

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 1956

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TUESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

EXCURSION FARES, WOMEN AND CHILDREN,
CENTRAL AND NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. FORDE (Flinders) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. What are the ordinary excursion fares, and women’s and children’s excursion fares, from Julia Creek, Richmond, and Hughenden, to Townsville?”

“2. When was this concession first given to women and children in the West, and by what Minister, and who was the Premier at the time?”

“3. What number of women and children have taken advantage of the concession up to 30 June, 1956?”

“4. What was the value of the fares?”

“5. What is the amount of reduction on ordinary fares?”

“6. Would he please supply similar information showing the value of the concession for Central Western women and children, living at Emerald and further west, and in the South West, living at Dalby, and further west?”

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

“1. To Townsville From.	Ordinary Excursion Fares.		Women and Children’s Excursion Fares.	
	1st.	2nd.	1st.	2nd.
Julia Creek	£ s. d. 8 15 3	£ s. d. 5 9 3	£ s. d. 5 10 9	£ s. d. 3 8 0
Richmond	7 0 3	4 8 6	4 8 6	2 15 3
Hughenden	5 13 0	3 11 9	3 10 0	2 5 0”

"2. 29 March, 1923. The Honourable J. Larcombe. Honourable E. G. Theodore.

"3. 272,319 women, 85,951 children.

"4. Value of fares, £413,038.

"5. Reduction in ordinary fares, £737,256.

"6. The information is not available for the areas requested but the following are for the whole of the respective divisions for the period 1 July, 1949, to 30 June, 1956:—

Division.	Women.	Children.	Value of Fares.	Reduction on Ordinary Fares.
South Western	37,901	13,877	83,769	129,594
Central	9,466	4,404	21,063	31,203
Northern	5,622	2,901	20,450	32,091 "

MINERAL SAND LEASES, MORETON BAY TO DOUBLE ISLAND POINT.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. What is the number of applications lodged for mineral sand leases on beaches from the northern end of Moreton Bay to Double Island Point?

"2. What is the total area of (a) Crown land, and (b) private land comprised in such applications?

"3. What is the number of such areas actually being worked at the present time?"

Hon. L. F. DIPLOCK (Condamine—Secretary for Public Instruction), for **Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory) replied—

"1. 62.

"2. (a) 3,116 acres, (b) 366 acres.

"3. As yet, only one treatment plant is operating within this area, and actual production takes place only from leases supplying material to that plant, but intensive prospecting work and evaluation of deposits, an essential prerequisite to erection of treatment plants, is proceeding on many of the leases."

RAIL MOTOR SERVICE, ROCKHAMPTON TO WESTWOOD.

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

"1. With reference to the rail motor service from Rockhampton to Westwood, is he aware (a) That this service is patronised mainly by workers and school children employed or attending school at Rockhampton; (b) That the rail motor is an obsolete type subject to frequent mechanical breakdowns, resulting in frequent late arrivals at Rockhampton in the mornings and at Westwood in the evenings? (c) That delays of up to three hours have been known for this 30-mile journey, some recent examples being the late arrivals in Westwood on Wednesday, 22 August last, and in Rockhampton on Friday, 24 August last; and (d) That, apart from the inconvenience caused to passengers at

places of employment, schools, and homes, the extended time to travel this short journey causes inconvenience and discomfort to passengers as no lavatory facilities are provided on the rail motor?

"2. In view of the above, will he give favourable consideration to providing a more modern and reliable service on this line?"

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

"It would appear the principal cause for complaint regarding this service, which is used predominantly by school children, is that when a motor of the 102-h.p. class is not available, it is operated by a 45-h.p. class motor. It is anticipated that it will be possible in a week or two to regularly place a 102-h.p. motor on this service, provided there are no unexpected withdrawals of other motors for workshops repair."

RETAIL PRICE OF MEAT, ROCKHAMPTON AND TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Attorney-General—

"On what basis is the retail price of meat fixed for sale at Rockhampton and Townsville, and what is the reason for the difference in prices?"

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) replied—

"For the information of the hon. member, I would advise him, that in accordance with the provisions of the Profiteering Prevention Acts, 1948 to 1954, the Commissioner of Prices fixes the prices of declared goods in his absolute discretion. Following representations by the hon. member for Townsville (Mr. G. Keyatta, M.L.A.) and the hon. member for Hinchinbrook (Mr. C. G. Jesson, M.L.A.) I did ask the Commissioner of Prices to investigate the prices of beef at Townsville. I am now informed by the Commissioner of Prices that, whilst in the individual cuts of beef there are slight variations in both wholesale and retail prices as between Townsville and Rockhampton, the weighted averages to all intents and purposes are identical."

BELLS FOR ST. ANNE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SCHOOL, TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. JESSON (Hinchinbrook), for **Mr. KEYATTA** (Townsville), without notice, asked the Premier—

“With reference to the press report regarding the donation of two bells of historic interest to St. Anne's Church of England, Townsville, by the Nottingham Mechanics Institution, can the Premier advise the present position and also the steps taken by the Government to secure the transportation of these bells to Queensland?”

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

“These bells, which are some eighty years old, have been donated by the Nottingham Mechanics Institute to St. Anne's Church of England School, Townsville, as the Institute considered it would be most fitting for them to be donated to an educational institution in some distant part of the British Commonwealth.

“The bells will be installed in a clock being made by Dr. P. O. Flecker of Mareeba for use at the new St. Anne's School.

“The Agent-General, on behalf of the Queensland Government, was able to have the bells shipped to Brisbane freight free through the good offices of the Blue Star Line, and at my request Messrs. John Burke Ltd. have agreed to carry them freight free from Brisbane to Townsville.

“The bells have arrived in Brisbane, but on Friday last I was informed that the customs authorities would not release them until customs duty of £86 was paid thereon.

“When advised of this, I immediately made strong representations to the Acting Prime Minister for this duty to be waived in view of the special circumstances, and I have now been informed that in view of the interest of my Government in this matter, the Commonwealth Government will admit these bells free of duty.”

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Police Investment Board for the year 1955-1956.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulation under the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Acts, 1922 to 1953.

Regulation under the Trust Accounts Acts, 1923 to 1952.

Regulations and Order in Council under the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929 to 1954.

Regulations under—

The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1955.

The Stock Acts, 1915 to 1954.

The Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1930.

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ADDRESS IN REPLY.

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR DEBATE.

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

“That under the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, the period allotted to debate on the Address in Reply be extended to nine full sitting days.”

Motion agreed to.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—SEVENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 30 August (see p. 351) on Mr. Moores's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (11.13 a.m.): It is with pleasure that I support the motion so capably moved by the hon. member for Kurilpa and seconded by the hon. member for Cook. I also associate myself with the expressions of loyalty and devotion to the Throne. I congratulate the hon. members for Rockhampton and Cairns in particular on the informative nature of their speeches in this debate. They have displayed a background of experience in their respective electorates and were able to give hon. members a synopsis of the many industries there. They showed by their speeches that representatives of the Labour Party in this Assembly are capable of undertaking the responsibility of representing the people of this State. Regardless of the criticism levelled against us by the anti-Labour forces in Queensland and in particular by hon. members opposite, we as a Party have proved to the people that we can efficiently represent in this Parliament every section of the community, every industry, profession and trade.

In contrast with the attitude of the hon. member for Sherwood, who said he was bored by speeches made in this Parliament, the hon. members for Cairns and Rockhampton showed that they have a knowledge of industry that will be of great value in the future deliberations of this Parliament.

I am grateful to the electors of Kedron for once again returning me to Parliament with an increased majority. The result of the election campaign showed that without doubt the Labour Party still retains the confidence of the people. Those who criticise the Government, whether it be on their developmental work or on such things as hospitalisation, housing and education, were given their answer in the splendid majority that the Labour Party got. We have shown the people of Queensland that we have the capacity to think beyond small issues and so we have been able to go before the people and tell them of the wonderful work that has been done. Such works as the conservation of water and soil, which are essentially of a national character and will be of immense value to future generations of Australians, have been embarked upon by this Government.

I refer to such projects as the Tully Falls Hydro-electric Scheme, the Burdekin River Dam and the Burdekin River Bridge. We have been able to tell the people that we have been able to embark on such projects from our own resources.

It is tragic that the present fiscal policy of the Federal Government is depriving the several State Governments of their powers of local self-government. Although State Governments are interested in providing essential services that will result in closer settlement, they are faced with financial restrictions that eventually will force them to surrender some of their powers of self-government. They are dependent for finance upon a Government who, although they control the finances of the country, cannot carry out essential developmental projects in the same way as the States.

We must face up to the full responsibility of self-government. We are responsible to the people of this State, who elect us to carry out certain public works. On many occasions we have told the people that we are willing and anxious to carry out public works of immense benefit to them and their children, but we cannot do it without finance.

Reports by the banking companies to their shareholders make very interesting reading. One from the Bank of New South Wales the other day said that not only was it necessary for the Commonwealth Government to cut migration (which is, of course, an essential feature of Australia's development) but also that at the present stage of inflation developmental works should be reduced. As a young nation with a population of only 8,000,000 after 150 years of settlement, we are warned by the private banks that our developmental policies add to inflation, but those same banks are utilising the people's savings for non-essential private investment.

In the Budget introduced by Sir Arthur Fadden last financial year he said he regarded the great increase in private investment in Australia as a very serious menace to our economic stability and he indicted the private trading banks for diverting funds from essential services and developmental works into hire purchase and no-deposit time-payment schemes thus absorbing the financial resources of the country for their own purposes—for a quick turnover, high profit and high dividends on what I call idle capital.

Even though the capital is in the final analysis being used for the expansion of secondary industries, in many cases they are not of great value to the country. Take, for instance, General Motors-Holden's Ltd. That company has made tremendous profits from the purchasing power of the Australian public but the chairman of directors of General Motors in America said it was not possible to let the public of Australia participate in those profits. In other words, there is only one type of share available to the Australian public, and, because it is necessary for the company to retain funds for the development

of the industry, it is impossible to make ordinary shares available to the people of Australia. That statement was published in "The Courier-Mail" as a paid advertisement and it should indicate how much money is being drained away from Australia into the pockets of American shareholders. I believe it represents a large proportion of the profits made by General Motors-Holden's from the production of what is supposed to be an all-Australian car and what is said to be of great value to our economy.

The same thing applies to refrigerators. In South Australia General Motors-Holden's produce the Frigidaire and Kelvinator. They are also making other refrigerators almost identical with the Frigidaire and Kelvinator. Again we find that the profits from their production leave the country.

There has been a mushroom growth of finance companies since the repeal of Capital Issues Regulations. The late John Curtin issued a warning in 1942 as to what would happen if some control were not placed on the competition on the loan market of Australia between private enterprise and Government and semi-governmental loans. At the present time the private trading banks are investing in private finance corporations. The majority of them are 40 per cent. owned and controlled by the trading banks of Australia. There are other finance corporations which are not backed by the trading banks and which are not secured on the exchange. The Alliance Acceptance Corporation advertised in the newspapers recently that it was not secured by any trading bank and a small coupon was provided at the bottom of the advertisement to be completed by anybody who wished to invest in short-term loans at 7 per cent. As a result of these mushroom growths governmental and semi-governmental loans are suffering and we are unable to get the necessary finance to develop Australia.

Mr. Dewar: Why do not the Government control the interest these people can offer?

Mr. LLOYD: Which Government?

Mr. Dewar: The State Government.

Mr. LLOYD: We have no power. The hon. member for Chermshire should know that under Section 92 of the Constitution we have no power to control the rate of interest. He is showing his crass ignorance. The Loan Council purely and simply controls through its authority the bond rate in Australia, but it has no control at all over the rate of interest offered by private finance corporations, private trading banks or any company in Australia, whether it be Castlemaine Brewery or any of the large monopolistic companies who wish to issue additional shares. The State Government have never had any control and as long as our constitution is framed as it is now we will have no control over the rate of interest offered to the lending public.

