

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1955**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

by the Department of Public Works, is it not a fact that this report will only deal with such installations to 30 June, 1955?

"2. Will he therefore advise me how such report will deal with any approvals subsequent to the statement made by the Premier on 5 August, 1955, which was the subject of my question?"

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General), for **Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory), replied—

"In my answer to your question I did not indicate any particular report of the Department of Public Works. However, for the information of the hon. member this work is being carried out progressively."

#### SCHOOL CLASSES, METROPOLITAN AREA.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. In view of his apparent desire to withhold information in his answer to my question of 7 September, relative to size of classes, etc., will he please advise how many school classes there were, as at 31 August, 1955, in the metropolitan area, and under the control of one teacher, consisting of the following total pupils:— (a) 50, but under 60; (b) 60, but under 70; (c) 70, but under 80; (d) 80, but under 90; (e) 90 or over?

"2. What were the grades of each class of 50 or more pupils, and at which school, respectively?"

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Attorney-General), for **Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory), replied—

"The comprehensive information sought can be obtained only by diverting officers from their normal duties, on which they are fully engaged. It is considered that the time involved in the preparation of these statistics is not warranted, in view of the fact that conditions in schools are continually altering."

#### QUEENSLAND TOURIST TRADE.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

"Was he correctly reported in the 'Courier-Mail' of 22 August last as having said that the Tourist trade in Queensland was worth £5,000,000 per year? If so, how does he arrive at such a figure?"

**Hon. C. G. McCATHIE** (Haughton) replied—

"The figure of £5,000,000 quoted by me was arrived at by adding—(i.) Over the counter takings of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau, £1,000,000. (ii.) Additional spendings of these tourists in Queensland, £3,000,000. (iii.) Spendings of all other tourists, £1,000,000. Total, £5,000,000. These figures are accepted by travel authorities in Queensland as conservative."

## TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER, 1955.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### SEPTIC SYSTEMS IN STATE SCHOOLS.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. Further to his answer to me on September 7 wherein he stated that details of Septic System approvals would be contained in the Annual Report to Parliament

## SUBSIDY FOR PENSIONERS' COTTAGES.

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

“1. Will the State Government subsidise the erection of cottages for pensioners by organisations such as Rotary Clubs?”

“2. If the answer to question (1) is in the affirmative, can he also advise if such a project would attract Federal subsidy in addition?”

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane) replied—

“1. The Queensland Government grants fifty per cent. subsidy to Local Authorities in respect of the capital cost of providing cottages for pensioners. The Local Authorities accept responsibility for the maintenance of the cottages. The Queensland Government also grants like subsidy to Religious and Charitable Organisations on the capital cost of establishing Homes for the Aged. The Organisations accept responsibility for the maintenance of the homes and the care and welfare of the aged people in them. Rotary Clubs have not advanced any proposals for subsidy for the provision of cottages for pensioners or the establishment of Homes for the Aged. However, should they do so, and give an undertaking that they will be responsible for the maintenance of the cottages or homes and the care and welfare of the aged occupants, their proposals will be considered.

“2. Full details of the Federal subsidy scheme are not known. It is known, however, that the Federal subsidy scheme is not as liberal as Queensland's scheme.”

## PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Thirty-fourth Report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Government Inscribed Stock.

Report of the Licensing Commission for the year 1954-1955.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under The Irrigation Acts, 1922 to 1954, and The Irrigation Areas (Land Settlement) Acts, 1933 to 1954.

Seventieth Report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Stock.

Ordinance under The City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1954.

Proclamation under The Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1930.

Order in Council under The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1954.

## TIMBER USERS' PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## INITIATION.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Timber User's Protection Act of 1949 in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

## RAILWAYS (GLADSTONE TIDAL LANDS) BILL.

## INITIATION.

**Hon. J. E. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba—Minister for Transport): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for granting in fee simple to the Commissioner for Railways certain tidal lands and other lands within and near to the limits of the Harbour of Gladstone.”

Motion agreed to.

## SUCCESSION AND PROBATE DUTIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

## INITIATION.

**Hon. E. J. WALSH** (Bundaberg—Treasurer): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Succession and Probate Duties Acts, 1892 to 1952, in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

## RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—EIGHTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 8 September (see p. 286) on Mr. Brosnan's motion for the Adoption of the Address in Reply.

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane—Premier) (11.15 a.m.): I should like to take the opportunity of congratulating the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply on their very excellent speeches. I did not intend to enter this debate but I felt that it was necessary to reply to the assertions made in the course of this debate particularly by the Leader of the Opposition and by some of his sycophantic followers. I do it more in sorrow than in anger. I have noted with some sincere regret

the decline in the party which the hon. gentleman for Landsborough has the privilege to lead. It is now a politically moribund party but in the days of his predecessors in leadership it had some pretension to political responsibility. It appears to be suffering from the effects of the environment in which its members find themselves. I feel that its enforced association with another party of many aliases, the latest of which is Liberal, is having its effect on the hon. gentleman for Landsborough and his party generally. I feel with some regret that the Leader of the Opposition has lost some of that frank—and that is not intended to be a pun—truthful and objective approach to questions that an Opposition leader who aspires, however hopelessly, to the Treasury benches, should possess. The hon. gentleman has succumbed to the overshadowing personality of the newest and fifth leader of this party of shreds and patches which is known by so many names in this Parliament. He has become more and more the echo of the hon. gentleman for Mt. Coot-tha whose extraordinary masterpieces of distortion have evoked the hilarity of students of political affairs in this State and country. We have witnessed in recent years from our political opponents the growth of a new cult of political propaganda which consists of turning the truth inside out until it is unrecognisable as a fact. This new form of political science might be described as political bodgysm.

The hon. gentleman for Landsborough complained bitterly about the absence of juicy promises in the form of attractive Bills. He referred to the list of Bills as wishy-washy and uninspiring. He was aggrieved because the Opening Speech did not contain a list of attractive Bills which he would have described as window-dressing for the election next year. He would certainly have taken the opportunity of being critical in that connection. However, as no Bills of that kind were included in the Governor's Speech, the Leader of the Opposition referred to those that were mentioned as being wishy-washy.

What did the Leader of the Opposition have to say about the Government's activities in the interests of the progress of the State and its people? After all, the Governor's Speech is an account of the stewardship of the Government, and, with the exception of its introduction, which is written by His Excellency himself, it is an account of what the Government have been responsible for, and outlines what the Government contemplate doing for the further progress and development of Queensland and the welfare of its people.

The Leader of the Opposition had nothing constructive to say about that part of the Opening Speech; he contributed not one iota of constructive criticism. Is it not right that the people of Queensland should expect that the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition would have some constructive criticism to

offer on an important document such as the Governor's Opening Speech? However, in his characteristic manner, the Leader of the Opposition failed to supply anything that would give the public any inducement or encouragement to vote for his party at any election.

In the course of his speech, he spoke of promises. In doing so, he displayed what I would describe as a fine piece of effrontery when regard is had to the promises made for the development of Queensland by his Federal Leader, Sir Arthur Fadden. Solemn promises were made by Sir Arthur Fadden, both in his policy speech and during the campaign that preceded the 1949 Federal election, about the Burdekin and other schemes, for the further development of Queensland and the settlement of more people in this State. These solemn promises, however, have been thrown overboard, yet the hon. gentleman talks about the promises by this Government! The promises that were made by Sir Arthur Fadden are so over-ripe that they have gone rotten on the bough.

Let us examine the promises of the Leader of the Opposition in the 1953 election campaign. He travelled the length and breadth of this State, promising to build railway lines here, there, and everywhere. The cost did not worry him. The building of the lines that he promised would have added millions of pounds to the national debt of this State. He promised that if his party was elected, it would build railway lines from Dajarra to Camooveal, and from Blackall to Charleville. He followed that up with the very stupid statement that he advocated the linking of our railways with those of the southern States, which would mean the virtual extinction of our ports and the processing factories in our country towns. He said that if those lines were built, there would be a complete railway connection between the southern capitals and the Northern Territory. Anyone with any knowledge of Queensland can imagine what would happen if such a rail connection was built. Fancy any man who aspires to statesmanship, and anxious to develop his native State, making such a silly statement! In other words, he wants to link the primary industries of this State with Sydney and Melbourne. He would like to see meat-treatment works in the South getting our cattle; then our ports would decline, rather than flourish. If the people were gullible enough to take the Leader of the Opposition at his word and put his politically-irresponsible party into power, the railways he promised would make ghost towns of Townsville and Cairns and other coastal towns, because all the beef cattle of this State would be treated in the South. That is obvious to any thinking person who has the interests of Queensland at heart.

The Leader of the Opposition really spread himself in his speech when he spoke of disunity in the Labour Party. Indeed

he spent most of his time dealing with the internal disturbances in the Labour Party in Australia at present and he accused me of turning a triple political somersault. Judging by the record not only of his own Party but also of his political associates, I should think the Leader of the Opposition would have maintained a coy silence on this subject of political unity. I shall deal with that at a later stage in my speech. As for political somersaults, I can never pretend to aspire to the heights of acrobatic prowess exhibited by the Leader of the Opposition. I shall also tear the mask from the political Blondin from Landsborough, the versatile performer on the political tightrope who can face in two directions at once without losing his balance; but for the present I want to examine the assertion that I have performed a triple somersault on policy. Let me make it perfectly clear that I have never been guilty of a political somersault in my political life and I do not propose to start any such acrobatics at this stage.

Let me dissect the assertions of the Leader of the Opposition and expose them for the flagrant falsehoods they are. The hon. gentleman began—"Let us cast our minds back" and he went on to state the unblushing mistruth that in 1950 I repudiated the decision of the Labour-in-Politics convention at Toowoomba which favoured the retention of the Socialistic objective. Let us cast our minds back to 1950 and find out just what I did say and this is an example of how unreliable the hon. gentleman is. He said that he spoke at Redcliffe in support of the hon. member for Murrumba and touched on the Socialistic objective of the Labour Party and that I came there immediately afterwards and denied emphatically that the Labour Party had a Socialistic policy or that it favoured Socialism. I am sure he will not deny having made that statement.

The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that I did not follow the Leader of the Opposition to Redcliffe, and, as hon. members know, I would not follow him anywhere or in anything.

**Government Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. GAIR:** As a matter of fact the Leader of the Opposition followed me there. He has his dates mixed just as he so often gets his facts mixed. I was at Redcliffe on 30 March and I challenged the Leader of the Opposition to declare whether the 40-hour week would be abolished if his Party was returned to power. He was four days late, as he usually is. He came to Redcliffe four days after me and got onto the question of Socialism.

However, the Leader of the Opposition asserts that I denied emphatically that the Labour Party had a Socialistic policy or that it favoured Socialism. Let me read from the report of "The Courier-Mail" of 31 March, 1950, to show how the Leader of the

Opposition distorted what I said and how he literally turned the truth inside out. The report reads—

"Labour's policy always had been, and would be, one of Socialism and industrial reform, said Mr. Gair. But to claim that Labour supported entire Socialism in place of private ownership and private enterprise was political nonsense. I would cease to be a member of the Labour Party if it did not believe in private ownership. Mr. Gair said. The right of private ownership always has been upheld and encouraged by Labour. Between 75 and 80 per cent. of the people own their own homes in Queensland as the result of Labour administration. No other State comes near that figure."

I fail to see that that statement is a repudiation of the decision of the Labour-in-Politics convention in Toowoomba or that it constitutes so emphatic a denial that Labour favoured Socialism.

On 9 April, 1950, I stated in the course of a broadcast that the opponents of the Labour Party were frantically trying, by vague and inaccurate references to the policy of the Labour Party as laid down in its platform, to create the impression that this State was in the midst of a headlong rush towards total Socialism and the destruction of private property. The decision of the Toowoomba convention was clear and unequivocal on this question and that decision and my statement at Redcliffe were identical, particularly on the question of private ownership.

Let us look at the work of the Government over the years since 1915, excluding a break of three years—and a tragic three years they were indeed—and we shall see the extent to which Labour Governments have encouraged private ownership. They have encouraged people to possess their own homes and properties. It is a base and deliberate lie to say those things and those who utter them, I feel, know that they are lies. The policy pursued by the Labour Government in this State that they call socialistic is no different to that policy demonstrated and put into effect by Mr. Playford, the Liberal Premier of South Australia, who did not hesitate to take over the privately controlled powerhouses in South Australia and convert them into a public authority which is precisely the policy of socialism practised by the Labour Government in this State. It is also the same principle that actuated a former Tory Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Chandler, in deciding to take over the privately owned buses and run them as a public utility. There is no difference at all except that Labour makes no apologies for its policy, but the Tories sneak in the back door with theirs. There is no difference at all except that they want to hide what they do and we are quite open regarding our policy and what it means. As I have said in the Press on more than one occasion, any

Government who would stand by and allow any private organisation to exploit the people and disregard the requirements of the people in regard to a public utility and took no action to socialise or nationalise that public utility would be recreant to their trust and would be betraying the people they represented. I do not think that any Government would hesitate to do those things in the public interest.

I want to deal a little further with the Toowoomba Convention because we hear almost parrot-like from the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, this cry of "Socialism." We hear the hon. member either on the air or in the newspaper with the one cry of "Socialism." Really, the hon. member's greatest supporters do not believe for one moment what the hon. member tells them on this matter. Let me quote the salient points of the interpretation of Labour's objective which the convention carried and by which every Labour man is bound. Convention affirmed the right of private property; affirmed the right to individual profit; denied that private profit was the prime motive of human endeavour. Convention proposed that all engaged in useful human effort should share equitably in the results of their industry; affirmed that man stands above the State, and not the State above man; condemned dictatorships either from the Left or from the Right. That is the policy that was determined by the Labour-in-Politics Convention at Toowoomba. The hon. member finds fault with it. Is it likely that I would repudiate that sound and humane policy that was determined by the Labour Convention? I am accused of having in the 1953 election campaign again denied that Labour had any connection whatsoever with socialism. I never made any such declaration. On 27 February, 1953, I said at Tully I think it was, that Labour's policy on Communism had been defined for many years, and that Labour was opposed to any organisation that was not Australian in outlook. I added that Labour fought Communists while the Nicklins and Hileys used it to try to destroy the Labour movement. The Leader of the Opposition has a very inventive imagination. I give the hon. gentleman credit for the fact that he does not aspire to such fantastic heights or depths of nonsense as his deputy, who seems to be dictating the policy of the Opposition at the present time. The hon. gentleman does not go to those fantastic heights or depths of nonsense as his Tory fellow traveller, the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha. The imagination of the Leader of the Opposition reached such feverish heights in the 1950 State election campaign that he almost convinced himself—although he disastrously failed to convince the electors—that the 1950 election might be the last time they would have the privilege of recording their vote at a democratic election. Hon. members remember that as well as I do.

