front of the world. There are starving millions of people crying out for food and it is the duty of this Government to at least produce farmers who will grow food. It does not matter what you lose in the process of producing farmers because in the ultimate analysis you are producing the wealth of the nation. However, I do not enter into any controversy at the moment as to

whether or not fees will be raised; I am pointing out to the Opposition the position of Gatton College as it exists at the moment.

Mr. Hiley: You raised the aspect of cost. If there are the same number of students you are not suggesting that they will eat less. You leave us quite perplexed as to your purpose in raising this matter.

Mr. DEVRIES: That is a matter that will be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

Mr. Muller: I take it your object is to turn out more practical men?

Mr. DEVRIES: The object of this Government is to produce farmers and to try and arrest that drift from the country to the cities about which we hear so much. I remind the hon. member for Fassifern and the hon. member for Marodian that the drift from rural areas to the cities is not peculiar to Queensland or even to the Commonwealth; it exists in the older countries, such as China, France, and even Great Britain. France today is concentrating on secondary and heavy industries, with the result that, just as is happening here, Big Business is inducing the people to leave the rural areas and come to the cities. It is my firm belief that those boys and girls who stay on the land today do so because of their inherent love of the land.

Mr. Low: Tell us something about how you propose to recruit more agricultural teachers.

Mr. DEVRIES: That is a very pertinent and important point. My Government wish to extend our rural schools, but the establishment of a rural school necessitates the appointment of a trained teacher who understands agriculture, a man who has a diploma, and I find that for the year 1954 we shall turn out only four of these specialists for engagement at rural schools. It is no use establishing these rural schools unless we have qualified teachers to staff them.

Let me now refer briefly to area schools. It is wrong to say that the Government object to the establishment of area schools. In 1946 we made a complete survey of Queensland, hoping that we could zone the State for the purpose of establishing area schools.

Mr. Pizzey: You have not done much about it.

Mr. DEVRIES: We have not done much as yet, but I propose to make a move in the matter. Wherever I am satisfied that I can establish an area school I will do so and I will also provide road transport to convey the children to that central or area school. I intend to do that because I know it is the policy of my Government.

There has been much criticism of the Government for their failure to build teachers' residences. As I have pointed out, there are 1,600 State schools in Queensland, and in my answers to questions from time to time I have shown that we have built 600 residences for head teachers. We have about another 600 to build if we are to provide residences for all head teachers. The hon. member for

Cooroora wrote me an insulting letter protesting that not one school teacher's residence had been built in his electorate, and he was demanding a fair deal for that area.

Mr. Low: I still do so, and I make no apology for it.

Mr. DEVRIES: The hon. member should get away from Cooroora a little. He should travel and see conditions outside. I do not quarrel with his advocacy, but I do ask him not to talk with his tongue in his cheek. That is all I want any hon. member opposite to do. It is easy for hon. members to talk like that. I will not take any of the courtesies away from the hon. member, but his electorate will get nothing more and nothing less than the electorate of any other hon. member.

Yesterday the hon. member for Lockyer talked about a Minister's blood pressure rising and attacked my attitude for refusing to give children attending State Schools in his electorate time off during the normal school hours to witness a display of the Crown jewels in Gatton. Again I say to that hon. member that he will get nothing more and nothing less than any other hon. member in this House; I do not propose to make an exception of Lockyer and give it something that is not given to the rest of Queensland. In answer to his criticism, I say that it is true that the National Arts Council of Australia in Brisbane did write to the Director-General of Education seeking permission for the children in the Gatton area to be absent from school during school hours to see a display of the Crown jewels and I take full responsibility for any decision arrived at by my departmental officers.

Mr. Jesson: Did they make any charge?

Mr. DEVRIES: Yes, adults 1s. and children 6d. There was a general decision, and it applied throughout Queensland, that no child would be entitled to see the display in school hours. At least, Lockyer had the same consideration as any other centre in Queensland.

Mr. Chalk: Nobody has denied that.

Mr. DEVRIES: I have no desire to delay the House further. I could go on talking about telephones and free light in schools but I shall probably have an opportunity of doing so later.

Mr. Nicholson: What are you doing about the transport of secondary school children by bus?