A tragic position has been created. Every year disastrous floods occur throughout Australia. We have seen them in north Queensland, in the northern areas of New South Wales and as far down as Maitland; Victoria and South Australia have suffered recently. However, very little flood prevention work has been undertaken because although State Governments have full control of the development of their own States they have not the necessary finance to undertake large schemes of national importance. We have large river reaches in the North such as the Burdekin and the Fitzroy, and in other places throughout the State and on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, and although there has been an agitation over a long period—50 to 75 years—for the damming of the headwaters of these rivers nothing has been done owing to the lack of a national policy of flood-prevention works. It is a damming indictment of the National Government, particularly the present one. During the past few years there have been numerous floodings and much good land has been eroded.

Mr. Morris: It is a problem that could be solved by co-operative effort by all the Governments.

Mr. LLOYD: I think the hon. member is endeavouring to be helpful. Under the Constitution that is the only way in which it could be done, unless the States grant the Commonwealth Government the necessary powers. The Commonwealth Government, having control of the financial resources of the country, should set aside an amount annually from revenue for the purpose of financing the State Governments for a specific purpose. We have had instances of agreements in the past whereby the Commonwealth have made available finance to the State Governments for a specific purpose. The Commonwealth laid down conditions regarding the spending of that money. I think flood prevention is something that must be handled on that basis. The State has a limited income and it is impossible to embark on a scheme to cost from £10,000,000 to £20,000,000, which would take us 20 years to complete if we attempted to do it alone. These schemes should be planned and carried out on a national basis. A period, such as five years, could be laid down within which the work is to be carried out. The money should be made available by the Commonwealth Government to the States for that specific purpose. It is absurd to hear so much talk that developmental works create an inflationary spiral. If it is necessary for us to cut down on expenditure in any direction I should say we should cut down on private investments, not on governmental investments of this sort.

It may be necessary to restrict investments in certain avenues or industries. The development of this country cannot be sacrificed in the interests of those who control the financial resources of Australia,

people who could be classed as usurers because of their speculation on the money market. I refer to those financial corporations that are able to offer very high returns to the public for short-term loans.

It was stated recently that in order to secure money for developmental purposes the Loan Council would have to fix higher returns for Governmental and semi-governmental loans. I do not agree with that policy. If that were done, the financial corporations in turn would increase the rate of interest on their debentures and so the inflationary spiral would be accelerated. There would then be competition in respect of interest rates on the internal loan market of Australia. The main reason for the referendum in 1928 when the people gave approval to the present financial relationship between the Federal authorities and the States was the fact that State Governments and local authorities were competing for money on the overseas loan market. We must avoid at all costs competition in interest rates in respect of governmental and semi-governmental loans and loans by banking institutions through finance corporations.

Take the housing agreement which is now being implemented by the Commonwealth Government. Under our system of Federation, the States of Australia are self-governing, but there has been a break away from that policy by the Commonwealth Government in respect of the new housing agreement. I have spoken on this subject previously when I mentioned the attempt by the Commonwealth Government to dictate policy to the elected Governments of the States of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government refused to lend any money to this State for war service land settlement because the State Government refused to relinquish Crown ownership of the land. In that way the Commonwealth Government attempted to control the policy of this Government.

There is little doubt that the Queensland Government will have to agree to the proposed new housing agreement. They may be forced to agree to the new conditions. The Commonwealth Government are adopting that attitude regardless of the wishes of the electors of Australia and the declared housing policy of the Queensland Labour Government and other State Governments. Unless the Queensland Government agree to allocate to co-operative building societies whether permanent or temporary for two years 20 per cent. of the money granted by the Commonwealth Government for housing, Queensland will not receive the benefits of that loan money.

We could perhaps secure the necessary finance to embark on our housing policy without signing the agreement. South Australia did it for several years, but on the other hand, we would not be able to get the concession of 1 per cent. interest below the bond rate of interest. If we did not sign the agreement it would be necessary for us to pay the

bond rate of 5 per cent. on the money that we borrow to build houses for the working people in Queensland. On signing the agreement we could secure the necessary finance at 4 per cent. It was said in the Federal House, that it would cost the Government of New South Wales an additional £20,000,000 over a period of 53 years if that Government did not sign the agreement. That statement indicates clearly that the gun is being held at the head of every State Government in Australia by the Federal Government. It is true that when South Australia refused to sign the agreement that State was allowed money at a discount rate. At present not only are the Commonwealth Government refusing to grant us our usual amount of money for housing but are holding the gun at the head of every State Government by telling them that if they do not sign the agreement they will have to pay the full bond interest rate on money borrowed for housing purposes. That is an indication of how the political philosophy of the central Government can overnight destroy the self-governing rights of the Parliaments of the States. The State Governments have been elected by their people to carry out their policies. This Government are responsible to the people of Queensland and if the grandiose scheme of the Commonwealth Government fails it is the Queensland Government who will be responsible to the people. We have had a political policy dictated to us by a party in government in the Federal sphere which is foreign to our ideals and principles. But the new agreement in regard to housing goes even further than threaten the States with additional costs. Under the old agreement of 1945 it was possible for State Governments to get finance to build rental homes at 3 per cent. That rate continued until the expiration of the 1945 agreement but on this occasion the Commonwealth Government have increased the rate of interest from 3 per cent. to 4 per cent. The additional 1 per cent. does not sound a great deal but it is a big sum when we consider that Queensland has been able to build 9,076 rental houses since 1945-1946. We are now faced with the problem of an additional rate of interest. On a £3,000 home which is the cost of the normal 3-bedroom house today, it will be necessary to charge an additional rental of 10s. a week because of the increase in interest rates. The previous agreement made it possible for this Government to fix a rental of approximately £3 12s. 6d. per week on a home costing £3,000. Under the proposed agreement, however, it will be necessary for us to increase the rental to £4 2s. 6d. a week.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government are departing from the principle of rental rebates. Unless the State Governments are willing to carry the cost of granting rental rebates to tenants, it will be necessary for them to charge a worker with an income of approximately £15 a week a rental of £4 2s. 6d. a week. Under the previous agreement the rental could not exceed one-fifth of the total family income. For example, if

the family income was £15 a week, the rental could not exceed £3 a week. Under the proposed agreement, as I have said, we will have to charge a rental of £4 2s. 6d. a week. Of course, in all humanity this Government could not enforce that provision.

Another aspect of the proposed agreement is the diversion of funds from State housing authorities to private building societies. We are very proud that there is a greater percentage of home ownership in Queensland than in any other State. The present figure is approximately 74 per cent. That indicates the wonderful work that has been carried out here not only by the Queensland Housing Commission but by all other authorities, including private enterprise.

Any departure from the present scheme would be a retrograde step. During the second-reading debate on the Commonwealth-States Housing Bill, Senator Spooner showed a complete ignorance of the true position in Queensland. For example, he said it was not necessary to continue the rental rebate scheme as there were many cheap rental homes that the States could make available to pensioners and workers on small incomes. He said that at present many of those homes were occupied by people earning more than £25 a week. That could not be said of this State, because the majority of our tenants are workers whose incomes would not average more than £15 or £17 a week.

Senator Spooner said also that the diversion of funds to private building societies would enable more homes to be built than formerly.

Here is a point that Senator Spooner did not consider—indeed I do not think any member of the Liberal and Country Parties in the Commonwealth Government considered it during the debate. A few more homes might be built but the people able to purchase them may not be those we as a Government should consider worth helping.

Take the young married couple of today. Without initial capital they cannot build their own home. One young man stated a case in the "Letters to the Editor" section of "The Courier-Mail" on Friday, 3 August last. It might be slightly exaggerated but it is worth reading. He has been engaged for three years but still cannot wed. He is purchasing his own block of land on time payment which, with interest, is costing him £450. I quite believe it. He earns £11 a week. I should think that would be after paying income tax. He is 24 years of age and can see no hope in the future. He ends his letter this way—

"Is this the civilisation my father died in the swamps of New Guinea for? Please, someone guide me before I turn Communist or heathen.

(Sgd.) T. Graham, Annerley."

In response many helpful suggestions have been made, some by people who apparently do not realise the position of many young married couples. I have them calling on me every

day, as no doubt other hon. members have. Capital of £300 is absolutely useless to them. They are not entitled to join the War Service scheme because they were too young to go to the war. If they get enough capital for a deposit they have to borrow anything up to £2,700 and pay 5 per cent. interest. Then they have to meet repayments and other charges of from £4 to £6 a week before facing up to their other living expenses.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HEADING (Marodian) (11.54 a.m.): I should like to compliment the Governor on his excellent work as the representative of Her Majesty in Queensland. He has gained much knowledge of the State in travelling many miles each year to acquaint himself with country areas.

I also congratulate the hon. member for Mackenzie and the hon. member for Sherwood two young men who have entered this House. I regret that nearly every speaker on the Government side attacked the hon. member for Sherwood, evidently on something that he said—or omitted to say. It is time that we had young men in the House with years ahead of them in which to do something worthwhile for the State. I congratulate them on their entry to the House and on their speeches. They are young and they need experience, and they will certainly get it if they stay here many years, as I sincerely hope they will.

The hon. member for Kedron made reference to hire purchase. I did not hear all that he said but I remind the House that last year I spoke on this matter so vital to Queensland. It is something that has exercised my mind a great deal and nothing happened last year to make me feel that it was a good thing for Queensland that hire purchase has been allowed to continue without any restriction of interest rate. The banks have closed on the primary producer to some extent. I live in the country and I am associated with the sale of machinery; I know what I am talking about. Most primary producers who want farm machinery must go to the hire-purchase people. I want to make it clear that I do not object to the hire purchase system but the rate of interest is too high. The primary producer has to pay 6½ per cent., flat rate, which is in the vicinity of 13 per cent. overall. Farmers cannot afford to pay such a rate today.

The hon. member for Kedron said that the State had no control over interest rates but surely there is no body of people in the country that is not amenable to some control by a Government. Some time ago the Commonwealth said they had no control. The Premier and the Treasurer said that they were going to discuss hire purchase at one of the Commonwealth conferences. I do not know whether they did or not; there was nothing in the paper about it.

Mr. Gair: We did not get round to it.

Mr. HEADING: The primary producer is constantly asked to increase production for export as it has a great effect on our credit overseas. It is responsible for something like 90 per cent. of the wealth of the country but to increase production he must have machinery. When he goes to an agent to buy a scarifier or a drill he is asked for money and if he has not the money he goes to the bank, but the bank says, "No, we are not allowed to extend our credit issue." What happens? Then he is forced to go to the hire-purchase people and it is time that some control was exercised over the interest rate so as to protect him.

I wonder why the State has not the necessary power. We find that Mr. Fullagar and the Minister can fix prices for other commodities but when it comes to the price of money they say they have no control—at least the hon. member for Kedron said so. If that is so, then it is time the State Government and the Commonwealth Government got together to deal with it. I see from the report of the Bank of New South Wales that yet another bank has taken shares in a hire-purchase company. I think there were two before and now three who have shares in these companies, and instead of giving the money at 5 or 5½ per cent. to the farmers to enable them to buy machinery they are forced to go to the hire-purchase companies and pay 6½ per cent., flat rate, which amounts to about 13 per cent. and it is time the matter was looked into.

Mr. Power: If you try to control them in Queensland they will operate from New South Wales.

Mr. HEADING: It is easy to pass the buck. I do not say that the Premier was not serious in saying that he wanted the matter discussed at the recent Premiers' conference. When he comes back from the South and says that the other fellows would not play perhaps I shall be satisfied that he has made an attempt. At the moment I am not satisfied. It is very necessary that something should be done. Yesterday's "Sunday-Mail" contains the following:—

"Hospital Fees Go Up.

"'Bare-bones' Economy. State Aims to Save £2m."

I am not going to say that the Government made that statement, but I think the Treasurer was at the back of it; the statement is pretty authentic. It says that the Government loan works programme would be £2,000,000 less than last year and it involved the dismissal of hundreds of forestry, irrigation and railway workers. I can only repeat what was in the Press; I do not know whether it was right or wrong.

