

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 1956**

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THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

PUBLIC HEARINGS OF LICENSING COMMISSION.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha) asked the Attorney-General—

“Further to my question of 25 September and his reply thereto,—

1. Is he aware of the difference between an administrative tribunal and a judicial tribunal?

2. If so, why did he infer in his answer that the administrative tribunal appointed under the Liquor Acts, and known as the Licensing Commission, is a judicial body, when in fact it cannot truly be described as such?”

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona) replied—

“1. Yes, but apparently the hon. member is not.

“2. Everybody knows that the Commission exercises judicial functions, and I will not interfere with their independence.”

LAND ACQUIRED BY HOUSING COMMISSION,  
MT. GRAVATT.

**Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration—

“1. Will he please advise at what date the Housing Commission or his Department secured possession of the land in Wishart Street and Logan Road, Mt. Gravatt, known, I believe, as sub. 2 of portion 334, county of Stanley, parish of Bulimba?”

"2. What was the total cost of acquiring this land?"

"3. What is the total amount spent on it to date in bulldozing and clearing generally?"

"4. Into how many building allotments has this land been subdivided?"

"5. Does the Housing Commission or the Government still own the total amount of land, or has any been disposed of?"

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

"1. 2 June, 1951.

"2. £7,635.

"3. £912.

"4. 113.

"5. The Queensland Housing Commission owns the whole of the land. For your information, cost of the land, £7,635, comprises £7,605 compensation, determined by the Land Court and paid to the owner, and £30 Public Curator's fees."

#### EXTRACTION OF OIL FROM COAL.

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

"1. Has he seen the article in the 'Telegraph' dated 25 September last, headed 'N.S.W. Miners seeking Coal Treatment Plant' which stated that the Miners' Federation will seek an early conference with the Premier to discuss the extraction of oil from coal and that support for such a plant has recently been provided by technical experts on the staff of the University of Technology?"

"2. If so, does he realise the danger of coal miners in Queensland being faced with the possibility of curtailment of employment through over-production of coal, as is happening in New South Wales at the present time, unless something similar is sponsored in this State, and will he endeavour to secure a copy of the data from the experts on the staff of the University of Technology?"

**Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. If the hon. member would devote a little time to reading the various reports and publications on the coal industry which have been supplied and are available to him, he would learn that there is no evidence of over production in this State. This has flowed from the interest in and control over the industry which has been continually demonstrated and provided by the Government of Queensland since 1933 and from the careful planning and development of the Queensland mines to equip them to meet fluctuating consumption demands without dislocation. In Queensland a most satisfactory degree of stability has been preserved in the number of persons employed in the industry and

full time work is provided for these persons. I would ask the hon. member to compare this position with what applied during the previous years of non-Labour control when many miners could secure only one or less day's work per fortnight. I can assure him that the Government will use every effort to maintain the present satisfactory position and will lose no opportunity of obtaining and studying all available expert information from all parts of the world on matters pertaining to the welfare of this industry."

APPLICATION FOR HOME BY MR. PUCKERING,  
MEADOW STREET, NORTH MACKAY.

**Mr. ROBERTS** (Whitsunday) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration—

"As a Mr. Puckering of Meadow Street, North Mackay, made an application to the Queensland Housing Commission in October, 1955, to have a home, style No. 161 in the Queensland Housing Commission booklet, erected, and as a recent approach on the matter by me elicited a reply from the Minister, dated 11 September, 1956, that the application is awaiting the preparation of a sketch and an estimate of cost, and that there are sixty-six applications ahead of Mr. Puckering, will he please advise if applicants will be compelled to wait for from one to two years, or does he hold out any hope for a vast improvement in the position in the near future?"

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

"Mr. and Mrs. Puckering's joint application was received in October, 1955, but it was not until 9 April, 1956, that advice was received from the Townsville Registry that the transfer from vendor to Puckering and from Puckering to himself and wife had been registered. On 16 April, mortgage document prepared for applicants' signature was despatched showing description of land as furnished by the applicants' solicitors and as in their application. Such mortgage duly signed and title to the land was returned to the Commission's office on 30 April. A check of the title revealed that solicitor and applicants had furnished a wrong description of the land, consequently the signed mortgage was of non effect. Fresh mortgage was prepared and forwarded on 28 May, 1956, which document duly signed was returned to the Commission on 22 June. No action for preparation of plans and specifications could be taken by the Commission until 22 June, 1956. The applicants had to be registered proprietors of the land and had to properly execute the mortgage. Mr. and Mrs. Puckering did not select design 161 as it stood, but desired many variations to such plan, including additional rooms under house.

For such house, they forwarded details of their specification requirements. On 28 August, a letter was received from the applicants changing from such type house to a larger house. On 28th instant, the applicants will be advised of the estimated cost of the design now chosen based on the specification details previously supplied and they will be requested to lodge necessary plan fees should they be in a position to finance the deposit necessary on such type dwelling. Provided the applicants require no alteration to the design now chosen and can finance the necessary deposit, a plan and specification will be forwarded to Mackay for tender purposes within two weeks of the receipt of plan fees at the Commission's office. Under such arrangement, the waiting time for these applicants would be 4 months, i.e., from 22 June, 1956—the date the properly signed mortgage was received by the Commission. Improvement in the position in respect of home purchase applications is dependent upon the success of the efforts to obtain further architects, and to the extent to which the pressure on the Housing Commission is relieved should the War Service Homes Division, Commonwealth Bank and similar bodies increase their advances to intending home owners to the extent which will encourage such persons to seek the services of these other institutions. In an endeavour to overcome the position, the Government has, in the last two years, provided scholarships to the Queensland University architectural course to train staff for the Commission. It must be realised that the majority of Commission clients desire that their house shall express their own ideas and individuality, and for such purpose desire a special plan or major variations to a standard plan. It is a good thing for the community when people exercise such personal interest and avoid standardisation. Only one in every 160 applicants desires a standard plan unaltered."

BUILDING EXPENDITURE, IPSWICH HOSPITALS BOARD DISTRICT.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) for **Mr. MULLER** (Fassifern), asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"1. Will he kindly advise the amount of money expended to date in the Ipswich Hospitals Board District on erection of new buildings, and additions to and maintenance of existing buildings for hospital purposes?

"2. Of the total sum expended, what amount has been expended on (a) the base hospital at Ipswich, and (b) all branch hospitals controlled by the Board?"

**Hon. W. M. MOORE** (Merthyr) replied—

"1. £384,342 16s. 9d.

"2. (a) £330,567 19s. 9d.; (b) £53,774 17s. 0d. These figures are in respect of the period from 1 July, 1936, to date. The Ipswich Hospitals District was constituted on 14 March, 1936. The figures include expenditure on the maintenance of maternity hospital buildings, but do not include expenditure on new maternity hospitals or additions to maternity hospitals. The latter expenditure is incurred by the Department of Public Works. If the hon. member desires to know such latter expenditure, he should direct a question to the Honourable the Minister for Public Works."

SEWERAGE FOR COMMISSION HOUSES, INALA.

**Mr. HERBERT** (Sherwood) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration—

"In view of the fact that homes in the Inala Housing Commission area have been built with a view to future sewerage and many houses have earth closets incorporated in the building, could he advise the approximate date for the commencement of this sewerage work?"

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

"No indication can be given of an approximate date for the commencement of sewerage work in Inala, the provision of sewerage being the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council, with which authority the matter has been taken up on several occasions, but due to shortage of loan funds, the council up to the present has been unable to make provision for this work."

EXPENDITURE FROM HOSPITAL MOTHERHOOD AND CHILD WELFARE FUND.

**Mr. MUNRO** (Toowong) asked the Treasurer—

"Having regard to the fact that the credit balance of the Hospital Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund was reduced during the year ended 30 June, 1956, from £2,971,657 to £1,720,244 (a reduction of £1,251,413) will he be good enough to state:—(a) Short particulars of how the amount of £1,251,413 has been utilised; and (b) How much of this amount of £1,251,413 represents expenditure which ordinarily would be regarded as a charge against Consolidated Revenue?"

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry), for **Hon. E. J. WALSH** (Bundaberg), replied—

"The Financial Statement and accompanying documents, made available to the hon. member on Thursday last, clearly show that expenditure from the Hospital, Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June, 1956, was £2,753,195 and short particulars of how the amount was utilised."

## EXPENDITURE FROM POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND.

**Mr. MUNRO** (Toowong) asked the Treasurer—

“Having regard to the fact that the credit balance of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund was reduced during the year ended 30 June, 1956, from £4,794,506 to £2,248,051 (a reduction of £2,546,455), will he be good enough to state:—(a) Short particulars of how the amount of £2,546,455 has been utilised; and (b) How much of this amount of £2,546,455 represents expenditure which ordinarily would be regarded as a charge against Consolidated Revenue?”

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry), for **Hon. E. J. WALSH** (Bundaberg), replied—

“Full particulars of the transactions in the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund for the year ended 30 June, 1956, including the information sought, are contained in the tables relating to the Treasurer’s Financial Statement and the Estimates of Probable Ways and Means of Expenditure, which documents were made available to hon. members on Thursday last. If the hon. member would peruse the documents made available such questions would be unnecessary and much valuable time of this House and Government officers would be saved.”

## MOTOR CARS FOR USE OF MINISTERS.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) asked the Premier—

“With reference to motor vehicles provided for the use of Cabinet Ministers, will he kindly advise (a) Whether any new motor vehicles have been supplied to any Cabinet Minister within the past twelve months and, if so, to what Minister or Ministers respectively; (b) In each of the cases (if any) covered by paragraph (a) hereof—(i.) The make and date of purchase of the former vehicle or vehicles; (ii.) The make and date of purchase of the vehicle now in use?”

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

“(a) The Hon. J. E. Duggan, M.L.A., Minister for Transport; the Hon. G. H. Devries, M.L.A., Secretary for Mines; the Hon. C. G. McCathie, M.L.A., Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration; the Hon. L. F. Diplock, M.L.A., Secretary for Public Instruction; (b) (i.) re Hon. J. E. Duggan, M.L.A.—Ford Customline purchased 21 September, 1955; re Hon. G. H. Devries, M.L.A.—De Soto sedan purchased 10 December, 1953, whilst Secretary for Public Instruction; re Hon. C. G. McCathie, M.L.A.—Dodge sedan purchased 16 November, 1954; re Hon. L. F. Diplock, M.L.A.—Ford Customline sedan purchased

11 November, 1955, by Department of Public Lands, transferred to Department of Mines and then to Department of Public Instruction; (ii.) re Hon. J. E. Duggan, M.L.A.—Ford Customline purchased on 18 May, 1956; re Hon. G. H. Devries, M.L.A.—Dodge Powerflite purchased 31 July, 1956; re Hon. C. G. McCathie, M.L.A.—Dodge Powerflite purchased 5 July, 1956; re Hon. L. F. Diplock, M.L.A.—Dodge sedan purchased 30 August, 1956. The cars which were replaced were traded in to the best advantage and after allowing for the “trade in” value, the new cars actually cost—Hon. J. E. Duggan, M.L.A., £79; Hon. G. H. Devries, M.L.A., £1,040; Hon. C. G. McCathie, M.L.A., £627; Hon. L. F. Diplock, M.L.A., £351.”

## FISH LADDERS, JACK TAYLOR AND DIRRANBANDI WEIRS.

**Mr. SPARKES** (Aubigny) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“1. Is he aware that large quantities of fish are now tightly massed below the Jack Taylor Weir at St. George and the Dirranbandi Weir, being prevented by these weirs from pursuing their natural course upstream, and that large quantities of such fish are being scooped out of the water and taken away in motor trucks and even, in at least one instance, by aircraft?”

“2. If so, will he give urgent consideration to immediately equipping such weirs with fish ladders in order to prevent such wholesale slaughter which must contribute to the eventual denuding of our inland streams of edible fish?”

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

“The matter of a fish ladder on the Jack Taylor Weir is already receiving consideration by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. The Dirranbandi Weir is under the control of the Balonne Shire Council who have been requested to instal a ladder by the Department of Harbours and Marine. It is pointed out, however, that no ladders have yet been installed on western streams and because of the different types of fish in these waters it is not possible to guarantee that a completely satisfactory structure could be installed. The matter is being further investigated.”

## SUB-INSPECTORS’ (POLICE) EXAMINATION.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“1. Is it a fact that the Commissioner of Police has decided to institute, for the first time in the history of the Force, an examination which must be passed by Sub-Inspectors before they can be promoted to Inspectors?”

"2. If so, will he inform the House the reasons for the action of the Commissioner, and the subject matters to be embraced by the examination?"

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. To encourage sub-inspectors to make a close study of the law and procedure which they are called upon to administer so that they will be in a position to more efficiently instruct their subordinates in the subject matters to be embraced in the examination papers, namely, the law which the police are called upon to administer and the practical administration of such law."

#### PAPERS.

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

Report of the Director of Secondary Industries and Chairman of Industries Assistance Board for the year 1955-1956.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1955.

#### FAILURE OF COMMONWEALTH TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FLOOD AND CYCLONE DAMAGE.

**Mr. KEHOE** (Nash) (11.18 a.m.): I move—

"That this Parliament (a) emphatically protests against the action of the Federal Government in refusing to render financial aid to the Queensland Government for the restoration of damage caused by floods and cyclones in Queensland, despite the fact that material assistance was given other States for the same purpose; (b) considers that such action by the Commonwealth constitutes another deplorable example of discrimination against this State and that the financial policy pursued by the Federal Government, which restricts the amount of finance available to this State for works of national importance and grave emergency, operates to the serious detriment of Queensland's economy; (c) urges the Federal Government to abandon its present policy of parsimony and callous indifference to Queensland's welfare, and to furnish adequate funds from its accumulated surpluses to assist in the restoration of flood and cyclone damage suffered by local government bodies and private individuals in this State."

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the hon. member for Mundingburra that his conduct is highly disorderly, and if he does not take steps to improve it I shall have to deal with him.

**Mr. Aikens:** Why don't you—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member knows the Standing Orders. He must remain in his place and not wander about the House.

**Mr. Aikens** interjected from the table of the House.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the hon. member to take his place in the House. He cannot speak from the table. It is a breach of Standing Orders.

**Mr. Aikens:** Don't you provoke me.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I hope the hon. member will not disregard my warning. This is the last warning I shall give him.

**Mr. KEHOE:** The motion is of great concern to all hon. members, as during the past few years Queensland has suffered many abnormal cyclones and floods that have caused tremendous damage, not only to private property but also to local authority roads and bridges. The motion is submitted because this State has received no financial aid from the Commonwealth Government to help repair damage to local authority property.

I refer first of all to the cyclone that hit my electorate in March of last year. These headlines appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 28 March, 1955, as a warning to people in the Mary River area—

"Cyclone Bertha lashes 200 miles of coastline.

"Wind wrecks town.

"Ducks ready to go with food, medicine.

"Huge walls of water are roaring down the Mary River towards Gympie and Maryborough."

That was the worst flood experienced in Gympie for 57 years, the peak height being 70 feet 4 inches. Because of the phenomenal speed at which the flood waters rose many business men in the shopping centre were caught unprepared and thousands of pounds worth of stock was ruined. In addition, about 100 homes were submerged.

On the morning of 28 March, realising the extent of the damage being caused by flood waters, I wired the Premier as follows:—

"Gympie and district and Maryborough citizens suffering great losses from result of record disastrous flood in Mary River.

Please petition Commonwealth Government for assistance for flood relief."

The Premier acknowledged that wire, and on the following day I received the following telegram from him:—

"Have today authorised stipendiary magistrates Gympie and Maryborough to incur expenditure for relief personal distress caused by recent floods Gympie and Maryborough. Am also requesting Secretary Public Works and Housing to arrange for officers to render assistance

where practicable. My colleague the Treasurer also instructing Manager Agricultural Bank to take similar action."

The loss suffered by Gympie business men as a result of the flood was estimated to be £100,000. In addition, damage to the extent of thousands of pounds was suffered by householders whose homes were inundated by flood waters.

The flood was even more severe in Maryborough where 10 homes, valued at about £30,000 were washed away and hundreds of other homes were affected by flood waters. The flood extended into the main business centre of Maryborough, too.

With the hon. member for Maryborough we made representations to the Premier and he arranged for the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department to visit Maryborough to survey the extent of the damage. On his report the Government immediately granted £1,000 to the Maryborough Flood Relief Committee. The Government also arranged for their officers to help the committee, which did an excellent job in distributing relief. The committee very much appreciated the help of the Government officers.

