

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1956

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

QUESTIONS.

HOME FOR THE AGED, STUART, TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“With reference to his reply, some time ago, to my representations on the matter, that a decision was being awaited as to the Commonwealth Government’s intention regarding the use or disposal of the buildings, can he inform the House if any progress has been made in the consideration of the acquisition of the Migrant Centre at Stuart from the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of converting it into a State Home for the aged?”

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

“At the outset, I would like to correct any misunderstanding that might be caused by the wording of this question. It might appear from the question, that the hon. member for Mundinburra was alone in making representations on this matter, whereas he was only one of many, and certainly not the first. The honourable the Minister for Works and Housing, and the hon. members for Townsville and Hinchinbrook, not only made representations, but have kept continually in touch with me in this matter. An inspection of the Migrant Centre at Stuart has been made, and the report discloses that the buildings in their present state are quite unsuitable for an Aged Persons' Home. Because of the cost involved alone in converting the buildings to meet the needs of aged people, the proposition is not a practical one, particularly at this time of restricted Loan Funds and shortage of finances generally. In addition, there are other shortcomings in the Centre that would seriously prejudice its use for the purpose proposed.”

COLLINSVILLE AND SCOTTVILLE
WORKERS' CLUB.

Mr. ROBERTS (Whitsunday) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. As the project of the Collinsville and Scottville Workers' Club does not come within the ambit of the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Acts and therefore a Government guarantee cannot be given, and taking into consideration that the committee handling the project are holding a cash balance of approximately £7,000/£8,000, £5,000 of which was donated by the Bowen Consolidated Mines Company, and as functions promoting the welfare of workers were recommended in the Powell Duffryn Report and appear to be the responsibility of the Queensland Coal Board, will he please advise whether it is within the powers of this board to (a) Make a donation towards the cost of erecting this amenity and (b) Guarantee an amount owing on the project?

“2. If the answer to either (a) or (b) or both are in the affirmative, will he take the necessary steps to bring the matter before the board and give it his support?”

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

“1. From the various questions which have, during the past few weeks, been asked by the hon. member for Whitsunday, I must conclude that he has not yet taken the time to study in full the Powell Duffryn Report or the provisions of the legislation of this Parliament, or the various reports of the Queensland Coal Board which have been supplied to him. He does not appear to be aware of the fact that the promotion of the welfare

of colliery employees was not a recommendation by the Powell Duffryn Organisation but that that Organisation in its Report merely quoted in this respect the provisions of the Coal Industry (Control) Act of this Parliament, which Act amongst other things authorised the Queensland Coal Board to take action towards the promotion of the welfare of workers engaged in the coal industry of the State. In pursuance of this authorisation the Coal Board has since its establishment expended from moneys advanced to it by the Government an amount approaching £100,000 towards the promotion of welfare projects for colliery employees and persons domiciled in coal-mining districts. The hon. member, if he had perused the various reports supplied to him, would be fully aware of this fact, and of the policy being pursued by the Coal Board regarding welfare projects. It is obvious that in considering the subsidising of welfare projects some degree of priority must be established within available finance and it would be totally impossible for the Coal Board to subsidise every project put forward which might involve an improvement in the conditions of colliery employees in every part of the State while there were some of these projects which were more urgent than others. To date the Coal Board has restricted its subsidy grants to the provision of water and electricity in isolated coal-mining districts and until such projects have been finalised the provision of Welfare Clubs must, of necessity, be deferred or left to the employees themselves or to the owners of the collieries. However, in reference to the statement by the hon. member that the Bowen Consolidated Coal Mine Company has donated an amount of £5,000 towards the provision of a Welfare Club at Scottville, I would inform him that the Government, as owners of the State Mine at Collinsville, have expended an amount considerably exceeding that figure on amenities for the promotion of the welfare of the employees on the field.

“2. See answer to Question 1.”

BITUMEN ROAD, WAROULA TO RIDGELANDS.

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

“With reference to the closure and recent lifting of the Rockhampton-Ridgeland railway line, will he kindly advise what progress has been made towards the completion of construction of a bitumen-surfaced roadway from Waroula to Ridgeland to compensate the residents of Ridgeland district for the loss of the railway service?”

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

“The existing road from Waroula to Ridgeland has been maintained in a trafficable condition. An amount of

£15,000 has been provided on the 1956-1957 programme for full construction and bitumen surfacing for a two-mile section over the portion which causes most inconvenience in the wet season. Consideration will be given to the full construction and bitumen surfacing of the rest of the road in the following year."

EUROPEAN HOUSE BORER.

Mr. MADSEN (Warwick) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"With reference to recent press reports that the European house borer, a serious threat to houses containing softwood timbers, has been identified in Brisbane, will he kindly advise whether such borer has been found in any Queensland homes constructed of imported timbers; if so, whether the prescribed methods of treating local timbers are effective against this type of borer, and also what steps generally are being taken to combat this menace?"

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) replied—

"Yes, the infestation by this insect has been discovered in houses in Queensland constructed of imported timbers. As soon as it was found, Cabinet, recognising the need for immediate action, approved of the setting up of an inter-departmental Committee representative of the Queensland Housing Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Stock and the Forestry Department to investigate the extent of infestation and to consider eradication measures. Eradication of this insect is possible by whole house fumigation with methyl-bromide and Cabinet has approved that tenders be called for such work. This borer will not attack Australian hardwoods but it may attack local pine species. Tests are being carried out at the present time to determine whether the insect will attack native pine and if so the most effective method of preventing such attack."

HOUSING ACCOMMODATION FOR LENGTHSMEN AT BARALABA.

Mr. HEWITT (Mackenzie) asked the Minister for Transport—

"With reference to two railway lengthsmen who have been stationed at Baralaba railway station yards for approximately four years and two years respectively and who, during such periods, have been provided only with tent accommodation, will he kindly give favourable consideration to providing these two employees and similar permanent employees with much more suitable and permanent accommodation, particularly in view of the fact that temporary railway employees in the area, such as painters and bridge carpenters, are housed in prefabricated huts erected for their use during the period of their employment?"

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

"Tents occupied by maintenance men are being rapidly replaced by bondwood huts with preference of supply being given to the accommodation of men employed in migratory gangs. When these gangs have been so equipped the tents used by fettlers will be replaced. Of the current order for 100 huts for the Central Division, 28 already have been supplied."

ART UNION REGULATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Power, read a third time.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—EIGHTH ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 4 September (see p. 375) on Mr. Moores's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba) (11.14 a.m.): It is a privilege to be associated once again with the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, when, regardless of political affiliations we re-affirm our loyalty to the Throne and express appreciation of the privilege of being members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. At the same time we recognise our responsibilities to the full.

I have already congratulated you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to your very important office. I know I express the views of all hon. members when I say that you possess their absolute confidence.

I also express gratitude to my electors for again returning me as their representative. We all realise our responsibilities to our electors. Whether we sit in Government or in Opposition it is our duty to present the case for our electors as we think fit. I do not know of any Parliament in the world where hon. members are given a freer right to express their opinions than they are on the floor of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. I have acknowledged the debt I owe to the very many helpers who assisted me in an extremely difficult election campaign. My opponent fought cleanly. I have never taken part in any campaign where personalities have been the major issue. Elections should not be fought on personalities. Labour Party candidates have enough to talk about in Labour's policy and Labour's record, without recourse to personalities. Any unpleasantness that did occur during the campaign was not caused by my opponent but, I believe, by Liberal Party headquarters in Brisbane. It was typical of their attitude throughout the campaign. I shall have more to say about it later on. The North Toowoomba electorate was written off by the minor prophets of the Opposition as one that would be

lost to Labour. From the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader down to their most minor prophet they considered North Toowoomba was a seat most likely to go. Such statements are typical of the Liberal Party's knowledge of the feeling of the electors of Queensland. A concentrated attack was made on the North Toowoomba seat; 15 certainties or near certainties were picked out and my electorate was one of them. A very determined attempt was made to take this seat from the Labour Party, but it was unsuccessful, and I express my appreciation to the electors for again returning me with a very handsome majority in spite of the bitterness of the attack launched against me.

Labour won the election under great difficulties. I do not remember any time in Queensland's Labour history when the Opposition were more inclined to express the hope that they were coming in for the kill, that they thought the kill was there. They believed that everything was weighted against the Government but they did not know the Labour Party. They thought that because we had our internal differences it meant that the Labour Party had been destroyed or was about to be destroyed. Despite very heavy handicaps Labour won the most resounding victory in the history of Queensland politics. There has never been a more convincing victory under such handicaps. All the alibis and complaints of the Opposition now cannot take away from the Government the conviction that they won for the one good reason. The people wanted them to be the Government, they would not trust the Opposition. They knew Labour and they were determined that Labour should be returned. I put this question to the House—why did Labour win so handsomely?

Mr. Low: The little Budget.

Mr. WOOD: There are several reasons. By that interjection the hon. member for Cooroora condemns the Federal Treasurer. The Little Budget was lauded by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition throughout Queensland.

Mr. Pizzey: Of course we do.

Mr. WOOD: The hon. member for Cooroora said it was the Little Budget. I shall have something to say about the Little Horror Budget later on. I should say that the first reason why Labour won so handsomely is that the people have had years of Labour Government and leadership. They knew Labour's policy and the ability of Labour's parliamentary representatives to carry it out. The second reason was that they knew the Opposition, which is very important too. Wherever I went during the election campaign I heard the strong opinion that one of the strongest cases for the Labour Party was the weakness of the Opposition. No-one on the Opposition can truthfully deny that. We went before the electors with the full and loyal backing of the trade union movement which the Labour Government still have—

make no mistake about that. We had the loyal support that Labour always expects from the trade union movement. There is another extremely important matter, something that the Liberal Party has not learned—the electors will not follow a party that is badly led. Labour in Queensland has always had a great edge on its opponents in the matter of leadership. I make no idle prophesy when I say that this Government will not be in the slightest danger at any other election until the Liberal and Country Parties can match the Labour Party with leadership. One thing that struck me most forcibly was the repugnance expressed by the people in my electorate at the methods of campaigning adopted by the Liberal Party. As I said before, my opponent was a very decent fellow who fought cleanly. The objectionable methods were adopted by Liberal Party headquarters. I believe, for instance, that there was a major plan formulated at their campaign headquarters. I experienced an example of it in my own electorate where, on the Thursday night, when I would have no chance of making an effective reply, 8,000 letters were posted to electors in my area attacking me on a personal basis. I believe that this was the plan followed in every electorate in Queensland where there was a Liberal Party candidate. It was all produced at the Liberal Party campaign headquarters in Brisbane, with local variations, in an attempt to discredit Labour candidates. In my case it failed ignominiously as it deserved to fail. Generally speaking, the tactics of the Liberal Party were repugnant not only to Labour members but also to the great majority of Country Party members in this House. I say that without fear of sincere denial.

In my electorate people laughed at some of the Liberal Party propaganda put over the local radio station. Two or three times a day listeners would hear words to this effect, "Interested visitors to Queensland find Queensland schools worse than the Black Hole of Calcutta. The crowding in many Queensland schools would put the Black Hole of Calcutta to shame." Those are not the exact words. I went to the radio station and got a copy of the script. My answer to my electors was this, "Look at your school and tell me where you will find a better school in Australia." That position is not common to North Toowoomba. In every electorate in Queensland, whether held by the Liberal Party, Country Party or Labour Party, generally speaking, there is a similar state of affairs. It is a shocking thing when a political party departs from the ordinary standards of decency and makes the repeated statement that our Queensland schools are worse than the Black Hole of Calcutta. I took great exception to the statement.

I was told by one Opposition candidate that the statement had not been made. I immediately went to the radio station where I was given a verbatim copy of the script.

The statement was definitely made, and it had the imprimatur of Liberal Party headquarters. These people are not doing a service to Queensland or Queenslanders when they represent to Australia generally that such a state of affairs exists, and that is particularly so when they know that our educational system compares favourably with that in any other State in Australia or any other country of the world.

I shall give a sample of the type of speech that was made against me. This appeared in one of my opponent's campaign addresses. It was headed, "The Gair Government is scratching," and concluded on this note, "There is an old saying that if you lie down with dogs you get up with fleas. It is no wonder the Gair Government is scratching. It will be even more so on May the 19th." That was the type of stuff used by the Liberal Party spokesman in the North Toowoomba campaign. Is it any wonder, leaving aside altogether the confidence of the public generally in the Labour Party and Labour Governments, that the electors were sickened by that nauseating type of propaganda?