Mr. DEVRIES: That is a matter involving Government policy but I might say that about 18 months ago I had a survey of Queensland made to see what additional finance my department would need if we gave children who live off the railway and who travel to private secondary schools or State high schools the same concession we give to those on the railway—children travelling by bus from Redcliffe to Sandgate for example—and on a rough estimate it was found that it would involve the Government in an expenditure of £10,000 a year.

Mr. Low: And it would be worth it, too.

Mr. DEVRIES: It might be; I am not quarrelling on that score. I know that my department would like to do it if possible but again, I can only repeat, it takes money. The hon. member for Cooroora said that when the Queensland Government get their taxing powers back we shall be able to get all the money we need. Then the next complaint we might have from the Opposition would be that the Queensland Government were taxing the man on the land too heavily and taking too much from him. I should say, "All right, we will be able to give you those amenities" but they would say that we were taking too much from them. Perhaps the Opposition might be able to help us. I notice that the Australian Teachers' Federation have asked the Menzies-Fadden Government for £100,000,000 for education.

Mr. Kerr: There is a difference between that and £10,000.

Mr. DEVRIES: The Department of Public Instruction is not the only department in Queensland. Hon. members opposite want rivers dammed and water conservation undertaken, are those things not as important as education? I am going to be bold and say when the hon. member for Cooroora complains domestic science and manual training are no longer compulsory subjects for the scholarship examination, that I do not believe they should ever have been subjects for examination. When they were, you could go into the manual-training class in a school and see the teacher making a boy develop a joint in wood, and that work would be examinable. You could go into the domestic-science class and see the girls memorising recipes, and so on. I think the time has arrived when the only subjects for examination should be English and mathematics. I propose to recommend the dropping of social studies.

Mr. Morris: I think that would be a very progressive step.

Mr. DEVRIES: After all, English and mathematics are the basis of an academic education.

Mr. Dewar: Why not abolish the Scholarship examination altogether?

Mr. DEVRIES: No. The idea of having courses in domestic science and manual training is to give our young girls an interest in home duties and our boys in woodwork, tinsmithing, and so forth. Would anyone seriously suggest that because you give them an opportunity of taking those subjects—

Mr. Low interjected.

Mr. DEVRIES: Why should people in the cities expect all these concessions when thousands of girls and boys outside have no opportunity of receiving instruction in manual training and domestic science? Even now, in the country areas where these facilities do not exist, the children are compelled to take English, mathematics, and social studies.

Mr. Morris: Would you elaborate on something you said a couple of minutes ago?

You mentioned that the Australian Teachers' Federation was asking for £100,000,000. Do you subscribe to that?

Mr. DEVRIES: I should say that we need £200,000,000, not £100,000,000.

Mr. Morris: From the Federal Government?

Mr. DEVRIES: Yes, or from anywhere. I believe that financially it is a national problem. How are you going to get all these things without the money. After all, £7,000,000 is not very much for education in Queensland. Do not forget that 86 per cent. of that goes out in teachers' salaries. If we build three State high schools we shall need about £1,500,000.

Mr. Low: Do you know that children attending intermediate schools receive secondary education without passing the Scholarship? That is a benefit to the city children only.

Mr. DEVRIES: Surely the hon. member for Cooroora would not suggest that we should take something from the city children merely because we cannot give it to those in the country?

I should now like to say a few words on the free-milk scheme. From time to time Sir Earle Page has condemned the Queensland Government for not taking part in that scheme when the other States did. Let us examine the matter, and find out the real position. There was a delay on the part of the Queensland Government because we did not want to be charged with giving children in the cities something that we could not give to those in the outlying areas. I say, "One in, all in." We were not going to be parochial in outlook and so it was with a great deal of diffidence that we were not prepared to come in on the free-milk scheme. Even today the Federal Government are engaged in delaying tactics. They will not allow us to extend our service, despite the fact that we have numerous inquiries from the co-operative dairy factories. We cannot extend the service because the Commonwealth Government will not accept the price for milk fixed by our price-fixing authority. In other words, they say that the price fixed by the Commissioner of Prices in Queensland is too high and that we should call tenders so that we can say to the dairyman, in effect, "Unless you give us milk at a cheaper figure the Federal Government are not going to allow us to bring your milk into the scheme."