That is a brief outline of the flood in the Gympie and Maryborough areas but I have not yet referred to the damage suffered by local authorities there. The headlines of the "Gympie Times" of 31 March, 1955, indicate some of the damage suffered by the Widgee Shire. The article reads—

"A helicopter flight revealed—two important Widgee bridges have been destroyed. They are the bridge leading into Imbil township and the Yabba Vale Bridge on the Kandanga-Bollier Road. The Imbil bridge was completely washed away, only the piles remaining, while the whole of the superstructure of the Yabba Vale bridge was pushed down the creek. Both bridges spanned Yabba Creek, which is a stream of considerable size."

The Normanby bridge, which is the connecting link between Gympie and the Mary Valley area, was completely washed away, too, and the approaches to the Bells bridge, which is the connecting link between Gympie and the South Burnett area were obliterated for about 300 yards. The damage to roads and bridges in Widgee was abnormal. As I said, the flood on the Mary River was the worst for 57 years.

In April and June I made representations to the Premier on behalf of the Widgee and Burrum shire councils for financial aid to repair roads, bridges and for other services. I received this reply from the Premier on 26 August, 1955, setting out the representations he had made to the Prime Minister.

"When it was announced that the Commonwealth Government had decided to contribute the sum of £500,000 towards the restoration of flood damage to roads, &c., in New South Wales, I immediately made

strong representations for similar treatment to be afforded to Queensland, especially in view of the damage suffered in the Maryborough and Gympie areas.

"The Prime Minister replied, and I quote—

"Your request has been examined and I would point out that it is not the Commonwealth's normal policy to make grants to the States to assist in the restoration of flood damage of this kind. The Commonwealth departed from this principle in the case of the New South Wales floods only because of the catastrophic proportion of those floods. The reports of the Queensland floods would suggest that they could not be compared in their intensity with the New South Wales floods, and for that reason the Commonwealth is not disposed to agree to the request. However, if it can be shown that the floods were in fact comparable with the New South Wales floods and an assessment given of the extent of the restoration work that will be necessary on roads, bridges and local government services the Commonwealth would be prepared to give further consideration to the matter."

"I thereupon caused a survey to be undertaken by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works who reported that the flood damage to roads, bridges and local government installations in certain local authority areas was considerable. This information, together with details of the areas affected and of the nature of the damage, was thereupon forwarded to the Prime Minister. Apparently the Prime Minister was not impressed, however, for I have now received advice to the effect that the Commonwealth cannot agree to provide special assistance to Queensland for this purpose."

The Premier received that advice from the Prime Minister and when I got the letter I referred it to the Widgee Shire Council on whose behalf I had made representations. The Widgee Shire Council passed the letter on to Mr. Adermann, the Federal Country Party member for Fisher. Imagine their surprise to get a letter from him which was a complete negation of what the Prime Minister had said. "The Gympie Times" of 1 October, 1955, published this statement concerning Mr. Adermann's letter to the Widgee Shire—

"Mr. Adermann, in his letter, advised:

"One statement in the Council's letter was not correct, viz. the Queensland Government, at the time of the flood made an offer to contribute £ for £ with the Commonwealth to help local authorities seriously affected by the flood, and the decision of the Commonwealth means that the State aid is also lost to the local authorities. The reverse is the case, and it is Commonwealth policy that they will contribute £1 for £1 to any State for any

disaster. The Queensland Government only asked and contributed £1,000 to flood relief, and it was promptly met by the Commonwealth.

'This is mighty poor recognition by the Premier of the losses incurred by Queensland local authorities. Had the Queensland Government voted a similar sum, the Commonwealth would have paid a similar sum. What Mr. Gair did was to refuse to meet the losses from flood damage on a £1 for £1 basis which would have been met by the Commonwealth, but he asked for a special grant which was to be all paid by the Commonwealth. It was this special grant which was refused, not the contribution on a £1 for £1 basis. The Commonwealth has not the authority to deal direct with the local authorities. So the Commonwealth expects the various State Governments to ascertain the extent of damage incurred in disaster and then to the degree that such State will prove its bona fides and contribute the Commonwealth will match £1 for £1. This obligation the present Commonwealth Government has always honoured, whether such damage occurred from flood, fire, etc. The Queensland Government,' continued Mr. Adermann's letter, 'makes the least call upon the Commonwealth Government considering the disasters that have happened to our State.'

**Mr. Gair:** He did not understand the position.

**Mr. KEHOE:** He certainly did not.

**Mr. Hilton:** He understood it, but he would not admit it.

**Mr. KEHOE:** It is hard to understand that Federal Tory Ministers from Queensland would not know their Government's policy on the matter. They endeavoured to mislead the people of this State on this matter. That is why I quoted the Prime Minister's letter to the Premier and the Premier's offer of financial assistance in this case.

**Mr. Low:** Did you quote the contents of the Premier's letter to the Prime Minister?

**Mr. KEHOE:** I have not got that here. The Premier, on many occasions, made representations on this matter.

**Mr. Gair:** I made application for similar treatment on a proportionate basis to that given to New South Wales for losses suffered in the Maitland flood. I recognised that the floods here were not as great in magnitude. I wanted it on a proportionate basis, and it was refused.

**Mr. Low:** I support you in that.

**Mr. KEHOE:** I agree with the last section of Mr. Adermann's letter in which he stated that Queensland received nothing for flood or fire damage and the other States had. The Federal Government have discriminated against this State in this connection. They have contributed sums to every

other State for flood and fire damage but only the paltry sum of £1,500 was contributed to Queensland.

**Mr. Nicklin:** That was what the State Government put up.

**Mr. KEHOE:** That is on a different basis. The State Government were quite satisfied to contribute on a £1 for £1 basis for the reparation of damage to local authorities. In response to the Prime Minister's request, the Premier arranged for the Co-ordinator-General to assess the damage suffered by the various shires and councils throughout the State. There is no doubt that the Co-ordinator-General and his officers were the most suitable people to assess the damage. No-one can dispute that the Co-ordinator-General is a very efficient officer, well equipped to assess the damage suffered throughout the State. He investigated the matter and subsequently advised the Premier that, whilst in most cases the damage done could have been expected as a result of heavy rainfall and the consequential flooding which occurs during the monsoonal season in Queensland, the local authority areas had suffered damage to roads and bridges of an estimated total amount of £80,328 which he thought had been caused by abnormal conditions of a catastrophic nature similar to those at Maitland. The Commonwealth Government made a grant of £500,000 for the Maitland area. We only asked for similar treatment. The local authority areas referred to above comprise Boonah, Esk, Gatton, Kileoy, Kilkivan, Laidley, Maroochy, Noosa, Tiaro, Widgee, Biggenden, Woocoo, and Mirani.

**Mr. Hilton:** He also made an assessment in other shires prior to that.

**Mr. KEHOE:** Yes, and a number of those shires are in electorates represented by hon. members opposite. I am quite certain they will support this motion because they know the damage caused in those areas by the same flood and the cost of repairs that have had to be undertaken by the shire councils. It is hard to believe that this State cannot get any assistance from the Commonwealth for this work. The hon. member for Cooroora is chairman of the Maroochy Shire Council, one of the shires in which damage occurred.

The ratepayers of that shire will have to foot the bill for the damage. About £14,000 in damage to bridges was suffered in the Widgee Shire and roads also were considerably damaged. The ratepayers will have to pay extra rates to cover the cost of repairs.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Because the Government would not contribute pound for pound.

**Mr. KEHOE:** The offer was definitely made.

**Mr. Sparkes:** It was not.

**Mr. Gair:** That is not right. The hon. member for Aubigny does not know the position. If he does, he is deliberately misrepresenting the facts.

**Mr. KEHOE:** The Commonwealth Government ignored the report of the Co-ordinator-General which was forwarded by the Premier. In all other States of the Commonwealth assistance has been given by the Commonwealth to repair such damage.

**Mr. Low:** The estimate of £80,000 was very conservative.

**Mr. KEHOE:** It was. Reports of that nature submitted by this Government are always fair and the Commonwealth Government should give greater consideration to them. They refused the appeal by the Premier to contribute on a pound for pound basis. In other words, the Commonwealth Government were not prepared to accept the opinion of Mr. Holt, the Co-ordinator-General, a highly qualified and experienced officer.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Why was it not stated that this Government would contribute pound for pound.

**Mr. KEHOE:** That was the offer. I have given the facts.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Read the Premier's letter in which he stated that his Government would contribute pound for pound with the Commonwealth.

**Mr. KEHOE:** The file can be produced if hon. members opposite want it.

Tremendous flood damage was also experienced in South-west Queensland. Again the Premier made representations to the Commonwealth Government and again his request was turned down. There was also damage in North Queensland. After the recent flood in the south-west portion of the State a considerable amount of debris and silt remained. I mention this to illustrate the unsympathetic attitude of the Commonwealth Government. The debris and silt were piled feet high in streets, in the yards of private residences and in the township of Inglewood. It was urgently necessary to tackle the removal of the silt and debris, particularly from the health aspect. It was estimated that twelve bulldozers, twelve end-loaders and fifty five-yard trucks were required for a period of three to four weeks for this work. It was estimated that this work would cost many thousands of pounds. The Premier made an urgent appeal to the Commonwealth Government to contribute towards the cost of clearing and operating the necessary plant, but the Commonwealth Government true to form replied that they were not prepared to co-operate.

However, they were willing to place whatever suitable Commonwealth plant and equipment were available at the disposal of the Queensland Government. The Commonwealth played safe because inquiries revealed that

the type of equipment suitable for this type of work was not readily available from Commonwealth sources. I am surprised at the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. I thought we would have had the full support of the Opposition as many shires in the electorates of hon. members opposite were seriously affected. Shires in electorates of hon. members on this side were affected too. We have the Prime Minister's reply. He was not prepared to enter into any arrangement.

**Mr. Nicklin:** He was not prepared to give a grant.

**Mr. KEHOE:** Not on a £1 for £1 basis. If the Leader of the Opposition has any doubt about that, he can see the file in the Premier's department.

**Mr. Low:** Produce it.

**Mr. KEHOE:** I hope the hon. member and other hon. members opposite will not be like the Federal Country Party member for Fisher and many other Tory members in the Federal House who do not know this subject. They have not gone to the trouble to get correct advice. It is absolutely deplorable to think that Federal Tory members have adopted their present attitude to Queensland, which is similar to their attitude in regard to developmental projects in this State. I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition and other hon. members opposite, by their interjections, support the attitude of the Federal Tory Government in this matter. I thought that they were Queenslanders.

**Mr. Hilton:** Their own Minister, Mr. McMahon had a look at the damage and then said that the Federal Government would not assist local authority areas.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Through the State Government.

**Mr. KEHOE:** The State Government made a £1 for £1 offer but it was turned down by the Federal Government. The State Government were forced to bear the whole of the cost of hiring equipment to remove debris in the South-west Queensland and this expenditure amounted to the not inconsiderable sum of £8,800. How can the Commonwealth Government justify their attitude particularly when we remember the assistance given to New South Wales local authorities to repair roads and bridges and local authority installations? They gave £500,000.

**Mr. Nicklin:** To the New South Wales Government.

**Mr. KEHOE:** Plus £2,000,000 special tax reimbursement for the repair of flood damage, plus £300,000 for the relief of personal distress. And they refused to share with Queensland on a £1 for £1 basis for personal distress only.

**Mr. Sparkes:** I reckon you handle the truth very carelessly.

**Mr. KEHOE:** Hon. members opposite are not handling the truth carefully. They are absolutely devoid of knowledge on the subject. They have betrayed the trust of the electors in not making themselves conversant with the position and in not making representations to the Federal Government for help for the local authorities in their electorates. We on this side have submitted a case to the Federal Government for aid for shires in the electorates of hon. members opposite but they did not support our request. That is evident from their interjections now. Since 1950-1951 New South Wales has received £3,400,000 from the Commonwealth Government, Victoria and South Australia £50,000 and West Australia £10,000 in bush fire and flood relief. Queensland, however, has received only £1,480. That is typical of the attitude towards Queensland by the Federal Tory Government. We know how their attitude towards projects in this State contrasts with that towards projects in other States. In New South Wales and Victoria the Federal Government are financing the Snowy River scheme, in South Australia the Leigh Creek railway, in Western Australia a water supply scheme, and in Tasmania the Bell Bay aluminium project. All those projects have been financed by the Federal Tory Government from revenue.

What of projects designed to develop this great State! All hon. members realise that Queensland has the greatest potential for development of any State in Australia. Time and again this Government have put up a case for the development of the Burdekin River project.

On 18 November, 1949, the Leader of the Federal Country Party, Sir Arthur Fadden, said in his Policy speech—

“Our plans will enable us to co-operate with Queensland for the development of the Channel Country. We will proceed with the Burdekin scheme immediately, and not keep it pigeon-holed as a blueprint for depression.”

A few months later, however, Sir Arthur denied saying that, although it was in his policy speech. He took part in the State election campaign in 1950, during which he made many statements to the effect that he would refuse Commonwealth aid for the Burdekin River scheme.

In “The Courier-Mail” of 4 April, 1950 the then Leader of the Queensland Liberal Party, the hon. member for Coorparoo, said—

“We can see no full development of this State without major financial help from Canberra. We want to see a real start made on the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme, the proposal for the Burdekin Dam, other major irrigation works, such as those proposed at Mareeba, the electrification of the suburban railways—all these are works which we regard as of a pressing urgency.

“If these works are to proceed with speed, special financial aid from the Commonwealth is essential.”

Sir Arthur Fadden’s statement in that election campaign so embarrassed members of his own party that they called on the Federal Minister for National Development, Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey, to make an aerial survey of the Burdekin River area and the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme. This is an extract from “The Courier-Mail” of 24 April, 1950—

“Aerial survey pleases Casey.

“Hope in North.

“Will speed development.

“Development of North Queensland will be hastened by his 1,250-mile aerial inspection of its major projects, the National Development Minister, Mr. Casey, said tonight.

“He had just completed a 7½-hour flight over the Burdekin, Tully, Herbert and Mareeba-Dimbulah Dam sites.”

Senator O’Sullivan accompanied Mr. Casey on his flight, and National Development experts studied closely every major project which were estimated to cost £50,000,000.

The newspaper article goes on to say—

“Mr. Casey said, ‘Here is a great field for fruitful Commonwealth-State co-operation.’”

That was the attitude of the Federal Minister for Development a week before the State elections, which was to offset Sir Arthur Fadden’s statement. After the elections, however, we heard nothing from the Commonwealth Government.

According to “The Courier-Mail” of 22 February, 1955, the Premier of this State said that he was tired of having a one-way correspondence with the Prime Minister on Queensland’s developmental projects.

No replies were received. The Premier said—

“This indifference to Queensland’s representations was not confined to the Mareeba-Dimbulah scheme.

“The request for financial assistance for the Burdekin River irrigation, hydro-electric, and flood mitigation project was first made to the Commonwealth (Chifley Government) in August, 1949.

“The last correspondence from the Menzies-Fadden Government was received on December 9, 1952, when Queensland was advised that the Commonwealth was considering its policy in regard to land development and settlement as a means of increasing production.

“Two other letters had been forwarded and no acknowledgment received.”

The Premier continued—

“Commonwealth assistance towards the cost of the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme was first sought on February 3,

1950. On November 26, 1954, the Prime Minister's Department said the representations were being considered.'

That shows how schemes presented by the State Government meet with cold indifference from the Federal Tory Government. One would expect hon. members opposite to press Tory Federal members to support a case for Queensland because it has the greatest potential of any State in the Commonwealth.

The Premier has made representations for Commonwealth help to develop the Mary Kathleen uranium field and Mt. Isa. Requests for Commonwealth financial assistance for the construction of a road to Mary Kathleen from Cloncurry and to improve rail transport facilities to meet increased production from the Mt. Isa Mines and Mary Kathleen were made to the Commonwealth Government on 26 April, 1956.

In accordance with its form, the Commonwealth Government appointed the usual Commonwealth committee to investigate the requests. The committee visited Queensland and conferred with State departmental officers. However, despite the urgency of the matter, no advice of the Commonwealth's intentions has been received and September is almost past. Hon. members opposite will agree that it is a matter of national importance and too big for the State alone to develop. Queensland will help to the full extent of its financial resources but £10,000,000 is needed to start the project. We hope that the Commonwealth will see the need to help.

We have had specious promises from Mr. Casey, the former Federal Minister for National Development. Reports have been obtained by Commonwealth officials. In every instance they have approved and recommended schemes in North Queensland, such as the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation project, Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme, and the Burdekin River irrigation scheme, but their actual decision has always made apparent the difference in attitude towards Queensland and the other States.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. COOPER (Keppel)** (12 Noon): I second the motion so ably moved by the hon. member for Nash. I stress that there is considerable resentment in my area and in the central district generally at the Federal Government's discriminatory treatment of requests from Queensland in times of severe flood and cyclone compared with that accorded to other States in similar circumstances. The disregard of Queensland's claim is to be deplored. It is in line with the unfair treatment given to the claims of this State for assistance on major developmental works. It is in sharp contrast to the attitude adopted by the Commonwealth Government towards other States and I instance the Snowy River hydro-electricity project which assists Victoria and New South Wales, the assistance rendered to Tasmania in the Bell Bay aluminium project, to South Australia in

the Leigh Creek Railway and to Western Australia in the construction of a water scheme.

