

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST 1956**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

**TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST, 1956.**

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

**QUESTIONS.**

**PUBLIC HALLS, REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS.**

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration—

“In view of the importance of public halls in the social life and entertainment of communities throughout the State, and the fact that many of such halls are falling into disrepair because of lack of the finance necessary for effecting repairs and improvements, will he kindly give favourable consideration to reviving the operation of the beneficial provisions of “The State Advances Corporation Buildings Improvement Act of 1932” and the Order in Council of 9 September, 1933, made thereunder, in relation to public halls?”

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

“The State Advances Corporation Buildings Improvement Act of 1932 was enacted primarily to give employment to unemployed builders, tradesmen and workers connected with the building industry and to that end Section 14 of the Act provides that it will be a condition of approval of any advance (up to £300 for residences and up to £500 for public halls) that the applicant, and contractor for the work, will give undertakings that the work will be given as far as practicable to genuinely unemployed contractors, tradesmen and/or workers. In view of such requirement it is considered that the emergency does not exist at present for reviving operations under the Act. Moreover there would appear to be some responsibility for local Committees to repair such halls rather than to endeavour to increase Government expenditure at a time when finance has been limited and our Works Programme seriously curtailed.”

**HIGH-LEVEL BRIDGE, HAUGHTON RIVER.**

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Transport—

“With reference to the proposed construction of a high-level railway bridge across the Haughton River, near Giru, will he kindly advise if provision has been made for the inclusion of a roadway on such bridge?”

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

“No.”

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS AT REDCLIFFE AND OTHER PLACES.**

**Mr. NICHOLSON** (Murrumba) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“With reference to his reply on 8 August last regarding the proposed secondary school at Redcliffe, will he kindly advise—(a) The location of recently established State high schools at which, as he stated, additional accommodation must be constructed during this financial year; and (b) The location of any new State high schools which it is proposed to establish during this financial year?”

**Hon. L. F. DIPLOCK** (Condamine) replied—

“(a) State high schools at which additional accommodation will be required during this financial year have been established during the past three (3) years at Banyo, Dalby, Harristown, Indooroopilly, Innisfail, Kedron, Mitchelton, Mount Isa, North Rockhampton and Salisbury. Schools opened in 1956 at North Rockhampton, Mitchelton and Kedron will require classroom accommodation for Sub-Junior students who will enrol in 1957. At other schools classroom accommodation will be required for increased enrolments and for Senior and Sub-Senior forms. A request for accommodation for Vocational Classes in Domestic Science and Manual Training is included in the schedules of several of these schools. (b) Except at Camp Hill where a new State high school was under construction prior to 30 June no new State high schools will be established during this financial year.”

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION.**

**Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha) (11.7 a.m.), by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation. I point out that during the debate on 9 August as recorded on page 189 of “Hansard” during the speech of the Treasurer I interjected, using the words, “Even though it was only hearsay . . . etc.,” to which the Treasurer replied, repeating the word “hearsay.” A few minutes later I again interjected, using the words “At that stage it was hearsay.” Both the “Hansard” reporter and the Treasurer quite obviously thought that I said, “At that stage it was his.” It is reported in “Hansard” in that way, and the Treasurer replied to it in that belief. I merely wish to record that my words were, “At that stage it was hearsay,” and ask that that correction be made in the subsequent printing of “Hansard.”

## REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

### RETURN TO ORDER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 2 August last, on the motion of Mr. Nicklin, showing (a) the revenue and (b) the expenditure of the Railway Department for the Southern, Central and Northern Divisions of the State for the year 1955-1956.

## GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

### RETURN TO ORDER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order made by the House on 2 August last, on the motion of Mr. Chalk, showing the number of Government employees at 30 June 1939 and at 30 June 1956 (all departments), paid from Consolidated Revenue, Trust Funds, and Loan Fund, respectively.

## PAPERS.

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

Report of the Auditor-General under the Supreme Court Funds Act of 1895 for the year 1955-1956.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Audited financial statements of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund for the year ended 30 June, 1956.

Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1954.

Order in Council under the Labour and Industry Acts, 1946 to 1952.

Proclamation under the Sugar Experiment Stations Acts, 1900 to 1954.

Orders in Council under the Landlord and Tenant Acts, 1948 to 1954.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 9 August (see p. 212) on Mr. Moores's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, on which Mr. Nicklin had moved the following amendment:—

‘Add to the question the following words:—

‘We desire to inform your Excellency, however, that, in the opinion of this Legislature, your present advisers are not fit and proper persons to form your Executive Council, in that—

(a) A Royal Commission, appointed by Your Excellency's Command to inquire into and report on allegations of corruption relating to dealings with

certain Crown leaseholds in this State, has, by report dated the eighth day of June, 1956, proved corruption within a Government Department, namely the Department of Public Lands, which corruption involves and implicates one of the members of Her Majesty's Government, and also the political party to which your present advisers owe allegiance and from which such advisers are drawn; and

(b) Your present advisers have failed to maintain law and order in the western regions of this State to such degree that offences against the statute law involving bodily harm to the person are of alarmingly frequent occurrence; that law-abiding citizens go continually in fear of bodily harm to their persons; and that persons committing offences of such nature are not being brought to justice; and

(c) Your present advisers have mismanaged and are mismanaging the business undertakings of Her Majesty's Government by failing to take all steps necessary to ensure the prompt and satisfactory transport of all wool lawfully consigned to and accepted by the Railway Department, thereby seriously and detrimentally affecting the basic economy of this State and causing huge and unwarranted losses in the trading accounts of the Railway Department; and

(d) Your present advisers have wholly failed to uphold and maintain the Industrial laws of this State.’

**Mr. SKINNER (Somerset) (11.10 a.m.):** First of all I wish to point out the inconsistencies of hon. members opposite. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out clearly and definitely that the reason for the appointment of the Royal Commission as stated at page 130 of ‘Hansard’ was—

‘The allegations of Senator Ian Wood in the Senate on 16 February, 1956, were directly responsible for the instigation of the Commission . . .’

That statement is in direct contrast to the statements of hon. members opposite who pointed out another reason for the Royal Commission. Surely hon. members opposite must take a lead from the Leader of the Opposition; there is no consistency in their approach to this matter.

I wish to confine my remarks to paragraphs (c) and (d) of the amendment. The first is critical of the Government for the alleged failure of the Railway Department to transport wool consigned for transport on the railways to capital cities for impending wool sales.

**Mr. Chalk:** Do you believe that it should be left there?

**Mr. SKINNER:** The hon. member will have an opportunity of making his speech when I resume my seat. I do not deny that

all wool is not being transported by the railway; the Minister for Transport indicated last Thursday that wool left in railway wagons at sidings was equivalent to 260 four-wheel wagon loads. Some wool is being transported by road. While wool is being transported by road it is imposing additional financial burdens on graziers and selectors throughout Queensland. If they can afford to pay the additional cost it proves the argument of those engaged in the industrial dispute. It will be noted that I use the word "dispute," not "strike." It is proof of the ability of the industry to pay a rate higher than that set down by the Industrial Court. Furthermore, those transporting their wool by road are called upon to pay increased licence fees. Investigations disclose that no wool is being transported by road without the payment of licence and permit fees—the ton-mile rate depends on the district from which the wool is transported. The increased licence fees impose another financial burden on the wool producers. The Opposition wanted the Premier to intervene in the dispute and order the railwaymen to handle all wool. That would have thrown the whole of the State's transport system into chaos and would have embarrassed the Government.

**Mr. Aikens:** The Opposition wanted to precipitate another railway strike.

**Mr. SKINNER:** That is correct. They were endeavouring to force the Premier against his own better judgment and wise counsel on this side of the House, to precipitate State-wide industrial turmoil over something that is not really a strike at all.

It is not an uncommon thing for wool, or any other product for that matter, to be transported by road. Every year, when production in some industries increases to the extent that it cannot be handled by the railways, the Government have to allow the use of road transport. The hon. members for Warwick and Cunningham know that road transport frequently has to be used to bring wheat to Brisbane. That happens every year, and generally at this time of the year. It is quite wrong, therefore, for the Opposition to say that the present dispute in the shearing industry is solely responsible for the losses in the Railway Department. A good deal of forestry work is done in my area, and every year road transport has to be used to transport timber. I remind hon. members opposite that it is the policy of the Government not to permit prolonged holdups in the transportation of any primary products, but to ensure that they reach their markets with the least possible delay.

To analyse the position from another angle, I remind members of the Opposition that they are forever supporting private enterprise, and crying out for the use of road transport rather than rail. Now, however, when the policy they advocate is being given effect to, they are setting up a howl.

With Clause (c), Clause (d) of the amendment has as its objective, caustic and unfair criticism of the Government.

We on this side of the House and the public of Queensland know full well that the Labour Government have always stood for a policy of industrial conciliation and arbitration. That has been clearly indicated whenever the State has been involved in a major industrial dispute in recent years. So I think it ill behoves the Leader of the Opposition to seize on such an opportunity as this to move an amendment in an attempt to castigate the Government for the way in which they carry out their industrial laws. We have in Queensland an industrial dispute which could not by any stretch of the imagination be referred to as a strike. Anybody who has had any association with the industrial movement over the years knows that before an industrial dispute can occur there must be a breach of contract between employer and employee.

**Mr. Aikens:** There must be a walk off the job.

**Mr. SKINNER:** That is right; there must be. In this case the men have not walked off any job. They have merely offered their services at a rate above that determined by the State Industrial Court as the minimum to be paid within the industry. Where, then, is the basis for the analogy sought to be drawn by the hon. member for Fassifern? He caustically criticised the Attorney-General. He said he was not only the Attorney-General but also the Minister in charge of prices and he tried to draw an analogy between the fixation of prices and the determination of award rates. No such analogy exists. In the first place, prices are fixed not by the Attorney-General but by the Commissioner of Prices. In the second place when prices are fixed under the Profiteering Prevention Acts all that is determined is that the retailer or the wholesaler shall not sell the goods concerned at a price above the maximum fixed by the Commissioner. That is exactly the opposite of wage determinations. All that the Industrial Court does is to fix a minimum rate to be paid to an employee in the industry concerned. It is no good hon. members opposite castigating the Government because the shearers have offered their services at more than the award rate. Day after day the metropolitan Press openly advertises for labour at rates above the award rate and nothing can be done about it.

**Mr. Dewar:** How much a week?

**Mr. SKINNER:** Apparently members of the Opposition are not conversant with the industrial set-up if they suggest that it is not being done. Every industrial concern in Brisbane is paying over award rates.

**An Opposition Member:** Who suggested they don't?

**Mr. SKINNER:** They are doing it in an endeavour to obtain efficient labour—that is one reason. Will anyone criticise the

standard of shearing labour? These men have been in the industry for years and are therefore efficient. If hon. members opposite agree with them they disagree also with Mr. C. W. Russell, a well-known grazier and a former member of Parliament.

He disagrees entirely with the contentions and submissions of the Leader of the Opposition and the President of the United Graziers' Association. The Press statement by Mr. Russell on this industrial dispute indicates that he has approached the matter from a far saner, less bigoted and politically biased point of view than hon. members opposite. I quote his own words as reported in yesterday's "Courier-Mail"—

"Commenting on a statement that the Association was concerned at his attitude to the shearers' strike, Mr. Russell said the shearers' award was a minimum and not a maximum award."

That is exactly what I said by interjection when the hon. member for Fassifern was speaking the other day. Mr. Russell went on to say—

"There should be no objection to employers paying above the award rates for efficient labour, which was done in most industries."

Mr. Russell is one who is prepared to pay for efficient labour and he is not the only member of the United Graziers' Association or the Selectors' Association to do so. From my contacts with secretaries of the Selectors' Association I have learned that in many instances, in fact the majority, they are paying the rate asked for by the union and by the shearers themselves.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Don't you think the man who is shearing at award rates today is efficient?

**Mr. SKINNER:** No, he is not efficient. The graziers are taking people today who have been shearing sheep for less than three months. They do not shear 100 sheep a day—not even 50. No one can tell me that that is efficient labour. I have reliable information to show that more wool is going down the shutes in sheds where inefficient labour is employed than is going on the board and classing table.

There is nothing at all wrong with the principle that the individual reserves the right to offer his labour at the best price he can get for it and that is what the shearer is doing today. I have not heard any hon. members opposite condemn private enterprise for paying more than award rates in various industries, and there was no criticism of this practice when we were debating the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

The Opposition, through the Leader of the Country Party and his Deputy, the Leader of the Liberal Party, have been yelling to high heaven for the Premier to interfere with the jurisdiction of the

Industrial Court. I should hate the day when any Premier, irrespective of party, should supersede the powers vested in the President of the Industrial Court. That would be a tragedy, but that is what hon. members opposite have advocated. In a previous speech the hon. member for Landsborough saw fit to uphold the judiciary and the magistracy of the State. He lauded them in every possible way and I compliment him and join with him in doing so, and I should hate to see the day when the judiciary or the magistracy was held in low esteem. Yet by his own words and actions and Press statements he was inferring that the Industrial Court was incapable of effectively handling the position. He suggested that the Premier should supersede the judges of the Industrial Court and do something to settle it. (Opposition interjections). Press statements attributed to the Leaders of the Liberal Party and the Country Party, demanded that the Government through the Premier should interfere and supersede the jurisdiction of the Industrial Court. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha shakes his head, but I invite him to go to the Parliamentary library and read the statements in the newspapers.

**Mr. Morris:** Why don't you tell the truth?

**Mr. SKINNER:** I am telling the truth. Will the hon. member deny that he did not clamour to high heaven for the Premier to interfere. It would indeed be a sorry day if the occasion arose when any Premier should supersede the powers of the Industrial Court. In no case were the statements by the Opposition in relation to the shearing dispute substantiated by facts. Hon. members opposite have inferred all along the line that the Government have failed to take decisive action. How many conferences have been held with the unions and how many conferences have been held between the unions and the Graziers Association as a result of action by the Premier in an endeavour to settle this dispute by conciliation? The following remarks made by the hon. member for Fassifern appear at page 208 of "Hansard"—

"Industrial laws must be enforced. Wages are fixed by the Industrial Court, and it is the duty of anyone seeking employment to work at those wages."