Mr. Nicholson: Is it not a fact that the price of milk to the consumer is higher?

Mr. DEVRIES: No. The price in Queensland is lower than it is in New South Wales.

Mr. Nicholson: I am referring to the price of milk to the consumer.

Mr. DEVRIES: Does the hon. member believe in a cut-throat policy?

Mr. Nicholson: No.

Mr. DEVRIES: What the Federal Government want is to have every milk organisation scab on the other.

Mr. Nicholson: Not exactly.

Mr. DEVRIES: They do. They say, "If you are not going to lower your price we will not admit it into the scheme."

That is all I have to say on the subject of education today.

Mr. JESSON (Hinchinbrook) (12.17 p.m.): It was my intention to deal with the subject of education today but as the Minister has spoken about it for an hour and a half I intend to try to educate hon. members opposite along other than academic lines. First of all, I should like to refer to the Federal Budget, "As I see it". Everyone will remember that three years ago the Menzies-Fadden Government produced a Budget in the national Parliament that was acclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the country as the horror Budget. Now we have another Budget that can be described as The Chain Store Budget or the Coles Budget—nothing over half-a-crown. (Opposition interjections). I can hear it being whispered from hon. members opposite that it is an incentive Budget. It was introduced with a good deal of side-showmanship, with a good deal of planning for political purposes. It was said by Sir Arthur Fadden, according to the Press, that the Budget was a winner for the public, that it would win votes. Is it intended to convey the meaning that the Budget was an advantage to the public generally or that it had an electoral advantage for the Menzies-Fadden Government? Those are the two points to be considered—was it introduced in the interests of the people generally, for the future development of Australia and for purposes of defence, or was it introduced only to provide a political value for the Federal Government in power?

I was astounded to read of some of the anomalies in the Budget. Look at the lengths to which Sir Arthur Fadden and his advisers have gone in the matter of sales tax! For instance, there is a remission in sales tax of 21s. a gallon on Scotch whisky, a liquor that is drunk by members of the Opposition and their class in the Millions Club and the other clubs to which they belong. It means that a nip is 1d. or 2d. cheaper, but nothing was taken from beer, from which the greatest amount of revenue comes and which is largely drunk by the working man.

Sir Arthur Fadden was gleeful about what he said were great reductions in the sales tax. Let us examine these from a common-sense point of view. The rate of 50 or 66 per cent. on high-class jewellery has been reduced to 16½ or 16¾ per cent. What is the good of that to the family budget? The working-class person does not go in for high-price jewellery. Most workers have to go to Harcourt Fells or Edments or Woolworths to buy their jewellery decorations. One member opposite told me the

other day—and I will not mention his name; I do not believe in breaking confidences—that the 1s. in the £1 would mean £2,000 a year to him in taxation.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Who gives you his confidences?

Mr. JESSON: Many people, because they know that any confidence placed in the member for Hinchinbrook is placed in the right place and what they tell him will never be divulged.

The ordinary working-man who paid £10 or £12 in taxation did not worry about it. The ordinary honest-to-goodness Australian would far prefer to see that small amount go into a development fund to develop this country and provide employment for those who would be unemployed as a result of the Federal Government's policy. I know that in this State the unemployment relief tax was converted into a development tax and used to develop this State. When the Commonwealth took over taxation that development tax fund was used to develop the country. Not one worker in industry objected to paying that development tax; there was not a murmur of disapproval. Many of our big projects in this State were carried out from funds provided from that tax. The impact of the horror Budget three years ago was considerably softened by use of the credit balance in that fund. When there was a restriction of loan money, £10,000,000 from that fund was used to help local authorities to cushion the impact of the horror Budget of three years ago.

I wish to quote something I received this morning from Mr. Murray, secretary of the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, who cannot be charged with being a member of the Labour Party. This circular was sent to the newspapers, but because it is an indictment of the Commonwealth Government I doubt whether it will appear in "The Courier-Mail." Luckily this publication arrived this morning from Sydney and it provided me with a certain amount of ammunition, which I shall use freely. First it speaks about the reduction of the excise duty on Scotch whisky of 21s. a gallon.

