

Queensland



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Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER 1956

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

QUESTIONS.

UNIFORM TAXATION TEST CASE.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

“With reference to the legal action taken by the Victorian Government in the High Court of Australia against the validity of the uniform taxation system, and the recently announced decision of the New South Wales Government to seek leave to intervene in the action in support of the Victorian Government’s case, and his Government’s professed desire for restoration of State taxing rights, will he kindly advise if it is the intention of his Government to seek leave to intervene in the action in the same manner as the New South Wales Government?”

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

“I am not officially aware of the intentions of the Government of New South Wales in this connection, and any action which my Government might take will be determined in the light of future happenings. To my mind it is preposterous that the States should be confronted with the necessity of taking legal action to procure the restoration of a fundamental Sovereign Right, namely, the complete possession of their own taxing powers. If the Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer were sincere in their professed willingness to restore taxing powers to the States they would cease paying lip service to this important question and take immediate practical steps to give effect to it. Their avaricious policy in continuing to hold powers which the States voluntarily surrendered for the sole purpose of assisting the Commonwealth to carry on the war is

a clear indication of their insincerity and a manifestation of their intention to keep the States in the role of supplicants. I have frequently stated the policy of my Government in regard to taxing powers. We believe that the right to levy income tax should be restored, but it must be on a basis that is fair and equitable to Queensland and not as may be determined solely by the Commonwealth.”

RAILWAY TRAVEL FOR PENSIONERS.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

“With reference to representations made to him by the Queensland Metropolitan Branch of the Australian Pensioners’ League, will he kindly advise if favourable consideration can be given to placing pensioners in this State on an equal footing with pensioners in New South Wales in regard to railway travel by granting concessions similar to those operating in the latter State, whereby pensioners are entitled, upon application made in that behalf, to railway travel at half normal adult fare except in the case of special services to racecourses and sporting fixtures?”

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

“The care and comfort of pensioners is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government which, through its arrogant retention of the sole right of levying income tax, is alone capable of meeting the needs of this worthy section of the community. If the Commonwealth would curtail some of the extravagances in which it now indulges and from the savings thus effected raise pensions to a level consistent with modern living standards instead of the miserable pittance now handed out, there would be no need for pensioners in Queensland or elsewhere to seek concessions in rail travel or otherwise. However, in pursuance of its humane and sympathetic policy and to the limit of its financial resources, the Queensland Government already provides rail concessions for aged and invalid pensioners in this State for the following purposes:—(a) To attend hospitals or clinics as out-patients; (b) To enter institutions such as aged people’s homes; (c) To have a change of climate; (d) To proceed on holidays; (e) If sick, infirm or homeless, to live with relatives; (f) To visit dangerously sick or dying relatives; (g) To travel for public hospital, dental and optometrical treatment not available locally; (h) To visit relatives in Government institutions; (i) To change their place of residence. On present indications, the value of rail concessions granted to indigent persons, of whom the vast majority are pensioners, for the current financial year will be some £48,000. My Government feels that these concessions are more

advantageous to pensioners than those allowed in New South Wales because through their financial circumstances many would not be able to raise the value of the half fare required in that State. However, as the honorary secretary of the Queensland Metropolitan Branch of the Australian Pensioners' League has been advised, their representations for increased rail concessions will be kept in mind. They will be further considered when circumstances permit."

LOADING OF LAUNCHES, TOWNSVILLE-MAGNETIC ISLAND.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Has any report been made by the departmental officer concerned following a narrowly averted tragedy, which undoubtedly would have been accompanied by loss of life when a load of loosely stacked timber shifted on the 2.30 p.m. passenger launch travelling between Townsville and Magnetic Island on Monday, 24 September last, causing the launch to list dangerously and forcing the captain to leave the wheel to assist in stabilising the craft?

"2. If so, will he inform the House of the nature of the report, and the action contemplated to prevent such dangerous loading of materials and goods on these passenger launches, so as to protect the lives of the passengers?"

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

"No report has been received regarding the incident referred to by the hon. member. However, I will have enquiries made and advise him in due course of the result of such enquiries."

PAPERS.

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

Report of the Public Service Superannuation Board for the year 1955-1956.

Report of the Public Service Commissioner for the year 1955-1956.

Report of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for the year 1955-1956.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulation under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1955.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

DATE OF PRESENTATION.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that we will be considering the Estimates very soon, have you had any information as to when the Auditor-General will be presenting his report to Parliament?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not had any information, but I shall make inquiries for the hon. gentleman.

FIRE BRIGADES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Debate resumed from 10 October (see p. 775) on Mr. Moore's motion—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Fire Brigades Acts, 1920 to 1931, in certain particulars."

Mr. TURNER (Kelvin Grove) (11.9 a.m.): At the adjournment yesterday I was dealing with the methods carried out by the Brisbane Fire Brigades Board in preventing fires. I mentioned a few of them but there are many others. Fire Brigade displays are arranged by the Board from time to time to demonstrate them, during which it uses the street fire alarm system on street corners.

The people are instructed how to use the fire alarm. Men wearing coats are advised to hit the glass with their elbow. Men in shirtsleeves and ladies are advised to wrap a handkerchief around their arm and hit the alarm with their elbow. Instruction is given in the prevention of fires and the method of dealing with them as quickly as possible. Despite all that instruction and reports published in the Press by the Board, fires still occur through carelessness.

I have before me the monthly report of the Chief Officer. The Brigade received no fewer than 328 calls last month, including four fires caused by children playing with matches. At every monthly meeting of the Brigade, when the Chief Officer's report is received, the chairman and members of the Board comment on the cause of fires. When are parents going to instruct their children in the danger of playing with matches? Four fires were caused in that way last month. The fire last week in the western suburbs in which a boy lost his life should be sufficient warning to parents that they must insist on their children not playing with matches. If that is not sufficient warning, I do not know what warning parents could be given.

Another cause of fires is careless smoking. It would be interesting to know the number started in this way during the last 12 months. Last month there were no fewer than eight caused by careless smoking, one by a smoker in a tram. A car was pulled up alongside a stationary tram and the smoker threw his cigarette dumper out the window. It entered the motor car and it caught fire. The car driver did not see the dumper being thrown into his car, but it was discovered later that that was the cause of the fire. It had lodged between the cushions in the back seat.

Many fires are attributed to sparks from locomotives; last month the number was 18. I object to their being attributed to sparks from locomotives, as it can only be guess-work. Locomotives, particularly in country areas, haul at least seven coaches and in all those coaches passengers smoke, and throw their dumpers through the windows. In seasons such as the present one when grass is dry, fires are easily started by dumpers.

Fires occur in dry cleaning establishments, particularly with those handling light clothing and women's garments. The cleaning fluid is highly inflammable, but we still find that people are careless enough to allow the garments to come within range of an open flame or spark. Those types of fires occur every month.

Other fires occur in fish and chip shops through the over-heating of fat. The Fire Brigade has more to do than to attend to fires caused by such absolute carelessness.

Last month there were 190 fires the cause of which was not known. The Brigade received approximately 11 calls a day last month. Seven of those fires were serious.

I urged the installation of sprinklers in big warehouses and factories of more than two stories. It has been proved over the years that sprinklers have a tremendous value in fire prevention.

My suggestion is that the Brisbane City Council should make it compulsory for every builder to install a sprinkler system in every building over three storeys in height. Other fire prevention methods should be insisted upon. The Brisbane brigade recently brought out at a cost of £15,000 an extension ladder from the other side of the world that goes to a height of 120 ft. We had the ladder only a few weeks when the Premier opened a new 11-storey building at the corner of Edward and Adelaide Streets. The ladder is not long enough to go to the top storey of the building. When buildings go higher and higher it cannot be expected that the Fire Brigades Board will have to keep buying longer ladders. The most rigid fire prevention methods should be insisted upon by the City Council, particularly when new buildings are erected. I suggest that all lifts, particularly passenger lifts, should be built on the outside walls of buildings with the entrance into the main building through the back wall, which could be closed in the event of fire. I know from my fire brigade experience that the lift acts as a flue when fires occur and the draught created by the lift fan the fire. It would thus be a good idea if passenger lifts were built on external walls to prevent the hazard caused by these flues. I am afraid that there might be a fire in a building and passengers in the lifts could be burnt.

I have realised since the last war that the fire brigade is not only a fire-fighting brigade but also a part of our civil defence. The fire brigade should be recognised as first

line of defence for the civil population. In time of war fighting forces are rushed to the fighting line to protect the country against the enemy. When fires occur say at munition works their control is left to the fire brigades. The City Council and municipal authorities should be relieved of the responsibility of fire fighting during war-time; the whole of this work should be handed over to the Commonwealth Government as a defence measure. I am not suggesting that the men should be regarded as soldiers so far as their work and working conditions are concerned.

In my eight years' fire brigade service I have noted how working conditions for firemen have improved. In my day we were on duty for 24 hours but in one week we got four hours off from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., in the second week from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m., and in the next week from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. We had one Sunday off every six months and only got one week's annual leave a year. We were on duty all the time. And what is more, we had to do four hours' watch duty at the observatory. Today firemen do not do any watching. If the fire brigade service was transferred to the Commonwealth Government as a defence measure that Government should give the Brisbane City Council sufficient money to relay the whole of the water services within the Greater Brisbane area.

Mr. Pizzey: Give all control to the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. TURNER: The 3-inch water main in George Street was laid in 1888 and today we learn that because of corrosion that it holds only 2 inches of water. When it was laid in 1888, I do not suppose there would have been 200 taps drawing water from it. Since then, however, many large buildings have been erected in George Street, and I suppose there would be more than 200 taps in Gordon & Gotch's new building alone. If all the taps in George Street were turned on simultaneously, there would be no water left in the main. Because of the extreme importance of having plentiful water supplies in war-time, the Federal Government should bear the cost of re-laying mains wherever necessary in city streets. During the war they laid 12-inch water mains on top of the ground in the city streets, the water being pumped from the river. Munition factories are safeguarded by the fire brigade, and it is up to the Federal Government to help it in that task.

Mr. Davies: They are not interested in Queensland.

Mr. TURNER: As the hon. member for Maryborough says, apparently the Commonwealth Government are not interested in Queensland. They have given us a raw deal in other matters.

During my time in the fire brigade the wage for a second-class fireman was £1 13s. 4d. a week, and £2 1s. 2d. a week for a first-class fireman. Before a man could

be promoted to the rank of first-class fireman he had to wait till a first-class fireman either died or resigned, and he had to have a third-class engine driver's certificate.

I commend the Minister on setting up an appeal board for fire brigade employees. That will relieve the Fire Brigades Board of a good deal of responsibility. If a fireman is reported by an officer for a breach of discipline, the chief officer suspends him and brings him before the Fire Brigades Board. Sworn evidence is heard by the Board, and it often happens that if the finding is in favour of the man who has been charged, the officers accuse the Board of letting them down and say it is useless to charge the men with breaches of discipline. I personally shall be very pleased to be relieved of that responsibility. Any fireman who is charged has the right to be represented by counsel and to call witnesses, whose evidence is heard on oath. Every facility is extended to an appellant to state his case, and the Board has always given him the benefit of any doubt. The hearing of many of the charges have taken a whole day; on one occasion it lasted from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Most members of the Board are business men who have more to do than listen to evidence in appeals by firemen. Now, however, they will be relieved of that obligation, and the men will have the opportunity of placing their case before a properly constituted appeal board. I know that a magistrate will be better able to sum up the evidence in an appeal than I could, and I think I can say the same of every other member of the board.

The Bill will greatly improve fire brigade services in the State. The appeal board provision, of course, extends to country areas.

The allocation of financial responsibility has been well considered. No precedent has been slavishly followed but the proportions are between those of other States.

When in Melbourne last year I learned that the McDonald Country Party Government had relieved the Victorian Government of responsibility for the payment of precept for fire brigade services although they had retained representation on the board. The Minister told us yesterday that New South Wales has another system, and he has tried to make the distribution of the cost in Queensland more equitable and more satisfactory to all parties, especially the local authorities and the Government. The insurance companies may not like the extra burden but there should be no need for them to increase premiums. The private companies will be able to afford the increased cost and, at the worst, the State Government Insurance Office may have to make a slight reduction in its 33½ per cent. rebate.

(Time expired.)

Mr. H. R. GARDNER (Rockhampton) (11.27 a.m.): I support the Bill. In all sincerity I believe overhaul of the Fire Brigades Acts is long overdue. I think hon.

members will agree that the Bill is sound in almost every detail. It is apparent that much more than putting out fires is involved in the administration of the fire brigade service.

The revision of the financial arrangements will afford great relief to local authorities. The change in allocation of contributions may at first glance seem drastic and revolutionary. It must be remembered that private citizens, who for the most part are ratepayers, are obliged to insure their homes against fire and other risks and fire insurance companies in particular must recognise the increasingly heavy burden being placed on local authorities in changing world conditions and accept a greater share of the cost of fire brigade services.

In Rockhampton, a city of 40,000, the City Council has to pay approximately £10,000 in precepts which represents practically a halfpenny in the £1 on general rates. The same thing would apply in Toowoomba and Townsville because they are comparable cities. While criticism of precept payments is made by all councils they must remember that the fire brigade boards are responsible for efficient fire-fighting services within their area. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove mentioned that £15,000 had been spent recently in the purchase of one of the most up-to-date ladders and that it will still be inadequate to cope with a fire at the top of the new building. The same difficulties apply outside Brisbane. When debating the revision and overhaul of an Act which has been in existence for so many years and subject to very little alteration, it must be obvious that the needs of the ever-changing world and the system under which we live make changes necessary. I do not think many people would criticise the Bill because in the final analysis, I would say the Minister and his department, have been generous in their allocation of contributions so that the board can carry out its fire-fighting functions. We look forward to the day when we will be in the same position as Victoria when local authorities will not be called upon to make any contribution.

I have tried to find out what the change will mean to fire insurance companies and insurance companies generally. It is very hard to get any statistical data on the point. The Insurance Commissioner's report for 1955 says that we have 114 insurance companies in Queensland and covering fire, marine and miscellaneous items. Up to the end of 1954 the premium income was £9,745,031, claims paid £3,642,580, a ratio of 37.4 per cent. While I cannot dissect from that the fire-fighting premium, it does show that the revolutionary change in financing the boards will not have any marked effect on these companies. It will not put them out of business. It is interesting to note that from 1953 to the end of this year there has been an increase in

premiums amounting to £1,469,538 representing 17.8 per cent. The people who pay fire insurance and who are still subject to rates will get a small benefit, while the local authority will receive a considerable benefit. I agree with what the hon. member for Cooroora said regarding local governing bodies. I realise that they are more or less governed by the capacity to pay. Local government can only strike a rate within the capacity of the individual to pay. If sufficient revenue is not derived from the general rate they have to go on the loan market.

The provision for an appeal board is very satisfactory. I was pleased to hear from the Minister about the qualifying factors in the oral and practical examination. I trust that the appeal board will be an improvement on some other appeal boards that are bound by a particular rule. The Minister said the object was to have efficiency, which, after all, is the main purpose.

Mr. Pizzey: Didn't you hope the railways had that?

Mr. H. R. GARDNER: If they had it, I would not be here today. There has been a marked improvement in fire-fighting appliances, and there are many more chemicals. To become a qualified officer one has to have a good knowledge of all these chemicals and their explosive qualities. It is important that everybody in a fire-fighting institution should keep that in mind. Staff efficiency and the early turnout of a fire engine after the alarm are the secret of success in fire fighting. The Bill is a particularly good one.

A good deal has been said about the position in Brisbane, but I discuss the matter from the point of view of centres outside the metropolitan area. It is a coincidence that this Bill has been introduced at the same time as the revolutionary change that has taken place in the conditions of employees, the implementation of the 40-hour week in the metropolitan area and four other country centres. In all probability by the end of the month it will operate throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. It is this aspect that prompted me to speak. It is possible that some members of fire brigade boards may consider sacrificing efficiency because of the added expense brought about by the 40-hour week, but I believe the members of every board should be imbued with one idea only—efficiency.

The money expended on this service may appear to be excessive compared with the number of fires, but there is another aspect of the work, fire prevention. That must be considered when analysing cost.

The person who pays a premium to an insurance company is entitled to the best protection for his property, and it is the obligation of insurance companies to see that fire brigades are maintained at the highest pitch of efficiency.

In outside districts many brigades are helped by auxiliary employees who are paid mainly on an annual basis. This auxiliary staff has done a wonderful job over the years. Many of the men are highly efficient and deserve our tribute for the job they have done.

In areas further out fire fighting is done by volunteers. I know, as do other hon. members, that premiums vary according to the efficiency of the fire-fighting service available, and its chance of effectively controlling any fire in the area.

It is the obligation of brigades in the bigger centres such as Townsville, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba to assist smaller centres in those areas where volunteer fire brigades operate. That is done in the Rockhampton area and I know it is the position in Townsville and Toowoomba.

I hope the introduction of this Bill will not mean that insurance companies will try to curtail expenditure and so lower the standard of efficiency of brigades.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (11.44 a.m.): I should say that the greatest need in any town is a district hospital. I give second priority to a branch of St. John's Ambulance and third priority to an efficient fire brigade.

It is very difficult to assess the merit of a Bill until it is printed. I am not suggesting for a moment that the Minister has not in this case given all the details. I know he endeavours at all times to present as clear a picture of a Bill as possible.

If the Bill will be the means of establishing fire brigades in towns where that is not possible at present it will serve a good purpose, still I think there is a good deal of sugar spread over this Bill. The Minister has been very careful to stick to its bright features. Government members have been enamoured of the benefits of the legislation to country towns and they have spoken about the relief that will be given to local authorities. The Minister has played football, and so have I, and he knows that you are not over the line until you pass the fullback. I want to examine this Bill closely. The Act prescribes that three-sevenths of the cost of fire brigades boards is to be carried by the Underwriters' Association and two-sevenths each by the local authorities and the Government. There is only one real principle in the Bill and that concerns the money that the Government are going to be saved. It is going to mean that only one-seventh of the cost will be paid by the Government. What a tremendous saving to the Government! What help will the Government give local authorities? I am not suggesting that the Government are not providing some relief, but who are local authorities in the first place?

Mr. Walsh: The Minister is doing exactly what the Local Authorities Association asked for.

Mr. MULLER: Let the Treasurer keep quiet.

Mr. Walsh: I have as much right to speak as you have and I will exercise my right.

Mr. MULLER: Then let the Treasurer get on his feet and make a speech. I am sure that Mr. Clark will give him time to put his case. This supposed relief to local authorities and the increased cost to the Underwriters Association are not going to come about. If the Underwriters Association is asked to carry five-sevenths of the cost of fire bridges, is it not reasonable to assume that the extra cost will be passed on to the owners of property by way of increased premiums?

Mr. Walsh: Will you say that every ratepayer insures his property?

Mr. MULLER: If the Treasurer wants to interject, let him not be silly.

Mr. Walsh: You are stupid.

Mr. MULLER: In the Treasurer's mind I would be stupid because he does not understand. If the underwriters or the insurance companies are obliged to increase premiums who is going to pay? The cost will be thrown back onto the owners of the property.

Mr. Walsh: They can take it out of their profits.

Mr. MULLER: The hon. gentleman would like to take more out of a person's pocket than is in it. Up to the present no action has been taken to prevent underwriters from increasing premiums. The hon. member for Somerset put over a wise crack yesterday by saying that he hoped this would not happen. I agree. He ventured to say that the State Government Insurance Office would not increase its premiums or he felt that it would not. The State Government Insurance Office picks the eyes out of the insurance business today.

Mr. Walsh: It is on the same basis as any other company. You are making a silly statement.

Mr. MULLER: Can the Treasurer tell me if the State Government Insurance Office will insure hay sheds and other farm property?

Mr. Walsh: It is taking more than the other companies are taking.

Mr. MULLER: I am asking the question. Is the Treasurer prepared to tell the Committee that the State Government Insurance Office will insure hay sheds and other farm buildings? It will not take that business, because it reduces its profits. The Government expect the private companies to take it, yet they stop them from increasing their premiums. The State Government Insurance Office will not increase its premiums, because it can pick the eyes out of the business.

Mr. Walsh: Are you making the specific statement that the State Government Insurance Office will not insure haystacks?

Mr. MULLER: Of course it does not.

I will not be misled by any assertion that local government will be relieved of its responsibility as a result of the Bill. Certainly its share will be reduced to one-seventh, but an additional responsibility will be placed upon ratepayers, who after all constitute local government. The Government, however, will be relieved of half their present responsibility. If the Minister had been honest, that would have been the first thing he should have told the Committee. He should have said that the Bill would result in the Government's saving half what it now costs them to maintain fire brigades.

Is it possible to help towns that are not big enough to establish branches of the Fire Brigades Board? The Minister did not mention that. Nothing is more sickening than to see a fire break out in a town where there is no means of controlling it. It is the responsibility of everyone to make some sacrifice to establish and maintain an efficient fire-fighting service, and the responsibility should be shared by the Government, the local authority and the people. The people carry their share of the responsibility by the three-sevenths' contribution made by the Underwriters' Association, whilst the local authority and the Government each contribute two-sevenths. That is a fair distribution of the cost. The Bill will not lessen the contribution by property owners. I am not suggesting that insurance companies should be allowed to make unduly high profits—

Mr. Power: You believe in price control?

Mr. MULLER: Up to a point, as long as there is a reasonable man in charge of it.

There is keen competition between the insurance companies. Of course, some people might say that they get their heads together and fix standard premium rates, but the State Government Insurance Office provides a good deal of competition because it picks the eyes out of the business. The co-operative insurance companies are also keen competitors for business, and in that way premiums are kept at a fair level.

The Bill contains only one real principle. In effect, it will reduce by half the Government's contribution to the maintenance of fire brigades.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) (11.55 a.m.): I think most hon. members will agree with the principles of the Bill. I have searched fairly diligently for one good reason why local authorities should contribute anything towards the cost of fire-brigades services. To my way of thinking, insurance is a contract between the insurer and the insured.

Mr. Walsh: As a matter of fact, the local authority makes a substantial contribution when it lays the water mains.

Mr. COBURN: It is a benefactor although it has no direct interest in saving the property of the insured. Whilst the local authority precept has not been eliminated, some good has been achieved by its reduction to half. If premiums must be increased because of the extra cost to the insurance companies, that is entirely a matter between them and the owners of property. The Bill is a step in the right direction.

The hon. member for Fassifern objects because the Government save money. The Government are the custodians of the taxpayers' money so the taxpayers are really saving it. Usually only beneficiaries under schemes are expected to pay for them. That is so with erosion-prevention schemes and there is no reason why it should not apply to fire services.

The Minister told us that the insurance companies in New South Wales already pay three-quarters of the cost whereas the Bill provides for the companies in Queensland to pay five-sevenths, so the companies in New South Wales already pay one-twenty-eighth more. I do not know whether their premiums are higher than ours.

I think all hon. members will approve of the appeal provision. Magistrates are skilled in examining evidence and in arriving at decisions and I think the provision will give great satisfaction. It has my approval.

Mr. Low: Do you think the State should make any contribution?

Mr. COBURN: I do not think anybody should, apart from the insurer and the insured. No-one should be asked to be a benefactor without his having a direct interest or deriving a benefit.

Mr. Low: You think it desirable to have representation of the State or local authority on a board without its making any contribution?

Mr. COBURN: Representation is another matter altogether. Fire brigade boards must be 100 per cent. efficient because on their work depends the amount of money insurance companies have to pay out. I do not think there is any need for any worry on that score.

Mr. Roberts: If insurance companies find all the finance for fire brigades they should be entitled to run them.

Mr. COBURN: I am not going to enter into that argument. They could establish their own organisations and so save their money when buildings are only partially, or not wholly destroyed by fire. The Bill does not refer to that aspect. As the State and local authorities still have to contribute they will still have some representation on the boards. When we wipe out precepts for the State and local authorities entirely, the administration of the board, and how it will be constituted will be a matter for future discussion.