What a biased approach to the industrial set-up. The hon. member should know—and I intimated this by way of interjection during his speech—that the rate is only a minimum rate to be paid in the industry. He also attempted to draw an analogy between price fixing and the fixing of award rates. I have never heard of anybody in the retail or wholesale trade being summonsed for selling goods below the price fixed, nor have I heard of any employer being summonsed by the Industrial Court for paying above the award rate. The hon. member sought to draw an analogy where

there was none. If industry wants efficient labour it must be prepared to pay the price sought by the people who offer such labour.

**Mr. Chalk:** Irrespective of the Industrial Court?

**Mr. SKINNER:** The hon. member is pretty dumb if he does not realise that all the Industrial Court does is fix a minimum rate. He knows that.

**Mr. Chalk:** Of course it does.

**Mr. SKINNER:** If I may digress for a moment I should like to point out that in 1948 certain conditions were brought about through no fault of this Government but as a result of the inefficiency of the political cohorts of the hon. member for Lockyer.

The Leader of the Opposition, at the conclusion of his remarks in moving the amendment said—

“I say that the Government stand condemned on those four headings I have included in my amendment to the Address in Reply and are no longer fit and proper persons to be advisers to His Excellency the Governor.”

Those remarks appear at page 131 of “Hansard.” As a member of this Government and as a member of the Labour Party I take very strong exception to them. Not only did the Leader of the Opposition reflect on the Government, but by innuendo and inference he reflected also on every member of the Government Party. He implied that each member of this Government has been unfaithful to his oath of service and allegiance, and unfaithful in the discharge of his duties and obligations to the people of this State. I take strong exception to those suggestions and I have spoken this morning for the purpose of having my resentment recorded in “Hansard,” and in that I am supported by the electors of Somerset. They are the best judges of the way in which I discharge my duties and fulfil my obligations—whether I have been faithful to my oaths of office and allegiance.

I endorse the statement of the Premier and other Government members that they accept the findings of the Royal Commission. Let there be no doubt about that.

Earlier I commended the Leader of the Opposition for lauding and supporting members of the judiciary and magistracy. I too laud and support them, and say now although it is unnecessary, that I have no fault to find with the manner in which they discharge their responsibilities. I do say, however, that never in the history of this State has anyone witnessed a political heresy hunt such as we have witnessed in the past four or five months. I honestly believe that Opposition members have been motivated by the very actions that caused them to spend a fabulous fortune prior to May, 1956 in an endeavour to defeat the Government. In some degree that is

responsible for the amendment and the debate and the waste of valuable time by this Parliament. They failed miserably in their attempt to defeat the Government and they are now endeavouring to capitalise on circumstances of which we are all well aware.

The hon. member for Coorparoo complimented the Government on the celerity with which they moved in appointing the Royal Commission, but the Leader of the Opposition is at variance with him. The Leader of the Opposition indulged in a political heresy hunt purely for political propaganda. He endeavoured to capitalise on present circumstances.

**Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (11.40 a.m.):** The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition is tantamount to a motion of no confidence in the Government. Let me say right here and now that I have no confidence in this Government; in fact I have never had any confidence in them. We have just listened to the diatribe of the hon. member for Somerset who with crocodile tears took unto himself the fact that he had been hurt by the suggestion that the Government were no longer fit and proper persons to be advisers to His Excellency the Governor. The words do not necessarily indicate that any particular hon. member of the Government has been unfaithful but rather that hon. members of the Government Party lack the capacity to govern this State. That is why I have no confidence in the Government and that is why the electors of Chermside have no confidence in them. Throughout the history of the Labour Party there has been little to indicate that the people of the State have had much confidence in its members. The fact that electoral returns show a majority of hon. members on that side of the House does not mean a thing. It simply shows that they are extremely adept in rigging boundary lines or creating zonal systems to deprive the people of the State of the democratic expression of their vote.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to the hon. member that his reference to the Government rigging boundary lines is a reflection on the Government and hon. members of the Cabinet. The Government have nothing to do with that matter; a commission is appointed for the purpose. I ask the hon. member to return to the question before the House.

**Mr. DEWAR:** Mr. Speaker, you obviously misunderstood my intent. I am saying that the Government are responsible for the legislation for the zonal system.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw his remark and obey the chair.

**Mr. DEWAR:** On your instruction, I withdraw. I am not imputing improper motives to the Cabinet but I am saying that the Government are responsible for the zonal system in this State which has been the

direct result of their obtaining a majority in this House out of all proportion to the votes they won. The Government have asked the people to judge them on their record. Certainly they are game, for 50 years ago they used to hang men with better records than the Labour Party has. The record of the Government is one of ineptitude and incapacity to do anything to promote the great potential of this State. Is it any wonder that we see rising on the political front of this State the happenings in the last six months, particularly with the background of political organisation. The Government have a background of complete incapacity to do anything well.

Since the beginning of this session of Parliament, with the exception of the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, we have witnessed a most unusual feature in the life of this State. We have seen a man sacked from his position because he took action on his suspicions regarding administration by a Minister of a department. His sacking was a travesty of justice. He was allowed to state his case before the Bar of this House knowing that his fate had been decided some time before. We have witnessed a rape of democracy which has left a feeling of disgust in the minds of the people. We have seen the appointment of a Royal Commission and the consequent finding of corrupt conduct on the part of a Minister of the Crown. Government spokesmen are hanging their hats on the hook that the suspicions of the man concerned played little or no part in the eventual findings of the Commission. Had it not been for the action that this man took no Royal Commission would have been held and the finding of corruption which has been proved would not have seen the light of day.

The Premier said we had seen a man who had risen to great heights in the Public Service, who enjoyed the confidence of the Government, but then he went on to indicate that certain action had been necessary against him because of the alleged treacherous nature of his actions.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the hon. member that we are now dealing with the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. DEWAR:** I shall be connecting my remarks with the amendment.

The Premier said also that he had a responsibility to do the right thing by the people of this State. In my view, Mr. Creighton went a long way further towards doing the right thing by the people of this State than did the Government in sacking him.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I point out to the hon. member that the debate on that matter is concluded and that we are now dealing with the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the matter before the House.

**Mr. DEWAR:** No-one is fooled by the action of the Government. It is a warning to all public servants to keep in line or get the axe. The only man who has suffered is the one whose action was responsible, either directly or indirectly, for bringing to light corrupt conduct in Government circles.

Prior to these happenings the Premier said, "We will appoint a royal commission immediately specific charges are made." That fools nobody. The Government were greatly concerned with frequent suggestions of corruption and so they said, "Give us a specific charge," feeling quite sure that there would be none. They felt quite sure they had nothing to worry about, and that nothing could be proved. With an election coming up they said, "Here is our chance. We will hold a royal commission. It will fizzle out and we will be right for the elections." That is why royal commissions are held—to white-wash governments. They are nothing new in Australia's political history; they are nothing new to the Labour Party. We have had royal commissions connected with the Premier of Tasmania, and Mr. Ward of Canberra, with regard to timber at Bulolo, and in Queensland right back to Mungana.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member is getting a long way from the matter before the House.

**Mr. DEWAR:** Labour has brought more of this type of thing than statesmanship into politics. If the Government were not secure in its thinking with regard to the outcome of this Royal Commission, why did they not ask Senator Wood for some evidence to support his statement, and thus save the expense of a royal commission? Instead of doing that they said, "Let's hold a royal commission. We will make a fool of Wood and kill these rumours for all time." However, they did not know that seven years ago at least one man in Queensland had bucked against what was going on, and that he had locked away in his safe certain information that he wrote at the time. Because he had guts and character, he was prepared to give evidence before the Royal Commission. From that moment, the Government knew that the Royal Commission was showing them up badly. Then followed panic and the mockery of the action in the magistrate's court, after which the Royal Commission heard all the evidence that was available.

I am concerned mainly with the growth of amoral thought relating to public life in our community and the slipping of standards, which is reflected in our national outlook. The national outlook is impaired when standards in high places slip. We read of the fall of the Roman Empire following corruption and the lowering of national standards, and it could quite easily happen here for history has a habit of repeating itself.

During this debate the hon. member for Belyando in an alleged explanation attacked and vilified the judiciary of the State. His suggestion of collusion between two Supreme

Court judges, made under the protection of Parliament, was disgusting in a British community. Of course, that was only the beginning. We then had the Treasurer on the stage for 90 minutes, when imagination ran riot. He was able to see a sectarian plot in the whole business. He did not explain how and I have not figured it out yet. He then accused my Leader and Deputy Leader and the hon. member for Yeronga of sectarian motives. It is a little late in the day for hon. members on this side of the House to try to introduce sectarianism into Queensland politics. Sectarianism entered Queensland politics with the birth and growth of the Labour Party and until it is eradicated we will never have clean politics. It is an old gag of Fascism and Communism and even relatively minute and unimportant factions such as the Labour Party to blame others for the things they are doing themselves to cover up their own activities. The Treasurer was able to convince himself that the action of the Presbyterian church assembly had something to do with the motion before the House. He supported the consistency of the Rev. Mr. Bardon. As a member of that church, I could show the Treasurer quite a few pamphlets issued by the Rev. Mr. Bardon and other members of the church on social questions and matters of social reform. Or does the Treasurer merely want to select those that suit him? I object to the Treasurer's bringing the church into the House.

In discussing Creighton he said that he had gone to the enemy. As Creighton had discussed some aspects of the case, or his suspicions, with two members of the Cabinet, colleagues of the Treasurer, and then had gone to an official of the A.W.U., I am wondering who is the enemy. As the A.W.U. runs the Labour Party I am somewhat confused.

The Treasurer then said he had no complaint against the conduct of the Commission by Mr. Justice Townley. He said that if he were being judged by him he would be sure of a fair go, which contrasted greatly with the action of the hon. member for Belyando who accused the Commissioner and Mr. Justice Philp of collusion.

The Treasurer then proceeded to attack Mr. Justice Philp. By way of interjection from this side of the House we found the Treasurer indulging in quite a common practice for members of the Government, not the least of whom is the Attorney-General. He is always bringing files into the House and saying, "If you goad me I will produce the names." The Treasurer indulged in similar tactics, making veiled threats against the Opposition. He indicated that if members of the Opposition did not keep their mouths closed he would reveal instances where they had made representations on behalf of constituents. He even referred to the hon. member for Barambah's making representations about Campbell or Cameron; I have forgotten the name.

**Mr. Power:** I never made any such statement.

**Mr. DEWAR:** With the mentality the hon. gentleman displays I should imagine he would not even hear it.

**Mr. POWER:** I rise to a point of order. I am not concerned about the offensive remarks of the hon. member but I do want to say that I never at any time accused the hon. member for Barambah of making representations for anybody by the name of Cameron.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I understood that the hon. member for Chermiside was alluding to the Treasurer's making the remarks.

**Mr. DEWAR:** We heard the Treasurer threatening to bring in information about representations made by the hon. member for Barambah and other members of the Opposition for getting people out of speeding charges, drunken driving charges, and the like. I am not prepared to sit in this House and be intimidated by the Treasurer or any member of Cabinet.

**A Government Member interjected.**

**Mr. DEWAR:** If the Treasurer or the hon. gentleman who interjected, or even those with greater mentality than he has, has anything to disclose in relation to any action of any hon. member on this side of the House, it is his duty to disclose such matter if it is of a reprehensible nature and against the law and order of the land. If anything is known against any hon. member of the Opposition then they are failing in their responsibilities to the Crown and to the State if members of Cabinet do not disclose these matters. I am not going to be intimidated into the position where I am going to be afraid to make representations on behalf of any constituent of mine whom I believe may have fallen into error through extenuating circumstances unbeknown to the Minister or the Police Department. I will make representations as I see fit on behalf of any person in my electorate; if I think that his case is deserving of sympathy then I will make representations. Recently I made representations to the Secretary for Labour and Industry on behalf of a young man who was caught speeding. The lad explained to me that he was rushing to see his sick mother, a widow living on her own. The mother substantiated his story and I took the matter to the Minister. As a sympathetic man he immediately withdrew the case. I am not ashamed of what I did. I will not be intimidated by the Treasurer or any other member of Cabinet into not taking similar action in the future. If any member of Cabinet knows anything about any hon. member on this side that he considers is against the standards of decency, it is his bounden duty to take some action, not merely to come into the House with threats of what will be done if we do not keep our mouths closed. I will not keep my mouth closed.

I quote from page 6 of "The Bulletin" of 15 August, where in the column "Plain English," under the heading "Lower Level Still," the last paragraph is quite pertinent and I think fairly sums up the attitude and outlook of the people of the State—

"So that is the position in Queensland today. A Minister of the Crown is found guilty of corruption. He resigns from Cabinet, but not from Parliament. His colleagues dismiss the man who was one of the principal causes of his exposure. They find it hard to believe the Commissioner's findings; they cast doubts on the value of the evidence of a witness who is a Supreme Court judge; they condone Foley's innuendoes of conspiracy between two judges; they do not see any cause for shame in Foley's continuance as a member of Parliament and of their Party."

I feel that there are other aspects of this amendment that require some attention.

**Mr. Aikens:** Are you going to deal with the shearing dispute?

**Mr. DEWAR:** Yes. I will have a crack at that too. Over the last eight months we have had what is known as a shearing dispute. With great exhortations the hon. member for Somerset endeavoured to prove to the House that it is not a strike. I am not going to quibble with him because he is an expert on these matters. I am only a layman and that does not give me any ground to reflect on his opinion but one thing does concern me. If this is not a strike, as we understand strikes in Queensland, why is it that the members of the Railway Department are not handling the wool?

This shearing dispute or strike or whatever you may call it is an absolute threat to the economy of this State. It is part and parcel of a plan to break down our economic structure and hasten the approach of the Socialist millennium. They may be called left-wing Socialists or would-be Communists or Red-baiters, but they are anti-Australian; they are men who are not interested in the promotion of industrial development in Queensland, but in breaking down what we already enjoy in order to hasten the coming of this thing they call Socialism. These attacks on our judicial system are all part and parcel of a scheme to break down our way of life. This Labour Party is the stooge who is doing it for these Reds and near-Reds in Australia. (Government interjections.) They are not prepared to take any action to check these people who are attempting to break down our system and hasten Socialism. The Honourable the Premier admitted that the Railway Department suffered a loss of £600,000 as a result of the shearers' strike. There is nothing unusual in the Railway Department losing money but it is a sorry state of affairs when the taxpayers are forced to pay another £600,000 when that loss could have been obviated if the Government had had the guts to do something about it. The Premier and

the Treasurer go down to Premiers' Conferences and cry poor mouth and complain of their inability to do this and that and indulge in passing the buck, and here we have £600,000 going down the drain.