There is nothing in the Federal Budget about relief in the excise on petrol and oil used very largely by the transport systems of Australia and in the many motor-cars used for trade and private purposes. It was only the other day that the price for petrol was increased. Taking into consideration that £30,000,000 per annum is taken from the pockets of industry and of the great transport system of Australia by petrol tax, it can be seen how serious is the position. Although Sir Arthur Fadden and his budgeteers have reduced the tax on high-class jewellery they have done nothing about reducing it on spare parts for motor vehicles and machinery, except on those exempted because they are used for agricultural purposes. One of the largest industries in Australia, the transport industry, has received no relief whatever.

This statement proceeds—

"In all, highway users, through customs, excise and sales tax, will this financial year pay in the vicinity of £63,000,000 to the Commonwealth and, in addition, will pay approximately £20,000,000 to the States, who have been forced to increase registration fees and to find revenue to meet the cost of essential undertakings.

"Responsible industry and people, who are truly Australian in outlook, must read into the Budget a clear indication that the Commonwealth Government desires, for reasons best known to itself, to reduce its responsibility in the sphere of national development."

I pause here. Is not that a great indictment by a huge organisation that does not support Labour Governments in either the State or Federal spheres?

The statement continues—

"No-one will quarrel with common sense reduction in taxation, providing always that it has occurred following the most searching examination of national needs and is based on a determination by all Governments to strive to avoid extravagance and waste of public funds. But so urgent is our need for national development today and so limited are our available financial resources for undertaking such work, that one reasonably may reach the conclusion that the financial policy of the present Commonwealth Government does not reflect a clear conception of its national responsibility."

I emphasise particularly the sting in the tail of that quotation.

Mr. Speaker, no doubt you read the other day the list of public works sponsored by the Commonwealth Government, running into many millions of pounds, for which a great deal of the money will be provided by the Queensland taxpayer by way of taxation on wool, sugar and the other great primary products of this State. You no doubt noticed the works being done in other parts of Australia but that not one major project of any kind was being undertaken in Queensland. The construction of railways in this State, the Burdekin project, and other national schemes, purely Commonwealth in their nature as regards defence, have been thrown overboard. A few days after this we read in the Brisbane "Courier-Mail" an article boosting private enterprise and saying that private enterprise was expending many millions of pounds in various parts of Queensland in the near future. That was merely a smoke-screen to cover the previous statement of the Commonwealth Government. Queensland again was left in the lurch.

As I develop my speech, I intend to deal with some of the extravagances of the Commonwealth Government and to reply completely to the allegations of disloyalty of members on this side made by the hon. member for Lockyer and several others as to the armed forces and the defence of this country in general. I intend also to reply briefly to the concluding remarks of the hon. member

for Clayfield, who worked himself into a frenzy of patriotism, patting his chest and uttering patriotic words about what they would not do in the defence of Australia.

Before putting the Commonwealth Government into a glass case, like the taxidermist, until I wish to dig it up again, I desire to deal with one or two more points in Sir Arthur Fadden's Budget. The letter I have mentioned goes on to say that in other States of the Commonwealth hospitals are urgently required, there is a lag in housing, schools are overcrowded, roads are inadequate, and many of them are in unserviceable condition; railways, still staggering as a result of past war-time service, are in urgent need of rehabilitation, and money is needed for sewerage, water conservation, and water-supply schemes. It continues—

"Admittedly some of these undertakings rightly may be regarded as a State responsibility, to be financed from such sources of revenue as are available to the States, but not, surely, where health, education and communications are concerned. Unquestionably such undertakings are the equitably spread responsibility of the whole of the taxpayers of the Commonwealth. Taking it by and large, the public may have more money in its pocket to spend on luxury goods, but it is possible that, given time for thought and to feel the impact of additional State taxation, which inevitably must occur, it may feel that it is not such a good Budget after all."