At Ayr, we have the Ayr-Brandon Fire Brigade Board. This efficient organisation was set up during World War II when air raids were feared. It was ready to act quickly in case of emergency. After the war it continued as a volunteer fire brigade and did excellent work. Then it was thought that a properly constituted fire brigade should be brought into existence and a very fine building was erected. It was opened only six or eight weeks ago by the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration. It is now a very well equipped brigade. Across the Burdekin River at Home Hill there is no fire-fighting service. Last year a very serious fire broke out in the Inkerman sugar mill. It could have proved disastrous to the economy of the whole area had it not been brought under control by the Ayr-Brandon fire brigade and the volunteer bucket brigade. It made the Home Hill people realise the seriousness of not having a fire-fighting force of their own. Application has since been made to the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs for the establishment of a sub-station at Home Hill. It has been realised that it would be cheaper and equally efficient to have the service as part of the Ayr-Brandon fire brigade rather than a separate brigade. Home Hill is a very important town in an extensive district. I hope that the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs in his wisdom will grant the request.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (12.3 p.m.): I congratulate the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs on bringing forward this desirable piece of legislation the specific purpose of which is to streamline the existing Act by conferring benefits on members of fire brigade boards. There will now be a right of appeal against penalties and promotions, previously enjoyed only by public servants. In future, fire brigades will be financed on the basis of contributions—five-sevenths by insurance companies, one-seventh by the Government and one-seventh by local authorities.

The Government believe that the main contribution should be from the people whose income from fire insurance premiums is so great. I emphasise, that in town planning, reticulation of water should be a first consideration. When a town grows to a city the reticulation lines should be enlarged and the small mains extended. In many places it is difficult to get sufficient pressure for fire-fighting purposes. It is essential that we plan ahead for an adequate water supply so as to ensure the maximum efficiency in fire-fighting services. No amount of insurance can compensate a home-owner for the loss of his home. Generally the insurance cover is much below replacement cost. The lack

of water pressure has been so great that it has been found necessary to build reservoirs on hilltops. In many areas round Brisbane tanks have been built on high parts to provide the necessary water pressure. The fault lies with the local authorities because they have had a liberal subsidy at their disposal. The Government have always been ready to help them if they were ready to help themselves. Not everybody can afford insurance costs and that is an added reason why an efficient fire brigade service should be provided. I compliment the Minister on his foresight, on his planning for the future, thus ensuring a more efficient fire brigade service.

Mr. PIZZEY (Isis) (12.10 p.m.): On almost every occasion some Government member will find an excuse to say that the Federal Government should give this Government Commonwealth financial assistance, whether the subject is fire brigades, bridges, roads, harbours, or anything else. And the statement is always made that the projects have a defence value. Every form of development has some defence value, even baby clinics. The Government should have a certain amount of pride and should accept their responsibility for developing the State. We hear the statement time and again, "It has a defence value. The Federal Government should subsidise it." I can only assume that the Government cannot face up to their responsibilities.

There is one pleasing feature of the Bill, one that seems to be a new principle—promotion on efficiency rather than seniority. I guarantee that many Government members would have liked to see that principle applied to the railway service, where seniority takes precedence over efficiency. This is a welcome change of front on the part of the Government. I am sure that Mr. Moriarty and a few other railway officers would like to have the same provision in the Railways Act. I commend the Minister on at last seeing the light.

I take this opportunity of paying a tribute to the Childers Volunteer Fire Brigade. I know that some volunteer fire brigades, offshoots of other brigades receive assistance from them, but not so at Childers. It was suggested that a fire brigade board be formed there, the committee said they did not want a board or any interference from the council or the Government. We have our own fire-fighting service and we run our own organisation. Meetings are held on Thursday nights at half past 7, when there is fire-fighting practice. It does not matter whether a fire occurs at the Isis Central Mill, Isis Junction, on a cane farm, or whether it is a grass fire in a paddock, the volunteers turn out to fight the fire. Some of the volunteers may be at their place of employment when the alarm goes. Some are employers and others employees. The business people of Childers are prepared to release their employees to fight fires, and they do not receive any compensation for their work.

Mr. Low: How do you finance your operations?

Mr. PIZZEY: Money is raised in different ways. The farmer whose cane is saved may make a donation of £10. Nearly all who are assisted make donations. No subsidy is received. Funds are saved to buy new machines. There is no expenditure other than on the maintenance of equipment. Those men are doing a wonderful job. The same principle could be applied in many small towns that could not afford the cost of a fire brigade, particularly now that it will be necessary to have a three-man station. Fire brigades, hospitals and the ambulance brigade must provide a 24-hour service on seven days of the week.

Mr. Roberts: Do the insurance companies give donations?

Mr. PIZZEY: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Roberts: It is nearly time they did.

Mr. PIZZEY: The Childers people do not seek that money. They prefer to raise their own money, buy their own machines and have nothing to do with any Government or council. It is a commendable spirit and I place on record my appreciation and the appreciation of the people of the district of their work.

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr—Secretary for Health and Home Affairs) (12.14 p.m.): The reception of the Bill by the Committee has been very pleasing.

You, Mr. Clark, have been generous in allowing hon. members some latitude in debate. The debate widened somewhat, but most of the matters related to fire brigades, fire brigade boards, the activities of fire brigades, their financing, and their work.

I was pleased to hear the appreciation of the excellent work of officers and firemen throughout Queensland. The Government's policy is not confined to the city of Brisbane but to the whole State. As Queensland develops and the Rural Fires Act is extended we shall be in a position to give fire protection to the whole of the State. I appreciate the work of the fire brigades. Reference has been made to them in urban areas and the need for additional equipment for fire fighting. Where fires occur in wooden buildings water is the most useful commodity to combat them. Mention was made of fire fighting appliances but the fire chief informs me that 2 or 3 gallons of water used effectively are probably more effective than some of the more modern ingredients that go into fire fighting appliances. I suppose the most desirable state of affairs would be sufficient modern equipment and appliances.

I pay a tribute to the members of fire brigades outside the metropolitan area who, by improvisation, have equipped themselves with effective equipment. Their vehicles are

probably not the most modern but through their activities they have built up only extremely useful fire-fighting service not in towns but in outside areas. At one time we talked only of fire engines, but today we have all sorts of vehicles for fire fighting. Some of the outside brigades that I have inspected have some superior equipment such as tankers, pumps and the like. We cannot give them too much credit for their interest and their good work.

Mr. Pizzey: They generally have obsolete machines.

Mr. MOORE: Which they are able to fix up efficiently. They have done an excellent job. On a couple of occasions my officers had to advise the less experienced officers in the country who wanted to buy costly modern equipment, thinking it would be more effective than some of the improvised equipment that we see in the North and inland towns. Members of fire brigades are doing a remarkable job in giving protection against fire.

The hon. member for Mundingburra got off the track a bit about storm and tempest cover in North Queensland.

Mr. Gaven: He generally makes a few storms.

Mr. MOORE: And not a great deal of rain in them.

The Insurance Commissioner advises me that storm and tempest is a hazard that cannot be underwritten in the usual way, since it is unpredictable. It generally causes widespread damage, particularly in well-populated areas. One storm could cause terrific damage in a small area, and it would be very difficult for any insurance office to take effective steps to protect itself against huge claims.

The hon. member's claim that the State Government Insurance Office will not grant storm and tempest cover is not correct. In 1953 it had in North Queensland storm and tempest liability exceeding £3,000,000, which sum probably exceeded the liability of all other insurance offices in North Queensland. In view of the large volume of fire insurance business that the State Government Insurance Office had in North Queensland—over £15,000,000—and the heavy demand for storm and tempest cover, a halt had to be called so as not to imperil the solvency of the office and further cover was refused.

Hon. members must be fair in their statements and keep in mind that an insurance office is not a benevolent institution, whether State or privately controlled. It cannot pursue a policy that will mean ultimate insolvency. During the past five years almost the total income received by the State Government Insurance Office for storm and tempest cover has been paid out in claims.

The hon. member for Mundingburra introduced a subject that, if given a little thought, can well be used to exemplify the arguments advanced by me to prove that the fortunes of fire insurance companies and offices depend, to a very large extent, on an efficient fire-fighting service. Storm and tempest is an act of God and has a very ravaging effect on property. The damage caused by it cannot be limited. On the other hand, an efficient fire-fighting service can not only control fires, but can, and does, very often, minimise the damage.

The profits of fire insurance companies—and indeed the very existence of fire insurance companies—depend to a great extent on the existence of fire-fighting services. It cannot be denied, therefore, that it is only just and reasonable that fire insurance companies and such organisations should bear a large proportion of the cost of fire-fighting services.

The hon. member for Fassifern got a little off the track. He suffers from a suspicion complex; he accused the Government of ulterior motives. He did not seem to be concerned so much about relief to local authorities as about the profits of the fire insurance companies. The Bill does not deal with the profits of the companies; that is their business. In the South the companies have paid the increased proportion of contributions for about 12 months and I have not heard of any dire effects of it.

The hon. member said haystacks were not insured by the State Government Insurance Office. The Insurance Commissioner assures me that they are.

Mr. Muller: When did they begin accepting them?

Mr. MOORE: I remind the hon. member that I have had some experience in the State Insurance Office and, in my day and since, the Insurance Commissioner has been very generous in issuing policies to cover fire risk of all descriptions. However, he is very shrewd and will not make the office a benevolent institution by accepting the undesirable part of a risk while some other office carries the remainder.

Mr. Walsh: They might have thought the hon. member for Fassifern was going to burn his haystack down.

Mr. MOORE: The Insurance Commissioner is not going to be the Aunt Sally and give isolated cover on the portion of a property regarded as a bad risk. He must be given credit for that.

The hon. member for Yeronga said the premiums on comprehensive motor vehicle policies in Queensland were the highest in Australia. That is not so. Since he has been a member of this assembly he has been famous for his inaccuracies, especially about my department, strangely enough.

The true position is shown in the following comparison:—

	Brisbane.			Sydney.			Melbourne.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Private Cars—									
Class 1—									
£500 ..	17	0	0	29	16	0	24	2	0
£1,000 ..	24	18	0	34	4	0	28	12	0
£1,500 ..	31	18	0	38	14	0	33	2	0
Business Cars—									
Class 2A—									
£500 ..	29	16	0	42	6	0	37	18	0
£1,000 ..	43	4	0	48	6	0	43	18	0
£1,500 ..	50	16	6	54	6	0	49	18	0
Goods Carrying									
Vehicles—Up to									
2 tons—									
Class 3A—									
£500 ..	19	6	0	37	4	0	28	6	0
£1,000 ..	28	2	0	43	4	0	33	6	0
£1,500 ..	35	14	6	49	4	0	38	6	0

The Insurance Commissioner assures me that fire insurance premiums in Queensland are the cheapest in Australia. I thank the Committee for their assistance with the introduction of this legislation.

Motion (Mr. Moore) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Moore, read a first time.

SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(Mr. Turner, Kelvin Grove, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 9 October (see p. 761) 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.”

Right Hon. F. M. FORDE (Flinders) (12.33 p.m.): I take great pleasure in extending my congratulations to the Treasurer on his Financial Statement for 1956-1957. It is a very illuminating document, filled with facts, figures and appreciations of the financial and economic position in Queensland. It also refers to other parts of Australia.

With the exception of two out of the last 18 years the Queensland Labour Government have balanced their Budget. That is a very fine record considering the niggardly treatment by the Federal Government. Queensland has great undeveloped resources. It has a partly developed food production potential. It has the capacity to carry a greatly increased population, estimated by the Premier on his return from overseas to be something like 3,000,000. In all the circumstances, the deficit of £1,723,438 is not very large. Why, in 1931-1932 there was a deficit of £2,075,180.

All the States except Tasmania showed a deficit, two of them much larger than Queensland. The New South Wales deficit was as high as £6,826,433. For the same period the Federal Government had a surplus of £61,000,000 or four times the aggregate deficits of the States. In the circumstances the Treasurer is justified in making the following comment:—

“An analysis of the financial figures of the Commonwealth and the States strongly suggests that the unsatisfactory and difficult financial position of the States is due to the disproportionate allocation of income tax receipts between the respective Governments.”

Queensland's allocation of the total loan programme of £190,000,000 for 1955 was £19,250,000, when £21,655,000 was required. At the Loan Council meeting in June last Queensland submitted a gross loan works programme of £31,600,000, considered absolutely essential by the Queensland Government for the development of their big national undertakings if Queensland is to go ahead, and if this part of Australia is to assume its responsibility in carrying a greatly increased population. Queensland's allocation of the £190,000,000 was £19,250,000. The Treasurer is deserving of congratulation on the methods he has adopted to carry out the programme for the expenditure of £33,681,882. The funds are being supplemented from various sources. In that way the Treasurer will be able to cushion what otherwise would be the very adverse effect of niggardly treatment by the Federal Government. There is urgent necessity to overhaul the Commonwealth-States financial relationships. We have been told by the premier, and the Treasurer, that the Queensland Government are quite prepared to attend any conference that might be convened by the Federal Government to this end. Few people realise that the Commonwealth has received a progressively increasing portion of the revenue from customs and excise—from 25 per cent. to 95 per cent. between the inception of Federation and in the present time. Queensland's net revenue from customs and excise duty prior to Federation was equivalent to £2 17s. 1d. per head of population and we received £1 14s. 1d. per head of population in 1955-1956. Customs and excise duties comprised 35 per cent. of the State's revenue in 1900 whereas State assistance from the Commonwealth is now equivalent to only 2 per cent. of the State's revenue. Queensland has great natural resources awaiting development and we must have additional loan money to carry out our great worthwhile undertakings. Some are in the course of construction, others are nearing completion.

Mr. Brown: Many are of a national character.

Mr. FORDE: As my friend the hon. member for Buranda reminds me, many are of a national character. They give employment and increase food production thus enabling us to feed Australia's rapidly growing population and increase our exports.

The Budget has had very favourable comment from all sections of the Press, and no severe criticism from the Opposition. The Federal Government were not quite as successful. The author of the Little Horror Budget and the more recent big brother Horror Budget aroused the ire and the very articulate criticism of the Hon. Wilfred Kent Hughes, Minister for the Interior in the Menzies-Fadden Government from 1951 to 1955.

After hearing the Budget delivered by the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Kent Hughes had this to say—

“The Budget maintained and aggravated most of the pressures causing inflation; approved policies the Government was not prepared to carry out; failed to tackle loans expenditure, and fix priorities for public works; contained an unrealistic defence programme; said nothing and did nothing about the national transport chaos; perpetuated increases in departmental staffs, and overlapping of Federal and State functions.”

He said it “ignored the reality of Federal and State financial problems.” Continuing, he said that the pattern for the Budget was set when the Prime Minister introduced the Little Budget in March, but the Budget did not live up to expectations. He said also that the public were tired of indecision and makeshift policy and that Australia today had almost an economic civil war on her hands through the Government's dilatoriness in tackling inflation. He added—

“I hope the Government will review its financial measures and amend them.”

Naturally great prominence was given to his criticism. He is a distinguished lawyer and a Rhodes Scholar from Victoria who distinguished himself in the academic world. For years he was a Minister in the Liberal Government in Victoria and later in one of the coalition governments in that State. For many years he has been a member of the Federal Parliament and for some years a Minister of the Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. Walsh: And chairman of the Olympic Games Committee.

Mr. FORDE: Yes.

I heard the hon. member for Fassifern say that he and the Treasurer used to play football; I can quite understand their keen interest in the Olympic Games. When the Federal Government wanted to ensure that the Olympic Games would be an outstanding success, whom did they ask to accept the chairmanship of the Committee? None other

than the Hon. Wilfred Kent Hughes, M.H.R., a very outstanding member of their Government.

His criticism is that of a very competent man, an outstanding organiser who has pledged that the Olympic Games will be an outstanding success. Is it any wonder that the Federal Government, deserving such criticism, failed to give leadership at the recent Premiers' Conference? They failed to formulate a plan to release Australia from the grip of the wild inflation that the Menzies-Fadden Government said in 1949 they would deal with when the Chifley Government were defeated. They were going to put value back into the £1 but the £1, worth 20s. then, is worth only 6s. today. It is no wonder that the hon. member for Coorparoo, when speaking on the Financial Statement a few days ago, had something to say about it. He is always interesting to listen to; he has the habit of making some fine admissions. He said on this occasion, “The crime at the moment is that we have no national plan to deal with inflation.” In other words, he was saying that the Federal Government had failed to formulate such a plan, and that they had failed to give leadership to the Premiers of Australia at the recent Premiers' Conference in Canberra. Consequently, the Premier was justified in his criticism on his return from Canberra when he said—

“The Commonwealth Government with plenty of time for preparation went into the anti-inflation conference with its guns half-cocked. The Commonwealth Government were not sincere in their efforts to halt inflation. The Commonwealth Government's sole concern seemed to be to suspend quarterly wage adjustments.”

It seems quite clear that if the Commonwealth had been really serious in their desire to achieve the objective of the Conference they should have tried to formulate a comprehensive plan to deal with inflation. That is just what the hon. member for Coorparoo had in mind when he said that the crime at the moment is that we have no national plan to deal with inflation. Who came into office to formulate a national plan to deal with inflation? The present Federal Liberal-Country Party combination. They said that they had a panacea for the financial malaise of Australia in 1949. The Commonwealth Government's argument, of course, is that wages have the main influence on inflation, but the Premier of Queensland rightly pointed out at the Conference that from June, 1953, to March, 1956, there was no increase in the basic wage in South Australia although from September, 1953, to June, 1956, there had been a 7.37 per cent. increase in prices excluding rent in Adelaide and that in Queensland whilst there had been a 5.06 per cent. increase in wages and there was only a 7.41 per cent. rise in prices excluding rent in that period. It is no wonder that not only Labour Premiers but Tory newspapers took the Federal Government to task for not

having any plan to put before the people. In an issue of "The Courier-Mail" one special writer said—

"A big quota of the blame for the failure of the Conference goes to the Commonwealth Government, under two separate headings.

"The Federal Government made the blunder of approaching last week's conference in the spirit of an overlord summoning his vassals to receive their marching orders. It made the further blunder of supposing that when such large economic issues were opened for discussion it could limit the proceedings of the Commonwealth to the narrow question of whether State Governments should or should not allow State fixed wages to vary quarterly with the cost of living.

"The Federal Government made the further secondary mistake of a want of frankness with the Premiers and with the Australian people."

It is obvious that much of the trouble confronting all the States today is due to unbridled inflation, which the Commonwealth Government have not checked. If they did, they would have to interfere with the huge profits being made by the great profiteering corporations of Australia. Although Mr. Menzies promised some years ago to introduce legislation to prevent excessive profits, so far he has failed to do so. That is because the profiteering vampires in the various States have control of the Liberal machine and can dominate the Federal Government. They are allowed, free and untrammelled, to continue with their profiteering.

The very fine Financial Statement presented by the Treasurer discloses that there were some heavy calls upon the public purse during the last financial year, and that there will be again this year. That is revealed particularly in the section on health services, than which there is nothing more important to any community. Even the hon. member for Fassifern, when speaking on the Bill that we were considering earlier, said that he thought a local hospital was of prime importance to the people, to be followed by a local fire brigade. Whether it is the Brisbane General Hospital or any other public hospital in Queensland, it is financed from public revenue. Hospitals and social services this year will cost the Government over £10,000,000, and I hope the day will never come when they are obliged to charge for services in public hospitals at ward standards. In Julia Creek, Richmond and Hughenden, all in my electorate, there are up-to-date and properly equipped hospitals; all controlled medically by doctors with high qualifications. Two of them went through the Queensland University on scholarships granted by the Department of Health and Home Affairs, and in return they signed an undertaking to serve for seven years in any

part of Queensland where the Director-General of Health considered that their services were wanted. They are doing a splendid job.

Since I have represented Flinders in this Parliament, the Government have been very generous in supplying funds for the purchase of equipment for hospitals in my electorate. I refer, for example, to humidicribs, which can save the lives of premature babies. In addition to repairs at Richmond and Julia Creek, they have also undertaken to provide up to £286,000 for a new hospital at Hughenden to replace the old buildings, which have become riddled with white ants. It is expected that in the coming year the new building and equipment will be officially opened by the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, who laid the foundation stone last year.

Dental clinics are another very fine institution. Hughenden has an excellent young dentist, who was trained by the Department of Health and Home Affairs on his undertaking to serve wherever required; he is giving a first-class service. I believe he has all the work he can cope with, especially as he gives a week in every two months to Richmond, some 86 miles away.

Those amenities are essential if we are to induce people to live in far-flung parts.

Another important concession given by the Queensland Labour Government is the liberal subsidy to the Flying Doctor Service, with bases at Charters Towers and Cloncurry. It gives outstanding service to people on cattle and sheep stations, many of whom might otherwise lose their lives. Those people are more valuable to the State than immigrants who have to be assimilated into our communities and who have some difficulty in settling down.

There are six metropolitan dental clinics and 47 others throughout Queensland.

Hon. members know what the Government have done in establishing the Queensland Radium Institute and what they have done about mental health. There is still not enough accommodation for the mentally ill and the large sum now being spent on a big mental hospital at Charters Towers will make a further important contribution.

This financial year £11,000,000 will be spent on education. That is amply justified as it is being invested to provide the education and mould the character of boys and girls who will become the men and women of tomorrow. Hon. members could count on the fingers of their hands the number of scholarships given by Queensland Tory Governments to the children of working people. They were highly competitive. It is a different story under Labour. In 1949, 6,400 scholarships were awarded, in 1952, 9,700 and in 1956 over 15,500. I compliment the Government on the training of teachers. In 1952 there were 344 cadets in the Teachers Training College and in 1955 there were 967.

I have already paid tribute to the State's liberal education policy. This financial year expenditure on education will exceed £11,000,000. Over £10,000,000 will be spent by the Department of Health and Home Affairs on social services, including hospitals. Thus £21,000,000 is accounted for by two non-revenue producing departments. To carry out Labour's humane policy of assisting the sick and afflicted and to provide a generous scholarship system for children from poor homes huge expenditure is absolutely inevitable.

If I were asked to mention one other item of expenditure that has won great praise for the Government I would refer to electrical development. Since the scheme was originated, the Government have spent £78,000,000. I remember that when the hon. W. Forgan Smith introduced the legislation he painted a promising picture of the electrification of the whole of the State. Since 1946 the Government have paid £5,000,000 in subsidies. They have been greatly appreciated by shire councils who run their own local electrical authorities. I should like to see some of them taken over as soon as possible by regional electricity boards. I have in mind particularly the Hughenden local electrical supply. With 485 ratepayers the Hughenden Town Council is finding it extremely difficult to maintain such amenities as the up-to-date swimming pool which cost £53,000, one-third of which was given as a grant by the Queensland Government. The direct-current system in Hughenden is being converted to alternating current. Because of the high cost, capitalisation charges and rates are very high. The Hughenden Town Council wants to convert to an up-to-date alternating current system, to be taken over by the regional electricity board. I know the Treasurer's difficulties in meeting all such requests but I hope the matter will be kept in mind.

I should like to have seen the Federal Government build a national defence road from Charters Towers to Mt. Isa. It would enable motorists to drive down to the coast. One of the disabilities associated with life in distant parts of the State is remoteness from the sea. Many children see the sea for the first time when they are brought to Townsville from the West by organisations such as the C.W.A.

There is a growing percentage of people out there who own motor-cars, but for four or five months of the year they cannot be used outside those areas because the roads are absolutely impassable. This was put up to the Federal Government some years ago but they turned it down on the ground that it was not necessary for the defence of Australia. The Chifley Government had the Alice Springs-Darwin Road built with the assistance of the Queensland Labour Government. The late Sir John Kemp occupied the high position of Deputy Director of the Civil Construction Corps which built roads from Alice Springs to Darwin,

from Brisbane up through Kingaroy to Emerald and on to Charters Towers. I think that the national defence road from Charters Towers to Mt. Isa is long overdue.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Davidson, the Postmaster-General, said it was not required for defence purposes.

Mr. FORDE: As my friend, the hon. member for Carpentaria said, Mr. Davidson, who was in the military and is now Postmaster General, said that it was not required for defence purposes. Of course the excuse is that it is not necessary for defence purposes, but many other undertakings were carried out from defence funds. Such a huge expenditure would be involved that the work should be carried out by the Federal Government. It would probably cost £10,000 a mile. The State Government have already built a great deal of the road, most of which has been declared a main road. Figures supplied to me by the Minister for Transport show that from 1950 to 1955 over £200,000 was spent on the road from Charters Towers to Mt. Isa, including £150,000 on permanent construction. At the present time a number of other projects are being carried out between Charters Towers and Pentland and the first section is nearing completion. The Federal Government should find the funds to build a national defence road to Cooktown. The claim that the road to Mt. Isa would not be justified from a defence point of view cannot apply to a road along the coast to Cooktown. These are matters that I hope our friends in the Federal sphere will take into consideration.