**Mr. A. Jones:** What would you do about it?

**Mr. DEWAR:** It is not my place to say what I would do. I tell you what I believe is happening and what will happen in the future unless something is done. You are the people who have the advisers to tell you what to do. Get some advice and do something. Private industry is exhorted to cut down costs, but what is the position in the Railway Department? Not only is it losing money every year but the number of its employees is increasing. Last year I read an extract from a statistician's report in the Press, which showed that in 1939 there were 18,000 railway employees and in 1954-55 the number was 29,000. While the railways are giving less service in branch lines and are cutting down services on other lines, the number of employees has increased during that period by 11,000, something like 75 per cent. Not only are the railways losing money but they are shockingly overloaded. The Government exhort private industry to cut down costs, yet all this extra staff is employed in the Railway Department. It must be obvious to anyone who is unbiased that service is not being given by these employees in the Railway service. Government members can think what they like about that statement. The Railway Department in 1939 with 18,000 employees was giving real service to the public and real service in regard to the industrial development of this State. Today with 29,000 employees the service is not 50 per cent. of that given in 1939. The root of the problem is the destruction of our national outlook, and that does not apply only to persons in the Railway Department. It applies to every person in the community. Today there is a desire to capitalise on the post-war boom and to do as little as possible for as much as possible. That statement applies from members of Parliament down to the men who sweep the streets.

**Mr. Aikens:** Except me.

**Mr. DEWAR:** The hon. member for Mundingburra is always an exception. There is always the exception that proves the rule. I wonder how he carries on. I was walking down the corridor the other day and I saw something dragging behind his pants. When I got close to him I saw it was a piece of barbed wire. This business of sitting on the fence is a dangerous practice.

If we are going to get out of this economic morass, achieve a sense of values and give service such as was given before the war, and in that latter statement I am referring not only to the Railway Department but to every aspect of community enterprise, we have to change our national outlook. Before the war

our money had value and the effort made was commensurate with the return. The problem is something beyond governments or political parties. This outlook permeates the whole social structure. We must return to honest values.

**Mr. Aikens:** How long is it since you did a decent day's work?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. Aikens:** How long is it since you did a decent day's work?

**Mr. DEWAR:** Yesterday.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the hon. member for Chermiside to direct his remarks to the Chair. I ask the hon. member for Mundingburra to refrain from interrupting the hon. member for Chermiside.

**Mr. DEWAR:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I need your protection.

I rose to protest at the attitude of the Treasurer particularly. He is known as a strong man and a man who says what he wants to say. I protest at the tenor of his contribution to the debate, his attack on the judicial system of this State, and his suggestion of sectarianism on this side of the chamber. It is a ridiculous suggestion in view of the history of the Labour Party.

We can solve our economic problems only by an effort on the part of all of us to do more than is being done today and by embracing the pioneering spirit that made this country. Men and women came here and suffered privations in the form of floods, fire, and famine for the purpose of achieving something of which they could feel proud. Unless we catch their spirit and their sense of values, we will never overcome our economic problems.

**Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) (12.10 p.m.):** The amendment before the House is an extremely serious one and, although Parliament has devoted at least four days to discussing it, the time has been well spent. It is the duty of every member of this Parliament to consider seriously the various points and at the right opportunity, express himself by exercising his vote in accordance with his belief. The Leader of the Opposition has suggested to Her Majesty's representative that the Government have lost the confidence of the people and has based his argument on four particular points. The Treasurer and other hon. members opposite have endeavoured to make capital out of the fact that perhaps one or two hon. members on this side have confined their remarks to what is perhaps the most important part of the amendment. In any well balanced team, Mr. Speaker, it is usual for certain persons to develop certain lines of argument in debate. The Leader of the Opposition was quite right in adopting his form of attack. I hope to be able to deal with not one, but all four points. We have said that no longer

should the Government be allowed to remain in charge of the affairs of this State without an approach to the ballot box and we say that because the Government have within their ranks a person found guilty by a Royal Commission of corrupt practices. That is my first point—corruption by a Minister of the Crown. Although he resigned the ministry he is still a member of the Government Party. We believe that is wrong, that it is not in the best interests of the State, and we support the amendment so that Her Majesty's representative will know clearly how we feel about the matter.

Our second point is that the Government have failed to maintain law and order in the western portions of Queensland during the present shearers' strike. The hon. member for Somerset said it was not a strike. Later I will reply to his comments and to the interjection by the Secretary for Mines.

**Mr. Aikens:** Will you tell us what you would do?

**Mr. CHALK:** I am prepared to do that.

The third point is the failure of the Government to transport wool shorn at award rates under Industrial Court conditions to points where it can be disposed of. I know that the hon. member for Mundingburra will have something to say when I come to deal with that matter. However, the important fact is that the Government have failed miserably in transporting wool.

**Mr. Devries:** Tell us what you would do?

**Mr. CHALK:** I shall be only too pleased to do that, because it is a matter that vitally affects the Minister's own electorate.

We have only to read the newspapers to realise how the Government have failed to uphold the industrial laws of Queensland.

**Mr. Aikens:** They are not always correct.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am not here to debate the opinions of newspapers, but to put forward the views of the Opposition. However, I feel quite sure that the Press will give a fair interpretation of my views, and that they will treat every other hon. member similarly.

The Treasurer has accused Opposition members of not stating their views on the four matters contained in the amendment. I shall deal firstly with that part of the amendment relating to events associated with the recent Royal Commission, and particularly with some events that have occurred in this Chamber since the Commission's findings were tabled. During the Creighton debate—and I do not intend to delve into that matter now—I said I did not agree entirely with the actions of Mr. Creighton, hence I was not prepared to support his reappointment to the position of Chairman of the Land Administration Board. However, I also made it clear that I would not vote for his dismissal while the hon. member for Belyando remained a member of the

Government. I felt it belittles the dignity of Parliament to have associated with it someone who has been found guilty of corrupt practices.

**Mr. Aikens:** You had two bob each way.

**Mr. CHALK:** I was not having two bob each way. I aired my views on Creighton, and I am now going to air my views on the hon. member for Belyando. Nothing has happened during this debate to cause me to change my views. I believe that the land administration of this State will be far better off if Mr. Creighton is not in charge of it and Mr. Foley is not a member of the Government. That has been my attitude throughout. If we are to have better government in Queensland, and to enjoy the confidence of the people, it is essential that either the hon. member for Belyando should leave the ranks of the Government or that we should go before the people and take the consequences of an election. I am fortified in that belief by quite a number of letters that I have received since the Creighton debate congratulating me on the stand I took.

Today I support very strongly the move by the Leader of the Opposition because, in my opinion, any Government who number within their ranks a person found guilty of corruption are not fit and proper to have charge of the affairs of the State. I say to them quite openly and bluntly that if they countenance the presence of the hon. member for Belyando they should do the decent thing and resign.

**Mr. Devries:** Didn't you steal a slate from a State school at one time?

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. member for Chermside, who just resumed his seat, said that he would not be intimidated by anything that might come from the Government. Knowing the hon. member for Gregory and his Government as I do, I say that if there had ever been a possibility of convicting me of stealing a slate I would have been the first to be convicted. However, I presented in this Chamber a slate that came into my possession and that bore certain things that hurt the Government. Threats were made against me, but I am still waiting for action. After all, actions speak louder than words. So far I have had only words.

**Mr. Devries:** Explanation accepted.

**Mr. CHALK:** I thank the hon. gentleman.

**Mr. Aikens:** Did you give the slate back?

**Mr. CHALK:** Yes, I gave him the slate back. Let me return to the serious side of the matter we are now debating. I have said that I think the Government should resign because the people are incensed and they should through the

ballot box be allowed to say whether they approve of the Government's action in continuing with Mr. Foley in their midst.

I do not propose to deal with all the findings of the Royal Commissioner, as my Leader and Deputy Leader and the hon. member for Coorparoo have dealt with them at length. But the hard, cold fact is that the Commissioner found the hon. member for Belyando guilty of corruption, however much the Premier or others might like to try to sugar-coat the pill.

**Mr. Aikens:** On more than one count.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am just saying he was found guilty of corruption. That is sufficient for me, whether it is one count or half a dozen. That should be enough to loosen up the hide of any man and cause him to leave the ranks of the people who occupy responsible positions. The finding of the Royal Commissioner was that the hon. member, with whom we must associate because we are members of Parliament, was guilty of corruption. That is the very sound reason why we support so sternly the motion of no confidence moved by way of amendment.

Despite the Commissioner's findings the Government are determined to carry on in office and determined to associate with the person who was corrupt. We had to sit in the Chamber and listen to an outrageous attack by the hon. member for Belyando under privilege on Mr. Justice Townley. I believe that such an attack strikes at the very roots of everything that is good and decent and all the things that we prefer to preserve in our way of life, yet the Government by their actions since the speech of the hon. member for Belyando condone his presence in our midst. They also condone his attack on the Royal Commissioner. In a court of law a person is given a fair trial. The Premier said that he accepted the findings of the Royal Commission and on the admission of the Premier the hon. member for Belyando was given a fair trial before the Royal Commission. In a court of law if a person is found guilty and then makes an outrageous outburst against the person who sat in judgment on him, that is regarded as contempt of court.

**Mr. Aikens:** Not after the case is finished.

**Mr. CHALK:** That is regarded as contempt of court.

**Mr. Aikens:** Not after the case is finished.

**Mr. CHALK:** We can split straws if the hon. member wants to. The point is that an hon. member of the Government Party was permitted to stand up in this Chamber and attack Mr. Justice Townley after that member by fair trial was found to be a guilty person. I do not think there is a fair-minded citizen in Queensland who does not condemn the action of the hon. member

for Belyando but the Government have continued to welcome him in their midst instead of condemning him. They countenance and adore the corruption that went on. I defy anyone to find one word in "Hansard" so far when any hon. member of the Government Party has said that anything the hon. member for Belyando did was wrong. That is a very important issue in this debate. They say that they accept the findings of the Royal Commission; that they regret them but not one hon. member of the Government Party so far condemned the hon. member for Belyando. Instead, several of them have countenanced his presence by saying, "Well, he is the hon. member for Belyando and we welcome him amongst us." Surely that alone is sufficient for us on this side of the Chamber to say to Her Majesty's representative, "This Government no longer are worthy to carry out Her Majesty's duties in this State." That is what we are saying to Her Majesty's representative. Apart from the other points in the amendment that should be sufficient reason for the Government to resign and go to a new election to test the feeling of the people—to see whether they have their confidence.

**Mr. Power:** We will do that in three years' time.

**Mr. CHALK:** Yes, I know, in three years' time! The Attorney-General leans back and says, "In three years' time." That is typical of the Government's attitude. They say, "To hell with the thoughts of the people. We are here for three years and from the Opposition point of view you can do what you like."

If we have to prove our point any further, if the tabled findings of the Royal Commission are not sufficient to convince the Government of what they should do, then let us go a little further and establish beyond all reasonable doubt what is the right thing for the Government to do. First let us examine the principal figures involved in this matter. On the one hand we have the Commissioner, and on the other, the person found guilty of corruption—a person to whom this Government, up to this stage, at any rate, have given their blessing. Was the Commissioner an ordinary citizen? He was not. He was a man charged with one of the highest and most responsible duties to be entrusted to any man—the duties of a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland. Some years ago it was my privilege to reside for some time under the same roof as Mr. Justice Townley in Townsville.

**Mr. Aikens:** You are a much better man for having lived in Townsville.

**Mr. CHALK:** I do not deny that either; I like Townsville. The hon. member will not put me off my point as easily as that. During the period that I was stationed in Townsville I lived under the same roof as Mr. Justice Townley, who was then a barrister. He was held in very high regard

by the people of North Queensland. He was a first-class citizen of the North, and during the war years he enlisted in the A.I.F. On his return to Queensland he resumed practice as a barrister in Brisbane and, because of his ability and the manner in which he conducted himself, the Government saw fit to appoint him to the Supreme Court bench.

**Mr. Power:** He was appointed to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board the other day, too.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am not denying that either. The point I make is that this man had a very high reputation in the community when he was appointed a Supreme Court judge and he is still held in very high regard by the people of Queensland. I know that Mr. Justice Townley is extremely devoted to his family, and that he is a good churchman. I believe that he values everything that is good, clean and decent in our community. Do you believe that that man would—we have the Government's condemnation of him—damn the future of any other person holding a high office unless he was thoroughly convinced—

**Mr. Devries:** Who said so?

**Mr. CHALK:** Wait a minute and I shall tell the hon. gentleman. The point is, and this will hurt the Government, this Supreme Court judge would not condemn any man unless he was absolutely convinced that corruption had taken place. Yet the Government, backed up by certain Cabinet Ministers, allow the hon. member for Belyando to accuse the Royal Commissioner of arriving at his finding with the filthy insinuation that another judge said to him, "Well, look after my bar-room drinking pal." That is the charge by an hon. member opposite and endorsed by the Government. That charge was made against a man whose background will stand any investigation.

**Mr. Aikens:** Monstrous.

**Mr. CHALK:** I agree for once with the hon. member for Mundingburra. It is monstrous that an hon. member is allowed to stand in this Chamber and make that accusation against a judge of the Supreme Court whose background will stand any investigation. The Government have condoned that conduct. What suggestion could be lower than the one made by the hon. member for Belyando?

What is the calibre of the person who has made that charge? I have said what I wanted to say in regard to Mr. Justice Townley and I now have something to say in regard to the hon. member for Belyando, the person who has made such a low, contemptible suggestion about the Royal Commissioner. In 1954 he drew on his imagination to create suspicion about an honest inquiry made by me in regard to land ballots for soldier settlements. He used words which were recorded in "Hansard" and published by "The Courier-Mail." I hope that newspaper will republish those statements. He voiced words about me

that were apparently based on some suspicion he had about my inquiries in regard to soldier settlement ballots. There can be no doubt that at that time there was no corruption in regard to the matters I mentioned but apparently I was getting into a realm that was rather unhealthy as far as the Minister was concerned. Without justification he used the strongest language I believe is allowed in this Chamber in an endeavour to ruin me in the eyes of the people I represent and those on whose behalf I was making some inquiries. It is my belief that the truth will always prevail. I support the amendment which virtually calls on the Government to resign because they retain in their ranks a person found guilty of corruption. I recall the tobacco case and I repeat to the hon. member for Belyando the words he used about me in 1954, "Only an ass bumps his head against the same wall twice." I return with my compliments further words he used about me, "The acts of the hon. member are on all fours with those of a knave and a rogue, a person with the low cunning of the worst type of criminal." I repeat his words because I believe they are apt and have been proved by the Royal Commission to apply to him. That is the calibre of the person that this Government countenance in their ranks.