The Leader of the Opposition is accepted by some people as a responsible parliamentarian. At the 1950 election, however, he told the people that if they voted for the Labour Government, it would probably be the last time they would have the democratic right of electing a Government. The damnable and detestable inference was that the electors would be disfranchised and that some form of dictatorship would be introduced in this State. He worked that furphy in 1950 and as it did not come off, he made another outrageous claim. He told the workers of Cairns on 18 February that, if the Gair Government were returned, the workers would stand the risk of losing the Industrial Court. One statement is just as silly as the other. There have been Labour Governments over the years, and they have advocated arbitration and conciliation. They built up the Court to its present standard. Anyone old enough to remember the years 1929 to 1932 knows that it was the Moore Government, of which the Leader of the Opposition and other hon. members opposite were supporters, if not in this House then outside Parliament, that ringbarked the Arbitration Court and took public servants and others away from the protection of the Court during those years. Imagine the effrontery of the Leader of the Opposition in making that statement! One would think they were the patrons and champions of arbitration. We know what would happen to the arbitration system if by any chance hon. members opposite formed the Government of this State. They would ringbark the Industrial Court again and outlaw the workers.

All this talk about Labour's association with Communism, of course, goes back to the days of Sir George Reid and his Socialistic tiger. The fact that they have to go back 60 years shows how outmoded and outdated are the policy and the platform of present Opposition parties. They referred then to members of the Labour Party as anarchists, fascists, people who believed in free love and other such nonsense, and that was long before there was any talk of Communism. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha and other Tories like him talk this rubbish in the hope of deceiving the people.

**Mr. Aikens:** They do not talk about free love now they have Pilbeam as a member.

**Mr. GAIR:** They are still using the same phrases. They say that times have changed. It is time there was a change in their approach to politics in this State. Their statements are very feeble. If that is the only way in which they hope to win the support of the people, I am satisfied that it means success for Labour.

We heard the cries in 1929, "Give the boy a chance", and "Ten thousand jobs". They were not talking about Socialism then, but in recent years they have gone back to Sir George Reid's time and are using all the slogans used in those very early years.

The Leader of the Opposition also asserted that my leadership of the party was in danger because I boycotted the Hobart Convention and supported the Industrial Group Movement. My leadership of the Parliamentary Labour Party was never in question. That is proved by the unanimous vote of confidence in me as leader of this party. The Leader of the Opposition, in typical fashion, distorts the decision of the Parliamentary Labour Party. He asserted that I supported the motion giving Labour's support to what he calls the "Federal faction led by Dr. Evatt", and in so doing I somersaulted in my support of the Industrial Group Movement. That statement clearly shows that he has no understanding of the position. The resolution carried by the Parliamentary Labour Party was that, as the decision of the Federal Conference was binding on every man and woman of the Australian Labour Party, there was no necessity for us as a party to direct our representative on the Q.C.E. how he should vote on that question or any other question. The industrial group question had nothing to do with and had no relation to what is described as the boycott of the Hobart A.L.P. conference by myself and others. It had absolutely nothing whatever to do with it. It has been used as an irrelevant red herring by the Leader of the Opposition and others to obscure the real issue. I want to state the real issue clearly so that hon. members will understand the position. I am a member of the Federal Executive of the Australian Labour Party and also a delegate to the Federal Conference. The Federal Executive had met some time previously and had sat in judgment on the Victorian State Executive. A special conference was decided upon. The old Executive of Victoria was boycotted. From that conference delegates were elected to the Federal Conference, and when the matter of credentials came before the Executive I raised the point that it was not the function of the Executive to credential delegates but rather a matter for conference itself. This was in accordance with practice. I was over-ruled and the six new delegates from Victoria were credentialed to represent Victoria. I wanted the conference to decide between the two sets of delegates from Victoria, which set was the constitutional representatives of Victoria.

**Mr. Sparkes:** You did not attend the conference.

**Mr. GAIR:** Somebody must have told the hon. member that. Of course I did not attend the conference. My point was that the question of which set of delegates was eligible to attend should be determined by the five remaining States. There was a precedent for that. In 1927 when there was a breach in Labour ranks in N.S.W. and we had the Lang and Hughes Groups, the Federal Conference which was attended by the late Mr. Seullin and W. Forgan Smith decided that the delegates of the five remaining States should determine which set of delegates were

to represent N.S.W. All delegates from N.S.W. were excluded until the matter was determined. That is what we wanted so far as the Victorian position was concerned. The question of groups did not come into the matter at all. The Leader of the Opposition and others from time to time have gone to great pains to link up the question of groups, which attitude is false, mischievous, and malicious. The vote of the Parliamentary Labour Party neither supported or condemned industrial groups. It dealt with the resolution of the Federal conference and did not express an opinion on the matter because the question of industrial groups had no bearing on the motion. The motion did not support the Dr. Evatt faction or any other faction. It was an unanimous expression of opinion that as all decisions of the Federal conference were binding on all branches and individual members of the Australian Labour Party, no specific direction from members of the Parliamentary Labour Party was necessary to the delegate on the Q.C.E.

**Mr. Aikens:** The Federal conference decided that groups were to be disbanded.

**Mr. GAIR:** That is so.

**Mr. Coburn:** It was not a properly constituted conference.

**Mr. GAIR:** We elected to remain away but the balance carried on and all branches of the Labour Movement throughout Australia accepted the decision as constitutional. As a member of the Labour Movement, I am bound to accept that decision. The majority of the States accepted the decision of the conference. Nobody will tell me nor will the Leader of the Opposition dare say that all decisions of Country Party conferences, wherever held, are unanimous. He is always bound by the majority decision and not the minority decision. He would be bound by the decision of the conference whether he was in the minority decision or the majority decision. He would accept the decision of the conference as a member of the Country Party, and so the same thing applies to the Labour Party. In the case of the hon. member for Burdekin it would not apply because he is the majority and the minority rolled into one.

On the question of supporting the Dr. Evatt group or some other group, let me say that Dr. Evatt was neither a member of the Federal Executive nor a delegate to the Federal conference. He was not a party to the decision. How could a decision of Caucus be construed as support for Dr. Evatt? It would be stupid and utter nonsense to say that.

I stand where I have always stood politically. My sole concern is the welfare of the Labour Party which has contributed so much to the development of this State and the Commonwealth. The party has lifted the State to the status of nationhood which it enjoys today. It has given to the people of Australia all the important legislation for

reform which is so much appreciated at the present time. The Labour Government were responsible for the establishment of the first Australian Navy, the first Australian Army, and the Commonwealth Bank, three highly important and indispensable pillars of any nation. In the face of criticism and ridicule, the Labour Government established those arms of defence for this country.

And now we come to the leader of the Liberal Party and its president, the unreliable Mr. Trout, who seems to be fully engaged in trying to convince the people of the need for a return to the 48-hour week. That is the very clear policy of the leader of the Liberal Party. The people of Queensland, particularly the workers, know what to expect in the event of the defeat of the Labour Government next year or at any other time, which of course is most unlikely. Mr. Trout attempted to effect a union with the Country Party by saying, "We hope that if we join your Party, you will join ours." That statement recalls the old story of the spider's saying to the fly, "Will you come into my parlour?"

The Leader of the Opposition sought to make much of the disunity within the Labour Party. Let us have a look at the Country Party, which in my opinion is a political misnomer if ever there was one. No party has done less than this alleged Country Party for the primary producer, in both the State and Federal spheres. It has a long and notorious record of turbulent upheaval, cunning plots and stratagems, and backstabbing intrigues. The position became so disgraceful and disgusting in 1941 that Mr. John Leahy, who was then President of the Queensland Country Party, blew the gaff. Announcing that a Country Party conference in Brisbane early in August 1941 had decided that Mr. Fadden—now Sir Arthur Fadden—had automatically excluded himself from the party, when he formed the Country-National organisation, Mr. Leahy's gorge rose to such an extent that he said—

"The move to oust Mr. Menzies originated in March this year when he was not in Australia to defend his position. The intrigue against him emerged from Stygian darkness when the C.N.O. was launched in Queensland. This episode makes nasty reading in Australia's wartime political history. Those who sponsored the movement in this State adopted the refined verbal subtleties of Japanese diplomacy to extol the value of national unity while actively engaged in destroying it."

What an indictment of the Country Party by its own President! He charged Sir Arthur Fadden, then Mr. Fadden, with having betrayed his leader whilst he was overseas and unable to defend himself. The Queensland Country Party conference decided to continue as an independent organisation, thus repudiating the action of Mr. Fadden in bringing about a fusion of the non-Labour organisations in Queensland. To show their

disgust, the Country-Nationalist Organisation decided to organise the electorates on its own. It appointed a political director, Mr. R. G. Larkin, who declared that the need for political unity in the national interests was obvious, and said it was regrettable that the remnants of the Queensland Country Party still remained irreconcilable. But in spite of all this jockeying for power and changing of labels, both parties suffered. Time and time again they met with exasperating defeat at the polls. The people would have nothing of the mergers or the divorces, or this alleged making-up that took place from time to time, particularly on the eve of an election. They would have nothing of new leaders, new slogans, new organisers, or new directors. Nothing served to win the goal of political power.

Tied up with the history of the Country Party is its rather discreditable liaison with the Tories, who have adopted a series of successive names. All hon. members know the brands under which they have traded from time to time; they are as colourful as Joseph's coat. We all know the hilarious story of the Kewpies, who tried to squeeze out some of the Tories and succeeded in dislodging Mr. Dart and Mr. Massey. They tried also to dislodge Mr. Luckins, but he was not having any. He resigned and announced his intention of standing as an Independent. He won his seat and had to be brought back into the ranks of the Old Gang by the Kewpies.

Meanwhile, the Federal Tories, having found themselves in Opposition, had been looking for a new label with which to make themselves presentable to the people. They had abandoned the name of United Australia Party for that of Liberal Party of Australia. But Lord Mayor Chandler was coy. He declared in January 1945 that the Queensland People's Party was prepared to work with, but would not allow itself to be merged into, the new Liberal Party of Australia, which would cause it to lose its identity.

The Liberals were ever persistent suitors and although they were unable to win the hand of the Kewpies, they took up residence in Queensland to be near.

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

**Mr. GAIR:** I desire to thank the hon. member for Fitzroy and other hon. members for their courtesy and I will try not to be any longer than I can help. However, I think it is important that I deal with some of these matters seeing that the Leader of the Opposition and other hon. members opposite went to great pains to speak of disunity in the Labour Party.

I am merely pointing out that every political party at some time or other has its difficulties and we should not be slow to recognise it. I would say that the record shows that "J. B." either was a deceitful liar or was having his leg pulled, because with his hand

on his heart he solemnly declared, "We must keep this party completely free from any outside domination. The executive feels that the Q.P.P. as a separate entity has a great role to play in Queensland's history." Less than a month later the newspapers were telling us that a formula for a linking up between the Kewpies and the Liberals had been evolved. The old boys who evolved it, of course, were J. B. Chandler, T. A. Hiley, R. G. Menzies, and T. Malcolm Ritchie. In another week's time the Kewpies announced that they had merged with the Liberals in the Federal sphere but would retain their name and identity in Queensland. Over the border down Canberra way they were the Liberals but in Queensland they were the Kewpies. Having, like the celebrated Duke of York on a memorable historical occasion, marched his men uphill and then marched them down again, Chandler tossed in the towel—I should say the leadership. In March, 1946, he had come in like a lion; he went out like a lamb, and that political fire-eater, Bruce Pie, succeeded him. Having tasted the inebriating cup, the Kewpies then offered in 1948 to go the full hoghead in company with the Country Party but the Country Party, playing the role of Greta Garbo, on the theme "I want to be alone," was shocked by this unseemly advance and slammed the door. When the Country Party ventured out in February, 1949, it found the Q.P.P., disguised as Federal Liberals, offering a pact for the Federal elections. The carrot was effective bait. The Country Party boys came over. Next stage was the demise of the short-lived Queensland People's Party. At the tender age of six years it departed from political life—unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Its members, who were the old gang anyhow, bobbed up again as the Liberal Party of Australia (Queensland Division).

Early in 1948, Bruce Pie had had enough, and, after the Casket Commission and a few other things, he felt that he was not suited to political life. He tossed it in and the leadership was taken by Mr. T. A. Hiley. Mr. Hiley gracefully retired from leadership of the Liberals and the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, Mr. K. J. Morris, stepped into the breach with a clarion challenge. His task was to breathe new life into the dry bones of the Opposition.

As for the Country Party, the coy lady is back at her old game of somewhat *passée* political Greta Garbo. She will not consent to a regular marriage with the Liberals but lives with them as a political *de facto* wife—hoping against hope that the day may come when she will sneak into power because the people may happen to be looking the other way!

The parties appear in public as one, but actually they are separate entities, united only in their common hatred of Labour.

Let us invoke the testimony of that great maestro of political comic opera, Sir Arturo Fadden. Let him tell us what he thinks of

the Country Party. This is what he said at Warwick on 19 December, 1944, without batting an eyelid—

"The Australian Country Party stands as a buffer between the Labour and Liberal."

The newspapers reporting that cynical declaration did not record how it was received by his audience, which comprised members of the Warwick branch of the party, and we may never know unless they make the belated discovery that he was giving them the horse laugh. Political parties which can be nothing more than buffers are fit for none but duffers. If the country supporters of Fadden wish to be political duffers, that is their own business, but in that role they have not got very far. The Country Party has been content to hitch-hike through the years in the old Tory wagon; to be made to walk when the wagon was full and to be picked up again when some of the Tories fell off for good. At the Tory Unity Conference at Albury in October, 1944, Menzies told the delegates that the Country Party had achieved a high degree of unity, and it was up to them to become equally united so that "we may be in a position to discuss co-operation or alliance or even full organic unity." And Sir Arthur sent good wishes to the Albury conference, although a little over a year previously he had cried to high heaven, "This stab in the back at this juncture makes another betrayal in the series for which Mr. Menzies has become notorious." One wonders how it is that country people allow themselves to be fooled by that sort of nonsense. In the Queensland Parliament the Labour Party represents a greater number of country electors than the so-called Country Party. The natural political affiliation is for producers in city and country to get together in opposition to their common exploiters. The Country Party, led by the hon. member for Landsborough, cannot hope to win power in Queensland, and it is pitiful to see how it plays for support from the Liberals. In doing so, however, it is only running true to form. There is nothing of the "buffer" about either the Australian or the Queensland Country Party; each is a political parasite. The Liberal and Country Party leaders are making goo-goo eyes at one another now and trying to get the people to believe that they are united. They backscratch each other with a zeal that would do justice to a better cause—

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

Mr. GAIR: I would sooner do it with him than with the hon. member. The hon. member is one of the last with whom I would like to backscratch.