I wish briefly to mention housing, a burning question in country electorates. At Hughenden there are 72 people waiting for homes. I know that the Railway Department have built more homes in Hughenden, I think 27, than in any other part of Queensland. In order to speed up construction and overcome the difficulty of getting tradesmen I have advocated that a contract should be let for the building of some of the homes. The Queensland Housing Commission has let a contract for an additional 11 homes in Hughenden. That will give some relief. To date 18 homes have been constructed.

I want to deal with the pastoral industry in Flinders. I have obtained from the Government Statistician stock figures for the Flinders electorate for 1956. For Hughenden and Flinders shires they are 115,858 cattle, 929,485 sheep and 4,527 horses, an increase of 6,600 cattle and 122,000 sheep since 1955. The figures for the Richmond area are 50,163 cattle, 745,588 sheep and 2,190 horses, an increase of 5,600 cattle and 100,000 sheep since 1955. The McKinlay Shire extends over a large portion of the Flinders electorate. The figures are 102,793 cattle, 809,520 sheep and 3,548 horses, an increase of 84,000 sheep and a decrease of 3,400 head of cattle since 1955. For the three country shires sheep numbers increased by 306,000 and cattle by 8,800 since 1955. The totals for the four shires are

268,814 cattle and 2,484,593 sheep. Those figures indicate the great importance of the Flinders electorate in the pastoral industry. I hope it will not be long before the industrial trouble that has caused a good deal of anxiety to people throughout the electorate is settled. In my opinion the cuts that caused the dispute should not have been made.

The Labour Party for many years has supported conciliation and arbitration. The wool dispute is now going to be heard again and I hope settled by the Industrial Court granting a higher rate. I hope a satisfactory decision will be made on the basis of comparison with awards in other parts of Australia, so that the grievances and complaints that may exist will be removed. The Donovan Federal award rate in New South Wales was £6 18s. 6d. a hundred as from 3 March 1956. The State award rate was £7 9s. 6d. a hundred. The New South Wales graziers settled the dispute by agreeing to the latter rate. If that formula was applied here, the rate would be increased from £7 1s. 6d. to £7 12s. 6d. If the margin of 3s. 7d. that Queensland shearers have enjoyed for the last 36 years over shearers in other parts of Australia, a margin determined by the late President of the Queensland Industrial Court, Mr. Justice McCawley, and accepted by the Federal Court at the time, was added to £7 9s. 6d. the rate would be £7 13s. 1d. a hundred. I understand the A. W. U. Branch Secretary, Mr. Bukowski, as spokesman for the shearers was prepared to settle at £7 13s. 3d. I am told that graziers in the Flinders electorate are paying shed hands up to £3 a week over the award rate in order to get labour. The graziers are paying £8 and £9 a hundred to shearers whereas the award rate is £7 1s. 6d. The A.W.U. has lodged 1200 Contracts in the Industrial Court showing that the graziers agreed to pay £7 16s. 3d. per hundred or better. Queensland shearers, who have gone down to New South Wales have been paid £8 per 100, plus free tucker, which costs £6 to £7 per week and still there are some people who would oppose the payment of £7 13s. 3d. per 100 as an interim award. Shearers and graziers in normal times, are very good friends and get on well together. There are scores of people who have built their homes and live in country towns such as Hughenden, Richmond and Julia Creek where they are bringing up good Australian families. It came as a bolt from the blue when they found that they were going to get a cut of 10 per cent. in their rates, particularly at a time when other workers in the community were getting increased rates of pay. I feel sure that the Court erred in bringing about the reduction. I discussed this matter with many Graziers; and they were very surprised that the shearing rate, and the rate for shed hands and cooks were reduced 10 per cent. The 10 per cent. reduction in the shearing rate meant a reduction of 15s. 3d. a hundred for the shearers;

the 10 per cent. cut in the wages of shed hands meant a £1 16s. 10d. a week reduction, and the cut to pressers represented a reduction of £2 2s. 11d. a week; to cooks up to four men, £2 15s. 1d. a week, and for cooks for over four men a reduction of £2 17s. 3d. a week. These cuts were made at a time when other workers were getting increases which is a point we must not overlook.

This dispute will soon be settled and we will be glad to see the end of it. No doubt it has caused a good deal of bitterness in many parts of Queensland. It has to be borne in mind that these men have been earning their livelihood in the industry since their boyhood. After leaving school there is virtually no other occupation for them to follow, in the west except Railway work, and they go to the shearing sheds as pickers' up and shed hands and many of them learn the art of shearing. They are localised in country towns. No finer body of men exists in Australia.

I want to say something further about the great pastoral industry, particularly the meat industry and what might be done to build up our herds and produce more beef. A great railway project that should be undertaken is the building of the Dajarra-Camooweal link, and from a study of the cattle industry I am satisfied that the Queensland Government have played their part in advocating the building of the line from Dajarra to Camooweal. The trouble is that the Commonwealth Government will not do their share. A letter was sent to the Commonwealth Government on 5 March, 1953, just about the time when the hon. member for Coorparoo said that the Commonwealth Government were not spending any money on any single national project in Queensland. More than a year elapsed before there was a reply to that letter from the Commonwealth Government and then it was said that the proposal was being examined. In other words, the proposal was being pigeonholed. The Government of this State indicated their willingness to contribute to the undertaking—

(a) £200,000 being the cost of additional crossing stations, and facilities necessary on existing lines, in Queensland for the operation of the extension;

(b) Three-quarters of the estimated cost of the provision and maintenance of rolling stock;

(c) The proposed share to be borne by the Queensland Government would result estimated operational losses of £158,000 a year on the above basis.

Therefore it will be seen that Queensland was not asking for something in which it was not prepared to assist to bring to fruition. The State Government believed that the direct and indirect increase in national assets and income warranted the construction of the railway as a national undertaking. The building of the line would mean that more cattle would be brought into the area. The

Minister for Transport, in reply to my communication after my election, said that at least another 160,000 head of additional cattle could be marketed from that area if the railway was built. Consequently, Queensland approached the Federal Government. What did the Federal Government say? Did they say "Yes" as they did to the construction of the aluminium works at Bell Bay, the building of the Leigh Creek railway, on which they have already spent some £10,000,000, the Snowy Mountain hydro-electric scheme, on which they have spent some £60,000,000, and the water conservation scheme in Western Australia, for which they have made provision for the expenditure of £400,000? They soon demonstrated that they would have nothing to do with this great national project for the opening up of the North-west to make it possible for cattlemen to get their cattle to market.

In reply to a question at the time, the Minister for Transport said that as at March, 1953, the estimated cost of the line was—

£

- | | |
|--|------------|
| (1) Dajarra-Camooweal, using Australian material | 4,680,000 |
| (2) Camooweal-Newcastle Waters, using Australian material .. | 10,546,000 |
| (3) Cost of additional rolling stock | 2,300,000 |

This big undertaking is one in which the Premier has taken a very active interest. On 7 April, 1954, he made a statement in Parliament deploring the apathy and indifference of the Federal Government to it. Inter alia, he said—

"Current Press reports would indicate that the influence of the Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, is likely to induce the Commonwealth Government to embark on an air beef plan."

He went on to say that such a plan was not supported by a large body of competent opinion in this State.

The Federal Government have not made any definite reply to this Government's representations. Apparently the matter has been pigeon-holed. We must remember that whilst Australia's population is steadily increasing, the world's population is increasing at the rate of 30,000,000 a year. We must produce more food, and particularly more meat. By their policy over the years, the Labour Government have shown that they stand for increasing the food production of Queensland, as well as establishing more secondary industries. Since 1946 the number of factories in Queensland has increased from 2,800 to 5,284, and the number of employees from 64,000 to 100,000.

Meat production and land uses are subjects of the greatest importance in a country such as Australia because of the rapid increase in our population. We are one of the favoured nations of the world and we should greatly increase our food production. At present, Australians consume about 80 per cent. of

their meat production, which has not increased, or even become stabilised, over a long period of years. The continued increase in our population will not only absorb the present exportable surplus of beef but will cause a shortage of local supplies in the foreseeable future, unless prompt action is taken to increase production. I have some figures showing conclusively that unless something is done in the very near future, Australia will face a serious shortage of meat. It has been estimated by the Government Statistician that if we have a population of 20,000,000 in Australia, we will have to kill 7,400,000 head of cattle a year. We could not at present supply enough meat to feed 20,000,000. It is estimated also that each additional 1,000,000 people will require an extra 100,000 tons of meat annually. As it has been forecast that our population will reach 10,000,000 by the end of 1957, the increase in meat production will need to be considerable. The periodical droughts in the North-West over the years have resulted in mass starvation of stock and the Government are to be congratulated on the steps taken to encourage the conservation of fodder. On this subject there has been close co-operation between the Department of Agriculture and Stock and the Department of Public Lands. Mr. Collings of Colwell Station near McKinlay, who is known to me, stores native pastures by means of automatic pick-up balers and supporting machinery and his haystacks contain some 17,000 bales of fodder. He has been developing the enterprise for many years. Mr. J. T. Kelman and A. K. Kelman of Dundee had 1,100 acres cultivated in 1955 and they store some 6,000 tons of ensilage. Mr. McClymont of Winchester near Muttaborra, too, has been carrying on fodder conservation with great success. He has 21 silage pits holding 153 tons each. Mr. L. J. A. Walker's property, 60 miles south of Richmond, is another. Messrs. R. D. and E. S. Lord, 45 miles south of Maxwellton had a crop of 225 acres of sweet sorghum in 1955. Messrs. W. H. and N. E. Anning of Blairmore Station, 50 miles south of Richmond, had over 3,000 tons stored in 1955. A similar story may be told of many other graziers in Central and South-Western Queensland.

Two very fine reports are available on what is necessary to increase beef production. One is the Report of the Royal Commission on Abattoirs published in 1945, presided over by Mr. E. F. E. Sunners. There is also the Bergin Bureau Report of 1947. I think Sir John Kemp was chairman and the members were—Mr. Arthur Bell, Mr. W. Nimmo, Commissioner for Irrigation, Mr. J. J. Bergin of the Department of Public Lands, and Dr. Somerville of the Department of Agriculture and stock. They were over two years on the job and they had technical officers doing field work. The whole investigation was focussed by the Abattoirs Commission's Report and the Bureau supervised much of the detail work. The Royal

Commission on Abattoirs and Meatworks made the following comment on page 29 of their report:—

"The breeding of cattle in the channel country, especially without rail communication, must always be a hazardous undertaking . . . So many adverse features may arise, so much uncertainty always exists, that unless a new policy, a new objective is set for its transformation . . . the far-west of Queensland, the inland of Australia, will always remain in its present inanimate state . . . But how revolutionary would be the change if railway communication existed, so that bullocks and speyed cows from North Queensland, and from the Northern Territory, could be brought into the channel country in fresh condition, depastured there, and in the same season taken out again in prime condition."

The Commission recommended the building of a railway line from Camooweal to Bourke with three railway links in Queensland connecting up the north-western railway, from Dajarra, the central railway system, from Yarakka, and the south-western railway, from Quilpie. Commenting on this proposition they said—

"The far-western route would be a line which would definitely benefit the Commonwealth. Its influence upon Northern Territory development alone assures this. And it confers advantages on all the southern States, as well as on Queensland . . . With the three railway systems in Queensland linked with the main line, cattle could be trucked to any part of the State, and fattened in the channel country. And when fat they could be transported away to any chosen centre."

The following comment appears on page 43 of the report:—

"From the foregoing reviews of the cattle-producing areas of the State, and from that section of the report which deals with the transport and handling of live-stock, it will be seen that opportunities exist on a large scale for increasing and improving the production of beef cattle. The number of fat cattle which could be turned off annually under full development is estimated at a figure approaching 2,400,000 head."

People who understand the Channel Country estimate that it would fatten 600,000 head of cattle in the best year, that is after a big flood when all the channels are inundated. Of course, there are times when the flood is small and there are dangers associated with it. That is why the men who invest their money in the beef industry are very chary about it. Much greater use could be made of the Channel Country if it were serviced by

a railway and abattoirs within a reasonable distance. The approximate areas of the flooded country in big flood would be—

	acres
Cooper's Creek	3,300,000
Diamantina River (with an estimated carrying capacity of 600,000)	3,000,000
Georgina River	1,800,000

There is quite a small fall in the water-courses, about 8 inches in a mile. In some cases it takes many months for the floodwaters to go down after they leave the head of the river.

In the opinion of the statistician, to supply the requirements of 20,000,000 people on present standards in Australia, and still maintain exports of beef and veal at today's level, it would require the slaughter of approximately 7,063,500 head of cattle a year. Let us hope that we will always be able to supply Australia's growing population and also be able to supply an increasing tonnage of beef to the less-favoured nations of the world. This whole world is increasing its population at a rate of over 30,000,000 a year. They must be fed. If they are not fed revolutions will follow, with further hardship and starvation.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LOW (Coorooora) (2.48 p.m.): At the outset let me say that I think the hon. member for Flinders has just made possibly his worst contribution to a debate in this Chamber. He continually attacked the Commonwealth Government. That seems to be his hymn of hate since he left the Federal arena. Although he plays politics with the Menzies-Fadden Government at the present time in his activities as State member for Flinders, he should be ever grateful to the present Commonwealth Government that when they were elected in 1949 they did not interfere with his cushy job of High Commissioner to Canada.

Mr. Walsh: That is cheap.

Mr. LOW: No. It has been the case. When an ex-Prime Minister comes into the Chamber he should be the last to criticise the Menzies-Fadden Government. They respected his representation in Canada and therefore he in turn should respect the present Commonwealth Government in office. We cannot allow this sort of thing to go on from time to time without showing some indignation. If hon. members on the Government side would only set a better standard I am sure we would set a better standard on this side. The Treasurer had the unfortunate experience of not being able to deliver his Budget on the day set down. It was delivered by the Premier; since then the Treasurer has returned after his attack of Urti and is now defending his figures.

Mr. Walsh: I have not had a say yet.

Mr. LOW: The hon. gentleman will later on.

Mr. Walsh: I hope to.

Mr. LOW: The hon. gentleman has already said certain things in the Budget and he will have another say.

I was absolutely staggered at the record deficit in the Railway Department for the year 1955-1956. Taking into consideration the loss on general working expenses and the amount transferred from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Trust Fund and the loss in interest on the railway debt we have the colossal figure of £6,131,132 lost on the working of the railways.

Mr. Walsh: That is not strictly correct.

Mr. LOW: I have got it here.

Mr. Walsh: Distinguish between working expenses and other charges.

Mr. LOW: Interest on loans associated with the working of the railways and railway expenditure amounted to £33,065,445, receipts amounted to £30,404,083 and the loss was £2,661,362. To that sum must be added £2,900,491 interest on reduced capital indebtedness and £564,904 expended from Post-war Reconstruction and Development Trust Fund on railway maintenance normally charged to consolidated revenue. You get the figure of £6,131,132.

Mr. Walsh: That is not on the working expenses.

Mr. LOW: It has to be accounted for. The Government failed in their responsibility to the people in as much as they delayed in raising freights and fares for so long on account of the election that they had to make their increases so severe and steep that they have had a detrimental effect on the people generally and the customers of the department.

Mr. Walsh: According to you, we should raise them again this year.

Mr. LOW: I am not suggesting such a course. The Government have a clear duty to the people, to consider the railway finances but when they were showing a serious deterioration early this calendar year the matter was held over on account of the election. The Government were afraid of the effect it would have on the elections if they dealt with it in January. It is nine months late and there has been a serious deterioration.

Mr. Walsh: We are glad to have your approval of the increases.

Mr. LOW: As far as the increases in freights and fares are concerned, if there was a little more care given to efficiency in the department rather than to increased freights and fares that might not be a bad idea either.

Mr. Davies: Do you say that they are inefficient?

Mr. LOW: I am not making any excuses. There are drones in the department and there are a lot of decent fellows in it who are prepared to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. This article appeared in the "Courier-Mail" on 3 October, 1956—

"The State Government's financial position for the first three months of the 1956-1957 financial year has deteriorated £1,593,085 compared with the same three months last year.

"This is mainly due to a slump in railways finances, despite the increase in fares and freights.

"The wool dispute has been a major contributing factor."

That statement emanated from the Treasurer.

Mr. Walsh: That indicates that I give you a lot of information.

Mr. LOW: I appreciate that.

In "The Telegraph" of 8 October, 1956, the Premier is reported as saying—

"The serious effect of the shearing dispute was shown by the fact that the Government's financial position for the first three months of 1956-1957 was more than £1,500,000 in the red compared with last year."

That is brought about mainly by railway losses. The Treasurer should be concerned about the drift in Government finance. The Budget does not make any provision for future cost increases. Railway finances will have to be given further serious consideration. A continuation of this drift in finance will without a doubt send this State bankrupt. I think the Treasurer agrees.

Mr. Walsh: You are expressing your own opinion.

Mr. LOW: The rot has set in and the political ship will soon hit the rocks, bringing in its train financial disaster. The losses in the Railway Department have been greater because very little, if any, wool has been transported during the last six or 12 months. The prospects for the future are gloomy. Wool is one of the most profitable freights handled by the department, and the Government should do everything possible to secure that freight business again. It is the rock on which the Government are going to perish if they do not take speedy action.

The Queensland Government should join with the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria in taking legal action to secure the return of taxing powers—the sovereign right of any State.

Mr. Walsh: Why should we have to go to court, when the Federal Government could return the powers by introducing a Bill in the House of Representatives?

Mr. LOW: I think the Queensland Government should take similar action. The Premier stated this morning that the Government were prepared to take taxing powers

back on a just and equitable basis. If the Commonwealth Government are to be the taxing authority and the Queensland Government merely a rubber stamp, we will be giving away our sovereign rights. I urge the Government to take action in this regard because a Government without taxing powers is not a Government of the people. If a Government have responsibilities in the spending of money they should have the responsibility of raising it.

Mr. Walsh: You realise, of course, that the case before the court does not determine that position; it determines the Commonwealth's prior right to levy income tax.

Mr. LOW: I understand that the Sovereign rights of the States are superior to the rights of the Commonwealth as laid down in the Constitution.

Mr. Walsh: The High Court has said otherwise.

Mr. LOW: There is justification for getting our taxing powers back. If the States had their taxing powers it would end for all time the attacks by one Government upon another about insufficient money to carry out developmental work. I hope the Treasurer and the Premier will go into this question thoroughly with the object of taking more positive action. The Leader of the Opposition has indicated his attitude to this vital question on many occasions, both in and out of this Chamber.

When the Premier and other representatives of Queensland go to meet the Premiers and representatives of the other States and the Commonwealth Government there always appears to be some misunderstanding or dissatisfaction as a result of the deliberations of the Loan Council. The Premier and the Treasurer have failed in their missions to the Loan Council from time to time and I suggest to them that they take the Leader of the Opposition with them to assist in Loan Council discussions.

Mr. Walsh: We have already two Liberal Premiers there now. They are just as loud in their condemnation of the Commonwealth as the Labour Premiers.

Mr. LOW: I think that the Leader of the Opposition should go with the Queensland representatives to help in the negotiations with the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer. It would be for the good of Queensland as a whole.

Seeing that the Premier and the Treasurer are in the Chamber I should like to know why Queensland does not make application for a grant to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. On page 16 of his Financial Statement the Treasurer said—

“To date Queensland has refrained from applying for a grant although its conditions are, in many ways, similar to those of the claimant States.”

If it would be the means of Queensland getting additional money, I cannot see any good reason why a case should not be put up to the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Mr. Gair: I recommend that you read the reports of the Premiers' Conferences. You will see them in the Library. You will be able to read what I said.

Mr. LOW: I am pleased that the Premier has made application to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. We should be Queenslanders in this matter.

Mr. Davies: You will admit we are not getting a fair share?

Mr. LOW: No. I want to go into the matter more thoroughly.

Mr. Gair: You have been here long enough to have gone into it thoroughly.

Mr. LOW: The Premier and the Treasurer have more vital information in their possession than I have on these matters. Both the Premier and the Treasurer can rest assured that they will get just treatment if they can prove beyond doubt that Queensland is not getting a fair deal.

The Premier agreed to raise £210,000,000 in loan moneys for distribution but the Commonwealth Government said, “No. We will go only as far as £190,000,000, and we will examine the position later on.”

Mr. Walsh: That was a unanimous decision.

Mr. LOW: That is so, but if it is not in the tin how can you get it out?

Mr. Walsh: Who said it was not in the tin?

Mr. LOW: I do not think it is. Most of it is raised by public subscription. If the appeals are not successful, it may not be possible to raise even £190,000,000.

Mr. Gair: The Commonwealth Government are spending their surplus revenue on capital works, thus avoiding the payment of interest.

Mr. LOW: They are the tax collectors, and therefore they have the first say. If the Queensland Government can get back their taxation powers, they can plan and carry out all these big schemes without difficulty.

Mr. Walsh: Out of approximately £1,000,000,000 collected by the Commonwealth Government in taxation, Queensland gets only £37,000,000.

Mr. LOW: And in the past some of that money has been tucked away by the State Treasurer in various funds for a rainy day. Of course, I am not blaming the Government for doing that as long as they eventually spend the money on sound schemes.

On page 17 of the Financial Statement the Treasurer says—

“It is suggested with all the emphasis at my command that the time is overdue for a complete revision of the Commonwealth and State financial relations with a view to a more equitable distribution of available funds between the Commonwealth and the States as a whole and among the States.”

Mr. Graham: Is that not true?

Mr. LOW: I go further and say that there is an urgent need for a review of Commonwealth-State financial relations, and local authorities should also be included.

Mr. Gair: We have moved to have local authorities represented at the Loan Council.

Mr. LOW: That is so, but it was not approved.

I read with great interest the deliberations of Loan Council meetings, as I regard it as necessary to ensure that Queensland gets a fair deal. Irrespective of what party is elected to the Commonwealth Government, we should see that Queensland gets a fair deal.

Under the heading of “Electrical Development”, the Treasurer has this to say in his Financial Statement—

“Subsidies paid by the Government for electrical development during the year 1955-56, amounted to £1.4 million, making a total of £5 million since 1946. It is estimated that a further £1,825,000 will be required during 1956-57.”

The following article appeared in “The Sunday Mail” of 7 October—

“Kingaroy.—Government subsidies to regional electricity boards had meant lower tariffs and greater development, the Mines Minister (Mr. Devries) said here yesterday.

He officially opened a new £22,000 office block built for the Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Electricity Board.

Mr. Devries complimented the contractor, Mr. L. G. Smith, of Wondai.

He said the State Government had so far contributed £550,000 towards electrical development in the Wide Bay-Burnett region in subsidies.”

The subsidy in some parts of Queensland is between 33½ per cent. and 65 per cent. I appeal again to the Treasurer to introduce a subsidy on a consumer basis into the franchise area of the Southern Electric Authority such as is operating in northern New South Wales. Rural dwellers in northern New South Wales are supplied with electricity generated by the Southern Electric Authority at the Brisbane power station. In 1954 I received a comprehensive report from the New South Wales Government which said—

“As a result of large increases in costs since the Scheme was introduced in 1946, the limit has now been increased to £400 per consumer. This limit represents the

extent of the capital cost on which subsidy will be based. On the £400 limit the actual subsidy over 10 years will be £206 5s., or a little over 50 per cent. of the capital cost. The Government’s decision to increase the limit from £250 to £400 represents an increase in actual subsidy for the consumer of 66.6 per cent.”

For the Southern Electric Authority area in Queensland, which embraces 10,000 sq. miles from Gympie to Coolangatta on the New South Wales border, I appeal to the Treasurer and the Government to adopt the New South Wales electrification consumer subsidy scheme to put the rural dwellers there on an equal footing with country people in northern New South Wales who receive electricity from the same public authority. As this has been submitted to the Government on many occasions before, I think the people in South-East Queensland would have a very good case for testing the validity of the Government’s action in withholding the subsidy in the Southern Electric Authority area while subsidies of up to 65 per cent. have been granted for schemes for the extension of power lines into other rural areas. I say that advisedly because I think any subsidy, which is referred to as a bounty, should be spread equally among the people of the State. I do not wish it to be thought that I do not agree with the Government subsidy of 65 per cent. in Western Queensland or in any other regional board area but I protest emphatically at the harsh and unfair treatment meted out to the rural dweller in the Southern Electric Authority area and I ask that the matter be further examined.