Mr. Gair: We have been trying to reduce staff because of reduced allocations. All the other is "Sunday-Mail" stuff.

Mr. HEADING: It is their political writer.

Mr. Gair: He did not get it from me or from the Treasurer.

Mr. HEADING: He mentioned his name here.

Mr. Gair: He does not mention Mr. Walsh as the author of the statement.

Mr. HEADING I did not say that he did. He said—

“The State Treasurer, Mr. Walsh, last week sent back their 1956-57 estimates to Government departmental heads with instructions for bare-bones slashing.”

He does mention Mr. Walsh. That is all I said earlier. That gives me the basis for what I am going to say in connection with the workers. No doubt many will get the sack. Over the years many things were said about people who lost their jobs during 1929-1932. I draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that according to this article hundreds of workers are to get the sack and no doubt many will have paid deposits to hire-purchase companies. If they lose their jobs they will lose the amenity for which they have paid a considerable amount and at a high rate of interest. As I said last year, and I repeat it now, some of the rates were as high as 10 per cent. flat, which is about 19 per cent. Some of the people employed on forestry and irrigation projects are to be sacked. Many of them may be purchasing amenities on time payment and they will lose them. I mentioned this subject 12 months ago and urged that something be done, but nothing was done. It is time the problem was considered, so as to help those who lose their livelihood at a time when they are purchasing things under hire-purchase agreements.

Mr. Aikens: Some of them may lose homes that they are purchasing on time payment.

Mr. HEADING: That is so. I was alarmed to read the report in the paper yesterday about the reduction in hospital subsidies; it is a matter for great concern. The people will have to pay more when they enter a hospital. Subsidies to country schools for amenities are to be cut. Subsidies were sought in the past for swimming pools. Country people will suffer more than city people because they have not had an opportunity to build as many swimming pools.

Mr. Gair: You are only saying what I said to Sir Arthur Fadden.

Mr. HEADING: I am pointing out what will happen. I am not in the Federal Parliament and I cannot mention it there. Amenities for school children and hospitals are to be cut.

I am pleased that the hon. member for Darlington has been invited to occupy the chair of this House, and it gives me a great deal of pleasure to address him as Mr. Acting

Speaker. I shall be careful not to say anything to offend or to cause my removal from the Chamber.

I have kept my eyes open over the years and as a primary producer I know something about conditions generally. In hard times when private industry is not able to absorb the unemployed the Government should provide loan money to keep the wheels of industry turning. The dismissals that have been mentioned will be felt throughout industry, and the workers will not be able to buy the articles they require. Loan money should be provided in hard times. Of course it should not be splashed about improvidently as it was before the last election and at other times when private industry could absorb unemployed persons. It may not be available later when it is required.

I spoke on hire purchase last year. The Treasurer interjected and ridiculed my knowledge of economics, but his ridicule did not upset me. I think my knowledge of economics is as good as his. I spoke of machines and other things that people buy at a high rate of interest under this high-purchase system. He said, “They will be going into thin air in two or three years’ time.” That was the effect of his words. He must have had a feeling that there was going to be a depression. That being so, why were steps not taken by his Government to obviate the present situation with the slashing of subsidies and the sacking of workers? They will be walking Queensland to get enough to feed their families.

Mr. Aikens: That is a remark that would do credit to Gerry Dawson.

Mr. HEADING: I do not worry about Gerry Dawson; I am Jim Heading. I have my own views about these things gathered from a lifetime’s experience.

Because of slackness on the part of this Government no action is taken when strikes occur. Why has it not been put to the worker that he is only committing suicide? Over the years we have allowed strikes to get worse; years ago one would not have expected the things to happen that have happened in the past couple of years. For instance, railway men have refused to carry wool. At one time that conduct would not have been tolerated for five minutes. The Government run the railways and railway men should have been told to do their jobs. How would a private employer fare if his employees said, “I will not do this or that.”? It would be the end of industry. According to a remark made by the Premier we have lost £600,000 by the non-carriage of wool and I daresay that by this time it has risen to £1,000,000. The Government have allowed the workers to commit hari-kari; and their action is slowly strangling the economy of this State. We have had strikes for 24 hours, stoppages for a day and strikes for weeks, and all the time somebody is paying. Who is paying for the ban on overtime imposed by railway employees? The Government have increased

freights on goods and stock. The freight on livestock has been increased by 12½ per cent. Where does the extra money come from? Nearly all the revenue from the railways comes from the country people. They have to pay on goods going to them and on the produce they send to market.

Mr. Aikens: The consumer pays for it in the form of higher prices.

Mr. HEADING: If we could pass on increased costs so readily we would be happy. We have difficulty in passing on increased costs. We are the only people who suffer, because we are supposed to absorb the increases in our cost of production.

Mr. Power: You are not suffering too much on the price of potatoes.

Mr. HEADING: I should like to debate that with the hon. gentleman when I have the time. When the storekeeper's cost goes up he passes it on in the goods he sells to the working people and when they have to meet increased costs they go to the industrial court for extra wages. We producers have been to the Commissioner of Prices to get a half-penny or so on cheese only to get a kick in the pants for our efforts. The Attorney-General said that the shearers of Queensland should not shear for less than shearers were getting in the other States. As he does not deny my statement I must be right in making it. But what about his action in forcing us to sell lard for 2s. a lb. less than the price in New South Wales? I could mention other products, for example, meat and milk.

Mr. Power: The cost of living here is cheaper than anywhere else.

Mr. HEADING: And the man on the land is paying for it.

Certain people in the community want to get away from the Industrial Court, to run the country themselves. That sort of thing must be stopped sooner or later. The Government now have a wonderful opportunity to show the people that they are statesmen, not ordinary politicians. We cannot afford to have £7,000,000 tied up for wool. In addition, thousands of bales of wool are lying at railway sidings throughout the West. We cannot afford to have sheep dying because they are not shorn. The Premier made a statement in the Press a couple of days ago that Queensland was short of money. Can we afford to abandon a wool sale that would mean £7,000,000 to the State? Can we afford to have wool carted by road when the railways are suffering record losses? The time has come for a halt to be called. If the Government will not do it, they should resign.

Mr. Power: What action would you take?

Mr. HEADING: I should be very happy to tell the Attorney-General what action I would take. I would certainly see that the wool was sold and loaded onto the ships. We cannot afford to have thousands of bales

of wool going to the South to be sold. According to the Premier we are virtually broke, and he says we cannot do certain things when we are poor. I can assure him that if he takes action to save the State's economy, this side of the House will be behind him to a man.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aikens: I think he will.

Mr. HEADING: I certainly hope he will.

I have mentioned the main effects of the shearing strike. I have said, for example, that the effect on the community generally will be reflected in large-scale unemployment.

Mr. Aikens: You want a general strike, which will put nearly everyone out of work.

Mr. HEADING: If I am working for a boss and refuse to carry out his orders, I get the sack. These men should be told to obey instructions. I well remember something that happened when the late Mr. W. J. Riordan was on the Industrial Court bench. Certain employers were complaining that the men would not do what they were asked to do, and Mr. Riordan said, "If they don't do a good job, sack them. You have the right to do that." I remember another occasion when Mr. Ferry was a member of the Industrial Court bench. He asked the then Secretary of the Meat Industry Employees' Union if he wanted the right to engage and dismiss men. The late Mr. Neumann said, "Yes." Mr. Ferry then said, "You will never get it from this court." If you pay men, you must have the right to say what they shall do.

Mr. Power: Don't you think the worker should have the right to say whether he will work at a certain wage?

Mr. HEADING: I have never said that a man must work but I have said that he must work to eat. He has every right to refuse to work but if he will not work he should get out of the way and let someone else work.

Mr. Aikens: Tell us in plain words how you would get the railway men to load the wool.

Mr. HEADING: We must forget the idea that the country is dependent on any set of workers. If the railway men went off tomorrow would the Government stand idly by and let them starve Brisbane? Of course not! Hon. members opposite would be among the first to look round for a crust and they would probably come out to us in the bush. Organisation is necessary. The wool people are setting the example by loading their wool on trucks and having it brought to Brisbane. If the railway employees went on strike tomorrow the best advice they could be given would be to go back to work or they might find they were not wanted because road transport could be organised. Hundreds of railway employees support what I am saying. It is rubbish to say that the workers do not want to work. They are badly led by men

like Bukowski who are trying to control Queensland and the Government. Everybody knows that hundreds and thousands of men are willing to work if they are allowed to. If the storemen and packers are dragged out over this matter, 80 per cent. of them will object. They were dissatisfied before. What about their wives and children? Are we going to force them to walk the streets because nobody has the courage to say the men should go back to work? Many of them are afraid to go back. If wharf labourers were called out, 75 per cent. of them would be willing to work. If the Government took a stand and refused to allow industry to be crippled, most of the men would be behind them.

Another industry affected is shipping. I have complained bitterly about increases in overseas freight but I am sensible enough to realise that in many cases increases are justified, though the companies sometimes increase their charges more than they should. The slow turn-round, the trouble with strikes, ships being kept in port not being loaded and sometimes not being unloaded, must cost the companies hundreds of pounds a day. Consider the effect of it on primary industries. Every time a ship goes away without a full load of butter the dairyman pays. Every time wool is left on the wharves the woolgrower pays, and if beef is not loaded the grazier pays. No wonder everybody is dissatisfied. If the trouble continues, ships may not come here.

Mr. Aikens: How would you solve that problem?

Mr. HEADING: They say it is a job for the Federal Government. Some of it is. I hope Federal members read what I have said and that some action will be taken to prevent these holdups, but the Queensland Government cannot escape their share of responsibility. They have a responsibility to me as a citizen to see that my produce is carted to the market where I want it to go. They have a responsibility to every man, woman and child in the State, whether under a Federal award or State. It is this Government's responsibility.

I think I have mentioned most of the things I wish to speak about.

Mr. Aikens: Did you tell us about the bacon factory strike in 1946?

Mr. HEADING: That is over and done with. If the Government had followed our plan then there would not have been any trouble, but they did not.

Let me say something about our roads. In a trip of a couple of hundred miles you frequently come to a small creek where 400 or 500 cars might be lined up waiting to get across. The cost to the people so held up over a year would more than pay for the cost of a bridge in many instances. For instance, there are frequent holdups at Cooyar Creek in the Somerset electorate. About 12 months

ago somebody dug a few holes to make tests for foundations. The gravel is still there but no more work has been done on the new bridge. Throughout Queensland there are hundreds of places like this where the absence of a small bridge holds up a large amount of traffic. Motorists have to sit and wait when the waters back up in Reedy Creek between Murgon and Nanango. If they are not held up at Reedy Creek they probably have to wait at Wheelbarrow Creek. Throughout Queensland people sit and wait for small creeks to go down and this means a loss of money because they should be employed on their farms. The Government should build these small bridges in spite of the shortage of money.

I have heard a great deal about road conditions in North Queensland. I was up there recently and there are many roads I should like to have had and many I should not like to have. Within a few miles of Brisbane there is much work to be done, in many cases small jobs that would not cost much. Because of the creek between Murgon and Wondai, every time it rains it is impossible for people to get to the public hospital in the district.

In a discussion like this I daresay one can use the parish pump and I want to mention the Mary Valley district which is second to none in Southern Queensland. It produces immense quantities of pineapples, beans and other things, mainly produce that must be marketed quickly. As the Leader of the Opposition could tell us, when a pineapple is ripe it should go to the cannery at once.

Over the years every time the Mary River floods they have to ferry produce over the river because there is no high-level bridge. The Minister for Transport promised us a bridge in three years, but in view of the talk about the financial stringency I am wondering whether it will not be five or six years. The Mary Valley is a very rich area that produces butter and beef as well as the other things that I mentioned. Not only the road but also the railway bridge is covered when the river floods. The people have waited for years for a high-level bridge so as to get their produce to market without delay. A railway line has been surveyed to Woodford. We would save a lot of mileage and money if it were built.

Mr. Nicklin: The Woodford line gets flooded, too.