That sums up the Budget very aptly. I say that the Budget presented by Sir Arthur Fadden was merely window-dressing. It gives big taxation reductions to people who could well afford to go on paying what they are paying now for the privilege of living in this country of full and plenty and the opportunity of continuing to amass huge fortunes. I enter my emphatic protest at the niggardly help granted to widows and orphans. I think that the people of Australia would be only too willing to pay what is required to give more generous treatment to the dependants of those who either lost their lives during the war or have died since as a result of war injuries, provided the money is used in that direction. I think also that the working people of the Commonwealth join with me in this emphatic protest against this cold-blooded hand-out of only 2s. 6d. by Sir Arthur Fadden.

When speaking to the Financial Statement last year, I mentioned the Commonwealth hospitals scheme and the medical benefits scheme. At that time I said that people were coming to Queensland from New South Wales and clattering up the Brisbane General Hospital. I spoke from authentic information I had received from hospital officials. After my speech, some person at the Murwillumbah Hospital in New South Wales saw fit to rush into print, attack me and say that my statement was wrong. It was right, as the following newspaper article proves—and this is analogous to the point made by the Secretary for Public Instruction this morning, that people from New South Wales were taking advantage of Gatton College because fees

were cheaper there and the facilities offered much greater than were available in other States—

“Free Hospitals Draw Interstate Patients!

“Because Queensland is the only State in the Commonwealth which offers free hospitalisation, more and more people are coming here for treatment.

“This, of course, means a big drain on the finances of the State Government, which is responsible for the free hospitalisation scheme in Queensland.

“‘Truth’ yesterday learned of one man who came here from New South Wales by plane for a free operation in a Queensland hospital, flew back to his home, and saved at least £100 on what the same treatment would have cost him in his own State.

“People from the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales, particularly, have derived great benefit from Queensland’s free hospitalisation programme.

“Big Influx.

“The position is approaching that which existed in the days when the Relief Fund was operating here.

“People from all other States ‘humped their Blueys’ to Queensland so as to benefit from this State’s more liberal attitude towards such persons.

“So great is this influx of Southern visitors becoming that it may shortly be necessary for people to provide bona fides that they are genuinely resident in this State before they receive the free hospital services.”

Mr. H. B. Taylor: What are you quoting from?

Mr. JESSON: A newspaper.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Which newspaper?

Mr. JESSON: One of the reputable Sunday papers that come out every Sunday.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: It might be “Truth.”

Mr. JESSON: It might be, too.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: It would not be “The Guardian”?

Mr. JESSON: No. Here is the newspaper, and as the hon. member for Mackay said the other day, I will not waste my brains and have them sucked by the hon. member for Clayfield. He is a brain-sucker. I have met a lot of suckers in my life, but he is a brain-sucker. Let the hon. member go to the library and he will find the newspaper for himself.

I want to deal briefly with these medical benefits schemes and I suggest that if the Commonwealth Government do not get busy and do something to expedite the repayment of accounts paid by people who have contributed to these schemes I shall have to ask the State Government to investigate the matter. Quite a lot of people in Queensland, after the flowery presentation of the Commonwealth’s health scheme, signed up with these medical benefits societies and pay their 2s. or 4s. a week. I know of many people who have been waiting months and months

trying to get a refund of amounts they have paid to doctors. These people contribute so much a week to the medical benefits schemes or health insurance schemes—call them what you like and when anything goes wrong with them many of them go to private hospitals whereas ordinarily they would have gone to general hospitals for free treatment. I think this benefits scheme is only something to bolster up the doctor’s business. People previously never went to a private doctor but always availed themselves of the facilities offering at Government hospitals, where they got the best services in the world, where the best appliances are installed, and where they were treated with the greatest skill and received the greatest care and attention. Those people, because they now contribute to some scheme or other, go to private doctors. Of course these men get their fees. I think it would be correct to say that most people pay their doctor’s debts before they pay their other debts. There seems to be a moral obligation on them to pay their doctor’s bill before paying any other bill.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: And the doctor’s have their bad debts.

Mr. JESSON: Yes, I know; that happens in all professions. People go to doctors and when they get their bills they get a shock. To listen to hon. members of the Opposition one would think that nobody pays his bill except themselves. These people pay the doctor’s bill but have to wait months to get a refund from the medical benefits association. I know of one case in which a lady was in hospital and applied to the society for her benefit. She used the application form with which she had been supplied in the first instance and sent it in with her book, but the society lost her book. Now it has no record of her payments, although she made them for over six months.