I had occasion during the campaign to refer to the Country Party member for Cunningham, a man for whom I have a very high personal respect. I objected to a statement he made and I asked him to produce a copy of "Hansard" to prove that what he had said was correct. He said first of all that his grandfather was a shearer. Good luck to him. My father-in-law was a shearer. Then the hon. member for Cunningham said that his grandfather stood for a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. That applies to every unionist. That is one of the basic principles of unionism, a fair day's work, and, equally important, a fair day's pay. The hon. member for Cunningham in speaking in his electorate said that, when a Country Party member was speaking last session in this Assembly and advocating a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, he was almost assaulted and met with cries of, "Tory exploiter," and, "You want to break the worker down." I asked the hon. member to produce the copy of "Hansard" that contained those statements.

It is true that on many occasions hon. members on this side of the Chamber have called certain members of the Opposition "Tory exploiters," and have told them that they want to break down the worker, but not on the basis of their advocacy of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. I ask the hon. member for Cunningham to produce the evidence now that a Country Party member was almost assaulted in this Chamber when advocating a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

I believe that each candidate has a perfect right to state his case in his own way, but I also believe that he has an equal obligation to make sure that his statements are founded on truth.

I have said that generally speaking there was great difference between the campaign methods adopted by the Country Party and those adopted by the Liberal Party. I have always believed that there is a mile of difference between the methods used in this House by members of the Country Party and members of the Liberal Party. I feel sure that most members of the Country Party would say that that statement was true. They know that they are doomed to permanent opposition whilst they associate themselves with the Liberal Party. I propose to give an example. We have four new members in this House, the hon. members for Cairns, Rockhampton, Mackenzie and Sherwood. Regardless of political affiliation, every hon. member takes an interest in new members in this Assembly, and I was particularly struck with the demeanour of three of the new members. The hon. members for Cairns, Rockhampton and Mackenzie made extremely valuable contributions to this debate and I was particularly struck with the demeanour of the hon. member for Mackenzie. Naturally, of course, I deplore that we have not our old colleague, Paddy Whyte, with us, but we must accept the decision of the people of the electorate. They have chosen a new member to take his place. No-one could be otherwise than impressed with his demeanour because his opening words were to this effect: "I rise to speak with a feeling of nervousness, like a stranger in a strange land." We all felt something in common with him when he said that because there is not one of us who does not suffer some degree of nervousness. With the passing years that feeling is not entirely removed. An hon. member who will admit that, with a degree of modesty, has much to commend him. So far as we on this side of the House are concerned, he lost nothing in our estimation by the modesty of his demeanour and the way in which he made his maiden speech. I should say the same of him from the platform in his electorate.

Mr. Muller: Perhaps you would help me next time?

Mr. Wood: I suggest to the hon. member for Fassifern that instead of asking me to help him he start to help his own Queensland Dairy-men's Organisation. I suggest even that he try to give some backing to that organisation. The Queensland Dairy-men's Organisation was made a statutory body by the Labour Government, and it is an organisation of producers and every producer should participate actively in it. I ask the hon. member for Fassifern to tell this House and the people why he bitterly opposed a request by the Queensland Dairy-men's Organisation that that organisation should be directly represented on the Equalisation Committee. That was a just claim. I have said that the Queensland Dairy-men's Organisation is an organisation of the producers. It sought representation on the Equalisation Committee. If hon. members opposite and the hon. member for Fassifern in particular, had supported it, it would

have got the representation. The hon. member need not worry about asking me to help him; let him help the industry that he is supposed to represent.

Before I was interrupted I was making a contrast between the correct approach adopted by the hon. member for Mackenzie and the extremely patronising approach of the hon. member for Sherwood.

He was treated with the courtesy due to every hon. member in making his maiden speech, unless of course he is provocative. I listened for the entire eleven minutes that he spoke of the 40 allowed to him, and I did not hear one interjection although almost everything he said could have been challenged by hon. members on this side of the House. For example, he clothed himself with the authority of an active trade unionist. I have known trade unionists in this State for 30 years and of their fight to better the conditions of the workers, but never have I heard of the name of John Herbert as a leader of the trade union movement. I ask the hon. member for Sherwood what trade union did he belong to.

Mr. Herbert: The one that your brother was president of.

Mr. WOOD: The Bank Officers' Association! Can anyone imagine anything more politically impertinent than that a man should pose as an active trade unionist when his only union activity has been membership of the Bank Officers' Association?

Mr. Pizzev: What has yours been, other than as a member of the Queensland Teachers' Union?

Mr. WOOD: What the hon. member for Isis says is quite correct; my only union has been the Queensland Teachers' Union. It was the only one I was eligible to join. But I have never come into this House and posed as a trade unionist of authority. That is the difference between the hon. member for Sherwood and me. However, I have had an extremely active and cordial relationship with trade unionists in my electorate, and I receive their loyal support in all my political actions.

I have no quarrel with the members of the Bank Officers' Association. As the hon. member for Sherwood has said, when my brother was in Queensland he was its president. Its members are just as decent as those of any other union, but the hon. member for Sherwood should not come into this Chamber and imply that membership of the Bank Officers' Association cloaks him with authority to speak as an active trade unionist. In passing, the only industrial activity that I know of on the part of the Bank Officers' Association was its bitter political organisation against the Chifley Labour Government. The hon. member for Sherwood, who is merely an ex-member of

the Bank Officers' Association, in his maiden speech in this Chamber posed as an authority on trade unionism.

Mr. Rasey: It was probably written for him by a bank manager.

Mr. WOOD: No, he probably wrote it himself as it took only eleven minutes to deliver.

I contrast his speech with those of the hon. members for McKenzie, Cairns and Rockhampton. I heard later the hon. member's broadcast speech. When he spoke in this Chamber he was not subjected to one interjection or one point of order. Nor was any objection taken from this side of the House to the fact that he read almost the whole of his speech. No-one took exception to that because it was his maiden speech. If an hon. member making his maiden speech has to help himself by reading it, that is nothing to his discredit. But I object to his patronising manner in getting up like a veteran, and to the way in which he spoke on the 4BK Political Forum. In that speech he referred to television and said, "It is a pity we have not television in our Parliament. It would keep a lot of them out." He said, "There are some good speakers on both sides but there are some who read their speeches and read them badly." That, coming from the hon. member for Sherwood who read almost every word of his own speech, was impertinent, patronising, and objectionable to hon. members.

Mention was made a moment ago of the "Little Horror" budget, I think by the hon. member for Cooroora, and a colleague said, "We believe in it." I can tell the House that members of the Opposition were almost struck with paralysis when they heard the "Little Horror" budget. No doubt it was one thing that helped, above all else, to show the people that Menzies and Fadden and the Liberal-Country Party generally could not be trusted with the administration of the country. We called it a "Little Horror" budget but it has become more than that; it has become a "Big Horror" budget because all the injustices that were introduced in the "Little Horror" budget have been perpetuated in the recent Federal budget.

I have not much time left and I do not want to be sidetracked. I want to comment on an important feature of that budget.

Mr. Munro: Do you think that because a thing is unpopular it is necessarily unsound?

Mr. WOOD: Not necessarily. But can the hon. member find any-one other than Professor Swan, Sir Arthur Fadden, Mr. Menzies and the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, who will say that that is not unsound? Let the hon. member listen to what he hears

on the trams and buses or as he walks along the streets. The average man is not devoid of common sense.

Mr. Gair: It amounts to a sectional tax.

Mr. WOOD: Remember that only as far back as 1939—admittedly before the days of uniform taxation—the Commonwealth budget provided for revenue amounting to £100,000,000. Recall, too, the bitter cries of the Opposition when the late Mr. Chifley introduced a budget for £359,000,000 and now we have one for about £1,200,000,000. It is hard to know where it will end. It seems to me that the Federal Government are becoming still more extravagant and they are asking the States and the workers to bear the burden. I refer to the leading article in "The Courier-Mail" this morning to instance such extravagance. The Commonwealth Government spokesmen want all quarterly basic-wage adjustments to be suspended on the ground that their continuance would add to the cost of living. That argument is completely broken down by the fact that the cost of living has risen higher in those States where the adjustments have been suspended than in other States.

An Opposition Member: That is not correct.

Mr. WOOD: Of course it is correct. Costs are highest in the States that have frozen the basic wage, which destroys the argument that the adjustments are the sole cause of our present economic troubles.

We have many economic problems but the Commonwealth Government seem to think there are only two ways to solve them—firstly ask the worker to live a tougher life and secondly, suggest that the States restrict their spending and retrench. I am not going to be so stupid as to say that we have large-scale unemployment. At present we have reasonably full employment but I am concerned with the position that could develop overnight. The signs are in Western Australia today and the Government there are deeply concerned at the unemployment trend. If it develops it will not be isolated in Western Australia but will manifest itself in every State in the Commonwealth. Any man who would not do all he could to avert a return to the hardships and miseries of the dole queue would be criminal in his neglect. I fear that the most serious consequence of the Commonwealth Government's madcap financial policy could be a return of unemployment. As a Labour man I would hate to see it and most hon. members opposite would hate to see a return to those days. The signs are in Western Australia and if the Commonwealth Government continue with their policy of reaping in more and more money and telling the States to cut down their works we could quite easily see a rapid decline in employment.

They tell us we must cut down, forgetting the admonitions of their own all-party Public Accounts Committee, forgetting the examples

of their own extravagance which are brought to notice every day. I ask hon. members opposite to tell us where the Queensland Government in all justice could make slashes in their expenditure. Should we do it in our schools? I do not think even one hon. member opposite would like to see our school vote cut down.

Mr. Pizzey interjected.

Mr. WOOD: I suggest that the hon. member for Isis read the leading article in this morning's "Courier-Mail." More than £3,000,000 was spent on a fleet tanker for which the Navy has no use and which it cannot now sell. In Commonwealth finance that is just a drop in a very big bucket.

Would the Opposition suggest that we should cut down on expenditure on our rolling stock, in the modernisation of our railways, in the building up of our roads, or in the health and hospital services? Would they suggest that we place an imposition on mothers taking children to public clinics or to maternal and child welfare centres? I believe there are not many hon. members opposite who would like to see us cut out our free hospital system. If hon. members of the Opposition were sincere in their election statements about continuing free hospitalisation I challenge them to make representations to the Commonwealth Government to ensure that no matter what else happens Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden will make certain that that system which means so much to us is never in danger of disappearing.

Mr. Menzies and Sir Arthur Fadden have spoken of problems and said that they are the problems of prosperity. If I had a choice between problems of prosperity and problems of poverty I should take the problems of prosperity every time. If you gave me the choice between the problems of rosy health or problems of starvation I should be happy. In regard to the problems associated with prosperity, we shall get over them far more quickly if we do not carry out false moves that may change those problems from those of prosperity to those of poverty. One of the worst features of the Commonwealth Government is their attitude towards pensioners. I refer principally to age pensioners although my remarks apply to all pensioners. The time is past when a payment to a pensioner is to be regarded as a charity. It has been accepted by every enlightened State that one of its obligations is to care for the aged who have no resources either by way of home provision or in pension payment. I know that members of the Opposition are just as interested in the problems of the aged as I am. I do not believe they adopt the callous attitude that the aged should be thrown on the scrap heap. Speaking generally, I believe that the public recognise their responsibilities to the aged.

Mr. Low: Can you offer any suggestions to improve their conditions?

Mr. WOOD: I do not believe that justice will ever be done to pensioners—and no government has ever given full justice to pensioners—until the rate for a pensioner is half the basic wage. That is my personal opinion on justice to pensioners. I believe that the same methods should be adopted in fixing the rate payable to aged pensioners as is adopted in determining the basic wage—the minimum amount required to maintain a pensioner and his wife on a reasonable standard.

Dr. Noble: And three children.

Mr. WOOD: The basic wage is not based on three children. Justice will not be given to the pensioners until that is done. I shall show hon. members how the position is declining. It is no longer a charity; it is a right. These people have grown old in the service of the State. They have worked hard in the shearing sheds, railways, mines, on the farms, in shops and factories. By their service to the community and their contributions through taxation they are right in believing that the State should recognise its obligation to them in return when they are least able to look after themselves. They have no organisation, although they have a Pensioners' League which is a voice crying in the wilderness. I know some members of the Pensioners' League; they are drawn together when they realise their desperate position. Can you tell me, Mr. Speaker, that any trade union would for a minute allow a state of affairs to continue where so many of its members suffered the injustice that the pensioners are suffering today. It is not so bad when a pensioner and his wife have their own home.