Mr. HEADING: We could build a higher bridge there, too. People with any knowledge of the country realise that thousands of pounds are lost owing to the delay in getting produce to the markets. If the workers were losing income to that extent there would be a mutiny. Yet we go on putting up with it.

Mr. Sparkes: They are long suffering.

Mr. HEADING: As the hon. member says, we are long suffering. We have suffered too long, and it is time something was done.

In my electorate there are two reserves, R. 74 Nangur and R. 127 Nangur and ever since I have been in Parliament they have been getting cleared of timber. There is some trouble in getting the timber out. When enquiries are made as to when they will be ready for selection we are told they are still getting the timber out. If that is so, they must be down to toothpicks by this time. For 30 years they have been taking timber out of these reserves. I understand that they will be available for selection when the timber is taken off. They are situated in a good rainfall area with an average of 28 inches. The railway and a cheese factory are close by. They are building a road into one of the reserves. I should like to see more expedition so that instead of having an area that is only a harbourage for wallabies that eat crops in the area we might have more farms with prosperous farmers—that is, if it is possible for a farmer to become prosperous with the existing high taxation and increased costs.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (12.34 p.m.): In rising to support the resolution so ably moved by the hon. member for Kurilpa and seconded by the hon. member for Cook, I desire again to place on record my loyalty to the throne of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In doing so I pay my respects to His Excellency Sir John Lavarack. He is a great personality. His knowledge of Queensland is immense, and he does not hesitate to avail himself of the opportunity of visiting the outposts of this great State.

I compliment you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to your high office. You have in the past conducted Parliament in the manner in which it should be conducted. You have received obedience from members and at all times you have been impartial. It is a pleasure to address you.

I compliment the Premier on his able leadership. The position of leader of a Government party in this State or any other State is not an easy matter, but the Premier has done an exceedingly good job. He has earned the confidence of the people of Queensland. That is exemplified by their vote at the elections. We know the difficulties with which he has to contend and he is entitled to our highest respect.

The hon. member for Marodian referred to the difficulties confronting primary producers. There is no doubt his statements are correct. They are unable to effect improvements and buy implements because of lack of money. There must be a reason. In my opinion it is the diversion of investments to other avenues. We see many advertisements in our papers setting out the record profits of some companies and the high rate of interest they are able to offer for loan money. In those circumstances it is only natural that banks, financial institutions and private persons should patronise the market where the higher interest rates prevail, but

that only makes the position difficult for the farmer who needs money badly to purchase fertilisers, plants, and so on. He has no ready money and he is tied financially to such an extent that he cannot get additional money. The banks are not very helpful.

I have spoken about the Mourilyan harbour on many occasions. The people of Innisfail have no objection to the development of the harbours of Cairns or Townsville. That is far from our thoughts. We want to see development take place over the whole of the State but because we have such a natural port we want to see it developed too. It would give a stimulus to the trade of the hinterland. We are seeking the direct shipment of sugar from Mourilyan at lower freight charges than are entailed in the transport of sugar by smaller vessels from other places. We want to obviate the lightening of sugar from the Innisfail district to Cairns and Townsville, which is an expensive item. We are entitled to ask that this uneconomic position be eliminated. It represents a huge cost to the industry. The industry cannot continue paying the great uneconomic charges involved in the lightening of sugar to either Cairns or Townsville. At present it costs the industry something like £300,000 a year which could be saved by the development of Mourilyan Harbour. We of Mourilyan, South Johnstone, Goondi and Tully urge the Government to give serious consideration to the construction of Mourilyan Harbour. We have been agitating for this for many years and hope eventually to succeed. Hon. members who have not had the pleasure of visiting the harbour should do so at the first opportunity. Mourilyan is a beautiful spot although the harbour is, admittedly, small. The distance from Tully to Townsville is 121 miles and we have to pay in transport charges something like 7s. on a ton of cane. A field of standing cane before it is converted into sugar has to bear a transport charge of 7s. a ton. The distance from Tully to Mourilyan is only 34 miles and to Lucinda Point 79 miles. The saving by sending Tully sugar to Lucinda Point would be 8s. a ton, and to Mourilyan 20s. 3d. The Tully cane-growers and mill are entitled to complain of the huge costs involved in transport charges on sugar from Tully to Townsville. Recently the Sugar Board made a further concession in regard to freights and although it is appreciated it was over-all only a small amount. The people of Innisfail are very desirous that Mourilyan Harbour be developed to take ships of at least 9,000 tons.

I now seek the indulgence of hon. members for a few moments to point out that perpetual lease rentals are not uniform throughout the State. For example, perpetual leases in the Tully district attract a rental of 5 per cent. of the value of the land, whereas in most other parts of Queensland the rental is only 3 per cent. The people of Tully have been paying 5 per cent. since the township was established about 1920, and the time has arrived when they think they are entitled

to ask the Government to consider a reduction to 3 per cent. They recognise, of course, that the Government were entitled to recoup some of the cost of developing the area, but they think that over the years they have paid enough in rentals for the Government to have recouped the major part of the developmental costs. Particularly is the present charge of 5 per cent. heavy when one considers the extent to which valuations have been increased.

Mr. Roberts: The assignment should not be included in the value of a sugar property. That is an injustice.

Mr. BYRNE: That matter has been thrashed out previously, and I do not wish to touch on it now.

A man who is paying a rental of 5 per cent. is greatly disadvantaged in comparison with one who is paying only 3 per cent. It hits particularly a man like an age pensioner, who now has to pay 5 per cent. on a greatly increased valuation. An example of the increase in valuations is afforded by the Johnstone Shire Council, where recently valuations were increased from £1,000,000-odd to £2,000,000-odd. I ask the Government to give serious consideration to reducing perpetual lease rentals in the Tully district to 3 per cent.

As a North Queenslander I believe that the work now being carried out in the North will in the years to come be of immense benefit to the district. I believe also that North Queensland has greater potential than South Queensland. The Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme will make cheap electricity available and attract industries. With more industries and amenities the district will progress rapidly. The Tinaroo Falls project provides work for many people.

I look forward to the establishment at Cairns of a new cannery for pineapples, citrus, and other fruit. The present cannery is out of date and I hope that representations to the Government will result in a completely new one.

The roads in the North are being developed as quickly as possible. Many are a pleasure to drive on; others are in a state of disrepair because of excessive wet conditions, but that must be expected.

Tully is my home town and I frequently travel by rail motor to towns north of it. The rail motor service there is out of date and we have long awaited a better one. I know that other districts want a better service, too, but I hope that when new and better rail motors are put into service soon, one will go to my district.

I also ask the Minister to consider connecting Cardwell with the Ingham and Cairns rail motor services as at present there is no rail motor service between Ingham and Tully. The link would be of great advantage to those north and south of Tully.

The people of North Queensland are greatly concerned about annual cyclones and floods. Because of the devastation each year to crops and dwellings there should be a State-wide, or even Commonwealth-wide, cyclone insurance fund. I travelled through North Queensland after the last cyclone, and as far as the eye could see, particularly in the Babinda area, sugar-cane crops were absolutely flattened. On each side of the road I found houses unroofed and houses thrown off their blocks. From Cairns to Tully the farmers suffered considerably and it is impossible to measure the damage in money. They have had to look everywhere for finance to rehabilitate themselves. I do not think there would be insurmountable difficulties in the creation of some form of insurance fund to protect farmers, at least to some extent, from loss by cyclone. I know the drain it has been on the financial resources of farmers in my own area; I know how difficult it has been to replant where crops were destroyed.

During the election campaign I noted with pleasure that our opponents gave the assurance that if they were elected they would continue our present hospital scheme. If they were sincere in what they said, I trust in the future they will withhold their criticism of our hospital administration. We believe that our hospital system, with its methods and administration, is what the people of Queensland want and I feel sure too, that we have converted the Opposition to that way of thinking. Their previous speeches in this House led me to believe that they thought our hospital system left much to be desired.

I approve of the viewpoint of hon. members of the Opposition that our hospital system is such that they would not adopt any other; in other words, if they were in power they would do what we are doing.

Mr. GAVEN (Southport) (2.16 p.m.): I regard it as an honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to associate myself with the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech that was delivered a few weeks ago. I listened with great interest to the speech delivered by His Excellency. He is doing an excellent job as representative of Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. He has a thorough grasp of the needs of this State and its people.

I take this opportunity of extending to you, Mr. Speaker, my heartiest congratulations on your elevation once again to the high and exalted position of Speaker of this Legislative Assembly. The position requires a man of ability and I believe that you have that necessary ability. I also congratulate the Chairman of Committees, on his re-election.

I speak on behalf of the people of Southport as well as myself when I support the statements of previous speakers regarding our loyalty to the Throne of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

I thank the electors of Southport for again reposing their confidence in me. This is the third occasion that I have been returned as their representative.

Mr. Pizzey: With a bigger and better majority on each occasion.

Mr. GAVEN: With a bigger and better majority on each occasion, not because of politics but because of the service that I give them. Irrespective of one's political colour, if a member gives faithful service to the people he will invariably retain their confidence. I believe the vote I received was a personal vote for service given, and I assure my supporters that their confidence will not be misplaced.

This debate gives an opportunity of raising matters affecting the electorates, and, while I do not want to overwork the parish pump, there are one or two matters affecting my electorate that I desire to mention. I am sorry that the Treasurer is not in the Chamber. I wanted him to hear what I have to say about the drainage of land on the South Coast.

Mr. Wood: The Merrimac land.

Mr. GAVEN: Yes. I raised this subject last Session when I said that I hoped the Treasurer would amend the Local Government Act to enable farmers to carry out maintenance work on the drains in the Merrimac area. Previously I had advocated the grant of a subsidy to extend the drains, but the Government pointed out, perhaps rightly, that they could not subsidise improvements to private land. The network of drains extends over many miles and needs cleaning. There are 30 farmers in the area and they desire to maintain and clean the drains, but one or two farmers do not desire to spend money on this work. Many hundreds of pounds have already been spent by farmers to maintain the drains so that excess water can be taken from their land, but unless there is absolute co-operation by all the farmers in the area the work is ineffective.

Local authorities at the present time have no power to strike a cleansing rate for the cleaning and maintenance of the drains. I want the Treasurer to introduce an amending Bill to give local authorities power to strike a cleansing rate for the whole of that area based on the unimproved value of the land. Hon. members can visualise the position. It is an area of about 6,000 acres of low-lying land. The network of drains cost many thousands of pounds in the first place but they are now choked with weeds and reeds and do not function. About 70 per cent. of the farmers are anxious to have the drains maintained, but 25 or 30 per cent. do not. If one or two farmers in the middle of the group do not carry out the work, the effort of the others is nullified. If an amendment as I suggest was introduced the local authority could strike a cleansing rate if the farmers of the area asked them to do it. The farmers could perhaps carry out the work

themselves. At the present time miles of drains are not functioning because one or two people in the area are not co-operating. I trust the Treasurer will introduce this amending legislation this session.

On page 10 of His Excellency's Speech he said—

“For the third year in succession, the over-the-counter receipts of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau exceeded £1,000,000. The Bureau, through its inter-State offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, is bringing increasing numbers of tourists to Queensland each year and is aiming to achieve an all-round-the-year tourist season in Queensland at an early date.”

I emphasise that in Queensland we are only scratching the surface of tourist trade. Tourist revenue could be increased ultimately to the value of one of the best exports of this State. The history of tourist trade in other countries much older than Queensland and Australia is one of development, but from the aspect of natural resources I believe that Queensland's natural resources compare more than favourably with those of other countries. It is because we have not paid attention to the development of our natural resources that the tourist trade was worth only £1,000,000 last year. That can be increased considerably. If we could increase it to £10,000,000 it would become a great export trade to the State and a revenue producer.

Mr. Graham: What do you suggest should be done to increase it?

Mr. GAVEN: If the hon. member will give me time I shall develop my case as I go along.

Mr. Graham: You are talking about the Gold Coast?