It is high time the Commonwealth Government checked up on these medical benefit societies. People who pay into them should get their refunds within 21 days at the very most. If the Commonwealth Government will not do anything about checking up on these societies, this Government should introduce legislation to control them. People living in the country in particular are experiencing difficulty. People with four or five kiddies might have three accidents in the family in a month, but whenever they want to make a claim they have to write in for another form. The society does not send another application form when it returns the book. It is time the whole thing was organised properly and steps were taken to ensure that people received prompt payment.

Mr. Dewar: You can get those forms from a chemist’s shop.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member for Chermiside does not know what he is talking about. I know a lady who was contributing to this scheme and had to go into hospital for two or three weeks. She later took ill again and went to the chemist and he said to her, “You will have to make application to headquarters.” Some chemists are not playing

the game. All they are concerned about is getting the commission on each new customer. One chemist told a woman that he would have nothing more to do with her. He said, "Go to the head office. They will tell you what you want to know." He had already received commission out of her when she became a member of one of the societies. In a matter such as this there should not be any such thing as the payment of commission for canvassing. The health scheme should not be commercialised. Once these people receive their commission they lose all further interest in the person in respect of whom they received it. Like little Audrey, the hon. member for Chermiside does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. Aikens: This is the pay-off for the help the B.M.A. gave the Menzies-Fadden Government in 1949.

Mr. JESSON: That is not a bad speech.

I should like now to deal with statements made by visitors who come to this country, either for their own enjoyment or for business purposes. I take very strong exception to a statement made the other day by Lord Blackford, one of these people who dive into the place and almost immediately dive out again. He was here for about 24 hours. He had a palatial flat at Lennons Hotel, walked up and down Queen Street a few times, and then had something to say about the place on the aerodrome as he was leaving. After getting a fair measure of hospitality from the powers that be, he started to condemn the place. I have not the newspaper report and I quote it from memory. It left a deep impression on me. I am told that he had blue blood streaming through his veins but I should say that he had a very thin streak of it indeed. He was on his way out and he said that he could not recommend the investing of any money by his company in insurance in Queensland because the Queensland Labour Government had been in power so long that it had socialistic tendencies. Why did he say that? I will tell you why. It is because he is a director of the Guardian Insurance Company and he did not like the State Government Insurance office. That is all; that is the reason. It is easy to see the reason, even on a superficial examination. In the first place he came here with his blue blood talking of a £10,000,000 capital, and pulling the leg of the Government. He was going to construct a great palatial building up the street near Barnes Auto. He interviewed the Minister in charge of building controls and the Minister went to considerable trouble to investigate his proposal in order to issue to him a building permit under certain conditions. He was to construct this big palatial building to replace the eyesore on the corner near the approach to Victoria Bridge. That place is an eyesore, with its old dilapidated buildings. They have been there for years, perhaps ever since Victoria Bridge was built. He was shown the greatest courtesy by the Government and now he goes away saying that they are not going on with the scheme. That is it in a nutshell—he is prepared to dice the lot and he gives

the excuse that the Queensland Labour Government are socialistic. He was not too proud to come here a little while back crawling on his belly to get a permit to build a place—and to get it in preference to other people who urgently needed a building. No, he was not too proud then. Now, when he thinks he can see a little fly in the ointment somewhere—the State Government Insurance Office doing such a great job of insurance for the people of Queensland—he shrinks from its record of achievement, which is second to none anywhere, and says, "I do not think we will put any money into a building at all. It will be better to go somewhere else." He is not prepared to compete with the State Government Insurance Office and so he decides to make other arrangements. He scandalised the Government and the people of Queensland and then scooted out of the place.

Mr. Dewar: Did you say the Guardian Insurance Company?

Mr. JESSON: Yes.

Mr. Dewar: It was not the Guardian Insurance Company that proposed to construct the building on North Quay.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. I have dealt very effectively with that subject. These lords make me laugh. I do not know how they can be made lords, but they are.