Having said those things in relation to the Royal Commission I want to go on to the other point associated with this motion of no confidence, if we can term it that, and deal with the second part—the failure of the Government to maintain law and order in Western Queensland during the present shearers' strike. The hon. member for Gregory challenged me a few moments ago to have something to say on this issue.

**Mr. Devries:** I hope you can prove it.

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. gentleman will probably tell us that the reports in the Press about rebellions, brawls and fights in the West today are all moonshine, that they did not happen—

**Mr. Devries:** I would not say that; it is not unusual in the West.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. CHALK:** So, all that is happening in the West is nothing unusual! If it is nothing unusual, it is a greater condemnation of the Government and the police force if this sort of thing is allowed to go on all the year round. The hon. gentleman and the Minister in charge of the Police Department know that these things are going on. The hon. gentleman said that he hoped I had some facts. I shall give him some. I returned this morning from Townsville. During my few days in North Queensland I met an officer of the law and a commercial traveller, both of whom I know very well. They had just returned from certain portions of the West including the electorate of the hon. gentleman. Both told me—and I believe them because I know they are decent, honest fellows—of some of their experiences in some

of the western towns during the present shearing crisis. One of them went into a local hotel, as he was entitled to do, to buy himself and a friend a drink. He had not been inside the hotel three minutes when the leader of a large gang of men, or a person who appeared to be the leader of a gang of men, approached him and asked him his name and his business in town.

**Mr. Devries:** Bodgies are doing that down here in Brisbane.

**Mr. CHALK:** If the hon. gentleman condones bodgies to play bodgies, it is his right, but I am telling him what happened in his own electorate to a decent citizen. This man was asked his business and what he was doing in town. The Government say that nothing like that is going on in the community. What is the position coming to if a decent, public thinking, free-minded man, just an ordinary citizen, cannot drive from here to Winton or Charleville, go into a hotel and ask for a drink without somebody, usually a man picked for the job, asking him in no kindly terms, "What are you doing here?" On that issue the Government stand condemned; we know it is going on. I shall be very careful in this connection because I do not want a decent member of the police to have any trouble or any inconvenience because of something he had guts enough to tell me. The Minister in charge of the Police Department will tell us that everything is all right, that the police are not concerned about these little backyard brawls that are going on. This man, who is well respected, told me of some of the happenings that have taken place in two western towns in which he has served. He told me of bashings and of attacks on decent fellows who are prepared to work at award rates by men who do not want to work and who do not want decent citizens to work.

The Government stand condemned in the eyes of the people for the part they are playing. All we can get from them and the Minister concerned is the bald statement, "We cannot prosecute, because we cannot find the man responsible." Only this morning I saw a statement in the Press by a prominent police officer about a fire and it concluded with these words, "These rumours have not reached me." There is a breaking-down of administration. Something is happening that is causing members of the Police Force to stand by idly while these things are happening. That is the second charge we make against the Government.

And now I come to the third charge. At the outset, I am quite prepared to reveal my attitude on the refusal of certain railway employees to handle what is referred to as "black" wool. Before doing that, however, I shall refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Somerset, who led the Government debate this morning. I think it would be quite fair to say that the hon. member came into this Chamber with a brief that he

hoped would convince him, and those who listened to him, of the sincerity of its contents. But the further he went the more involved he became, and when he had completed his speech he had convinced neither himself nor anyone else. He accused the Leader of the Opposition of condemning arbitration. I defy him, or anybody else, to prove that any member of the Opposition has condemned the Industrial Court for failing to carry out its duties. We believe that there should be some rearrangement of the Industrial Court so that cases can be heard more expeditiously than at present, but at no time has any member of the Opposition condemned any findings of the Industrial Court or said that the Government should interfere with it. The hon. member for Somerset endeavoured to drag that type of red herring across the trail.

He then proceeded to say that the present trouble in the shearing industry was not a strike, but a dispute.

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

**Mr. CHALK:** I thank hon. members for the opportunity to finish my remarks.

The hon. member for Chermiside adopted at least one sentence of mine when he asked: if this is not a strike, why is certain wool declared black? Why is Mr. Bukowski travelling throughout Western Queensland urging the shearers to rebel against arbitration? Every statement by Mr. Bukowski that I have read has referred to it as a strike.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Why are they paying strike pay?

**Mr. CHALK:** I am coming to that.

**Mr. Aikens** interjected.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am not interested in the hon. member's opinion of Mr. Bukowski. I am expressing my own views. However, my Leader very rightly asked the question I intended to put—why are they paying strike pay if it is not a strike? If, as the hon. member for Somerset suggests, the men are not involved in a strike, why are unionists contributing money to a fund for them?

**An Opposition Member:** How silly can anyone be?

**Mr. CHALK:** I quite agree. The hon. member for Somerset referred to railway employees who refused to handle wool on a union direction because it was declared black. He also referred to a statement by the hon. member for Fassifern that industrial laws must be enforced. I believe that all the laws of the country should be enforced, not merely the industrial laws. Does the hon. member for Somerset believe in lawlessness? That is what he conveyed this morning. Apparently he believes in only the laws that suit himself and his party and is not prepared to obey laws made for the betterment of all the people.

**Mr. SKINNER:** I rise to a point of order. The statement I made has been repeated only in part by the hon. member for Lockyer. I quoted from "Hansard" a statement by the hon. member for Fassifern. I did not say that I supported his statement. In the latter part of my remarks I condemned it.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the hon. member for Lockyer to accept the denial of the hon. member for Somerset.

**Mr. CHALK:** I am quite prepared to accept his denial. What I am concerned about is the hon. member's statement about railway employees who refused to handle the wool. The hon. member for Somerset condoned their actions and I do not think he will deny it.

**Mr. Aikens:** I will go one better than condone it; I will support it.

**Mr. CHALK:** We know the hon. member for Mundingburra would support anything at any time for political capital. I am making my point. If a man does not want to work, if he does not agree with the findings of the Industrial Court nor accept its award, he has his alternative and that is not to work under those conditions. He has that right. I believe in the right of every person to choose his own employment. A man has the right to choose his own employment but what I object to strongly about this shearing strike or dispute—call it what you like—is that the person who will not accept the findings of the Industrial Court on the legal minimum amount that must be paid is permitted to bulldoze his friends and cause trouble with others who are prepared to accept the Court's findings and work under these conditions.

**Mr. Power:** What would you do with him?

**Mr. CHALK:** I will come to that in a few moments. I know what I would do with him.

**Mr. Power:** What would you do with him?

**Mr. CHALK:** The Attorney-General comes in and says, "What would you do with him?" Firstly, if a man will not work that is his business, but if he causes bodily harm or creates a disturbance or does anything to prevent another from working under a just award laid down by the Industrial Court, then he is guilty and should be dealt with.

**Mr. Power:** You have not furnished any evidence. It is only hearsay.

**Mr. CHALK:** Now the Attorney-General is talking about hearsay evidence. Why does he not sit in the Chamber all the time? He has heard only part of my remarks. The point I am making is that I believe it is wrong that these people should be permitted to do as they please when the Industrial Court, the tribunal that heard the claims

of the graziers and the claims of the men, found that work should be carried on at a certain figure. Yet the Government are prepared to encourage these people to carry on this whole sorry business which is undoubtedly causing great hardship in many homes and affecting the economy of the State. These people do not want to work and on their own admission the Government have done nothing. We heard the Attorney-General say that is hearsay evidence.

**Mr. Power:** So it is.

**Mr. CHALK:** Did you ever hear anything more stupid?

**Mr. Power** interjected.

**Mr. CHALK:** Did you ever hear anything more silly? He says that this is all hearsay evidence.

**Mr. Power** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The Attorney-General is not in order in making such persistent interjections.

**Mr. Aikens:** Send him out.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the hon. member for Mundingburra that if he does not behave himself I shall deal with him.

**Mr. CHALK:** The Attorney-General says that this is hearsay evidence. Does he say that it is hearsay evidence that something like 300 trucks are tied up with wool at the present moment in the western parts of Queensland?

**Mr. Skinner:** Be accurate.

**Mr. CHALK:** 260 odd, if the hon. member is going to split straws. There may be 300 now.

**Mr. Aikens:** How would you get them moving?

**Mr. CHALK:** Let the hon. member enjoy his lunch and then I will tell him. That holdup of trucks is not hearsay evidence, nor is it hearsay evidence that people in North Queensland are crying out for trucks. The third point of the amendment deals with the failure of the Government to provide rail transport facilities for all wool available for consignment. This is of vital importance to Queensland as a whole. The hon. member for Somerset made reference to what he termed a few graziers being concerned about the transport of their wool to the Queensland markets, but the transport of this wool not only concerns the graziers or owners of the wool, it affects the whole economy of this State. And this Government are condoning the actions of certain men who are doing all in their power to prevent that wool from being placed on the markets of Queensland so as to provide finance for the development of our pastoral industry. In reply to a question in this House the Minister for Transport said that at least 260 4-wheel rail wagons were at present tied up at railway sidings loaded with wool. In

case there is any doubt in the mind of the hon. member for Gregory, let me tell him that there are at least approximately two trainloads of wool held up at the Winton railway siding because railway employees will not shift it. Let us have a look at what is involved. On the admission of the Minister for Transport there are 260 4-wheel wagons held up. For reasons best known to himself the Minister did not tell us what the actual tonnage was, but assuming that most of them are F wagons each of which would hold 30 bales of wool there would be approximately 8,000 bales held up.

**Mr. Collins:** What percentage would that be of the total?

**Mr. CHALK:** It is not the percentage that is important, but the value of the wool to the economy of this State. That is what we have to consider. Each bale is worth about £100. That will indicate the value of wool that is held up. It is affecting the economy of this State and the economy of Australia, apart from its effect on general rail transport, and the spending power in the townships or cities from which the wool is consigned.

What is the reason for the hold-up? The hon. member for Mundingburra was rather noisy this morning, but unfortunately he is not now in the Chamber. He asked what could be done about it. The wool is held in those places because a few railwaymen refuse to move it.

**Mr. Devries:** No. They are obeying the decision of the executive body of that union.

**Mr. CHALK:** If I was going fishing with the hon. gentleman, I would not take any bait. That is exactly what I wanted him to say, but who inspired those men? Bukowski went to the West and who went with him? He took none other than Hanson. Government members know who he is.

**Mr. Donald:** The Chairman of the Disputes Committee.

**Mr. CHALK:** He is a Communist. The point is that Bukowski took Hanson with him when he went to the West.

**Mr. DONALD:** I rise to a point of order. I did not say he was a Communist. I said he was Chairman of the Disputes Committee.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I did not hear the remark, but I ask the hon. member to accept the denial of the hon. member for Bremer.

**Mr. CHALK:** I accept his denial. Some hon. member interjected and I thought the interjection was that he was a Communist. I do not know who said it. The hon. member for Bremer knows very well where Mr. Hanson stands and he knows his political affiliations. Mr. Bukowski and Mr. Hanson went through the West and, as was said by the Secretary for Mines, a few railwaymen on their instructions have refused to load the wool at various sidings.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** I rise to a point of order. I did not say that that action was taken on the instructions of Mr. Bukowski and Mr. Hanson. I said it was as a result of a decision of the Disputes Committee.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I ask the hon. member to accept that explanation.

**Mr. CHALK:** I accept it. I am going to proceed further. We know why this wool is not being transported by the Railway Department.

**Mr. Wood:** What would you do?

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. member for North Toowoomba now joins in the argument. He has asked me what would I do if I was a railwayman. In other words, he is insinuating that because of certain intimidation in the department at the moment the men will not handle the wool. I shall say what I would do and what I believe should be done.

This Government countenance the disobedience of instructions to employees. It is useless quibbling over the word "strike". The hon. member for Somerset said there was no strike; the Government cannot have it both ways. The point is that a few employees of the department are refusing to carry out the lawful instructions of the Commissioner. The hon. member for Mundingburra who has now come into the House wants to know what we would do.

**Mr. Aikens:** How would you get the wool moved?

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. member wants to know how we would get the wool moved. There are approximately 29,000 men employed in the Railway Department.

**Mr. Aikens:** And not one of them will handle the wool.

**Mr. CHALK:** This Government have not tested the loyalty of those 29,000 railway employees. A majority of the men in the department are not in favour of what is going on. The Government have no "inside" to issue instructions to test the position. Can the Minister for Transport say that he has threatened or issued a notice of suspension against any railway employee who refuses to carry out the duties expected of him? The hon. member for Mundingburra says that we would have a strike on our hands.

**Mr. Aikens:** Of course you would.

**Mr. CHALK:** The ordinary railway man is a decent fellow, willing to do an honest day's work, but, unfortunately, a few in the department dictated to by Bukowski and others are following out the policy laid down by Bukowski. It is not the policy of the Government, but they are under the heel of Bukowski. There are those who are prepared to jeopardise the welfare of this State by carrying out the wishes of Bukowski, and the Government are not prepared to take a hand in the matter. If they did there would be no strike; the decent average man, the man

concerned with the future of his wife and children, would see that this sorry business, strike or dispute—call it what you like—was cleared up.

**Mr. Aikens:** The wool is at the sidings. Why have not the decent men hauled it?

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. member for Mundingburra is an ex-railway man; he knows and appreciates the position. The Government have stood by and done nothing.

**Mr. Wood:** You still have not told me what you would do if you were a railway man.

**Mr. CHALK:** What I would do if I were a railway man? I am prepared to tell the hon. member what members of the Opposition would do if we were in charge of the railways with the administration in our hands. We would have the wool shifted, and there would be no back-peddalling. The wool would be shifted. The average, honest, decent railway man realises that the Government should face up to their obligations, and he, as an honest employee of the Government, would play his part. The Government have been backing and filling and on the Premier's own admission we have lost at least £600,000 in wool freights alone. That was the figure at the end of June, but now we are near the end of August. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the figure is now close to the £1,000,000 mark, because this wool has not been shifted. The quantity of wool involved is roughly 7,800 bales. Virtually, £1,000,000 worth of freight has been lost to the Government because they will not take the initiative. And, what is more, an increase in railway freights has been forced upon the people of Queensland allegedly because the railways are not paying. How could they possibly pay if the Government are not prepared to have the wool carried? The most important thing to remember is that the wool that is held up at the various railway sidings was shorn under an award of the Industrial Court and loaded under conditions that complied with the laws of the State.