They compete in finding expressions of hatred of Labour.

Mr. Evans: The hon. gentleman is reading it.

**Mr. GAIR:** The hon. member could not read it; that would be his difficulty. The hon. member could not speak because his mouth would be invariably full of chewing gum.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. GAIR:** The primary producers are at last awakening to the false pretences of this alleged Country Party.

It does not become the Leader of the Opposition or any other hon. member opposite who talk about somersaulting or disunity in the Labour Party to think that they are without fault in this connection. I could go on and quote numbers of these statements. For the benefit of Country Party members I shall quote the statement by the late W. M. Hughes on Mr. Menzies. This is what he said—

“He could not lead a flock of homing pigeons.”

Another pearl of wisdom from the Little Digger is this—

“Mr. Menzies deplores the self-seeking, whispering campaigns and intrigues; he passionately urges the need for unity, but is himself the great self-seeker, the man behind the scene in every intrigue, the fountain head of every whispering campaign, the destroyer of unity.”

That is what Billy said about Bob. Let us see what Sir Earle Page, then Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Country Party had to say about Mr. Menzies before J. Lyons passed out.

“The national leader must have courage, judgment, and loyalty. Mr. Menzies does not possess those qualities which are needed to fit him to be the leader of the country.”

Despite that statement he is a member of Mr. Menzies's Cabinet today.

This is what Mr. W. C. Wentworth had to say about Mr. Menzies—

“Mr. Menzies can neither call nor command as a leader... The greatest national service he could render the Party and Australia would be to quit politics. Those of us who stand for a more vigorous policy are anxious that Mr. Menzies's inevitable failures should not block the path of future progress.”

That is Mr. Wentworth's opinion of his leader. Has Mr. Menzies forgotten, or has Mr. Wentworth forgiven, or is it that they have not yet caught up with each other? The anguished cry of stab-wounded Fadden, and the bitter remarks of Page and Hughes, make a mockery of this humbug about the good companion basis existing between the Country Party and the Liberal Party. We know the Country Party and the Liberal Party to be Labour haters who are opposed to industrial reform or anything that might prove to be in the interests of the working class people of this State.

Listen to this statement by Mr. McDonald, Leader of the Victorian Country Party, concerning Mr. Holloway, then Liberal Party State Premier.

“This contemptible political ratbag... this arch disruptionist... he has done more intrigue than ever Sir Albert Dunstan thought about.”

Of course, since then the Victorian Liberals and the Country Party have so split up, and realigned themselves in separate quarrelling factions, that a Chinese jigsaw puzzle would be easier to understand than the present political set-up.

The note of disillusionment with the Country Party was self-evident in an editorial in the “West Australian Wheat-grower” on 10 February, 1949, which stated—

“What happens is that usually a hurried truce is patched up, prior to elections, and the public is told loudly and lengthily through the Press that ‘agreement has been reached.’ Actually, the only ‘agreement’ that has been effected, is one by which both parties agree not to oppose each other's candidates and we fall for it.”

That is what the “West Australian Wheat-grower” has to say of the unity of these parties.

Here is Mr. Menzies in melancholy mood, talking to the New South Wales Liberal Party—

“The Liberal Party's greatest undertaking was to get candidates of the highest qualifications. The Liberal Party was still handicapped by ‘doubtful supporters’ and ‘appalling halfwits’, who thought they would make better leaders of the Party than those at present in office.”

A nice thing to say of his supporters! To whom was Mr. Menzies referring? Did he have in mind Eric Harrison, Jos. Francis, Archie Cameron, Percy Spender, or some of the Queensland Liberals?

We find the same melancholy note sounded by Sir Percy Spender—

“The dangerous legend has been allowed to grow—and in this we have played right into the hands of the Labour Party—that, apart from one or two people, the Liberal Party has nothing to offer the country in brains, character, or capacity.”

To whom was the hon. member for Warringham referring? Did he have in mind the Prime Minister or Mr. Casey? To whom was he referring when he made that statement?

The Leader of the Opposition and his principal gun-bearer on the heights of Mount Coot-tha are desperately anxious to smear the Labour Party with Communism. They have been plugging that line for a long time. We can all imagine their great disappointment at the statement by the Prime Minister recently at a dinner in Finney's Cafe when they entertained him. In the course of his speech

the Prime Minister said, "The Labour Party is no more communist than I am." Imagine their great disappointment! They have been plugging that line for years and years, trying to link the Labour Party with communism and the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Liberals in Australia, made that very definite and perfectly clear statement. These people must be feeling very frustrated at this stage at the lack of support from their Federal Leader in their attempt to beguile the people of Queensland into believing a mistruth, that Labour is associated with communism.

We find greater sympathy for communists among Opposition members than on this side of the House. Having dealt with the statements and charges by the Leader of the Opposition supported by the hon. member for Barambah—I think the hon. member for Mirani had something to say also—let me deal with the irresponsible statements of the hon. member for Whitsunday, in which he charged this Government with discriminating against certain youths who were applicants for scholarships on the score that their people were or had been members of the Communist Party. That statement is the statement of an irresponsible, a person with a mischievous mind, a mind that would be prepared to conjure up anything. I want to say as leader of the Government that not one member of my Cabinet or myself would know the names of any of the applicants for teacher scholarships. I have never seen a list of children who applied for teacher scholarships and, if I saw such a list, I would not know the politics of the parents. I would not be concerned about that. The same thing can be said about any member of the Cabinet. A body of officers select pupils for teacher scholarships. The possession of a scholarship is not the only qualification required for a good teacher. Appearance, personality and suchlike things go to make up a successful teacher. Indeed we have had some great men and women scholastically who could not impart knowledge to children or anybody else for that matter. On the other hand you can get people of mediocre mentality who have the great gift of transferring knowledge to others. I know since I have been in Parliament that all these things are taken into account. I remember the days when Mr. Riddell of the department used to get these people in. People with an impediment are disadvantaged as teachers; people with facial deformities are not so desired in the teaching service, more out of compassion than anything else because pupils might nick-name the teachers with names that would be offensive and hurtful. As I said, all these things are taken into account. We have been charged with discrimination between children because their parents were Communists. Who said they were Communists? The hon. member for Whitsunday. If the people themselves are so conscious about it and feel guilty on that score, they are responsible for any discrimination, not us. The Government do not

admit that there was discrimination as charged. Recently I received a deputation from the Trades and Labour Council. I noticed that Mr. Dawson and Mr. Macdonald were present. They raised this question with me and I said, "If your charge is right, you might explain why the son of so-and-so"—I will not make the mistake the hon. member for Whitsunday made by disclosing names of people and disadvantaging them at their place of work—"who is a leading and wellknown Communist in this State had a teacher scholarship." He was there himself.

There is another angle to this matter and an important one, and I was pleased to see that Mr. Bernard Corser, a former member of State and Federal Parliaments, took the matter up in the form of a letter to the Press recently. I do not think that we can be too careful as to whom we place in front of our children in class. I am not now connecting my remarks with this question at all. We cannot be too careful in the choice of the people we stand before our children. When travelling the State I invariably visit schools because I am interested in the work of schools. I find, generally speaking, that our teachers are of a high order and do an excellent job. Invariably in my talks to the children I ask this question: "What is the best country in the world?" I ask that question in the hope of impressing upon them that Australia is the best country in the world. In all cases but one, in reply to my question, I have got the answer, "Australia." I have said, "Yes, of course." In one place I got the reply, "Soviet Russia, Sir."

What would other hon. members do in the circumstances? I inquired discreetly whether the teacher had Communist tendencies or had any affiliation with the Communist Party, or whether the parent was a Communist. I am sure that no hon. member would approve of any teacher's inculcating into the minds of our children that any country other than Australia was the best in the world. We have a responsibility to build up the national spirit of this country and, if the process has not already begun in the home before the child attends school, it must begin in the schools.

The hon. member for Whitsunday made a lot of this matter and, as he invariably does, took up the cudgels on behalf of the Communists. That is not to be wondered at, because he admits to being the author of a poem that I think is highly seditious. He says he is proud of the fact that he wrote these lines—

"It was the money-bags of England that brought Malaya into war,  
Bringing countless men from far and wide to contest that country's shore."

**Mr. Lloyd Roberts:** Why not read the rest? I will recite all of it in this House one day.

**Mr. GAIR:** The hon. member will if he is permitted.

It is easy to understand the concern of the hon. member for Whitsunday for these people if they are Communists.

**Mr. Sparkes:** He was decent enough to fight for his country.

**Mr. GAIR:** I cannot say that about the hon. member for Aubigny.

The hon. member for Whitsunday went on to say—

“This is another example of the dirty, filthy grouper-action that has been operating in this State for quite some time, and for which this Government are so renowned.”

That is the intemperate language employed by the hon. member for Whitsunday against this Government, who had nothing to do with the non-selection of those young people for entry to the Teachers' Training College.

**Mr. Lloyd Roberts:** Not much!

**Mr. GAIR:** The Government had nothing at all to do with it.

The basis of the hon. member's statement was definitely sectarian. He has the reputation of being a bigot, and he makes statements such as that for no reason whatever and without any basic foundation.

In conclusion, I repeat that it ill becomes the hon. member for Whitsunday, or anyone else, to make such rash statements and charges against the Government, with resultant discord among the people of our community. I try to be tolerant to all sections of the community, irrespective of class or creed, and that should be the attitude of all. If we are to live together, let us live harmoniously. But we have a duty as a Government to protect our children, and one day we may find it necessary to discriminate against certain people whom we do not regard as qualified for the teaching of our children. If that necessity arises, this Government will not shirk their responsibility in the interests of Australia and of the future generations of this great country.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (12.22 p.m.): I take this opportunity of congratulating the mover and the seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply on their very able and capable speeches, both of which disclose a wide knowledge of the affairs of this State. Let me associate myself, too, with the expression of loyalty to the Throne. We believe our system of government to be the best in the world and it is something we Australians should always keep in mind.

I want to express my appreciation of the work of the Governor, Sir John Lavarack, and Lady Lavarack. At present they are out in the far western areas of the State, meeting the people at various gatherings, opening

shows, and attending other functions. The people of Queensland are most appreciative of their efforts.

As Secretary for Agriculture and Stock I was particularly pleased at the mention in the Governor's Speech of the importance of my department. The prosperity of Australia is wrapped up with the prosperity of its primary industries. Our primary industries are now enjoying reasonable prosperity but let me sound the note of warning that has been sounded by many others in the National Parliament that prosperity has to be very carefully watched and safeguarded; otherwise it may not continue.

It is interesting to note that in 1953-1954 Queensland primary industries contributed £109,476,000, or 75 per cent., of Australia's favourable overseas trade balance. The main industries concerned were wool, sugar, meat, butter, and wheat.

We have full employment, yet we are facing financial instability, largely due to, (1), our tremendous imports and, (2), falling prices for the major exports. Sir Arthur Fadden has seen fit to go overseas to attend a world monetary conference to see if he can improve Australia's overseas credits.

**Mr. Aikens:** Our economic position is pretty grim.

**Mr. COLLINS:** It is very grim. I am not criticising Sir Arthur for doing that at this stage; but it was very disquieting to read in this morning's "Courier-Mail" that of all the countries in the world Australia is the greatest borrower from the international bank. That is a sad commentary on the way this country is slipping under the present Federal Government and I think every citizen, and every primary producer in particular, must view it with alarm. Although our prices are falling, they are still reasonably high.

I ask hon. members to cast their minds back to the time just before World War II. when our primary industries were in a desperate position. I think it desirable here to quote certain figures issued by responsible bodies. In 1935, at the time of the Royal Commission into the wheat industry, it was estimated that there were 41,000 wheat-growers in Australia. The area under wheat was about 10,000,000 acres and the total debt of the wheatgrowers was no less than £151,459,000, or an average debt per wheat-grower of about £3,676. The total assets of the farmers were far less than their total debts. Indeed, their assets were £136,132,000 and their savings were not taken into account in that estimate.

At that time—in 1935—it was stated that 60 per cent. of the wheat farmers could not pay their way. Consequently debt adjustment schemes were introduced by the Federal Government to relieve the position of some of the farmers, and in some cases their position was relieved, but owing to seasonal conditions the whole picture at that time was just

one of misery and destitution for them. Today the wheatgrower's position is not so bad.

Another very important industry is the dairying industry. Somewhere about that time or just prior to the war, the dairying industry had and still has better marketing facilities in comparison with the wheat industry, but the picture was still a tragic one. It is estimated that in Australia there are 100,000 dairy farmers and it was estimated that their financial assets were worth £300,000,000. In Queensland there are approximately 29,000 dairy farmers who had an average income of £181 per annum including family labour. Although their interest bill was not a very big one, their position was very drastic. We are apt to regard the sheep industry as one where people own large areas and are prosperous and wealthy. They are prosperous at the present time and their prosperity has helped this country considerably during the last few years, particularly in connection with our overseas trade balances; but in the years prior to the war and right up to the war, the position was not so good. In the early stage of the war, wool was pegged at about 1s. a lb. According to the figures supplied by the Queensland Bureau of Statistics, in 1941 the average net income of the sheep pastoralist was only £240 per annum or less than £5 a week. They had an interest bill of £150 per annum so their indebtedness was, compared with their income, reasonably high. The cattle man was in a better position, but his position was still a very desperate one. According to the figures his net income in 1941 was only £366 per year and his interest bill was only £54. I know the desperate position of the cattle men at that time because I happen to have in my electorate a great number of cattle men whose properties are in the Peninsular and the Gulf. Bullocks were selling at £2 10s. to £3 a head. Even in that difficult position the primary producer then carried all Australia's overseas commitments. It is plain that Australia has and still does, ride on the back of the primary producer. For that reason the primary producer is entitled at least to receive the full value of the cost of production for his products in order to retain the solvency of this country. A lot has been done to try to bring that about. I am bringing these matters before the House so that the position may be reviewed before it is too late.