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

Mr. WOOD: I thank the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the House for their courtesy. I shall not trespass by going beyond the subject with which I am dealing.

The position can be tolerable when a pensioner and his wife own their own home and have an income between them of £8 a week but it becomes worse when they have to pay rent and infinitely worse where there is only one pensioner—a pensioner whose wife or husband has died—who has to rent a home or live in his or her own home on £4 a week. I do not know how they make ends meet. They do not do it by buying good cuts of meat, potatoes at 1s. 8d. lb. and onions at 1s. 7d. lb. They do it by going on a starvation diet. It is a scandalous indictment of the Federal Government in these times of record budgets that they adopt this niggardly attitude towards pensioners. They have failed to realise their responsibilities to people who are no longer able to look after themselves. A deputation went to Parliament House, Canberra, to see the Federal Treasurer. At first he refused to see them, and then was kind enough to arrange for them to have luncheon—one luncheon. That is all the encouragement Sir

Arthur Fadden gave this deputation of pensioners. It is useless saying that this Government gave so much and another Government gave something less. Yesterday I rang the Government Statistician. I had no particular reason for picking on a certain year. I said to him, "Would you mind starting from the year before the one in which Mr. Chifley went out of office, 1948, and give me the percentage that the full pension bore to the simple average of the basic wage over the capital cities?" By that I meant the simple division, without taking into account the number of people working in the different States. He said, "Any particular date?" I said, "Make it 31 December." Here are the figures he supplied:—

Year.	Percentage to Basic Wage.
1948	35.3
1949	32.7
1950	31.1
1951	30.2
1952	29.4
1953	29.5
1954	29.5
1955	33.0

Hon. members will see that there has been a gradual decline in the real value of the pensioner's money. It went up last time when the pension was increased by 10s., but since 31 December, 1955, as a result of the cost-of-living increases since that date, the pension percentage to the basic wage has decreased to 31.2. Relatively speaking, the pensioner is getting 31.2 per cent. of the average basic wage of the six capital cities, as against 35.3 per cent in 1948. I do not think anyone will deny my statement that, in terms of goods that can be bought with it, the pension is even worse than it was in 1948, and I am not going to say it was good in 1948. I know the means test has been liberalised to some degree but that does not help in any way the man or woman who has no means at all and has not the health to augment his or her meagre income.

Mr. Herbert: What about the medical benefits they receive? They should be taken into consideration.

Mr. WOOD: They are certainly of some assistance.

The figures I have quoted prove beyond all doubt that the plight of the pensioner is a desperate one and, if for no other reason, the people of Australia should indict the Federal Government on the latest Budget brought down on their callous attitude towards the pensioners.

I believe that the care of the aged is one of the most pressing problems in Australia today.

Churches, religious organisations and the Government are doing their part to provide homes for the aged, but that satisfies only a percentage. We still have a vast army of

people who do not want to go into homes; after all, they have the right to please themselves. They want to live and die in the surroundings in which they were brought up and in which they have lived their adult life. We find that this army is growing year by year. So I say that we in Australia have many problems but I do not know of any more pressing or crying out for solution as this one of giving justice to the aged. I appeal to all members of the Opposition to join with my party in pressing the Commonwealth Government all they can in their time of inflated revenue to make some worthwhile attempt to give to the pensioners some belated recognition of the justice to which they are entitled.

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (12.1 p.m.): I associate myself with the Speech delivered by His Excellency and I pay tribute to him on the excellent way that he has continued to serve this State. No-one travels the State more than Sir John and Lady Lavarack. We have been fortunate indeed to have had their services over so many years and as a citizen I associate myself with the expressions of appreciation to him and his good lady on their excellent work.

I congratulate the Premier, Hon. V. C. Gair, on once again leading his party to victory at the polls. I do not know of any other Premier who has had greater electoral success than he. It is a high tribute to him that he has gone to the country on two occasions and on each he has come back with an all-time record majority of members. It shows the great confidence reposed in his Government by the people of Queensland. He is entitled to the highest praise one can bestow for his capable leadership. Not only do we of the Labour Party praise him for his leadership but the people of Queensland do likewise. It was stated by our political opponents—and they have every right to state their case—that the Labour Government would fail at the elections, that our opponents were going to win a great number of electorates, but the Government came back with the same numbers as before. That in itself is a great tribute to the party and its leader.

I express my congratulations to you, Mr. Clark, on your re-election as Chairman of Committees, and to Mr. Speaker on his re-election to office. The hon. member for Brisbane has been Speaker in this House for a long time and he has gained the confidence of its members. His decisions are always crisp and to the point.

He makes quick and fair decisions and both sides of the House have expressed complete confidence in him. We also have complete confidence in you, Mr. Clark, as Chairman of Committees.

I should like also to congratulate the five new hon. members. Starting with North Queensland, there is the hon. member for Cairns, who was returned with an excellent

majority. His maiden speech conveyed the impression that he will go far in the political life of this State. He can express himself clearly, he has had a long life in public affairs in North Queensland, and has now become an able representative of the people of Cairns in this Parliament.

The hon. member for Rockhampton is another worthy addition to Parliament. He, too, has had a long and varied experience in public affairs, and in his maiden speech he displayed an innate capacity for conveying his thoughts.

The hon. member for Nundah is not a new Parliamentarian. He comes here after having served in the Federal Parliament, and is well qualified to help the Government in applying their policy.

I congratulate also the hon. member for Sherwood. He comes here with a good deal of knowledge. It is a very difficult thing for a new member of Parliament to express himself effectively in this Chamber during his early days. He is speaking to seasoned men, and the atmosphere is not very helpful to a new member. However, I feel sure that the hon. member for Sherwood will make a worthy addition to this Chamber, as also will the hon. member for Mackenzie. I regret very much that we have lost the services of Paddy Whyte. The campaign in the Mackenzie electorate was hard, but fair, and it was a very close finish. The new hon. member for Mackenzie has youth on his side, and with the knowledge that he will gain here I am sure he will make a valuable contribution to Queensland's advancement. All hon. members are entitled to their political views, and the people have the right to decide who shall represent them in Parliament. In the main, I feel quite sure that in the recent election the public of Queensland made wise decisions.

I intend to spend a little time on a matter that is rather alarming to the primary industries of this State. Anything that affects our primary industries is of concern to the people of Australia generally. They are responsible not only for supplying the food requirements of the 9,000,000 or 10,000,000 residents of Australia, but also for maintaining this country's solvency.

They have done that for many years. They have made various moves to ensure reasonable profits. Certainly they are entitled to be as prosperous as any other section of the community and they are entitled to a just reward for their labour. Their importance, derived from the fact that they provide practically all our exports, makes it essential that all Governments of whatever political philosophy see that at least no injustice is done them. I do not say that they should be singled out for very special treatment, but they should be given every protection to enable them to compete on an equal footing with other industries in the State. Nearly all our secondary industries are protected and so they should be.

Mr. Nicklin: It is particularly disturbing that their incomes are falling notwithstanding their record production.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. I intend to mention that as I develop the subject.

One can only regard as alarming some statements in a circular issued by not less an authority than the Bank of New South Wales in its Review of August, 1956. The article is very well written, as one might expect. After all, the Bank of New South Wales is the oldest banking institution in Australia.

Mr. Nicklin: A bank that has contributed largely to the development of the primary industries.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, it has a very fine record, and I value its circulars because they contain sound views. I will remember a few years back when they set out ways and means of recovering from the depression. At one time they took very definite steps to help primary producers. I remember when our markets overseas were in a very parlous position and our primary producers could not pay their way. Whether it was ultimately for good or ill I do not say but the Bank of New South Wales fixed the exchange rate at £30 per £100 in advance of sterling, which immediately increased the return to primary producers for all their exports. With the passing of the years they have been able to get out of the wood.

By inference rather than by direct statement some of the methods used to help primary industries are now being questioned and it is more or less being suggested that the primary industries are overplaying their hand and getting too much consideration. Nothing could be more misleading than the inference there. A table here sets out that £15,200,000 was granted by way of bounties and subsidies during 1955-1956. That is correct but nearly the whole of it was subsidy to the dairying industry—£14,500,000 was paid to the dairying industry.

The report goes on to say that £500,000 went on sulphuric acid. That is one of the principal ingredients of fertilisers, an essential ingredient, if we are going successfully to grow wheat and other commodities that help to keep the State solvent. Fertilisers must be used in the dairying industry to maintain pastures at a high standard. The report continues—

“The dairy industry subsidy, however, is of such a size as to warrant the closest examination of its purpose and consequences. Without it, either butter and cheese would rise in price to the consumer by about 7d. per lb. or the dairy farmer would receive this much less. It may well be that an apportionment of the difference between producer and consumer should provide a more realistic basis for a prosperous dairy industry than continued dependence on a slowly diminishing

subsidy, which only partially shields the industry from the realities of the current structure of demand but gives it little incentive to improve its efficiency.”

It is suggested that the subsidy is too large. We all admit that £14,500,000 is a big subsidy, and it is certainly £1,000,000 less this year, but it must be looked at in a fair and factual way. Is it a subsidy to the dairying industry or a subsidy to the consumer? I say it is a subsidy to the consumer as much as it is to the dairying industry. If butter rises in price the basic wage must rise and therefore it is going to put up the cost of living and everything else that is on such an inflationary spiral at the moment.

I believe subsidy could well be increased in the interests of Australia as a whole. It would not cost the Australian public any more money because it would have the effect of reducing the general cost of living and the general cost of production. The dairy farmer is in no different position from anybody else. He is carrying on a business and unless he can make a profit he cannot continue. I am not going to say that it is pleasing to see this subsidy but is not every secondary industry in the country protected by a very high tariff wall? Of course it is.

Other countries, like our sister Dominion New Zealand, have a much lower tariff policy and lower cost of living. There is very little secondary industry in New Zealand, but let it be understood that I am not arguing against secondary industry. With increased prices for everything he uses, very definitely the primary producer is entitled to the same measure of protection that we give to secondary industries.

The report continues, “but gives it very little incentive to improve its efficiency.” Later on it says—

“Cost of production surveys, however, cannot claim an absolute scientific validity. A world of difference exists between ‘average cost of production’ and ‘cost of efficient production’.”

They open up a very big subject there. The dairying industry is subsidised only on the basis of efficient production. The dairyman is not getting the cost of production, even the cost of efficient production. That is emphasised when you realise that the subsidy is based on the production per cow of 205 or 206 lb. of butter a year.

Mr. Madsen: 219 lb.

Mr. COLLINS: I thank the hon. member for Warwick for the correction. It is based on 219 lb. of butter a cow, and the average production a cow in Queensland is not 156 lb. of butter, so that the average dairyman is losing on every lb. of butter that he produces. Surely that is sufficient to make him step up his production to what is termed by the Dairy and Agriculture Commission as efficient production. I think this

report is very misleading. I take it the inference is that the subsidy is based on inefficient production. Nothing is further from the truth. The report goes on to deal with marketing boards and it has a tilt at the various marketing boards of Australia, of which there is quite a number. I say "Thank God for the marketing boards." I say to anybody who challenges the right of the primary producer to have marketing boards, "Hands off our commodity and marketing boards." They were created by the Labour Government in 1922 with the object of lifting the primary producer out of the hands of the exploiter who was making more money out of buying and selling the primary producers' goods, in many instances, than the primary producer made himself. It was to the credit of the Queensland Labour Government, and the Federal Labour Government who extended these commodity boards in certain cases to a nation-wide basis. Commodity boards have meant that it is possible for the farmer to sell the whole of his commodity through his own commodity board; the exploiter is kept out to the greatest possible extent. In that respect the boards have done remarkably good work. Take the Committee of Direction for example. This body handles over £10,000,000 worth of perishable products a year. It lives in open competition with all merchants and traders in Queensland and Australia. A fruit-grower can send his product to the C.O.D. who acts as his agent. They carry out the work of an agent. It is done as efficiently as possible and they hand back to the grower anything left over and above the cost of carrying on their organisation. The Government have stood behind them by advancing a great deal of money. From time to time the Government have assisted all commodity boards and primary industries. During the last 20 years the assistance to primary industries through commodity boards, associations, and so on, amounts to over £6,000,000.

This circular goes on to say that consumers have no effective representation on board-pricing policies and therefore they tend to favour the producer. In other words, it is claimed that the board tends to favour the producer and that the Government have no means of checking that policy. The Government have every means of checking such a policy. The Government could bring down legislation to put those boards out of existence. The public stand behind commodity boards because of the mighty job that those boards are doing.