Mr. GAVEN: Now that the hon. member has mentioned it, in spite of what we have heard in past weeks, the Gold Coast is the greatest attraction to tourists that this State possesses. That has been demonstrated in the last 12 months or two years.

Mr. Aikens: For politicians or wealthy Jews.

Mr. GAVEN: For the ordinary working man and woman to spend a holiday on the coast. I might mention to the hon. member for Mundingburra that the ordinary working man and his wife and family can get as cheap a holiday on the Gold Coast as anywhere else, far cheaper than in some other parts.

Mr. Graham: That is not the consensus of opinion.

Mr. GAVEN: I challenge the hon. members for Mackay and Mundingburra by saying that I can buy a meal on the Gold Coast as cheap as I can get one in Townsville or Mackay. I can get a three-course meal on

the Gold Coast for 6s., whereas in Townsville and Mackay I could not get one worth eating for less than 6s. If the hon. member for Mundingburra wants to adopt the role of a Pooch-Bah he can get one for £6 if he wants to. The ordinary working man can get as cheap a meal on the Gold Coast as can be had anywhere else in Australia.

Mr. Aikens: Five shillings for a piece of fish and potatoes.

Mr. GAVEN: With potatoes at their present price, you did not get much for 1s. 3d. at the Brisbane National Exhibition. Chips are selling at 1d. each in Brisbane.

Mr. Graham: Do you say that the Gold Coast caters for the working man or the wealthy class?

Mr. GAVEN: The working man and the wealthy tourist.

Mr. Aikens: Is the Gold Coast in your electorate?

Mr. GAVEN: Yes. I have been saying what a great contribution the South Coast has made to the tourist trade of this State. Since September, 1952, a matter of four years, private enterprise has spent no less than £12,000,000 on the South Coast. Each year we see being erected residential, boarding-houses, flats, etc. At one time we were told that all this building would be overdone and that there would be more accommodation available than people to occupy it. We find that most of the places are booked out 12 months ahead. Why, even today, you cannot get a seat in to or out of the South Coast by plane until 18 September, a fact showing that the South Coast has become pre-eminent and is playing an important part in the contribution of the £1,000,000 mentioned in His Excellency's Speech. The Government are fully aware of the development that has been taking place on the Gold Coast, as it is termed by some hon. members opposite. In fairness to the Government and the Attorney-General's department I want to say that they have had the foresight and initiative to see what great potentialities exist on the South Coast, that they have co-operated to the full with the local authorities concerned. Two new hotel licences have been granted for the area and if we are to cater for the right type of tourists to this State we must have first-class accommodation for them. If the right type of tourist cannot get first-class accommodation he becomes sour. Today there are tens of thousands of people travelling the world as professional tourists, and they require first-class accommodation. If we can give them that accommodation we will attract them to our tourist resorts again. But if first-class accommodation is not available we will be doing a disservice to the tourist industry. I thank the Attorney-General's department and the Government for the part they have played in granting hotel licences on the South Coast which were so badly needed.

A Government Member: I see that you are after another one.

Mr. GAVEN: If there is justice in my case I am sure I will get another one. The Government had enough foresight to realise that these things were needed on the South Coast, with the result that at present new hotels are being built at Kirra and Broadbeach, extensive maintenance work is being carried out on the Grand Hotel at Labrador, virtually a new hotel is being built at Burleigh Heads, and tenders have been called for the licence of a first class hotel at Surfers' Paradise.

Mr. Aikens: That proves my point that the Government will do anything for Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Mr. GAVEN: They are very sensible. Following my representations, they realised that it was necessary to develop that part of the State. I thank the Government for granting the new hotel licenses in the South Coast area.

Before dealing with the controversy over the mining of beach sands on the South Coast, I shall refer to reclamation work now being carried out by syndicates in the Nerang River. These syndicates have permits from the Land Administration Board and the Department of Harbours and Marine to reclaim islands in the Nerang River in the vicinity of Surfers' Paradise and to build them up with silt pumped from the river bed. The intention, of course, is to cut them up into allotments and sell them at fairly high prices. I was recently informed that work on the Riverside Estate reclamation project adjacent to Whelan St. was jutting out into the river to the great alarm of many people who have had to protect their properties from erosion with stone and log walls. Many of them had already lost up to 30 ft. of frontage through erosion. I was told that the Riverside Estate reclamation work looked like blocking the normal flow of the river. I approached the local authority, which communicated with the Department of Harbours and Marine. As a result two officers were sent down to examine the position. I understand that one was the chief engineer, Mr. Fison, and the other Captain Masterman. They came down and made an inspection about six weeks ago, and it was found that the reclamation people had exceeded their boundaries by more than one chain into the river for a distance of several chains. When the river rises the water overflows the bank on the western side, which acts as a safety valve for property owners on the other bank. However, these reclamation projects will probably remove that safety valve. I understand that more reclamation projects are to be undertaken on McIntosh Island and Goat Island. As the result of all these reclamation projects, the course of the Nerang River will be diverted in flood time and devastation will be caused to many built-up areas on the river bank at Surfers' Paradise.

When it was discovered that the Riverside Estate reclamation people had exceeded their boundaries, I asked the chief engineer of the Department of Harbours and Marine what action was to be taken. He told me he did not think there was anything to worry about but that he would make a report to the local authority. So far, however, the local authority has not received any report. These people have been allowed to reclaim an area one chain in width and several chains in length greater than was originally approved. That sort of thing should be watched more closely than it is. If reclamation work at Nerang River is not watched very closely by officers of the Harbours and Marine Department the whole area on the upstream side of the river will eventually be flooded out, not only the built-up areas fronting the river but also the good grazing and dairying lands upstream to a depth of 2 or 3 ft. I hope some action will be taken by the department to ensure that reclamation work is expertly planned and that the plans are rigidly policed.

Mr. Aikens: Are those people going to be allowed to get away with what they have already done?

Mr. GAVEN: Six weeks have passed and nothing has happened. On the admission of the departmental engineers, they have about 10 more allotments than they are entitled to. The area was part of the Nerang River and belongs to the Crown. The people anxiously await the outcome.

I want to deal now with the big controversy, particularly in the Press, about the mining of beach sands on the South Coast. I have an open mind on the subject. It has been said that newspapers even start wars. I believe sometimes they may. Much of what is published about the mining controversy is merely playing it up and setting one set of people against the other. No sensible person on the South Coast is opposed to the operations of the companies mining for zircon, rutile and ilmenite. They know it is a great industry, worth many millions of pounds to the State and deserving of the utmost encouragement. It is a very fine revenue producer and provides work for hundreds of families. The people have no quarrel with the mining companies at all as long as they keep out of certain areas. Over the years the greatest outcry has been because of the tendency to interfere with places of public interest. If the mining companies conferred in a common-sense way with the local authority and others interested, many of the difficulties would be straightened out. If the South Coast is to be developed into the Riviera or playground of the Southern Hemisphere, we must guard jealously every little scenic reserve, every park, every sanctuary and every playground. The beaches are the people's heritage and no bulldozer or end-loader or other piece of machinery should be allowed to force people off them. The companies might just as well begin mining operations in Queen Street. I do not say that the entire beach or the entire coast should be protected from beach mining

but known surfing areas should, and to some extent, heavily built-up areas fronting the beaches. It is not for me to say because I am only a layman and the best engineers in the world are not prepared to say whether or not beach mining contributes to erosion.

Mr. Hadley: You would know the surfing areas.

Mr. GAVEN: I have known them for 40 years.

Mr. Hadley: Define them.

Mr. GAVEN: They are already defined. There are two bones of contention here today. The first one is dredging claim 36 which runs from Elkhorn Avenue on the North side of Surfers Paradise Hotel, back to Main Beach towards the Jubilee Bridge. The other one is dredging claim 35 which runs south from Surfers Paradise to almost in front of the new Broadbeach Hotel. They are dredging claims, not dredging leases. There is a very big difference between the two. A dredging lease is usually for a period of 18 to 21 years whereas a dredging claim goes on in perpetuity. I think it is absurd for any Government or any department to give any company a claim that goes on in perpetuity—never ends. All of these leases should be for a definite period of not more than five or six years at the most. In this way mistakes can be corrected.

Mr. Foley: The rutile sands would not be there in perpetuity.

Mr. GAVEN: The greatest concentrate of the rutile, zircon and ilmenite is from Byron Bay to the north of Stradbroke Island. Eighty per cent. of the world's requirements was supplied from this area last year, almost £6,000,000 worth. It is worth over £100 a ton and is therefore a great asset to the State. Nobody wants to interfere with mining on beaches but we do want to protect our surfing areas, sanctuaries, scenic reserves and playgrounds. The mining companies have no regard for anything. They come along and just mine. A man who has built a very nice home and who is paying high rates does not appreciate a mining company's coming along with end loaders and bulldozers to mine next door to him. They are allowed to mine up to within eight feet of a property alignment. Because beach mining is worth so much to the State we should do all we possibly can to encourage these people but at the same time we must protect our great natural asset.

The hon. member for Belyando mentioned that they might not be there always. The sands are washed in from the tablelands of New South Wales, carried out to sea by the rivers in floodtime and carried back again by the currents to be lodged on the beaches from Byron Bay to the north of Stradbroke Island. During the severe weather experienced three or four months ago large quantities of black

sand were washed up onto the beach comprising dredging claim 36. It happened at a time when there were many visitors from the southern States. The mining people immediately began to scrape off two to three feet of black sand lodged by the tides on top of the surfing beach. They used bulldozers. The greatest attraction for the tourists who come to the South Coast or the North Coast is the surfing beach. It is not a pleasant sight to see this thing in operation. These people should not be allowed to go onto the surfing beaches. There are miles of sand that is not surfing beach. We should protect our scenic reserves. There was a public outcry not long ago when the bird sanctuary at Currumbin was threatened. I do not know whether members of the Government have seen the bird sanctuary there. It is indeed a great attraction. The man walks out and whistles twice and thousands of birds come from everywhere. An application was made for the right to mine this area, and the matter was dropped because of weight of public opinion. A further application has been made and I hope the Government will reject it. If the continuation of this sanctuary was threatened there would be an outcry not only from the people of Queensland but from every State in Australia and New Zealand.

Mr. Graham: How would they get into the sanctuary?

Mr. GAVEN: They can go anywhere if they get a miner's licence. I understand that the Mining Acts are to be amended this Session and I hope that they will give these people some protection. I have one or two suggestions which, if given effect to, will provide some protection for the people on the South Coast. I have nothing against the man who pegs a claim and follows it up, but many people are simply mining on the Stock Exchange, with no intention of putting a shovel into the sand. They peg an area and get a miner's right and they sell it to Bill Jones who holds it for two or three weeks and then sells it to somebody else; and that goes on in perpetuity. The person who owns the land does not build on it because he is not sure of his position and he cannot sell it to anyone else. Many people who hold these leases are not genuine miners; they are speculators or scaplers.

I shall read part of an article which bears out my contention written by Arthur Richards which appeared in the Press recently:

"A Brisbane citizen recently took out a mining lease to 3 acres of Gold Coast foreshore, down south of Surfers Paradise.

"He did not put a shovel to it himself. Just sold the mining rights to one of the big mineral sands companies then sat back and waited.

"In four weeks the company had 'dug' the area with suction pumps, extracted the mineral sands, replaced the surface, tidied the place up—and handed over the cheque.

"The Brisbaneite received just £5,600 for his four weeks' wait: almost £2,000 for each acre."

This is going on all the time. It should not be allowed to continue. I have some suggestions to make. If the Government are guided by them, I think some of our problems will be solved. If the mining companies, the people and local authorities got together and made a common-sense approach to the question, much of the trouble could be overcome.

Mr. Clark: What about the people who found the Mary Kathleen deposit? Were they not entitled to something?

Mr. GAVEN: The interjection by the hon. member for Fitzroy is not pertinent. There is no analogy or comparison.

Mr. Clark: They are mining leases under the Mining Acts.

Mr. GAVEN: The hon. member can explain his point when he speaks. I do not think there is an analogy.