**Mr. Aikens** interjected.

**Mr. CHALK:** That is the point we have to remember and, irrespective of how noisy he might be, the hon. member for Mundingburra realises the cold facts. Wool shorn under an award of the Industrial Court is being held up because the Government will not face up to their responsibilities.

**Mr. Aikens:** What do you mean by "will not face up to their responsibilities?"

**Mr. CHALK:** We on this side of the House believe that if the Government would issue an instruction to all railway employees to move wool shorn under an award of the Industrial Court and in accordance with the law of the land, although a few might say, "We won't do it," the majority would carry out that instruction.

**Mr. Aikens:** What would you do with the men who would not haul it?

**Mr. CHALK:** I know what I would do with them.

**A Government Member:** You would bring out the guns.

**Mr. CHALK:** There are some hon. members in this Chamber who would probably prefer to fight with guns. We would suspend the men who refused to obey instructions.

**Mr. Aikens:** You would have a general strike on your hands.

**Mr. CHALK:** I do not accept the hon. member's word for it. I remind the hon. member for Mundingburra that this morning the hon. member for Somerset said the grazier was in a position to stand the cost of road transport, that he did not care very much how his wool got to the market. However, the railways play a vital part in the life of the community, and if they are to operate in the best interests of the State it is essential that railway employees carry out their instructions.

We on this side deplore the spinelessness of the Minister for Transport in not facing up to his duties, and the attitude of the Government in not insisting that the Railway Department transport the wool that has already been loaded. The Government are granting permits for the transport of wool by road. The hon. member for Somerset set up a howl because the road transport of wool was damaging the roads. It is his Government who are responsible for forcing the wool on to the roads, so they must accept at least portion of the blame for anything that might happen to any road over which wool is hauled.

The four points that we have raised are all very important to the economy of Queensland and to the dignity of Parliament. If the Government continue to countenance corruption in their ranks, they cannot retain the confidence of the people. They know only too well that if they went to the polls tomorrow they would be defeated. This morning the Attorney-General leaned back in his seat and said, "We are here for three years." That is the attitude of the whole of the Cabinet and the Government who unfortunately control the destinies of the people of Queensland at the present time. We of the Opposition realise that our numbers are not as great as those of the Government, but the number of voters who support us is almost the same as theirs.

**Mr. Power:** Rubbish!

**Mr. CHALK:** The hon. gentleman's interjection indicates how much he knows about his own department. Nevertheless, the people of Queensland know the position. We cannot defeat the Government but at least we can raise our voices in protest and I am pleased to associate mine with this amendment.

**Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (2.36 p.m.):** My colleague the hon. member for Lockyer stressed the great loss of freight to the

Railway Department. He also said that the hon. member for Somerset said the graziers were not very much concerned about how their wool got here. But what about the loss to the State because of the wool lying at railway sidings? My own firm has about £2,000,000 worth of it there. I do not blame the Minister for Transport. I blame the Government because they are responsible. The Minister is only one member of the Government. The main objection to action seems to be that we will have a general strike on our hands.

**Mr. Aikens:** And you know you will, too.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Assuming that is correct, that objection could be raised to any proposed action. What a wonderful way to run the country! Suppose for the sake of argument that the men employed in the cattle industry decided that the award wages were not sufficient and refused to carry cattle. It would come to exactly the same thing. What would the people eat? The same holds good for any commodity. If there is going to be a general strike, let us have it and clean the whole matter up. Are we to leave millions of pounds' worth of wool at railway sidings? The State is not the only loser. What about the men in the pastoral industry who cannot develop their properties because they have not the money and firms like mine have not the money to lend them because it is not coming in from that wool? It is well known that wool is the staple industry of Queensland and of Australia.

It is all very well for hon. members to talk about the roads. If the Government did the decent thing they would give at least 50 per cent. of the amount required for the improvement of their roads, especially in the West and North-West. Through their action alone the roads are being destroyed. I understand that the hon. member for Somerset complained about the roads in his area. Let him go a little further West and he will see the deplorable state of what was once a decent road, caused by this heavy haulage of wool.

**Mr. Aikens:** They still carry wool by road even when the railways are in full operation.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Of course they do. The hon. member is not telling me anything I do not know. But for every bale of wool that was carried by road before this hold-up there are probably 2,000 carried by road now. It is the only means of transport. With the exceptional loads it is no wonder that the roads are being destroyed. How long is this sort of thing to go on?

**Mr. Hadley:** Why don't you support your railways?

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member would not know which end of the railways hit him.

The loss to the railways is nothing compared to what the State has lost. How long are the Government going to permit this? Are they going to sit there and say, "We cannot do anything because if we do we will have a general strike."?

**Mr. Aikens:** The wool has not been destroyed; what has the State lost?

**Mr. SPARKES:** The hon. member has a wonderful, imaginary brain! If his salary were going into a truck standing at a railway siding what would he be doing with the money? It would not be destroyed but he would have a hell of a job to clothe himself. On the argument of the hon. member for Mundingburra it would be better not to sell the wool at all but to let it stand. "It is not being destroyed", he said. Months have gone past and these men have to purchase sheep to stock up; they need finance to put water on their properties and improve them to carry the stock. They have not got the money. The fact that the wool is lying in trucks and will be shifted we know not when is a very important matter when they approach firms for advances.

**Mr. Aikens:** Why don't you stop the strike?

**Mr. SPARKES:** What a wonderful gentleman we have here! The hon. member is a railway man, why does he not?

**Mr. Aikens:** You know our terms.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Is that the position with the Government? Are they saying, "You have to accept the men's terms, whether they are right or wrong."? Apparently hon. members on that side do not believe in arbitration today. That is what the Attorney-General was saying. "I do not believe in arbitration because it does not fit in with my view."

**Mr. Power:** I didn't say that at all.

**Mr. SPARKES:** That is what he wants to say.

By their attitude the Government apparently are doing exactly the same thing. There is an hon. gentleman over there who publicly stated, "I only take instructions from the people of my electorate." He is leaving the Chamber now.

**Mr. Aikens:** Every time the price of meat falls you withdraw your bullocks from the abattoir.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I draw the attention of the hon. member for Mundingburra to the fact that what he is doing is grossly unparliamentary. He is not entitled to keep interrupting and I warn him that if he continues to do that I will take steps to deal with him.

**Mr. Aikens:** I will beat you to it; I will leave the Chamber.

**Mr. SPARKES:** When the Secretary for Public Instruction was a private member he

said that in his electorate. Are the people of the Condamine electorate in favour of the present hold up of the wool? Let the hon. gentleman come back into the Chamber and answer that question. It is all very well to be big and make big statements but if one is going to do that one must try to live up to it. There are hon. members on that side who try to live up to the statements they make. Apparently the hon. member for Condamine makes one statement in Condamine and another in this House or somewhere else. That is typical of him. I mention these things because they actually happen. This man will not live up to what he says. I will at least try and live up to any statement I make. That is what the hon. member for Condamine does not do and never will do.

**Mr. Jesson:** What about Charlie Russell?

**Mr. SPARKES:** I am not concerned about Mr. Russell. If the hon. member has something to say about Mr. Russell let him say it. I am concerned with this hold-up of wool. I do not want any political gain out of it—none whatever. I do hope for the sake of the people engaged in the industry and Queensland generally that something is done to remedy the position. If the man who is selling the wool does not get a return he cannot continue employing men and developing his property. In the long run every hold-up or strike affects the working man and his family more than anybody else. As soon as members on the Government side realise that, the better. You are playing right into the hands of the Communists. I am not going to enter into the controversy about the shearers' strike. I am concerned about the wool that is being held up throughout Queensland and not allowed to go to its destination. Hon. members on the Government side like the hon. member for Balonne and the hon. member for Warrego know what a serious effect the non-delivery and sale of wool has on the grazier. It is all very well for the hon. member for Somerset to talk about the grazier, but the matter of the sale of wool affects shearers, station hands and men working in wool stores in Brisbane. I have no intention, as I have said, of castigating the Minister for Transport; he is only one member of the Cabinet. It is the Government of Queensland who stand condemned for their action in not carrying out their duty. We hear much talk about having a general strike. The other day a man was stood down from the abattoirs—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! That has nothing to do with the amendment.

**Mr. SPARKES:** Suppose those engaged in some other industry decide that they are not going to do this or that, will the Government be afraid to take action? The Government have emphasised the danger of a general strike as a cover-up for their inactivity. I know that there are hon. members

on the Government side who must view the position seriously. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you would rule me out of order if I attempted to say what those hon. members think about the action of most of their colleagues in regard to this matter. It is time that some action was taken.

**A Government Member:** What is the United Graziers Association going to do?

**Mr. SPARKES:** I am not concerned about what the United Graziers Association is going to do. I am concerned about the hold-up of wool. If we are going to have a strike let us have it and clean up the whole situation. The State cannot carry on under these conditions. Where would I or any other employer be if an employee said, "I will not go round that corner of the paddock today. It is too rough."? Do the Government think the employer should take the attitude that he had better not send him round that way or all the employees will knock off work? No business could be carried on in that manner, and the Government cannot carry on under those conditions.

It is up to the Government to give to the local authorities especially in the western and north-western parts of Queensland grants to cover at least 50 per cent. of the repair bill of roads in those areas. Those local authorities are going to be crippled financially if they have to make good the roads that have been damaged by the road transport of wool. I challenge any Government member or anyone to say that our roads are not being damaged to a considerable extent. You, Mr. Speaker, and other members who live on bitumen roads can imagine it, because even the bitumen roads are starting to crack up. I noticed, coming down today, that there are holes in the surface of the bitumen caused by heavy road transport. Ask the hon. member for Balonne the condition of the road west of Roma. He will tell you the same thing. I have not been to the north-west lately, but I can imagine what the roads out there are like. Ask the hon. member for Warrego about the condition of the roads west of Roma and what they will be like if the present situation continues.

I know that the party on this side of the chamber will be behind the Government in any stand they take to ensure that the law of the land is carried out.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (Mr. Nicklin's amendment) be so added—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 19.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen	Mr. Munro
" Chalk	" Nicholson
" Coburn	" Nicklin
" Fletcher	" Plunkett
" Gaven	" Roberts
" Herbert	" Sparkes
" Hewitt	
" Hiley	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Low	" Dewar
" Madsen	" Jones, V. E.
" Morris	

NOES, 37.

Mr. Adair	Mr. Hilton
" Baxter	" Jesson
" Brown	" Jones, A.
" Byrne	" Kehoe
" Clark	" Keyatta
" Cooper	" Marsden
" Davis	" McCathie
" Devries	" Moore
" Diplock	" Moores
Dr. Dittmer	" Power
Mr. Dohring	" Rasey
" Donald	" Taylor, J. R.
" Dufficy	" Wallace
" Duggan	" Walsh
" English	" Wood
" Poley	
" Gardner, H. R.	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Gardner, R. J.	" Davies
" Graham	" Lloyd
" Hadley	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Evans	Mr. Burrows
" Heading	" Gair
" Müller	" Brosnan
Dr. Noble	" Robinson
Mr. Pizzey	" Gunn
" Taylor, H. B.	" Turner

Resolved in the negative.

**Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (2.59 p.m.):** I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere gratitude to the electors of Bremer for the wonderful support they afforded the Government on 19 May last and I assure them that I shall continue to serve them with the same zeal and enthusiasm as I have in the years I have had the honour to represent them in this House, and to give them that service without fear, favour or prejudice.

In view of the increase of automatic productive technique in industry, commonly called automation, and its possible effect upon the economy of the nation, I intend to devote the greater part of my time in dealing with that subject. I firmly believe that some knowledge of industrial history is very helpful in providing the answer as to how automation is going to effect our social and economic life. Industrial history is the story of man's labour with tools and mechanical and power appliances for the satisfaction of his wants. When we speak of the industrial revolution we mean that great transformation which has been brought about during the past 200 years by discoveries and inventions which have altered fundamentally all the methods of production and distribution of the means of life, and consequently revolutionised all the economic functions of society.

Man, who through the long centuries had toiled with his hands, aided by crude implements to wrest a pitiful subsistence from nature, suddenly discovered that the blind forces against which he had been struggling could be harnessed to do his work. Through the countless ages humanity had been the helpless prey of the vulture element, consumed by fire, drowned by flood, struck down by lightning, frozen in winter storms, and eliminated by pestilence and famine. So man's first action was defensive; he sharpened a piece of wood, polished a flint, kindled a flame; thus industrial history was begun. Yet the thousands of years that elapsed from the primaevial dawn until the 18th century did

not produce as many mechanical, technical and scientific triumphs as have been brought forth in the last two centuries.

Not since the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century has industry witnessed such far-reaching changes in the method of production as those following the development of automatic control devices, which have made automation possible. There can be no doubt that robots and automation are threatening to revolutionise the gadget age as did the spinning wheel the industrial age, when hand weavers feared for their jobs and their futures.

It is the opinion of many that automation will displace many workers from industry, thereby causing wide-spread unemployment. If that is so, it will be necessary for governments to cushion the effect of automation when it is introduced into industry. It is true that automation, in a mild way, has been creeping into our daily lives ever since push buttons and gadgets took the place of physical exertion. As we watch a bulldozer, a grader or an excavator at work on an irrigation, main road, railway or building construction job, it is not difficult to visualise the number of semi-skilled and unskilled workers whose services are no longer required on that type of project. The same position is found in the printing industry, where linotype machines have displaced hundreds of hand setters. And so it goes on throughout industry generally. The answer, of course, is firstly, no-one would want to return to the pick and shovel or to hand setting, and secondly, for every navy, hand setter, or unskilled or semi-skilled worker put out of employment, many more technicians have been employed manufacturing earth-moving, printing and other machinery, the use of which has been encouraged by the cheaper cost of production.

Thus it is that progress is encouraged, and workmen graduate from the drudgery of antiquity to the status of technical and engineering experts at a higher rate of remuneration and under improved working conditions that formerly were not economically possible.

Naturally, the worker fears what will happen during the transition period, covering the stage during which the unskilled worker is trained and acquires the necessary skill and knowledge to become an expert technician. It is the responsibility and the first duty of all governments to insist that the welfare of any displaced employee should be safeguarded, even if it means a charge on the wealthy companies that are experimenting with automation discoveries.