I cannot quote the actual figures, but I do not think the sugar industry was in the same bad position as other primary industries to which I have referred. I do know, however, that during that period the cost of production was estimated at £23 10s. or £24 a ton of sugar. That is what the sugar-producer gets for home-consumption sugar and it is the result of an agreement between the State, as the buyer of sugar, and the Commonwealth Government. The sugar-grower has to get at least the cost of production for sugar sold in Australia.

The overseas price at that time was deplorably low. In one year, 1939, speaking from memory, sugar-growers exported more sugar than they sold in Australia, and the price for much of the export sugar was as low as £9 and £10 a ton. The return to the sugar-grower in many years was about £10 a ton below the cost of production. Sugar-producers, however, carried on.

With that as a background, you would expect the Federal Government of the day to do something to assist the producers who play their part in ensuring the prosperity of Australia and so enable us to meet our overseas debt commitments. The then Government were composed of the same Parties as the present Federal Government. That was virtually the position that obtained when the late John Curtin came to the helm in the Federal sphere. He became Prime Minister of Australia in 1941. He realised our dependence on the efforts of primary producers and he immediately took steps to improve their position. Primary producers were given a guaranteed price or cost-of-production price for their produce. There were no guaranteed prices in respect of wool and meat, but there were guaranteed prices for sugar, butter, and wheat.

Mr. Curtin died before the end of the war and the Labour Government at that time were led by the late Mr. Chifley. After the War Precautions Act ceased to operate the Labour Government gave the primary producers that I have mentioned greater stability than ever. Wheat-producers were given a contract price based on the cost of production. That put them in a sound and secure financial position. It was a five-year contract. The same help was given to the butter industry, and negotiations for a long-term contract in regard to sugar were taking place.

In 1950 the Queensland Premier went overseas and negotiated a long-term sugar contract for our surplus sugar. It was signed in 1951 by representatives of all Commonwealth Dominions and colonies. The sugar industry was then on a sounder footing than ever before. It received an increase in export quota from 400,000 tons to 600,000 tons. It received a guaranteed price for countries within the British Commonwealth. For Queensland there was a guaranteed price for 300,000 tons of our surplus of 600,000 tons and for the balance of 285,000 tons the price was world parity plus British preference. That contract was for seven years. There are price readjustments every year, but that was the basis of the undertaking, and the sugar contract is really the only one working satisfactorily. The price of sugar is falling. Members of the industry proceed overseas every year and work in close contact with the Queensland Agent-General who knows the sugar industry very well, and with the Department of Agriculture and Stock.

The liaison within the sugar industry is close indeed. I congratulate the leaders of

the industry in being open and broadminded; it is perhaps one of the industries which introduces less politics than any other. The sugar industry has paid the Under-Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Stock the high compliment of asking him to go overseas this year to help negotiate in the matter of price. There is probably not another man in Queensland who knows the sugar industry in all aspects as well as Mr. Bell. The Government have allowed Mr. Bell to go abroad; he is also going to an F.A.O. Conference as the Australian delegate. The point I make is that we are facing a period when the price of wool is coming down. The price of meat is also coming down and I think that cattle this year have dropped to the extent of £9 or £10 a head. However, the hon. member for Aubigny will correct me in that if I am wrong.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Unfortunately I cannot correct you on that.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I have been so advised by graziers. In 1949 we were told that if Sir Arthur Fadden was elected as Treasurer that his Government would make better contracts with the powers that be for the sale of our primary products. It was said that they would give farmers 10-year contracts because the five-year contracts were not much good. It was also said that they would give them the full cost of production on a liberal scale and that they put value back into the £1. Can anybody tell me that the Government have done any of those things? Can anybody tell me what the Federal Government propose to do for the marketing of our products in the future? If something is not done in the near future I feel sure that we will drift to the sorry position this country was in between 1930 and 1940. What are the farmers getting for their wheat? They have a guaranteed price, a price guaranteed by the Federal Government based on the cost of production estimated at 12s. 6d. or 12s. 7d. a bushel. There is no doubt that they have got that guaranteed price but the great disappointment is that the wheat is not being sold. What is the use of a guaranteed price if the wheat is ultimately destroyed by weevils? Much money is being spent in its storage. Storage under the circumstances is necessary, but what of the future? The interest bill on the wheat in storage runs into something over £2,000,000 a year and it is mounting all the time. Unless wheat is well stored it will deteriorate. I know that a lot of wheat-growers are dissatisfied with the existing position and I think it is time that they asked the Federal Government if they will honour their guarantee or not. The wheat cannot be left in storage indefinitely.

**Mr. Aikens:** Why isn't the wheat made available to the public to reduce the price of flour and bread?

**Mr. COLLINS:** That is so.

The price placed on wheat is 14s. 2d. a bushel, and the cost of production is 12s. 7d.

a bushel. The wheat is lying in store, although much of it could be used in Australia as live-stock feed. I can see no other way of using it unless, like the United States of America, we make a gift of some of it to those starving people who have neither money nor credit with which to buy it. Of course that is not the ultimate solution of the problem, but a gesture such as that would be a very good advertisement for this country. The Federal Government cannot claim to be in an unsound financial position, because last year they enjoyed a surplus of £70,000,000. They are quite capable of honouring the undertaking they made to the wheat-growers.

The wheat-growers of Queensland are suffering also in that the Federal Government have not spent as much money in this State in providing wheat storage space as they have in the other States. During the war, storage space was built at the cost of the wheat industry; the cost was met by Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia, irrespective of where the wheat storage was. Recently, a little over £3,000,000 was made available to provide extra storage space for wheat in Australia, of which Queensland has received only £80,000, although our percentage increase in production is greater than that of any other State. Although the storage space to which I refer is classed as temporary, much of it will in fact be permanent.

Queensland is not getting a fair deal from the Commonwealth Government. Something more could be done than merely sitting down waiting for something to happen.

The meat agreement is not yet working satisfactorily, and those engaged in the cattle industry do not know where they stand. They do not know the value of their contract. After reading the contract, I claim that its intention is crystal-clear. It was made in good faith between the Australian Government and the United Kingdom Government, and it had two main purposes. The first was to secure to the United Kingdom a greater supply of meat from the dominions as a safety measure and to overcome the upsetting of markets that war always causes. That fact was brought home to us on two occasions. During the two world wars we sold goods to the United Kingdom Government at a much cheaper price than the world market merited. However, as soon as peace again ruled the tendency of the United Kingdom Government was to buy on the cheapest market.

The second purpose underlying the agreement was to secure for the Australian producer a payable price for his cattle. No-one can produce any commodity unless he receives for it his cost of production, in which is always included a reasonable margin of profit.

**Mr. Aikens:** We pay a high price for our food so that it can be sold overseas on the cheap.

**Mr. COLLINS:** That is so, and I claim it is not fair.

Having made the agreement to which I refer, somebody has failed. It is very hard to say who the somebody is, but the agreement was made between the Federal Government and the United Kingdom Government. I do not think the United Kingdom Government would ever repudiate a contract any more than I believe the Australian Government would. The present Australian Government have repudiated nearly all the promises they made but I do not know of their repudiating a contract; they would consider themselves bound by it. While there may not be a legally binding contract in this case, I am sure the United Kingdom Government would not repudiate it.

I have asked the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. McEwen, if he could tell me what price the grazier should be getting for his cattle under the terms of the present contract. So far I have not been able to get a reply from him.

**Mr. Aikens:** He would not know in any case.

**Mr. COLLINS:** Last month they had somebody out from England studying the question. I claim that the whole thing is a muddle from one end to the other and I think I am right in stating the case for the thousands of graziers in the far north of Queensland who are not by any means on the same happy and prosperous footing as the graziers in the southern part of Australia. I think we are within our rights in asking that question. The graziers want it answered and I hope that some pressure will be brought to bear on the makers of that agreement to let the graziers know where they stand. Collectively our primary producers have every moral right to demand for their products the cost of producing them both for Australian consumption and for export. I do not think there is any answer to that.

The question involves Australia's solvency or insolvency. It means the difference between prosperity and destitution, between full employment and unemployment. Unless we do a whole lot more for the primary producers than we are doing and feed and work them under decent conditions, Australia, like any other country, will turn to communism. Surely to goodness the people as a whole, who reap the benefit of what the primary producers grow, in many cases at very much below cost, should be willing to carry any loss they sustain. It seems to me that the Federal Government have sold out the primary producer. The farmer is struggling as he has never struggled before in an effort to improve his property and his working conditions and to make for more economic farming. I can see no future for him unless he has some assurance not only of the cost of feeding Australia but also of the cost of production of products for export. Surely that is not asking too much! Surely hon. members opposite, who claim to represent the primary producers, will back every word I have uttered.

**Mr. Evans:** You do not mean that. You just said that we were paying too much now.

**Mr. COLLINS:** No, I did not.

**Mr. Evans:** You said it would mean an increased price.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I said that we were paying too much for wheat in Australia but that the wheat-grower was not getting it.

**Mr. Evans:** You are talking about wheat now.

**Mr. COLLINS:** The wheat-grower is not getting it although he has a guarantee.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Who is getting it?

**Mr. COLLINS:** The mice and the rats, and they will finish it unless something is done. When that comes about the Federal Government will be absolved from their guarantee because it will not be fair average quality of export standard. That is what the Federal Government are waiting for. They will dump the wheat-grower the same as they have already dumped the butter producer. I think hon. members opposite should take heed of this. I know they do not represent the primary producer and they never will because their party is divided into two halves, one representing the city interests. Our primary producers are facing a desperate position and I ask every hon. member of this House to stand solemnly behind what I have said this morning and to see that the primary producer gets a fair deal.

**Mr. PLUNKETT** (Darlington) (2.15 p.m.): I wish to associate myself with other hon. members in expressing loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. I also wish to congratulate the Queen's representative in this State, Sir John Lavarack, on the great work he is doing. I also congratulate Lady Lavarack who is a great help to her husband in carrying out the many duties of his office. Sir John and Lady Lavarack have travelled far and wide throughout the State to familiarise themselves with the conditions under which people live and the needs of the various areas.

I have listened to many speeches during this debate, some good, some bad, a few indifferent, and some extraordinary. The speech by the Premier this morning was mainly a dissertation on people associated with the Government of this country over the years. Apparently some public servants worked overtime in looking up records going back to the periods mentioned by the hon. gentleman. It is apparent that the Government are fearful of what might happen to them in the future because the speech was what one might term the swan song of the Government. I should like the Premier to explain how it is if these people worked against the interests of this country why we are now experiencing the most prosperous times. We have reached the stage when everybody who wants work can get it and

earn a good living. That is my answer to the statements by hon. members on the Government side. We are living in a changing world. What applied 25 years ago may not apply today because conditions have altered. You must change with the times; if you do not, you will not progress.

I wish to say a few words about the dairying industry, one with which I have been associated so long and in which I have a great interest. I am satisfied that there are many hon. members and a great many people outside who do not fully appreciate the ramifications of this great industry and the organisations connected with it. Conditions have changed a great deal in the dairying industry. For 15 years we had a contract for the sale of our butter and cheese to the United Kingdom Government. We knew what we were going to get for our produce. The conditions today have not been brought about by any one Government. We lost the contract price that we enjoyed for 15 years, and the present price is from £90 to £100 a ton less. That means a drastic change, especially when it is remembered that one-third of our produce has to be sold on a free market overseas. We know what we are going to get for home-consumption products. We are entitled to expect at least the cost of production, and I do not think anyone would begrudge the primary producer that.

There are three organisations on a Commonwealth basis. Representatives are elected by the producers from all States. We have the Australian Federation, composed of the chairmen of the various organisations in the six States. Then we have the Australian Dairy Board, a statutory body, the members of which are elected by producers. That Board attends to the export of produce. Then there is the Australian Equalisation Committee, elected by the producers in the various States. The Equalisation Committee is a voluntary body not under the control of any Government. It has to equalise values for produce irrespective of the source of production. It is also the duty of the committee to see that no State goes short of butter, and it has discharged its duty successfully for 20 years. Western Australia, South Australia, and New South Wales, with its big population, have to obtain butter from other States. The Equalisation Committee ensures that all shortages in Australia are filled before any butter is sent overseas. To do that butter is often held in cold storage for months, storage charges for the butter being paid out of an equalisation fund.

Equalisation is on a 12-months' basis. The flush seasons and off seasons do not coincide in all the States, and it is therefore necessary to equalise prices over a period of 12 months. The price of butter in far north North Queensland, the west of Western Australia, and the south of Tasmania is the same, and it must be remembered that butter is a perishable product.

**Mr. Evans:** Who appoints the members of the Equalisation Committee?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** The producers. It is a voluntary body, and perhaps that accounts for its success. In this industry producers receive monthly payments. Otherwise they could not carry on. It is a system that enables them to establish credit with the various shopkeepers in the small country towns. As I said, the position has altered and we now have equalisation over the full 12 months with monthly payments. It must not be forgotten, as it usually is, that dairy products for export might not be realised on for six months after manufacture. The production might be held in cold storage in Australia for two or three months and is in transit to Great Britain for another two or three months. It will be seen that six months elapses before we realise on our exports.

**Mr. Evans:** And you don't know what you are going to get until the butter is sold.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** That is so. In the meantime, advance payments are made to the producers. It must be remembered too that under equalisation the producer is paid for his production. Last year we exported approximately one-third of our production or in other words 60,000 tons of butter. That volume could not be realised on for some time. Things have changed again and we have to go on the open market. The Equalisation Committee was forced to decide what would be a fair interim advance to the producer. There are many problems to be confronted. The factories get payment every month and if they overpay the producers there is no repayment. It is a pretty complex question. In the first place we have to consider the production of the whole of Australia. Last year was a good one for production because we had good seasons in all States at the one time. We do not usually have that. Generally, when one State has a flush season some other State has a decline in production. So the first thing to be done is to forecast Australia's production as whole. The next thing is to estimate consumption and the third to estimate the amount for export. Nobody knows the answers to these problems. We have also to estimate to what extent Government-fostered margarine might eat into the consumption of butter. Nobody knows that. The interim payment has to be a conservative sum but one that will give as much as possible to the farmers. Every State gets the same price. The sugar industry is worked along lines similar and to a lesser degree, the wheat industry. Inspired perhaps by Labour politicians, many people think that the Federal Government are doing all these things. The Federal Government have nothing to do with the amount decided upon as the interim payment to the producers in all States. I was a member of the committee, which was representative of the three organisations, that

reached unanimous agreement on that matter. It annoys me to hear the hon. member for Rockhampton say that the Federal Government have robbed the producers right and left. That was a silly statement to make, because nobody has robbed anybody.