Mr. Madsen: Consumers get as much benefit as producers.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. Take the sugar industry. In Australia we are able to sell our sugar in Australia at a price based on the cost of production, just as do the manufacturers of harvesters, boots, hats, shirts, and so on, if the Commissioner of Prices decides to include their goods in the price-fixing system. The Commissioner

allows those persons a profit that is fair and reasonable and sufficient to keep them in business. Are not the sugar-grower, the wheat-grower, the butter producer and all primary producers entitled to exactly the same thing? What is the result of fixing the price of sugar in Australia at a price based on the cost of production? There is not one article in Australia that has risen less than sugar during this inflationary period. The industry is under the control of the Sugar Board, and governments, whether they be Liberal, Country Party or Labour Governments, have given the sugar industry a fair crack of the whip. The main thing is that the people of Australia over a period of 30, 40 or 50 years, as a result of this legislation, have been able to buy the cheapest sugar in the world. The United Kingdom Government paid a tremendously high price for foreign sugar during the war. So impressed were they with the Australian scheme that they agreed to buy a percentage of their sugar at a price based on the cost of producing it within the British Commonwealth. They included all the sugar-producing countries in the Commonwealth because over a period of years that scheme had given Australians the cheapest sugar in the world. The British Government recognised that it was a fair and reasonable approach to the purchase of this commodity.

During the war Australians were able to buy sugar at a low price. If world parity had been insisted on, we could have got £60 a ton for it instead of £25 or £30 a ton. We did not do that, but now with prices coming down, surely the Australian producer should be protected in the same way as he protected the Australian public during the war in not asking for world parity for his commodity?

The butter industry is in the same position because the Australian producer could have sold his butter during the war at a greatly enhanced price but did not do so. He accepted the cost-of-production formula brought in by the Government led by the late Mr. Curtin and later by the late Mr. Chifley which, for the first time in the history of the dairying industry, enabled the producer to get recognition in the cost of production. Wheat is another commodity controlled by a Commonwealth-wide commodity board. The States have given the Commonwealth power to declare a Wheat Board for the whole of Australia. It is said that the powers of the board are intended to keep the price of wheat up to the consumer. Let us look at the position. The industry, from time to time, has suffered from depression just as much as any other industry in this country. The wheat-grower provides a great quantity of his produce for export and, if it was not for the export of butter, sugar, meat and wool, this country would not be solvent. Because we are having great difficulty in selling wheat the stability of this country is being challenged at the present time. When

export wheat was bringing anything from 18s. to 22s. a bushel on the overseas market the Australian consumer was getting exactly the same class of wheat for 12s., 13s. and 14s. a bushel. That is protecting the consumer, not exploiting him. That is one of the big things that the wheat industry has done. I remember hon. members of the Opposition claiming as they and their Party have done throughout Australia that the wheat-grower was subsidising the consumer in this country by selling him wheat at 10s. a bushel less than the value of wheat on the export market. When things take a downward turn, surely the wheat-grower is entitled to protection on that quantity of wheat consumed in this country! So far as I can assist in protecting the wheat-grower and all primary producers I certainly intend to do so.

This circular goes on to say—

“Decisions on items involving no actual cash outlay are also arbitrary—e.g., farmer’s remuneration for his own labour and management, interest on capital invested in the farm, allocation of costs between different periods, and land values. Accuracy and quantity of cost data available vary greatly.”

It is true that land values have gone high mainly as the result of high export values of the various commodities that the farmers grow, but is it not equally true that nobody has been more responsible for increasing land values than the Bank of New South Wales and other associated banks in this country? They have led the band in encouraging land speculation. When they had funds that they could not use in other avenues they lent them and encouraged people to buy land at fictitious prices. It is a shame that land values have been allowed to reach such heights, as high land values have many adverse repercussions. On the Darling Downs, for example, land has increased in price from about £8 or £9 an acre to £60 or £70. It is obvious, of course, that a huge increase in the price of land does not make it produce any more than previously. I am not saying that £8 or £9 an acre was the correct price—I think it was too low—but the land is certainly not worth £60 or £70 an acre.

The huge increase in land values was brought about largely because the banks had money available to lend to people who wanted to buy land. Now, however, following the remarkable growth of secondary industry, they are investing their funds in such things as buildings for rental, picture shows, and hire-purchase finance companies. It is their business what they do with their money, but immediately other avenues were available for investment they clamped down on the primary producer. The result has been that the primary producer cannot get the money that he needs to maintain production. The banks and other financial institutions should remember the part that primary industry

plays in Australia’s welfare. I am not saying, of course, that the banks have done a bad job—I have borrowed a good deal of money from them in my time—but I must say something when a veiled attack is made on commodity boards, as it was in the circular that I read. The Australia and New Zealand Bank, too, recently attacked the subsidy to the dairying industry. If that subsidy was discontinued, it would cost twice as much to keep the dairying industry stable.

I go now from the Bank of New South Wales to the Press. “The Sunday Mail” of 26 August, quoting “The Week’s” Melbourne Bureau, had this to say—

“Boards (67 of them) send our prices up.

“Melbourne.—One of the causes of high prices is the existence of 67 boards concerned in marketing and pricing Australia’s rural products.”

The boards do not fix the prices of their products. Another authority altogether, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, fixes the price for wheat and butter and helps fix the price for sugar. Those are three commodities sold at cost-of-production in Australia. Our marketing organisation naturally tries to sustain the value of our exports in the overseas market, knowing that if one country undersold another the bottom would fall out of the market and, as in the 1930’s, the primary producer would verge on bankruptcy.

The article continues—

“In the name of ‘orderly marketing,’ the effect of the boards is to protect the producer and obtain higher prices than would normally reign from the consumer. Some of the boards exist for the purpose of obtaining a home-consumption price greater than the export price, so that high prices at home compensate producers for selling abroad at a loss.”

That opens a big question. I do not favour charging the Australian public a higher cost of production to make up for a loss on overseas sales, nor are we doing that. We are selling our butter at less than the cost of production and our wheat and sugar at a reasonable cost of production. I challenge “The Sunday-Mail” or any other newspaper to prove otherwise.

Eggs may be cited as an instance where the overseas price is lower than the home price. That is true. At certain times of the year when we export eggs, the egg producer shows a loss; but he could easily remedy that by producing only enough eggs for home consumption. But what would be the result?

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

Mr. COLLINS: I thank the hon. member for Fitzroy and the House for graciously extending my time because I think it is important to mention these matters. During the current session matters have been debated at length not nearly as worthy of discussion as the welfare of the primary producers.

Let us consider the result of eliminating the export of eggs. Everybody knows that egg production is highest in the months from June till December each year. Should they reduce their flocks to supply only the home market. Everybody knows that eggs are usually scarce from early January to the end of June. If we cut our export we will be paying double the price for eggs, if we could get them from any other State or country, in the first half of the year. That is the reason and the justification for the industry's carrying the egg producer during the flush months when the overseas price is low. Because wages in Indonesia, Russia or some other country are lower than wages in Australia, should we reduce our tariff and allow foreign eggs to come in and flood the market? We should not. The egg producer is not getting any more than a reasonable profit at the price he sells in Australia. If he were, the Prices Commissioner has every right to fix the price. All commodity boards are controlled and prices are fixed by a bureau of agriculture economists which has no political philosophy.

Although production is very high the butter producer is probably hit harder than any other primary producer in the country because of the price he is receiving for his product today. I am not saying he should be getting more but he is carrying on his business at a very distinct loss.

The article goes on—

“Queensland has 18 boards. To some of those of other States it adds Broom Millet, Cotton, Ginger, Grain Sorghum, Navy Bean, Sugar, Tobacco, and Peanuts.

“We are board-ridden.

“The home consumption price device covers wheat, butter, cheese, eggs, dried fruits, sugar, and rice.”

Nothing could be further from the truth than to say that we are board-ridden in this country. Have not all types of business the right to an organisation? Of course they have, and they all have their organisations. Every section of the community sets up some organisation to protect itself; everybody realises that unity is strength. If the primary producers did not get together they would be exploited by merchants and traders as they were in the past. A big section of them would try to do away with commodity boards in Queensland and Australia. At a recent meeting of the Agricultural Council I endeavoured to persuade the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. McMahon, that the Commonwealth Government should issue permits to export our sorghum or other grains only to the board that has legal control over the commodity. So far I have not been able to get him to agree but I have the matter listed for discussion at the next Australian Council of Agriculture meeting when I hope to have a full-dress debate about it.

We have the spectacle of the Sorghum Board legally constituted under the laws of this State to protect the sorghum grower, and the merchant-traders in Brisbane getting a permit to export a commodity that belongs to the marketing board. We know the grain comes from Queensland—the only State that grows any quantity of it—but while they have that permit, there is nothing much that we can do. We know it is brought in trucks registered in New South Wales. If the truck-driver is asked where it comes from he says that it came from New South Wales, and we cannot do anything about a product from another State. I think the Federal Minister should have accepted the arguments I put up; he should have given the board in charge of the commodity a permit to export it. At the present time the board is being by-passed and side-tracked. The report goes on to draw attention to the high land values which, unfortunately, do ultimately creep into the cost of production. I believe that the banks were responsible for that to a greater degree than anybody else. In his Budget, the Federal Treasurer showed that all incomes rose last year, except the farmer's. Business people in Australia gained but the farmer apparently is the butt of the whole lot. It does seem as though there is a desire to reduce the farmer to the coolie standard. I quote “The Courier-Mail” on the Budget—

“Total national income rose by £265,000,000 to a record £4,312,000,000.

“Wages and Salaries rose 9 per cent. to £2,562,000,000, company income 5 per cent. to £550,000,000, unincorporated businesses and professions 7 per cent. to £520,000,000.

“But farm income fell by 6 per cent. to £440,000,000.”

It will be seen that while everybody else was increasing profits the farmers' income fell. Some action should have been taken long ago to stop this inflationary spiral. Other businesses were becoming more prosperous while the main business that this country depends upon for its prosperity and stability received a lesser income. Surely people do not forget the plight of the primary producer during the year from 1932 till the outbreak of the last war.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent in investigating and rehabilitating the wheat industry. Wheat-growers were unable to carry on and were nearly forced to abandon the production of that crop. There was a similar scheme of assistance in the butter industry, the Paterson scheme. It had the effect of loading the Australian price, but the price was still not greater than the cost of production or anything like it. We do not want to see those days again when the primary producer was earning no more than a common coolie. I heard it said in this Chamber by one of our most able leaders that in a country that depends for its main

source of wealth on primary production if the farmers are not prosperous the country itself cannot be prosperous. Today we see a veiled onslaught on commodity boards, the purpose being to place farmers once again at the mercy of commission and produce agents. It will be one of the sorriest days of this country if we get away from the orderly marketing of our products and return to the chaotic conditions that existed before the inception of commodity marketing boards.

It is unforunate and indeed deplorable that the Federal Government have allowed the inflation that has taken place in recent years. It is difficult to control. We all know that during the war years when proper control was exercised Australia had the soundest currency in the world. That lasted until the Chifley Government held a referendum on the matter and lost the right to control prices. They had that power during the war years but after the war they had to get the approval of the Australian people to continue price control. The issue was turned down by the people of Australia. Among the greatest advocates against giving that power to the Commonwealth Government were the people sitting in Opposition in this Chamber today. There is no doubt that the controls exercised by the Chifley Government led to some black marketing, but surely that was better than the position today when our money has less than half the purchasing power it had a few years ago. The election was fought on that issue. During the campaign the present Federal Treasurer said, "We will cure this inflation." Inflation has not been overcome; in fact it is out of hand. Unless some drastic methods are again adopted, primary industries will be forced to cease exporting, and Australia will then get into a tailspin such as we experienced in 1929, from which the country did not recover until after the commencement of the last world war.

Mr. PIZZEY (Isis) (2.15 p.m.): In his speech the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock discussed the primary industries which are of vital concern to the State. He gave a lead to all hon. members that we should devote our minds to things that really matter rather, not the trivial things in political life. The speech by the hon. member for North Toowoomba was the weakest and most ineffective I have heard. He devoted most of his time to trivialities in his election campaign and to an attack on a new member of the Opposition. He did not offer any constructive suggestions about the great problems facing the State. The Minister gave a lead not only to his own side but to all hon. members. We should take the opportunity of this debate to offer constructive suggestions or point out weaknesses in Government policy.