This debate should be entirely divorced from party politics because we are discussing a subject of great importance to the State and Australia as a whole. In the past the Press of the State has been mainly responsible for making it party political. The fact that it so vitally affects all the people of the nation, irrespective of political affiliations demands that it be treated non-politically.

In Queensland in recent years we have had a series of cyclones and floods, many of them very serious and causing widespread damage. In some instances they have amounted to disasters. Queensland has a formidable record of cyclones and floods but when they have passed by and damage has been repaired to some extent, they are forgotten by most people. I have compiled a list of some of the more serious cyclones showing the damage caused and I have no doubt that these figures will prove how serious the loss has been to the public, local authorities, the State, and the nation. Losses are comparable with those of other States to which the Federal Government have rendered financial assistance.

In January, 1947, a cyclone moved in from the Coral Sea and passed over the Brisbane area. It caused flooding in the south-eastern corner of the State in the Logan, Albert, and Brisbane tributaries. Two lives were lost and serious soil erosion occurred. Flood damage to property and crops amounted to approximately £500,000.

In February, 1947, a cyclone moved southward along the coast, flooding all the coastal rivers from Cooktown to the New South Wales border, particularly the Burdekin, Dawson, Fitzroy, Mary, Burnett, Condamine, and Brisbane tributaries. Again much damage was caused to property, bridges, and roads.

On 26 February, extending into March, 1949, the Gladstone cyclone, reaching 90 and 100 miles an hour, caused extensive damage in Rockhampton, Gladstone, and Bundaberg. Four lives were lost and severe flooding occurred in the Mackenzie, Dawson, and Fitzroy basins, and moderate flooding in the Burnett and Mary Rivers. Three lives were lost in the Fitzroy area.

From the 5 and 16 March, 1950, the Camilla cyclone operated. It moved inland across the coast in the Camilla area with winds up to 100 miles per hour. There was extensive structural damage at Camilla where one life was lost and several people were injured. The Burdekin River was flooded and the subsequent inland movement of this storm maintained extensive floods throughout the central and southern and western rivers. On 16 and 17 November, 1950, there was a short-lived cyclonic depression over the south-coast Moreton Area which resulted in flood rains and structural damage, and the loss of one life in the Brisbane area. From the 9 to the 24 January, 1951, a cyclone operated over the Gulf of Carpentaria divisions

and caused near record flooding in the Gulf rivers and tropical interior rivers as well as the Burdekin. The Inkerman railway bridge was submerged for three weeks. Many homes in the central west plains were evacuated, and mail routes and traffic arteries were not operable. From 25 to 30 January, 1951, a cyclone operated over the Hervey Bay area. Low-level flooding was very severe on the central tropical coast, southern coast, Downs and Maranoa streams. The property damage by flood waters was considerable and road transport was dislocated. One life was lost at Curramundi near Caloundra. High seas damaged craft on Moreton Bay and there was structural damage to buildings. Soil erosion undermined several houses on the far south coast. From 5 to 9 February, 1954, a cyclone passed over the coast in the Townsville area and moved to the southern inland. The winds at Townsville were estimated at 100 miles per hour and caused superficial damage. Sustained and extensive floods occurred in the Burdekin and Fitzroy systems, reaching a near record in the latter. The Inkerman bridge was submerged from 5 February to 3 March. From the 18 to 22 February, 1954, an intense cyclone approached the coast over Hervey Bay and passed over Brisbane to northern New South Wales. Floods occurred in the Warrego, Condamine, Dawson, Coomera, and Nerang rivers and there were disastrous floods in the northern coastal rivers of New South Wales. From 11 to 13 July, 1954, a cyclone developed over Hervey Bay and moved to the New South Wales border. Gales were up to 75 miles per hour, and £1,000,000 damage occurred along the coast south from Bundaberg. Floods occurred particularly in the Dawson, Burnett, Mary, and Condamine rivers. From 6 to 18 March, 1955, an intense cyclone approached the coast in the Mackay area, moved inland and then northwards and inland again from the coast. Winds in the Camilla and Koumala area reached 90 miles per hour. A lugger was lost with eight hands on board. Coastal structures were damaged and cane crops were damaged in the Sarina area. Floods occurred in the Thompson, Flinders, Burdekin, and Fitzroy basins. From 21 March to 7 April, 1955, a cyclone approached the coast in the Hervey Bay area and moved along the south coast to sea. There was some structural damage, particularly in the Bundaberg and Yandina areas where the wind was estimated at 90 miles per hour. There was a high flood in the Brisbane and Mary river basins, the highest since 1941 in the former. One life was lost in the Brisbane area. From 4 to 8 March, 1956, a very intense cyclone approached the coast near Mackay, then moved north and north-west, passing over Townsville. There was a high flood in the Gilbert, Mitchell, and Burdekin rivers. Flooding also occurred in the Herbert, Fitzroy, Kolan, Burnett, and Mary rivers. Evacuations were necessary in Georgetown and the Gilbert areas and four lives were lost. There was extensive structural damage

in the Townsville and Cairns areas with widespread damage of cane crops and forests. Structural and crop damage was also suffered in other parts of the far North. The estimate of overall damage on that occasion was £2,000,000.

There have been extensive floods on many occasions not associated with cyclones during the period from 1949 to 1956, and it cannot be claimed that these were due entirely to the normal monsoon season. For instance, take the flood at Dirranbandi recently. The people were isolated on no fewer than six occasions, and there was great damage to homes and properties. The people of that area were isolated for from five to six weeks as trains could not get through. The position is so serious that the Balonne Shire Council has submitted a plan to the Director of Local Government who in turn has forwarded it to the Co-ordinator General of Public Works. The suggestion is that the town be shifted from its present site. It does not require much imagination to realise that that would be a big project involving huge expenditure on capital works for which substantial loans and subsidies would be required. This project compares with a similar one in respect of at least one of the Northern Rivers towns of New South Wales. I stress that the Federal Government rendered assistance in the case of New South Wales.

I shall deal mainly with one great river in the State, the river I know best. I shall be able to prove that a major project would be required to overcome the position, a project that would be entirely beyond the capacity of the State, and that the Federal Government should render some practical assistance. I have taken out some very interesting figures of flooding in the Fitzroy River area. In the 37 years, between the record flood in 1918 and the 1954 flood, the second highest on record, there was a flood frequency of one in 10 years. There were major floods in 1953, 1954 and 1955 and according to the long-range forecaster another one can be expected early in 1957. In view of the frequency with which these floods have occurred in recent years it could be claimed that they are not due to the normal monsoonal season. The figures I am about to quote prove the need for some Federal assistance. During the record flood of 1918 1,600,000 acre feet of water a day passed down the Fitzroy River and during the flood in 1954 1,280,000 acre feet of water flowed down the river each day. When hon. members realise that the Hume Dam, one of the biggest constructed to date in Australia, has a storage capacity of 1,250,000 acre feet of water, less than one day's flood flow of the Fitzroy River, they will appreciate the seriousness of the position.

The Eildon Dam in Victoria when completed will have a storage capacity of 2,750,000 acre feet and it is estimated to cost between £22,000,000 and £24,000,000. When we think of that we should have some realisation of what would be required on the Fitzroy River when the flood period lasts

from one week to three and when we know of the great volume of water that passes down that river each day in floodtime. The Fitzroy River drains a watershed of 54,000 sq. miles. With the huge volume of water coming down in flood one can appreciate the magnitude of any proposal to avert flood damage. When regard is had to the cost of the Eildon Dam in Victoria one can visualise what a flood mitigation scheme would cost for the Fitzroy River. It is essential that we get help from the Federal Government.

**Mr. Sparkes:** What do you propose to do?

**Mr. COOPER:** If the hon. member will have patience he will hear what I have to say. The only alternative to any storage proposal as a flood mitigation scheme would be a diversion channel. I emphasise that this is the only recognised alternative. We heard a wild-cat proposal put forward in Rockhampton prior to the last State election by a Russian hydrologist who made the claim that he had a scheme to prevent flooding in the Fitzroy. When the Government made overtures to him and offered to pay for his proposal it folded up and has not seen the light of day since. The only practical place for a diversion of water on the Fitzroy would be at Pink Lily where the Fitzroy River breaks its banks at a height of 25 feet. On the 1918 flood figures, to avert a serious flooding and construct a diversion channel it would be necessary that the diversion channel carry 400,000 cusecs. and this would require the channel to be 3,000 feet wide and 30 feet deep and approximately 20,000,000 cubic yards of earth would have to be removed and the minimum length of the channel would be from 16 to 18 miles. A straightout earthworks is expected to cost £89,000,000, and that would be apart from any structure to take a road and railway across that diversion channel. Such problems as siltation and erosion would arise. No-one can forecast with accuracy what these problems would lead to, particularly in relation to the silting up of the main Fitzroy River. I say therefore that any scheme for diversion would be unsound on those grounds and by comparison with the multi-purposes for which storage might be used, such, for example, as water conservation and irrigation, hydro-electric generation and flood mitigation. During the 1954 flood, which as I said was the second highest on record in the Fitzroy River extensive damage was done, and on that occasion the Premier on behalf of the Government immediately the flood reached serious proportions wired the stipendiary magistrate at Rockhampton and authorised him to incur certain expenditure in cases where there was severe personal hardship and distress. That action was taken and many families were relieved. A flood relief committee was set up in the district which raised and distributed £12,000 in flood relief to people who had suffered damage because of the flood.

Severe damage was done also to the Rockhampton City Council's roads. The State Government helped by making available a long-term loan and subsidy, but what did the Federal Government do? I recollect a statement appearing in the Rockhampton "Morning Bulletin" by Messrs. Davidson and Pearce, the local Federal members of Parliament, that they had approached the Minister for the Army and had been advised that two Army ducks would be made available for rescue work in the area. I do not know what sort of ducks they were; they must have been Muscovy ducks with their wings clipped, because they have not yet arrived in Rockhampton. That was the sole extent of the Federal Government's help on that occasion.

In response to the Premier's request for financial aid, the Prime Minister said, *inter alia*—

"It would be contrary to all accepted principles governing financial relations between the Commonwealth and grants to local authorities to cover the cost of repair work after natural disasters."

The Prime Minister calmly brushed aside the Premier's request, as he had done on previous occasions when the Queensland Government had sought relief from national, not natural, disasters. Yet from 1950 to 1955, an amount of £1,080,000 was given to New South Wales for flood and bush fire relief, and it is estimated that a further £320,000 has been given to that State this financial year, making a total of £1,400,000. In addition, New South Wales will receive a special payment of £2,000,000 during the current financial year because of the effect that floods have had on that State's finances.

**Mr. Nicklin:** That amount will be received by every State in Australia.

**Mr. COOPER:** I do not disagree with it, but this State deserved more sympathetic treatment from the Commonwealth Government, and hon. members opposite should have supported the Queensland Government's requests. During the period that the Commonwealth Government have given the help to New South Wales that I have referred to, they have allocated £50,000 to Victoria and South Australia, and £10,000 to Western Australia. For all the disasters in this State that the hon. member for Nash and I have referred to, Queensland has received only £1,480 from the Commonwealth Government.

Under the present formula, the States are dependent in the main for financing their works programmes on moneys received from the Federal Government under various headings, such as tax reimbursement and special grants, Commonwealth aid roads grants and loan raisings. The tax reimbursement and special grant represents this State's allocation of the collections by the Commonwealth from income tax under the uniform taxation scheme. The Commonwealth Government have consistently refused to discontinue that

scheme to permit the States to determine and collect their own income taxes. In the year immediately prior to World War II, 1938-1939, when the States had the right to determine their own taxes on income, Queensland received 13.4 per cent. of the total collections from taxes on incomes in Australia. The Commonwealth received 28.5 per cent.

This year Queensland had been allocated the equivalent of 4.3 per cent. of the total income tax collection and the Commonwealth have elected to retain not less than 72.8 per cent. If they had retained only 28.5 per cent. of collections for the current year a further sum of over £250,000,000 would have been made available to the States. In view of that, I submit we have a strong case for help in the disasters I have mentioned.

Commonwealth Aid Road Grants are made available to the State from the proceeds of the petrol tax for the construction of roads, &c. The States' share of such collections is expended on road construction, but the sum retained by the Commonwealth is used to swell their surplus revenue.

Recently the Commonwealth increased petrol tax by 3d. a gallon. Of the additional £12,000,000 in annual revenue only £4,000,000 will be paid to the States for roads; £8,000,000, or two-thirds will be retained in Commonwealth reserve funds.

From time to time in the Press happenings in America are applauded, and I have often agreed that we may learn much from them. In the United States over four-fifths of the money received from petrol tax is used for the construction and maintenance of roads.

**Mr. Sparkes** interjected.

**Mr. COOPER:** For the hon. member's information, it was only on the 6 o'clock news this morning that I heard the announcement. I am sure he is interested in what is being done by the American authorities. What sound reason can the Commonwealth Government offer for retaining two-thirds of the additional amount? Clamour by local bodies alone in recent times would influence any fair-minded Government to give the whole of the extra £12,000,000 to the States for road construction.

In this morning's "Courier-Mail," Mr. Marshall, the president of the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, is reported as saying—

"Most Australians were now realising the serious problems of the inadequate Commonwealth road system."

Suggesting that something should be done about it on a Commonwealth basis.

During the course of the recent State election campaign Sir Arthur Fadden, as reported in the local Press, stated that the Commonwealth had made £261,000,000 available to Queensland during the present Federal Government's term of office. If we examine the position we will see whether their attitude and policy towards Queensland has been a

just and fair one. The total amounts made available under the three headings during the years 1950 to 1956 were—

	£
Tax Reimbursement and Special grants .. ..	880.6 million
Commonwealth Aid Roads Grant .. ..	107.8 million
Loan Raisings .. ..	970.5 million
	<hr/>
Total .. ..	£1,958.9 million

The following Commonwealth funds have been expended on developmental works in other States:—

	£
Snowy Mountains Project (benefiting Victoria and New South Wales) ..	71.0 million
Leigh Creek Railway (South Australia) .. ..	10.2 million
Aluminium Commission (Tasmania) .. ..	8.7 million
Standardisation of South Australian Railways ..	4.0 million
Western Australia Waterworks Grant .. ..	2.1 million

This makes a grand total of £2,054.9 million. We see that Queensland with 22.5 per cent. of Australia's area, and 14.75 per cent. of the population of the six States according to the 1954 census, received only 12.68 per cent. of the funds which Sir Arthur Fadden said his Government made available during their period of office. If the abovementioned funds had been distributed on a per capita basis Queensland should have received a further £42.4 million.

Queensland raised £24.3 million of a total of £44.1 million by all States by way of domestic raisings. If domestic raisings by the States, which are not made available by the Commonwealth, are excluded, as they should be, the position is that Queensland with 14.75 per cent. of the population received only 11.75 per cent. of the funds made available by the Commonwealth, a deficiency of over £60 million.

An interesting comparison can be made between South Australia and Queensland—

	Queensland.	South Australia.
	£	£
Tax Reimbursement Grants	126,468,140	68,234,577
Grants Commission Grants	Nil	29,983,000
Commonwealth Aid Roads	20,698,934	11,958,389
Loan Raisings .. ..	113,483,858	130,172,000
Reduction in Programme to cover excess subscription retained by Electricity Trust .. ..	Nil	1,587,000
Overseas Borrowing ..	Nil	3,883,000
Developmental Works—		
Leigh Creek Railway ..	Nil	10,200,000
Railway standardisation	Nil	4,000,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	260,650,932	260,017,966

The amount per capita according to the 1954 census was Queensland £197 14s. 1d. and South Australia £326 3s. 7d. The figures which I have quoted this morning clearly indicate the extent of the serious cyclone and flood damage that has occurred in this State from time to time involving loss of life in several instances and serious structural damage, damage to crops and roads, and erosion. I have shown clearly that the Commonwealth Government have shown the same indifference to Queensland's claim for assistance for cyclone and flood damage as they have shown to our claim for assistance in the development of major developmental works in North Queensland. Although there may be some disagreement with some of my statements by hon. members opposite, I believe that many of them agree with the claims that I have made. Some time ago a report of a Liberal Party conference appeared in "The Courier-Mail," from which I quote:

"A Rockhampton resolution that State members be instructed to give fuller co-operation to Federal Members in their fight for Queensland advancement was defeated."