Mr. Walsh: You will reach the stage where subsidies might disappear altogether.

Mr. LOW: I do not think the Government would withdraw subsidies on such important amenities. If they did they would do a great wrong to the people.

Mr. Walsh: It was never intended that that should continue.

Mr. LOW: The subsidies are being extended. After all, the State Government have a responsibility to the people as well as to themselves.

Mr. Walsh: The arrangement in the first place was for only five years.

Mr. LOW: It has been said that subsidies are being made available in regional board areas and in other areas controlled by local authorities to take electricity into rural areas where it would otherwise be too expensive for the landholder to take advantage of it. The Southern Electric Authority has indicated that it would welcome the introduction of the scheme into South-Eastern Queensland. How can the Treasurer justify subsidies in other parts of Queensland and deprive people in South-Eastern Queensland of the subsidy? It would allow many areas to have electricity.

Mr. Walsh: Does the Brisbane City Council get any subsidy?

Mr. LOW: Not on electricity supply extensions. I have letters here to back me up. On 20 March, 1956, the Southern Electric Authority submitted a proposal under a guarantee system to the people of the Traveston district, in my electorate. The first letter is addressed to Messrs. A. & M. Raabe, Traveston, and this is what they were asked to do—

“For the first two years £165 per annum; during the second two years £181 10s., and in the third two years, £198.”

What a tremendous amount they ask as a guarantee from farmers who are doing their best in a rural area! The next letter is addressed to Mr. H. S. Francis, Traveston, and the guarantee form enclosed reads—

“I hereby guarantee the undermentioned minimum payments per annum for a period of six years for the supply of electrical energy in the Traveston area.

“During the first two years £220 per annum.

“During the second two years £242 per annum.

“During the third two years £264 per annum.”

That is only for supply. There is still the huge additional expense in wiring homes and outhouses.

Mr. Walsh: Many people would buy a motor-car if they could afford it.

Mr. LOW: Yes. It would appear that we are advantageously situated with the Southern Electric Authority in south-eastern Queensland, but it shows how the farming community are being deprived of electricity by being asked to give such outrageous guarantees. There are areas which I believe would qualify for a subsidy so that the people would be able to enjoy an electricity supply and all its benefits. Therefore, I hope that the Treasurer will give this matter further consideration.

Mr. Walsh: I am not here to make decisions on departmental policy—Government policy, ultimately.

Mr. LOW: I am surprised that there has not been greater representation from hon. members on the Government side. The hon. member for Somerset is involved.

Mr. Walsh: He has done a good job in his electorate.

Mr. LOW: He is not game to ask for this, apparently. If he were doing justice to the people he represents he would be making a very strong plea, as I am doing. I am doing it in good faith; there are no politics in it. If we do not get results I am going to organise every hon. member in the Southern Electric Authority area with a view to stronger representation to overcome the problem.

Mr. Walsh: It will not make any difference.

Mr. LOW: Now let me again deal with State finances. If the Government got part of the additional £20,000,000 loan it would make a difference. I think quite a lot of supplementary grant will be available. The Treasurer may even balance the Budget after a stiff fight. If he cannot, maybe I will show him how.

Mr. Walsh: What £20,000,000?

Mr. LOW: The £20,000,000 is the difference between the £190,000,000 and the £210,000,000 that the State Premiers agreed would be the fair loan allocation.

Mr. Walsh: Queensland should get the £20,000,000?

Mr. LOW: No, a fair proportion. If the loans are a success I am sure the Commonwealth Government will be only too pleased to increase the amount from £190,000,000 to £210,000,000. When all is said and done, the Commonwealth Government are carrying the loan. They are really the underwriters. If the loan fails the Commonwealth makes up the difference from revenue.

Mr. Walsh: The State pays its share into the sinking fund.

Mr. LOW: There is need for all-round co-operation. There is the possibility that the Treasurer will have much more money at the end of the financial year than he has disclosed at the present time. If things brighten up as far as loan raisings are concerned, this State will get an extra grant the same as we got during the last three years.

Mr. Walsh: Nothing of the sort!

Mr. LOW: The Statement has indicated anything from £2,000,000, £3,000,000, £4,000,000 or £5,000,000.

Mr. Walsh: That already has been decided upon. The hon. member is talking about something in addition.

Mr. LOW: The hon. gentleman will get more money than he has counted on.

Mr. Walsh: A great proportion is going back to the Commonwealth in interest charges.

Mr. LOW: I shall have something to say about that later on. I shall talk about this matter until we get fair and just treatment in the area in which the Southern Electric Authority supplies electricity.

I have spoken on many occasions about the destruction of groundsel and I am glad of the good progress that has been made.

Mr. Walsh: It came from your shire.

Mr. LOW: We prevented the spread of groundsel from the southern part of the State so that it could not infest the Bundaberg area. The Maroochy Shire led the people in the attack on groundsel, which was thought to be hopeless at one time. As a result of the co-operation of local authorities between the New South Wales border and Bundaberg and the inland areas, the results in the fight against groundsel have been gratifying. The Maroochy Shire was the first area to be thickly infested with groundsel in Queensland. With the co-operation of landholders and co-ordinating board we are getting the task well under way. We propose to attack the groundsel from three different quarters. It is proposed to blitz the groundsel from the air and the water as well as on the land. It has been discovered that groundsel grows extensively on the banks of the river streams and the islands in the rivers between New South Wales and Maryborough. It can only be effectively attacked by the use of hormones used in a power spray operated from a river craft. As a result of negotiations with the Co-ordinating Board and the Maroochy Shire, a suitable craft is being purchased and in future the banks of the river streams will be blitzed from it. I hope other local authorities will continue that work. It has been found necessary to extend the war from the air to destroy large areas of infestation in the coastal Wallum country and some hillside and rocky gullies between Caloundra and Tin Can Bay. We could go as far south as Coolangatta. The aerial spraying that we hope will be commenced next month in the Coolum-Maroochy River area will be under the control of the hon. member for Barambah who owns a number of aeroplanes and has been successfully carrying out aerial spraying in the brigalow country. He has a contract in addition for aerial baiting. He has been carrying out experiments in conjunction with the Co-ordinating Board in the Nanango area for the destruction of Noogoora burr.

He has come to an arrangement with the Co-ordinating Board and the Maroochy Shire Council to start next month and a suitable airstrip is being prepared. The spraying will be of 5-acre blocks approximately 20 chains long by 2 chains wide. The blocks will have to be at least one mile from cultivated land and the spraying carried out in the early hours of the morning just after daybreak, before the wind springs up. I hope this new method of destruction will be successful as it could mean the return to production of 10,000 to 20,000 acres of land between Coolangatta and Tin Can Bay and possibly other land as far as Maryborough. The infestation in that area is so bad that a man can barely crawl through the growth. It is a seed bed for the spread of groundsel.

Mr. Nicklin: There is a lot of groundsel around Brisbane.

Mr. LOW: Destruction has been commenced here, but the campaign has to be speeded up. Country people are making a special effort, but they are disappointed to see groundsel growing in and around Brisbane.

Although there has been a lot of co-operation by the Government in the destruction of groundsel on Crown land, there is need for greater effort by a number of departments that are not pulling their weight. I recently attended a local authority meeting at Landsborough. The Chairman of the Caboolture Shire Council drew our attention to the 1,802 acres of Crown land set aside at Burpengary for hospital purposes. It is badly infested with groundsel. The Co-ordinating Board has ruled that the Caboolture Shire Council is responsible for the cleaning up of all Crown land such as roads, reserves and other places in its area. The destruction on that area of 1,802 acres would cost in the vicinity of £1,000.

Mr. Nicholson: The taking over of the land was a wild-cat scheme.

Mr. LOW: Yes. I appeal to the Government to see that that land is cleared quickly because at the moment it is a groundsel seed bed.

Railway land is also affected. Although that department has made a very good effort on the northern stretches of the Brisbane-Gympie section, I noticed on Tuesday morning when travelling to Brisbane that there is a badly infested area of railway property near Zillmere. I hope it will be cleared quickly so that travellers will know the Government are co-operating in this task.

The war on groundsel has now been in operation for three or four years. It is being brought under control. If we continue the effort for another two or three years, the job of destruction will be almost completed. It will be necessary to continue the fight not only on land but from the water and the air.

I want again to refer to the Railway Department and to draw attention to a newly-erected railway residence situated in the station yard at Cooroy. I have a photograph of the house. I understand that the cost of the building was between £3,000 and £4,000. It looks as if it should not have cost more than £3,000 because it is a frail little structure. It was built for the assistant station master some 12 or 18 months ago but the rent demanded for it was £4 10s. a week. Despite the fact that it was erected over 12 months ago it has not been occupied. The reason is obvious. How can a working man afford to pay £4 10s. a week rent and maintain his wife and family? A number of people outside the railway service have inquired about the rent of the house but on hearing it they were not interested. Without doubt the Government are the greediest landlord in the State—if that is an example of what they do. I am sure the hon. member for Carpentaria will agree that no working man could afford to pay £4 10s. a

week for rent, and this house will be unoccupied for the next 10 years at that rent. The station master's residence at the corner of Diamond and Maple Streets is in a dilapidated and broken-down condition. Cooroy is a progressive country town with many new buildings. This broken-down dilapidated house is the laughing stock of the community. A new C.W.A. rest room is being opened nearby and I suggest that the Government do something with this broken-down house. I recommend to the Minister for Transport that the station master shift into the new building of which I spoke and that the old residence now occupied by him be pulled down. A portion of the land on which it stands could be sold for commercial purposes as it is in the main street of Cooroy, and the balance handed over to the Noosa Shire Council for a children's playground. The station master should be moved out of the dilapidated house into the new building.

And now a word about flood damage to local authority roads and bridges. The State Government offered to match any contribution by the Commonwealth Government to help local authorities repair roads and bridges damaged by floods, but when the Commonwealth Government refused any aid at all, the State Government withdrew their offer.

On 7 September, 1955, the North Coast Local Government Association passed the following resolution at Landsborough:—

"That, in view of the Premier's statement that his Government would subsidise to 50 per cent. any assistance given by the Federal Government, he be asked to grant such subsidy to local authorities on expenditure incurred."

If the Treasurer could make that 50 per cent. available to local authorities without the Commonwealth Government's coming into it, it would be greatly appreciated. Because of the Commonwealth Government's refusal to help, the local authorities have to bear the whole cost of repairing the roads and bridges damaged by floods.

Mr. Davies: Do you agree with the Commonwealth Government's refusal to help?

Mr. LOW: It is wrapped up in the grant of £500,000 to New South Wales. Notwithstanding that the Commonwealth Government refused to grant any help to Queensland, the State Government should not have refused to make available their 50 per cent.

Mr. Walsh: You are already getting a subsidy. Your attitude is unreasonable. The Commonwealth Government have given over £3,000,000 to New South Wales and £50,000 to Victoria and South Australia. Why not agitate to the Federal Government for some help?

Mr. LOW: It does not matter what was made available to the other States. Local authorities in Queensland are very disappointed that the State Government have not made available their 50 per cent. We were all very

disappointed that the Commonwealth Government would not contribute, but the State Government should have given us some help. We can expect similar disasters in the future, and it will be a sorry outlook for local authorities if they cannot get some help from the Commonwealth and State Governments.

Mr. Walsh: You get help from the State Government in subsidies.

Mr. Davies: A number of local authorities could not raise the money for which they were granted approval.

Mr. Walsh: Your local authority raised only 30 per cent.

Mr. LOW: That is not correct. I am not worried about subsidies for other purposes. The hon. member for Maryborough is not as conversant with subsidies and local authority procedure as I am. A man in daily touch with it can readily understand it. I admit that the Treasurer considers local authority requests seriously and grants many of them but I suggest this one has not been studied seriously enough.

Mr. Davies: Why could not your shire raise all the money that was approved?

Mr. LOW: We could raise it every time. The Treasurer must be fair, too. Ever since I have been associated with local government I have refrained from begging on his doorstep for Treasury loans. I am prepared to go out and work to raise debenture loans, leaving the Treasury loans for some less fortunate local authorities in, say, western and northern Queensland.

Mr. Walsh: I will make a note of that.

Mr. LOW: I ask the Treasurer to study this matter well.

Mr. Walsh: I am glad to hear you say you will not want any Treasury loans.

Mr. LOW: The Treasurer knows very well that he keeps those for hospital boards, fire brigade boards and the like.

Mr. Walsh: And western shires.

Mr. LOW: While on the subject of loans, let me say quite definitely that the State Government Insurance Office treats local authorities very well. I am being fair in saying that and I ask the Treasurer to be fair, too.

Mr. Walsh: Over £3,000,000 last year.

Mr. LOW: And it is appreciated by local authorities, too.

I say unhesitatingly that I believe local authorities should participate in the common pool of taxation. Taxation on land has to a great extent outlived its usefulness and for their work and responsibility local authorities in Queensland and the other States deserve a share in the common pool of taxation. I

hope that will be borne in mind by Queensland's representatives when State and Commonwealth financial relationships are reviewed.

In 1955-1956 fees collected from heavy-vehicle operators in Queensland under the Transport Facilities Act totalled £1,047,283. That money should be returned to the Department of Main Roads and the local authorities for the repair and maintenance of roads.

Mr. Walsh: Is not that where it goes?

Mr. LOW: No, it does not go there. I have traced it through. It goes into Consolidated Revenue and it stays there. The Treasurer does not give one penny of it to the Department of Main Roads. Last year he gave the department a small loan but not one penny this year.

Mr. Walsh: It all finds its way back by way of subsidies for roads and bridges and so on.

Mr. LOW: The matter would be placed beyond doubt if the money collected from heavy vehicle operators were transferred direct to the Department of Main Roads or to local authorities. Heavy vehicles crush and distort the foundations of roads and do by far the greatest damage, but the money collected from them is not being given to the constructing authorities for road construction and maintenance.

Mr. Walsh: What would be the basis of allocation?

Mr. LOW: I do not know. I have not worked that out; but if the Treasurer is considering the matter I will make a suggestion later on. It would not matter which constructing authority the money went to as long as it went to one of them. Indeed, I think a proportion should be diverted to each so that the roads might be put in order.

I suggest, too, that a large percentage of royalties on sand mining should be returned to the local authorities for road-making purposes and with those I bracket some of the royalties collected from timber sales. Royalties collected from those two sources would be fairly considerable.

Mr. Walsh: How long have we been collecting royalties from sand-mining?

Mr. LOW: Not very long, unfortunately.

Mr. Walsh: This is the first year.

Mr. LOW: Trucks carrying heavy loads of timber and sand have caused considerable damage to roads and therefore they should make some permanent contribution towards their upkeep.

Mr. Walsh: You mean that it should go to the local authorities between here and the South Coast?

Mr. LOW: As long as it went to somebody in the affected areas it would all help to

build up revenue. At the present time local authorities are expected to do the job but all they are getting out of it is experience.

Mr. Walsh: That is not quite right.

Mr. LOW: What do they get?

Mr. Walsh: Who finances the expenditure between here and the South Coast? The Main Roads Department finds the biggest proportion.

Mr. LOW: Yes, from ordinary vehicle registration fees. The poor old motorist today is carrying everybody—the heavy vehicle operator, the interstate hauler, and everybody else. He is also making a very fair contribution to Federal funds.

The Government should consider an increased allocation of Commonwealth road aid to local authorities in Queensland. In 1955-1956 the State received for main roads purposes £3,981,236 and an amount of £1,028,125 was distributed to local authorities, a total income for the State of £5,009,361. That is the amount the State Government in Queensland received from the Commonwealth out of the petrol fund last year.

Mr. Walsh: Where did that go?

Mr. LOW: The sum of £3,981,236 went on gazetted roads throughout the State and the £1,028,125 went to local authorities for spending on shire roads. A much larger amount should be made available to local authorities throughout the State and moneys collected under the State Transport Facilities Act should go directly to the Main Roads Department.

(Time expired.)

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (3.48 p.m.): It has been said time and time again that finance is the test of government. Even though the Treasurer showed a deficit of £1,723,438 during the last financial year, because of the difficulties associated with finance over the past 12 months it can be said that the Government have maintained their prestige equal to any Government that have ever successfully controlled and administered the State. It was remarkable to hear the hon. member for Cooroorra set himself up as an authority on the Financial Statement. It would have been better had he left the analysis to someone better fitted to do it. It is not my intention to delve into the whys and wherefores of finance. The document prepared by the Treasurer is clear, concise and should be accepted by every hon. member. It is significant that this is the third deficit in 18 years and we need not be ashamed of what we have done considering the financial difficulties of the past year. If Queensland had been the only State to show a deficit it might be suggested it was due to bad management, but all the States with the exception of Tasmania have had the same experience. Western Australia had a deficit of £1,830,000, New South Wales £6,826,000, Victoria over

£4,500,000 and South Australia £1,430,000. That makes one wonder why all the States are in this position. On the other hand the Commonwealth showed a surplus of £61,000,000 or four times the aggregate of the deficits of all the States. We have been accused by hon. members opposite of lambasting the Federal Government because of the financial set-up. Are we not justified in doing so? Are we not entitled to object to this set-up determined by the Commonwealth Government? We claim that the States are not receiving from the Commonwealth Government that share of the funds to which they are justly entitled. It was amusing to read in this morning's newspaper that the Prime Minister said he was quite prepared to hand back the taxing powers to the States but, he added, "We will do it on our own terms." Mr. Menzies is not likely to give back the goose that is laying golden eggs for the Commonwealth. Since he has had control of the finances the States have been brought to their knees. (Opposition interjections). It is remarkable to hear hon. members opposite attacking this Government about the finances. The hon. member for Coorparoo referred to the State as being stone motherless broke and suggested that this Government go to the Commonwealth and plead for a special grant. We have handled the finances of this State for virtually 40 years—since 1915. Why should we have to go to the Commonwealth on our bended knees and ask for something to which we are entitled? We are entitled to our full share of the funds collected by the Commonwealth. If we received it there would be no need to seek further finance.

Mr. Pizzey: You got what you were entitled to under the formula.

Mr. GRAHAM: What about the other States. Tasmania received a total of £70 9s. 9d. per capita for 1955-1956, Western Australia £56 18s., South Australia £54 8s. 5d., New South Wales £34 12s. 10d., Victoria £34 11s. 5d. and Queensland £32 1s. 7d. Can it reasonably be suggested that Queensland has less need for money than the other States? Can it be said that Queensland has less developmental projects in view or in course of construction?

Mr. Pizzey: Did you include semi-governmental authorities and local authorities?

Mr. GRAHAM: Regardless of how one looks at it, the Commonwealth hand-out finds Queensland at the bottom of the list. We are justified in attacking the Federal Government on their handling of the finances. If the Commonwealth Government were as cautious in handling their funds as they are in making grants to the States, a greater amount would have been available for distribution. If the States were as careless in the handling of their finances as the Commonwealth, the deficits would have been much greater. The Commonwealth Government have little regard for the requirements of

Queensland and the other States. Because of their extravagance they are being referred to as a spendthrift Government. That extravagance can be understood when it is realised that very few Cabinet Ministers remain long enough in Australia to run affairs efficiently. They are generally globetrotting. A tremendous amount of money is wasted on overseas trips.

Mr. Pizzey: For the advancement of Australia.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is tommyrot. They are even being castigated by members of their own party.

The hon. member for Coorooora said that the Prime Minister would be pleased to hand back taxing powers to the States. A statement by Mr. Menzies appeared in this morning's "Courier-Mail." He said his Government would return taxing powers "on a broad basis of agreement." In saying that, he knew full well that his broad basis of agreement would not be acceptable to the States. He said, "The interest of taxpayers must be considered".

Mr. Pizzey: Would you want the taxing powers handed back to the States on your terms?

Mr. GRAHAM: As a constitutional authority this Government should have some say in the matter.

Mr. Walsh: The conditions should be as they were prior to uniform taxation.

Mr. GRAHAM: Who could safeguard the interests of taxpayers better than the State Governments? Who could look after Queenslanders better than the Queensland Government? This Government have virtually 40 years' experience and are better able to look after Queenslanders than the present Federal Government.

Mr. Pizzey: What about the wool dispute?

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member is anxious to draw me into that argument.

The Government have earned the confidence of the people and they have been returned at election after election.

It was amusing to hear the prediction of the hon. member for Coorooora that this Government would be shipwrecked. It is more amusing because it comes from a member of a band of castaways whose political ship has been wrecked twice in the last 40 years, in 1915 and 1929. They will remain castaways in the political seas. Their numbers are getting fewer and fewer and it is only a matter of time before they suffer the fate of all castaways and die out. This Government ship will never be wrecked. I know that is the aim and hope of every Opposition member. They would stop at nothing to bring about the defeat of the Government. They proved that by their statements and actions during the last election. I shall

mention certain happenings in my electorate. While I took exception to those things, I was not really surprised. It is part and parcel of the Tory makeup that any propaganda is good propaganda provided the public fall for it. Fortunately for the people, they did not fall for it on this occasion—consequently the Government are here for another term of three years. Politics, like anything else, should be kept clean and above board. It does not bring credit on any member of a political party whether the Labour Party or Country Party or any other to attempt to gain prestige or support by questionable tactics. One appreciates the candidate who fights an election campaign on clean lines. I am glad that the hon. member for Whitsunday is in the Chamber because he is the one I am going to attack as the campaign director for the Mackay electorate and his own. I also mention the hon. member for Mirani.

An Opposition Member: A mighty man.

Mr. GRAHAM: I admit he is a man above the average in size. I am glad that the hon. member for Whitsunday is in the Chamber as I would not like to say anything about him behind his back. I am referring to publications in the Mackay "Mercury" and the statement as to whether it is a good thing to give money to m-u-g-s. He said that if he was going to hand his business over to somebody to look after he would not hand it over to a mug. No name was mentioned, of course. I do not think I am dense or without initiative but as the only member for Mackay I accepted the advertisement as referring to myself. I let the people of Mackay say whether I should be termed a mug or not. If the hon. member for Whitsunday would like to tell me that outside the Chamber and put the same venom into his remarks I would demonstrate in some other way with him. It is a pity that anyone has to resort to that sort of advertising to gain public support. I should say that I am no more a mug than the hon. member for Whitsunday or Mirani or the political rat they dug up to oppose me.

Mr. Morris: So that is where it started.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: I would rather be called a mug than a rat.

Mr. Morris: So you are the one who originated that.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member for Whitsunday can tell you that Mr. Tracy called himself a rat. He knew in his own mind that he was a rat. I am not going to talk about Mr. Tracy but about the hon. member for Whitsunday and the advertisements in the Mackay "Mercury". He made a number of statements, the majority of which were untrue. A campaign can be fought cleanly without resort to lying statements as published in the "Mercury". Some of the statements had a semblance of truth

about them. One wonders what the political field is coming to. Why should this sort of stuff come from hon. members who pride themselves on being honest, upright, decent, clean-living citizens?

Mr. V. E. Jones: Did you reply in the Mackay "Mercury"?

Mr. GRAHAM: I replied from the public platform. As the hon. member for Whitsunday would know it would be easier for me to get into the Bank of England than to have anything published in the "Mercury." The only people who can get publication in the "Mercury" are the hon. members for Whitsunday and Mirani. The hon. member for Mackay gets little or nothing because the paper does not support the Labour cause.

The next statement is that Labour has "talked of free hospitals." Is that true? The next one is that Labour "delayed the increase in the price of sugar." It goes on to say—

"It took Gair nine days to reply to the sugar organisations' presentation of a case for the increase and then, when forwarded to the Federal Government, endeavoured to have it delayed until he could personally present the case, after the elections, which could have cost the industry up to £2,000,000."