I pay tribute to the decency exhibited by the new members of this Assembly. In their maiden speeches they were most sincere and they showed a knowledge of their electorates.

They will be an acquisition to this Parliament. I pay a tribute to the hon. member of the Opposition who won a seat from the Government, the hon. member for Mackenzie. His was a most sincere and knowledgeable speech dealing with the problems of his electorate. I remember reading a passage by Mr. Justice Isaacs in a report of a royal commission into the question of corrupt conduct on the part of a Minister in New South Wales. He said that when a man becomes a member of Parliament he commences a high public duty; responsibilities are inescapable from the position and he cannot retain honour and divest himself of the duty. That is something we should all remember. Anyone who is given the opportunity of becoming a member of this Parliament should feel obligated to accept the full duties and responsibilities of the position. He should avoid hypocrisy and corrupt conduct and uphold the law of the land, criminal, civil, and industrial. That is a duty that reposes in him when he accepts the honour of being elected a member of Parliament. I feel sure that the hon. member for Mackenzie has acknowledged the great honour bestowed upon him, that he will represent his electorate through many sessions of Parliament, honourably and efficiently in the fulfilment of his high public duties.

This is the second time since I have been a member of this Assembly that we have met in times of great international tension. The first occasion was the Korean war which had a tremendously upsetting effect upon our economy. There is no denying that. We are now told that the Federal Government have failed to combat inflation. Perhaps they have but there are some almost uncontrollable factors in the struggle against inflation.

Mr. Power: Are you going to apologise for the Commonwealth Government?

Mr. PIZZEY: I shall not have very much to say on that matter.

One of the greatest causes of the inflationary trend in the early 1950's was the extraordinary price to which wool went as the result of heavy buying caused by the Korean War. Now we are faced with acute international tension over the Suez Canal. In passing, I pay a tribute to the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, for the part he is playing in that matter and I congratulate him on the honour bestowed upon him, not only by the British people but by 22 other countries of the world, in being asked to lead the delegation to Cairo. Let us not forget that the result of his negotiations can mean much to the primary industries of this country. If his negotiations are not successful and ships from Australia have to travel via the Cape, another heavy burden will be placed upon our exporting industries. I am sure every member of this House fervently hopes that the present negotiations in Cairo will be

successful, and that a further imposition will not be placed upon the primary industries of this country.

We heard much from the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock about the primary industries and their costs. There is no denying that over the last few years, primary producers have been the only people whose incomes have been cut. Figures prove that primary producers have suffered a reduction in income, whilst every other section in the community has enjoyed an increase. I take it that the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock is fully aware of the tremendously damaging effect that the recent rail freight increases have had on the sugar industry.

Mr. Power: They can stand it.

Mr. PIZZEY: According to the Attorney-General, private enterprise can stand any imposition that the Government like to put on it.

Let me quote a few figures to prove what I have said. In 1946 the freight on sugar cane to the mill was 3s. 3d. a ton. It is now 16s. 3d., an increase of 400 per cent.! The last increase was 5s. 3d. a ton or 18 times the increase given to cane-cutters, who received a rise of 3½d. a ton.

Mr. Jesson: The railways must have been carrying the cane at a heavy loss previously.

Mr. PIZZEY: That interjection ill becomes the hon. member for Hinchinbrook. The railway section in his area is earning profits, and most of its income comes from the carrying of sugar cane and raw sugar.

In 1946 the price paid to the farmer for 14 c.c.s. cane was 40s. 2d. a ton. As I have said, the rail freight in 1946 was 3s. 3d., which represented 8 per cent. of the price paid to the farmer. Today the farmer gets about 81s. 6d. a ton for his cane, whilst the rail freight for upwards of 20 miles has increased to 16s. 3d. a ton. In other words, today the freight is 20 per cent. of the value of his cane. What a staggering imposition on the industry!

For transport by rail for 90 miles the freight will be 37.7 per cent., more than one-third of the value of the cane, and that is mainly in the district around Rollingstone where cane is sent to the Invicta mill from the area of the hon. member for Hinchinbrook.

I interjected the other day while the hon. member for Hinchinbrook was speaking to say that the cane farmers in his area would not be very happy about railway freights and he replied that they had been getting it carried far too long for far too little.

Mr. Jesson: Who said that?

Mr. PIZZEY: The hon. member for Hinchinbrook, in this House, but it does not appear in "Hansard."

Mr. JESSON: I rise to a point of order. I did not say that and the hon. member's allegation is a reflection on "Hansard." I assure hon. members that nothing I say in the House is ever cut out of my speech.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member to accept the denial.

Mr. PIZZEY: I accept his denial. I will say, however, it is no figment of my imagination.

Mr. Jesson: Of course it is.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PIZZEY: At Invicta they pay £130,000 to the Railway Department to have their cane carted to the mill.

A Government Member: Do you want them to cart it at a loss?

Mr. PIZZEY: The railways have not been carting it at a loss. They have been using the sugar industry as the "bunny." Of that £130,000, £65,000 was paid by the millers and £65,000 by the growers. In most other areas the mill pays the increase.

Mr. Collins: That was taken into account in fixing the cost of production.

Mr. PIZZEY: That was before the increase.

Mr. Collins: And it will be done again.

Mr. PIZZEY: That is another £65,000 the mill will have to pay for cane.

Mr. Jesson: If the mill does not fall to pieces during the season. In that case it will not crush any.

Mr. PIZZEY: The hon. member had better see the hon. member for Haughton about that. Let us take as an instance a proprietary mill in my area. That mill pays about £52,000 in cane freight. Again freight has increased by 50 per cent. That is another £26,000 to pay. The mill has about 260 employees so the increase in cane freight is the equivalent of £100 per employee for the season. It is tantamount to increasing the salary or wage of every man employed in the mill by £4 per week. What would the Minister for Transport say if some outside authority said to him, "From tomorrow morning you will pay every railway employee £4 a week extra?" I should say he would leave the country and take the first plane to Saudi Arabia for an oil company job. He knows the department could not stand such a heavy imposition.

It is a very strange thing that the areas in which cane is transported to the mill by rail and in which freights have been increased are areas that showed a profitable return to the railways before the increase. It cannot be because the cane was carried so cheaply that the railways were losing on it. It was not and the hon. member for

Hinchinbrook and the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock know it well. At the present time up to 100,000 tons of raw sugar each year are transported from the Isis, Bingera, Millaquin and Fairymead mills to Urangan for shipment overseas. Before the increase in freight the Bundaberg millers and the corporation of the Bundaberg Harbour Board examined the possibility of establishing their own deep-sea port and the Treasurer has given approval for a bulk handling deep-sea port at the mouth of the river, to cost over £1,500,000. What is going to happen? As soon as it is built the railways will lose about £130,000 in freight. Many of the mill areas at present transporting sugar by rail will give serious consideration to installing a 2-ft. tramline instead of using the Government railway. I do not think the Minister for Transport has heard of the law of diminishing returns. When you put the price up too high eventually you receive far less than you ever did before. I predict that the latest increase in freights imposed on the sugar industry will be so destructive to the railways that the Government will regret the mistake.

Mr. Aikens: It will do the State more harm than good.

Mr. PIZZEY: Of course it will. The Minister for Transport must regret it and I hope the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock will examine the effect of these increased freights on industry.

Mr. Collins: The safeguard to the industry is the cost of production.

Mr. PIZZEY: It is always lagging behind. The penny increase has already gone with the increased freights.

Mr. Aikens: The Government are making the country people pay for the staggering losses on the suburban lines.

Mr. PIZZEY: That is true, and those in the North have to pay.

The Government talk about price control. What would they say if a man in private industry put up the price of his product by 50 per cent.? The Attorney-General would be the first to call for a full and urgent investigation.

Mr. Power: My word, I would!

Mr. PIZZEY: But he does not investigate the case of his own Minister for Transport. He lets him get away completely.

Mr. Aikens: He might bring him under price control.

Mr. PIZZEY: It is about time he did.

Mr. Graham: Are you saying that the cane industry should not bear any of the increased costs?

Mr. PIZZEY: A fair share. The hon. member for Mackay would not even say it had to carry a fair share. He is not game

to say it and face his people. There will never be any incentive for the Government to be efficient as long as they can ask for a supplementary grant from the Federal Government. Because they are able to ask for a supplementary grant they are little concerned about increased costs. The sooner the Federal Government say, "You will have to carry any increased costs due to your own inefficiency," the better it will be for Queensland. Eventually the Government will lose on the increased freights. Already they are losing over £500,000 because of their attitude towards the transport of wool. They will howl and scream to the Federal Government for another supplementary grant of a couple of million pounds, saying, "We cannot get this wool carried by the railway so we will get the money from you." There has never been greater need for efficiency than at the present time. Even the Premier has stressed in the Press and to his administrative heads the great need for more efficiency. I know there are costs over which the Government have no control. Perhaps other hon. members on my own side may not agree when I say that in Queensland where there is no Government direction of the court over quarterly basic wage adjustments and the court deems fit to award them the Government have a good case for a supplementary grant from the Commonwealth Government, but if they directed the court, as they do in New South Wales, to make quarterly adjustments it is up to them to find the money.

Mr. Power: We do not direct the court.

Mr. PIZZEY: I said so. In addition to freight increase there is now a strike in the sugar mills. The A.W.U. is extending its iron hand over the most important agricultural industries in an attempt to ruin them financially as they attempted to ruin the great pastoral industry. Getting back to the subject of strikes, no fair-minded man suggests that any one should be forced to work for a wage that was not considered adequate. That is his business.

Mr. Aikens: I certainly could not be forced to work for a wage that I did not consider adequate.

Mr. PIZZEY: The hon. member is not forced. He could get out and Parliament would be a better place. The worker has the right to sell his labour on the best market the same as the primary producer; but no union official has the right to prevent a man from working for a wage that the man is willing to work for. Apparently hon. members of the Government think that he has the right. We have not heard from western hon. members on the Government side for the last six weeks or so. In presenting his case for an increase in wages the late Mr. Boland said that it was necessary that industry had the capacity to bear the initial cost. How lucky he was that he approached the court before the Minister for

Transport announced this crippling increase of 50 per cent. in freights. If he had not he would never have been able to prove that the industry could afford an increase in wages. Mr. Boland said, "We should prove that industry can afford to pay it." The best report on the economics of the sugar industry was the McCarthy report of 1952.

Mr. Aikens: Senator McCarthy?

Mr. PIZZEY: No, a senior Government official in Canberra. In his report he said he considered that the minimum requirements of the sugar industry was £43 6s. 1d. per ton 94 n.t. raw sugar. That is the minimum price mentioned by a pretty tough price investigator—just as tough as Mr. Fullagher.

Mr. Power: He is not tough.

Mr. PIZZEY: I said that he was just as tough. Mr. McCarthy said that the minimum price required was £43 6s. 1d. but sugar has never reached that price. In 1952 it was £42 12s. 3d., in 1953 £42 7s. 11d., in 1954 £41 4s. 7d., in 1955 £42 6s. 5d., and, even with the 1d. increase given in May this year the figure of £43 6s. 1d. will not be reached. It would be very difficult to prove that this industry has the capacity to pay. No-one with a knowledge of the industry would say that the position is better than it was three, four or five years ago. The position is becoming progressively worse. The case was heard by the Industrial Court.

Mr. Jesson: You do not hear of too many cane-farms being sold cheaply.

Mr. PIZZEY: I am glad to hear that interjection. Recently an old, established cane-farming family in the Isis district put up their farm for sale. They could not get a bid. Years ago the auction would have started at £120,000, but they were asked to allow it to start at £60,000. Even then they could not get a bid, and they decided to cut the property up for sale. They received something like £45,000 or £50,000 for the lot.

Mr. Jesson: Nonsense.

Mr. PIZZEY: A farm with an assignment of 136 acres was sold for £12,000.

Mr. Jesson: What about the cash money?

Mr. PIZZEY: There was none at all. It was sold at auction. Nobody was interested.

Mr. Byrne: What was the cane assignment on the 600 acres?

Mr. PIZZEY: There were 600 acres that could be assigned.

Mr. Byrne: What was the gross and net assignment?

Mr. Jesson: A gross assignment of 600 acres.

Mr. PIZZEY: Originally there were five properties. They had assignments of 136 acres, 96 acres and so on. This is part of the judgment delivered by Mr. Dwyer and the late Mr. McCracken in this case.