The only interpretation I can put on that is that they agreed that there had been no attempt by the Federal Government to advance Queensland.

I quote again from the report:

"The State Liberal Leader (Mr. Hiley) said that State members felt the 'boot of complaint was on the other foot. In other States we see important work being carried out, but where is one important Federal project being done in Queensland?' he asked."

I quote again from the report:

"Mr. Dewar said: 'We have no quarrel with individual Federal Members, but we have a terrific quarrel with the powers that be in Canberra.'"

That indicates very clearly that some hon. members opposite agree with the claims they I have made in this regard.

In conclusion I submit that Queensland has a greater potential for development than any other Australian State. It has been emphasised on many occasions that the first line of defence of this country lies in the development of the North of Queensland and the North-west of Western Australia. There are over 1,200,000,000 Asiatics on our doorstep looking with land-hungry eyes to the wide-open and undeveloped spaces in the north of Queensland. We have no moral right to hold this country unless we are prepared to do something about developing and populating it.

**Mr. NICHOLSON** (Murrumba) (12.41 p.m.): I comment first of all on the opening remarks of the hon. member for Nash. He said that this motion was of considerable concern to all members of this Parliament. That is correct. The wording of the motion also causes considerable concern to members

of the Opposition, in that the statements are not factual. This motion is in keeping with past attempts by the Government to belittle the efforts of the Federal Government to assist flood victims in this State. Opposition members will always associate themselves with any motion that may result in benefit to this great State, irrespective of the side of the Chamber from which it emanates, provided that the motion is consistent with truth and does not savour of blatant, political hypocrisy, as this one does. The Leader of the Opposition proved the other day that we are prepared to co-operate in passing a motion that is put forward in a non-political atmosphere. He congratulated the hon member for Kedron on his motion. I think all hon. members will applaud the hon. member for Kedron for moving it and the Leader of the Opposition for his support of it.

**Opposition Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** On this occasion, however, we cannot associate ourselves with the motion, because it is not factual. Opposition members have the facts and figures in their possession not the guesses of the mover and seconder of the motion. It is based purely and simply on political bias and follows the usual practice of the Government of playing politics at the expense of unfortunate people who have in many instances been deprived of their homes and livelihood through flood and cyclone. It has been said that the Federal Government have not made grants and have not co-operated with the State in respect of flood damage. The figures quoted show a complete lack of understanding and knowledge of the position. It was claimed by the mover and seconder that the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister asking for support in the alleviation of flood distress.

**Mr. Gair:** You are not denying that?

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** I am not denying it for one moment, but so far we have not heard a public statement or seen a copy of the letter. I should imagine it would be easy for the Premier to prove his statement. The mover or seconder could have read the letter.

**Mr. Gair:** You either cannot read, or you do not read the newspapers.

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** The Premier has always said, when it suits him, that you cannot believe everything you see in the newspapers. It has been stated that apart from the £1,480 quoted by the hon. member for Nash no other monetary assistance has been received for the alleviation of flood distress in this State. The question arises, what figures are factual and what are not. I propose to give some figures later on to show that those quoted by the mover and seconder of the motion were not factual. This State cannot blame the Federal Government for their approach to the relief of flood

distress in Queensland for not believing the overtures by the State Government about subsidies for local authorities or individuals. I give an instance of where the Commonwealth Government rose to the occasion and the State Government failed dismally to help people affected by cyclone. I do not refer to the last cyclone, but to 1954 when hon. members will remember the fishing fleet in Moreton Bay was virtually wiped out. Boats were stoved in—15 fishing boats were thrown onto the beach at Beechmere. I made overtures to all departments for relief to salvage the boats and equipment. The only help I was able to get came from the Commonwealth Government. They did not hesitate for a moment to help salvage the fishing fleet. They supplied all the useful equipment from the Commonwealth Handling Equipment Pool. The Postmaster-General's Department helped with a bulldozer, the Army with a barge and winch to tow the boats from the beach. When I made representations to the Premier to alleviate the distress of the fishermen and rehabilitate the fleet, not by way of a grant, but by way of a loan to help them back into industry, I was flatly turned down. The Premier said that it was not the policy of the Government to assist individuals. That is one instance where the Commonwealth Government were ready to rise to the occasion at no cost to the individual, while the State Government were tardy in helping distressed people.

It has been said, and no doubt it will be repeated, that the Premier put a proposal to the Commonwealth Government to subsidise £1 for £1 any money made available by the State to alleviate flood distress. I think every right-thinking citizen will agree that in a sovereign State such as Queensland it is up to the State Government to make the first move with a grant for flood relief. This Government have made no payment to relieve damage suffered by local authorities. They have granted relief for personal distress, but their relief to local authorities has been very niggardly. The devastating damage suffered by local authorities in Queensland from floods and cyclones has already been referred to by the hon. members for Nash and Keppel, yet the Government were very tardy and niggardly in granting relief. Their approach was not to make a grant to local authorities to cover the cost of repairing roads and bridges; they went about it in a round-about way—on a subsidy basis. In many instances, it deterred local authorities from applying for aid, as any relief would be too small to warrant the time and effort required in assessing the damage.

There are many ways of looking at subsidy loans. The hon. member for Nash said that one bridge in his area had been completely washed away and that the approaches to another had been damaged. In their usual niggardly fashion, the Government offered help on a subsidy basis. If a bridge collapses or needs replacing because of

age, or for any other cause, the local authority is subsidised on the total cost of construction. In other words, if the bridge cost £5,000, the subsidy would be made available on that basis. Of course, the subsidy is based on the ruling rate applicable to the local authority. For example, if it is a rate of 7d. in the £1 the local authority gets 15 per cent., and on a maximum rate of 30d. the subsidy is 33½ per cent. However, the position is quite different if a bridge is washed away. I know the hon. member for Nash will bear me out in what I say. The cyclone to which he referred occurred in March, yet he made no representations to the Premier till June.

**Mr. Kehoe:** In April and June.

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** Damage to a bridge caused by a flood or cyclone is regarded in a totally different light by the Government from the replacement of one that has collapsed from wear and tear. That may seem strange but it is true, and it is very unfair to local authorities. If a bridge is worn out and needs replacing the full subsidy is paid, but if it is washed away by flood or damaged by a cyclone the subsidy is paid only on the cost of replacing it after deducting the value of the old bridge. Take a £5,000 bridge to replace one that is washed away. The Co-ordinator General, or his assessor, would value the old bridge at, say £2,500. That would be deducted from the £5,000, leaving £2,500 on which the Government would pay subsidy at the ruling rate. It should be to their eternal shame that they adopt such cheese-paring tactics in the local authority's emergency, but they have the colossal hide to criticise the Federal Government's approach to a suggestion to subsidise on a £1 for £1 basis, money paid by the State for rehabilitation work.

Later I shall quote figures to prove conclusively that what the mover and the seconder of the motion have said is not factual. My figures will astound them and the public, too.

The re-establishment of roads is a matter purely for the State Government. If they need help from the Federal Government, it is surely up to the State Government to make the first move. The Local Government Association on the north coast has already requested the Premier to make good his promise of a 50 per cent. subsidy.

**Mr. Kehoe:** That is what he has done but the Commonwealth Government have to help just as they did in the other States.

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** The hon. member's statement is definitely not a factual one. The Premier has never made good his promise to provide 50 per cent.

**Mr. Kehoe:** He made an offer to the Commonwealth.

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** He made an offer but he has never put it into operation. Let him do it and the Federal Government will fall into line.

**Mr. Kehoe:** All he wants is the same co-operation as the other States are getting.

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** All I can say is that the mover and the seconder have been handed a brief that they did not understand; they have not delved into it.

**Mr. Kehoe:** You got your brief from the Federal Country Party member for Fisher and he did not understand it.

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** The hon. member for Nash is just trying to put me off the track.

**Mr. Kehoe:** You haven't been on it.

**Mr. NICHOLSON:** Even yesterday he did a little eavesdropping to try to bolster up his case but he could not manage it.

At 2.15 p.m.,

*In accordance with Sessional Order, the House proceeded with Government business.*

#### SUPPLY.

##### COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 25 September (see p. 572) on Mr. Gair's motion—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1956-1957, a sum not exceeding £1,122 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

**Mr. TURNER** (Kelvin Grove): I congratulate the Treasurer on the presentation of his sixth Budget. I do not need to repeat what I have said so frequently about the Treasurer; my opinion of him remains unaltered. I only wish that the Federal Treasurer had taken the same realistic view in his approach to his own Financial Statement.

In the second paragraph of his statement the State Treasurer said—

“The States are experiencing various degrees of financial stringency, the number of unemployed has increased, but the levels of employment and economic activity generally have remained high during the year.”

According to the latest Federal figure on unemployment there are only 5,000 registered unemployed in the Commonwealth. In my opinion a large percentage of that number would be unemployable. The Commonwealth Government should take the realistic view and separate the people whom industry cannot afford to carry. Industry is highly mechanised today and every link in the chain must be efficient. If one link is not strong the whole chain is weakened. Rather than have

inefficient links it would be far better if the Commonwealth Government put these people on pensions and kept them completely out of industry. At least 25 per cent. of the 5,000 would be unemployable and it would not cost the Commonwealth Government a great deal to make money available to the States to employ the remainder on developmental work. In a young country like Australia, particularly in Queensland, there is much opportunity for development. The country is screaming out for development and not one able-bodied person, willing and able to work should be unemployed. Money should be available to place them in useful employment to assist in the development of the State.

The Treasurer further said—

“One of Australia's principal economic problems is still to achieve a favourable overseas trade balance without the necessity of drastic import restrictions.”

There is a realistic approach. Like many other people with a realistic view, he knows that it could be accomplished were it not for the Federal Government's stranglehold on the finances of Australia. Since import restrictions have been imposed I often wonder what the position was in the days when we imported almost everything, including jam, of which we manufacture millions of tons today. We even imported confectionery, and no-one worried about trade balances in those days.

**Mr. Pizzey:** They were able to get overseas loans.

**Mr. TURNER:** We know all about overseas loans. They were one of the curses because of the conditions attaching to them. It was laid down that we had to buy the material from them and after doing so there was hardly sufficient left to pay wages to complete the job, even though wages were very small. That is why we are in such a plight in regard to our railways. The position would have been much different if we had developed our own raw materials. During their years of operations B.H.P. have shown what could have been done in the early years of our development, instead of buying all materials including fishplates and dog spikes in the Old Country.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Are you averse to overseas finance being brought into the country?

**Mr. TURNER:** The hon. member should not be so stupid. I deplore the fact that they did not do it earlier. I also deplore the fact that the Federal Government have not kept a closer check on import restrictions than they have. I have before me in a businessman's handwriting a statement in which he complains about import restrictions in his industry, which is not a luxury one. This man's imports were cut from £27,000 to a little over £6,000 a year, and he knows that licences are on sale in Brisbane up to 100 per cent. premiums. This man informed

me that a businessman from New South Wales, a bankrupt, wanted to sell him import licences. If the Federal Government had been doing their job immediately this businessman was declared a bankrupt they would have called in his import licences. He wanted 80 per cent. on them. This man boasted to my friend that last year he worked four hours selling import licences for which he got £24,000. The Federal Government have fallen down on their job because they are not policing their import licences as they should. If money was made available to the State Governments we could do what the Treasurer suggests is necessary. In his Statement he says—

“Export prices continued to fall during 1955-1956, averaging about 8 per cent. below 1954-1955.”

I am glad of that because it will bring our export prices within the purchasing power of the people who require our products on the other side of the world. It is necessary to make a realistic approach in order to arrest the spiral of increased prices which wages are forced to follow. If the Federal Government were courageous enough to impose price restrictions we would be in a better position to compete on the world's markets. I am not going to repeat what other speakers have said. During the last three or four years I have mentioned the tremendous increase in wages compared with the increase during the term of office of the Federal Labour Government in wartime and for three years after the war. Prices were controlled and kept at a reasonable level. The basic wage has now been increased, however, to £12 from £6 in those days. If the Federal Government had the courage to peg prices and had taken that action years ago, the basic wage would still be reasonable and our exporters would be able to compete on overseas markets.

**Mr. Pizzey:** You know the Commonwealth Government have not the power to fix prices. That is the responsibility of the States.

**Mr. TURNER:** In answer to that interjection, I say that if they co-operated with the States they would have the necessary power. Why did they oppose that issue during the referendum? The people of Australia would have given it to them, but they did not want it because it would interfere with their friends who supply their election funds. That was in keeping with their action of giving the private banks £10,000,000 for the efforts spent by those institutions in returning them to power and defeating the Chifley Government. That was done to restrict the operations of the Commonwealth Bank, and they have now given private banks the right to compete with the Commonwealth Savings Bank. In the few months that private savings banks have been operating they were able to report to the public that their deposits totalled more than £10,000,000.

The Budget could be described as courageous in that the Treasurer has budgeted for a surplus of a little over £15,000. The other State Governments have budgeted for deficits, to follow the huge deficits last year. Western Australia finished with a deficit of £1,830,831, after budgeting for a deficit of £453,873. New South Wales budgeted for a small deficit and finished the year with a deficit of £6,826,433. Victoria budgeted for a small deficit and finished with a deficit of £4,582,307. South Australia, the State that is always held up as an example of the way in which a State should be governed, budgeted for a deficit of £748,000 and finished the year with a deficit of £1,430,000. The Queensland deficit is £1,723,438. Queensland's per capita deficit is the lowest of all the other States. Western Australia had a per capita deficit of £2 14s. 9d., New South Wales £1 18s. 9d., Victoria £1 15s. 9d. and South Australia £1 14s. 3d. The Commonwealth last year budgeted for a surplus of £70,000 and ended with a surplus of £61,612,952, or nearly four times the aggregate deficits of the State Governments. Is that not an indictment of the Commonwealth Government? I have always said that there are two kinds of bad Government, the one that budgets for more than they need and the one that does not know how much to budget for. The Commonwealth Treasurer who is held up as being the brains of Australia budgeted for a £70,000 surplus but finished the year with a surplus of £61,000,000. That is an indictment of the Commonwealth Government—when they allow State Governments to go into the “red.” As the Treasurer pointed out it would require only £16.4 million of the disclosed surplus of £61,613,000 of the Commonwealth to wipe out all the State deficits. That would have been a better move than to allow the State Governments to show deficits over the last 12 months. Victoria, a highly developed State, could be fitted into the electorate of Carpentaria almost twice. There is more development in that State than in any other State, because it is such a small State. That State does not need as much money for further development as the other States who are crying out for development. This year the Victorian Government, after budgeting for a deficit of £2,445,000, finished with a deficit of £4,285,000. New South Wales after a deficit of £6,000,000 odd last year budgeted for a surplus of £529,000. The Commonwealth Government have budgeted for a surplus of £222,000 this year. If its surplus of £61,000,000 is any guide, its surplus next year will be near the £100,000,000 mark.

I want to deal with the money appropriated and actually spent. When we take the railway development during the last year I think the deficit of £1,723,438 is a creditable performance. Most of the deficit is represented by interest on loan money for the development of the railways and rolling-stock.

I should express my gratitude to the former member for Rockhampton, Mr. Larcombe who during the war years was Minister for

Railways. The people of Queensland will never know what they owe to Mr. Larcombe for what he saved the State. Sir Harold Clapp was appointed by the Commonwealth Government to control the transport arrangements of Australia. He and some of his friends who were interested in heavy industry, decided that Queensland would have to take 30 Garratt engines. Officers of the Railway Department reported unfavourably as did also Mr. Larcombe on these engines. Mr. Larcombe spoke in this Parliament of how unfavourably impressed he was with the Garratt engine and mentioned the unnecessary costs involved in lengthening platforms and straightening curves to accommodate them. They were absolute failures. Some of them are still lying on the scrap heap at Clapham Junction.

Mr. Larcombe, on the advice of his officers, proved conclusively to Sir Harold Clapp and the Federal Government of the day that the engines were useless to Queensland, and the Queensland Government refused to take them. Had we accepted them at the price asked, the present railway indebtedness would have been much greater than it is. Considering that the Government have spent £3,250,000 on modernising trains and £1,500,000 on diesel-electric locomotives, a deficit of £1,002,145 is negligible.

There are people in Queensland who delight in discrediting our railway system, and are giving all the help possible to road transport. When the Government build a railway extension they have to acquire the land and lay the tracks. But it is the people generally who pay for the roads that the road hauliers use. They carry such heavy loads that they are quickly destroying all our roads. Railway tracks cost approximately £40,000 a mile. I do not know whether any road hauliers would be prepared to pay as much as that for a mile of road, particularly since the decision of the Privy Council, which in my opinion was ridiculous. The High Court of Australia, with a knowledge of this country, decided against the road hauliers. The Privy Councillors, however, some of whom do not even know where Queensland is, decided in favour of the road hauliers. Today the road hauliers are not satisfied with carrying normal loads, but are overloading their trucks to such an extent that they are destroying every mile of main road.