The hon. member for Whitsunday knew that was a lie when he published it. He knew that the Premier had approached the Federal Government for an increase in the price of sugar, and that on a previous occasion an increase had been granted without a personal approach from the Premier or any other member of the Queensland Cabinet. When the Premier sent the case to the Federal Government, he told the Prime Minister that if necessary the Queensland Government would fight it in the Court. There was no need for the Premier or the Treasurer, or any other member of the Cabinet, to go to Canberra to press for an increase in the price of sugar.

The next statement is "Neglected schools and free education." Is that not a lie? Have the Queensland Government neglected the schools and free education?

Opposition Members: Of course they have.

Mr. GRAHAM: They have not. It is easy to make these allegations, but very difficult to prove them. I could quite easily say that the hon. member for Isis was a rogue, but I may not be able to prove it.

Mr. Pizzey: They are only points of view.

Mr. GRAHAM: They are statements of fact made by a campaign director.

The next statement is "Deprived North Queensland of over £5,255,000 of their rightful and legal share of Main Roads moneys over the past eight years."

The next one is "Robbed the rest of Queensland of its rightful share of Queensland Housing Commission houses to the advantage of Brisbane."

The next one is "Hoarded £26.3 millions in kitty whilst depriving distressed farmers, local authorities, workers and others of financial aid when in distress as a result of an act of God."

The hon. member for Coorparoo rebuked the Government because of their low financial resources. In effect, he said they were stone motherless broke.

Mr. Pizzey: He said they would be.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so. What would have happened had the Government not had £26,000,000 in kitty? How could they have started major developmental projects in North Queensland without that money?

Mr. Chalk: What about the money you lost on the railways?

Mr. GRAHAM: Is Queensland the only State that is losing money on its railways?

Mr. Chalk: What about the Commonwealth railways?

Mr. GRAHAM: Where do they run? There is no comparison between the Queensland railways and the Commonwealth railways.

Because of the Government's careful husbanding of their finances, they were able to put money away for a rainy day and start developmental works that the Commonwealth Government have flatly refused to help.

Mr. Pizzey interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Interjections are in order, but I will not allow interruptions. I ask the hon. member for Isis to take heed of my call to order, otherwise I shall have to deal with him.

Mr. GRAHAM: I thank you for your protection, Mr. Clark, although I was doing very well without it. The truth hurts hon. members opposite. I am refuting the untruthful statements published by the hon. member for Whitsunday.

Mr. Morris: They must have got under your skin.

Mr. GRAHAM: Oh no; but I like clean politics, as does every other Government member. It is only when they cannot win with clean politics that the Opposition resort to subtle, lying propaganda to try to fool people into voting for them. I would rather be back where I came from than enter Parliament on the backs of a political party by telling untruths.

Mr. Morris: It riles you, apparently.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, it riles me that this sort of statement is published and nobody can attack the person responsible except in this Chamber.

Mr. Pizzey: The worst untruth is the accusation by Government members that the Federal Government are niggardly in their treatment of Queensland.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member need not take my word for it. If he has any sense let him read the Financial Statement; he will see in it a complete refutation of his remark.

Mr. Pizzey: I have read it.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Treasurer has given facts and figures showing that Queensland is not getting its rightful share of funds. If what he said about Commonwealth finance is wrong, why is the Victorian Premier, with the support of the Premier of New South Wales, taking a court action against the Commonwealth Government? If Queensland alone made the charges, it might be said that we were wrong.

Mr. Pizzey: They want their powers back.

Mr. GRAHAM: Why do they want their powers back? It is because of the unsatisfactory Commonwealth-States relationship. They are worse off now than they were before uniform taxation. That is the charge we make against the Federal Government. Although they are collecting huge sums in taxation they are handing out money to the States in such small amounts that they cannot carry on.

Mr. Pizzey: You just told me they have put a lot away in the last five years.

Mr. GRAHAM: How long ago was that? The hon. member knows perfectly well why that money was put away. In the war years we were unable to spend it; but today, when we can make good use of money for developmental works, we cannot get it. If the Treasurer's statements are untrue, why do not hon. members opposite refute them and show where they are wrong? They know that New South Wales and Victoria, too, are dissatisfied with the Commonwealth-States relationship and that New South Wales has taken matters a step further in an attempt to restore sanity so that it might control its own destiny.

Despite our difficulties in financing public works we are doing all right. We must be, and the people must be satisfied or they would not return us.

I was sidetracked from my attack upon the hon. member for Whitsunday so I shall return to it. At least he should try to be fair. He said—

"Hold-up of increase to sugar industry due to the Gair Government."

That is a lie. Ask any sugar man amongst the Opposition whether what the hon. member for Whitsunday said is true. A few days ago the hon. member tried to make capital out of a matter affecting the sugar industry when he more or less

demanding in the Chamber that the Government give consideration to the substitution of assigned land. I accuse him directly of chasing the limelight. He knows perfectly well that that is not acceptable to the sugar industry. He would not get one man in the sugar industry to support him. Let him show me where any member of the industry has put that argument to the Cane Prices Board!

Mr. Roberts: That is part of the platform and policy of the Country Party, and that was made by cane-growers throughout the State.

Mr. Walsh: That is not true.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member knows it is not true.

Mr. Walsh: Ask the hon. member for Isis what the representative for the Bundaberg growers said.

Mr. GRAHAM: Ask any member of the sugar industry in Mackay and you would have the answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member for Whitsunday raised these issues to bring a little limelight upon himself, knowing full well that he had a dead duck. All he gets is publicity.

As to petrol tax he said—

“Inflicted a surcharge of 5d. per gallon on every gallon of petrol used in Mackay and district.”

Mr. Roberts: You do not deny that?

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not deny the surcharge. What the hon. member cannot deny is that the people of Mackay got petrol 5d. a gallon cheaper than they would have been paying had the oil terminal not been erected there.

Mr. Pizzey: Who erected the terminal?

Mr. GRAHAM: Vacuum.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: They erected it there and got a concession from the Government for doing so.

Mr. Pizzey: What do you mean by concession?

Mr. GRAHAM: If they had not erected it the people would have been paying 5d. a gallon more. The hon. member for Whitsunday reminds me of the drunk who found half a bottle of rum. He complained because it was half empty while another fellow said, “It is half-full.”

Mr. Pizzey: What concession was granted?

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Mr. GRAHAM: I am not concerned about what concession the oil company got. All I know is that the people of Mackay got a concession and the Mackay Harbour Board has got increased revenue from the terminal.

Mr. Roberts interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: They get their petrol 6d. a gallon cheaper for three years. The hon. member was not prepared to take advantage of the invitation of the oil company to attend the opening.

Mr. Roberts: I was not in Mackay at the time.

Mr. GRAHAM: He saw to it he was out of Mackay. I want to speak now about something else.

An Opposition Member: Get onto wool.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not want to pull the wool over the hon. member's eyes. I will deal with something we all should be very concerned about. I am fortified in my opinion by what I have read by prominent men in regard to the future of Australia and Queensland. If the Queensland members of the Federal Government were as concerned about the future of this State as we are we would have heard from them in the Federal house.

Mr. Chalk: Get the wool shifted.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is all the hon. member can cry about. He would be down there to scab tomorrow if he got the chance. I am concerned about the future of the State. If we had the co-operation of the Menzies-Fadden Government, if they carried out their obligation to Queensland we would hear much more from them. I have yet to read of any statement by any member of the Liberal-Country Party group in the Federal House in defence of Queensland.

Mr. Pizzey: Tell us what the Chifley Government gave you.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not going into the past. I am dealing with the Menzies-Fadden Government. I am not going back to what the Chifley, Curtin or Lyons Government did. We are concerned about what the present Federal Government are doing just as the people of this State are concerned with what the Gair Government are doing. We are entitled to control this State. We are entitled to the co-operation of the Federal Government.

Mr. Sparkes: How can you make out a man is a scab if he agrees with your Premier and goes down to work?

Mr. GRAHAM: There are different interpretations. The hon. member for Aubigny's interpretation of a scab would be different to mine.

Mr. Chalk interjected.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have the right to my interpretation. (Opposition interjections.) I am not going to be sidetracked.

Mr. V. E. Jones: Didn't you scab on your leader?

Mr. GRAHAM: Do you say I scabbed because I expressed an opinion? No. That does not constitute a scab and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Chalk interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I draw the attention of the hon. member for Lockyer to Standing Order 123A. If the hon. member persists in interrupting I shall have to deal with him.

Mr. GRAHAM: Hon. members opposite know little or nothing of industrial organisation. All the scabs ever born have come out of the Liberal-Country Party organisations or have supported them. You do not find the honest Labour man going as a scab. Do not try to tell me the scab has a right as far as industry is concerned. We do not think so.

Certain statements have been made to indicate that unless we are careful we will soon have another depression. People say that it cannot happen. In "The Courier-Mail" of 20 June Sir Frank Richardson, President of the Australian Council of Retailers, said, "A nasty black cloud of unemployment could hang over Australia by November."

There is something in that statement because day after day we read reports of increasing unemployment in Australia, including Queensland.

Mr. Morris: When you speak about a man-made depression, are you referring to Mr. Joe Bukowski?

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member is entitled to his opinion.

Mr. Morris: I am asking you.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not referring to Mr. Bukowski, but that might be the opinion of the hon. member.

Mr. Morris: It is.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am quoting the report of a statement by Sir Frank Richardson, president of the Australian Council of Retailers.

The report continued:—

"In 'The Courier-Mail' of June 26th, Sir Frank Richardson, President of the Australian Council of Retailers, was reported to have said that a 'nasty black cloud of unemployment' could hang over Australia by November. As a result of credit squeeze we would walk into the worst man-made depression ever. 'We are moving into bad times,' he continued. 'We feel

the time has arrived when retailers will have to show more ingenuity to keep their businesses going.'"

The present financial position has been caused by the Federal Government. It is more difficult to obtain credit today than ever before, irrespective of the use to which the money will be put. The banks are gradually closing up their money bags.

Mr. Sparkes: If the wool is tied up how can you expect to get credit?

Mr. GRAHAM: All the Opposition can talk about is wool.

I have here the report of a statement made recently by Mr. Staniforth Ricketson. He claimed "that it was now too late to put financial curbs on the nation."

Sir Arthur Fadden, in introducing his Budget, said that we must expect to bear financial strain and that the spending of the people must be reduced. To do that he retained a high taxation rate so that the money would be taken out of circulation. That is contrary to other views.

Mr. Pizzev: Who are they?

Mr. GRAHAM: They have some standing in the community. I assume that Sir Frank Richardson is a man of importance; he has been knighted.

While the Menzies-Fadden Government are in power we can expect a gradual retarding of development throughout Australia.

Mr. W. Robinson, another man of importance, said in Melbourne recently that we need men of forward vision. I have here the report of his statement which appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 16 August last. It reads—

"You cannot have progress free of cost without some rise in prices, some inconvenience, some risks. The country has simply to choose whether it wants stability or progress."

The word "stability" is used frequently by Sir Arthur Fadden, but he has overlooked the fact that the important thing is progress rather than stability. Sir Arthur Fadden has stated time and time again that the Federal Government are taking steps to stabilise the economy of this country. I repeat Mr. W. S. Robinson's statement—

"The country has simply to choose whether it wants stability or progress. If it chooses stability it will stagnate."

That is what will happen in Australia if the Menzies Government remain in power. The restriction of development will certainly bring about stability, but it will also bring about stagnation. To progress the Government must have forward vision, must be prepared to take risks and carry out the public's desire for development.

The approach by the Commonwealth Government to development in Queensland is a story that has been told time and time again,

but it bears repeating. I refer particularly to developmental schemes undertaken by this Government in North Queensland. Recently we heard the hon. member for Clayfield give credit to this Government for their irrigation projects in North Queensland. I ask hon. members opposite who support the Menzies-Fadden Government what have that Government done to assist Queensland in its development? Having asked the question, I get no answer. The Federal Government have no regard for the future of this State; if they had they would be prepared to give Queensland the same measure of help as they gave the other States.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: If it were not for the help of the Menzies-Fadden Government in regard to tobacco, the Tinaroo Falls dam scheme would not be an economic success.

Mr. GRAHAM: It took the Federal Government 25 or 30 years to give any help to the tobacco-grower. They are tied up with the big Australian tobacco combines. If we had been dependent on the Menzies-Fadden Government for help in development, we would never have had the Tinaroo Falls dam scheme. The whole of the credit for that work goes to the Queensland Labour Party. It had the vision to put such schemes into operation for the progress of the State.

I am not unmindful of the necessity for State development but if we are to progress we must undertake the financial responsibility for it. However, must we go to the Federal Government cap in hand and on our bended knees, clamouring, pleading and begging for money that is rightly ours? How can we expect to progress? The Menzies-Fadden Government have done their damndest to stop progress not only in Queensland but in the other States. We recognise our responsibilities. That is why we have held the reins of government so long, that is why we have been the Government of Queensland for all these years. If we had failed the people they would have thrown us out but they have full and complete confidence in us. While hon. members opposite support the Federal Government, they will be, as one of their members said, the ship-wrecked party with a castaway crew that will surely die in the political sea. The Treasurer has made certain predictions in regard to the future of this State. Our experience as a Government will carry us through and Queensland will benefit from a continuance of our administration.

Mr. FLETCHER (Cunningham) (4.34 p.m.): This is a very valuable debate as it enables hon. members to get rid of repression and political tension. We have just witnessed one hon. member who did that to such effect that towards the end of his speech he even woke up one of the Government backbenchers who had been asleep through two previous speeches.

Mr. Walsh: You never see me asleep in the Chamber.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have never seen the Treasurer asleep, or even half asleep. As a matter of fact, he is far too wide awake.

This debate gives hon. members a chance to say what they think about matters that cannot be discussed in other debates. They can work the parish pump. That of course has some value, because out of the working of many parish pumps comes the political scene. It is a good thing that we have this chance to air our pet grievances or even, as so often happens on the Government side, to berate the Federal Government. That is the perfect right of Government members, and they engage in it to a very great extent.

Mr. Aikens: Do you not think they deserve berating?

Mr. FLETCHER: Sometimes, but they do not deserve as much as they get. The principle behind the constant berating is that if you say things often enough somebody will believe them. In any case, it is a good way to distract attention from your own shortcomings. Hon. members opposite would not think that their own Government had no shortcomings, any more than I think the Federal Government have none. I could suggest one of this Government's shortcomings, that is, its attitude towards the carting of wool by the railways.

I have a feeling of sympathy for the Treasurer. He has disclosed a rather unhappy financial position. In view of the remarks of hon. members generally, and especially the hon. member for Coorparoo, the position seems to be worse than the Treasurer has admitted. He is in the very unhappy position that for years he has been crying wolf. He has blamed the Federal Government for starving him of funds, although previously he has been rather well off, and on many occasions has been able to "sock" away a few millions for future use. That is a very wise thing to do and I commend him, but he should not have said that the Federal Government were starving him of funds. Having for years used all his superlatives about his financial starvation, he has reached the position where he is in real trouble and his superlatives have been all used up. From that point of view, he has my sympathy.

I shall proceed to mention a few matters that deserve a place in the political scheme of things in Queensland. When I mention them the Treasurer will probably say, "We haven't the money," or, "How will we get the money? What do you suggest I should defer to promote what you think is a good thing or give a higher priority to it?" That is something that perhaps I could not answer easily. However, if I can persuade him that what I suggest will help to get the railways running again, that would certainly save the Government a good deal of money.

To get my point of view registered and perhaps to persuade the Government that certain priorities should be recognised, there

are one or two things I should like to mention. One of them is education. I agree with the hon. members for Isis, Burdekin and Sherwood, and some Government members, that education, and particularly secondary education is a very important matter. We live in a scientific and technical age and our wealth is more a matter of education than anything else. Our strength lies not in mere numbers but in the number of those educated. It is not easy for country parents to give their children secondary education because there are no free institutions nearby. I realise it is not easy, or perhaps possible, to provide those facilities in as many places as the Minister would like to have them.

The Junior Farmer movement deserves the utmost encouragement. It is a very fine movement and I congratulate its founders. It began in 1947 with, I think, 40 clubs, under Mr. Williams and now it has 128 clubs under Mr. Park of the Department of Public Instruction. He is doing a splendid job and his work is very much appreciated, but he has not a large organisation or much help. Originally there were 15 zones with a zone council, but in 1954 the movement was reorganised and it is now controlled by a State council. Mr. Park needs help, if possible of his own calibre. It would not be easy to get but it is so important that every effort should be made to get it. Perhaps the salary and status of the organiser and his assistant would have to be raised but that would be worthwhile.

In New South Wales the parallel movement is much larger. The organiser is assisted by 22 men of the same type as he, most of them working in the field and attending club meetings. The budget expenditure each year is £50,000 as against about £5,000 in Queensland—quite a contrast.

Junior farmers go in for education and citizenship. They hold two or three leadership schools each year and organise trips out of the country and interstate for representatives. They send one lad to America each year and they exchange with other States and New Zealand. They also exchange information with other countries and disseminate it throughout the States.

Mr. Chalk: And much goodwill results.

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. I am very much impressed by the results of their ordinary club activities. Those who do not come into contact with Junior Farmers can have no conception of their improvement in poise and self-confidence. The boys and girls develop to a noticeable degree their capacity for self-expression. They are given special and valuable training to take their places as future citizens of the State in direct contrast to the traditionally inarticulate sons of the soil, of whom I suppose I should confess I am one.

Mr. Walsh: Do you not think their organisations would deteriorate if they had to rely too much on the Government for finance?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not suggesting that the Government should finance them. I am suggesting the Government should finance the enlargement of the organisation at the head—the supervising. According to the boys and girls themselves, and according to men and women who have acted as supervisors of the various branches, what they want more than anything else is expert organisers who can lecture, guide and counsel them and generally frame their activities. If they do not have that they lose their main value.

Mr. Walsh: Agricultural societies could do much in that regard.

Mr. FLETCHER: Perhaps they do. Mr. Park is a splendid type of man who is doing a great job. He needs to be duplicated half a dozen times. The return to the community by the increase in the standards of the boys and girls who join junior farmers' clubs makes the scheme worthwhile.

Mr. Walsh: There is no doubt it is doing valuable work. It is inculcating into the young people an interest in agriculture.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is my suggestion. Higher priority should be given to this educational programme. To some extent it would compensate the country dweller who so often cannot take advantage of secondary education. On a parliamentary income I am able to send my children to boarding-school—and you could not wish for finer institutions—but the small farmer cannot afford to do that. There are no technical colleges or free institutions to send their children to. This is the age when Queensland wealth can be measured more by counting the number of educated brains than by any other method.

Mr. Walsh: The hon. member for Aubigny will not agree, but I think you will agree that Gatton College does a grand job.

Mr. FLETCHER: Of course it does. The Junior Farmers' organisation needs a boost. It probably needs to be divided into three zones. Queensland is a very large State and there is only one zone at the moment. There should be three zones, one in Brisbane, and one say, in Townsville and one in Rockhampton.

Mr. Walsh: Bundaberg is a good place, too.

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. Bundaberg is a good place and it would be a still better place if it had a Junior Farmers' Organisation to boost the standard.

I have said this many times before, but if I say it long enough somebody will believe me: the Department of Soil Erosion Control should receive higher priority. Soil erosion is an increasing problem but the organisation set up to deal with it is not increasing in the same proportion. I approve of the cautious note in the control of soil erosion in Queensland. When interfering with the

rights of free citizens of a free country—and it is still free—it is necessary to protect the rights, privileges and fundamental freedoms of men on the land. I claim that for every section of the community. At the same time under certain circumstances some compulsion is justifiable and even necessary to control soil erosion. No man has any right to destroy anything that is never really his. Even freehold land is only his for the term of his natural life. He has nothing more than the use of the land within his lifetime and therefore he must not damage it or destroy it. Soil erosion control should rate a much higher priority in the expenditure of public money than it is getting. It is only something to protect a basic necessity. I refer to the fact that in all sections of the community it is acknowledged that the thing we all lean on more than anything else is the soil of the State; our living and our international income all come from it. Generally speaking, this is something that we cannot afford to put off.

Mr. Walsh: It is pretty hard to follow hon. members on that side. On the one hand you talk about a reduction in expenditure and then you proceed to outline plans, the carrying out of which would cost huge sums of money. (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. FLETCHER: I could pay for all the things I put up in regard to soil erosion with the money that the Government have lost in two months by refusing to carry wool on the railways. Soil erosion is a matter that the Government, through the Department of Agriculture and Stock, must take an interest in. It is not often possible for one owner to carry out a complete programme because the problem overlaps from one property to another; it is generally part of a larger problem. It can only be controlled in larger areas. I like the Minister's amendment of the Local Government Act which helps my point of view in regard to soil erosion.

Mr. Walsh: All you want to do is get over that bank.

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. I shall get over the bank in time. We need trained educators and organisers—men trained in the particular type of work necessary for soil erosion. Such an officer has to be an engineer who knows a bit about soil, crops, farming generally and many things. They are doing a good job in collaborating with the farmers who are becoming more and more soil-conscious. The general community is better and better served by the men collaborating with the soil erosion department.

Mr. Devries: We could do with a few more students from the university.

Mr. FLETCHER: Perhaps we could. The matter of soil erosion is one that is as important to the man in Queen Street as it is to me or any other man in the back-blocks. We are all interested in the preservation of the soil. Many farmers are

to blame more or less, and perhaps some are being criminally negligent; but the best attitude is to cajole them, to educate them and get them to co-operate. That is happening, but not often enough. We have not enough men trained in this work. The men we have are first rate; I have complimented the Minister on their work before. If only we had twice or three times as many we could cope with the problem or catch up with it a little more than we are. The increase in the growth of the problem is disquieting. We have just had unseasonal rains with a great deal of runoff and the damage has been calamitous—and I use that word advisedly. There has been tremendous damage on the Darling Downs. It was so extensive that the soil erosion men as well as the landholders were shocked. Those officers have to admit that the work they have done on the Downs is not more than half of one per cent. of what is required. That is a shocking state of affairs. This year saw a sudden upsurge in the rate of erosion, and the result of the floods will be felt for many years and will cause increasing disquiet to men engaged on this work.

Mr. Pizzey: We are not even holding our own.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so. In the area formerly owned by the Queensland British Food Corporation the problem is very grave. So quickly does soil erosion follow the breaking up of natural pastures and the removal of trees that it should be necessary to undertake soil protection work when land is broken up for agriculture.

Mr. Walsh: You will agree that a great deal of responsibility rests on the landholders.

Mr. FLETCHER: Of course it does, but in many instances those men are not in a position to do more than battle for a living. Perhaps the things they do regretfully are done in the name of providing the necessities for their wives and children and meeting their bank overdrafts.

Mr. Walsh: For example, some of the farmers in the Warwick area were sowing their wheat up and down the slopes.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is a shocking state of affairs. The soil erosion officer would certainly advise them not to do that, but in all probability those farmers have never seen a soil erosion officer, as there are very few in the department. I am sure the farmers would be glad of their advice and would carry out their recommendations. I hope some priority can be given to the enlarging of this department. There are other priorities I could suggest, but I may be permitted to speak on those things during the Estimates or at some other time. I shall use the time available to me to mention one or two matters that may not be appropriate to other debates.

The first matter was mentioned recently by way of interjection from this side of the Chamber. I cannot remember the exact words.

but it related to the spending of money in particular electorates. It was a reference to the system of political patronage of which we have heard during the years.

Mr. Walsh: If you raise that matter, I should be inclined to say that there may be too much money spent in Country Party electorates.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is the opinion of the Treasurer and I am not going to say he is wrong.

Mr. Walsh: I have no doubt I could produce figures to indicate that Main Roads expenditure is very high in electorates represented by opponents of Labour. We do not argue about that. The money is spent where we think it should be spent.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am happy to hear that, because it is my opinion too. I do not say that too much money is spent in opposition electorates. I admit we get a fair crack of the whip, and I have said so previously. That is not my point. This is raised during every election campaign, and it came up again in my electorate. It is a feeling throughout the community and it was suggested openly that votes should be cast for a Labour candidate because he would be a member of the Government Party and more money would be spent in the electorate, that if a Labour candidate was not returned the same amount of money would not be spent.

Mr. Walsh: If a Labour candidate is returned, there will be better representation.