"With one exception, increases of 10 per cent. in all wage rates were asked for by the unions. The only explanation as to how this 10 per cent. was arrived at was given in the closing stages of the cases by Mr. Whiteside, who said:—

'You asked me how did we arrive at the 10 per cent. I had a conversation with Mr. Boland and we set out the different classifications, and we took in the main classification—we took into consideration the time of travelling from here to there and we think if the 10 per cent. were granted to the higher rates and other rates . . .'

"This explanation does not establish any basis for a 10 per cent. increase in wage rates. It would result in the field worker being granted an increase of £1 6s. 1d. per week, a rise which so far as we have been able to find, is not paralleled anywhere else for other than highly skilled work."

Mr. Jesson: Is this the Court judgment?

Mr. PIZZEY: Yes. It continues—

"Nothing put before the Court by either union advocate supports such an increase; and even Mr. Leeman's tables which were much more extensive than the combined unions' efforts does not afford support to it.

"We have gone into the matter as thoroughly as we have been able and have come to the conclusion that increases must be granted but of differing amounts. This is rendered necessary by the fact that owing to wage movements under a number of awards, for example, Engine Drivers' Award, Mechanical Engineering Award, Electrical Engineering Award, Sawmilling Award, and Forestry Employees' Award—State Government, to quote a few, some employees under the Sugar Industry Award have had their positions worsened considerably; other employees under this award have either slightly improved their comparative positions, or have not suffered so greatly as others. A few examples will suffice."

Mr. Jesson: These are wages paid after the cane is cut.

Mr. PIZZEY: That is so. I am dealing with the mill-workers. The judgment continues:—

"In 1946, the year chosen by the respondents, the engine-driver—first class, in the sugar industry enjoyed an advantage over the first class engine-driver outside of 8s. per week. Today the rates are equal. If the 5s. increase granted in 1951 be disregarded (because of the fact that it is a

seasonal loading) then the engine-driver in this industry has suffered a disadvantage of 13s. a week.

“On the same basis of comparison second class engine-drivers under this award have suffered a disadvantage of 13s. 6d. a week; engine-drivers—suction gas up to 60 h.p., have fallen behind by 16s. per week; firemen by 3s. per week; whereas trimmers have gained 1s. per week.”

“All these comparisons have been made with the Engine Drivers’ Award—Southern Division.

“When comparisons are made with movements in the Mechanical Engineering Award, assuming that a tradesmen’s assistant in the latter award is comparable with the firemen, clarifier, carrier hand, and faggaller under the Sugar Industry Award, the sugar industry employees have fallen behind by 10s. 8d. per week; whereas wool, coal, coke and lime handlers under the Sugar Industry Award have lost only 1s. 2d. per week.

“These examples indicate the Court’s difficulty in arriving at decisions which could be regarded as just and reasonable. It might be well to state here that we have not given any consideration to future wage trends, they are too vague and uncertain.”

He then went on to show the increases granted—

“Engine Driver—First Class.

“In comparing wage trends, the engine driver in sugar mills has lost ground to the extent of 13s. per week against the engine driver outside, i.e. disregarding the 5s. per week increase granted in 1951 on account of the seasonal nature of the industry.

“As this seasonal loading is present in the wage rate, not because of any recognition of skill, etc., but as stated above because of the intermittent nature of the work, it should be disregarded.

“Therefore an increase of 13s. per week plus 2s. 6d. per week additional seasonal loading is granted.

“This increase might be supported in part on another ground. On present rates if an engine driver is employed in the slack season doing work covered by his certificate he gets 9s. 1d. per week less than the outside engine driver.”

I could go on and enumerate the other classifications. The court heard the case expeditiously on this occasion; I do not think there was much delay.

Mr. Byrne: Are you suggesting that the sugar mills are going broke because they have to pay those increases?

Mr. PIZZEY: It is not a question of going broke. Surely the mills are entitled to make some profit. The hon. member does not want them to go broke. Members of the

Opposition, and I take it members on the Government side, allegedly believe in arbitration. If a man thinks he has a just case for a wage increase he can state his case and put his arguments before the Court and convince the members of the Court that the industry with which he is concerned can afford to pay. The other side put up their case about costs, etc. The men constituting the court have had life-long training in industrial matters, Mr. Dwyer in particular and the late Mr. McCracken to a lesser extent. They sift the arguments advanced to determine whether industry can afford to pay. If the union concerned is not satisfied with the judgment of the court it says, “We did not get all we wanted” or “The Industrial Court’s decision is wrong and we will not abide by it; we will create strikes in the industry and use strongarm tactics and force the millers to give us what the court refused to give us.” Surely people believe in arbitration or they do not. The workers cannot have it both ways. Every member of the A.W.U. is a member of the Labour Party. Union members might consider that they need better advocates. That may be true on many occasions.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. PIZZEY: The hon. member does not believe in arbitration and I am not interested in what he has to say. Hon. members opposite allegedly believe in arbitration. If a claim is refused or reduced surely the right and sensible thing to do in a civilised community is to prepare another case to prove that industry can afford to pay and so give the employees the wage justice to which they are entitled. Surely that is the only sound and logical approach? Let us not forget that there is a great difference between the wool industry and the sugar industry. A delay of a few weeks in shearing sheep makes little difference, but if the cutting of cane is delayed it becomes almost worthless. Sugar-cane quickly loses its sugar content, and if it is not cut before the New Year it is not worth cutting. For every week that a strike lasts hundreds of thousands of tons of sugar-cane are lost, and that loss can never be recovered. We must remember that the industry will be less able to afford an increase in wages after a fortnight’s strike than it was before it. If the capacity of an industry to pay is to be the criterion of the Industrial Court in deciding whether an increase in wages is warranted, surely the employees in the sugar industry are cutting their own throats by striking? No-one can convince me that any employee in the sugar industry was happy about the imposition of the overtime ban last year.

Mr. Aikens: Only the hungry fellows were unhappy about it.

Mr. PIZZEY: I should say that 90 per cent. of them felt tremendously the great falling off in their wages. By the overtime

ban the mills discovered that they could manage with very little overtime, so the workers were merely cutting their own throats. The same thing happened to the wharf labourers in Mackay. The sugar industry would not have considered bulk-handling facilities for some years had the sugar been handled efficiently on the waterfront.

Mr. Aikens: You know that is not true.

Mr. PIZZEY: Because of the excessive handling costs on the waterfront, the sugar industry decided on bulk handling much sooner than it would otherwise have done.

I hope the Government will not allow the strike in the sugar industry to develop into the chaotic mess that we now see in the wool industry. They should stand by the principles of arbitration and give wise guidance to the Australian Workers' Union. If the union has a case, there is a place to present it.

I shall now deal with education. I cannot miss the opportunity of referring to a remark of the present Secretary for Public Instruction when he was newly elected to this House. I suppose he came here feeling that if he honestly put forward his views on the deficiencies and needs of education in this State, the Government would listen to him and do something about it.

Mr. Aikens: He was speaking as a back-bencher then.

Mr. PIZZEY: That is so. I do not know whether he got his knuckles rapped. I hope he did not. He suggested certain things on that occasion, and he now has a golden opportunity to implement them. One of the things he said was that there was an urgent need in this State for a Teacher's Training College with residential and sporting facilities. He referred to the adequacy of the facilities in the nursing profession and contrasted them with those in the teaching profession. He said we had nothing but a converted intermediate school for a Teachers' Training College. We still have no Teachers' Training College worthy of the name. Now that he is the Minister in charge of the Department, let us hope that he can get the co-operation of Cabinet and the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration in providing a suitable Teachers' Training College.

Mr. Jesson: And Artie Fadden, too.

Mr. PIZZEY: For anything hon. members opposite cannot get, Sir Arthur Fadden is to blame. The Government must be less capable than the Labour Government in New South Wales where they have had to put up with Sir Arthur Fadden for the last six years. What have they got in the way of teachers' training schools?

(Time expired.)

Mr. BAXTER (Norman) (2.56 p.m.): I wish to associate myself with the sentiments expressed so capably by the hon. member for Kurilpa and seconded so ably by the hon. member for Cook and tender expressions of loyalty to the throne on behalf of the people whom I represent.

I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election to the Chair and I compliment you on your capable handling of the debates.

I extend thanks to all the very good workers who helped me in my campaign.

I congratulate the new members on their election and on their able speeches. I advise the hon. member for Sherwood not to be led astray by whisperings. If he wants any information, in the future, on his speeches, and broadcasts, I suggest that if he goes to the leader of his party he will be much better off. He will be properly advised not to be too egoistical.

The hon. member for Isis spoke very strongly about lack of efficiency. What he said was quite true of the Federal coalition for that is where efficiency is lacking. I have before me an article written by Alan Reid, who writes from Canberra. This is what he said—

“Your income-tax money is being ‘salted’ away.”

Opposition members have tried to show that the Federal Government have the best administration but Alan Reid, a correspondent conversant with proceedings in the Federal House where he has many avenues of information says—

“The Menzies-Fadden Ministry is practising a piece of financial legerdemain that in any sphere other than politics would merit police attention.”

Trickery and charlatanny seem to be all that is taught in the schools of the Liberal-Country Party. Alan Reid goes on to say—

“It is slugging the taxpayer in the sacred name of Defence for millions that it has not—and apparently never had—an intention of spending.

“Nominally it is putting these needlessly extorted millions into trust funds. Actually, it is lending this money out to the States at five per cent., thereby making a tidy little profit.”

“And incidentally, by so doing the Commonwealth is making the cost of State services dearer to the same taxpayers from whom it extracts the extra taxation. It is a vicious, almost foolproof circle from which nobody except the Commonwealth can possibly benefit.”

Mr. Reid quotes Professor Armand Bland, Liberal member for Warringah. Of him he says—

“He has a streak of tenacity that has already taken him a long way along the involved trail of the trust funds.”

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. BAXTER: I am still reading because this makes good reading. I cannot help it if it hurts the hon. member because he is tied to the Liberal-Country Party coalition. I continue—

“He got a long way further last week as chairman of the all-party parliamentary committee on public accounts. Being put through his paces was Secretary of the Defence Department, Sir Frederick Shedden, for over two decades Public Service Czar of the Defence set-up.”

Under cross-examination Sir Frederick was not too easy. Further—

“Sir Frederick told the committee that despite the £600,000,000 expended on defence in the last three years Australia was not ready for trouble.”

The hon. member who just resumed his seat spoke of inefficiency. Where could there be a greater example of inefficiency than that which has been brought to light in this article by Alan Reid? Does it not savour very much of the period just prior to the last world war when Senator Foll, and I think Mr. Spicer, then Minister for the Army, went to Singapore and checked up on defences. He came back waving his arms and proclaiming to the world that Singapore could not be taken. It was taken within 14 days of his statement, proving once again where inefficiency lies. There has been inefficiency in the Federal Liberal-Country Party coalition ever since it has been in the Federal House. It happened prior to the last war and it is happening today; they cannot get away from it. They have not the ability to control the finances of a Commonwealth as large as Australia.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Persuade the people to put them out.

Mr. BAXTER: If the hon. member who interjected is alluding to the fact that we have a great number of Liberal-Country Party representatives in the Federal House from Queensland my answer to him is that it was only because the electorates have been very capably rigged. (Opposition laughter.) We find a repetition today of what happened before the last world war. What is going to happen now? I surmise that the Menzies-Fadden Government will do what they did at the beginning of the last war—run out because they have not the ability to control in a difficult period and leave it to Labour to save the country as Labour saved it during the last war. There is the great possibility that that will happen again in the event of a declaration of war over the Suez Question.