When interested persons inspect the areas they find that some companies are mining outside the boundaries of their leases and that the pegs have not been put in. That is not the fault of the Mines Department, but so much money is being made out of this type of mining that it is time a permanent officer of the department was stationed there to see that the conditions of the leases are carried out.

These are the points I raise—

1. Some mining companies have encroached on land outside the alignments of their leases and others place pegs long distances apart, thus making it hard for interested persons to follow the exact area defined in an application;

2. No mining lease should be granted by the Government if such lease is considered to be contrary to the best interests of the residents of the area or the public of Queensland;

3. Leases held by one company are over an area approximately 2½ miles long and are only required to be pegged north and south. Who could follow that lease?

4. Because of the amount of mining now in operation a permanent officer of the Mines Department should be stationed in the area;

5. The Mining Acts need drastic revision. They were never intended to cover the activities of sand mining in heavily built-up areas covering many square miles of country;

6. The application for a lease should be determined or finalised within six months, either by mutual agreement between the applicant and the freeholder or by the Wardens Court;

7. No sand-mining lease should be for more than three years. Long leases prevent others from competing against the

original peggers who have now pegged virtually the whole of the South Coast lands;

8. Court cases are costly to the freeholder. Costs should be given against the applicant if he loses his case.

9. Applications for leases of 21 years duration and leases in perpetuity are absurd and a hindrance to the development of Queensland;

10. Trafficking in mining leases should not be countenanced under any consideration. A pegger should begin to work his claim within a reasonable time or forfeit it.

No comparison can be drawn between this work and uranium mining at Mt. Isa. No-one wants to build on the site of a uranium mine. In my area people want to use the land they own as building allotments. Some of them have built homes on the land. The position is entirely different from that of uranium fields.

Mr. Clark: The same lease conditions apply.

Mr. GAVEN: I cannot see eye to eye with the hon. member. The present state of affairs should not be allowed to continue. I believe the companies should be encouraged in this work, but the heritage of the people should be protected. No mining work should be allowed on surf beaches proper, or the area defined for surfing, on any civic reserve, sanctuary or public park. If the Government take cognisance of the points I have raised there will be a happier relationship between the companies and the residents of the area.

Mr. SMITH (Carpentaria) (2.55 p.m.): I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to office and also the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. This is an important debate as it allows hon. members to bring before the House matters concerning their electorates and the State generally. The area I represent, situated in the north-west portion of the State, is very important for its mineral production in particular. Population in that area is badly needed and as I have said on numerous occasions, it is a part of the Commonwealth that badly needs population and development. Opportunities are waiting for those who have the desire to finance its potentialities. Over the years we have had the huge silver-lead and zinc production at Mt. Isa and since 1953 Mt. Isa Mines has been engaged in the production of copper. As a result of investigations and research and much prospecting, the stage has now been reached for the development of the uranium field known as Mary Kathleen. In time this will become not only Queensland's greatest uranium field but the greatest uranium field of Australia. The uranium field at Rum Jungle has now gone into copper and the Mary Kathleen project

will be supplying the uranium required for the British Commonwealth of Nations. Not only have the Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. and the Rio Tinto Company done much to exploit our mineral resources but in the Cloncurry mineral field great quantities of copper have been won by the small producers or gougers. From the commencement of production of copper in February, 1953 to December, 1953 the value of blister copper produced by small producers was £170,000. The copper ore is treated by Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. By 1954 that value of copper won had been increased to £192,000 and for 1955 its value had increased to £500,000-odd. I appeal to the Government to give greater financial aid to small producers of copper in the Cloncurry area. In May of this year because of the inadequacy of the copper furnaces at Mt. Isa that company placed small copper producers on a quota. It has reduced by approximately 33½ per cent. the supplies that it will take from the small producers. I appeal to the Government to help the small producers as well as the big companies. We need the small producers, of whom there are at present approximately 100 on the Cloncurry mineral field. In Canada and the United States of America a good deal of financial aid is given to the prospector and the small producer. Particularly is it so in Canada, where the Government are building a series of small copper treatment plants. That has helped to make Canada one of the biggest copper-producing countries in the world, and it is expected that its annual production of blister copper will be increased this year to 500,000 tons.

The cause of the reduced output of copper in the Mt. Isa district is the inadequacy of the reverberatory furnace owned by Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. to smelt even its own ore. I appeal to the Department of Mines to take up the matter with Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. The mining companies pay royalties on the basis of their profits and this year the Government should receive between £300,000 and £500,000 from that source. I should like the Minister for Mines to suggest to Cabinet that Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. be asked to accept some, if not all, of that money and to use it in constructing a reverberatory or a blast furnace that could treat all the copper ore that could be produced on the Cloncurry field. If that was done, the present production valued at £500,000 a year could well be increased to millions of pounds. Around the old mining fields of Kuridala, Selwyn and Mt. Cuthbert there are reserves of copper ore amounting to approximately 2,000,000 tons, averaging 4.62 per cent. That ore could be mined by the small producers and taken to the smelters at Mt. Isa, which would result in the production of between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000 worth of blister copper. I think we should help the smaller producer, just as they do in the United States and Canada. The small miner paves the way for the big companies.

The area of Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. itself was found by Simpson and Campbell Miles, prospectors, back in 1923.

Who found the deposits of uranium in the Cloncurry area? That area was held for a couple of years under a prospecting lease by the huge Zinc Corporation and their geologists and heads handed it back to the Crown saying there was no payable mineral in it. That was before 1953. In 1953 when Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. started copper production, Birger Schildt-Wheatley and their mates had a small copper mine north of Mt. Isa and when they went prospecting for more ore they came across an unusual type of rock formation. They broke off some samples and sent them to Mr. Carter, Chief Geologist for Mt. Isa mines and out of that find came the Mary Kathleen.

It is always the little prospector who makes the find but he cannot develop the field he discovers and the big companies come in after him. They go hand in hand, capital and labour. We cannot dissolve them; we cannot separate them. We need the small copper mines. Small mineral outcrops are not required by the big mining companies but development by the small producer or the gouger leads to the discovery of a huge mineral lode underground that diamond drills may not find.

Mr. McCathie: Mt. Morgan is handling outside copper.

Mr. SMITH: Yes, but it is too far away. We do not want to send copper ore a thousand miles when we can treat it on the spot. I appeal to the Secretary for Mines and the Government to give Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. a grant from royalties based on the production of minerals and, if desired, charge the small producer a small fee for smelting his minerals but let the royalties go back into the mining field for the working of the small copper shows in the huge Cloncurry field. That is something we can do with the help of the Commonwealth Government. We need more taxation concessions in the area.

Mr. Sparkes: You have some in your own area.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member is one of the lucky ones. He owns, or is interested in, station properties in the Northern Territory above the 26th parallel, an area that will enjoy taxation concessions for 20 years.

Mr. Sparkes: Don't you think it is a good idea?

Mr. SMITH: Yes, but I want the concession extended along that parallel through Queensland, not to end at Haddon Corner at the border of South Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland. If the concession is to be granted at all, let it be extended right across the State to the eastern coast so that the whole of the North may enjoy it.

Mr. Sparkes: You want to take in Mount Isa.

Mr. SMITH: There is no difference between Mt. Isa mines and the small producer of copper silver-lead, zinc or uranium or huge companies such as the Atlas Mining Company or any such American companies that are coming in to work the uranium field in the Northern Territory. The people of Queensland north of the 26th parallel are entitled to the same concessions as those granted in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

In the pastoral areas the cattle man can sell a bullock this year but another one comes along next year.

Mr. Sparkes: If you are lucky.

Mr. SMITH: There is not too much luck about it. Once a ton of mineral is taken out of the earth it is never replaced. There is no such thing as re-mineralising the earth. In the Cloncurry field at Mt. Isa we have marginal ore bodies of lead, zinc and copper. The average lead content at Mt. Isa is about 6 per cent. and the average copper content about 4 per cent. There are millions and millions of tons of lower-grade marginal ore bodies. The Commonwealth and State Governments should confer on the granting of some taxation reimbursement to the company so that it could work these marginal ore bodies economically. It would add a generation to the life of that mineral field. In the past nobody has worried. The companies took out the high-grade ore and left the low-grade. Once the high-grade ore has been removed it is too late to come back to mine the low-grade.

Mt. Isa, Mt. Morgan and Mt. Lyle, the three great copper producers in Australia, were granted a 20 per cent. tax reimbursement by the Commonwealth Government to encourage copper production. This has allowed Mt. Isa to work the underground marginal grade ore bodies of copper. What has come out of it? Mt. Isa Mines is building a huge copper refinery in Townsville and there is to be over £20,000,000 worth of development at Mt. Isa. Let us do the same thing in respect of lead ores. In March this year the Commonwealth Government granted the company operating the Mary Kathleen uranium field complete taxation exemption until 1965. What is the difference between uranium and silver-lead and copper-ore? There is no difference. What is wrong with giving it to the other mineral producers in the Cloncurry area? What is wrong with extending the concession to the workers in the Cloncurry mineral area and on the Mary Kathleen uranium field? If it is good enough to give the Rio Tinto Corporation a tax exemption till 1965, what is wrong with giving the same concession to people working the Mary Kathleen field? Let labour and capital go together. If the man who invests his money is given a tax conces-

sion for 10 years what is wrong with giving the same concession to the man who works and offers his labour?

Mr. Muller: Why not give it to the hon. member for the district?

Mr. SMITH: I live there and I work for the people so I suppose I would be entitled to it. I view this matter very seriously. By this taxation line of the 26th parallel the Treasurer is drawing a circle round the greatest mineral belt in the world.

Mr. Muller: There must be some reason for it.

Mr. SMITH: There is some reason. He thinks that it may be already developed. We have only started. Mt. Isa Mines has been taking out the rich grade ores. The Government should see that it takes all the lower grade ore, not leave any mineral behind at all. Let us extend the life of the mine and so create labour and population that we need so much. If we do this not only this State but the whole of Australia and the British Empire will be well rewarded. We shall not have the white-elephant mining areas that we have had for the past 30 years. In the Cloncurry area there are 2,000,000 tons of copper ore waiting to be treated in a copper furnace. At present money values approximately £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 worth of ore are lying idle in the Cloncurry field. The Mines Department made statements about the £1,000,000 project on the South Coast, but in our area we have £7,000,000 worth waiting for treatment. The average gold content in this copper ore is 2½ dwts. to 3 dwts to the ton. The Government, through the Minister and the department should at the earliest date hold a conference with the executives of Mt. Isa Mines and the Commonwealth Government with a view to carrying out a policy of treating the lower-grade ore. The Mary Kathleen is not the only uranium field in the area. We have a thousand other leases covering 5, 10 and 20 acres. That area assays ore from a quarter to one per cent. Before the Rio Tinto Company commences production I suggest that the Government discuss the position with the Federal Government and the company officials to see if we can get a concentrate plant in the Cloncurry area to process the uranium ore in that field. The field extends a distance of approximately 150 miles by 100 miles. On the Rand in South Africa millions of pounds have been spent by the Atomic Energy Commission and the South Africa Government on uranium production, and that field is only half the size of the Cloncurry field. In South Africa every ounce of uranium ore is extracted. Treatment plants have been erected throughout the field. Last year I spoke of the building of plants in the area. I said that there were 14 treatment plants on The Rand and that it was expected that by the end of June this year there would be more than 30 plants.

In America there are six hundred uranium-producing fields, the biggest being worked by about 12 men. The deposits are not nearly as large as those on the Mary Kathleen field. The uranium shows in America are worked by one man, two men, and up to 12 men. America also is recovering every ounce of uranium in those fields. The same applies to Canada and other nations.

Before passing to the second stage of development in Queensland, we should see that ore of the lowest grade is treated. Companies should be encouraged by taxation exemptions to develop these fields. The Commonwealth Government should be asked to extend the tax-free area right along the 26th Parallel to Haddon's corner then in a north easterly direction to cover the area so badly in need of development and population. Let us put back into the development of mineral fields the royalties that are collected, so that every ounce of copper, silver-lead, and uranium in those fields can be recovered. In that way the life of these mineral fields can be extended. I think that is wise advice. If it is followed the life of these fields will be extended into the next generation and perhaps the generation after that.