Mr. FLETCHER: The people would not get better representation and that is not the claim. The claim is that more money will be spent in the electorate. The suggestion is, "Vote for me and I will get more money for the electorate." It is plainly a political statement made for personal gain. I condemned that suggestion whenever I heard it. I said, "I do not believe it happens very often. I do not know of my own knowledge that it has happened." The point is that people think it happens and, that being so, it is just as effective a political weapon as if it did happen.

Mr. Walsh: Many Opposition members go round the country stating that they are pretty friendly with the Minister.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have stated my reaction.

I complimented the Premier on his statement a few years ago that he would not condone it under any circumstances. I compliment him on that. It is all over the place, and all through my election campaign it was cropping up. Fellows even said to me, "I would be a mug to vote for you; if I vote for the other bloke we will get more money spent up here." I said that it was not true, and that there might be some people who thought it was true. I said that there were few if any departmental heads who would be

willing to do that sort of thing; that it might have happened but I did not think it happened very often, if at all.

Mr. Wood: Your candidates, both Liberal and Country Party, made the claim, "Vote for us and we will get you this and that."

Mr. FLETCHER: I am talking about what happened in my election campaign.

Mr. Walsh: There are plenty of roads in your electorate. Dairy farmers cannot even feed their cows on the roads.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not growling about the treatment meted out to my shire but I am growling about this system that has got round. The worst feature is that our children are being educated to expect it as the natural thing politically in Queensland. It is a rotten system. There is nothing too bad to say about it. When I was at Millmerran I was taken to task by the hon. member for North Toowoomba who reproached me bitterly for suggesting that it could happen. He said, with a tremble in his voice and a hurt expression, that this could not possibly happen. The hon. member could not wait until I replied and gave my point of view after the meeting. After the meeting the main supporter of his friend, the candidate, came up to me and I said to him, "What do you think about Mr. Wood's point of view?" He laughed and said, "He could not openly admit it but you cannot kid me it does not go on. What happened in the next electorate?" I said, "Which electorate?" and he said, "Condamine. Look what happened—no money and then a lot of money."

Mr. Wood: Did I, in your campaign, ever hold out a promise to your people that if you were defeated Labour would spend more money in your electorate?"

Mr. FLETCHER: Not once, but the hon. member reproached me for suggesting that sort of propaganda was used. The hon. member said that no Labour man would do that sort of thing. I was invited to listen to the statement made by the hon. member for Condamine. I did and it seemed to suggest that he was suggesting that if the people voted for Labour in his particular area they would get more money spent on them. Mind you, Mr. Turner, I could be mistaken. He might not have intended that, but his remarks sounded like that.

Mr. Walsh: Better representation by a Labour member.

Mr. FLETCHER: It sounded like—and these figures are only hypothetical—"You have had £300,000 for roads and £200,000 for schools, and if you want to keep the money rolling in then vote for Diplock." Of course, Mr. Turner, I might be doing the hon. member an injustice. He might have been speaking of his persuasive skill. If one gets the impression that these things happen it is just as bad as if they did happen.

I read in the Press a report by the Premier concerning the general trend of the election and in referring to the electorates of Somerset and Condamine he said that his party was expecting to keep them because it had two good members who were hard workers and Labour was pouring money into the electorates. That created a very unfortunate impression in my mind. Later on the Deputy Premier went to Dalby to support the hon. member for Condamine and he said, *inter alia*—

“If the constituents of this electorate do not return Mr. Diplock and, by so doing, refuse to accept Labour’s policy, could it be expected that a Labour Government would spend money in this electorate?”

Mr. Walsh: He was merely asking a question.

Mr. FLETCHER: A very logical and reasonable inference can be drawn from it. Could I be blamed for thinking that it was being used as an instrument against us? Do hon. members opposite think that is fair? Do they not think it is the most rotten thing that could permeate a democratic community?

Mr. Walsh: I am surprised that you should waste your time on such trivial matters.

Mr. FLETCHER: This is not trivial. It is a principle. The gentleman whom the hon. member for North Toowoomba was supporting at Millmerran later had a meeting at Mt. Tyson. He did not have the hon. member for North Toowoomba with him, and one of my friends asked him to comment on this matter. He said, “We are men of the world. This sort of thing goes on. Of course you lean to your mates.” Can hon. members opposite blame me for being a bit worried? History, both modern and ancient, shows us that political rottenness of this kind is the cause of internal decay, which is the first thing that invites external danger. As the hon. member for Condamine is now a Minister of the Crown and, probably in the view of many mistaken men up there, is in a position to carry out what appeared to me to be his policy, I beg of him to state his position. I hope he will put beyond doubt where he stands.

Mr. Walsh: He will probably get a fairer balance between your electorate and his own.

Mr. FLETCHER: This is too important a matter to be glossed over, and I ask the hon. member for Condamine for an explanation.

A matter that is very much in our minds is the present wool dispute. I did not intend to speak on it until Tuesday night, when three members of the Government, who are also members of the Australian Workers’ Union, tried to convince us that the leaders of the Australian Workers’ Union are perfectly reasonable men and are right in what

they do. One of my colleagues suggested that they should have been dubbed the three musketeers.

Mr. Walsh: They were only exercising their right.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not suggesting that they did not have a perfect right to do it.

The leader of these three musketeers came in proudly, like D’Artagnan might have done, and started his defence in a very martial way. If he had not got his facts and his principles mixed, and if he had not turned round so blindly among his arguments and given us a good exhibition of a wool-blind wether, we should have been able to carry on the idea of his being a musketeer. He twisted his alleged political facts and drew conclusions that were obviously not good or honest. He drew the most illogical assumptions from them and silenced all interjections from this side by arrogantly saying, “You wouldn’t know!” He has no right to say that. We have rights as well as Government members. He also said, “You wouldn’t know one end of a sheep from another.” Does that give any hon. member the right to deny another hon. member an opportunity to express his opinion or to disagree? What does it matter if I have never seen a sheep? I have sheep and have wool for sale. Incidentally, I am financially embarrassed because it is not being sold. What does it matter whether I can shear sheep or baa like a Merino wether? I think we are entitled to a more reasonable and responsible attitude towards what is a very important question politically and economically. We are members of the most responsible body in Queensland, Parliament, and nobody has the right to bellow at us, “What do you know? You have never cut the pizzle off a sheep. You wouldn’t know!” Saying that sort of thing does not prove anything.

To claim that only a shearer is entitled to speak on the shearing dispute is silly. It would be just as illogical to argue that only a wheat-grower should be allowed to speak on a wheat Bill or that only a publican should be allowed to speak on the Liquor Act, or only a truck-driver on the Transport Act. Carried to its logical conclusion, the principle would disqualify nearly every Minister from exercising his reasonable discretion in his own portfolio simply because he did not mine or shear or grow wheat.

Mr. Walsh: Somebody had the hide today to say that Sir Arthur Fadden and I were the two best “shearers” in the Commonwealth.

Mr. FLETCHER: It would be just as reasonable to suggest that the Treasurer had to be a hen and lay eggs before he could express an opinion on a subsidy to poultry farmers.

Mr. Walsh: What I know about "shearing" I learnt from Sir Arthur Fadden.

Mr. FLETCHER: We are entitled to insist on logic, common sense and fair play and we are entitled to something better than we got from those three men.

The hon. member for Warrego paraded what he alleged were sound arguments to convince us. He said that in the first place it was very unfair of the court to reduce the rates by 10 per cent. because that was all that the U.G.A. asked for. What an argument! That shows that his standards and perhaps the union's standards are to ask for much more than they think reasonable, even as much as five times more, to get what they want. I think it is a tribute to the reasonableness and sense of justice of the U.G.A. that they asked only for what they thought they were entitled to.

The hon. member said he talked to many graziers and they all agreed that the 10 per cent. reduction was unfair.

Mr. Davis: That is right, too.

Mr. FLETCHER: Ye gods and little fishes! How can he expect us to believe that in the light of the history of the dispute? Think of all the trouble and expense the graziers have gone to to fight this thing and to have their wool carted, and all the other expense that they have incurred directly and indirectly! Does that show that they believe the 10 per cent. was unreasonable?

The hon. member said that the fact that 75 per cent. of the shearers in the district were shearing at the old rate showed that 75 per cent. of the graziers thought the reduction unreasonable. That is just not true. It is not true that 75 per cent. of the shearers are shearing at the old rate, and even if that were true it would not prove what he claims.

Mr. Davis: You know it is true and you cannot deny it.

Mr. FLETCHER: There are many reasons why men should shear at the old rate. After all, it is only a minimum rate. Sheep vary—some are burry and others are extra wrinkly. Perhaps the grazier has the same shearers year after year and is very friendly with them. Up till now most of my sheep have been shorn at above award rates. As a matter of principle it cannot be done now.

Mr. Power: You are a new-rater?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, I am a new-rater. Sometimes graziers are absolutely blackmailed into doing it. They have full-woolled sheep and along comes wet weather, flies and heat. They have no option. The sheep must be shorn even if it cost £10 a 100. They have to get the wool off.

Mr. Walsh: Don't you get your wool off.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not getting my wool off. "The Telegraph" said that some members of the A.W.U. were helping the shearers to pen up the sheep. Why were they not declared black? The hon. member for Warrego said it was a matter of principle because the A.W.U. was interested in the welfare of the State and the welfare of the industry and they were not going to pull them out. Is there any difference between the men who helped the shearing industry by putting sheep into a yard and the unfortunate storemen and packers who were persuaded to come out and the railmen who were persuaded to take action they are still taking? What is the difference in principle between those men and the A.W.U. men who drive sheep into a yard? If that is A.W.U. logic, God help us! The hon. member for Warrego agreed that he wanted the whole matter to go back to the court. Now he seems to think we should think he was a good fellow. He spoils the whole thing by saying, "And we won't agree to go back unless it is at the rate we think we are entitled to." What is the use of saying that he expects them to go back to the court and then say, "We will not take the decision of the court unless we are satisfied?" It is just a negation of the whole idea—one contradicts the other. If the court is of any use it has to be a court. If you go to the court surely you must accept what it says! He further complicated his argument—if it could be considered an argument—by saying in answer to an interjection that there was no strike on anyway. It is about time we faced up to facts instead of splitting straws, and by devious arguments proving that there is no strike. We must face the fact that the A.W.U. told men not to accept work, and they did just that—that is a strike. The hon. member said that it could not have been a strike because they had no signed contract. Again I say, why split straws? On his own argument a shed would cut out in three weeks and therefore that contract would be completed. If shearers are on strike there is not another shed and consequently no need for another set of contracts. It is purely a device and an insincere argument. If there is no strike then there is something which has all the appearances of a strike, and why do we not face up to it? To say there is no strike merely invests an argument with an aura of insincerity; you are merely kidding yourself, pulling your own leg. These men decided they would not shear for the new rates.

Mr. Walsh: Is it or is it not a fact that the award says that the shearers must sign an agreement before they start to shear?

Mr. FLETCHER: Of course, but if there is a strike on there is no signing of new contracts because shearers do not go to another shed. It is a different thing from a man working in a store for five years. In that case he terminates his employment but here you have men moving from one shed to another.

Mr. J. R. Taylor: They have just not gone out.

Mr. FLETCHER: It constitutes a strike without any doubt. The hon. member for Warrego also claimed that men who were shearing at new rates were actually paying more than they would under old rates, because of the use of unskilled shearers. It is true that they got unskilled shearers and they probably did run into trouble. They were fighting for the principle of arbitration and they were willing to pay more. If they gave more on this occasion it was worth it. That is what the hon. member should have been doing—sticking up for the principle of arbitration. I happen to know something about the shearing industry. My grandfather was a shearing union organiser. I know what his principles were. They decided, instead of having dog and goanna rules, it would be better to have an Industrial Court presided over by experts who would deal out a slice of the national cake to each section of the community. If they were not satisfied with it they would go to the court with their argument.

Mr. Walsh: If your grandfather was a union official how ever did you get mixed up with that bunch over there?

Mr. FLETCHER: This is where my grandfather would have been, with his principles. My grandfather and his men would have regarded as "scabs" the fellows who did not stick for arbitration—the men out in defiance of the Industrial Court. Some of the statements are a distortion of the facts and a deliberate attempt to cloud the issue and produce hard feelings among people who should be friends. These men are betraying the men who fought with my grandfather to establish arbitration. They should be on the side of arbitration but they are not. I pay tribute to the hon. member for Barcoo, who is the one Labour man who said, in regard to the 1929-1932 debacle and the government of the day that he did not blame them at all for what they had to do because they were compelled by the conditions which overwhelmed them. The hon. member is the first Labour man I am going to dip my lid to. The hon. member was fair enough and man enough and gentleman enough to pay a tribute to those gallant men who, in a world that was falling on their heads, did the best that they could under the most shocking conditions in the world depression.

Mr. Devries: You did not give Scullin any credit.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. gentleman did not hear me talk about Jim Scullin in disparaging terms. The hon. member for Barcoo gave us some figures in regard to wool. When the 10 per cent. prosperity loading was put on, wool was 141d. per lb. and when it was taken off it was 72d. There are figures that are hard to controvert. Surely they provided a case on which to go to the court. Surely they are complete justification for even more than 10 per cent. One does

not need to carry the argument any further. The last rise was a prosperity loading and it was understood when the price came down the rate came down too. It came down in nothing like the same proportion as wool did.

Mr. Walsh: Was 141d. the maximum or average?

Mr. FLETCHER: Average. One of the three musketeers said it was an injustice to this section when in every other section wages were going up. Even in the case of wool that is not true. It is not true of any primary industry. Every primary industry has been going down as far as prices are concerned and up as far as costs are concerned. Those three hon. members adopted the deplorable argument that if you are not a shearer you are not entitled to an opinion. They were getting on-side with the A.W.U. They got their arguments mixed and their principles mixed. They even got their scabs mixed, and that applies also to the hon. member for Mackay. If those hon. members look in the places where they shave tomorrow morning they might meet another scab. Who knows?

Mr. Pizzey: They heeded the whistle and got on side.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so. They came in like three musketeers and went out like three wool-blind wethers, rattling their political dags at us.

Mr. DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. I have great respect for the hon. member for Cunningham, but he has just said that we come in like three musketeers (which we are not—we are ordinary members of the Government Party) and went out like three fly-blown wethers rattling our political dags. Those remarks are offensive to me and I ask that they be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the the member for Cunningham to withdraw those remarks as they are offensive to the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. FLETCHER: I withdraw them. I am sorry. I realise I was a bit over the fence, but I was carried away by thought of the present shameful situation.

When this dispute started ten months ago Opposition members said, "This is an attack on arbitration. It is an attack on the Court." We were told by the Government spokesman and once or twice by the Premier, "There is no strike and we cannot do anything about it." In March the railway workers were drawn in. They refused to carry the wool and still the Government said there was no strike.

Mr. Walsh: Then in May there was an election and the Labour Party won it.

Mr. FLETCHER: The railway men defied their own Minister and dictated the policy of the Government. We said, "It is an attack on the court." "Oh, no," said Government members, "it is only the exercising of the God-given right to men to work if

they want to and not to work if they do not want to." The storemen and packers suffered because they thought it was a strike and stopped work. They suffered on strike pay while the industry employees were working. Still Government members said there was no strike. The culmination of the whole sorry business was the cancelling or deferring of the wool sale because of the refusal of certain men down here to handle the wool. At last the Government realised that there was a real calamity and in the name of arbitration they said that the A.W.U. was wrong. They said, "This is an attack on the Industrial Court and an attempt to break down the arbitration system." It took the Government nine months to discover that it was an attack on the Industrial Court. We support the Government in that attitude. I compliment the Government. After nine months of our telling them what this constituted they decided that this was a strike, that it was a calamity, and that the A.W.U. had to be put in its place. The A.W.U. is consistent. It has not changed its view. It was wrong, but it was consistent. It was trying to wreck the arbitration system. When it defied the court, the Communist element achieved something. When it was allowed to keep on defying the court, the Communist element achieved something else. When the storemen and packers were involved the Communist element in the A.W.U. and other unions made a further step forward. They achieved a splendid forward move when the wool sale was cancelled. The fact that the community was going to suffer gave them some satisfaction, but when they got the Gair Government to support them, they made the greatest step forward that they have made for years. The Government helped them along their road. The Government apologised for them and explained that there was no strike. In that way they were achieving their aim of fostering class hatred between grazier and grazier and between shearer and shearer, men who had worked very happily together throughout the years. It will take twenty years to again achieve the state of amity and good feeling that operated before this rotten thing was allowed to develop.

Up to a few weeks ago this Government were on side with the Communists. The Communist attitude is, "What does it matter? Misery, hatred, distress and that sort of thing is all right and can be suffered for a while to achieve the ultimate purpose."

Mr. Walsh: Did you say that the Government were on the side with the Communists?

Mr. Fletcher: They were in that they did not do anything about it, and were apologising for them.

Mr. Walsh: I rise to a point of order. I understood the hon. member for Cunningham to say that the Government were on the side of the Comms.

Mr. Dewar: He said nothing of the sort.

Mr. Walsh: He said it. It is offensive to me and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member, if he did make the remark as mentioned by the Treasurer, that he withdraw it.

Mr. Fletcher: I did not say it and if I did I would withdraw it. There has been an attack on arbitration by the Communist-inspired element of unionists. If at the appropriate stage the Government had said, "We are the Government, this is our law and you should obey it" there would have been no calamity. They could have said, "If you don't like this particular part of the industrial law, marshal your arguments and get it changed, but whilst it is the law you have to obey it." That is what the Government should have done. On the other hand the Government told the men that there was no strike and they allowed the railway system to be used to help the union and by helping the union they were making the Treasurer's position financially worse than ever. I hope that this change of heart on the part of the Government will usher in a new era of more responsibility to our system of arbitration which should be supported and integrated with the Federal system. The Government have to face up to the matter of quarterly wage adjustments.

Mr. Walsh: It has nothing to do with the Government.

Mr. Fletcher: It has something to do with Labour policy.

Mr. Walsh: No. The court has never been directed on that at any stage.

Mr. Fletcher: It will have to be recognised that wages and salaries cannot rise and conditions improve without a corresponding rise in the cost of living. We cannot have that sort of thing both ways. We cannot have higher wages and salaries and expect prices to fall or remain static. I am appealing to the Government, seeing that there has been a change of heart, to be honest with themselves. The Premier was honest in his references to the three weeks' leave. The Government have to face facts. There are things that you can afford or cannot afford. The Government cannot keep on raising wages and improving conditions or providing other services and amenities without rising costs. Value is being robbed from the £1. The Government have let unions get away with a lot of things.

In conclusion I wish to quote a paragraph I found in an American magazine, as I think it is particularly appropriate that the Government have it in mind at the moment. It is a statement by Abraham Lincoln—

"You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred. You cannot build character and courage by taking away a

man's initiative and independence. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves."

I quote that as being appropriate to the unfortunate predicament the Government are having to face up to and the particular problems which at the moment are their lot in life.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (5.34 p.m.): I compliment the Treasurer on the presentation of such a splendid Financial Statement. It is a credit to his ability and foresight. Before dealing with any feature of it I wish to refer to the statements of hon. members opposite during the last election. Hon. members opposite have attacked the Government for not directing employees to return to work. On numerous occasions, however, the Menzies Government have been in the same position and their direction was of no avail against waterside workers, miners, and other classes of workers who did the same thing. The A.W.U. members could not be compelled to work for conditions and wages that did not suit them and for less than was previously enjoyed. You cannot force a man to work if he does not want to. The men decided that they did not want to work, and the unions have no more control over them than have hon. members opposite. If men are sacked, where will you get others to replace them? This Government have always pursued a policy of conciliation.

I was very interested to read, on page 17 of the Financial Statement, details of the Commonwealth Government's tax reimbursement grants per head of population. Queensland's allocation was the lowest at £32 1s. 7d. That figure, of course, includes loan moneys.

After setting out the per capita payments for each State the Treasurer goes on to say—

"Queensland, with 14.6 per cent. of the nation's population, contributed 20.2 per cent. of Australia's exports during 1954-1955. It cannot be disputed that this State offers considerable scope for development and that the expenditure of more funds in this State on developmental works would enable a greater contribution to Australia's exports as well as providing greater self-sufficiency within Australia.

"Queensland's exports of beef, butter, sugar, wool and silver lead, totalling £128.8 million in 1954-1955, accounted for 83 per cent. of the State's exports. They also represented 28.5 per cent. of Australia's exports of these five commodities and 16.8 per cent. of the total Australian exports.

"The significance of these figures lies, not so much in the results already achieved, but in the potentialities that exist for expansion of export production in this State. The importance of stimulating our traditional export industries in order to achieve a stable trade balance has been stressed on previous occasions."

The Treasurer has played a leading part in the economy of the State. He is without peer in ability and integrity, and we are indebted to him for his leadership. He has stressed Queensland's contribution to the economy of the nation, and has pointed out that she received a lower contribution from the Commonwealth Government per head of population than any other State.

Queensland is closer than any other State to Australia's potential enemies and she needs a much greater population than she has. However, her population can be increased only by large developmental projects, which call for the expenditure of huge sums of loan moneys. I strongly urge the Premier and the Treasurer to suggest at the next Premiers' Conference that a grant of land be made in the remote parts of Queensland or other northern areas of Australia free of taxation for five years for the establishment of industry to fill our empty spaces. Great benefits would flow even apart from the saving in costs of patrolling the area by the armed services.

Mr. Pizzey: Where would the people come from?

Mr. KEYATTA: Provide the inducement and the people will come. When a gold rush begins in any part of the world, people flock to the scene. South America threw open vast tracts of land to interests prepared to develop them and population was soon attracted.

Another suggestion is that petrol tax paid to the Commonwealth should be applied to meeting interest and redemption on a huge loan for road construction and maintenance. Probably the World Bank would make such a loan available. Roads should be built to last 50 to 100 years. France has a bitumen road that has been in existence for 120 years, and first-class concrete roads have proved highly satisfactory.

Mr. Pizzey: What about the Gap road from Townsville to Giru?

Mr. KEYATTA: I was on the Townsville District Development League many years ago and went down that route. It is very steep near the gorge. The road will be a costly job, but one day it will be done. A connecting link remains to be completed on the Woodstock section. The Gap road is not as easy as many people think.

Mr. Baxter: A very steep grade!

Mr. KEYATTA: Yes. When I was there I slid about 100 feet and the others would not follow. I had to walk miles and miles to return to the camp.

The Secretary for Public Instruction spoke of the increased enrolments during the last three years and said that the expansion of secondary education was being threatened by the Commonwealth's financial policy. Education is the community's first need. It is

important to equip a soldier as well as drilling him, and his greatest strength is knowledge. The State could not develop without education. It is a rather sad state of affairs that plans for four additional high schools for 1957 have been abandoned because of shortage of loan funds. That does not reflect credit on any administration, irrespective of politics. It deprives us of something that we need. The Government have appropriated £11,000,000 for education, excluding building costs, this financial year. The Secretary for Public Instruction said that high school enrolments had risen by 7,000 in the last eight years to more than 12,000. This probably will be doubled by 1961. Because of the natural increase in population there is danger in restricting loan money for education. We will be ham-stringed as we were after the war. The number of pupils at primary schools has increased from 154,000 in 1951 to 189,000 this year. The teacher-recruitment scheme, started in 1952, has boosted entries to the Teachers' Training College from 344 to 967 in 1955. I commend the Minister and the ex-Minister and the officers of the department on their efforts. Labour's policy is always "the best possible for the people."

The new Central State School at Townsville was recently opened by the Minister for Public Instruction to whom I am greatly indebted for his kindness and assistance to the ex-Minister, Mr. Devries. It is one of the finest school buildings in the State, for which I congratulate the Secretary for Public Instruction, the ex-Secretary for Public Instruction, the Secretary for Public Works and his predecessor. The old school was one of the oldest in Queensland; it was 90 years old. The construction of the new school was included in the Estimates many years ago and at long last it has been built. I must not overlook the works supervisor, Mr. Gordon Bright. I commend him for his efforts in the building of a very fine school. It is a credit to the Government who built it and the taxpayers who found the money. Gordon Bright is one of the most efficient works supervisors. I am sure the Minister is impressed with the good work of this officer. Our thanks are due to the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs for his co-operation whereby the school was built on land adjoining Queen's Park and the botanical gardens. This area was transferred to the Department of Public Instruction, and the old school reserve was handed over to the Hospitals Board. I wish to read the following letter that I received from the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs:—

"Dear Mr. Keyatta,

As the new school building on the Reserve to be taken over by the Department of Public Instruction in exchange for the present Central State School Reserve appears to be in an advanced state of construction, this Department is seeking

advice from the Director of Education as to when the present Central State School site is likely to be vacated.