Mr. Hugh Leslie, a Country Party man, also asked a question of Sir Frederick Shedden. He asked him why the Defence Department was not prepared for war, and the answer was that they could not spend the money they had. Sir Frederick Shedden talked about the cost of bombers and so

forth, but boiled down, the reason given was the shortage of man-power. Labour's Albert Thompson, an ex-union secretary from South Australia, asked this question: “Is it not a fact you've been firing men from the aircraft industry despite their protests?” They have not the ability to control any industry let alone control a financial project. Immediately they are challenged they hide behind the excuse of lack of man-power. It has been proved conclusively that it was not because of lack of man-power that they could not spend the money. He was asked what happens to it and Sir Frederick said, “It goes into trust funds, but not the lot.” The question was also asked, “Are these funds held in cash?”, and the answer was, “No, the funds are invested in conformity with requirements of the Audit Acts.” The thought in the minds of the people at the conference table was that the moneys had been used to finance State loans. Nobody said so but that was the thought. The question was also asked, “Can you reasonably sell loans to the States?” That is the crux of the argument. There was an instruction from the Treasurer not to touch the moneys in funds. The Treasury issued that instruction because they wanted to sell that money back to the States at 5½ per cent. That is why it could not be touched, altogether the Commonwealth Government have underwritten State loans since 1951-52 to the extent of \$461,800,000. Of that sum, £89,793,000, the amount in the Defence Trust Funds, has come direct from taxpayers, but the Commonwealth Government charges the States an interest rate of 5 per cent. The net effect of this has been to add to the cost of State services. It could be a psychological factor in the Commonwealth allowing the loan market to go to pot instead of devising new methods to raise loan moneys. They have shown absolute inefficiency in administering the finances of this country. Despite the expenditure of £600,000,000 on defence in three years, we could not defend the Commonwealth in the event of hostilities. In addition, they have salted away a further £89,000,000 under that heading and that money has been loaned to the States, earning for the Commonwealth Government a further £4,500,000 a year approximately. The hon. member for Isis touched on this subject, but his remarks should have been directed to the Federal Government.

The hon. member for Marodian when speaking recently mentioned unemployment and the possibility of further unemployment because of lack of loan allocations by the Federal Government.

Mr. Low: The Loan Council.

Mr. BAXTER: The Federal Government control the Loan Council.

Mr. Nicklin: They do not.

Mr. BAXTER: The Federal Government can do what they like. They control the voting strength of the Loan Council. There may be serious unemployment as a result of their policy. Taking into consideration the surpluses of the Federal Government, one wonders whether the present position is not the result of a long-range plan. When the Menzies-Fadden Government first took office it was said that it was necessary to have unemployment of 10 per cent. of the possible work force if Australia was to be an efficiently-controlled economic nation.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: Where did you read that?

Mr. BAXTER: If the hon. member had been interested, he could have read it for himself. It was said at a conference in Tasmania. Have the Federal Government been carrying out a long-range plan to that end? Was the Little Horror Budget which rakes off another £115,000,000 a further step in this plan? I say it was. We are just beginning to feel the effect of it. There is more unemployment in Queensland today than for many years.

Mr. Power: That is quite right.

Mr. BAXTER: There are unemployed people now walking the streets looking for work. Why is that so? The Little Horror Budget only affected one section of the community, those on the basic wage and a little above it. They are the salt of industry. They spend the money they receive in their pay envelope on Friday night. It is necessary for them to spend almost all of it to provide for themselves and their families, to give them a decent living to which they are justly entitled. They are the ones most vitally affected by this Little Horror Budget. They suffer the most and they are unemployed. From this section comes the unemployed.

Mr. Dewar interjected.

Mr. BAXTER: These people keep big businesses going. These little people are compelled to spend their money and under Federal legislation they will not have a belt to hold their trousers up. They will be walking round with string or rope to hold up their pants. Look at the situation in Western Australia. Only a night or two ago I heard over the international broadcast news that they were handing out bread and meat to the unemployed over there. Do we want that in Queensland? No. We do not want to see it anywhere.

Mr. Dewar: Change the Government.

Mr. BAXTER: If we changed the Queensland Government we would have that position overnight. In 1929-1932 it took only three weeks to bring about unemployment with people moving all over Queensland because they could not get work. That is going to happen again so far as the Federal Administration is concerned if they have

their way. It is only because we have people big and strong enough to point out the position that we have not got that state of affairs here. These facts were brought forward at the last State election in Queensland the people made their decision—a correct one too.

Mr. Low: What is the total unemployed in Brisbane today?

Mr. BAXTER: The hon. member would not know anything about it because he lives in a world of his own, where people control the destinies of the poor working people. He does not give working people what they are entitled to. He would not know whether there was unemployment or not. I had 17 unemployed come to my house in the last three weeks, and if the hon. member wishes it I can give their names and addresses. Can he tell me that there is no unemployment in Brisbane?

Mr. Turner: That is only in your own electorate.

Mr. BAXTER: That is so. There has been a big increase in unemployment since the introduction of the Little Budget. I know one business that put off 300 men, and not because of an industrial dispute. In another industry are 200 unemployed as a result of the Little Horror Budget. I refer to the liquor trade. One brewery alone in Victoria sacked 187 people.

Mr. Nicholson: That is not Queensland.

Mr. BAXTER: The effect of the Little Budget has been felt throughout Australia. The interests represented by hon. members opposite are now trying to do in the Federal sphere what they did many years ago in the State, and they will succeed to a large degree.

With the possible advent of war, I am wondering if there is anything of an ulterior motive in the mind of the Federal Government. Are they trying to bring about large-scale unemployment so that they can fill their armies?

Opposition Members: Oh!

Mr. BAXTER: Never mind about saying, "Oh!" It has happened before and it will happen again. Prior to both world wars, unemployment was widespread throughout the world.

I have here an article by a Mr. Higgins, who is by no means a supporter of Federal Labour. Rather is he a supporter of the Country Party. He speaks of the record Federal Budget of £1,230,000,000, and draws a strong comparison showing that the late Ben Chifley was not such a bad guy after all. Many hard things were said about him when he was Federal Treasurer and Prime Minister, but he was not too bad. In 1946 he brought down what was then a record Budget of £359,000,000. The Tory Opposition of the day screamed to high heaven about the

scandalous waste and crippling taxation. In 1949, just before Ben Chifley was defeated, he brought down a Budget of £544,000,000.

Now we come to the interesting part. This is where the inflationary spiral starts. When the "glamour boys" became the Government in the Federal sphere they said, "We will put value back into the £1. We will reduce taxation. We will save the world." But what happened? They started the greatest inflationary spiral of all time!

Mr. Nicholson: Are you quoting Higgins, or is this your own interpretation?

Mr. BAXTER: This is my own interpretation.

Like their predecessors, the present Federal Government, who control the destinies of this country, have done nothing for the people who returned them on their promise to put value back into the £1.

A study of the rise and fall of the basic wage over that period is very interesting. The "C" Series index has been the subject of controversy for many years and I think it is time to review the method of computing increases in the basic wage. Any system will in time outlive its usefulness and require review and possibly amendment. If the "C" Series index is found to be faulty let it be amended. No-one could be satisfied with a system under which the cost of living increases immediately after a wage increase so that the worker is really much worse off than before. That is why the Labour Government believe in pegging prices of all commodities that affect the cost of living.

Under a Labour regime the "C" Series index figure remained relatively stable for the seven years from 1942 to 1949, including a period of war when there was every indication of a spiral. It was checked effectively by pegging. Labour had two very strong leaders who knew their business. The index figure moved from 1020 to 1388, an increase of about 360 points, or 31.2 per cent. Between 1949 and 1956, under the Government who said they would put value back into the £1, it jumped from 1388 to 2299, 911 points or 71.8 per cent.

Mr. Aikens: A shocking performance!

Mr. BAXTER: Yes, very shocking. They put value back into the £1 all right! They bumped up the cost of living. Under Labour the basic wage rose from £4 12s. in 1942 to £6 6s. in 1949, an increase of £1 14s. or 37 per cent. over-all. Today the basic wage is £11 17s., in increase of £5 11s. over 1949, or an increase of 88.1 per cent.

The difference is very noticeable. Under Labour, from 1942 to 1949, the increase was 37 per cent., under the Liberal-Country Party coalition, from 1949 to 1956, the increase was 88.1 per cent. These are the people who were going to put value back into the £1. In 1942 the £1 could purchase 20s. worth of goods; in 1949 it was worth only 15s. 3d., but what

of 1956? After seven years of legislation by the Government who made the false promise that they would put value back into the £1 we find that today the £1 is worth only 8s. They are the people who came in with all the glamour. They were going to eliminate unnecessary taxation, they were going to save the world, they were going to put value back into the £1. The value of the £1 has been reduced by 50 per cent. on the 1949 level, another promise not fulfilled. Today we have something that we have not had for years—unemployment. It was brought about in the first instance by the Little Horror Budget with its draining away of £115,000,000 from the spending power of the people. It caused the small businessman to close down. Hundreds of small businessmen who previously employed eight, nine or ten are now walking the streets. I spoke to one the other day who had employed 25. He could have occupied an important place in the building industry. He said to me, "I am very sorry to say that as a result of the Little Horror Budget I was compelled to go out of business and seek employment myself. I had to dispense with all my employees." The effects of the Little Horror Budget are just beginning to be felt. The recent budget in the Federal House will make things even worse and I predict that things will be in a very bad way by Christmas. It could possibly be that because overseas today we have a man who ran out under the pressure in 1939-1940. We may have to face a World War III. and it is possible that the Federal Liberal-Country Party coalition are endeavouring to create a strong pool of unemployed so as to fill the armies. We must not overlook that. There is a tie-up in the comparison of the months and situation when we recall a period prior to the 1914-1918 War and World War II. Because of the inflationary trend forced on the people of Australia by lack of administration by the people who control the Federal Treasury we could very easily find ourselves again humping our swag and walking the streets. And we could have the spectacle of people asking farmers for a little bit of food to tide them over until they reached the next farm. I know that it could happen. I was one of the unfortunates who suffered during the period 1929 to 1932 because of the actions of the Government of the same political colour as the present Federal Government. The gross inefficiency displayed by them is responsible for the unemployment today. It has almost reached the stage in Western Australia of providing soup kitchens to feed the hungry.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (3.37 p.m.): I should like first of all to pay my respects to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I pay a tribute to the Governor for the interest that he takes in the welfare of this State. I join with other hon. members in their general expression of loyalty to the Throne.

One makes up one's mind to speak on some subject but after hearing some of the frightful nonsense from Government members one changes one's mind again and again, and eventually, like the man with the axe for 40 years during which time he had a couple of new heads and three handles, one finishes up with a speech that is nothing like the original speech one intended to make. However, it is important that I should refer to the statements of Government members, particularly the hon. member for Pessimism, who just resumed his seat. I draw attention to the following statement in today's "Telegraph":—

"Figures released by the Acting Commonwealth Government Statistician (Mr. Carver) show that at the end of July the banks held £52,335,000—an increase of £15-million in two months.

"At the same time deposits with the Commonwealth Savings Bank also increased by about £15-million to £705,905,000."

After listening to the diatribe delivered by the hon. member for Norman, it is interesting to find that our savings bank deposits have increased to £760,000,000. If that is not sufficient to rebut the statements of the hon. member I shall quote from the magazine "Facts" of July this year. On the back of that magazine the following appears, "Australia grows industrially." Later, I may have time to discuss certain aspects of industrial growth but let me tell the hon. member for Norman, who spent 40 minutes dispensing gloom, that the production of tobacco and cigarettes jumped from 23,000,000 lbs. in 1939 to 44,000,000 lbs. in 1954. No-one would suggest that ice-cream is an essential commodity. The consumption of it obviously reflects the state of the working man's pocket. We find production increased from 4,262,000 gallons to 14,836,000 gallons. During the period I have been discussing, the growth of population in this country has been only something like 25 per cent. Take the position in regard to refrigerators. Surely it would be a fair assumption that the increased numbers of refrigerators in the homes of Australians reflects in some measure the economic stability of the country. In 1939, 29,000 refrigerators were produced in Australia. In 1954-1955, 279,000 refrigerators were produced in this country. Surely that reflects in some degree the economic stability of this country.

Mr. Power: All thanks to the Labour Government.

Mr. DEWAR: A lot of things have been blamed on to the Labour Government and a lot of things have been credited to them. Generally speaking, the things credited to them have been credited by themselves.

Mr. Power: By the electors.

Mr. DEWAR: The Labour Government make promises, but never carry them out. They are without future, but it is only natural that they would give themselves a lot of credit. I shall return to that later.

The hon. member for North Toowoomba bemoaned the fact that the hon. member for Sherwood was able to deliver his speech with the aplomb of a veteran, a speech in which, according to the hon. member for North Toowoomba, he supported things in which he did not believe. The hon. member for Sherwood is a young man with great experience. He has been associated with a branch of the trade union movement. He has been a working man all his life. He served his country in the navy for four years, joining that service at the age of 17 years. He thought sufficient of his country to take part in its defence. He has the youth which I believe is essential in this Parliament, because the legislation of today is legislation under which the people of this State are going to live for many years. I believe that more young men and women should be encouraged to enter politics. In dealing with legislation we need the imagination of people young enough to look ahead. That is the approach of young people. We need consideration of legislation by men who know full well that they are going to see the results of that legislation in their lifetime. It is pleasing to see young men of the calibre of the hon. member for Sherwood in this Chamber. The hon. member for Mackenzie also made a solid contribution to this debate. I congratulate both of them on their speeches. They will be an asset in this Parliament in years to come when the electors, despite the electoral boundary rigging, will wake up to the Labour Government and kick them out.