**Mr. Moore:** You had better see the farmers who are going "crook" on Sir Arthur Fadden.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** If the Minister made that statement outside the Chamber, it would be libellous. What he says is deliberately untrue.

**Mr. Moore:** They held an indignation meeting. It that untrue?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** No.

**Mr. Moore:** You were not there defending Sir Arthur Fadden. You stayed away.

**Mr. Muller:** It was organised by a lot of Labour supporters.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** I shall tell hon. members of the action of the Federal Government. We conferred with the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture and asked him for cost of production.

**Mr. Moore:** Aren't you getting it?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** Yes.

**Mr. Moore:** What are you singing out about?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** All that the Federal Government did was to give the dairying industry its cost of production, which was arrived at by an independent committee.

**Mr. Hilton:** Was the personnel of that committee subsequently changed?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** I do not know. The members of the committee were not members of the dairying industry.

**Mr. Power:** The Federal Government reduced the subsidy, and the only way that those engaged in the dairying industry could get their cost of production was by the consumer's paying another 3½d.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** The Attorney-General is inviting me to say something about price control. I say now that he with his system of price control is injuring Queensland generally far more than he is benefiting the consumer. As the result of his efforts to keep prices down, many people cannot afford the necessaries of life. People hesitate about coming to Queensland because they fear the price-fixing arrangements in this State. The Attorney-General is causing Queensland to get a bad name in the other States. I shall tell hon. members of some of the things this Government have done. They claim it is not their desire to hurt the dairying industry, yet look at the tremendous impetus they have given to margarine. The Government ask the dairymen to stand behind the Labour Party, yet not so long ago they refused a cost increase of 3d. a lb. In October 1951, a drought year with very low

production, they passed a measure that they admitted would mean 5½d. a lb. less to the producer.

**Mr. Evans:** Then they said they were getting too much.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** Yes. All the States, except New South Wales and Queensland agreed to 3s. 1½d. a lb. as the cost of production. Later New South Wales gave way but Queensland hung on like grim death. For something like five months the butter producers of Queensland were taken down by 5½d. a lb. by this Government and they cannot deny it. In one day they rushed through that vicious Act on marketing and they said they were going to commandeer the farmers' dairy produce. They might have commandeered their butter, but they could not make them milk their cows, and they realised that a little later. That Act remains on the Statute Book. It is a disgrace to any government that pretends to help primary producers.

Only an hour or two ago the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, who should know something about primary production, said that the outlook of Queensland primary industries was not promising. His speech was very good up to the point where he spoke of difficulties confronting the producers and then he ruined it by trying to scramble out. He said the Federal Government were responsible for all those difficulties.

**Mr. Power:** So they are.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** What nonsense! Were it not for the Commonwealth Government I do not know what Queensland industry would have survived. Remember what happened with cotton, tobacco and wheat. I remember that the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock whipped himself into a fury and said that 12s. 8d. a bushel was the cost of producing wheat and the Government would not agree to any more—it was 12s. 8d. a bushel or nothing. All the other States agreed to 14s.

**Mr. Aikens:** The rats and the mice are getting all the wheat today.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** I know. It is not my fault; it is the fault of the Queensland Government for not making better storage provision. When hon. members opposite examine what they have done, for goodness sake let them not call themselves a producers' government, because they are anything but that. They tax the producer in every way open to them. The farmer who lives 25 miles outside the city is not allowed to bring his produce in for sale or shipment. That is great encouragement is it not? In the dairying industry they are increasing all the factory charges and they increased the manufacturing fee from 1d. to 3d. a lb. The freight on butter from the same factory now costs £1,000 more than it did five years ago. I am pointing out that you are attacking the basis of production by increasing land valuations. I also point out that a man who owns

11 head of cattle—and you would not run much of a dairy with 11 head—does not have to pay anything, but the man who has 100 head has to pay 30s. and 30s. for any part of 100. Previously the farmer paid for the number of stock he had, but now he has to pay for cattle that do not exist. For instance, if a man has 105 head he pays 30s. for the first 100 and 30s. for the five head. Many farmers keep a few sheep for killing purposes. If they run 11 they are exempt but when they get over that number they have to pay 8s. for every 100 or part thereof. If you have 12 you cannot escape the minimum payment for 100. When we come to deal with swine we think it is no wonder that the pigs squeal. There is a fee of 10s. for every 100 or part thereof. There is no exemption. If you have one pig you have to pay 10s. If that is not exploitation, I do not know what is. If the farmer fails to make a return or makes a false return he is liable to a fine of £50. We have reached the stage when the Government are destroying the value of property by virtue of the high valuation that they have put on the land. Up to the present not half the shires have been valued, but 22 have been done twice. Why are the others exempt, and why have the Government concentrated on the 22?

**Mr. Hilton:** Every property has to be revalued every five years.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** In 1950 my land valuation went up 100 per cent.

**Mr. Hilton:** Is that all?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** The hon. gentleman would have put it up 100 per cent. It goes up 100 per cent. in five years. I should like to know how the man who valued it in 1950 at 100 per cent. on the shire valuation could put it up another 100 per cent. five years later when the value of the product from the land was less than it was in 1950. These valuations are having a depreciating effect on the value of the land today because the first thing people want to know is what the valuation and the rates are.

**Mr. Hilton:** Can the hon. member tell me one case where property has been sold at less than the valuation?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** The hon. gentleman would not understand if I told him. There is only one beneficiary under this land valuation scheme, and that is the Government. For the year ending 30 June, 1954, succession and probate duty amounted to £2,352,384. For 1955 it was £2,512,895, an increase of £160,511.

To 30 June, 1954, stamp duty amounted to £2,835,394. To 30 June, 1955, it amounted to £2,917,412, an increase in one year of £82,018.

I am very strongly opposed to gift duty as it affects primary producers. A farmer may struggle all his life and rear a family,

and, when he is too old to work he wants to give the farm to his son. If he transfers the land to his son during his lifetime, he has to pay gift duty on it. If he leaves it to his son in his will, his son has to pay probate and succession duty on it. Those charges are so high that the value of the farm is reduced, and the result is that the son has to work for some time for the Government.

**Mr. Low:** Daylight robbery.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** It is unfair and unjust. I quote their figures in regard to gift duty—

| Year.             | Gift Duty. |
|-------------------|------------|
|                   | £          |
| 1951-1952 .. .. . | 119,307    |
| 1952-1953 .. .. . | 117,057    |
| 1953-1954 .. .. . | 212,971    |

The figures show an increase of £93,664 in 1953-1954 over the year 1951-1952 and £95,914 in 1953-1954 over the year 1952-1953. Land valuation has had more serious repercussions than it is generally realised. As heavier taxes are levied, the value of the land depreciates, and more families leave the land. We are asked to produce cheaply. How can it be done when these taxes are levied. A land-owner is taxed for owning land, and increased valuations mean a reduced value, because the valuations are too high. I do not know the qualifications of the valuers, but I am beginning to doubt their ability. They do not take into account the value of the product from the land. If for five years following a valuation severe droughts are experienced, the income from the property is reduced, but the landholder still has to pay the tax.

**Mr. Hilton:** Valuations used to remain in force for 20 years in some local authorities under the old setup.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** The landholder is subject to a revaluation of his land every five years, and our experience is that the valuation is increased by 100 per cent. each time. That brings about increases in succession and probate duty and stamp duty. The producer or the landowner must pay for the valuation of his property.

**Mr. Hilton:** Why not?

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** Why not? The Government get the revenue from the land tax.

**Mr. Hilton:** The local authorities get it.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** Why should the landholder be called on to pay for the valuation of his own land?

**Mr. Hilton:** That was always the case. Shires always had to pay for their valuation.

**Mr. PLUNKETT:** Landholders did not pay for it individually.

(Time expired.)

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON** (Carnarvon—Secretary for Public Works and Housing) (2.56 p.m.): I did not intend to participate in this debate, but certain statements by hon. members opposite call for a reply.

I associate myself with the very noble sentiments expressed in the preamble to the Address in Reply. The hon. members for Fortitude Valley and Mulgrave who moved and seconded the motion respectively are to be congratulated on the high standard of debate set by them, and it is to be regretted that that high standard was not maintained by hon. members opposite. This debate is worthwhile if hon. members opposite put forward constructive suggestions and make constructive criticism, but they have not done so. When indulging in criticism they should confine themselves to that very abstract but nevertheless desirable quality, the truth. It is because of some shocking misstatements by certain Opposition members that I enter this debate today. I listened very intently to the speech by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, in his alleged championship of the primary producers. It is true, as the Premier remarked, that the Country Party in the main is a party that sails under false colours, although I admit that there are some sincere and conscientious members in it. When it was realised in this State many years ago that the Labour Party had provided all the desirable legislation necessary for the protection and advancement of primary producers and when the Party had actually pioneered and passed statutes which are now standard throughout Australia and other parts of the world, certain people of the Opposition knowing that they would never have a chance of deposing the Labour Party of its occupancy of the Treasury benches conceived the idea of forming a Country Party. They actually went to the extent of incorporating in its constitution many of the fundamental things conceived in the minds of Labour men. I often regret that so many honest, sincere and hard-working primary producers have, unwittingly or without giving the matter full thought, pledged their political allegiance to a party which in the final analysis can never do anything for them in State or Federal spheres. Recent events in the Federal sphere have proved how true those words are.

**Mr. Muller:** To what are you referring?

**Mr. HILTON:** The disastrous blow struck at the dairying industry. I take exception to the remarks made by a very prominent member of the Country Party. He is a gentleman who is not a member of this House although he aspired on several occasions to become a member. I find myself at variance with certain statements made by him at a time when a certain section of the primary producers of Australia is fighting for its legitimate rights and for justice. He made a statement in "The Telegraph" today which is calculated to damn the efforts of these people fighting for justice. I refer

to the statement by Mr. John Leahy, senior, president of the Stanthorpe Branch of the Country Party.

The article states—

"Mr. Leahy said he had made investigations and had been astounded at incomes of some dairy farmers, and at prices paid for dairying properties."

That statement is calculated to undermine the fight being waged at the present time in the dairying industry. I do not want to anticipate debate on any motion—

**Mr. Muller:** Who is waging the fight?

**Mr. HILTON:** The dairy farmer. That was a statement from a man who for many years has been associated with the Country Party. In fact, he claims to be the founder of the Country Party. As I said, that statement is calculated to cut the ground from under the feet of those men fighting for their just rights. There has been talk about splits in parties and so on but I want to draw attention to this great split in a vital issue which affects the interests of so many primary producers.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Are you an Evatt or Santamaria man?

**Mr. HILTON:** I am a good Australian Labour Party man, always have been and always will be. The wily hon. member for Aubigny cannot side-track me from the point I am making. That statement by Mr. Leahy will add further fuel to the fire of resentment burning deeply in the breasts of so many primary producers in this State.

**Mr. Evans** interjected.

**Mr. HILTON:** The hon. member has only to read the provincial Press of the Darling Downs to realise the extent to which this resentment has registered. I am sure this statement by the alleged founder of the Country Party in Queensland will cut the ground from under the feet of the primary producers in their fight for justice.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Your seditious speech will do it.

**Mr. HILTON:** My speeches are not seditious but calculated to champion the cause of the downtrodden and shine the torch on the facts of any matter under discussion. I give a word of encouragement to those people who, at long last, have realised that the Labour Party is really their true haven of refuge, and I hope they will come into the Labour fold in their hundreds.

The tone of debate by hon. members opposite on this occasion is of a very low standard. I deplore the fact that whenever an issue of importance is under discussion, hon. members opposite do not confine themselves to the truth. In fact, they actually resort to grave deception to bolster up their own false case.

The hon. member for Chermside, who has been appointed the housing expert of the

Opposition, made a contribution to this debate. Usually what he says is hardly worth notice, but if a statement made by an hon. member is recorded in "Hansard" and is not replied to, those who read "Hansard" may think that what he said was correct. I referred recently to the great somersault by members of the Opposition on housing matters, and particularly to their wholehearted support of the 1953 amendment to the housing legislation, which support they withdrew at a later stage.

The hon. member for Chermshire referred to a broadcast that I had made, and said that when I introduced the 1953 amending Bill I did not inform the House fully of its provisions. This is what the hon. member said on page 97 of the current "Hansard"—

"At page 1641 on that day (2 December, 1953) it will be seen that the Minister when introducing the Bill said that it provided for—

(c) (i.) That in determining the purchase price of a house the commission shall have regard to the improved value of the appurtenant land."

The hon. member came to a full stop there, without completing my remarks when I introduced that legislation. I propose to read everything that I said on that clause of the Bill when I introduced it. This is what I said—

"(c) (i.) That in determining the purchase price of a house the commission shall have regard to the improved value of the appurtenant land, i.e., the sum that a bona-fide seller might expect to realise, having due regard to the added value given to the land by the house and other improvements."

Why did the hon. member for Chermshire stop at the word "land" when he was quoting me and not quote me in full? If those are not despicable tactics, I do not know what are. He adopted those tactics so that at a later date he could go out on the hustings and say, "This is from 'Hansard'." He deliberately short-quoted me so that he could make out that he was telling the truth. However, I have shown him to be worse than one who tells a deliberate untruth. In most cases, half a lie is much worse than a deliberate lie. I expose the hon. member as one who is careless of the truth. Whilst he poses as a paragon of virtue, he will stick at nothing to gain his own political ends.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Are you speaking of Dr. Evatt?

**Mr. HILTON:** I am speaking of the hon. member for Chermshire. Those tactics are generally employed by the Opposition, which shows how bereft they are of any solid arguments. Because of the splendid record of this Government, because no phase of government fails to receive due attention from us, and because the Opposition cannot launch any attack upon us that is founded on truth, they resort to the type of undesirable tactics that

were employed by the hon. member for Chermshire. We know that when people realise it they will continue to disregard the Opposition as an effective political party in this State. Of course they never have been and with their present set-up they are never likely to be.

Another matter that concerns my department and reveals once more the insincerity, hypocrisy and lack of regard for truth by certain hon. members opposite, is land valuation. The hon. member for Southport had much to say on this subject recently. I was amazed that he had the audacity to say what he did the other day in this Chamber about the Valuer-General in view of what he said previously. When a man says one thing one day and a year or so later says the reverse without any factual basis for it, what credence can be given him? Evidently on the first occasion his statement was made in good faith because there was no other reason for his saying it.