I remember an experience I had when the late Hon. F. A. Cooper was Premier. He took me to Warwick on one occasion and we travelled in the first car to use the road through Cunningham's Gap to Warwick. About a fortnight later Mr. Cooper came into the Chamber and told me that a road haulier had broken up eight miles of the road and smashed two bridges. He had a load of 24 tons on his lorry. Main roads cannot be expected to carry loads such as that.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Was any action taken on that occasion?

**Mr. TURNER:** No action could be taken. If I went out onto the street and dug it up with a pick the Brisbane City Council could take action against me for wilful destruction. But this man said he thought the road could carry the load, and no action could be taken against him. For 1954-1955 the railways showed a surplus of £952,125 but after taking into account interest on borrowed money it showed a deficit of £1,459,850. The capital indebtedness of the railway system totals £109,300,905. In 1931 the Moore Government, in their wisdom or otherwise, reduced the railway capital by £28,000,000. We have paid £110,508,675 in interest and we still owe £109,300,905.

Let me give hon. members some idea of how interest works. I refer to a report of the New South Wales Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Winsor.

He reports that the Railway Department's overall earnings for 1952-1953 reached the record figure of £72,675,775, or £3,766,055 more than 1951-1952 and this notwithstanding the fact that the fares were not raised. The actual profit on operations before interest and other charges were deducted was £6,223,780 but the interest bill alone was £6,342,000, the final result being a deficit of £1,449,839.

Take another instance, the Sydney Harbour Bridge—

“The financial facts regarding this magnificent structure demonstrates the truth of what a noted London banker, Sir Basil Blackett, giving his Halley-Stewart Lecture on ‘The World's Economic Crisis’ said—

‘In view of what we have done with currency and what currency has done with us in the last 20 years, we are all of us fit for a lunatic asylum.’”

I agree with him. The report continues—

“Since 1932 when the bridge was constructed more than £9,000,000 has been collected from the people in tolls, over £6,000,000 has been paid in interest and exchange—yet we still owe close on £7,000,000 of the original £8,000,000 borrowed.”

Just think of the effect of interest on the development of the country! What is interest? Is it money? I say definitely not, because the banks have the right to issue £9 for every £1 deposited with them. They lend that credit, not money, to Governments. They do not give the actual cash, merely a cheque, a piece of paper. It is only a book entry. We pay interest on the sum and that is what is destroying us.

The writer goes on to say—

“There is hope, however, as we break from the wrongs of the past chaotic financial policy with the experience of two world wars and a depression, that we will gain sanity and

find another way not only to finance production in this atomic age but also to adequately finance distribution and so make what is physically possible financially possible.

"On 31 March, 1941, 'The Sydney Morning-Herald's' special article said—

'War at last has taught everyone that full employment of our resources is an aim which scarcity of money or credit cannot be allowed to frustrate. If millions can be found for war, why cannot millions be found for peace?''

He continues—

"At a Local Government Association conference held at Wollongong, in October, 1953 (one of the largest and most important of its kind), the City of Bathurst Council secured the passing of a resolution calling for the amendment of the Charter, adding under Section 4, Finance, the following Sub-Section, which reads:—

'Major productive works for public improvements should be financed from the Central Bank Credit. Such credit to be made available to local authorities to enable them to carry out approved works.'"

I think everybody will agree with that.

He continues—

"As Central Bank Credit is the credit of the nation, issues to councils should be free of interest."

I heard an interjection about Social Credit. Call it whatever credit you wish—it is not money. I was amused last Saturday to read in "The Courier-Mail" a small paragraph of about seven lines that the Social Credit Government in Ottawa had been elected for the third time in succession, and with an increased majority. If they had been defeated "The Courier-Mail" would have had big headlines about it. Apparently the people of Ottawa were quite satisfied with Social Credit.

In 1954-1955 the Main Roads Department spent £9,772,600 and in 1955-1956 we spent £10,307,345, an increase of £534,745. We spent over £10,000,000 last year in building roadways for private hauliers to traverse in competition with the Railway Department and at the same time destroy Queensland's asset worth £109,000,000.

I give full credit to the Treasurer for the detailed information of how loan money has been spent. For instance, £4,214,645 or 19.46 per cent. of the total of £21,655,139 was spent on Railways. His Budget is very easy to follow and understand.

I now speak about something very dear to my heart, the uplifting of the quality and standard of industry. In Australia, in 1946, the decent men in industry, the manufacturing employers, the retail people and the furnishing trades unions formed themselves into what is known as the Standards Association of Australia. Its main objective is to give

quality for money spent on furniture. They have set minimum standards. We realise how very necessary this is because of the tricks by some people in the various trades today. The Governments of Australia should give every possible support to such associations in their endeavour to eliminate fraud on the buying public. In every industry we find the smart alec who tries to take every possible advantage of his competitors by undercutting, by reducing the quality of his goods. Some people say that competition is the life of trade, that competition will right all prices and create a change overnight but I do not accept that. There is very little competition in industry today. Employers have realised the benefit of organisation to trade unions and their collective bargaining methods. The employers have taken a leaf out of their book and formed themselves into organisations; instead of cutting each other's throats to get business they fixed prices. It is only a scab who works beneath award wages and conditions and I can find no other word for the man who cuts prices and so the quality of his goods. In Brisbane it was found that the frame of a lounge suite was made of softwood casing. The manufacturer bought overseas cases for a few shillings, pulled them to pieces and used them to make lounge suites. He was not prepared to buy new nails; he straightened the old nails that were taken out of the softwood cases. Instead of glueing and dowelling the pieces of timber together as should be done he simply nailed them together. No glue was used in the joints before he lapped and nailed them. The furnishing trade was established in Australia in 1833 just after the convict days, and the artisan has always prided himself on doing a good job. It is regrettable that these interlopers should now come along and ruin their trade. The furniture manufacturers, retailers and the union decided on a standard, and all furniture up to that standard bears a label. A buyer of furniture would know that furniture not bearing that label is not reliable. The seat of one of the armchairs of the lounge suite to which I referred contained four undersized springs whereas the standard stipulates nine springs. Hon. members can imagine the difference in comfort with four springs instead of nine in 15 square inches of seat. The back of the chairs had only two springs whereas the standard is five. Eight by eight gauge springs are stipulated but the springs in these chairs were of a much lighter gauge—the whole job was very inferior. A good manufacturer covers the seats with a good type of fibre or kapok or, in the case of very high quality, horsehair. The lounge suite to which I referred was padded with shavings from the planing machine and the hand plane. This inferior material is not noticeable when the seats are covered with good quality Genoa velvet. The average person, seeing a Genoa

velvet-covered suite in one shop marked £100, and another that looked similar, in another shop marked at £80 or £90 would think that the proprietor of the first shop was a robber. He would not know what was under the cover. Take the webbing that holds the springs in position. The stipulation is that there must be five each way, that is, 10 webbing straps underneath the springs, each of 9 lb. breaking strain. On this suite there were only two.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Surely there is some control.

**Mr. TURNER:** No, there is no control. These manufacturers are deceiving the people. The hidden faults are covered by good material and the attractive prices enable the manufacturers to sell the suites, but it is only a short time before the faults are found. The State law provides for the compulsory branding of furniture to indicate whether it is European or Chinese manufacture, but that is as far as the law goes. If the public are to be protected against unscrupulous manufacturers, the law will have to be amended in such a way that the Government or a Standards Association will have authority to control the manufacturers.

I have inquired into the shirt manufacturing industry, too. I am sure every hon. member, during the last few years, has realised the shortness of his shirt tail compared with shirts of years ago. There are two types of manufacturer, the one who is supplied with material and manufactures to the requirements of the people who give him the work, and the other, who buys material and makes shirts for sale. Shirts used to measure 35 inches at back and 32 inches in front, that is, from the collar to the end of the tail of the shirt. Those measurements have now been reduced to 29 inches in front and 32 at the back. That does not sound much, but it represents a twelfth of a yard of material back and front, that is, a sixth of a yard in all. Taking the material for shirts for working men at 2s. a yard, the saving by that reduction in size is 4d. a shirt, or 4s. a dozen. In the manufacture of 100 dozen shirts an extra 3 dozen shirts can be made by that reduction in size.

Another aspect of shirt manufacture that affects working men rather than those who wear dress shirts is the reduction in size of the armhole. The reduction is as much as 2½ inches. The sleeve also is an inch narrower all the way down. This means that the worker cannot roll up his sleeves. The housewife has to cut them off so that her husband can work in comfort. All these things mean a saving of material at the expense of the working man.

The same thing applies to pyjamas. Recently I received a complaint about pyjamas. Some manufacturers have reduced the size by making the rise an inch shorter, that is, from the fork to the waistline, and making the back an inch shorter. In that way they are getting increased production out

of the same material. That is a tremendous disadvantage to the user. They shrink after washing. You realise that something is wrong, but you must go on wearing them. The housewife, because the pyjamas are made of flannelette, has to wash them to take out the smell and generally after washing she cannot get them back into shape and, what is more, they shrink. It is not long before the seams burst when the wearer bends or stretches or rolls over in bed. They do not give the service they should and the housewife thinks that she has bought a size too small. The next time she buys a larger size, and this costs more money. We have to do something to protect the unthinking consumer from these unscrupulous people.

Yesterday I went into a warehouse and saw some singlets. I had been told about singlets being short in length. The singlets were up to three inches short in length and this applied to three different makes. The sleeve-hole was five inches smaller than the standard size and the sleeve round the arm was 5¼ inches instead of 7½ inches in diameter. It was also one inch narrower in the body. Coming back to shirts again, one man told me that in shirt manufacture he was able to get a gross of loose collars out of the same material as well as the ordinary number cut. How often do we see the singlets and shirts of workmen in our streets and on buildings three or four inches up the back, and the back and ribs exposed as they bend over. I know that many workmen prefer to work without singlets and shirts, but the exposure of three or four inches at the back is because the shirts and singlets are not long enough to stay inside the trousers when belts are worn. I am suggesting that some consideration should be given to protect honest people who buy these goods. They are entitled to value for their money. Every Government should encourage business people to give value for money.

**Mr. Pizzey:** How long should the singlet be?

**Mr. TURNER:** It should be at least 35 inches in length, not 29.

I have in my hand a booklet of standards dealing with every type of furniture. It shows the sizes and diameter of timber that should be used, and how joints should be made, particularly in chairs. Every detail is contained in this book. It has the full approval of most of the employers of Australia and the whole of the cabinet-making industry. I think that we should have some authority, or take it upon ourselves to see that decent people, the consumers, get what they are paying for.

The hon. member for Bremer in the Address in Reply debate spoke of automation. Automation is not new to this country or any other. Automation has been developed here for many years. I can go back to the days when the multigraph was used in the

schools. Then there was the duplicating machine, which is now worked electrically. You can set the machine to turn out the required number of copies, and when they have been done it shuts itself off automatically. That is automation. And then there is the automatic typewriter, two of which are used by the Brisbane City Mission. The typist cuts a stencil similar to player-piano rolls, and the machine types the required number of letters, all of which appear to be original letters. That, too, is automation. It saves the typist the boredom of typing hundreds of similar letters.

Then there is the new method of printing. You type out what you want reproduced and send it to the printer. He then photographs it and prints the required number of copies just as though they were original letters. There are also computing machines and adding machines, now used extensively in offices. Again, when you buy goods at a cash and carry store you place them all on a table and the attendant presses a couple of buttons for each article and tells you the total cost of your purchases. Is that not much better than writing the individual items on a docket and adding up the cost? Automation is all around us. The totalisator is another example. It has been in use for years. Every day we see something new in automation. Some people fear it whilst others are just not interested in it.

The following article is from the magazine "Palm"—

"The fear of automation is easy to understand. But . . . . it is wholly unfounded. Let us look at this revolutionary movement soberly instead of with alarm.

"The trend towards automation has caught the public's fancy—and people are always more impressed by fancy than by fact. The current publicity of phenomenal developments and fantastic predictions of pushbutton factories has in general been psychologically harmful to the attitude development of certain workers.

"Actually, automation is merely an extension of mass production."

Many industries now use mass-production methods. When the Bill that introduced the 40-hour week was before the House I spoke at length on mass production and the machinery in use at that time. Those machines have been further developed and are now producing still more than they did then. I quote trams as an example.

Our first trams were referred to as "bucking jennies," although we thought they were wonderful. They carried 60 passengers. The modern trams, however, carry 200 passengers although they are still controlled by only two men, the driver and the conductor. Mass production must be carefully safeguarded. If everything is done by automation how will we dispose of the increased production? We have not enough people to absorb it, and I doubt whether automation will enable us to

produce at a price low enough to send our surplus overseas. If that can be done, let us have automation right now because it will help relieve some of the murder by starvation in the world.

**Mr. Aikens:** Let us not forget, though, that charity begins at home.

**Mr. TURNER:** I took care of that by saying that we must first of all satisfy our own market. We have not enough population to absorb the increased production, especially of food industries.

The report continues—

"Mr. Walter Reuther, a United States labour leader said recently before a Senate-House economic sub-committee on automation—

"Careful social planning and proper controls will be needed if the change-over is to be made without first having to pay a price in unemployment."

"In his testimony he advocated such cushions as a 30- to 35-hour working week, earlier retirement, improved social welfare services and pricing policies to help consumers enjoy increased production."

I think that is a very sound suggestion and one that everyone should heed. Forget the horror that men will be working 30 to 35 hours a week instead of 40 or 44 hours. The most stupid argument since men began to work has been that with fewer hours we would starve and goodness knows what.

**Mr. Pizzey:** How will the worker be able to use his extra leisure?

**Mr. TURNER:** That will have to be considered. How does he use his enforced leisure?

The report continues—

"Unions should not use automation as a psychological weapon, to create a fear obsession upon which to build pyramiding demands.

"So far, managements have taken little initiative in planning for automation in Australia, and its effect on people. Any efforts have been concentrated on the technical aspects of automation. Not enough managements have yet been made to realise that the introduction of automation principles or the installation of an electronic computer will have a greater impact on people than it will on methods.

"Management must avoid thinking in terms of generalities instead of specifics. It appreciates that automation will eliminate hazardous and spirit-deadening tasks."

I have spoken on the spirit-deadening tasks that I have seen in industry. One need go no further than a factory making cannisters. There young women sit at a machine all day feeding sheets of tin into machines stamping out lids or bodies of tins or cannisters with a din so terrific that, though they sit only a

foot apart, they cannot hear each other speaking. Automation will eliminate monotony and repetitive work of that nature.

**An Opposition Member:** They might like it.

**Mr. TURNER:** They like it because they have no option. They may be handicapped or may not have the intelligence to do anything better. For them it is a job and a means of keeping a roof over their heads and food in their stomachs. It does not follow that we should pin the poor creatures to it and say, "It does not matter if you die; someone else will take your place." That is what it means. If automation can do what it has done in Germany it is worth while. If it can obviate the necessity of sending men 3,000 feet below the surface of the earth to bring coal to the top then it is going to do some good. We would not have a repetition of the tragedy we read about the other day where 260 fathers and sons were burned to death 3,000 feet below the surface.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. MUNRO (Toowong)** (3.16 p.m.): As this part of the session is supposed to be in the nature of a debate I will begin my contribution by making brief reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove.

**Mr. Aikens:** Not derogatorily, I hope.

**Mr. MUNRO:** I hope not. Later I will speak about automation but referring to the earlier parts of the hon. member's speech it seems to me that he very lightly covered a number of subjects. First of all he drew our attention to the very airy fallacy that if millions can be found for war why could not millions be found for peace? He went on to indicate how we could cure all our ills by expanding credit and made reference to social credit. He continued and came to the very interesting subject of short shirts and tight trousers, giving more time to that subject than to many of the other interesting questions he touched on. Some hon. members received his reference to short shirts and tight trousers with a certain amount of levity but all these subjects are connected to some extent. However, the hon. member for Kelvin Grove did not connect them up in quite the way they should have been. One short answer to all these questions, of course, is that, in an economic sense you cut your coat according to your cloth.

I wish to make more serious comments on his first two points. I refer to the ever-popular fallacy that if millions can be found for war then we should be able to cure all our problems by finding millions in times of peace. Anybody with any experience at all knows that you cannot create wealth merely by creating more money. That is one of our troubles at the present time. We have created difficulties by having more money than goods and commodities. If we want

to improve our position and make our people more wealthy we have to increase production. We have to produce something more; we have to create wealth. That is the answer to it. I promised that I would come back to the question of automation. I am sorry that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove has left the Chamber. His contribution in relation to the question of automation was of much more value than the earlier part of his speech. I would not say that I agree completely with everything he said or with everything that he quoted from sources with which I am very familiar; but I think the hon. member's approach to the question was right. Fundamentally it is this: There is no great menace to the community in automation. It is something that will come. It will not come suddenly. It will come in one section of industry at a time. Provided we deal with the problem in a commonsense way, it is something that will be for the benefit of every section of the community.