Mr. Sparkes: I agree so long as you are not too hard on the cattle industry.

Mr. SMITH: With the development of these fields population will increase and the hon. member and other cattle producers will be at their wits' end to supply the requirements of the people in those areas. I ask the Premier, the Secretary for Mines and Cabinet to consider my suggestion to approach the Federal Government for an extension of the tax-free line. It now stops at Haddon's Corner on the border of the Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland whereas it should be extended through Queensland to the coast to the area I have mentioned. Alice Springs is in the tax-free area, but the Cloncurry mineral field is not, despite the fact that it is 300 to 400 miles north of Alice Springs. Tenants Creek is only 150 or 175 miles north-west of Mt. Isa when you take the parallels into consideration.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

Mr. SMITH: There is no difference in the conditions of men working on the hon. member's cattle stations in the Northern Territory and those working on Augustus Downs. I have been through all these areas and I know the conditions. There is no difference in climatic conditions in the various places; the climate is the same, the rainfall the same. It is ridiculous for the hon. member to say that conditions on cattle stations are different.

Mr. Sparkes: You would not be able to have a cold beer.

Mr. SMITH: I have been on cattle stations that had cold rooms and refrigerators and found them to be well stocked with

lager, not draught beer. The air service provided by T.A.A. drives isolation away. The cattle people on Augustus Downs are as much entitled to amenities as the cattleman on Glenroy Station, Rockhampton Downs and Alroy. And what about the people in the sugar industry north of Townsville? Should they not participate in the free taxation? If we were to draw a line round the earth and look at the area between the 26th parallel and the equator, we would find that the part of Australia enclosed between those lines is the only country in the world where the white man survives. Every other country between those lines is worked by black labour. I say that the people in the area are deserving of this tax free scheme. The line should be extended to the West Australian border, to Wyndham and Broome, where we have the pearling industries. I hope that the Treasurer and Premier of this State will put up the case to have the area I have referred to included in the tax free zone.

Mr. Dewar: And what would you do if everybody moved up there?

Mr. SMITH: It is only for 20 years. By that time we would find that there was a leather factory at Burketown. I am not concerned about electorates. I want to see the North populated and developed as it should be for the future protection of this nation. I want to see it protected for my family and my family's families and I shall be happy to forgo my electorate for the development and settlement of North Australia as a buffer area against the hordes to the north of us. I should be happy to forget my own personal interests and I should be happy to walk out tomorrow if I could say that I had done my job in my advocacy on the floor of this House. My argument is to have the parallels extended to the eastern coast of Australia to the area I have mentioned. One can visualise the development that would take place.

We have heard much criticism of the railway system in the North and the West, but we know of the great development that is going to take place out there. We know of the expenditure of many millions of pounds by mining companies in that area. Two representatives of the World Bank are visiting Mt. Isa today on an investigation of the Queensland Government's scheme to strengthen the railway line from Townsville to Mt. Isa. I sincerely hope that the estimated cost of £10,000,000 will be made available by the World Bank, and that consideration will be given also to the building of accommodation for all railway employees on the line. The locomotives and rolling stock used on the line have improved immeasurably over the years, and even if it costs £2,000,000 I should like to see a similar improvement in accommodation for railway employees.

Very few people give the railways the credit due to them for what they have done in developing this State. I refer particularly

to the section from Townsville to Mt. Isa, which is doing a marvellous job in hauling to the port of Townsville the entire output of Mt. Isa Mines. There is no stockpile of lead or copper in the company's yards at Mt. Isa; record shipments of those minerals have been made from Townsville.

Here is an extract from "The Townsville Bulletin" of 31 December, 1955—

"Port trade is broken in eleven months. Cargo Value £27,000,000 to date."

Included in that cargo is copper, lead, zinc, dross, beef, wool, timber and sugar.

I have here figures showing the production of Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. They show as mis-statements many things said not only by members of the Opposition, but by the Press and other critics of the railways, which transport to Townsville every ton of lead, zinc and copper produced by Mt. Isa Mines Ltd.

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

Mr. SMITH: I thank hon. members.

Mr. Sparkes: Where are you going now?

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member for Aubigny should have read in the Townsville "Bulletin" a few weeks ago that a cattle graziers' organisation complimented the Railway Department in the North on the haulage of cattle to make the 1955 killing season the greatest on record. Among the cattle hauled from the trucking yards at Kajabbi, Mt. Isa and Dajarra were some belonging to the hon. member for Aubigny. He comes within the area of taxation concession but when I mentioned the Cloncurry mineral field he said, "Oh, don't ruin it." It is all right for his property "Alroy," but do not bring in other people.

The report of the Townsville Harbour Board shows that during the first 11 months of this year the value of overseas cargo handled at the port was more than £27,000,000, which exceeded by over £2,000,000 the record value of imports and exports established last year. Criticism has been levelled at the haulage of products from Mt. Isa mine to the coast. Lead shipments in June of that year were 1,519 tons, bringing the total for the financial year to 36,544 tons compared with 31,823 tons for the financial year ended 30 June, 1954. The total of 6,738 tons of zinc concentrates exported last month brought the year's total to 41,150 tons, 1,017 tons less than the previous financial year. Blister copper exports in the financial year just ended were 22,000 tons compared with 21,000 tons the previous year. The copper smelters at Mt. Isa were built to produce about 18,000 or 19,000 tons of copper a year but the company is very anxious to produce more and the railways are handling it. In 1954-1955 Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. made a profit of £3,500,000. They

could do that only by selling their products and their only means of transporting them was the railways.

A Government Member: And they are doing a good job, too.

Mr. SMITH: Yes, they are doing a good job. The products did not go down to the coast by Cobb & Co. or by packhorse or camel team but by the Queensland railways. Nobody will deny that for future expansion the line should be strengthened.

Newspapers and hon. members opposite have criticised the railways. I quote the following from a report of Mt. Isa Mines Ltd.:—

“During 1955-1956, 35,389 tons of lead bullion were railed from Mt. Isa. Of this, 30,825 tons were shipped to Britain. Similarly, 24,424 tons of blister copper were received at Townsville and 21,929 tons went overseas and to Port Kembla.

Then there were 35,094 tons of zinc concentrates to be handled. These figures would have been higher but for the close-down and hold-ups caused by the railway overtime ban during the year.

At Townsville, there is storage space for 10,000 tons of lead bullion, 6,000 tons of blister copper, and 19,000 of zinc concentrates.

Lead and copper are stored in neat stacks; zinc concentrates in our own storage shed near the wharf.”

That proves that the railways are hauling every ounce of copper, lead and zinc produced at Mt. Isa to the Townsville jetty for the ships to take overseas or to Port Kembla or wherever the company sells its products.

Mr. Sparkes: What did you say the profit was last year?

Mr. SMITH: £3,500,000.

Mr. Sparkes: Yet you ask for tax concessions.

Mr. SMITH: I ask for them for these people. I ask for them for the workers, their wives and their families. I cannot exclude the company. I cannot ask for one section to be taxed and the other not. I ask for the tax concessions so that the companies can produce from the marginal ore bodies that exist in their mining leases, and thus give a longer life and greater population to the Cloncurry mineral field.

A certain amount of criticism has been levelled against the Government for the delay in the reconstruction of the Townsville-Chartiers Towers railway section. In October, 1954, the then known copper-ore reserves in Mt. Isa were estimated at the current rate of production to last only seven years. By the end of 1955 Mt. Isa Mines by development underground found tremendous copper-ore bodies on its lease. This was not made public until October or November, 1955, when the managing director of Mt. Isa Mines in

his annual report said that huge copper-ore bodies and silver-lead ore bodies had been found, which were going to put at least another 50 years or more on to the life of Mt. Isa. In February, 1956, three head executive directors of Mt. Isa Mines and executives of the American company came to Mt. Isa to get first-hand information on these huge ore reserves. At the end of December, 1955, the Rio Tinto people decided to purchase a controlling interest in the Mary Kathleen uranium field. They did not finalise the purchase or the taking over till the shareholders had a meeting in February 1956. In March, 1956, the directors of Mt. Isa Mines approached the Government to strengthen the railway line from Mt. Isa to Townsville and the Rio Tinto to build an all-weather road to the Mary Kathleen field from Cloncurry. The Premier announced that the Government would construct the road and strengthen the railway from Townsville to Mt. Isa, but that they needed financial assistance. This all happened within three months, from December to March, 1956. The case was placed before the Federal Government through Mr. Fadden in March. We are now into September and they have not done anything. Who is responsible for the delay? Huge ore reserves were found at the end of 1955 and the Rio Tinto Company purchased the Mary Kathleen early in 1956 and in March, 1956, the Premier said, “We will do it. We will appeal to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance.” Sir Arthur Fadden said, “I need more information.” Since then there have been more Federal Ministers in the Mt. Isa, Cloncurry and Mary Kathleen areas than ever before in the history of the State. They only went to have a look.

Mr. Pizzey: You are not objecting.

Mr. SMITH: I am not objecting. These men have no mining knowledge whatsoever. One senator was there three times already this year. Mr. Beale, the Minister for Supply, was forced to go back to Mt. Isa and the Mary Kathleen. He was in the Northern Territory and he flew across Mt. Isa in a Sky-master travelling from Darwin to Sydney. As a result of protests and representations he got in a plane on Sunday in Sydney and flew back to Mt. Isa, went to the Mary Kathleen field, landed back in Brisbane on the Tuesday night, and said that Mt. Isa was going to put in a nuclear power station. Why did he not send men with experience and technical skill? There has been a great influx of Federal politicians to this area since the Premier asked for financial assistance to strengthen the railway and build the road. However, I feel confident because of the visit of the two representatives of the World Bank to the area, this afternoon, where they will stay for a couple of days they will bring the money necessary to build the railway.

It is true, as the hon. member for Hinchinbrook said, that there is a move to try to take trade from Queensland and give it to South Australia and Victoria. Who is trying

to do it? I warn the Premier and the Minister for Transport to watch the position closely, because Federal Ministers are financially interested in this new co-ordinated transport service, and are sending Mr. Harris of the Commonwealth railways to Townsville to act on their behalf in an effort to divert trade from Queensland into South Australia by way of this road transport and Commonwealth rail service. Those Federal Ministers are using representatives of the Commonwealth railways and Mr. Ryan of the Northern Territory Transport Service to get that trade. Federal Ministers are financially interested in this Northern Territory Co-ordinated transport service. Trade is being solicited in the Cloncurry area. The goods are taken by transport to Alice Springs and by Commonwealth Railway to Port Augusta.

They are ably assisted by the Liberal Premier of South Australia, Mr. Playford. At the present time they are not doing much harm as they are taking more from the railway at Mt. Isa than they are delivering in that area. As a matter of fact, the back-loading is 100 per cent. greater than the tonnage delivered. The people of the area are not very interested, because the destination is too far away and the service is too expensive. I admit that at the present time they are carrying goods at a cheap rate to encourage patronage, but that is usual in a new business. A person who starts a business sells an article cheaply at first to encourage customers. The Federal Ministers who are financially interested in this undertaking—

Mr. Sparkes: Give us their names.

Mr. Gair: You know their names?

Mr. SMITH: Yes.

Mr. Brosnan: And the hon. member for Aubigny knows them.

Mr. SMITH: Of course he does. They are the men who were going to conduct the air-beef scheme to bring cattle from the Northern Territory to the Southern meat-works. I would not be surprised if the owners and directors of Alroy Downs are not behind it.

Mr. ROBERTS (Whitsunday) (3.53 p.m.): I associate myself with the other expressions of loyalty to Her Majesty, and I take this opportunity of congratulating His Excellency the Governor on the excellent job he is doing in this State.