This is what the hon. member for Southport said in this Chamber in 1951—

"The Valuer-General, Mr. Richardson, like many other persons in authority, has found it very difficult to obtain skilled men to carry out this work. His staff is not large enough to complete this work in the time allotted to him, which we thought would be seven years. It is absolutely necessary that Mr. Richardson should have men skilled in this work. One must agree that so far it has done an excellent job; its men are very skilled. They go thoroughly into the whole ramifications of the areas they visit and spend a great deal of time and trouble in arriving at uniformity."

Later on he said—

"At the seaside unimproved values have risen greatly. People should take stock of these things and should know that by paying these fictitious prices they are making rods for their own backs. If they do not want the unimproved value to rise, they should be careful not to pay £1,000 and £1,500 for allotments."

When the hon. member said "so far", of course he was referring to the limited staff available in the Valuer-General's Department and to the fact that they had not so far been able to value the whole of the State.

**Mr. Sparkes:** How do you know?

**Mr. HILTON:** The hon. member for Aubigny need not come in on this. Let the hon. member for Southport speak for himself. What he said appears at page 1140 of the 1951-1952 "Hansard".

**Mr. Gaven:** That is true.

**Mr. HILTON:** He stressed that the department went to no end of trouble to ascertain the facts so as to arrive at uniformity in valuation. He praised the work of those officers to the skies and lamented the fact that more staff was not available, yet

the other day, because ill-informed people started a campaign when the South Coast was revalued, he did not have the courage to adhere to his previous statements. Rather, he threw himself into the swirling political current down there at the time and absolutely made a goat of himself. When he so trenchantly criticised the Valuer-General's Department he did not think that his 1951 speech would be remembered and brought to light. I am sure that if he had, he would not have been guilty of making a goat of himself as he did the other day.

**Mr. Gaven:** Mr. Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. HILTON:** A political goat. Personally I regard the hon. member for Southport as a hail-fellow-well-met type of person but may I be pardoned, in view of the discrepancy in his two statements, for using a metaphor common in the country when I say that he made a political goat or a political ass of himself? That is the long and the short of it.

**Mr. Gaven:** That was five years ago.

**Mr. HILTON:** The same valuer-general was there and in the main the same officers were there. Can the hon. member tell me any factor that has arisen that would substantiate the hon. member's ill-considered remarks the other day.

**Mr. Gaven:** Yes.

**Mr. HILTON:** In order to bolster up his case the other day the hon. member made certain statements and I shall now analyse one or two of them. If he says he can substantiate the statements that he made the other day then he is now making a bigger political goat of himself in respect of these matters. He referred to the valuation of land in connection with the Grand and Coolangatta hotels, Coolangatta. He said that there was a great discrepancy in the values and that the new valuation for the Grand Hotel was £7,260 and for the Coolangatta Hotel £15,840. He then argued that because those two properties were close to each other, there was inequity in the valuations. I asked the hon. member what the respective areas were but he conveniently ignored my question at the time.

**Mr. Gaven:** I did not.

**Mr. HILTON:** I now have the particulars. The area of land on which the Grand Hotel is built is 2 roods 24.2 perches with a 132-foot frontage and the valuation is £7,260. The area of land on which the Coolangatta Hotel is built is one acre with a frontage of 198 feet in one street and 66 ft. in another, the valuation of which is £15,940. As one area is much greater than another and the footage is greater than the other it is obvious that there would be a big discrepancy in the valuation.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Which one is in the better position?

**Mr. HILTON:** The Coolangatta Hotel, of course.

**Mr. Gaven:** No.

**Mr. HILTON:** Of course it is. It has a greater area. I suppose it is a matter of opinion which has the best situation. It was absurd for the hon. member for Southport to argue that there was a discrepancy in the valuations in respect of those two properties when the areas and the frontages are entirely different. The other day the hon. member talked about 20 perches in Orchid Avenue, the valuation of which had increased from £380 to £3,900. There is no such allotment on the record. There is no 20-perch allotment as he alleged in Orchid Avenue. There is no record of any residential allotment there being increased as stated by him. So the hon. member has been either entirely misinformed or has made wild statements. Perhaps foolish statements were made to the hon. member by people down there, but in a matter like this he should verify his facts. There is a corner site of 23.6 perches, an allotment comprising three shop sites with a frontage of 60 feet to the Pacific Highway that is valued at £3,900. It is not a residential allotment. As a matter of fact, that allotment was sold for £4,100, and the Valuer-General's value was £1,560. Whilst you can only take sales as a pointer in respect of valuations, the Valuer-General never goes up to the full amount indicated by sale values. The hon. member for Aubigny knows that.

**Mr. Aikens:** It would be madness if he did.

**Mr. HILTON:** It would be. The hon. member for Southport suggested that the valuation should be fixed having regard to the capital value of the leasehold land.

**Mr. Gaven:** No, I did not.

**Mr. HILTON:** I accept the hon. member's denial, but he made some reference to that.

**Mr. Gaven:** No.

**Mr. HILTON:** Even outside the House?

**Mr. Gaven:** No.

**Mr. HILTON:** I am glad of that. If the Valuer-General took the fantastic price that were bid for these leasehold properties as a basis of valuation, the position would be completely intolerable.

I do not intend to give a resume of the activities of the Valuer-General's department.

The hon. members for Darlington, and Lockyer, and other hon. members opposite during this debate have made the point that the Valuer-General has concentrated on the South Coast and other freehold areas with the sole object of obtaining revenue.

**Mr. Gaven:** It looks like it.

**Mr. HILTON:** That is entirely incorrect.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Why is it?

**Mr. HILTON:** The hon. member for Aubigny must agree that there were shocking anomalies in valuations of freehold land in this State, particularly in the south-eastern area of Queensland. Since I have been Minister in charge of this department I have been inundated with requests from local authorities that their areas be valued as speedily as possible by the Valuer-General. It was the policy of the Government that priority should be given to areas in which there were amalgamations, such as the South Coast area. Priority is given to those areas in order to remove the shocking inequalities that exist. The hon. member for Fassifern introduced a deputation to me in regard to this matter.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Why have some shires been valued twice?

**Mr. HILTON:** The Act provides for that. I shall deal with that in a moment.

In response to requests from local authorities—they are still coming to hand—we endeavoured to value the freehold areas in the south-eastern corner of Queensland as speedily as possible, and our efforts in that direction have been very successful.

Local authorities in the main are composed of primary producers, but you do not find that they raise any objection to valuations. I have yet to hear of any shire councillor whose property is involved complaining about the basis of valuation or the valuation arrived at by the Valuer-General, and that speaks volumes for the work of this department.

**Mr. Sparkes:** You must admit that it has resulted in increased land tax.

**Mr. HILTON:** The hon. member for Aubigny is trying to draw me off the point I am making. I repeat, that to my knowledge no primary producer who is a member of a local authority has complained about the basis of valuation or the valuations fixed by the Valuer-General.

**Mr. Plunkett:** I know some who are appealing.

**Mr. HILTON:** Individuals may appeal, or they may join with others in lodging an objection, but very few appeals are heard. Some people think they may get something out of an objection and it is only natural that they should try. I emphasise, however, that our efforts have been directed or designed to meet the urgent appeals made by local authorities for a speedy valuation of their areas.

**Mr. Sparkes:** You must admit that it has resulted in increased land tax.

**Mr. HILTON:** Land tax does not come within the ambit of my department. I know that the exemption figure in regard to land tax has been increased. That was done some little time ago by the Government and

possibly when the whole of the State has been valued further consideration will be given to that point.

The hon. member for Southport was looking for further information, and I am prepared to give it to him. His statements regarding land tax on South Coast properties were entirely erroneous. He said that in one instance a land-owner paid a tax of £13 on property valued at £1,800. The actual land tax payable on that amount would be £8 0s. 5d. I do not know who worked out the assessment he quoted but it is entirely wrong. I examined every statement made by the hon. member for Southport, but I could not find one that was correct. I wanted to prove how wrong the hon. member for Southport was in the statements he made.

**Mr. Gaven:** Your figures are different from mine.

**Mr. HILTON:** They have been worked out and checked by experts, and if the hon. member wants to check my figures, I invite him to do so straightaway. There is a big difference between £13 and £8 0s. 5d. If I and wrong in my figures I will apologise as I always do when I am found to be wrong.

Again, the idea that the Government were trying to chase workers out of the South Coast by the imposition of land tax is absurd. Land tax does not apply until the land is valued in excess of £820.

**Mr. Gaven:** Many age pensioners have to fill in and return forms on a valuation of £700.

**Mr. HILTON:** Particulars on that disclose that less than 16,000 resident land-owners in Queensland were assessed for land tax last year and more than half, 8,432 to be exact, were assessed an average amount of £2 7s. 5d. each for land tax. Those whose land is valued at less than £820 do not pay land tax at all, and those whose land is valued at between £700 and £1,200 pay on the average £1 3s. 0d. a year. This group comprises a little less than one-third of the total resident taxpayers in the State. The Act provides for a re-valuation every five years. Up until 1942 land-sales control obtained and valuers in making valuations had to take that into account. The position changed when land-sales control was lifted. Once the Valuer-General has moved into a particular local authority area he should keep valuations up to date. I make the point in regard to private valuers that the Valuer-General's valuers are not the only big bad wolves as alleged by the Opposition. As hon. members realise, when it was seen that the whole of Queensland could not be valued in seven years, the Act was amended to permit local authorities to have temporary valuations made. Many local authorities had these temporary valuations made and, of course, they are accepted until such time as the Valuer-General moves in. I want to quote two cases of what has happened when independent valuers, men not engaged by the Valuer-General, made their

valuations. The first case refers to the city of Townsville. The Valuer-General has not dealt with this city, but in 1953 the Townsville City Council caused a valuation of its area to be made, and valuations were increased from less than £2,000,000 to more than £3,500,000.

**Mr. Aikens:** Don't we know it?

**Mr. HILTON:** I am making the point that independent valuers are, in the main in agreement with the values ascertained by the valuers employed by the Valuer-General. In respect to the Booringa shire, an outside valuer came in in 1953 and raised the value from £440,000 to almost £900,000, an increase of over 100 per cent. In other shires the increase in valuation made by the Valuer-General has not been 100 per cent. Where a shire has not been valued, there has been a substantial increase in valuation for years. I give the lie direct to the statement that the policy is being pursued by the Government with the object of getting land tax and succession and probate duty as the hon. member for Southport claimed. I inform the hon. member that any valuer can be called in to make a valuation for probate and succession duty.

**Mr. Gaven:** Do you think by reason of our valuation we will get a reduction in succession and probate duty?

**Mr. HILTON:** The hon. member made the statement that it was mandatory for the Valuer-General's figure to be accepted. I am saying that anybody can obtain the services of an outside valuer and experience has proved that in many cases where the outside valuer has done the job for probate and succession duty his valuation has been found to be in excess of that fixed by the Valuer-General's Department. The hon. member cannot have it both ways.

**Mr. Kerr:** The figures of outside valuers are never accepted.

**Mr. HILTON:** The hon. member for Sherwood is quite wrong. I defy him to prove that the figures of outside valuers are never accepted. I know for a fact that they are. It ill becomes an hon. member who is about to retire from Parliament to make incorrect assertions.

In conclusion, I inform hon. members that there are in Queensland approximately 430,000 ratable properties of all descriptions, of which 320,000 have been valued by the Valuer-General, either once or twice. That number represents a very high percentage of the freehold properties in the State. The Valuer-General has so far covered an area of 66,700 square miles. There are only 43,700 square miles of freehold land in the State, the balance of 620,000 square miles being either Crown leasehold or unoccupied land. Those figures indicate that great progress has been made in the work of valuing the State, and the fact that very few appeals are lodged with the Supreme

Court indicates the fairness of the valuations. I admit that anomalies creep in—anybody can make an honest mistake—but if landholders are not satisfied with the result of an objection to the department, they have recourse to the Courts as provided in the Act.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. JESSON (Hinchinbrook) (3.35 p.m.):** I congratulate the mover and the seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I also compliment Sir John Lavarack on his numerous visits to many parts of the State in the course of his duties.

I am sorry that the leader of the Liberal Party is not present in the Chamber. He got such a bashing this morning that he has gone away seeking more ammunition.

**Mr. Aikens:** There is a big meeting of members of the stock exchange.

**Mr. JESSON:** I do not know where he has gone, but I regret his absence because I shall have something to say about the fact-finding mission to the North that was undertaken by four members of the Liberal-Country Party. Those people spoke with different voices at different places. In fact, they had two different policies in the same town. They held a Country Party meeting at the back of the Station Hotel in Ingham and condemned the Government on the introduction of the 40-hour week, while in the town of Ingham the Liberals were having a yarn with the business people and telling them that they would reintroduce the 48-hour week.

And then we have the half-truths that were referred to by the Secretary for Public Works and Housing when he tackled the hon. member for Chermside. The leader of the Liberal Party went on the trip to which I have referred because no-one else would go. The hon. member for Coorparoo was so disgusted that he decided to get out of the rabble. The Hunter Bros. student took it on, much to the disgust of the supporters of the Liberal Party. He went to my electorate and was running around looking for a candidate. He spoke about the Communist Party and referred to me as a half-Commo because I believe in Socialism. I challenged a statement that he made and, very sensibly, he left me alone. I have here a letter that I wrote to the local newspaper about this boggy of Socialism that has bitten the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha. It has been noticeable that over the last two or three months when talking about the Labour Government he has dropped the word "Socialism". I think Mr. Killen used the phrase "The Queensland socialistic Government," but the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha has dropped it because his alleged supporters have objected to it. Big firms like Eagers Ltd., Australian Paper Mills, and paint manufacturing firms do not care to have a Government who have been good to them, who have guaranteed their overdrafts called nasty names. They are tired of hearing the Liberal Party calling

the Government a socialistic Government and trying to make out that they are bed-fellows of the Communist Party.

I have in my hand a very valuable book entitled "The Labour Annual" printed in 1898 and I propose to read one or two extracts from it. In the days when this book was published the working classes were oppressed in Germany, Russia, France and England. Some of the world's greatest thinkers were trying to improve the conditions of those oppressed classes. Family men like me do not want to return to those conditions but, judging by their comments, hon. member opposite do.

This is what I wrote in a letter on 14 June, which was published in "The Herbert River Express"—

"I noticed in your issue of the 'Herbert River Express' of 14 June, comments by Mr. K. J. Morris, M.L.A., when he brought out that Great Ogre 'The Socialistic Tiger' that was ruining Queensland and he mentioned 'that he would not have fought the Labour Party so strenuously 40 years ago.'