Another vital social problem arising from automation is the utilisation of the extra leisure time made available by the reduction of the working week, so that society can obtain the greatest benefit. Workers must not be left in a position where they will have plenty of time on their hands with nowhere to go and nothing to do. That would not benefit the individual, the race or the nation.

It will be the duty of governments, therefore, to provide opportunities for the technical and cultural advancement of the people by making available technical educational facilities to enable ambitious young men and women to qualify for positions superior to those filled by the unskilled. For those who desire cultural subjects a conservatorium of music, among other things, should be established.

A still shorter working week, which would be made possible by the extension of automation to more and more industries, will call for greater facilities, both cultural and technical, to enable all who so desire to qualify for the highest posts their country can offer.

Even from the sordid, selfish standpoint, the dividend-chasing investor will need to provide his employees with higher salaries not for their benefit but to ensure a healthy consumer fund for the effective purchase of more goods and commodities produced by the newest devices. Accordingly, it will be in the interests of the investor's own profits and dividends that any unemployment pools traceable to automation be ended as early as possible.

The application of automatic productive techniques in industry and their possible consequences for the working people should have the closest attention of all, particularly members of the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement.

Automation has been described as a curse but is such a pessimistic view justified? If automation is properly handled need such an attitude be adopted towards what after all is only a logical adaptation of power, other than human labour, to industry and which presents no problem of itself entirely new?

Automation promises a very real possibility of removing much that is monotonous and back-breaking from factory work and I believe that on this ground alone it should win the support of the Trade Union Movement. If by some process the energy stored in coal could be obtained without asking men to go underground and engage in what must be regarded as a dangerous and very strenuous occupation, it would be much better for all those employed underground and for many engaged on the surface in the coalmining industry. Indeed it would be to the benefit of mankind generally because it would eliminate for all time the dreadful disasters that occur all too frequently. For instance only a few weeks ago more than 250 men were entombed in a coal mine in Belgium and met a premature and ghastly death.

Fears are frequently expressed that automation will give rise to widespread unemployment and economic depression but the people who express such fears have seldom stopped to consider the full impact of greater industrial efficiency on the economy as a whole, nor have they assessed or visualised clearly all the implications and possibilities for the working people in a more advanced economy.

In the first place, I cannot see any firm, company or enterprise installing expensive and elaborate automatic equipment without

reasonable grounds for expecting that the resulting increase in production will be disposed of at a satisfactory profit. However much an owner may disclaim responsibility for unemployment, there is nothing he dislikes more than unemployed capital and as, under automation, capital is likely to be substituted for labour to an extent greater than at present, the need to use industrial equipment to the full in order to obtain a satisfactory return on the capital invested becomes paramount. I think that alone will prevent a willy-nilly changeover to automation. The huge capital expenditure entailed will not be warranted in a given industry unless the new production methods enable commodities to be produced at a rate considerably cheaper than those produced by existing methods. That prompts the question: would the availability of cheaper goods be a bad thing? I feel sure hon. members will agree that it would be very desirable and would be welcomed by the vast majority of people in the community.

It is true that employment in the now less efficient branches of the industry concerned could be adversely affected and trade union activity must be directed towards safeguarding in full the interests of members during the transitional period and to ensuring, through conciliation and arbitration or collective bargaining and political action, that the share of the national product going to capital does not increase with the changeover to automation, a very likely consequence that must be watched.

Goods must be cheaper under automatic production or they will not be able to compete with those produced by existing methods. Cheaper-priced goods must result in advantages to all trade unionists and these advantages should not be overlooked or minimised.

First of all, when prices of commodities such as motor cars, refrigerators, washing machines fall they become within the reach of new groups of consumers. Much of the increased production will be absorbed in this way. What is more important is that a reduction in the price of consumer goods, under a given wage structure, enables all consumers to retain the part of their income normally expended on those goods. This money becomes immediately available for the purchase of goods not usually consumed or for the greater purchase of those which are. Thus money saved out of normal consumption expenditure will give a new stimulus to demand and through it to employment in other industries, some of which might well absorb many of the workers automation displaces. This would be particularly true where effective demand is increased in industries which are labour intensive, that is, where a high proportion of labour is contained in the finished product and which does not lend itself to automatic organisation. A further factor not to be disregarded is that those workers fortunate enough to retain employment in industries where auto-

mation is extensively applied will receive considerably greater wages than those normally paid to factory workers.

Electronic equipment will demand highly trained technicians to construct, install, maintain and set for production. They will naturally command rates of pay in keeping with their skill and ability. When this money is spent it will contribute to the overall effective demand, thereby keeping other parts of the economy buoyant.

Again, if it is possible to increase production to the extent that a reduction of working hours is possible—and who does not want to see a reduction of working hours?—then the problem of fully and constructively utilising the increased leisure presents itself. At present many trade unionists and their families are unable to make the best use of the available leisure and annual holidays simply because too much of their income is used in the struggle for existence. If automation is to be successful it should, indeed it must, remove this disability and give to all a brighter, fuller and better life.

The rapid development of automation in Great Britain has caused the British Labour movement much anxiety. The trades unions of that country are considering just how the problem of unemployment arising from the wheels of progress can be adequately handled. It is only natural that the workers generally should be concerned at the grave possibility of having their earnings reduced by under-employment or their pay envelopes vanish altogether by being thrown out of employment. On the other hand, there are others who look upon automation as merely the latest and most novel of the developments in industrial technique that has been going on for many years. These people show no signs that they understand or have any knowledge that automation is going to raise political and economic problems that will go to the roots of present-day society.

In Britain the workers employed by the Standard Motor Co. and others recently went on strike. This brings very vividly to my mind the miners' strike which preceded the general strike during the 1920's in Great Britain. However, there is a distinct contrast between the two disputes. It does appear that the employees of the Standard Motor Co. went on strike as a protest against the introduction of new machines which threatened to, and eventually did, rob many of them of their jobs. The miners, who had the support of the whole of the British trade union movement, were in effect demanding that the colliery proprietors bring their industry up to date. During the middle twenties British industry was, as it is now, facing serious competition from abroad. It could and should have met that competition by turning to new techniques and modern plant. But it chose to consume its profits rather than invest them, and it tried to keep its prices competitive by slashing wages to obtain cheap labour.

When the miners fought back they were fighting for the benefit of others, as they generally do, as well as for their own protection. They were endeavouring to lift the economy out of stagnation and to teach the indolent and backward industrialist a lesson that many of them did not succeed in learning until the war and the post-war boom brought both high wages and a labour shortage. So it is seen that 30 years ago British capitalism tried to maintain profitability and its competitive position at the expense of the working class. Despite the great difference between the 1926 dispute and the strike of the Standard Motor Company workers of 1956, the same issue lies behind both struggles. I emphasise this point: The men are not Luddites, objecting to technical change. They are much more conscious of the nation's need to pay its way in the world than paid anti-labour propagandists. They can see quite clearly that the incentive for automation is not the long-term national interest, but the immediate interest of the shareholders. Men are to be thrown on to the labour market because it is more profitable to use machines. While automation is an important technical change, the American experience has shown quite definitely that it is very expensive. In the long run these new methods of automatic control can indeed revolutionise production, but they will only be introduced where they can earn their keep; and they cannot earn their keep unless the saving in labour costs is substantial. Since industry is owned and controlled by private enterprise, and since the economy is increasingly dominated by large producers and monopolies such decisions about investments, prices and output are taken within the framework of the profit system. There is no national plan for production, no means of ensuring the best use of labour, plant and raw materials, and so the introduction of automation is bound to be capricious and unplanned, depending entirely on relative costs at a given time. If our economy were completely free the process would work as it does in the textbooks, and as certain economists would have us believe that it does in real life. The displaced workers would be thrown on to the labour market, the price of skilled labour would fall and the unemployed would be absorbed by other firms which would then be in a position to employ them. In this way a balance between labour costs and machine costs would be maintained. However, the workers who have already been involved in this kind of dispute have found that the matter is not so simple. There are many reasons why labour is not mobile. There are the housing shortages, long-service leave, superannuation, and other schemes associated with years of employment with the one employer, and in some instances trade union rules. At the moment many workers see in automation a serious threat to their livelihood, and naturally react in the traditional fashion to defend their interests. Therefore it is necessary for the unions and employers to meet in conference and discuss the pace

and character of the technical changes, and to arrive at some satisfactory basis of a scheme which would ensure proper training for workers who have been thrown out of employment, thereby enabling them to be gainfully employed. The industrial disputes which have already taken place in the homeland should be sufficient warning of the trouble that lies ahead. That trouble cannot be avoided by promises of the many benefits that will flow from automation. Nor can it be avoided by appealing to trade unions to remodel the structure of their organisations and to co-operate with managements. The plain fact is that the structure of our trade union and our industry belongs to an economy that was the product of the first industrial revolution.

We now stand on the verge of a new age with new tools and new methods and we have to adjust our social system to accommodate them and to make the best use of them.

I think we all agree that automation will be more profitable when an industry or firm has a large and steady market, when there are reserves of capital and when mass production has already led to considerable concentration of ownership. It cannot be applied successfully or effectively by small backward enterprises.

By its nature it requires an integrated process of production which reaches far beyond the wall of a particular factory. It follows therefore, that it will lead to further economic concentration, a reduction in the area of competition and a strengthening of the large companies and near monopolies.

Under automation, production will no longer be a series of steps separated by the division of different skills, and this is very likely to cause a change in the character of trade unions. It will demand new lines of demarcation based on the process rather than skill. I realise that it would be premature to advocate such reorganisation for the unions unless the atmosphere in which they operate is radically changed.

As long as the unions are faced with a system of industrial ownership which is substantially unchanged, they will cling to the organisational pattern created by that system.

They will be able to change only when there is a far-reaching change in that system and in the meantime they cannot and should not be condemned for trying to protect the interests of their members as strenuously as management is trying to protect the interest of its shareholders. If the character of production is to be changed, however, there must also be changes in our educational system and our economic structure. We cannot reap the full benefits of automation until we provide a flow of scientists and technicians adequate to develop and maintain the new equipment. This we are not doing because we are inclined to look upon automation as a marginal technical adjustment. I doubt if we are training three technicians

to every hundred workers entering industry today, and that applies not only to Queensland but the rest of Australia and probably the rest of the world.

The effect of automation is causing widespread discussion in all countries and in some instances deep concern. In England as already mentioned there have been strikes in the automobile industry and in the United States where the system is gaining greater power every day, the question is becoming a very live issue.

Therefore, the opinion of Mr. Walter Reuther, who is one of the leaders of the amalgamated American Labor Movement is of great interest. The article reads—

“The following remarks by Mr. Walter Reuther, one of the two leaders of the amalgamated American Labor Movement through the union of the A.F.L. and the C.I.O., had this to say recently about automation—

“‘The rate of scientific and technological development in the United States is being greatly accelerated, resulting in rapidly increasing output per hour worked,’ states Mr. Reuther—‘These technological changes can be a blessing if wisely used, or they can result in unemployment and suffering if they are introduced and operated without proper social controls.

‘Automation has been heralded by some scientists as introducing the second industrial revolution. Whereas the first industrial revolution replaced human and animal muscle power with machines, automation tends to use electronic devices to replace human regulation and control of machines.

‘Automation holds out the promise of vast improvement in living conditions, in increased leisure for workers and in greatly increased economic strength. It likewise promises the elimination of routine, repetitive jobs. But the widespread introduction of automation will present serious economic and social problems, involving dislocations of the labor force, geographical shifts of industry, labor displacement, changing the skills of workers and the need for substantial increases in consumer buying power for rapidly growing markets.

‘We know that you cannot hide from technological progress. We know, too, that the labor movement, which is itself a progressive movement, must not stand in the way of scientific improvements. We have, therefore, welcomed automation as a new step in man’s progress toward the production of abundance and the establishment of a better and richer life for all people. At the same time, however, we are committed to the proposition that the transition to automation must not result in the dislocations and human suffering that accompanied the first

industrial revolution or that followed the introduction of mass production techniques after World War I.

‘Science and technology are giving us the tools for economic abundance. We intend to do all in our power to see to it that these tools will help to bring peace, freedom and improved living conditions, as well as a greater measure of security and leisure to mankind everywhere,’ he ended.’”

Following the experience of workers in the United States of America and in Great Britain, the Australian workers and those who represent them have a right and a duty to ask what effect automation will have upon living and working conditions and upon the social and economic life of the community. The workers have never retarded progress, and I say this with all the force at my command, but to the contrary they have at all times done all in their power to accelerate progress. When occasions have demanded it they have fought against the introduction of industrial expansion that would jeopardise the nation’s welfare by lowering the living standards of the working people.

Organised labour through the industrial unions, and the Labour Party, will continue to fight against exploitation, monopolies and combines, poor housing and overcrowding which creates slum areas, unemployment and under employment and all the suffering and anxiety that accompany it, war and famine, inadequate medical attention and hospitalisation. Should automation threaten to undermine the conditions and living standards of the people made possible by the unity and organisation of the working people, then it will be opposed by all the strength that Labour can marshal against it. If the introduction into industry of electronic devices is only for the purpose of winning higher profits for investors at the expense of the worker, whose reward in such circumstances would be a reduced working week—a knowledge of industrial history proves that—and a much lower income with the prospect of being thrown on the industrial scrapheap at an early stage, then the working people must be expected to oppose and fear the coming of automation. Should automation, however, be introduced as a means of providing the whole of our people with a brighter, fuller and better life, to banish for all times poverty and ignorance in our midst, to ensure to all a happy and comfortable old age after a life of fruitful toil, automation will be welcomed. All people in authority should be fully alive to the dangers and also to the advantages of automation, and act in the interest of the whole of the community.

Therefore it is of great interest and very gratifying to know that the A.C.T.U. and the A.E.U. of Australia have taken the initial step to see what can be done in this direction, and I quote from the June A.E.U.

Monthly Journal, an article by Mr. D. McLelland, secretary of the Metal Trades Federation, reading—

“The potentialities of atomic energy and automation are not fully known . . . but experts agree that there will be radical changes within industry in machinery, lay-out of plant, and in personnel.”

“There is, however, a measure of agreement between experts, industrialists, and union leaders in the U.S.A. that as automation spreads there will be need for—

- (i.) Retaining of existing workers.
- (ii.) The job of apprenticeship will be that of developing new workers proficient in the skills automation will require.
- (iii.) Apprenticeship training will be of a higher standard.
- (iv.) ‘The very nature of automation puts a premium on skills, in operation and in maintenance.’