I shall now comment on the Budget itself. In speaking on the Appropriation Bill on 23 August last I drew attention to the need for full and complete consultation and co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States. I then suggested that there should be a set-up, something in the nature of a Commonwealth and States Consultative Council. On Thursday of last week I dealt with some of the legal and constitutional aspects of the problem in the course of the discussion of the private motion moved by the hon. member for Kedron dealing with the need for a review of the Commonwealth Constitution. Today I propose to take this opportunity—and it is very appropriate to the subject before the Chamber—to deal with some of the financial aspects. It is appropriate because the problem of finance is the fundamental problem of federalism, and we carry on under a Federal system of government. The financial problem arises from the difficulty of securing equilibrium between the division of constitutional powers and the division of revenue sources. This generally leads, as has been pointed out on previous occasions, to a Federal Government being better off than the States, while there is usually a further problem in that some States are usually poorer or less developed than others. From that there arises the problem of the poorer States. In Australia we have what I regard as a very advanced type of arrangement for dealing with the problem. We have the Commonwealth Grants Commission. It is interesting to note (from the Commission's third report) that that commission has developed along the lines of the principle that "Special grants are justified when a State through financial stress from any cause is unable efficiently to discharge its functions as a member of the federation, and should be determined by the amount of help found necessary to make it possible for that State, by reasonable effort, to function at a standard not appreciably below that of other States."

The next development in Australia was the appointment of a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Social Security, with wide terms of reference. This committee was appointed in July, 1941, and made its first report on social security planning and legislation in September. This report included an interesting statement of principle with regard to the related matter of social services. I quote that statement—

“It has been pointed out that Australian social services have tended to develop in a piecemeal fashion, that we have suffered from lack of a general plan, that certain services have expanded in some States more than others, and that some states have spent much more per head than others. This is unjust, because all Australians should be able to obtain similar treatment, wherever they live.”

I mention those things merely as a statement of general principle that I think will assist us in dealing with the other problems more specifically related to our Budget. At a later stage I shall make one or two suggestions as to how certain aspects of this problem should be dealt with.

Before proceeding to consider the actual Budget proposals, I think it is our responsibility to give careful consideration to the actual facts of the financial transactions for the year just closed. The Treasurer's statement shows that the deficit for the year is £1,723,438, and it appears to be a very large deficit, particularly when we remember that for a number of years we have managed to finish the year with small surpluses. I regret that the Treasurer, perhaps because of his indisposition, was apparently unable to give an answer to the questions that I asked this morning. If he had been able to give an answer we would have been able to state with a reasonable degree of accuracy the real deficit for this year. In the absence of the specific figures for which I asked and which were not given, I can only give an approximation, and, as an approximation, I am prepared to state that the real deficit of the State of Queensland for the year ended 30 June, 1956, was about double the amount stated in the Financial Statement. If the details for which I asked had been supplied, I think that I could have stated with accuracy that the deficit would probably be more than double the amount of £1,700,000. I must now give an approximate check on those figures to show, at least approximately, the trend in the last 12 months.

In the preparation of the accounts of the State of Queensland for a number of years, I think it is well known that there have been a few accounts which are described as trust and special funds, but which are really in the nature of reserve accounts.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Nest eggs.

**Mr. MUNRO:** Yes. Some of these accounts, as was said by the hon. member for Isis, could be described as nest eggs.

There are others that are partly of the nature of nest eggs and partly trust funds applied for particular purposes and which are not available, but there are three accounts that I regard as clearly of the nature of reserves. It is only necessary to check the balances of the main accounts to ascertain what is the real trend in the finances of this country. Therefore, I have made a very approximate reconciliation showing to what extent we have drawn on three main funds during the year. First of all, I refer to the Hospital, Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund, and we find that at the commencement of the year it had a credit balance of £2,971,657, but at the end of the year that was reduced to £1,720,244 or a reduction of £1,251,413. Taking the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund, there was a balance at the commencement of the year of £4,794,506 and the balance at the end of the year was £2,248,051, a reduction of £2,546,455. The third account, although it does not affect the calculation, is the Unemployment Insurance Fund. It has a substantial balance, but was not operated on during the year. Taking the first two accounts, we have a deficiency in credit balances of £3,797,868 which, added to the deficit shown in the Treasurer's accounts shows that during the year although we had large funds freely available for spending we suffered a total reduction of £5,521,306. I do not state that as the corrected deficit figure. Although the Treasurer did not answer a question I asked of him this morning, I have delved into such details as are available and I am in a position to say that of the amount of £3,797,868 which has been charged to these Nest Egg Accounts, some of the items are in the nature of expenditure which would ordinarily be chargeable against Consolidated Revenue and some are in the nature of items which ordinarily would be charged to Loan Account. There are some other items which, because of the lack of detail in the Financial Statement, I am unable to say with certainty whether they should be charged to Consolidated Revenue or Loan Account. For that reason, I will not at this stage attempt to give the corrected figures. It is clear however, that the real deficit for the State of Queensland for the year ended 30 June, 1956, is very much greater than the figure of £1.7 million pounds stated by the Treasurer. The Treasurer in his Financial Statement on page 2 stated that there was a transfer of £250,000 from the profit on the Kyogle-South Brisbane railway to revenue, and on the same page he mentioned the utilisation of £250,000 from loan repayments towards Sinking Fund contributions. The Treasurer himself stated that these measures could not be repeated indefinitely.

**Mr. Skinner:** If we assume your figures are correct, would that not be a further argument in favour of greater allocations of further finance from the Federal Government?

**Mr. MUNRO:** It would. I have stated in this House before that we cannot expect to get a greater allocation of funds from the Commonwealth Government unless we state our case correctly. How can we expect to get from the Commonwealth Government everything to which we are justly entitled if we do not put up a correct case?

**Mr. Collins:** Your argument is that we should use up all our reserves before we can expect our full quota from the Commonwealth?

**Mr. MUNRO:** No. If the financial statements and accounts of this State are presented in a manner that will show more accurately its real financial position, the first result is that we will all be very much better informed and, secondly, on the facts for this year we will have a very much better case to put to the Commonwealth Government for some financial aid.

**Mr. Aikens:** You are suggesting that the Premier and the Treasurer are incompetent to state Queensland's case?

**Mr. MUNRO:** No. Those are the words of the hon. member for Mundingburra. I should not like them to be attributed to me. What I say is that in my opinion the case for Queensland has not been stated as effectively as it could have been.

**Mr. Aikens:** That is exactly what I said, only you took longer to say it.

**Mr. MUNRO:** The hon. member for Mundingburra said it in his language, and I said it in mine.

Proceeding from a consideration of the trend for the year, let us look now at the position at the end of the year. Mention has been made of nest-eggs. Let us look at the extent to which those funds have been depleted. In my view, credit balances shown as available in the Trust and Special Funds should be regarded as being free for general spending only if they survive two tests—

(a) In a legal sense the balances should be available, or should be capable of being made available, by legislation not violating any sound legal or financial principle and

(b) The amounts should be readily available in money.

The published balances as at 30 June, 1956 that are known to survive these tests are—

	£
(i.) Hospital, Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund .. ..	1,720,244
(ii.) Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund .. ..	2,248,051
(iii.) Unemployment Insurance Fund .. .. .	2,695,589
Total .. .. .	<u>6,663,884</u>

In addition, there are a number of funds that, on the information publicly available, must be regarded as either doubtful or as not fully available. In addition—and this should be noted particularly—there are a number of debit balances in the Trust and Special Funds that might ultimately prove to be a charge against credit balances.

If, in the absence of more detailed information, we regard these various debit balances and available portions of credit balances as being approximately compensating, the general credit position as at 30 June, 1956, is approximately as follows:—

	£
Credit balances of the three funds that may be regarded as being free for general spending .. .. .	6,663,884
Less debit balance of the Consolidated Revenue Fund .. .. .	<u>3,712,517</u>
Leaving net available amount of only (approx.) .. .. .	<u>2,951,367</u>

I mention those figures because, in considering them, we must also have regard to the fact that it is quite normal to have a lag in the collections of Consolidated Revenue during certain periods of the year, while there is also the necessity for long-term planning of major undertakings, involving the undertaking of commitments if they are to be carried out efficiently.

This is the point I am leading up to—it will be appreciated that the available reserves of the Queensland Government have been reduced, and are being reduced, to such an extent that the position must be viewed with very great concern.

I think we should consider it on three bases—

(1) Public expenditure—the budget system itself, and possibly the introduction of a public accounts committee.

(2) The general question of the financial relationships of the Commonwealth and States and, possibly, of local authorities.

(3) The general position of productive industry, more especially the industrial situation, throughout the State.

The last is really the kernel of the whole problem.

The Treasurer's speech is the most remarkable Budget speech I have ever heard. It gives us a lot of interesting facts and data on what has been done; it gives a lot of interesting comments about the Commonwealth Government; but as to what the Government intend to do about increased expenditure it is virtually silent. So I call it a "wait-and-see" Budget. It is hardly a Budget at all. It does not tell us what the Government propose to do to solve these problems. The Treasurer merely tells us that the estimated surplus for the year is £15,153. That is nominal. Everybody knows that. He goes on to say—

“No provision has been made in the Estimates for further award or basic wage increases, which would involve the Government in substantial additional outlays.”

No attempt has been made to estimate them.

The Treasurer goes on to say—

“The current trend of rising salaries, wages and costs generally leaves no alternative but to increase taxation revenue by higher rates and/or the creation of additional avenues. The Government’s plans will be revealed after a closer examination of the financial position.”

**Mr. Nicklin:** He did say the other day that he would be looking for £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 before the end of the year.

**Mr. Collins:** You cannot budget for increased wages that have not come about.

**Mr. MUNRO:** I do not want to be harsh in my criticism because I know the tremendous difficulty of the problem facing the Treasurer; but this really is not a Budget speech at all by ordinary standards because it does not attempt to estimate the additional expenditure for the year and it does not essay in any way to tell us what the Government propose to do. In those circumstances I think it would be profitable to give some thought to the Budget system. What I have to say on this might not be altogether contrary to the Treasurer’s attitude, but let us be honest and realise that this in some respects is not a Budget speech at all.

Dealing with general principles first—the principle of parliamentary control of the purse and the traditions that surround the principle are fairly well known. Parliament, usually apprised of the amounts required to meet the expenditure obligations of the Crown, firstly approves of the expenditures, and next sanctions the fund-raising measures put forward by the Government. Parliament votes the money to the Crown for disbursement through the responsible Ministers of the Crown. For assurance that the funds are raised and expended in the manner approved, it necessarily relies on well established formalities and safeguards carried on through various executive, administrative and checking agencies.

Although the word “purse” as applied to constitutional finance is symbolic of the whole extent and ramifications of annual income and outgo, it cannot nowadays be said that Parliament directly exercises its control in this all-embracing fund-raising and appropriating sense. For the better financing of public business enterprise, there has been evolved a distinct code of financial procedure under which semi-Government authorities are not obliged to account to the general revenues for their receipts, and may regulate expenditures according to operational needs without recourse to votes of the Legislature.

Again, Parliament for a long time has permitted the practice of spending by the Executive beyond the plan approved in each

year’s Appropriation Act. Parliament in those circumstances, does not require the submission of supplementary estimates in advance of these spendings, but relies rather on their separate accounting and approval after the close of the year.

That indicates what is happening in this Parliament. Although we have it happening in a somewhat extreme form to some extent it is in accordance with modern trends in other parts of the world. We should recognise that it creates new problems. When we have these new problems we definitely require some new means of overseeing and checking expenditure.

I will go back to a suggestion made by myself and other hon. members on this side of the Chamber on previous occasions that there should be a public accounts committee. When speaking about it previously I have referred to the precedent established by the Commonwealth Parliament and today I will take my submission a step further by briefly indicating what has been done in New South Wales. I am not going to state my own views but put before the Chamber something which the Chamber can accept as really authoritative because it is a statement made by the Auditor-General of New South Wales. In 1954, dealing with the public accounts committee, Mr. W. J. Campbell, Auditor-General of New South Wales, at page 27 of “Australian State Public Finance” said—

“The State’s Audit Act following English practice, provides for the constitution of a Public Accounts Committee. This body consists of five members of the Legislative Assembly appointed by vote at the commencement of the first session of each Parliament. Its duties are (1) to enquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly upon any question which may have arisen in connection with the Public Accounts and which may have been referred to the Committee, either by a Minister of the Crown or by the Auditor-General or by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly, and (2) to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly upon all expenditure by a Minister of the Crown made without Parliamentary sanction or appropriation. Parliament is to be furnished each year with a report of the Committee dealing with matters submitted for its inquiry. In this report the Committee may lay before Parliament suggestions that may appear desirable for the better conduct of the public business or for the keeping of the Public Accounts.

“The Public Accounts Committee does not form part of the executive government but on the contrary the acts of the Executive may come under its examination.”

“While it cannot, therefore, suggest financial policy, it can review the effects or the manner of carrying out policy. Stated broadly the underlying purpose of the Committee is to assist Parliament in

its deliberations upon matters of financial importance. The prestige possessed by the Committee as a Parliamentary body could give force to its pronouncements, particularly when it deals with financial procedures or contentious questions (such for example as might arise between the Auditor-General and an administrative department), referred for its inquiry and report.

"It will be seen that, while the function of inquiry and report upon unauthorised expenditures is mandatory upon the Committee, its activities otherwise extend only to such matters as might be referred to it. This lack of authority to initiate inquiries need not detract from the Committee's usefulness, for in the range of authorities which may refer matters to it—consisting of the deliberate body in the form of the Legislature, the Minister representing the Executive, and the Auditor-General as an independent checking authority—there exist all the means of permitting a wide range of inquiry and report."

I quoted that at length because I do think we have ample example there of what is done in New South Wales, and which we could follow with considerable advantage here. I intended to deal with further matters which I regard as very important in relation to our plans for the future, one being the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States, and the other being the industrial situation. I do not wish to take up too much time; I know the hon. member for Mundingburra desires to speak, and I shall make my remarks as brief as I can. Returning to the very difficult problem of the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States, we find as a matter of evolution not only in the Australian Commonwealth but in most Federal systems that there has been a financial ascendancy of the Commonwealth Government. That has come about by the surrender by the States of customs and excise duties and the surrender of the power to legislate for taxation. Secondly, it comes about by the financial agreement of 1927 setting up an Australian Loan Council under which the States have surrendered their rights to carry out independent borrowing programmes. It has also come about by legislation and court decision. Under those headings we have in mind the exclusion of the States from the field of income taxation. I only wish to make a very brief reference to this. I do say that this is a problem that the Commonwealth and the States collectively must tackle. There is no simple answer to this such as saying that the taxation powers must be returned to the States, or something of that nature. The problem is very much more involved than that, because, in considering the field of taxation, there are numbers of different types of tax. Some of them have constitutional limitations as to their being imposed by either one Governmental authority or another. In other cases each Government has

the power to tax, but there may be practical difficulties in the way of the tax being made ineffective either by the Commonwealth or the States. The whole problem needs a much more thorough examination than it appears to have had up to the present. This is just another of the problems which is not likely to be solved unless the States and the Commonwealth get closer by way of some machinery such as I have suggested, a Commonwealth and States Consultative Council. If there was some authority of that kind to consider these problems, I think a solution could be found, and that it could be found along the lines of the broad principle of limitation of the respective fields of taxation, and the principle that each authority as far as practicable is responsible for the collection of revenue to meet its own expenditure. It follows that there should be elimination of any duplication of taxation. That leaves open the exception, which I appreciate—that it may not be completely practicable. If it is not completely practicable, there remains the need for co-ordination and co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States. There will always be with us the problem of the poorer States and, notwithstanding any constitutional changes that might be made and any new agreement that might be entered into covering the broad general question of taxation, there will be need for this co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States which, to use a phrase I used in this Chamber last week, is the new phase of co-operative federalism.