"Mr. Editor, that was when the present platform of the Labour Party was formed and the first Labour Party was elected in Queensland and has been in power since then, except for three years. Many great reforms and benefits were started then which are in evidence today. Mr. Morris stated, and I quote, 'The local Member, Mr. Jesson, had said he was proud of the fact that they were marching on to the goal of Socialism.' Mr. Morris also said, 'The fight was not against the old Labour Party but against Socialism whose ideals were identical with Communism.' Unquote. It is a well known fact that I am strongly against Communism, and for Mr. Morris' benefit, just as strongly against Fascism. However, Mr. Morris often says the first thing that comes into his head so therefore I challenge him to produce any proof that I made the statement attributed to me either inside Parliament or out of it.

"I am proud, very proud, to be associated with a Party and to have assisted a Party that has brought about the following reforms and benefits by legislation. A Party that sponsored the Co-operative Acts giving farmers control of their industry; Cane Prices Board; Co-operative Sugar Mills; Co-operative Butter and Bacon Factories; that guaranteed finance and subsidised the Northgate Cannery; its Hospital policy with Pre-Natal, Child Welfare and Maternity Hospitals; its Workers' Homes and Dwelling Schemes; that created the State Government Insurance Office; Public Curator; Arbitration Court. These have been beneficial to all sections of the community, including Mr. Morris. Getting nearer home, it was the so-called Socialistic Labour Government that guaranteed the overdraft for the Northern Cement Works—a great

boon to North Queensland who could not have started it without the guarantee—and assisted the Northern Canneries; Tip Top Paints; transport of beef by barge from Cape York to Cairns; and also, incidentally, guaranteed the overdraft of Mr. Morris' ex-leader, Mr. Bruce Pie, through the Assistance to Industry Act and the Bureau of Industry, when all other financial institutions turned him down.

"I cannot understand the Country Party, especially in the Hinchinbrook Electorate, having anything to do with the Liberal Party. In purely a farming area, it has been like their cheek and effrontery to stand candidates in the past. They are a discredited party and have been completely wiped out in Victoria and other States. In the Queensland Parliament, they hold 7 seats out of 75 and are now trying to tag on to the Country Party and appear to be accepted by the Southern section of the Country Party, but, I feel that the Northern farming community will not swallow the dope ladled out by the bombastic utterances and the sham indignation of Mr. Morris. If he has anything to say let him tell the truth and keep away from veiled innuendoes."

It was signed C. G. Jesson, M.L.A., Parliament House, Brisbane.

I completely endorse the remarks of the Premier this morning when he spoke of a fine body like the Country Party tagging itself onto the so-called Liberal Party. There are one or two decent members of the Country Party. I am not talking about their private lives; I am talking about their tactics and their attitude in this House. I refer to how hon. members opposite talk with their tongues in the cheeks. I challenge any hon. member opposite to disclose himself on the 40-hour week. I say the same thing about the Leader of the Opposition. Let the hon. gentleman define his attitude on the 40-hour week. I know what they said in Ingham. The went up into the Ingham and Abergowrie areas—the hon. member for Mirani was in the party—and told the farmers that because they had farms they should vote for the Country Party. They have an organisation for the Country Party up there. I shall not mention any names, but the members of this organisation put over this stuff on the farmers. They ask the people to pay a levy of so much a ton on their cane. These people sign a document not knowing what it is. They are taken down for a halfpenny or a penny a ton that goes to the Country Party funds. These people contribute to the Country Party funds.

**Mr. Sparkes:** The same as the workers.

**Mr. JESSON:** Not at all. I have always paid all my union dues. These people cannot even vote for the candidate. At times there have been solicitors, insurance agents and policemen's wives up against me as Liberal candidates. If the Country Party are

collecting a halfpenny or a penny a ton from the cane farmers towards Country Party funds it should go towards the support of Country Party candidates and not Liberal candidates. It is misrepresentation for a start. The Country Party organiser in my area cannot work a cane farm himself. He leases a cane farm. There is a court case pending. He refused to pay any workers' compensation. He is indebted to the cane farmer who has leased his farm to the extent of £230 to £250 for workers' compensation which he refuses to pay.

The following appeared in the Press:—

"The Country Party will keep its identity.

"The Country Party would never merge with any other party, the State Leader (Lt.-Col. Bruxner) said today.

"Colonel Bruxner officially opening the annual State conference said:

'Dazzling offers have been made to my colleagues and me to abandon our separate existence and merge with some other organisation that professes to represent everyone and everything. That would be fatal and a betrayal of all those wonderful pioneer people in our rural areas.' "

The Country Party have sold out to the Liberal Party in my area. They know it is a hard seat to win, and they may want the Liberal Party to do their "dough", which they will do. In 1950 we heard much talk about the western seats and all these railways they were going to build for the western people if they were returned, but they were not able to get a Country Party candidate for many country electorates. We put up candidates in country electorates like Warrego, Condamine and Roma, and we won.

This Press statement goes on:—

"Experience has proved to me that the Country Party must remain an entity at all costs if we are to develop the country on a federal basis. We have always been most ready to co-operate with forces that have the same outlook as ourselves and I challenge anyone to show a single instance where the Country Party has not given loyal and efficient service in coalition."

That is the whole thing in a nutshell. They are all prepared to back a coalition but nothing else. I do not like quoting statements in this paper, but I want to make the point that the Liberal Party does not believe in liberty. The statement is by a gentleman recently released from prison, Frank Browne. He was speaking of the time in 1943 when he stood against Evatt for the seat of Barton. This is what he said—

"During this period I saw a good deal of the Country Party, and concluded that of all the Australian political parties the Country Party was the best and most honest."

That was written in 1953, but since then that party has sold out. It has become a dishonest party by reason of its association with the Liberal Party. It is pushed around by the people who are prepared to sell Australia—the guilty men of Australia, the members of the Liberal Party.

The hon. member for Chermide spoke about the Commonwealth Government's action in allowing 500 hides to be imported from N.Z. That action was not to the advantage of Australian interests in the hide industry. The Federal Government de-controlled the price of hides. That is one of the reasons why the price of footwear has risen to the extent that it has.

The Federal Government lifted the embargo on Japanese and Indian onions. There was a protest meeting at Lowood or Laidley and £20,000 was mentioned as the loss to Queensland onion growers, but we did not hear any protest from hon. members opposite.

In the newspaper this morning or yesterday, it was stated that sales tax was to be increased. That tax, in the main, is paid by the working class, who represent the majority of consumers. One of the most callous aspects is the sales tax levied on ice cream. That is made from milk and cream. Why not levy sales tax on butter and be done with it? The sales tax on ice cream is 12½ per cent. I do not mind the imposition of a sales tax on champagne, turkey, asparagus, caviare and those things, but I strongly object to sales tax on kiddies' ice cream. We have heard no protest from hon. members opposite about that.

I now quote from the "Labour Annual" of 1898.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** That is out of date.

**Mr. JESSON:** It is never out of date. It says—

"The 'Labour Annual' is dedicated in the name of the weary and oppressed of every land, to all who are working towards a new organisation of society, of which useful labour shall be the surest foundation, and in which the people's service shall be the highest reward."

Laugh at those sentiments!

**Mr. Muller:** I did not laugh.

**Mr. JESSON:** In regard to the hon. member for Fassifern, I think it could be said that loud laughter denotes a vacant mind. I wonder if hon. members opposite will laugh at this statement—

"Elizabeth Ryan, late of 23 Silver street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, white-lead worker, in Spring of 1896 had worked four months as a white-bed woman, aged 19; average wages about 2s. a day; average hours about 9; . . ."

I could read more from this booklet and I wonder if hon. members opposite would laugh

at the statements. The booklet traces the evolution of co-operative stores through the ages, particularly in Germany, the home of the co-operative store movement. Little factories were started and prices were fixed. Why, Mr. Speaker, you could buy a suit of clothes in those days for 25s. I want to read this statement—

“The New Age Clothing Co.

“Men’s Clothing to measure.

“For the people, at prices within the reach of all! No Sweaters. No Middlemen. Forty-eight Hours per Week and Good Wages. Style, Fit, and Quality Guaranteed, or Money Refunded in Full. No Better Value on this Planet. Men’s Suits, to Measure, 25s. to 60s.

“In every style, made from Scotch, West, and Yorkshire Tweeds, Serges, Worsteds, etc.

“Men’s Overcoats, to Measure, 26s. to 66s.

“Men’s Trousers, to Measure, 8s. 6d. to 20s.”

And what is more, this book shows the steps taken to protect people working with machinery. It explains how young girls working in factories had their scalps torn off because they were not protected from the machinery with which they were working. It didn’t matter in those days because there was always a pool of labour available. Acts were brought in by what was called the Independent Labour Party of those days. All classes of people tried to find a means of getting people out of the trouble, distress, and starvation that existed in those days. I could quote from many such books as this one. It is from a collection left by the late John Huxham. I am sending 100 books away tomorrow to the library at Ingham. I have kept several of them because they are very valuable. They contain the aspirations and thoughts of the men and women of the early days who made this country good for the likes of the hon. member for Lockyer to live in. The hon. member is the greatest knocker Australia ever had and he should get down on his hands and knees every night and thank God that he is living in this country. He does not give credit to the pioneers of the movement. It is very fortunate to have informative books like this to read. The hon. member for Lockyer is lucky that he was born when he was, at a time after these people had fought and starved to get what he has today. This book is well-worth reading.

**Mr. Chalk:** Is it in the Parliamentary Library?

**Mr. JESSON:** No, it could not be bought today. It is worth its weight in gold.

I resent the implication that the Labour Party was established to bring this country to ruin. I have never heard anything so ridiculous as some of the statements that emanate from members of the Opposition.

Whenever you visit a dairying centre, you find that all the people own big motor-cars. Why do their representatives cry poor mouth on their behalf? The dairy farmers are well off, and they have never got their money easier than they do today.

**An Opposition Member:** What about the sugar farmers?

**Mr. JESSON:** The sugar farmers are well off, too, and they know who to thank for it. All this knocking of Queensland by the Opposition is not doing our State any good. Many people who have visited North Queensland have been so impressed that they have invested their money there. I know one family who came from New Zealand on a holiday. They went to one of the islands off Hinehinbrook Island for a few days and were so impressed that they settled their affairs in New Zealand and returned to Queensland and bought it. They have now a flourishing tourist resort there. I know also that the large firm of Tutt, Bryant is interested in a station property in my electorate. People will come to the North when they discover its real worth.

To illustrate how far Queensland is ahead of the other States in some directions, about 12 months ago I was in Victoria and I paid a visit to the public gallery, Parliament House, Melbourne. One of the Ministers was introducing a Bill to give adult franchise in municipal elections, something we have had in Queensland for 40 years. The continual damning of this State by hon. members opposite is a disgrace. The Leader of the Liberal Party has never said a good word of this Government.

I do not want to take up any more time—

**Mr. Chalk:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. JESSON:** I could continue for a long while telling hon. members about the mysterious disappearance of the slate and the smell of the ink.

**Mr. Chalk:** Tell us about this bloke “Curry.”

**Mr. JESSON:** I have no objection to his opposing me. He is a citizen of this country and he has that right. I think Mr. Curro would be very much upset to think that his name was being bandied round this House.

**Mr. Wood:** His own party are poking fun at him.

**Mr. JESSON:** Yes, calling him Curry and throwing off at him all the time. I have never heard of such rotten things in all my life. We never go round digging up things like that and slinging off at the Opposition. I want to make an emphatic protest on behalf of Mr. Curro at the snide methods of the Opposition in using his name in this Chamber. He has not even nominated yet and in his absence I am going to protect

him here. What I have to say in the election campaign is another matter. It is a disgrace that he should be treated so when he is not here to defend himself. He is a young man in this country, though of foreign extraction. As far as I know, he is of good education. He went to Nudgee College. He belongs to a democratic country where it is his natural right to stand as a candidate for Parliament or anything else. I am not going to deny him that right. There is nothing of Hitler or the Gestapo about me, as there is about hon. members opposite.

I am very sorry indeed that hon. members opposite speak in half-truths. I have here "Hansard" references where the Leader of the Liberal Party spoke about me as being a great Socialist and Communist in the North. He only half-quoted me. The Secretary for Public Works and Housing already this afternoon has had to take the hon. member for Chermiside to task for speaking half-truths. That is all we get from hon. members opposite and I resent it very much.

**Mr. HEADING (Marodian) (4.12 p.m.):** I want to associate myself with expressions of loyalty and appreciation of the work of His Excellency the Governor and Lady Lavarack. They travel extensively throughout the State and acquaint themselves with the living conditions of the people and perform their social functions commendably.

I am not going to compliment the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. In some cases I could even do that but in many cases I should have to disagree with them.

In the last few sitting days we have listened to many speeches, two of them read almost entirely. I refer in the first place to the Attorney-General, who gave a dissertation on the happenings of 1929 to 1932. The hon. member for Hinchinbrook complained about half-truths. I suggest that the Attorney-General could have gone back beyond 1929 and told an interesting story of what the Labour Government did then. He could have told us about the number of unemployed in 1929. When he blamed the Moore Government for lending money to other States he could have told us that the McCormack Government had already started that before the Moore Government came into power. In any case, of what value to Queensland is the story about something that happened years and years ago? This afternoon we heard something of happenings in the last century. I suggest that hon. members opposite would do better to speak of plans for the future. It appears to me that we have the Labour Government on the run. After listening to the Premier this morning I am convinced of that. I understand that the hon. gentleman was galloping round the dance floor at Lowood to see if he could save the political hide of the hon. member for Somerset.

**Mr. Gair:** He is right; do not worry about him.

**Mr. HEADING:** That was followed by his speech this morning which is further evidence that he realises that his Government are not too safe. I never heard him make such a vicious and personal attack before as he made on hon. members on this side, particularly the Leader of the Opposition. It was unwarranted in every way. The hon. gentleman endeavoured to belittle the standard of the Leader of the Opposition and to belittle hon. members on this side of the House. (Government interjections.) I assure the Premier that his attack will not help him one little bit. He is right up against it and this time he will have to do something more than make personal attacks such as he made today on members on this side of the House. (Government interjections.) Some members on the Government side are trying to drive a wedge between the Liberal Party and the Country Party. The fact is that we sit over here and work together without any trouble at all; that is giving hon. members opposite the jitters.