“There facts indicate the need for highly skilled tradesmen in sufficient numbers on the job to meet emergencies and keep the plant running full time.

“In Australia the development of automation is not so advanced but it is so far advanced as to require the unions to give it close attention, and the active co-operation of all metal trades unions to be ready for its expansion.

“Here, however, the metal trades unions are handicapped for the reason set out in the Report of the Apprenticeship Committee of Inquiry, namely, ‘that it is nobody’s business to know, to study, or to plan the trends of tradesmen supply either generally or by trades.’ This position should be reversed. Two facts should be remembered:

- (i.) The strength of the nation must be a strength based upon skill rather than mere numbers;
- (ii.) Investment by the nation in skilled manpower is as essential as investment in new plant and equipment.”

The second article reads—

“We are concerned with the incidence of automation; the manner in which it will affect industry and especially the manner in which it will affect the employees in the various plants as a result of its application.

“The conclusion reached by the unions relative to those facts is that it will be necessary to prepare ‘a carefully organised retraining programme to give those displaced the opportunity of acquiring the skills they will need . . . The programme will require not merely training facilities and expert vocational guidance; it will have to include provision for training allowances to replace lost wages during the training period.’

“But this draws attention to other positions that will arise even should the above proposals be given effect. It should be noted that,

1. Most workers will be mature men and women to whom the learning of new skills will not come easily. They may require a longer period of training during which they will have to live and support their families, and in their case some special allowance will have to be made.

2. Then there is the case of older workers not old enough for normal retirement, but too old to learn new skills or to adjust themselves to the demands of the new technology.

Automation may also affect employees in two other directions as follows:—

1. An employer whose only concern is his own profit, may decide that it is to his advantage to build a new plant in a new location, perhaps a long distance away, without any consideration for his employees or the effect of his removal on the community wherein his old plant was situated.

“On the other hand the trade unions in the U.S.A. believe that the potential benefits of automation are great if properly handled. They believe that ‘if only a fraction of what technologists say is true, within a few years automation can make possible:

- (i.) a four day week.
- (ii.) longer vocational periods.
- (iii.) a vast improvement in material standards of living.
- (iv.) freedom from the monotonous drudgery of many jobs in which the worker is no more than the servant of the machine, and it can free workers from routine, repetitious tasks which the machine to do.’

“However, it should be carefully noted that the potential benefits can only be experienced in the long run but the matter of most concern is the fact of the impact on employees in the short run. Workmen must live and support their families in the short run. From the cradle to the grave it is so.

“The end of technology is the service of mankind and industry exists for the ultimate benefit of human beings. It follows, therefore, that the human problems associated with automation are far more important than the merely technical ones.

“Now is the time for Australian trade unions to take preparatory action.”

I commend both those articles to hon. members who are interested. I assure them that they are worth assimilating.

I was very favourably impressed by a statement by Mr. Suggars, General Manager of the Queensland Chamber of Manufactures, which appeared in ‘The Telegraph’ of 9 August. I shall not quote it in full, not because I do not think it is worth quoting, but because I have very little time left.

Mr. Suggars had this to say—

“How would you like to have a world which is free from want? Such a state of affairs is available but it won’t just

happen. It can be achieved in the future if we are all sensible.

"This is, indeed the promise of automation—a word that over the past years has been greatly over-used, abused and mis-used."

He went on to say—

"Australians will have to stop thinking of themselves as employers and the employed.

"Employers must realise that to use automation for selfish purposes would create a self-destructive nightmare—where men walk idle and hungry and unwanted."

"And employees must realise that the establishment of this fuller life will call for readjustments in approach that will be rich in ultimate rewards."

**Mr. HERBERT (Sherwood) (3.36 p.m.) :** I join with hon. members in their declaration of loyalty to the Queen as contained in the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

As I begin my first speech in this House, I should like to express my regret that my predecessor, the late Mr. T. C. Kerr, is not present to give me moral support. His untimely death so soon after the election was a tragedy to his family and to the many friends he made during his long term as member for Sherwood.

Before commenting on the industrial problem facing Queensland, I point out that before my election I served for several years in the executive of my trade union, and the sentiments I shall express stem from a very real fear in the minds of many of the more far-seeing trade unionists today. That fear emanates from the attack being made on the arbitration system by the left-wing elements in the community. Those elements, led by Mr. Bukowski of the A.W.U., are conducting an insidious campaign aimed at discrediting the arbitration system in the eyes of both employees and employers as a prelude to presenting their own sugar-coated pill as an antidote for our industrial ills. I believe that this left-wing clique aims at the abolition of the Industrial Court and the introduction in its place of some type of wages board. Probably the Board would be constituted somewhat along the lines of one representative from the employers, another from the employees, and an independent, Government-appointed chairman. Just how independent the chairman would be may be left to the imagination. It would not surprise me even to see Mr. Bukowski nominated as an independent chairman to preside over the hearing of the shearing dispute.

I do not attack wages boards as such. In some States they form a valuable subsidiary to the Arbitration Court, but the danger lies in the attempt to substitute them for the Arbitration Court. We all know that the arbitration system has its weaknesses, many of them aggravated by the inactivity of the Government and their failure to apply corrective legislation. Such inactivity is betting

the campaign of the would-be arbitration assassins by providing them with the opportunity to point out the present weaknesses and claim them as reasons for jettisoning the whole arbitration system. People deluded into supporting such a line of attack on arbitration would be well advised to look into the future when considering an alternative system. Recently the workers of Poznan in Poland gave us direct evidence of the eventual fate of the employee when socialism gains complete control. When the government owns the business the rights of the workers become subordinate to the good of the State. If the governing clique demand cheaply produced goods at the expense of the workers, the workers have no avenue of appeal. Sheer despair produced the tragedy of Poznan and demonstrated to the free world the fallacy of the socialist workers' paradise. The system that produced Poznan is the system that Labour has joined under the Unity ticket.

As a first step in the campaign for the streamlining and modernisation of the arbitration system I suggest that a committee be appointed by the Government to convene a public meeting, or series of public meetings, to hear complaints and constructive criticism of the arbitration system from all interested persons. I suggest that at this meeting representation of paid union secretaries, advocates and paid employers' representatives be kept to a minimum. The best evidence would come from those directly affected by arbitration but who take no active part in its present operations, for example, men engaged in industry who give voluntarily of their spare time in union executive positions or men who manage or own their own small businesses or small-scale industries. A meeting of this nature would necessarily take some time, but a conscientious committee would collect from such a meeting invaluable material to assist the Government to frame legislation to remove anomalies from the present system.

Wise and effective amendment of our industrial legislation would effectively hamstring the attacks of the left wing union executives who, travelling under the Unity ticket, are determined to bring communism to the country by the back door.

The emergence of the Unity ticket between Labour and communist interests in this country is a matter of very real concern to every decent employee. When the pattern emerged overseas after the visits of socialist leaders to Russia, many people thought that wise counsel in Australia would prevail and prevent the Labour socialist here from embracing the Unity ticket, but recent events have proved that the Evatt brand of Labour is prepared to play along with the communists. Surely the example of east European countries has been enough for these deluded gentry to realise that playing along with communism has only one result. The cuckoo, communism finally kicks the socialist fledgling out of the nest and takes the lot for himself.

In Queensland, Comrade Bukowski is the present tool. It is not just coincidence that the shearing industry was selected as the target. The Unity ticket boys realise that the wool industry carries this country on its back, and disruption of the wool industry can ruin our overseas trade balances.

Although this programme of international communism has been abundantly clear, there are still enough stooges in Queensland to fall for this line. Within the ranks of the Labour Party there are many men who realise where the road leads, but they lack the courage to stand up and declare themselves because the Unity ticket men are ruthless masters and brook no opposition.

Vacillation and weakness by the Government in the face of direct attack on the arbitration system would be disastrous. The arbitration system is under attack because it is the most effective way of curing our industrial troubles. Once it is out of the way and a puppet system installed the Unity ticket group can proceed full steam ahead with their plan for socialising and communising the country. This House must ensure that the plot fails by a long overdue modernisation of our arbitration proceedings.

It is common practice in the Address in Reply for hon. members to make a Cook's tour around their electorates. I will start my travelogue of the Sherwood electorate with the train line which passes through the centre of the area. At Chelmer and Darra there have been protracted attempts to build new platforms as part of the quadruplication system. Now that the goat track at Taringa has been finished every train traveller from Wacol to Chelmer is afraid that he might receive the same sort of structure at his station. I would suggest to the Minister for Transport that before any more stations are built the plans be published so that Progress Associations and interested people might be able to make protests before expense has been incurred in construction work. Constructive criticism by people with local knowledge may not only save the Railway Department money, but also may circumvent considerable local criticism when the station has been erected. The Sherwood electorate does not want the high flights of stairs as have been provided at Taringa. If we cannot have subways at least give us ramps so that we can keep down the incidence of heart attacks in the Sherwood area.

From railways let us move on to the school position. Any visiting educationalist who wants to see how not to build a school should be taken for a trip round the Darra State school. In a feeble attempt to cope with the educational needs of this vigorous community the department constructed a temporary classroom and then under this temporary structure it created two extra temporary rooms by running a roll of impregnated wire gauze round the stumps. Push-out shutters were provided in place of win-

dows. All this winter two classes of small kiddies have had to stand on concrete floors with the wind whistling through holes in the gauze. Darra is simply an example of the poor school accommodation provided by the Government.

From Darra let us cross Ipswich road to Inala. This satellite town has received a good deal of unfair criticism recently because of acts of hooliganism committed by some of the youngsters. The Government must accept part of the blame for the state of affairs existing in Inala. They constructed row after row of houses, a few shops, and then seemed to think that their job was finished. Inadequate schools without proper playing areas were slapped up. Inala is simply a dormitory suburb. Not one playing area, not one recreational facility, has been provided in the whole area. No cricket or football pitches are available, consequently the children of Inala have only the streets to play on and are open to temptation. Fortunately, public-spirited citizens in the area are taking steps to organise the youngsters into healthy clubs. The people of Inala are mainly battlers who are struggling to raise families and establish homes. They cannot spare the money available in more established suburbs to construct their own recreational facilities. I urge the Government to build a recreational reserve before many more homes are occupied.

In conclusion, I say that from my remarks it is obvious that Sherwood needs a great deal of attention. It is worth noting that its greatest asset has been a long unbroken line of representation by distinguished Liberal statesmen, and in spite of my advancing years I feel sure that that representation will be continued for many years to come.

**Opposition Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. SKINNER** (Somerset) (3.47 p.m.): I congratulate His Excellency the Governor on the very full and informative speech which members of this Assembly and a large gathering of representative people and the public generally heard at the opening of the first session of the Thirty-fourth Parliament of Queensland. I also take this opportunity of offering my congratulations to the hon. member for Kurilpa and the hon. member for Cook on their contributions in moving and seconding the Address in Reply. I also take this opportunity of joining with them in reaffirming my loyalty to Her Majesty our Most Gracious Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II. I also express loyalty on behalf of the people of the Somerset electorate whom I have the privilege and pleasure of representing.

I feel sure that hon. members will join with me in expressing regret at the situation that has arisen in the Middle East, where there is the possibility of serious developments in regard to the control, supervision, and management of the Suez Canal. I am sure hon. members join with me in the hope

that wiser counsels will prevail and that an amicable solution will be found to the problems confronting the nations and that we will not witness the spectacle again of nations hurled against one another in bloody conflict.

First I wish to deal at some length with the opening remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, who said that the Government with the support of just over half of the electors—50.4 per cent.—won 49 seats and the Liberal-Country parties, with 46.26 per cent. of the votes, won only 24 seats. In his usual fashion he endeavoured to mislead the public of Queensland by misrepresenting facts and implying that this was due entirely to manipulation of State boundaries by the Labour Government, thus placing the Opposition parties at a distinct disadvantage. I shall analyse the results of the recent election and I hope to prove conclusively that the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition are entirely unfounded. One important fact that emerges is that the people of Queensland, particularly those in the rural, country areas, and centres of primary production, have realised the utter futility of voting for Country Party candidates.

They know that the big Liberal Party moguls dictate the policy of the Country Party in Queensland and demand that the interests of big business combines must be served first, even to the detriment of the primary-producing industries of this State.

Let us consider the detailed voting in the electoral zones, particularly those in which rural and primary production is carried on.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Take the zone containing the electorate of Somerset.

**Mr. SKINNER:** The hon. member should not say too much about the electorate of Somerset. The metropolitan area can be excluded, because, although it contains 24 seats, it is entirely within the boundaries of the Greater Brisbane area and is in the main an industrial area. Very little primary production is carried on in this zone. In the metropolitan zone, to give the complete figures, the Labour Party won 17 seats, and the Liberal Party seven seats, but the Country Party did not win a seat. Now take the south-eastern zone. The Labour Party polled 110,417 votes, the Liberal Party 26,056, the Country Party 91,209, the Communist Party 193 and other candidates 66 votes. The Labour Party polled 48.44 per cent. of the votes and won 14 seats, the Liberal Party 11.43 per cent. of the votes and won one seat, while the Country Party polled 40.01 per cent. and won 13 seats. The valid votes cast totalled 227,941. The number of people on the roll was 244,567. No-one could deny that the south-eastern electoral zone of Queensland, which extends from Brisbane to Rockhampton, out as far as Condamine and Roma and into the area below Toowoomba, is a primary-producing portion of the State. In 1953 the Labour

Party won the Roma, Condamine and Somerset seats, three electorates that were recognised by the Country Party as blue-ribbon electorates. We will leave it at that for the time being.

**Mr. Walsh:** They won seats in 1950 on the so-called rigged boundaries.

**Mr. SKINNER:** I shall bring that in too. We move on to the northern zone where Labour polled 52,622 votes, gaining 50.09 per cent. of the votes cast and won 9 seats. The Liberal Party polled 11,604 votes, gained 11.22 per cent. of the votes cast and won no seats. The Country Party polled 24,303 votes, gained 23.50 per cent. of the votes cast and won 2 seats, and our Independent friends, the hon. members for Burdekin and Mundingburra polled 14,333 votes along with some other Independents who did not gain a seat, gaining 13.86 per cent. of the votes cast, and won 2 seats.