In the meantime, there would be no objection to the Hospitals Board having preliminary plans and estimates of cost completed for the work required to establish the psychiatry block on the present Central State School site. This Department is advising the Treasury Department accordingly and suggesting that the Hospitals Board be allowed to retain the loan abovementioned to cover the cost of this preliminary work.

Yours faithfully (sgd.) W. Moore."

The Government do not get all the publicity they deserve. The problems of post-war education are not confined to any one country; they are to be found throughout the English-speaking world. In no country has the problem been fully solved, but I claim, with no little pride, that the achievements of the Queensland Labour Government compare more than favourably with those elsewhere. It is a proud boast of the Labour Government that, during the most acute period of teacher shortage and building lag, no child between the ages of 6 and 14 was denied enrolment at a school and no school with the required enrolment was closed. In this connection it should be remembered that there are, in addition to larger schools, over 1,000 one-teacher schools to staff and maintain. During the period 1951 to 1956, primary school enrolments have increased from 154,000 to 189,000 and secondary school enrolments from 6,800 to 13,000.

It will be noted that, during this period, primary school enrolments have increased by 35,000 pupils and that secondary enrolments have almost doubled. The task of providing staff and accommodation for over 40,000 additional pupils can be readily appreciated by all fairminded observers. The Government have done a very fine job.

In 1952 the Government embarked on a scheme of recruitment of teachers. Young people were encouraged to remain at secondary schools to qualify for entry to the Teachers' Training College by passing the Senior Public Examination. Liberal allowances—the highest in Australia—were offered to them.

The success of the campaign is shown by the enrolments at the college, which increased from 344 in 1952 to 967 in 1955.

In 1954, 1955 and the present year, 10 new high schools and 18 secondary departments have been established. The establishment of secondary departments in country centres has gone a long way towards solving the problem of providing equal educational opportunity for country children.

It is a proud boast of the Queensland Labour Government that education from the kindergarten to the highest level is free, in addition to every facility and comfort that money can provide.

Australia is essentially a primary-producing nation. The late Hon. W. Forgan Smith and his virile Cabinet of those years developed orderly marketing. That pattern was copied throughout the Commonwealth, and by New Zealand and Canada. In that way the primary producers were given protection and a fair return for their produce. I doubt whether home consumption would account for 25 per cent. of production. The remainder has to be exported at world prices. Australians enjoy a high standard of wages and conditions, but we are still able to sell our products overseas. The Queensland Labour Government can claim some credit for that. The Hon. H. H. Collins succeeded the late Hon. W. Forgan Smith as Secretary for Agriculture and Stock. He has carried out the duties of his office with equal vigour and efficiency and has made possible greater achievements.

In 1949 only 34 children in every 100 were attending secondary schools. In 1955 the number had increased to 50. The number this year will be still higher. The policy of the Queensland Labour Government in respect of secondary education is meeting with widespread public support.

The Government are not only building more schools; they are building better schools. The new high schools have large, airy, well-lit classrooms, painted in attractive shades. Modern, comfortable school furniture has replaced the old desks. High schools are equipped with modern laboratories for the teaching of the sciences and facilities for teaching woodwork, sheet metal work and domestic science are provided.

The Townsville secondary school is a particularly fine institution. It is provided with the latest equipment. The residents of Townsville are very proud of it. The hon. members for Bowen and Isis know this, as they were formerly members of the teaching profession. The Queensland Labour Government have given great assistance to school children in the formation of parents' and citizens' associations. Under a generous system of subsidies, schools have expanded their teaching aids and equipment. Radiograms, projectors, library books, pianos and duplicators attract a £1 for £1 subsidy from the Government. I should also mention swimming pools and other amenities. School ground improvements and playground equipment are also eligible for the payment of subsidies. It is estimated that over £57,000 will be paid this financial year in subsidies on playground improvements and equipment. Over 1,400 schools are equipped with radiograms and over 700 schools use projectors. Most schools have well equipped libraries. It is estimated that over 400,000 books have been supplied to schools under the subsidy scheme. Parents' and citizens' associations have been formed to keep in close contact with the welfare of children and not allow them to be regimented under departmental control. The research and guidance branch of the Department of Public Instruction is

now well established and a senior research and guidance officer has been appointed. These men have played a great part in the education and guidance of backward children. It is claimed that some children are lazy or have a disinclination to do school work. In many there is a fear complex. The object of the Government is to cater for these backward children. The department are to be commended for that work as it is a vital factor in the welfare of young children. Very often that state of affairs is created in the minds of these children in the home or on the playground or in the environment of their playmates and could be caused by contact with a bully. The guidance officer and his staff are doing excellent work indeed.

I want to give a summary of building operations for the year ended 30 June, 1956, released by the Government Statistician. Last year 7,660 dwellings were completed and work was started on 7,460. At the end of June this year 22,754 workers were employed in the building industry. Commercial, industrial and public buildings completed totalled £12,594,000 in outlay, 25 per cent. more than in the previous year.

The lack of housing has caused a great deal of heartburning among many families. The basis laid down for the assessment of applications for temporary accommodation is as follows:—

	Points
Group A.—Families facing ejectment by order of the court	100
Group B.—Families living in tents or huts	100
Group C.—Families living in other unsuitable premises (condemned by local authority or inspecting officer)	100
Group D.—Families living under seriously overcrowded conditions (certified by inspecting officer)	100
Group E.—Families separated owing to lack of accommodation	60
Group F.—Families sharing houses with other families (including flats, etc.)	40
Group G.—Other applicants.	

The Government are looking forward to the day when they can get enough loan money to complete their building programme.

I have repeatedly urged the setting up of a scheme of national insurance against storm and tempest damage. This is something that affects the working man, the farmer and industry generally. It should be possible to institute a scheme along the lines of the war risk insurance that operated during World War II. When we read of heavy damage being caused by storm and tempest, it makes us wonder why the Commonwealth Government do not formulate a scheme of national insurance. Many workers have been rendered homeless, industries have been bankrupt, and farmers have been washed out.

Another matter that I have frequently urged is a reclamation scheme for the foreshores of Townsville Harbour. I was a member of the Townsville Harbour Board for many years, and I strongly advocated the building of a retaining wall from the mouth of Ross River to the bend in the jetty. Silt

could be pumped and dredged from the channel and used for reclamation. That would create valuable land for the Harbour Board. It would also eliminate the silting which is disfiguring the beaches and destroying the coral reef at Magnetic Island by tugs towing barges and dumping it into Cleveland Bay at great cost. It has been done effectively in other places and in this instance it would serve the dual purpose of eliminating the siltage that is now disfiguring the beaches thus greatly improving our economy by making available reclaimed areas.

The Government have been attacked about the breakwater and the small harbour there.

Mr. Pizzey: Who attacked the Government?

Mr. KEYATTA: Many citizens and members of bodies in Townsville. A letter was published about it and the Treasurer propounded a scheme that the Government were prepared to subsidise, but the Townsville Harbour Board and the Townsville City Council will not move in the matter. It cannot be said that the Government were not prepared to play their part, but the local authorities will not move.

Mr. Pizzey: Why?

Mr. KEYATTA: The hon. member had better ask them that. I have had something to do with the scheme, but its adoption is entirely a matter for the Townsville City Council and the Harbour Board assisted by Government subsidy.

From time to time we hear clamour for a new State. There is provision for it in the Government's policy, but it will have to wait until it becomes an economic possibility. There are many difficulties over which the Government have no control. The Labour Government have never walked out when the subject has been raised in this Chamber, but in 1870 when a representative of Central Queensland first raised the question of a new State in the North hon. members walked out on him, leaving the House without a quorum. That was done to stifle the debate. Of course, the Labour Party were not the Government then. The Commonwealth Constitution provides for the creation of new States but before any portion of a State can break away a poll of the whole State must favour the passing of an Act requesting the Commonwealth to create a new State. A poll dominated by votes of the people outside the affected area would have little chance of success. The only way to overcome this would be to alter the Constitution, but the people have shown that they are extremely chary about that. The State Government are not to blame; it is a constitutional matter under Commonwealth jurisdiction.

Mr. Pizzey: You do not give us much encouragement.

Mr. KEYATTA: Who?

Mr. Pizzey: The Government.

Mr. KEYATTA: Professor Copeland made a detailed statement in which he said it was not at present an economic possibility. We can only be guided by highly qualified authorities like him. I have a ton of material here about decentralisation of government and industries created under the Secondary Industries Act. Many concerns in Brisbane and North Queensland have benefited. It cannot be denied that the Government have given every assistance. We are the only State in the Commonwealth with a positive decentralisation policy. We have more cities in Queensland than any other State.

Mr. L. E. D. Tomlins, Chairman of the Townsville Harbour Board, said—

"In the past private enterprise had established industries in the North, such as the meat industry, sugar mills and mining. There seems to be a lot of apathy in North Queensland in recent times. People should show the Government they have sufficient courage, initiative and confidence in the future of the North. What is wrong with establishing industries here ourselves? The first thing is to help ourselves and then we can go to the Government or financial institutions for help, but it is only with the full co-operation of all sections that the North can be developed."

Even if we had a new State in North Queensland—call it North Queensland, Northland, or any other name—the same position would arise. The capital in the area is almost entirely overseas capital. What happens? The commodity is produced and it either goes interstate or overseas. The new State of North Queensland would be in no better, but probably a far worse, position than Central and South Queensland. Private enterprise is there to develop its industry in accordance with its own policy and the goods would be taken away from Queensland to New South Wales, Victoria, or overseas. Therefore there is little to be gained at the present time by the creation of a new State.

Mr. Tomlins said that while protests were justified where they were necessary, he deplored the system of expecting everything from the Government, although he agreed that it had not done everything it could for the North. Instances of neglect were the existing shipping services.

Shipping services to North Queensland are not controlled by the State Government, but by shipping interests. Four ships have been sold in recent months to overseas companies. The railways cannot carry the full load; they are overloaded and taxed to capacity. Shipping is most important to the North.

An Opposition Member: Blame the waterside workers.

Mr. KEYATTA: An investigation proved that the waterside workers were not to blame; it was the shipping interests. That can be found in the report of the Federal Government. It was not the fault of the waterside workers that they were idle. The existing shipping services are totally inadequate and have isolated the North. The North has been sabotaged. Years ago we had our own wool sales in the North. Forty years ago we were exporting 100,000 bales of wool from Townsville each year and now not one bale goes through that port. We want that shipping service again. The neglect of the North lies with the interests who control shipping and other large concerns. Wool sales are held in the South while centres like Rockhampton and Townsville cannot get wool sales.

At a meeting of the United Graziers' Association it was decided that Brisbane brokers be asked to allow Queensland wool-growers to sell their clip through more than one broker and that representations be made to the Federal Government for the establishment of a wool-selling centre at Townsville. That is the organisation supported by hon. members opposite. I read the following from a newspaper report of a meeting of the Graziers' Association—

"Queensland graziers consider they should be allowed to split their wool clips, Mr. W. I. Maclean (Central North) told the executive council of the United Graziers' Association today.

Hitherto, wool selling regulations prohibited the selling of clips through more than one broker.

Now, however, the association has decided to approach Brisbane brokers and ask them to allow Queensland growers to sell their clips through more than one broker, as is the practice in some other centres.

For the establishment of a wool selling centre at Townsville the Council decided to make further representations to the Federal Government."

Hon. members opposite support a Party that neglected the North and isolated it. This Government have played an important part in the development of the North. The North Australian Committee was formed by the late Ben Chifley, its members being the Prime Minister and the Premiers of Western Australia and Queensland. Much preparatory investigation has been carried out. It was established for the purpose of decentralisation. That is in conformity with the suggestion that I made recently. I suggested recently that free grants of land should be made to settlers and others who are prepared to develop remote areas. Their income should be tax free for five years to enable them to establish themselves. In that way we would get increased population in the remote parts of Queensland and the northern areas of other States. Navy patrols in those waters

and Army vigilance would be unnecessary if these outposts of our continent were populated as a line of defence.

I now turn to the assistance given to private enterprise by the Government under the Industries Assistance Acts 1929 to 1933 and the Labour and Industries Acts 1946 to 1952. Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. received tremendous assistance. North Australia Cement Ltd. is another company that was assisted under these Acts. The plant of that company is now running at full capacity and with future development may have to be duplicated. Those companies displayed initiative and were given every encouragement by the Government. North Queensland has been isolated by private enterprise. The abandoning of wool sales at Townsville proves that point. The Government have started irrigation and hydro-electric projects in North Queensland but have not received any assistance from the Commonwealth Government. Queensland is the only State that has not been assisted by the Commonwealth Government in this type of scheme. Hon. members opposite have criticised the Government for building the Burdekin Bridge. The bridge over the Drumoyne River in New South Wales took 10 years to complete and cost £625,000. I have here a newspaper cutting showing the New South Wales Premier opening the bridge.

Mr. Pizzey: It was built by a Labour Government.

Mr. KEYATTA: It was built by supporters of the party of the hon. member. The delay was not the fault of the Government. The relevant figures illustrate the growth of private industry in Queensland. In 1944-1945 there were 2,720 factories and in 1954-1955 5,209. There were 63,131 employees in 1944-1945, and 98,558 employees in 1954-1955. The value of factory plant in 1944-1945 was £28,438,466 compared with £92,112,973 in 1954-1955. Those figures represent an increase of 91 per cent. in factories, 56 per cent. in workers employed, and 224 per cent. in value of plant. They prove conclusively that this Government have given every encouragement to private industry which gives the lie direct to the statements of the Opposition that the Government have not assisted private industry.

An Opposition Member: What about canneries?

Mr. KEYATTA: The growers themselves must accept some responsibility for the establishment of canneries. The Government have played a great part in helping crippled children. The Premier recently laid the foundation stone of a crippled children's home and the Government gave a grant of £10,000 on a £1 for £1 basis. I am afraid that I have not the time to go into details and features of that home.

I am glad that the hon. member for Yeronga is in the Chamber because I want to say a word or two with regard to heart trouble. Its mortality rate is 100 per cent. more than that for any other disease. The great secret of life is to relax. Many business people claim that they have ulcers and from reports in the Press it would appear that one is not a successful business or professional man unless he suffers from ulcers. Ulcers are brought about by tension, stress and strain and I trust that the medical fraternity can devise ways and means of helping workers in their callings. Employees in industry should be taught to relax. It is a means of health education. The cost of illness is a great cost to the State Government. Remember, "Prevention is better than cure."

Mr. Muller: Do you think that the wharfies will suffer from heart failure?

Mr. KEYATTA: Many of them have heart troubles. A lot of workers suffer from stress and strain which have brought about heart ailments. There is a story told of a particular chap who was very keen on swimming. He was swimming across a lake with a lady friend and when half-way across he said, "I am done." She said, "Do not get excited, float," and he has been floating ever since. That shows the need for people to get as much relaxation as they can to break the tension of work. I am hoping that the hon. member for Yeronga will deal with this matter one of these days as I am sure ways and means could be devised whereby the death rate from heart ailments could be minimised. The hon. member for Fassifern told me that through hard work and stress and strain in his business he lost not only his hair but his heart was affected.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (7.50 p.m.): Before discussing the Financial Statement, I desire to reply to some of the remarks of the hon. member for Condamine on 11 September last. The hon. member for Lockyer has already dealt very effectively with the hon. member and left him with hardly a feather to fly with. Nevertheless, I desire to comment on something that the hon. member for Condamine said about me.

As is usual with a new Minister, the hon. member's speech was commented on by hon. members on both sides of the Chamber. As far as I can gather, the general opinion is that it was one of the weakest speeches ever made in this Chamber by a Minister. That was said by hon. members on both sides.

Mr. Walsh: What right have you to implicate any hon. member on this side? Do you mean to say that you have contacts on this side of the Chamber who have expressed that opinion to you?

Mr. SPARKES: This is very interesting. The Treasurer said he was going to remain dumb whilst I was speaking, but he is "in" already. If I may digress, I bet him a Casket ticket that he would "come in". I know that he is an honourable man and will honour his bet.

Mr. Walsh: I did not intend to be dumb tonight and you know it.

Mr. SPARKES: That is very good.

The hon. member for Condamine told me on my return to Parliament House that he read almost the whole of his speech.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I rise to a point of order. I have had no contact with the hon. member for Aubigny, nor do I intend to have. I ask him to withdraw his statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Aubigny to accept the denial of the hon. member for Condamine.

Mr. SPARKES: I am quite happy to withdraw it. Apparently there is a misunderstanding somewhere. It was not the hon. member who told me, it was other hon. members. However, I would do anything to please the hon. member, Mr. Clark, as you will see as I proceed. I am not in a position to judge his speech because I merely read it in "Hansard".

Mr. Moore: You should have been here to hear it.

Mr. SPARKES: That is all right.

Mr. Walsh: Have you read the speech?

Mr. SPARKES: Yes.

Mr. Gair: Whether you understood it is a different matter.

Mr. SPARKES: Apparently I understood it better than the Premier understands the men whom he wants to return to work.

I do not think it is fair comment to say that the hon. member's speech was written for him. He referred at the outset to garbage, and anyone knowing him as I do would not doubt who wrote the speech. Nobody would know more about garbage than the hon. member for Condamine.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I rise to a point of order. That statement is offensive to me and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Aubigny to accept the denial of the hon. member for Condamine.

Mr. SPARKES: What have I got to deny?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's remark was offensive to the hon. member for Condamine and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. SPARKES: If the hon. member must have me withdraw it, I will withdraw it. But I can still think it.

Mr. Gair: What have you got to think with?

Mr. SPARKES: Probably more than the Premier has. If he had thought eight months ago and stood the railway men up, he would not have had the trouble on his hands that he has today. Instead, he is now riding on the back of the tiger and he is not game to get off for fear the tiger will swallow him. It will sooner or later so why not get off and let us get on with the job?

Let me return to the hon. gentleman from Condamine.

Mr. Moore: Get onto the Budget.

Mr. Gair: He is more concerned with his own.

Mr. SPARKES: They like giving it but they do not like taking it; like all dingoes, they start to howl then.

Mr. Power: You are the biggest dingo in the Chamber.

Mr. SPARKES: I am quite happy about that as long as the hon. gentleman is. At least I can take it as well as give it.

I fully believe that the hon. gentleman wrote his own speech because its whole trend is so typical of him that I must give him the doubtful honour.

Mr. Devries: You must be very jealous of his ability.

Mr. SPARKES: If I am, I am not jealous of what is thought about him and his ability in other respects.

Government Members: Get on with the Budget!

Mr. SPARKES: They do not like it all. Let me quote the hon. gentleman—and I suppose he will jump up again. He says that I am not rated very highly by the people in the Dalby district. The electorate of Aubigny almost surrounds the town of Dalby and, naturally, there is a booth in Dalby for Aubigny people to vote. I have before me the Aubigny figures for the last election and, so that there will be no doubt about the matter, I will read them. They are—

Dalby, Alexander (my opponent) 68
Sparkes 216

That is where I am so unpopular. Goodness me, what would happen where I am popular?

Mr. Walsh: You were a bit lucky that you did not have Bassingthwaight as your opponent.

Mr. SPARKES: Let the hon. gentleman get him. As a matter of fact, if I am so unpopular in the area I suggest to the hon. member for Condamine that he resign his seat and I will resign mine; we will contest the Aubigny electorate and leave the decision to the people with whom I am so unpopular.

Mr. Power: Get on with the Budget!

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Mr. SPARKES: There is plenty of time. I have the best part of an hour yet.

Mr. Moore: You will run out of paper.

Mr. SPARKES: Oh no, I won't.

Typical of the real hypocrite is the statement made by the hon. member for Condamine. Anyone jump up? No? He says, "Oh, I will not play politics with children." A very noble speech!

Mr. Diplock: Do not be such a bully.

Mr. SPARKES: At least I prefer to be a bully than half a bull with a very croaky voice. The hon. gentleman did not raise very great objections when it was suggested that the children should not hand out any voting cards for Mr. Keys who was the honourable gentleman's opponent at the election. That was all right. So long as they handed out his, but they must not hand out Mr. Keys's! He has the hide then to tell the children what they should do.

Mr. Power: He is very happy with it too; that seems to be annoying you.

Mr. SPARKES: Not at all. As a matter of fact his days are numbered. The funny part about it is that it is his own people who are numbering them.

Mr. Diplock: Tell me whom.

Mr. SPARKES: I could not name all the people in the Condamine electorate, but I could name the organisation who are getting round to saying that he will not stand any more, and I do not blame them, because any man who does not play the game with his own mates deserves it.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I rise to a point of order. That is offensive and I ask the hon. member to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Aubigny to withdraw the remark.

Mr. SPARKES: What does he want me to withdraw? I know you do not know.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the remark.

Mr. SPARKES: What remark?

The CHAIRMAN: You know you made an offensive remark to the hon. member for Condamine.

Mr. SPARKES: Tell me the offensive remark.

The CHAIRMAN: About not playing the game with his mates.

Mr. SPARKES: All right. We are certainly getting down to the level of school children. Of course, before the hon. gentleman entered Parliament he was a man with a lot of kiddies and now he is amongst a lot of men. Every time he jumps up he shows what a great kid he is. He cannot take it but he likes to hand it out.

Mr. Power interjected.

Mr. SPARKES: He has not the guts to hand it out.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I rise to a point of order. A writ has been issued out of the Supreme Court against the hon. member for Aubigny.

Mr. SPARKES: If the writ has been issued—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SPARKES: If the writ has been issued I have not got it, and it is some months ago—

Mr. Moore: You did not get something else one night, but you were not game to go to the Belle Vue because of what Artie had for you.

Mr. SPARKES: Say what you like. I do not care what he says, he has nothing against me. Let him get up—I am game enough.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Moore: You were not game to go out—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the chair.

Mr. SPARKES: I am game enough to go out with him any time he likes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber. "Hansard" will not be able to hear what the hon. member is saying.

Mr. SPARKES: I wish the hon. gentleman would be guided by the Minister alongside him and sit down next time he tries to get up. I still have a lot to say about him. I have found that it is always the truth that hurts.

Mr. Walsh: You would not know.

Mr. SPARKES: At least I am not like the hon. member for Condamine who said—and he cannot deny it—that the reason why he was reading his speech was that he wanted to tell the truth. Apparently he could not trust himself to tell the truth unless he wrote it down. Let the hon. gentleman jump up and deny that; it is in black and white. What a remarkable state of affairs if we have to write something down. I doubt if when the hon. gentleman wrote it down he regarded it as being the truth. He took exception to my quoting a statement that he made in the Press but he did not contradict it till the other day. I asked them and they said, "No, we did not have a contradiction."

Mr. Power: You got a writ over it.

Mr. SPARKES: If I got it I do not know where it is. I am happy about it. I have a firm of solicitors ready to defend it. I am happy about it and so is the paper in Toowoomba.

Mr. Diplock: That is not what the paper said.

Mr. SPARKES: That is what the paper said to me.

Mr. Power: The matter is sub judice.

Mr. SPARKES: Let us forget about it. I say that I did not receive it. The hon. gentleman will not be able to jump up like a jumping jack there when the barrister gets on to him. (Government interjections.) I wanted to exercise my right to reply to the hon. gentleman. There are people who are supposed to be going one way and when they get to a certain spot they find things are not so bright ahead and they jump the other way to protect their hides. I am wondering how they will jump when the other pressure comes on. Although you may sit on the fence, sooner or later somebody is going to push you off. The hon. member for Condamine is a good fence-sitter—I shall give him his due—and so far he has been able to get through on a very slippery rail, but the rail will not last much longer. (Government interjections.) I was going to be beaten for 20 years and I am still here.

Mr. Power: You are not always here.

Mr. SPARKES: I am never here according to the hon. gentleman. My party are happy about it all.

Mr. Power: That is not what they tell us.

Mr. SPARKES: That is all right. This party is not directed by somebody outside and told what to do. We stand by one another. Hon. members opposite have signed a pledge but they are not game to stand up to it.

Mr. Walsh: That is not what Bill Ewan said about you.