My third point is the industrial situation in this State. I have been talking only in terms of financial matters, only in terms of money, and I feel that any contribution I have made to this debate would be incomplete if I did not at least refer to what I regard as the real kernel of our problem. We have to recognise that it does not matter whether we are considering the problems of the Commonwealth, the problems of the State, or the problems of the domestic affairs of a man, his wife and children. The result is the same. If we are going to have a higher standard of living or even maintain our present standard, and I think we should be able to do more than that, we have to consider the one outstanding question, man-hour production. Our position depends on that. Man-hour production may be improved in many ways. It may be a matter of getting more capital to get better and more modern machinery. It may be a matter of better techniques of management. It may be a matter of training of employees on some of these new techniques such as methods of time measurement and that kind of thing which give greater output without greater effort. All those things enter into the question, but the most important thing, the essential thing, is that we will never solve this problem until we get better employer-employee relations. What do we find today in this State? As I see it, in

regard to the employer-employee relations in this State and the industrial situation generally, the outlook is just as bad as I can ever recollect. That represents a rather tragic state of affairs. Surely there is some way in which men holding responsible positions and with some knowledge of these things can make the position known to the people throughout the State. Hon. members will know that I am quite tolerant in my views; I am not here putting the employers' case as distinct from that of employees. Amongst people I meet in industry today, I find the same thing. I find that there is a readiness to examine these problems to see if it is not possible to find a solution. We seem to be baffled by this hostility that exists amongst certain factions and in certain circumstances. In the net result we are proceeding along a course—I should like you, Mr. Clark, to keep in mind the finances of the State and the other matters I have dealt with—which, unless corrected, can only bring to people in this State considerable hardship and in some cases, poverty and want. All these things are within our own control. To me, all these questions of industrial relations hinge on two or three basic things. Let us recognise that the true wealth of the community must depend upon production; production must depend on capital, management, and labour getting together and co-operating very much better than has been the case in the last few years. We must have law and order and surely we must uphold our system of industrial arbitration. If we do not uphold that system it will come to the rule of tooth and claw. First of all, the strong, in an industrial sense, gains at the expense of the weak, and that sort of feeling goes from one to another, and ultimately we get to the stage which will be very close to industrial anarchy and it will be not only extremely difficult to improve our standard of living but mighty difficult to maintain the standard of living we have today. We have financial problems in Queensland; we have economic problems, but none of them are so difficult that they cannot be overcome. I feel that it is the duty of every hon. member, particularly in the course of this debate, to make some contribution to the problem by expressing his views, and, if the speeches from each side of the Chamber can be along the line of bringing back a little more of the spirit of tolerance and goodwill between various sections of the community, that again will be of very considerable gain not only to Parliament but also the State.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra) (4.4 p.m.): Before I get on with the main points of my speech on the Financial Statement I want to make reference to incidents that occurred this morning when Mr. Speaker called me to order and threatened me with all sorts of dire penalties. As his calls to order and the threats will appear in "Hansard", I want to place my version of the incident in "Hansard" so that posterity can read it.

As a member of this Assembly who does not belong to the Government party, I am officially classed as a member of the Opposition. Consequently, when I have to make arrangements to speak—as we have to in this debate and in the Address-in-Reply debate—it is necessary for me to go to the official Whip of the Opposition, the hon. member for Aubigny. I told him the other day that I was quite prepared to speak this afternoon, and this morning, when I was walking down to the centre table to put a question to the officers of the House, the hon. member for Aubigny called me over and asked me if I was still prepared to speak this afternoon. I did not have a chance to reply before Mr. Speaker was on me like a ton of bricks. My only wish is that instead of being at the table I had been at my place in the Chamber, because I would have given Mr. Speaker more than he was looking for. I refer to that because of the unctuous remarks about Mr. Speaker's impartiality that we have to listen to—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Turner): Order! That is a reflection on Mr. Speaker, and I ask the hon. member for Mundingburra to withdraw his remarks.

**Mr. AIKENS**: Very well, I withdraw.

On Tuesday afternoon we saw perhaps the most deplorable example of interruption ever seen in this Chamber, when the Premier came in whilst the Treasurer was speaking. The Premier went to the Labour backbenches, gathered a multitude about him, and started to talk in a loud and excited voice. The Government Whip also was speaking loudly and excitedly, so much so that the Treasurer, who was then addressing the House—and no-one can claim that he is a whispering baritone—could not make himself heard. He had to look in the direction of the Premier, the Whip, and the other members of the Labour Party who were creating the hullabaloo. Not once during that hullabaloo did Mr. Speaker attempt to call the Premier to order until the Treasurer looked in the direction of the hullabaloo. Then, very belatedly and in almost an apologetic whisper, Mr. Speaker said, "Order!"

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN**: Order! I will not allow the hon. member to continue in that strain. I ask him to withdraw his remark.

**Mr. AIKENS**: I withdraw it.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN**: Order! I ask the hon. member for Burdekin to behave himself.

**Mr. AIKENS**: It is a change—and a very welcome change—when someone else in the Chamber is asked to behave himself.

I said what I did merely to have it recorded in "Hansard", so that people who read it can see what goes on in this Chamber from time to time.

**Mr. MOORE:** I rise to a point of order. The statement by the hon. member for Mundingburra about a member of this Assembly desiring to speak is not correct. According to Standing Orders, any hon. member desiring to speak must rise in his place and address either Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees and I do not know of any member being denied his right.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I do not know what the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs is talking about, but it is O.K. with me. It is quite irrelevant to the debate, but it is O.K. with me.

I refer now to the turmoil within the Labour Party at the present time. The ruling body of the Labour Party, the Q.C.E., is sharpening the axe to lop off the heads of certain members of the party; that is, of course, if it has the guts to do it, which I doubt.

I take hon. members back to 1939, when the late M. P. Hynes died. He was then the hon. member for Townsville. As deputy mayor of Townsville and a lifelong member of the Australian Labour Party, I nominated in the plebiscite for the selection of a candidate to contest the Townsville by-election. The A.W.U.-dominated Q.C.E. refused my endorsement on two grounds: firstly, that I was a militant trade unionist and, secondly, that as a militant trade unionist I had been seen frequently in the company of trade union officials who were known to be Communists. The men behind my non-endorsement on those grounds were the Mr. Thomas Dougherty and the Mr. Joseph Bukowski who are now doing the things for which I was condemned in 1939 and for which I was refused endorsement. That same A.W.U.-dominated Q.C.E., the same men who said I was not fit to carry the banner of Labour at the 1939 by-election for the City of Townsville because (1) I was a militant trades unionist and (2) I had been seen in association with trades union officials who were known Communists, are now sharpening the axe to lop the heads of certain members of the Labour Party, including all the Cabinet, because they are not as militant as I was then. Since those days I have continued in the path of militant trades-unionism. I have not deviated one hair's breadth from that path and I never will.

I know, of course, that there are some members of the Opposition and some members of the public who cannot understand the attitude of the great mass of the people in the working-class movement today towards the shearing dispute. Opposition members have said, "Why don't the railway men haul the wool?" They have asked "Why won't the waterside workers load the wool after the wool sale?" and "Why won't the seamen cart the wool?" I know it is hard for them to understand the real deep-down philosophy and principle of the true Labour man. When I speak of the true

Labour man I speak of those who belong to the world-wide great Labour Movement and that includes, of course, the little tinpot show known as the Australian Labour Party.

I think I can give hon. members what the mass of the working-class movement think of the present shearing dispute by reading the first verse of that immortal poem by Henry Lawson called "Too Old to Rat." I think this first verse could very well have been written about this dispute. It exemplifies the principle, the spirit, and the belief of the true Labour man. I repeat that it is not necessary to belong to the A.L.P. to be a true Labour man; rather sometimes it is better not to belong to the A.L.P. to be a true Labour man. The first verse of the poem says—

"I don't care if the cause be wrong,  
Or if the cause be right  
I've had my day and sung my song,  
And fought the bitter fight.  
In truth, at times I can't tell what  
The men are driving at;  
But I've been Union thirty years  
And I'm too old to rat."

That is the attitude of the Labour Movement in Queensland today and throughout Australia towards the shearers' dispute. Whether the A.W.U. is right or wrong in the conduct of the dispute—and I think it has boxed it right from the start—nevertheless, I believe, as a militant trades unionist and as a member of the Australian Railways Union, that my old workmates and my fellow unionists are doing the right thing in refusing to haul any wool that has been declared black by any reputable working-class organisation. That is the basic principle of Labour and, just as the Imperialists used to say—and I remember when members of the Opposition used to cheer them—"My country right or wrong," so also do the members of the great trades union movement throughout the world say "My Union right or wrong." But it is amusing to see the present-day antics of the Doughertys and Bukowskis who have suddenly blossomed forth. After a lifetime of weak-kneed, milk-and-water trades unionism, they have now blossomed forth as, shall we say, mates of mine as militant trades unionists. I only wish I could bring myself to believe that the conversion of Dougherty, Bukowski, and company to militant trades unionism was genuine and permanent. However, whether it is for the sake of trades union expediency or for any other reason, they are now talking, acting, and going through the gestures of militant trades unionism. Will they continue to do that? It is the duty of every fellow-trade-unionist to stand with them in this struggle.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Right or wrong?

**Mr. AIKENS:** There is the old saying that there are only two sides to an industrial dispute, the worker's side and the other side. It does not take the dinki-di member of the

trade-union movement long to make up his mind on what side he stands. There has never been any doubt where I have stood on the matter of militant trade-unionism. I have gone along the path without deviating one hair's breadth. In the years that have passed—I suppose you could call them the black years that have gone—I had the Doughertys and the Bukowskis sniping at me from the extreme right and then I had the others sniping at me and branding me as “pro-Com.” and “pro-Liberal” and “pro-this and that” from the middle. Now, lo and behold they are all over with me on the extreme left. How long they are going to stay there I do not know. Whether they are going to carry on with their threats to lop the heads off those who refuse to become extreme leftists with them, I do not know. I do not think they have the guts. Nevertheless, I do wish I could believe that Tom Dougherty, of all people, was genuine and permanent in his conversion to militant trade unionism at this age in his life.

**Mr. Dewar:** Is that the straight line you try to run on the fence?

**Mr. AIKENS:** I do not know any straighter lines than some of the western fences that the Secretary for Labour and Industry and I built in the olden days. They ran straight and true across the plains and the hills. They stand today as a monument of good workmanship.

I want to deal with the subject closest and dearest to my heart, the development of northern Queensland and its neglect by the Government. I shall only touch on two aspects of the neglect because I wish to get on to something very serious in the latter part of my speech.

We all know about the drift from the country and from the North to Brisbane. It is becoming greater as the years go by. Anyone who knows anything about it realises that the real cause of the drift to the South is not only that the workers in North Queensland cannot be assured of permanent employment and regular pay envelopes, but they have to come here so that their children can get the same opportunity for advanced education as is provided only for the people of Brisbane. A brilliant western boy or girl goes to the State school in his area and passes the Scholarship examination. If the parents of that brilliant child are working-class people they simply cannot afford to send it to the coast for secondary education. Consequently the parents have to pack up and go to the coast or some larger town where they can work and live in order to give their child an opportunity for secondary education. When the child passes the Senior examination in a northern town the parents are faced with exactly the same problem if they want to give that child higher education, an academic degree or University diploma. Probably they cannot afford to send the boy or girl to Brisbane to board while attending the University

because this Government, which is in all ways a Queen Street government, will not make a decent allowance to offset board and lodging while northern students are attending the University.

**Mr. Pizzey:** The means test applies.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. member says that the means test applies. Consequently the parents are faced with one of two alternatives. Either they must take the boy or girl away from school after the Senior or they must pack up and come to Brisbane to live. The husband must get a job here in order that the boy or the girl might live at home and attend the University and be on the same economic footing as the Brisbane boy or girl.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Is that why only three per cent. of that age group go to the University?

**Mr. AIKENS:** I have no doubt that is the case. That is why we are losing people. That is why they pack up and leave the North. The workmen and their families come here from the North to give their children the opportunities that they should have for advanced education. Every Northern and Western member is well aware of that, and they know families that have had to do it in order that their children may not be denied the opportunities for higher education that they need to fit them for a better position in life. Here is an example of how miserable the Government are in regard to a boy of 16, compared with the Federal Government—and hon. members know how hard it is for me to pay the latter a compliment. When North Queensland railwaymen go on holidays they get passes for themselves, their wives and any young girl member of the family not working for a living, but the pass for the boy only applies up to the age of 16. If a boy is attending high school taking the senior at that age—and he often is—he is still a schoolboy, but the Northern parents of that boy have to pay his full fare on the Queensland railways in order that the boy might accompany them on their annual holidays.

**Mr. Morris:** He would get an excursion rate.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Not always. Why should he pay any fare? He is still a schoolboy; he is still entirely dependent on his parents. Surely he should be included on the pass. The Federal Government set an example in that regard inasmuch as the parent can claim a taxation deduction for a child up to 18 years of age as long as he is attending school. The State Government say, “Not on your life; it does not matter whether the boy is attending school or not, if he is over 16 he has to pay his fare when his mother and father go on holidays on their annual pass.” How much lousier can you be? How much more opposed to development of Northern Queensland could you be than that? I know more about the Country

Women's Association fares than the hon. member for Flinders. I was in the west when they started. I was a permanent member of the Cloncurry Shire Council.

I now come to musical education in North Queensland. We have some talented boys and girls in the musical sense. Various visiting adjudicators who are competent to judge say that the standard of music and musical appreciation in North Queensland is comparably higher than in any other part of Australia. I shall be up there next week when the juvenile eisteddfod is being held—not as a competitor; the hon. member for Fortitude Valley could nominate as such—as one who is interested in it. It is probably the best juvenile eisteddfod in Queensland, if not in Australia. Our adult eisteddfod is the best in Queensland and is only excelled by the Ballarat eisteddfod. We heard the Premier tell us when he came up to Townsville that the Government had acquired the old South Brisbane Town Hall at a cost of £40,000. Later I got the information that they are going to spend £16,000 on repairs and renovations and pay £10,000 annually to run it, and I naturally thought that the Northern boys and girls would be given an equal opportunity to participate in the amenities provided for the Brisbane boys and girls. Not on your life! When I asked the Secretary for Public Instruction only the other day a question on this point he told me that no allowances were going to be made for the Northern boys and girls to attend the Brisbane Conservatorium in order to put them on an equal economic footing with the Brisbane boys and girls. He went on to say that if there was some donation or something else there may be a few fellowships or scholarships thrown out, but he also added that Brisbane boys and girls will be eligible to compete for those scholarships with the Northern boys and girls. Do not let us call it the Queensland Conservatorium. Let us call it by its correct name, the Brisbane Conservatorium. If the parents of the talented boys and girls in the musical world want to give their children an opportunity of further study, they are faced with the same financial problem. The parents will have to put their hands deep into their pockets and perhaps deny their other children the necessities of life in order to send the talented boy or girl down to Brisbane, to board here and attend the Conservatorium, or they will have to pack and transfer the whole family to Brisbane so that the talented child will have opportunities for advancement in musical education. How can the Government claim that they are not a Queen Street Government when those things are taking place? How can they claim that they are not a Queen Street Government when everything they do is deliberately designed to bleed away the people from the North and the country areas of this State, and get them down to Brisbane?

**Mr. Pizzey:** Where do you stand on the three-weeks' leave issue?

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. member knows where I stand on the three-weeks' leave issue. Any hon. member with the slightest smattering of knowledge of the trade union movement would not have to ask me that question. If I was not going to be away next week I would move a reduction of this Vote in order to test where the hon. members of the Government stand in regard to the three-weeks' leave issue. Do not make any mistake about that. I would line them up. I know where the Opposition would be, over with the Gairites voting against three weeks' leave. I do not know how many over there would vote with me.

Is it any wonder, when we consider the Brisbane-first policy of the present Government that we can pick up "The Courier-Mail," "The Telegraph," "Truth" and any Brisbane paper on almost any day of the week and read articles such as this. In "The Courier-Mail" only the other day appeared the following—

"Set Record in Building

"Value of buildings erected in Brisbane last year was a record, the Property Owners' Association of Queensland stated in an annual report released yesterday. A sum of £12,044,000 spent on city buildings during the year was an increase of 50 per cent. on the amount spent in 1954. The report states that although new buildings increased during 1955, the work yielded little office or store accommodation. The Association's report noted a tendency for commercial interests to move their activities to suburban centres. The report said that the move was 'no doubt the result of the present unsatisfactory state of traffic control.'"