The hon. member for North Toowoomba said that he was not very happy about the Liberal Party propaganda and organisation used against him in his electorate. He said that sort of thing went on throughout Queensland. I take his word that it went on in North Toowoomba, but it did not come into the Chermiside electorate. The last was the fourth election I contested. The first was when I stood for Nundah and was defeated by Mr. Frank Roberts, and I must say that the first three election campaigns were fought on a clean basis. I did not use the names of my opponents nor did they use mine. That is the way an election should be fought. In an election one should completely divorce personalities from the issues, and get down to the basic policy of each party although it would be hard to get down to the basic policy of the Labour Party because it does not appear to have one. A group within the Labour Party had a man shifted from Northgate station to the Nundah station for the express purpose of winning the Labour plebiscite for Nundah. When that went against him that man opposed me. The present member for Nundah won the plebiscite. I dare say that members of the Labour Party are aware of all that went on. It could not get a candidate to put up against me in Chermiside and it directed this man whom Mr. Hadley cleaned up in Nundah to be my opponent. We had quite a little scrap. The campaign was satisfactory as far as I was concerned,

but I objected when the Communist organisation showed its colours and started in to support the Labour Party.

Mr. Hadley: Do not bring that in.

Mr. DEWAR: I will tell the whole story. The first indication I got of what was in the air was when I put up a poster on the Nundah station. It was promptly dragged down and as I was about to put it up again I was told that if I put it up it would be dragged down again. Furthermore, a sign of mine in Hamilton road, Chermside, adjacent to the housing settlement was dragged down. As I had heard of Bruce and the spider, I thought I would try again. I put it up and it came down again. I decided that I would stay the distance so far as the putting up of this sign was concerned, provided the sign would stand up to the struggle. Each time I put it up it was pulled down. The unfortunate thing was that it was pulled down at night-time and I was not always there to put it up straight-away. On the last occasion it was pulled down it was taken across the paddock and thrown into a creek and smeared with mud. I dragged the sign out of the mud—it was quite a heavy sign—and as I was dragging it out two persons walked past me and one said that although he was a member of the Labour Party he objected to that sort of thing. On the second occasion when the sign was thrown into the mud a chap helped me put it up again. When the sign had been smeared with mud I put it up on a fence where the people could see it and see the type of campaign being carried on against me. That sign stayed on the fence for a fortnight and it got me many votes. Those are a few facts typical of the campaign of vilification that went on against me at the election, castigating me and dragging the names of my wife and children into the election campaign. There were suggestions that I was not living with my wife. It was the dirtiest campaign I ever had to contend with. My majority was increased from 462 to 2,786. That is proof that people in my electorate do not stand for the filth that was levelled against me. I have in particular to thank the Communist cohorts of Labour for many votes cast in my favour.

Some of the would-be mathematicians in the House have quoted figures to show why the election was won by Labour, but when I read the election results in the newspaper the day after the election, I noticed that Labour had increased its majority in only four seats.

Mr. Power: What were they?

Mr. DEWAR: Somerset and Cook were two of them, whereas the majorities of hon. members on this side of the House increased considerably. In every electorate in Queensland save four there was a vote against the Government. The people of

Queensland registered a vote of protest against Labour's mismanagement of the State.

And now I wish to deal with housing, something that is of great interest to me and to which I normally pay a good deal of attention. Early last year the Federal Government introduced legislation designed to encourage workers to own their own homes. That contrasts remarkably with the policy of the Labour Party, one of whose spokesmen said on one occasion that it was not Labour's policy to let the worker own his own home and become a little capitalist.

The Commonwealth Government amended the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement so that a worker in a rental home could buy his own home on the payment of a deposit of 5 per cent. of the first £2,000 and 10 per cent. of the balance. Under the amended agreement the State Government has to refund to the Commonwealth Government the capital cost of a home that is sold. If the house is sold for cash, the State Government refunds to the Commonwealth Government the capital cost. If it is sold on a deposit, the State Government refunds the deposit immediately and the periodical repayments as they are received. That places the State Government under no financial liability whatever.

When the Bill to implement that agreement came before this Parliament, the Opposition put forward an amendment designed to allow the workers to buy their homes at capital cost. The Queensland Government, however, who allegedly represent the worker, refused to accept the amendment and took unto themselves the right to sell the homes at current valuation less depreciation.

During the last election campaign we went before the people with a policy based on the amendment to which I have just referred. We said we would sell the homes at capital cost irrespective of when they were built. That would give the worker an opportunity of buying his home at a fair and reasonable price.

In Queensland almost no workers who are tenants are taking advantage of the opportunity to buy their own homes. Yesterday the Secretary for Public Works and Housing in reply to my question said that 154 applications to purchase had been lodged and that 103 contracts of sale had been executed. It is rather pertinent that today there became available from Federal sources a statement by the Minister for National Development, Senator Spooner. He said what I have already outlined about the scheme and gave the figure of 121 homes purchased in Queensland as at 30 June, 1956. Apparently 121 was the figure at 30 June and the other 33 included in the Minister's figure have come since.

The Commonwealth figures tell an amazing story. They show clearly that the proposal we made last year would have been far more acceptable to the people of this State. Of the 2,676 houses sold to tenants throughout Australia under the new agreement, only 121, or 4.8 per cent., are in Queensland. What a shocking commentary on a Government purporting to represent the workers of the State! It is sickening to hear some of the remarks of some of the new members. The other day the hon. member for Cairns began with a sanctimonious parading of nauseating propaganda about how the Labour Party was returned because it represented the workers, and so on, blah, blah, blah. The new agreement has been in operation for 18 months and only 4.8 per cent. of the houses are in Queensland whereas Victoria has 1,289, or almost half Australia's total, and New South Wales 733. South Australia generally speaking kept outside the Commonwealth-States agreement but it still has 281 homes purchased under the scheme. The number of houses purchased under the agreement is negligible compared with the number purchased in other States. Once again Queensland is at the bottom of the list; but that is not unusual for it is so often there in expenditure per head of population on education and in growth of industry.

Mr. Hadley: You had a lot of houses built at Chermside by the Housing Commission.

Mr. DEWAR: Yes. They did their best to get rid of me. That is why they put them there. The people in Housing Commission homes at Chermside are a wake-up to the Queensland Government. Is it any wonder that such a small number were purchased in Queensland in view of what I am about to quote? I shall not mention names although I have permission to do so if I think fit. Some time ago I helped a widow with a worker's compensation claim. Her family started work and she decided to purchase the home she was living in as it would be a good asset to pass on to her children. She asked me to get a quote from the Housing Commission. I approached one of the senior officers and arranged for a quote to be submitted to her. Some time later her father wrote to me from Toowoomba stating that in his opinion it was a sorry state of affairs that such a deal should be offered to his daughter. I do not care what an hon. member's political views are, but any hon. member who is not shocked with this case has no right to be here because he has not the sympathetic approach that a member of Parliament should have. The house was built 10 or 11 years ago for under £1,000. The lady knows this because when her husband was alive they inquired the price as they thought of buying the house. However, they found they could not buy it and continued to rent it. She has been paying approximately £2 a week rent for the last 10 years

which means that she has paid £1,000 in rent for a house which cost roughly £950. She has paid more in rent than the house cost to build, yet to my amazement and to her amazement and despair she received a letter from the Housing Commission quoting her a purchase price of £2,197 8s. She was offered the house for £2,197 8s. less a credit of £99 for rent paid, on a deposit of £109. Any man who could justify this could write his own passport to heaven because he would be the best talker that ever drew breath. It is a shocking indictment of our alleged democratic viewpoint that the Government who are constantly criticising profits in private enterprise, should want to make £2,000 profit out of a widow. They have the hide to talk about how the Labour policy looks after the working man. Not only do they not look after the working man, but they cheat his widow when he is dead.

Mr. Hadley: That is a determination—

Mr. DEWAR: It is a determination on the result of the legislation passed by the Government, and passed by a Government that refused to accept the amendment we moved in the House to prevent this sort of abominable thing happening. The thing that we prophesied 18 months ago has now happened. The hon. member for Norman suggested that the Government at Canberra were working to create the same conditions that existed during 1929-1932. Let me remind the hon. member that the Scullin Labour Government were in power at Canberra during that period.

Mr. Hadley: With no power.

Mr. DEWAR: "Power without glory". At that time our overseas markets dropped by roughly 32 per cent. and our unemployment figure was roughly 32 per cent. Let me remind these Labour economists that in 1952 the overseas markets dropped by a similar figure, but because of the actions of the Menzies-Fadden Government, unemployment was about 2.5 per cent. Under Scullin the overseas markets dropped by 32 per cent. and unemployment rose by 32 per cent. and under the Menzies-Fadden Government the overseas markets dropped by 32 per cent. but unemployment rose to 2.5 per cent. Yet hon. members opposite have the hide to get up and make untrue statements with an air of sanctimonious piety. The condition of affairs in Queensland today are not much different from those that obtained in the early '20s when the McCormack Labour Government were defeated and another Government had to do the cleaning up. The conditions that confront this State are not much different to the conditions that operated in 1925 and 1926. I am glad that Labour won the last election because they can clean up the mess that they have made. They will not be able to leave it to somebody else to clean up as they did in 1928. Let them clean it up themselves. I prophesy that this State will experience much trouble while they are

cleaning it up. If their actions during the last eight months are any criterion of how they are going to clean it up, heaven help Queensland.

Mr. Graham: The Moore Government did not clean up the mess in 1929.

Mr. DEWAR: I will say they did. There was less unemployment when they went out of power than when they came in. For the information of hon. members I shall quote some figures. The rise and fall in exports over the last few years are interesting. Any man who sticks his head in the sand like an ostrich and refuses to face facts is not worth his salt in this Parliament, irrespective of his political beliefs. I quote further from "Facts". From 1937-1938 to 1953-1954 all exports from this country were down 8 per cent. I refer to quantities, not values. I was amazed when I read those figures. Wheat and flour exports were down 58 per cent. during those 16 years, butter was down 66 per cent., meat down 20 per cent, wool up 7 per cent., sugar up 28 per cent., and dried and preserved fruit up 16 per cent. These are some of the basic industries on which our country depends. Irrespective of any increase in our exports that may have occurred in the last two years, that position would not change greatly. Our meat exports were down 20 per cent. despite the fact that Australia is recognised as one of the leading meat-producing countries in the world. Unless we are prepared to face facts and take concrete action to encourage and develop the export of primary products, Australia is going to stagnate.

A little has been said in this debate about a matter that will increase in importance as time goes on, a matter that will be discussed at length in this Parliament and every Parliament in the world, automation. I have done a little research on this subject. In the years to come automation will become a major factor in our way of life. I do not think that in the next ten years we will see the full impact of it in Australia, particularly Queensland, but I think the Government should give consideration to the establishment of research facilities within the University of Queensland, so that we will be ready to avail ourselves of the benefits of automation. In view of the limited time now at my disposal, I shall not be able to deal with this matter at length. My remarks would take at least 20 minutes. I shall deal with the subject on the financial statement. Thought must be given to the establishment of research facilities so that the effects of automation can be studied. There is no doubt that eventually automation will make a tremendous impact on our way of life. There will be a certain amount of dislocation but, if the trend of full employment continues—and I do not see why it should not—the only effect it will have, in my opinion, will be a reduction in the cost of goods and therefore an improvement in our standard of living.

It will not bring unemployment. Automatic machinery will take care of the position that exists today where industry is hampered because it is unable to get skilled labour. Automation will have the effect of increasing production without creating unemployment whilst we live in an era of full employment. On the other hand, if we reach the stage when we do not have full employment it is obvious that any big impact of automation will create a problem of unemployment. Should that time come the obvious thing would be to lessen working hours, but I want to say that any move in the mind of unions or the Government or the Q.C.E. or anybody else to lessen working hours in any way whatsoever under existing conditions would be crass stupidity. We have been rapidly costing ourselves out of the export markets and if the day comes when we impose restrictive costs on primary industries, on which we depend, and to such an extent that we cannot compete on the overseas markets we will be in trouble in this State.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Hadley, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 4.19 p.m