I have spoken on a number of occasions of the serious flood position in the Cremorne area, North Mackay. The residents of the area experience this calamity year after year, but nothing is done about it. Every year the whole of the Mackay police force is called out to assist in flood rescue work, together with lifesavers and civilians. Ropes are tied from one electric-light pole to another and across to the hotel. Boats are manned to

rescue people from homes in the area. There is a great risk of loss of life and much property damage is incurred. The area is only a quarter of a mile from the Mackay Post Office, on the other side of the city proper. For the information of hon. members, I have pasted two parish maps together so that they can get the situation in true perspective.

Hon. members will see on the map an area ringed in blue. For the benefit of hon. members I have had a couple of photographs taken and I leave one on each side of the House so that hon. members may follow the position.

Mackay is a rather big city, rated about No. 10 in Queensland. The population figure relates only to the city of Mackay, not the shire of Pioneer which is immediately across the river. If we took a radius of three miles from the post office in Mackay we would have a population of at least 20,000. The big map I have does not go as far as I should have liked it to go, but great expansion is being made in North Mackay particularly since the war. The population in the immediate vicinity of North Mackay has increased at least three fold in the years following the war. A big expansion will take place in the area in the future. The rifle range at North Mackay is to be done away with and that will throw open a very big area for residential purposes. It is no good bullying and appealing to the Government in these matters because, as I have found in matters of this kind, it is more or less like pouring water on a duck's back. It is my intention to endeavour to submit something constructive. In March of this year, during the Easter holidays, we had a ghastly flood experience and, unfortunately, a member of the police force lost his life. There is always the danger of loss of life in such floods. It is only because of the good work by the police and others that we have not lost more lives. If one walked round the area after the flood and looked into some of the houses or huts—call them what you will—one would see that the flood water had reached to within a foot of the ceiling. One would have seen babies' cots and the few possessions that the people have lying out in the yard broken and covered with mud. It is indeed a sorry sight to see. I was over there in the last flood, a little after 9 o'clock at night with the Salvation Army delivering clothing to these people. The people who live in the area are not wealthy, they are of the poorer class. Perhaps that is why they have to live in the area. Hon. members will remember that I suggested in this House some years ago that perhaps the Government could throw open some perpetual lease land on a higher portion of North Mackay and so encourage people to shift to there. Perhaps the Government could bear the cost of removal through the Queensland Housing Commission. I am sure that the residents of the area could not afford the cost.

Mr. Gair: Does it flood every year?

Mr. ROBERTS: Not every year, but I should say that there have been floods in three out of the last five years, and in six or seven out of the last 10.

Mr. Gair: Are the residences old-established places?

Mr. ROBERTS: Most of them.

Mr. Gair: No-one would build there now if it is under flood level.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is so. The Pioneer Shire Council refuses to grant building permits for residential purposes, but that is only in the last four years. However, it will grant building permits for business purposes.

Something could be done very quickly to remedy the position. I suggest that at least the area I have marked on the map should be reclaimed. It lies between the southern bank of Barnes Creek and the northern bank of the Pioneer River, linking up with the harbour railway line. Incidentally, that line has been one of the main contributing factors to flooding. The railway embankment is 4 or 5 ft. above ground level and it acts as a dam. In flood time the water on the eastern side is from 1 ft. to 18 ins. lower than that on the western side. If it was a viaduct rather than an embankment, the flooding would not be nearly as serious as it is.

Government inspectors could examine the land, but for the purposes of this debate I suggest that the area on the map that I have enclosed in a blue pencil line should be reclaimed. Retaining walls could be built on the southern bank of Barnes Creek and the northern bank of the Pioneer River, and the railway embankment used as a retaining wall on the other side. The Pioneer River is silted up, and large quantities of sand could be pumped from it and used to reclaim the area. That would have a twofold effect: it would raise the level of the land and deepen the river channel, thus reducing the water level in times of flood. Further up the stream around the hospital bridge it is silted and sanded up and perhaps it is only a matter of time when the river will silt up again. It calls for a more expert opinion than mine but if this vast quantity of sand were removed it would give the river the run and perhaps wash some of the other sand out to sea. The area comprises about 150 acres—105 acres in one section, 15 acres in another, and 9 acres are marked off as freehold land, with no improvements. I think it would be necessary to resume the freehold portion to do the job effectively.

Then there is an area to the east between the main road and the railway embankment. It is mangrove swamp and it extends $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 chains from the road. The reclaimed land on both sides of the main road would be very valuable.

There would be some difficulty with the small settled area just off the Forgan Bridge, particularly with small houses and shacks almost on the ground. It might be necessary to introduce legislation to force the people

to lift the houses. While that might cost £100 or £150, the land would increase in value by at least £300 or £400 an allotment and perhaps finance could be arranged through the Housing Commission. As it is subject to such consistent flooding it would be very hard to put any value on it now.

We have the sand and with sand pumping we could reclaim the area very quickly and efficiently. I am told that it takes about 500 cubic yards of sand to cover an acre-foot of land. Assuming that the area is to be covered to 5 ft., at 150 acres that would be 75,000 cubic yards for 1 ft. and 375,000 cubic yards to reclaim the lot. We may well expect to be told, "We have not the finance. The Federal Government are running us a bit short. You have seen on this occasion that we have had to cut down by about £2,000,000." We get that all the time. I will show the Government how they could do the whole job most effectively and without the payment of one penny. They could give the land to the Pioneer Shire Council or the Mackay Harbour Board or lease it on perpetual lease. By making a grant of the land to the Pioneer Shire Council, the Mackay Harbour Board, Thiess Bros., Hornibrooks, or anybody else, conditional upon their reclaiming it and putting in roads, drainage, etc., it would cost the Government nothing but it would be a most effective way of making it very valuable land indeed, handy to the city.

Thiess Bros. are used to this type of job. They have recently completed similar work on the Gold Coast in the Southport-Surfers Paradise area. I have discussed the matter with Thiess Bros.' chief engineer, Mr. Osborne, and he told me that he does not see any difficulties at all. Based on similar jobs, he gave me a rough estimate of £1,000 an acre to reclaim the land. Therefore it would cost £150,000 to reclaim 150 acres, and this would include roads and drainage.

Let us assume that four 32-perch allotments are subdivided out of each area, instead of five, allowing the other 32 perches for roads. As a matter of fact, I suggest that there could be an excellent esplanade right along the river frontage. Even assuming that only three 32-perch allotments came out of each acre, allowing the equivalent of two 32-perch allotments for roads, etc., it would mean that each allotment would have a value of £330, and they could be sold very quickly at £350 or £400 each. In a westerly direction from Mackay, two miles out of town, they pay up to £600 and £700 for an allotment. Apparently it is not an over-estimate to suggest that if this area were reclaimed within a quarter of a mile of the main street there would be no difficulty in getting £400 for an allotment. I think I have clearly shown how the Government can reclaim this area and at the same time eliminate the flood danger. At present the land is marked on that map as a Harbour Board reserve but its value, due to flooding, is virtually nothing. I know that the Government are

not disposed to sell Crown land. They have frequently boasted that 95 per cent. of the land of the State is owned by the Crown. In this instance I do not think they would be losing anything if they gave this swamp land either to the Council, the Harbour Board, or to anybody who would undertake to reclaim it in a manner laid down by the Government. I sincerely ask the Minister concerned to go into this matter. I think I have offered a constructive suggestion. It will not cost the Government anything; it will remove the danger of flooding and so relieve the strain on the police force during flood periods. It will eradicate the mosquitoes that inhabit the mangrove area. I do not think that Government engineers will be able to fault the proposal. I hope the Government will do something quickly, not allow the matter to rest for years when other lives may be lost through the flooding of the area. I do not think many people realise the advancement that has taken place in North Mackay in such a short time. Only a few years prior to the war the Forgan Bridge was built but now it is hardly wide enough to handle the traffic from the North Mackay area. By the end of this year a bitumen road will be completed to link Malcomson Street with Hill End over what we knew as Amiet's or Croker's Hill. When this is finished it will permit a much larger percentage of the traffic from the North Coast to go through North Mackay.

At the present time there is not much traffic from the North Coast but when the bitumen road is completed by the end of the year a considerable increase can be expected. Any one who has driven in a motor car to North Mackay over the Forgan Bridge at knocking-off time and has seen the number of cyclists who use the bridge can appreciate the great difficulties of the motorist. Something will have to be done. I do not suggest for a moment that anything as expensive as a new bridge can be considered, but the position could be relieved by building a board walk for pedestrians on the downstream side of the bridge. At the moment a walk of about three or four feet is provided for pedestrians on each side of the bridge. It is divided from the road by a kerbing. This part of the bridge is not used by a great number of pedestrians throughout the day. I suggest that it be used by cyclists travelling each way. The board walk for pedestrians would not cost a great deal. I ask the Minister to consider my suggestion.

The Barnes Creek bridge was completed in the last seven or eight years, but already it is too small and perhaps slightly low. Further consideration will have to be given to it.

I suggest that the Licensing Commission should grant another hotel licence in the North Mackay area. It has a population of 4,500 to 5,000 people; the only hotel is near the Forgan Bridge.

Mr. Jesson: The correct pronunciation is "F-o-g-a-n."

Mr. ROBERTS: Forgan came from Mackay. Forgan it was and still is. He was a very good man. This hotel is situated almost in the city of Mackay. From the 20th Annual Report of the Licensing Commission I learn that at 30 June, 1956, the average number of persons to a hotel in Queensland was 1,135. With its population of 5,000, North Mackay would be entitled to four hotels on that basis, but there is only one hotel and it is at the extreme end of the area. A new hotel in the centre of North Mackay would be a distinct advantage to the working man. They could have their glass of ale at knocking-off time and not be so far away from home. I feel that it would be appreciated by the womenfolk at home too because the husband would get home earlier for his meals and, if he wanted, he could go out later.

A few weeks ago I was in Sydney. Since the introduction of 10 o'clock closing in that city the hotels close at half past 6, reopening again at half past 7. That is a law that this State might well copy. I believe some of the publicans in Sydney did not like it at first. There are several advantages. A man who knocks off work at 5 p.m. or 5.30 p.m. has had a few drinks by 6.30 p.m. If the hotels are closed at that hour his wife or boarding-house keeper could reasonably expect him home within the next 10 or 15 minutes. If he wanted to, he could go out again later at night. The closing law in Sydney also allows hotel staff to have a meal between 6.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. Further it gives the hotel-keeper an opportunity to clean up his hotel which so often gets like a pigsty. Many get into this condition after a heavy rush at knocking-off time. It is a pleasure to go into a Sydney hotel after 7.30 p.m. I offer that suggestion for Government consideration. Hotels in Brisbane, like the Carlton and others, would not be kindly disposed towards this scheme because it means that if a man knocks off work in town and waits only till half past 6 he will go to his suburban hotel for any further drinks that he may want.

Mr. Aikens: Few working men can go to the Carlton.

Mr. ROBERTS: There is a public bar in the front of that hotel and at any time you can find working men in it.

Money has gone in dribs and drabs to the Pioneer Shire Council for the sewerage of North Mackay. An odd piece of land for a sewerage station has been purchased and I suppose in a matter of time the people of North Mackay will have sewerage. As I said several times today this area is growing fast. It is high country and the main portion of it is well drained. In the near future we hope to have a further water supply at Mount Oscar. I ask the Government to speed up the sewerage of North Mackay.

Another matter to which I have referred previously is the provision of a permanent baby clinic in North Mackay. At present it is open only two or three days a week.

The people of North Mackay would also like a police station and a C.P.S. office. That would save them from going into Mackay to transact their business. An area with the population of North Mackay is entitled to a police station. Of course, I am not suggesting that they are not law-abiding people, but they would appreciate a police station.

North Mackay needs a hospital too. Brisbane has its General Hospital and the new South Brisbane Hospital as well as numerous private hospitals, and I ask the Government to establish a cottage hospital in North Mackay, with the Mackay Hospital as a base hospital. If they do not establish a Government hospital in North Mackay, it is likely that steps will be taken in the near future to establish a co-operative or a friendly societies hospital there. There is an urgent need for the hospital, particularly for out-patients and maternity cases.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Wood, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.34 p.m.