In every paper you can read of increased building activity in Brisbane, of millions of pounds being spent here not only by the commercial interests but by the Government. You have only to take a walk around the streets to get evidence of that. I do not know how much they paid for this dilapidated old shack on the corner of Margaret and George Streets that once rejoiced in the name of "Binna-Burra" and I do not know how much they are going to spend on repairing and reconditioning it. No-one seems to know what they are going to do with it when it is completed and the money poured down the drain. It proves there is abundant money for Brisbane, to refurbish, repaint and retarnish perhaps the Executive Building or the Treasury Building. It proves there are bags of money for Brisbane, but the moment any request is made for a reasonable deal for the West and the North, and that is all we want, we are given, if I may use the vernacular, the brush-off or wipe-off. Yet we hear the Premier saying as he did at Goondiwindi the other day when opening a court house there that cost £1,200. "Having seen me here performing this

opening ceremony, who can claim we are a Queen Street Government?" It is quite true that we get some from the Government. I have been looking for a simile or an analogy but I do not think I can quote a better one than this: every now and again the Government put a big roast duck on the table. Brisbane gets roast duck, the central and the west of Queensland get the giblets and the North, the parson's nose. Because we get the parson's nose we are expected to be satisfied with it and we are branded as whiners, whingers and moaners if we ask for more. The spokesman of the Liberal Party, the hon. member for Chermside, branded us as bellyachers and said that we should call North Queensland "Belly-achin' Land."

**Mr. Davies:** What would be the use of your getting more of the roast duck when you make speeches like this?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Is the hon. member suggesting that I suffer in silence or that I crawl to get back into the A.L.P. and run around with a gag in my mouth, genuflecting and wobbling every time a Southern Minister pays us the compliment of coming to North Queensland in the salubrious wintertime?

**Mr. Morris:** You would like an opportunity to get back into the A.L.P.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Like hell I would. Which A.L.P.? To introduce a little humour into a serious debate, I was rather amused when I read in "The Courier-Mail" that there was a likelihood of there being two Labour Parties. There are two now. There is the sham Labour Party and the "dinky-die" Labour Party, the North Queensland Labour Party. If this gang on the Treasury benches split in twain there will be three Labour Parties.

Let us end this nonsense. I want to talk about something that I think every sensible member of the Government will agree with and something I think every sensible member of the Opposition will agree with. We are, not only in Queensland and Australia but in the whole of the world, on the threshold of the atomic age. All power in the future will be power produced by nuclear power. Whether we like it or not the days of firewood and coal and even the days of hydro-electric power are fast going out. Production of electricity and all forms of motor power for industry will, in the foreseeable future, be the result of the product of nuclear power. In England already there is a huge power station in the North using nothing but nuclear energy or some derivative of uranium ore. In America there is the same thing and, although I do not know what is going on in Russia, I have read in American journals in the library that very much the same thing is going on there. In all parts of the world those who have the interests of their country at heart and want to keep pace with other countries in the development of their own particular country are looking forward and planning for development in the increased use

of nuclear power for industry. I really thought that here in Queensland we would be one of the main uranium-producing States in the Commonwealth when the Mary Kathleen and the other uranium deposits at Mt. Isa and in the Cloncurry area are developed. I thought that we in Queensland and Australia would be planning and looking ahead in order to ensure that our great uranium deposits are used for the benefit of Queensland industry, particularly in the North if our nuclear energy were used for the benefit of North Queensland industry.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Would you scrap the power and hydro-electric scheme for the North?

**Mr. AIKENS:** It will be some time before we will be able to discard the generation of electricity by coal or hydro-electric power, but we must look ahead. I am trying to look further than immediately or next week. If the hon. member for Isis is incapable of seeing that far ahead and lacks courage and vision, I am sorry for him. I do not suggest that we disband all hydro-electric schemes, but I believe we should plan for the future. I am a great Australian. I think this can be one of the greatest countries in the world if we do not continually give away our life blood. It is time we ceased being the primary wood-and-water joey for the rest of the world, just as it is time that North Queensland ceased being the primary wood-and-water joey for the southern parts of Queensland and the rest of Australia. We should plot and plan to develop Australia and we should use all our resources, not to push other countries into the forefront, but to push our own into the forefront. That is my simple philosophy as an Australian.

Those being my sentiments, hon. members can imagine my feelings when I read this in "The Courier-Mail" only the other day—

"Use Queensland atom power.

"Mackay.—Queensland uranium would provide the backbone of Britain's electric power during the next decade.

"The United Kingdom Trade Commissioner in Queensland (Mr. R. Fell) said here last night that within 10 years about 25 per cent. of Britain's power would come from atomic power stations.

"These nuclear plants will be powered mainly by atomic minerals from Queensland," he said.

"The first and only uranium agreement entered into by Britain was with the Mary Kathleen lease."

"The Queen would open Britain's first nuclear power station in Calderhall (Cumberland) on October 17, he added."

What a shocking thing it is for a Queensland-lander to read that Britain will have the full use and benefit of all the uranium fields in Queensland.

**Mr. Collins:** It does not say that.

**Mr. AIKENS:** It does. What other interpretation can the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock place on it?

**Mr. Collins:** You are not reading it properly.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. gentleman can have his own interpretation of it. That is my interpretation of it. We, as Queenslanders, are to supply British industry—and I understand, United States industry—with the very means to outstrip us in the race for trade and commerce.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Not necessarily.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Yes, necessarily. We will stick to the horse-and-buggy style of production and be content with electricity generated by water, coal, firewood and the diesel engine, while we mine our uranium ore, probably reduce it to the first element—uranium oxide—and sell it to Great Britain or any other country that wants to buy it and use it to outstrip us in trade and commerce.

I went to the Library the other day to get a book on this subject so that I could quote from it today, but unfortunately the hon. member for Clayfield had borrowed it. It says that the Commonwealth Government have set up a commission to control, among other things, the sale and use of uranium ores and their derivatives in Australia. Because of that, I asked the Secretary for Mines a question in the House the other day, to which he replied—

“The sovereign rights of the State of Queensland in the production of uranium have never been in question, but the rights of the Commonwealth in matters affecting defence are recognised. It will be noted that Section 17 (1) (c) of the Commonwealth Statute empowers this Commission to co-operate with State authorities in certain directions, including the use or disposal of uranium. To date, such co-operation has been most satisfactory.”

From that—and I am open to correction by the Secretary for Mines—the only inference I can draw is that Queensland has sold out to the commission set up by the Commonwealth Government, and has co-operated to the fullest extent in allowing it to acquire all the uranium and uranium derivatives that might be produced in Queensland to sell them when and where it likes. If that is not the answer that the Secretary for Mines gave me I am open to correction. But from the attitude of the Commonwealth Government, that would appear to be the case. Why cannot we in Australia use our own uranium for our own development and progress? Why must we play second fiddle to overseas countries like Great Britain and the United States? Why must we tag along hanging to their shirt-tails in trade and commerce and everything else when uranium opens up such a splendid vista of progress?

**Mr. Nicklin:** There are about fifty million reasons why. What about the £50,000,000 it would cost to put up a refinery?

**Mr. AIKENS:** Never mind the £50,000,000. Let us erect the refinery. Let us not adopt the defeatist attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. Let us not sit down and say, “Oh, we are only a State of 1,250,000 people. We have not got the money. We will do with Great Britain and the other countries of the world what we have been doing for the last 100 years with wool, meat, hides and everything else. We will be the primary wood-and-water joeys. We will ship our primary products overseas to be manufactured into the finished article and then we will let the manufacturers in other countries ship them back to us and we will buy them at their prices. In other words, we will sell our primary produce to the countries of the world at their price and we will buy the finished article at their price and we will go broke in the process.” Is it not time to end that sort of thing and stand on our own feet as a nation?

**Dr. Noble:** I agree with you.

**Mr. AIKENS:** The hon. member for Yeronga agrees with that. The other day he facetiously called me an obsessionist. He has a sense of humour, and that is something rare in this Chamber. He said I had an obsession about nineteen different things, including the Attorney-General. I should not mind if he accused me of having an obsession about being a good Australian because I am a 100 per cent. Australian and I think we should always think, speak and act as Australians.

**Dr. Noble:** I don't think it would cost more than the Snowy River scheme to put up that refinery.

**Mr. AIKENS:** We found the money for the Snowy River scheme. When it was suggested that the Commonwealth of Australia should set up the Snowy River scheme, the carpers, the criers, and the weak sisters, like the Leader of the Opposition said it would cost £120,000,000, but we found the money and the Snowy River scheme is under way. I could not agree more than I agreed with the hon. member for Kelvin Grove when he said the other day, “We can find unlimited millions for war; let us find unlimited millions for the peaceful development and progress of the country.”

Let us make a start. If the Government are sincere in their desire to give Australia its place in the sun, if they are sincere in wishing to act towards the ultimate destiny of Australia, towards making it one of the great nations of the world, they can make history if they like by immediately convening a Commonwealth-Queensland convention or conference on the production and use of uranium ore and all its derivatives. Let them call into the conference all the big industrialists who are likely to be interested in the use of nuclear power for the development of industry. Let them call in, if they like, the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., Australian Consolidated Industries, Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. and the Rio Tinto people, the

Bauxite people and all those interested in the big industrial development of the State. Let the conference be thrown wide open so that the public may listen to the discussions and the Press may report them. We may then first of all convince the people of Australia that it is in Australia's interests to develop its nuclear power for its own peaceful ends. We may then convince the industrialists that the old types of power generation are on the way out and the new-style nuclear power generation is on the way in. Out at Mt. Isa we have a company that is only really starting to develop. I was in Mt. Isa when people had to travel there by road just after Miles and Simpson discovered the field. I was deputy chairman of the Cloncurry Shire. We went out there and set the site for the first water supply, a bore sunk in a creek. That is all past history now. Thirteen or 14 miles north of Mt. Isa I understand they have bigger mineral deposits than at Mt. Isa itself, so the potential of Mt. Isa is almost unlimited. But they are hampered by rising costs and by the long haul of coal all the way from Collinsville. Do you not think Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. would be vitally interested in the generation of power at Mt. Isa by nuclear energy? If Mt. Isa is interested in the generation of power by nuclear energy would not the bauxite people be interested if that develops into what we hope it will? Would not every big industrialist be interested in the generation of power by nuclear energy? But what has been done?

**Mr. Devries:** You must have some inside oil.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I have a lot of inside oil. I do not want to see the people of Australia or the people of Queensland, or particularly the people of Northern Queensland, sacrificed on the altar of tradition and overseas interests. It is a blind idea that we should only produce things in the primary state. I was absolutely shocked to read the open and blatant remarks of the Trade Commissioner of Great Britain that Great Britain was to benefit by the use of nuclear energy produced from Australian uranium ore. My first reaction to that would be the natural reaction of any dinki-di Queenslander and dinki-di Australian. If we are going to produce uranium ore in Queensland—as we will when Mary Kathleen gets into full production—if we are going to see that it is transformed into nuclear energy for generating electricity and other power, why the hell can it not be transferred into nuclear energy for the generation of power in Australia?

**Dr. Noble:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. AIKENS:** Thank you. At least I have one supporter in the Chamber who is openly prepared to speak as an Australian and not as a party hack.

Let us get on with the job. I do not know whether this conference has even been considered by the hon. members of the Government, but it is their job to get into

it. Let us have a big public conference immediately, not only of the Governments concerned but of every industrial enterprise in Australia today that might be interested in the production of power by nuclear energy. Let that conference be held in public and let us get the people of the nation behind us in this move to use our great natural resources, not for the benefit of the United Kingdom, not for the benefit of the United States of America, nor for the benefit of any other country in the world, but for the benefit of Australia.

Here is an opportunity for the Government to do something that will probably be the greatest step forward in the progress of the country and the State taken by any Government. I put that proposition to the Chamber in all seriousness.

**Mr. Pizzey interjected.**

**Mr. AIKENS:** I would not care if they called it the George Devries power station or the Joe Bukowski power station. I would not even care if they called it the Jack Pizzey power station, and nothing could have a worse name than that. I would not care what the name of the power station was. It is a challenge to us all as Australians when we read in the Press that our uranium ore and its final derivatives are going to be used, not for the progress and development of our own country, but for the progress and development of countries overseas.

**Mr. Devries:** You are off the beam there.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am not off the beam and I refer the Secretary for Mines to his own reply to my question. I regret that I have not the book here because I could have read to the Chamber the constitution of the Commission to which the Minister referred in his reply. I could have read its objectives, functions, and what it proposes to do. If the Commonwealth Government claim they are vested with powers under the Commonwealth Constitution to control the purchase, use and sale of uranium ore and its derivatives in Queensland under the defence section of the Constitution, then I would suggest to the Queensland Government that they take the very first opportunity that presents itself to contest that contention before the High Court.

**Mr. Devries:** They only use that power for a period of time.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Perhaps the damage will be done in that given period of time. They say that they will produce uranium ore in many parts of Australia and reduce this to its derivative unit oxide and we will not make any attempt to produce power here but we will send it overseas. I remind the Secretary for Mines who must know as well as I do—he is more conversant with the affairs of his department than any other Minister—that Mr. Playford, the Premier of South Australia, is not sleeping on the job. Speaking politically, it is not easy for me to pay a compliment to a Liberal Premier, but

Mr. Playford has already made plans for the first nuclear power station in South Australia. The latest information I can get on that matter is that the plans are fairly well advanced.

**Mr. Nicklin:** He has to have the necessary things imported.

**Mr. AIKENS:** We produce uranium ore here and from what I can get from books that I have read they then reduce the ore to what might be called the first substance, a yellowish powder called uranium oxide which then has to be reduced still further to the component parts necessary for the production of nuclear energy or power. It has been necessary to send that overseas because there they have the breaking-down process to reduce that uranium oxide to the component parts necessary. Why cannot that be done here? Why must it be sent overseas? Have we made any attempt to set it up here?

**Mr. Nicklin:** Yes, down South.

**Mr. AIKENS:** It is quite true that Mr. Playford in the initial stages of his project may have to get the necessary things from overseas, but in the first stage they come from here. Repeating my argument, we grow the wool here and send it overseas where it is manufactured into cloth and then we buy back the manufactured article. I ask why should we do that with uranium? Why cannot we go through all the processes of manufacture and the reduction of derivatives of uranium right here in Australia? I believe that the necessary money could be raised.

**Mr. Nicklin:** It has cost Great Britain about £150,000,000 so far.

**Mr. AIKENS:** £150,000,000 could be raised here in Australia easily. We might not be able to raise it for roads and bridges, but when you get companies like the C.S.R. Company, Australian Consolidated Industries, Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., Mt. Isa Mines, and Rio Tinto—when you get all the industrial combines together and say to them that the Commonwealth and the State Governments are prepared to work in with them to formulate a scheme to raise the money to permit of this being done in Australia, then I think you will get the co-operation and the money that you need. Nothing can be done until we make a start.

**Mr. Nicklin:** They are taking the raw material and processing it. That is a better proposition for Australia at the present stage.

**Mr. AIKENS:** It may be and it may not be, but we must use nuclear power if we are going to be in the race for progress, if we are going to keep abreast of modern development and hold our place, even if we do not improve it, in the race for trade and commerce. When it is all said and done, it is by trade and commerce that we live. If we are going to maintain our standard of living and keep our place in the age beginning now, which may be termed the nuclear age, we

cannot afford to let the other countries outstrip us. We have been blessed, if I may say so, with large deposits of uranium ore in Australia, and I do not want to see the same old principle adopted with regard to our uranium ore that has been adopted with regard to all our great primary products, wool, hides and the other things I have mentioned. Let us make a start. We must not sit down and say, "It cannot be done. We cannot raise the money." I suggest that the Secretary for Mines make history in this State by putting to the members of Cabinet the suggestion I have made today. It is not necessarily wrong because it comes from me. I know that some people say that anything Tom Aikens says is ipso facto wrong.

**Mr. Devries:** I have already done that.

**Mr. AIKENS:** If he has done it, why has the Minister not told us he has done it?

**Mr. Devries:** There was no need to mention it.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I can only draw the assumption from that statement that he has not done it.

**Mr. Devries:** You are fishing.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am not fishing. All these things have come from my own brain. I have thought about them and worked them out. It may be that great minds are thinking alike. I can only say that if any other hon. member has been thinking as I have been thinking over the last few months, this Parliament has in it two great Australians instead of one.

**Mr. Devries:** I can assure you that we have not been sitting down, not thinking about it.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Why did the Minister not tell us about it? This Parliament is not like the Q.C.E. or Cabinet or Caucus. There is no vow of secrecy on us. These uranium deposits belong to the people of Queensland; they do not belong to the Queensland Labour Party. They belong to the people of Queensland and I am confident that there are many people in Queensland who are just as concerned as I am about this particular matter. If the Minister has made a move to start the processing of uranium oxide, to set up huge uranium refineries in Queensland, even if he has made a single faltering step in that direction, I will be pleased to hear about it. I am not going to criticise or condemn him if he has not, but, if he has not, I suggest that he make a start now. Let the people of Australia know what is going to be done. Get them behind the Government. For too long we have been thinking of ourselves as the lifelong wood-and-water joys of the United Kingdom and the United States. Let us begin to speak, think and act as Australians, particularly in the almost frightening nuclear world that lies ahead.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 5 p.m.