**Mr. Gair:** Tell us how you handled the strike out at the Royal National grounds.

**Mr. HEADING:** I have tried to keep politics away from it, but if the hon. gentleman wants to discuss the strike at the grounds, I say without being egotistical, that it was handled very well. We came out with a record gate amounting to £96,000 and the greatest number of people that were ever on the grounds. Every person to whom I spoke complimented me on the success of the show. Did the Premier want me to hunt those people off the grounds and have no entertainment for the public?

**Mr. Aikens:** Why did you put up the price of ham and bacon the other day?

**Mr. HEADING:** I have only a few minutes to speak and I do not want to talk about bacon today. It is cheaper here than anywhere else in Australia.

**Mr. Aikens:** The workers cannot afford to buy it.

**Mr. HEADING:** If we did not pay the price we are paying today, we would not have a pig left in Queensland—southern buyers would come and buy the lot.

The Premier and the hon. member for Hinchinbrook seem to be worried because we have two parties. I advise hon. members opposite not to worry about that. They have two of their own.

**Mr. Aikens:** There are four over here.

**Mr. HEADING:** I did not know that. I knew that there were two. To which party do hon. members belong? Do they belong to the Evatt party or to the Labour anti-Communist party? I advise hon. members opposite not to worry about our two parties. We are getting on very nicely. We will not have as much to worry about as hon. member opposite have.

In regard to the valuation of land, hon. members opposite were surely not so dumb that they did not know that when there was an increase in the valuation of land it would mean more taxation. Of course they knew! If the Government go on the way they are going nobody will want to own anything and nobody will want to grow any food.

**Mr. Aikens:** Give me some of yours and I will be satisfied.

**Mr. HEADING:** I would, but the hon. member would not know how to work it. (Opposition laughter.) I always endeavour to be fair in anything I do. I thank the Government for their assistance in connection with the running of the Royal National Show. We received any help that we wanted from every Government department. I particularly thank the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock not only for assistance given in running the Show but also in regard to the pasture improvement competitions in Queensland. We were assisted in every way by the department, particularly with the judging. The extent of that assistance can be gauged when it is realised that entries were received from places as far away as the Atherton Tableland, right down to the border of New South Wales. Pasture improvement with consequent increase in carrying capacity is most important.

The Show has been expanding for years. Expansion of showgrounds is something that has been forced upon us, but there is another matter that should be given consideration, that is, the housing of the people who come to Brisbane for the Show. I notice that Mr. Bill Edwards is making great efforts to have the Davis Cup played in Brisbane next year. If he is successful, how are we going to house the people in this city. During the Show season my Association gets many letters asking us to secure accommodation. There is not enough accommodation available. I have been on holidays in Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria and in those States I get in touch with the Tourist Bureau for accommodation. Despite the fact that a regatta and race meeting were being held while I was in Hobart, the Tourist Bureau was able to get accommodation for me in a private house. They guaranteed the people and the home to which I was sent. The same applied in Launceston.

**Mr. Aikens:** You couldn't come into my home.

**Mr. HEADING:** The householders are not compelled to provide accommodation, if they do not want to do so. The accommodation of Launceston was excellent. The same system operates in Victoria. This year in Brisbane we had many requests for accommodation and we got in touch with the Tourist Bureau to find out if accommodation was available in homes. A list of homes was sent to the Royal National Association, but the Tourist Bureau told us that they could

not recommend the accommodation. The Tourist Bureau should be able to undertake this work. They could get in touch with the police and find out about the people and the accommodation available. The Tourist Bureau could compile a list of people who wanted to earn a few pounds in that way. One of the homes in which I stayed in the South was occupied by a widow and her son and daughter. They told me that they were paying off the home and were glad to earn a few pounds by providing accommodation. Inquiries should be made by the Government to see what accommodation of this sort is available.

**Mr. Power:** Surveys of colleges and other places where accommodation could be provided have been undertaken. It is understood that accommodation could be provided for 50,000 people if the Davis Cup is played here. I happen to be Chairman of that committee. That is how I have the information.

**Mr. HEADING:** I am glad to hear that something is being done in that regard.

**Mr. Aikens:** If that can be done to provide accommodation for visitors who wish to see the Davis Cup, why can it not be done for Show visitors?

**Mr. HEADING:** It should be done. When wool sales are conducted in Brisbane, it is virtually impossible to obtain accommodation. The system I have mentioned operates the year round in the South.

The next subject on which I wish to speak is extermination of noxious weeds. Present efforts in this regard are better than nothing. Noogoora burr, groundsel, and many other pests are being attacked, but to date no concerted effort is being made to eradicate lantana. Lantana now covers areas that a few years ago were free. In my district and in the Coalstoun Lakes area paddocks of lantana can be seen. It is very difficult to eradicate, but it is time that something was done about it. If it is not attacked shortly, it will soon assume the proportions of groundsel and other pests. Its seeds will be carried all over Queensland. It is spreading all over Queensland and the Government should realise that it is a menace. People said that it could not grow in the South Burnett because the area was too dry, but that is not true. It is spreading and lantana is a bush that is hard to clear. It should be included in the list of noxious weeds that the Government are cleaning up.

**Mr. Aikens:** It is not as big a problem as some of the burrs.

**Mr. HEADING:** The hon. member would not know. All through the timber alongside the road over the Blackbutt Range one can find lantana growing. These places will be seed-beds for many years to come.

I want to speak of the position of shire councils particularly after floods, when they

have damaged roads and bridges and go to the Government for help. I am not talking about the repair of main roads after flood but local authority roads. In no case can they get help to repair the damage that is done. The Biggenden Shire Council experienced a terrific flood some two years ago and no help was given to it. The Widgee Shire lost a bridge at Kandanga and had damage to its roads. The Tiaro Council was in the same position and the Woocoo Shire also suffered. I think it is time that the Government had a look at the position of helping shire councils.

**Mr. Hilton:** The Federal Government gave flood relief to New South Wales.

**Mr. HEADING:** And they matched the Government's £1,000 for Gympie. There was a question asked about it in the Federal House and Mr. Menzies said that the Government had donated £1,000.

I make an appeal to the Minister for Transport about the position in the Mary Valley. This wonderfully fertile area suffered through the flooding of the Mary River when a low-level bridge was washed away. The urgency of a high-level bridge over the Mary should be recognised. The district grows pineapples, beans, and other crops and produces cream. Every now and then a flood causes damage and I suggest that a high-level bridge should be built as soon as possible. People talk about the neglect of the North but I suggest there is neglect in the South.

**Mr. Aikens:** There is no neglect of Brisbane or the South Coast.

**Mr. HEADING:** I have been to the North and on the south coast and I am not saying North Queensland has not been neglected. When we realise that some of our main areas are still without bitumen roads we can say that there has been some neglect. During the running of the Redex reliability trial the stretch between Dalby and Maryborough was referred to as a horror stretch. Surely there should be no horror stretch in Queensland after 40 years of Labour administration. The fact that there is such a stretch is a condemnation of labour administration. The Government do not realise the indirect causes of bad communication. Excellent roads lead out of Brisbane, but in the South Burnett area there is not one continuous bitumen road out of the area. Yet the Government talk about decentralisation! Bad roads are one of the things that cause people to leave country areas. Every encouragement must be given them to stay there. We must make it financially possible for people to invest their money away from the large centres of population. It is no use building a factory 100 miles from Brisbane when the Government impose excessive rail freights that make it impossible to compete with factories in the city.

**Mr. Power:** They must be doing all right in Kenilworth. It is not very long since a new factory was established there.

**Mr. HEADING:** I know all about that, but Kenilworth has not a full-length bitumen road leading to it, either.

I wish to refer now to the failure of the Government to provide teachers' residences for country schools. The Government boast about what they are doing in the cities, but they almost faint if they are asked to build a residence for a country school-teacher. Last year they erected only about seven. They have the money, and surely they have the desire to see country school-teachers decently housed. In my district a school-teacher who must be receiving a salary of about £1,000 a year is living in an old farmhouse that no-one else wants. He has to travel 3 miles to his school. The Government could quite easily provide him with a residence close to his school.

The other day the Attorney-General had something to say about the Queensland Butter Board's paying off its building.

**Mr. Power:** Out of profits!

**Mr. HEADING:** If the Minister examines his daily newspapers, he will see information about the balance-sheets of various companies and the huge dividends they are paying. I instance the case of one company that paid a dividend of 30 per cent., and if it had not made a 1-for-1 bonus share issue last year its dividend could have been 60 per cent. The Queensland Butter Board desired to erect a building so that it could produce the best butter possible for the people of Brisbane. The Attorney-General in his capacity as Minister in charge of prices reduced the price by ½d. a lb.—

**Mr. POWER:** I rise to a point of order. I am continually drawing the attention of the House to the fact that I am not responsible for the fixing of prices. The hon. member's statement that I reduced the price of butter is quite incorrect. Whatever was done, was done by the Commissioner of Prices and I agree with his action.

**Mr. HEADING:** I am glad to hear the Minister's explanation, but he spent some time the other day defending the reduction in the price of butter. They took another eighth of a penny off us on the packing side and so altogether we lost a farthing.

**Mr. Power:** You lost one-eighth of a penny and the consumer paid 3½d. more.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. HEADING:** Do not be worried. I am not talking about subsidies. I am keeping right off that subject; but I suggest to the Government that this reduction was wrong from every angle.

At one time the people of Brisbane complained about the moisture content of butter and in their desire to give Brisbane the best butter possible, and with the acquiescence of Mr. Bulcock, the then Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, the dairymen began to pack butter for Brisbane so that it would not have a higher moisture content than 16 per cent.

We have built up our business over the years and today we are putting out one of the best possible grades of butter. When we want to pay off our outlay in 10 years the Attorney-General denies us the right. We are putting up one of the finest buildings in Australia to handle butter and we are doing it in the interests of the people of Brisbane as well as the dairying industry. I suggest that when prices are being fixed the Government should not take £20,000 off us by way of that one-eighth of a penny. It is too silly. The Premier spoke of silly things this morning but nothing could be sillier than that reduction.

**Mr. Power:** You are not complaining about Arty Fadden's reduction of the subsidy.

**Mr. HEADING:** We got £4,000,000 more from him this year than last year.

**Mr. Power:** Tell us something about margarine.

**Mr. HEADING:** I know Mr. Deputy Speaker will not allow the Attorney-General to talk about margarine and surely the hon. gentleman would not be so ill-behaved as to bring up a matter we cannot discuss.

**Mr. Power:** We will all be eating margarine if the price of butter goes up much further.

**Mr. HEADING:** The other day the Premier invited us to join with the Labour Party. What a wonderful idea that would be! After the hiding that the hon. member for Port Curtis got I can just imagine the reception we would get if we wanted some help for the dairy farmer. We should be overwhelmed. We should be told in Caucus that if we say things like that we will get into a lot of trouble.

I have a long memory. Sometimes it is nice to be young but as the years pass one can look back and remember a lot of things. I can remember a dry spell in 1915. I went up into the country in 1909 and, like a lot of other chaps, I chopped scrub and did fencing and fought with the wallabies and did all sorts of things so as to start producing butter. At the election in 1915 the Labour Government came into power. The day I heard the news was the driest day we had had and everything looked black. The first action of the Government was to reduce the price of butter. I suppose because they had won the election they thought they would show us what they could do. That is only

one of the things they did. Some hon. members opposite may not even remember it. I enlisted in the army shortly after that. I do not know what they expected of me after such treatment.

**Mr. Hilton:** It was the retailers' profit that was reduced.

**Mr. HEADING:** The Government took it off the dairy farmers. The matter of taking it off the retailers is one you thought up recently.

In 1949-1950 when Mr. Pollard was Federal Labour Minister for Agriculture the Joint Dairy Advisory Committee recommended 3d. to meet increased costs. The Minister refused at first and later granted 2½d. We had to wait for the Menzies-Fadden Government in 1949 when they made a retrospective payment of ½d.

**Mr. Collins:** The Labour Government gave you a guaranteed price for your butter.

**Mr. HEADING:** They gave us at the most only £6,000,000 per annum while the Menzies-Fadden Government gave us £16,000,000. All the other States agreed to pay 3s. 1½d. a lb. but this Government were willing to grant only 2s. 8d. a lb. on the next recommendation for an increase in price based on cost of production.

**Mr. Collins:** It was the cost of production.

**Mr. HEADING:** The Government only wanted to give us 2s. 8d. The public servants were dissatisfied for a long time. Every policeman was squealing about the treatment of the police. They told me how unfairly they were treated. Of course the elections are due next year and everything in the garden is lovely now because they have been granted an increase in salaries. They do not love the Government any more than the dairymen do. I remember the Premier's saying, "We are giving the primary producer what we think is a fair thing. Cost of production is not our responsibility." On top of that the Government increased the quantity of table margarine manufacture from 600 tons to 6,000 tons, subsequently reducing the amount to 4,236 tons (Government interjections.) I want to say that I stand for a fair deal for the dairymen—for the cost of production plus a reasonable margin of profit. The Federal Government have given us more money this year than we ever had. If we are not satisfied we can do what the school teachers and the police had to do—fight the Government to get the conditions they wanted. I shall be one who will be doing it. Do not try to kid me that you gave the civil servants everything they wanted. The only thing you gave them was a 40-hour week and you did that because it was the eve of an election.

**Mr. A. Jones:** They can go to the court.

**Mr. HEADING:** That is where they should go. Why did the police have to wait from 1950 till 1955 to have their claims granted?

**Mr. A. Jones:** Because they did not go to the court.

**Mr. HEADING:** Come off.

I wish to say a word or two about education on which I spoke last year, and I hope that the Treasurer is listening out there. What do the Government propose to do with the country children and town children who desire to learn all they can about farming? They have the Kingsley Fairbridge Home and the Molong school farm in New South Wales. They handled over 200 boys and girls and there was not one failure. There is one in Western Australia and two in Canada and they are doing a fine job. In an article dealing with the work of Kingsley Fairbridge, who dedicated his life to the creation of colleges of agriculture, the writer wonders why we did not do something like that ourselves. According to this article there are thousands of children in England who would jump at coming to Australia. What wonderful migrants they would be. I suggest we should establish a farm like that in Queensland to which country boys and girls could go. We know that it was necessary last year, because of lack of accommodation to refuse admittance to 60 students to Gatton College. If country boys and girls go to the city and learn what it means to live in the city with all its amenities, many of them will not return to the country. I recommend that such a school be established.

(Time expired.)

Motion—that the Address in Reply be adopted (Mr. Brosnan)—agreed to.

#### SUPPLY.

##### CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE.

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane—Premier): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.”

Motion agreed to.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

##### CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE.

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane—Premier): I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.”

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.55 p.m.