There are other matters that I shall deal with later on but now I should like to refer to the speech by the hon. member for Clayfield the other day in which he referred to compulsory military training. The hon. member for Chermiside bounced about the place and talked of patriotic endeavour and the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha talked about patriotism in relation to national training. Let me take hon. members opposite back a few years in order to remind them that it was Andrew Fisher who introduced compulsory military training in the first place for the defence of Australia. When the 1914-18 war was over the people of Australia foolishly did the same thing as they did after the end of the last war—they sacked the Federal Labour Government.

What did the Tories do? They abolished compulsory training because it interfered with industry and hindered work in factories and other places. The blame for Australia's unpreparedness lies on the Menzies-Fadden Government, the Bruce-Page Government, the Lyons Government, and the other Federal Governments who did not carry on the compulsory training scheme introduced by Andrew Fisher. After another decade there was another war. Then what happened? The Federal Government started the National Training Scheme, and only a fortnight ago we had the "Liberals" at the City Hall or a place up on Wickham Terrace—it is painted yellow, which suits their character; the place is painted the same colour as themselves—and a motion was moved (I cannot think of the name of the gentleman who moved it) that national training should be modified or abolished. It is to their credit

that the convention overwhelmingly rejected it. They did suggest that the Federal Government or Federal members who were present should suggest to the Government that the National Training Scheme should be broken down so that they might acquire more young people for industry. (Opposition interjections.) It is on the files of "The Courier-Mail." The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha knows about it. I give credit to those who voted against it. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha voted for it.

Mr. Morris: No.

Mr. JESSON: There is an admission that he knows all about it. (Government laughter.)

Mr. Morris: You know that was not the resolution.

Mr. JESSON: I know what it was. The hon. member cannot sidetrack me like that. There is no doubt the attempt was made. Then we have these flag-wavers from the Liberal Party talking about the war. We had an exhibition by the hon. member for Clayfield the other day, and I thought his blood pressure would blow up.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: I must have impressed you.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member depressed me too. These people dealt with a motion to abolish the National Training Scheme.

In order to demonstrate just how patriotic the Liberal Party and the Opposition generally are I refer to the fact that on V.P. Day on 9 August, the day that celebrates the defeat of the dirty little Japanese, this Government sent a representative to place a wreath at the Eternal Flame, but neither the Country Party nor the Liberal Party was represented. The R.S.S.A.I.L.A. was missing. It can please itself. During Show Week there were no flags flying in the city and thousands of people were preparing to go to the beaches, to the races, to football, and to the Exhibition, and not one gave a damn about the day commemorating the war in the Pacific. Then we have people like the majors and others, who are patriotic when it suits them but never bother to go along to represent their organisation at that important ceremony.

An Opposition Member: Who sponsored it?

Mr. JESSON: It was the Legion of Ex-Servicemen.

Mr. Morris: Did they send an invitation?

Mr. JESSON: They sent an invitation to the Government. But do you have to get an invitation to go to a church to pray for somebody? Do you want an invitation from Archbishop Halse to do that? As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha used to be politically limelighting himself by being secretary of the organisation known as the Rats of Tobruk, but that organisation kicked him out; it sacked him and he is now

conspicuous by his absence, like the remainder of the Liberals at the present time.

Mr. Morris: Were you there?

Mr. JESSON: I was there as a returned soldier and also acting as the representative of the Government.

Mr. MORRIS: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member has made a statement that is untrue. He said that I had belonged to the Rats of Tobruk organisation and was sacked by that organisation. The hon. member knows that is not true. He knows that the only reason why I do not attend meetings of the Rats of Tobruk Association is that the hon. member for Mundingburra said I was using it as political capital.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Hinchinbrook to accept the denial of the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha.

Mr. JESSON: I accept the hon. member's denial, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

I have not much time left at my disposal; therefore on behalf of the people I represent I congratulate the Queensland Central Sugar Cane Prices Board for what it has done for the district in opening up cane lands and giving cane assignments and for the help it has given to the sugar-mills in the Herbert Valley district to assist in production. This district is the greatest sugar-producing district in the world. Great credit is due to the secretary of that board, Mr. Ferguson, and to the board for having done a gigantic job. I know the job they have had to do in trying to appease the people who want this and want that. I congratulate the board on its job.

(Time expired.)

Debate, on motion of Mr. Kerr, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 12.58 p.m.