**Mr. Sparkes:** What do you call Mackenzie?

**Mr. SKINNER:** What did the Opposition win it by?

I come now to the western zone and I do not think that anyone will cavil at my statement when I say that it is a primary-producing zone. Labour polled 27,393 votes, gaining 60 per cent. of the votes cast and won 9 seats; the Liberal Party polled 1,329 votes, gained 2.91 per cent. of the votes cast and did not win a seat; and the Country Party polled 16,537 votes, gaining 37.09 per cent. of the votes cast and won 1 seat. Those figures are factual and nobody can question them, and they give a clear indication of the votes for Labour and the other political parties. It is very significant that the Labour candidates won a clear majority of the votes and seats in each of the zones I have detailed. The total number of seats won by Labour and the other parties in the northern, south-eastern and western zones was 32, the Liberal Party won one and the Country Party 16, no seat being won by the Independent. Let me now take the voting results for the whole of the State, bringing in the metropolitan zone, and we find that Labour won 49 seats, the Country Party 16, the Liberal Party 8, and the Independents 2. Those figures completely debunk the erroneous impression the Leader of the Opposition was endeavouring to create in the minds of the people.

Elections in Queensland are fought on distinct party lines; each party selects its own endorsed candidate. I think the Leader of the Liberal Party will not dispute that fact because he demanded the right to deliver his portion of the Policy Speech on behalf of the Opposition. In view of all that, we have the spectacle of the Leader of the Opposition in this House hiding the identity of the Country Party by merging it with the Liberal Party to prove his argument that the Labour Party won a certain number of seats with 50.04 per cent. of votes and the Liberal-Country Party could win only 24 seats with

46.2 per cent. of the votes cast. He submerged the identity of his party to prove his argument. That, of course, bears out my previous statement that the people have realised for some time that the Country Party are becoming a nonentity so far as politics and the interests of primary producers of the State are concerned.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**Mr. SKINNER:** When we are quoting figures, we must be factual. I am making no mistakes with my figures. They bear out my statement that the Country Party has submerged its identity under pressure from the representatives of the big business interests, the Liberals. That is further emphasised by the fact that although in 1950, following the re-distribution of boundaries, many seats were won by the Country Party, they are now held by Labour.

It was wrong for the hon. member for Barambah to cast a slur on a member of the judiciary by claiming that electoral boundaries were rigged. The Government do not determine the boundaries; they are determined by an electoral commission, the chairman of which is a Supreme Court judge. After what we have heard here during the last few days, any member of the Opposition who criticises the electoral commission, of which a Supreme Court judge was chairman, stands condemned forever.

**Opposition Members:** Who determined the zones?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I hope hon. members will allow the hon. member for Somerset to continue his speech without further interruption.

**Mr. SKINNER:** Criticism of the judiciary was started by the hon. member for Barambah during the last session of the previous parliament. He said quite openly that I held my position in this House only because the boundaries of the Somerset electorate had been rigged to make it safe for Labour. I pointed out then that the Country Party had won the seat in 1950, following the re-distribution of the boundaries. However, the Country Party did not win it in 1953, nor did they win it in 1956.

After the re-distribution in 1950, many electorates in both the south-eastern and the northern zones were considered by the Country Party to be blue-ribbon Tory seats. Yet they are now held by Labour. In 1953 Labour won Roma, Condamine, Nash, Mulgrave, Cook, and Somerset from the Country Party. Surely that must signify to the leaders of the Country Party that the people are awake to the fact that the Country Party has submerged its identity under the domination of the Liberal Party! People in the rural areas have far more confidence in Labour representation than in Country Party representation. The recent

electoral campaign was the most intensive and the costliest campaign ever waged by the Liberal and Country Parties in an effort to overthrow the Government of this State. Money was no object. The procession into the Somerset electorate was like a parade of the stars. The first star advertised was the hon. member for Southport, the greatest debater in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. Next was the hon. member for Murrumba, paraded as one of the greatest debaters. He had signs up in his own electorate, "Wanted." He was wanted all right—wanted back down here, not up there. He did not do any good up there. I think altogether seven State members representing Liberal and Country Party interests and two Federal members moved into the Somerset electorate to try to regain it for the Country Party. The hon. member for Lockyer did not join the parade but the hon. member for Fassifern did, and I will have something to say about him soon.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I passed you on the road and you had the wind up.

**Mr. SKINNER:** I had the wind up so much that when I went to the polling booth Opposition supporters would not even cover ten shillings for me. That is how confident I was.

I am sorry for the people in rural areas that the Leader of the Opposition should admit in the House that he no longer represents an independent political party but that he has submerged himself. It must add to the concern and dissatisfaction felt by the primary producers and others in rural areas when they know that they can no longer select a candidate with any degree of interest and feel that he will win sufficient confidence and support to contest a seat as an independent party candidate. The Leader of the Opposition still attempts to confuse the real issue by deliberately joining the polling results of the Liberal Party with those of the Country Party to give a combined total for the State. It is recognised by every hon. member that the Country Party do not nominate a candidate in the metropolitan zone, yet the hon. gentleman wants to add the votes cast for Liberal candidates in the metropolitan zone to those paltry few votes cast for Country Party candidates in the northern, south-eastern and western zones to prove a political argument.

**Mr. Power:** They even took the Commos. in.

**Mr. SKINNER:** Yes, they took the Commos. in as well. I am wondering what excuses the hon. member for Fassifern, the hon. member for Darlington and other Country Party members will offer primary producers, particularly the dairy farmers, now that we have a very clear indication of the final payment for 1955-1956 to the dairy farmer for commercial butter fat delivered by him to the factory door. Hon. members will remember

well the slogan of the hon. member for Fassifern in the last session of the 33rd Parliament—“Don't panic, boys. Everything will be all right if—” It is quite apparent to those hundreds of people engaged in the dairying industry in Queensland that all the ifs, all the suppositions, of the hon. Mr. McEwen, the hon. member for Fassifern and others who claim to represent the dairy farmer's interests did not eventuate. Unfortunately for the dairy farmer he will not get what he is entitled to; he will not get more than 3s. 9d. a lb. for butter fat for 1955-1956. I stand on that figure. Hon. members opposite can challenge it if they want to. It can be worked out. The final ex-factory price that is being paid by the Butter Board is 45s. 1d. a cwt. That works out to about 4s. 1½d. a lb. If you deduct from that 4.6d. a lb., which is the recognised cost-of-production figure and the allowed figure for the butter factories, you arrive at a figure of 3s. 9d. It is 3s. 8d. point something odd that is the price the factories will pay to the dairyfarmer at the end of the year. They should be receiving that money at least before the end of September. The only thing that can alter the price is the fact that there remains unsold a quantity of butter on the United Kingdom market, approximately 30,000 tons. Taking that at present-day values, which I hope will be sustained, it would not make any more than ½d. a lb. difference in the price per lb. to the dairyfarmers of Australia. At the very most all the dairyfarmer can expect to receive by way of payment for the butter fat he produced during the year ended 30 June, 1956, is 3s. 9d. a lb. Yet we know what has been said by the hon. members for Fassifern and Darlington, Sir Arthur Fadden and the Hon. Mr. McEwen in the Federal Parliament. They told the dairyfarmers that everything would be all right. They told them to produce a lot more butter and they would have the same return at the end of the year. Is it fair and equitable to demand increased production from the dairyfarmer, to increase the price of butter to the consumer public of this State and every other State, and then for the Commonwealth to give the dairyfarmer a lower price than he received in 1954-1955? He will get approximately 1½d. a lb. less in 1955-1956 than he got in 1954-1955.

The cost of production for butter is determined by the Dairy Industry Investigation Committee which submits its report to the Federal Government. I would say that the Dairy Industry Investigation Committee is the arbitration court of the dairyfarmer. We have heard a lot today about the Industrial Court and what it should do. We have heard hon. members opposite say that people should accept the determined wage of the Industrial Court. Why do they not get up in this House and demand of their Federal cohorts that they do justice by the dairyfarmer and ensure that he receives the price that was determined by his own arbitration court, the Dairy Industry Investigation Committee? If hon. members opposite were to do that they would

probably get a little more support in the rural areas. Farmers who answered the call for increased production know that they are still not getting anywhere near a fair cost of production for the extra butter fat they deliver to the factory door. I am pleased to see that the hon. member for Darlington is now in the Chamber. I am sorry that he was not here when I was speaking earlier.

**Mr. Plunkett:** What is the cost of production? Do you know what it is?

**Mr. SKINNER:** Yes. The hon. member knows as well as I do. I do not need any notes. In 1955-1956 the Dairy Industry Investigation Committee found that the cost of production was 50d. a lb. The dairy farmers' organisation found the cost of production was approximately 52d. The hon. member has all that information. The hon. member for Fassifern said that people seeking employment in industry should be prepared to accept the wage determined by the Industrial Court for industry. I do not wish to repeat what I said about the Dairy Industry Investigation Committee being the industrial court for the dairy farmer. If the hon. member for Fassifern was sincere and did not make his remarks for political propaganda he should admit to the dairy farmers that the Federal Government had fallen down on the promises made to them.

**Mr. Plunkett:** That is not true.

**Mr. SKINNER:** It is true. Can the hon. member for Darlington explain why dairy farmers will receive a maximum of 3s. 9d. a lb. for 1955-1956? They will not receive one penny more.

**Mr. Plunkett:** You do not know what you are talking about.

**Mr. SKINNER:** I do. The hon. member should have listened to the figures that were quoted in this House from the Equalisation Committee and the Butter Marketing Board.

**Mr. Plunkett:** The equalisation is not finalised yet.

**Mr. SKINNER:** The only thing holding it up is the 30,000 lb. not sold on the United Kingdom market. That will not make any more than a farthing a lb. difference spread over Australia. The hon. member for Darlington should not attempt to mislead the House by silly interjections. I repeat the claim that I made on previous occasions—this section of the community which has to go out in all sorts of weather and endure droughts and floods, has the same right as any other section to demand a just payment for its product.

**Mr. Plunkett:** What about land tax?

**Mr. SKINNER:** The hon. member cannot dispose of one point by raising another. That does not excuse the Commonwealth Government or their attitude to the dairy farmers. If the hon. member does not think that the dairy farmer is concerned about

this, I shall read an extract from a letter I received from a dairy farmer in my own electorate.

**Mr. Sparkes:** They are a bit worried about margarine in your electorate.

**Mr. SKINNER:** I shall say something about that. The following is an extract from the letter I received:—

“We cannot get any satisfaction regarding price of butter, 55/56, so I decided to approach you and ask you if you could furnish any definite information for us. It appears the Federal Government is just making a tool of the farmers, and we just cannot carry on on promises on rising costs. You only just have to ask the business people to find out the plight of the farmers. One member said of the subsidy that the Federal Government made available to the dairying industry only a small portion was used . . . .

“Is there any move that we could take to bring the price fixing of butter to the farmer under State control?”

**Mr. Sparkes:** How is it that Dr. Cameron got a record majority in the hon. member's electorate?

**Mr. SKINNER:** I am not talking about Dr. Cameron. There is one answer to the problem of prices and I have already conveyed that information to the people who are interested. The Federal Government agreed to grant the bounty, conditional on the States' fixing the ex-factory price at a level comparable with that determined by the Federal Minister. Unfortunately the people who should have given this information to the dairy farmers have not given it to them. Marketing is controlled by the Dairy Produce Marketing Board. That board handles all export sales. I know and the hon. member for Darlington knows that the board known as the Dairy Produce Equalisation Committee, which has on it representatives of the State dairy produce boards, is responsible for the equalisation of the price of butter, irrespective of the place of sale of the butter, whether Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland or overseas. Why do not Opposition members make this clear to dairy farmers in their electorates? The only State control over the price of butter is control of the retail price.

I was rather amazed to read in the Press a statement attributed to the gentleman referred to by the hon. member for Aubigny.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I asked the hon. member for Somerset to contest my seat. I shall resign it if he agrees to do so.

**Mr. SKINNER:** The hon. member for Aubigny did not accept my challenge last election to contest the Somerset election.

**Mr. Aikens:** Why do not both of you come to Mundingburra and take me on? You will have a real contest on your hands.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. SKINNER:** We must all realise that economic disturbances in primary industries affect the economy of the State and the Commonwealth. It cannot be denied that dairy farmers are one section of the primary producers who are definitely suffering undue hardship by not getting a fair return for their product. It would not be a surprise to me to learn that more and more dairy farmers abandon butter production. Spiralling costs that they have had to meet have not been taken into consideration. There has been no attempt by the Federal Government to curb this inflationary trend. The Federal Government refuse absolutely to introduce any form of price control in the Commonwealth.

**Mr. Aikens:** Does the hon. member advocate a further rise in the price of butter.

**Mr. SKINNER:** No, but what concerns me is that, although the price of butter to the consumers has been increased, the dairy farmer has not received a greater return. The price to the consumer is now up to 4s 8d. a lb. in some parts of the State, is it not?

**Mr. Aikens:** I do not know. We cannot afford to buy it.

**Mr. SKINNER:** The Brisbane retail price is 4s. 6½d. a lb. The price to the consumer is increasing all the time, but the return to the dairy farmer has not been increased.

The hon. member for Fassifern formerly advocated greater production, smaller profits and bigger returns, but apparently he has changed his opinion. I must pay him a tribute. Only a couple of months ago he wrote an article in “The Queensland Times” in which he said he was willing to admit that all his previous statements to the effect that everything in the garden was rosy were incorrect, and that dairy farmers would finish the year worse off than in 1954-1955. I was pleased to hear that from the hon. member for Fassifern but he is not all consistent. He is one of the greatest distorters of facts and figures that I have ever met, and to illustrate that I give an instance. He came into the Somerset electorate and addressed the people at a little place called Mt. Beppo in an endeavour to belittle the Labour Government on the question of finance, and particularly their allocations to main roads. He told the people that the shire council had built four miles of road from Moore to Linville at a cost of £15,000 whereas the Department of Main Roads had only built four miles of main road from Yimbun to Harlin at a cost in the vicinity of £70,000. He made that misrepresentation and gave it as an illustration of waste of public money by the Government. What he did not tell the people was that the first four miles of road were straight, with no bridges and no resumptions of land whereas the other four had two elevated rail crossings, seven

concrete viaducts and bridges with resumptions of land and miles of fencing to be constructed. It is all very well to go before the public and make unfactual statements; he did not know the true position.

(Time expired.)

Debate, on motion of Mr. Kehoe, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.28 p.m.