Mr. SPARKES: I do not know about that. I do not know what Ewan said. There is a difference of opinion as to what the hon. gentleman is likely to do. To prove that, I could perhaps do no better than quote a conversation I had recently. I asked the question, "What will the hon. member for Condamine do when the A.W.U. get at him?" This man said, "I do not think he knows himself where he is. Probably only he, himself, and God knows, and I doubt if God knows now where he is." In one place he tries to prove something, and then he goes to another place and tries to prove something else.

Mr. Walsh: Did you know that his A.L.P. by 24 votes to one passed a vote of confidence in him?

Mr. SPARKES: The Treasurer may want some A.L.P. and A.W.U. votes before very long. I advise him to cheer up.

The hon. gentleman got up in this Chamber and said straightout that he did not agree with what was being done.

There is no doubt about the stand of the hon. member for Mackay. I think a great deal of him despite his statements, because he at least knows where he stands.

Mr. Walsh: When are you going to tell us something?

Mr. SPARKES: The Treasurer would not have the brains to understand if I did tell him something.

We usually expect that a Minister will at least be decent to a new member.

Mr. Walsh: He has made rapid progress.

Mr. SPARKES: We know how he got that rapid promotion, but that will not save him.

The hon. member for Condamine said of the hon. member for Sherwood, "Whether the young hon. member was asleep I do not know." What a childish thing for a Minister to say! God help the hon. member for Condamine if ever that young member takes to him outside. He will clean him up. (Government laughter.) I will bet 10 to one on the hon. member for Sherwood. The Minister continued, "It may have been an example of his babyish attitude because that is the way the amateur or the immature seeks attention. I shall never forget this picture because its utter lack of dignity burned itself into my mind. The figure was that of the hon. member for Sherwood." Does the Minister think it does him credit to talk in that way about a new member who has made only one speech in this Chamber? I think he had made only one speech at that time, and I am told by the hon. member for Whitsunday that he was very sick at the time.

Mr. Davies: You could have said all this in five minutes and got onto something worth while.

Mr. SPARKES: I have plenty of time. I shall deal with the hon. member shortly.

I want to give a little credit to the hon. member for Sherwood.

Mr. Power: Anything you have given away you still have.

Mr. SPARKES: I am always very careful. I am Scotch by nature.

It is said, however, that the hon. gentleman is generous to a fault with other persons' property. Let the hon. gentleman jump up and deny that too. He seems to be keeping very quiet and keeping to himself. I am saying that he is generous with other people's property.

Mr. Power: What do you mean by that?

Mr. SPARKES: The Attorney-General knows. The hon. gentleman is glad to give somebody else's property away.

Mr. Walsh: I have heard the story that you rigged in a few crook bulls.

Mr. SPARKES: I might do that too; at least they would be bulls. We must give the hon. gentleman credit if he is prepared to give something away that belongs to somebody else.

Mr. Diplock: Say what you mean.

Mr. SPARKES: I am.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member for Aubigny is not trying to impute improper motives to any hon. member.

Mr. SPARKES: God forbid that I should impute improper motives to the hon. member; knowing him as I do, no. The hon. members associated with him know also. Perhaps to please hon. members opposite might I say of the hon. member for Condamine, farewell to the hon. member and the more I see and know of him the more I like my dog.

Perhaps I should get on to another subject. I could keep on going like this all night.

Mr. Diplock: I could talk all day and night about you too.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. gentleman has had his opportunity. He can get up tonight or Tuesday and speak. I will be here to hear him.

I now proceed to speak on the Financial Statement and make a statement as is naturally expected of me in connection with the present industrial trouble. I think that most of us in this Chamber—if not the people outside—realise what the present problem means to this State and what it will eventually mean. In the long run we realise that commonsense will prevail and that eventually, be it this year or next, we will be back to normal in selling our wool. I wonder just how many realise what this hold-up of our wool means to the people of Queensland. When I say that, do not let it be thought that I mean only to the people engaged in the grazing industry. I suppose there would be a great deal of inconvenience and hardship caused to many people in the industry. But what of the hardship to the men employed in the industry and those dependent upon it, which embraces almost every working man in the State? In all seriousness, I say that the present industrial trouble is the worst that Queensland has ever faced, at least in my time. However, I do not intend to speak on the shearing dispute at length. It has been tossed about so often that the less said about it now, the better. Hon. members opposite will appreciate that I was not influenced by any political motive in what I have done, but in the hope that something could be done for an industry in which I am greatly interested. I have done everything possible to end the industrial trouble so that the industry could return to normal. We would have been very happy to take back every man engaged in our store. We had no thought of victimisation.

The sooner the Government realise that no industrial trouble should be allowed to continue without a secret ballot of the workers engaged in the industry, the better it will be. Secret ballots are a "must"; I mean of course properly conducted ballots. Workers should be given the right to say what they really think. The Government have always been opposed to secret ballots but this time it has been a real boomerang, and they must admit it. A shining example of the need for secret ballots is afforded by the storemen and packers. In an open ballot about 400 of them voted for a strike and only a few against it, but at a secret ballot a large majority voted for a return to work. It is my honest opinion that the whole trouble could have been avoided if a secret ballot had been held.

Mr. Davis: You cannot find protection for the potential "scab."

Mr. SPARKES: That word was used this afternoon. It should never have been brought into this debate. Nobody regrets more than I that it was. I interjected at the time, "What do you mean by 'scab'?" The hon. member replied, "Anyone who works now." What would be the position of my own boy if he came down here and worked in our wool store? He served his country in the recent war, but what would happen if he came down here to work in an emergency at the request of the Leader of the Government?

Let us be quite clear about this. The Government have declared a state of emergency. We know what that means. It means that a grave position exists in the State and if my boy is prepared to come down and work to get us out of the difficulty he should not have the term "scab" hurled at him. He and his kind have no great desire to do that work for others.

On the properties I have and supervise, I employ many men and all of them are my friends. In our industry that has to be so. We depend on them and they depend on us. In no other industry in the State do the masters and men depend so much upon each other, and the further West one goes the more that applies. In his younger days the hon. member for Barecoo was on a property of 2,500,000 acres and he knows that what I say is true. They talk things over and they are very close. It is a great pity that anything should arise to alter that atmosphere of friendliness.

Mr. Davis: No-one regrets it more than I.

Mr. SPARKES: I fully appreciate that. I have known the hon. member for many years and I greatly respect him. We may differ politically, but I have always regarded him as a friend and I hope we will continue that way to our end.

A Government Member: How long will the end be?

Mr. SPARKES: I do not want it to come too soon. The more sensible members of the Government realise that the time has come for some means whereby the men may express their feelings without fear of victimisation. Without that, this sort of trouble will always exist. I will not enter into a discussion of the rights or wrongs of the matter. The men have their views and if given a secret ballot they will express them and we will know where we are. There is an old saying, and a true one—"If you have a trouble, get to it at once." The longer you leave it in the hope that some thing will turn up, the worse it becomes.

Mr. Coburn: Like a bushfire.

Mr. SPARKES: My friend the hon. member for Burdekin aptly expresses it; it spreads like a bushfire.

While speaking in this Chamber a little over a month ago I was howled at. Unfortunately the hon. member for Somerset is not in the Chamber. I will give him his due; he is usually here.

Mr. Walsh: He is away up in his electorate with Mr. Adermann and Dr. Cameron.

Mr. SPARKES: I always think that when an hon. member is out of the Chamber, whichever side he belongs to, it is most likely on some duty connected with his electorate.

Mr. Walsh: He is at a public function with two hon. members of the Opposition.

Mr. SPARKES: Hon. members will recall that the Premier said to me, "You want a general strike!" I said, "The sooner we have a showdown the better." I do not profess to be a mind-reader but I believe the Premier would have preferred it if we had had a showdown some months ago. The State would certainly have been much better off. We would have known where we stood. I do not take any kudos for saying at that time we should have had it and had done with it. It is like a wound. It starts off and then poisoning sets in, then something else sets in and the longer it is left the more difficult is the cure. That has been the trouble here. Had there been a showdown right from the word "go" we would have been working happily today.

The Treasurer realises that he has lost a large amount of money because of the railways action during this strike. I give him credit for being big enough to see even beyond that. He realises that the loss of revenue is not the worst feature. The worst thing is the suffering that must occur to the working men of the State.

Mr. Evans: They always suffer.

Mr. SPARKES: In the long run they are the ones to suffer from any strike. You may inconvenience me but you do not create the hardship that is inflicted upon the working man, his wife and children. They

are the ones who suffer and they are the people upon whom this great industry is so dependent.

Let us go back to the start of the trouble. I will not go into details because the Court is going to sit and I leave it to them. After the trouble started it was not long before the railway men said, "We won't carry the wool." Remember that no-one has a greater admiration for the working man than I have. Anybody can ask any of the men employed by me anywhere at any time. Had the Government said there and then, "You have a duty to perform, if you do not do it we cannot guarantee you will keep your job. Have a secret ballot and decide what you are going to do," every decent-minded man in the Chamber must believe that the great probability is that the railways would have carried all the wool and work would have gone on.

An Opposition Member: Why shouldn't they?

Mr. SPARKES: Of course they should but I am giving them the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. Walsh: Surely you are not suggesting that if that action had been taken by the railways it would have settled the pastoral dispute?

Mr. SPARKES: I honestly think that the hon. gentleman believes that if there had been a showdown then the pastoral dispute would have been over. The hon. gentleman believes, as we all hope, that this thing will be settled in the very near future.

Mr. Walsh: True.

Mr. SPARKES: If you had the same showdown eight months ago would not we be in a happier state now?

Mr. Walsh: Can the hon. member tell me how that would affect the shearing rate? Logically, I cannot see it.

Mr. SPARKES: I put this to the hon. gentleman: the Government have many people working for them and if one section says, "We will not do this," and the Government do nothing about it because they think if they do there will be a general strike, what is going to happen? If they think they cannot be done without and you are trying to kid to them they can smell it.

Mr. Walsh: You would be interested in what move Harold Holt will make.

Mr. SPARKES: I do not care what moves he makes.

Mr. Walsh: We are all interested in that.

Mr. SPARKES: At least we are together in something. I appreciate the problem with which the Premier was confronted. I do not suppose anyone could have gone to more trouble or put more thought into what would happen and what would be best for the State.

Mr. Walsh: He did no more than the leader of any responsible government would do. He did no more than Ben Chifley and Ned Hanlon had the courage to do.

Mr. SPARKES: I repeat what I said a month or six weeks ago, that you cannot put it off. The best thing to do is to have a showdown and clean the whole thing up. For months and months the strike has been going on. I think the Treasurer and the Premier will agree that the man in the street did not care a snap of the fingers about the shearing industry dispute. Actually at that stage it did not touch him at all. If there had been a showdown and he found that he could not get his bread and butter next day then he would have taken some action. Proof of that is to be found in the actions of the storemen and packers. In the first instance these men came out on strike. I know the men employed in my company and a finer lot of fellows you could not meet. After wandering round the street for some time they woke up to the fact that while they were wandering around shearers were making £30 or £40 a week; and they then took a pretty poor view of it. If action had been taken—and I do not want to rub it in; I am not out to gain any advantage—the trouble would have been solved quickly. I am urged to speak tonight in the hope that the strike might be settled.

Mr. Aikens: Would you rather have seen the whole State tied up and all the other primary producers penalised?

Mr. SPARKES: I would rather see the whole State tied up for 20 hours—then the strike would have fallen through.

Mr. Aikens: It might have lasted nine weeks like the last one did.

Mr. SPARKES: It might not. For the benefit of the hon. gentleman who has just entered the Chamber, let me repeat my statement that if a secret ballot had been taken there would not, in my opinion, be any industrial trouble today.

As a matter of fact, the Railway Department is still not carrying wool, and we are in a terrible position.

Mr. Gair: You know very well that if wool was being carried by the department the brokers would be embarrassed.

Mr. SPARKES: The situation is like a nightmare.

Mr. Gair: That is humbug.

Mr. SPARKES: The wool, if carried by the department, would not be coming day after day and night after night, on big trailers carrying 100 bales, and our roads would not be chopped to pieces.

I was at our board meeting yesterday and I spoke to a man who wanted to get 500 or 600 bales away. In ordinary times we would have welcomed him with open arms, but at the present time we do not know what is happening.

Mr. Walsh: You do not know where to put it.

Mr. SPARKES: That is correct. We have space at the showgrounds, at the Oasis, in hangars and other places.

Mr. Walsh: Would you not credit us with knowing that?

Mr. SPARKES: Of course I do. I do not want the hon. gentleman to get the impression that I am making these statements for political gain. I am not imbued with that idea. I merely emphasise the importance of secret ballots. I have always believed in secret ballots and I hope this trouble will result in the introduction of legislation to provide for secret ballots. Members on this side of the Chamber would be in full accord with it. I have not discussed the subject with our Leader, but I think I can say that it would be so.

I appreciated the remarks of the hon. member for Flinders about producing more cattle. I am mindful of the need to produce more cattle, but I suggest that he ask the Minister for Transport if the Railway Department will be able to move them. We cannot at the present time get our cattle to market.

Mr. Adair: Why do you not drive them overland as they do in the Peninsula?

Mr. SPARKES: I have great respect for the hon. member who undertakes occasional walkabouts, but I should like to ask him through you, Mr. Chairman, how he would be able to bring overland 500 or 600 bullocks from Longreach to Brisbane. As soon as the cattle arrived in a tick-infested area they would commence to die with redwater.

Mr. Smith: That would not be different from transporting them by train.

Mr. SPARKES: Of course it is different. Cattle that are being driven across country pick up ticks, but ticks do not jump into trains. The suggestion of the hon. member for Cook is tantamount to going back to the horse-and-dray days.

Mr. Aikens: They would not be fat beasts after they had walked a few miles.

Mr. SPARKES: No, and as soon as they got on to pebbly country they would go lame. No-one knows that better than the hon. member for Carpentaria.

Mr. Davies: How would you overcome the position?

Mr. SPARKES: When a person employs a lot of men he must inevitably have some drones. The position in the Railway Department may not be the fault of the railway men. It may be the fault of the rollingstock. The other day I had to wait for a train to come and pick up some stock. The engine arrived with only a few trucks and some were full of wheat. I asked what had happened to the cattle wagons and I was told, "This thing would not pull the hat off your head."

They had to pull the wheat off and then go back and pull up the rest of the trucks. As a matter of fact, that train took 25 hours to go 160 miles. If engines are not in proper order I know it is difficult to run trains to time.

Mr. Davies: What would you do about it?

Mr. SPARKES: There would have to be something done about more rolling stock. We have a market for our stock and we cannot get them to it. Surely the hon. member does not subscribe to that state of affairs!

Mr. Aikens: The Minister for Transport will employ as many tradesmen as you can get him, particularly ironworkers.

Mr. SPARKES: That is the position today. I will admit that when the Treasurer was Minister for Railways things brightened up considerably. I told him so at the time. If the Government are going to sit back and say that they cannot carry the cattle, what is going to happen? Do the Government realise that once you get cattle fat you cannot hold them for ever?

Mr. Davies: The quantity of goods carried on the railways is increasing every month.

Mr. SPARKES: That is only an argument for increased rolling stock.

Mr. Aikens: There are locomotives and rolling stock still on order with the big engineering firms and they cannot deliver them.

Mr. SPARKES: I have not gone into that. Surely there is something wrong in the State of Denmark when this position is allowed to continue. The hon. member for Flinders wanted more stock, but what is the use of having more stock if you cannot carry the present stock to market? To me it is wrong that this position exists and we should take action to right it. It is not in the best interests of the State to have fat cattle that cannot be got to market. I say quite frankly that clients of my firm have not hundreds, but thousands of cattle waiting to be shipped to market.

Mr. Aikens: Every railway man agrees with you but can you tell us how the position can be rectified?

Mr. SPARKES: I am not the Commissioner for Railways nor am I the Minister for Transport. I am just saying what is happening. If the hon. member told me of something that happened on one of my stations, I would do something to rectify it. It is up to us to do that.

Mr. Aikens: If a flood washed away your fences—

Mr. SPARKES: I would repair the damage and put them up again. I agree with the hon. member for Flinders about the number of cattle we should have. We talk

about the Channel Country but you have to get the cattle in and out of that country. Hon. members cannot tell me anything about the Channel Country as I know it from one end to the other. I was there as a kid of 16 years of age.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SMITH (Carpentaria) (8.50 p.m.): I compliment the Treasurer on the way he handles the State's financial affairs. I am very interested in the financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and this State, and I am greatly concerned at the paucity of the loan moneys made available to Queensland for public works.

Before enlarging on that, however, I should like to deal with a matter that has just been raised by the hon. member for Aubigny. Although he is one of the leading cattle men in the Commonwealth, he is unable to devise a means of getting fat cattle from the back country to the coast. The solution of the problem is the establishment of inland killing centres. I suppose Vesteys alone this year will shift some 80,000 to 100,000 head of cattle from the Northern Territory into their Queensland properties. They are transporting them to Dajarra by road trains, and railfing them from there to the coast. That is a ridiculous arrangement, just as ridiculous as bringing sheep to the coast to shear them. The hon. member for Aubigny should organise the cattle men of Queensland and the Northern Territory to seek the establishment of inland killing centres. The carcasses could then be railed to the coast. Instead of building more cattle trucks, the Government should go in extensively for refrigerated wagons for the transport of carcasses from inland killing centres to the coast.

An Opposition Member: How many refrigerated wagons would the railways have?

Mr. SMITH: I do not know, but instead of building more cattle trucks they should go in for refrigerated wagons.

Mr. Hewitt: What about road transport?

Mr. SMITH: Road transport would not carry nearly the quantity of carcasses that rail transport would. One diesel locomotive could haul hundreds of tons of beef more than a diesel truck.

I was astonished to hear the hon. member for Aubigny say he had no answer to the problem. Let him organise the cattle men to establish inland killing centres. That would be of great benefit not only to the cattle industry, but to the State and the Commonwealth as a whole. The hon. member was disgusted with the Federal Treasurer's scheme to transport live cattle from the Northern Territory by air. I should like to know how they would get the cattle into aeroplanes for a start. It is hard enough to get them into a stockyard.

I am really concerned about the State's financial position because of the meanness of the Commonwealth Government. Despite the millions of pounds they collect from the people of Queensland their mean return forces us to curtail expenditure on hospitals, dental clinics, baby clinics, maternity hospitals, schools and other important amenities and services. I have been waiting to find in the Press or in Federal "Hansard" a report of a great outburst, not by Labour members or Opposition members alone, but by all members of the Federal Parliament—Country Party, Liberal and Labour—protesting on the floor of the Federal House against the mean handout to the State by the Federal Treasurer.

The Secretary for Health and Home Affairs has given the hospital board at Mt. Isa permission to spend the best part of £650,000 on a new hospital if it can raise the money. To do that it will have to canvass the financial institutions for a loan, and I do not think it will be able to raise it. Anyway, I cannot see why the hospital board should have to go cap in hand to any financial institution. Some scheme should have been put forward by the Federal Treasurer to hand back some of the millions of pounds the Commonwealth Government have taken from Mt. Isa Mines and its employees over the years.

In the next five years the Rio Tinto people will spend £10,000,000 on the development of the Mary Kathleen uranium field. The Commonwealth Government offer no help to provide hospitals or schools there and make no contribution to the new township. The money for all that work must come from the measly loan allocation given by the Commonwealth Treasurer.

Mr. Pizzey: Not the Commonwealth Treasurer, but the Loan Council.

Mr. SMITH: The Commonwealth Government have the controlling interest on the Loan Council. They cry that they have no money.

Mr. Pizzey: Who said that?

Mr. SMITH: The Commonwealth Government. It is a man-made depression!

Mr. Pizzey: No!

Mr. SMITH: The Prime Minister says the Commonwealth have no money and he wants to call a conference of the State Premiers to discuss wage-pegging and conditions of the workers. Queensland has an area of 640,000 square miles, and by multiplying 640,000 by 640 we get a few million acres. Mt. Isa Mines have mineral leases covering approximately 6,000 acres. The Rio Tinto people have another 6,000 acres. On 12,000 acres nearly £40,000,000 will be spent in the next five years. All that money is to be spent on 12,000 acres of Queensland with an area of 640,000 square miles. Are the Commonwealth Government encouraging these people? Of course they are not. They are trying to make a man-made depression,

Mr. Pizzey: You will get good assistance for the northern mines.

Mr. SMITH: It is pretty slow coming. Two months have gone by since I brought the matter up on the Address in Reply. The Commonwealth Government have done nothing. Every day thousands of pounds are being spent on the expansion of the area but the Commonwealth sit down and say, "We want more information." Two men from the World Bank went out there three months ago. They made their report, but what has been done? They want more information! What more information do they want than that between £35,000,000 and £40,000,000 will be spent on 12,000 acres of mineral lease within the next five years? Is that not worthy of some consideration from the Commonwealth Government?

Mr. Pizzey: You will get it too.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member is more optimistic than I am.

In March this year the Premier said that we needed the money but they are still waiting for more information.

I am concerned about the attitude of the Commonwealth Government towards the Queensland hospital system. A Government that curtails the allocation of money to be spent by the Queensland Government on a hospital building programme is worthy of only the severest condemnation.

Mr. Pizzey: I hope next session you will be good enough to say "Thank you" for what you get in the meantime.

Mr. SMITH: Education is financed from loan money. In his Financial Statement the Treasurer said—

"It is regrettable to note that, despite the assistance rendered by the Government, only 49 of the 123 local authorities which had debenture borrowing programmes were able to raise 80 per cent. of their approved allocation. The Brisbane City Council could only raise £2,289,700 or 61 per cent. of its amended borrowing programme of £3,750,000. Thirteen local authorities raised no funds whatever."

I will tell hon. members why. Insurance companies, banks and finance houses of the State are not interested in Western Queensland. The Local Authority Monthly Journal proves that. Longreach, Charleville and many western local authorities have complained of the apathy towards the western part of the State. They say that the west of Queensland needs development. They say that there are great potentials in pastoral and mining fields. They say, "Why do not the Government do something?" On the other hand, why do not these financial houses put some of their money into it?

Mr. Pizzey: Do you have any labour problems in the West?

Mr. SMITH: We have an army of unemployed in the West now. Only recently the Northern District Secretary of the A.W.U., Mr. Edgar Williams, made a statement through "The Worker" and "The Townsville Bulletin" warning unemployed not to go to the Cloncurry mineral field as there were too many men there now looking for work. The other night I heard a broadcast by a banking authority in Melbourne, I think the manager of the A.N. & Z. Bank, who said that Queensland Government's policy for developing the northern part of the State was too ambitious, that they must go very carefully because the potentialities may not be there, then they must see that the money was not spent unwisely. It is quite usual to read of such statements from southern interests warning against any financial assistance to develop the many potentialities of these northern districts. I know that the shires of Cloncurry, Barkly Downs, Burketown, Carpentaria and Croydon, could not raise one penny from these financial houses. They are not interested in Western Queensland. I understand officials of Mt. Isa Mines, endeavoured to persuade the T. & G. Insurance Coy. to lend the Cloncurry shire council money but it was not interested. They are not interested in lending money to the Mt. Isa Hospitals Board. The Minister gave permission to the Hospitals Board to raise the money so as to be in a position to call tenders, but not one financial house was interested in advancing the money. Let hon. members read the Longreach newspaper and learn of the experience of the Longreach shire council and other councils down as far as Charleville and Cunnamulla.

Mr. Devries: Most of the accommodation comes from the State Government Insurance Office.

Mr. SMITH: I am coming to that. The main source of funds for these western local authorities for water and other facilities is the State Government Insurance Office. Two or three years ago the Treasurer gave the Cloncurry shire council permission to borrow to build a water scheme at Cloncurry and Mt. Isa but not one of the financial institutions was interested. The State Government Insurance Office came to the rescue. The hon. member for Fassifern complained that the State Government Insurance Office was not interested in insuring woolsheds, haysheds or cowbails. I point out to him that it is interested in the back country to a greater extent than any other insurance company in Queensland. It is the only financial authority to give the western area the financial backing that it needed. I have been asked by local authorities to urge the Treasurer to grant Treasury loans for water and electric light schemes. Private financial institutions are not interested.

Mr. Muller: The Government are not interested.

Mr. SMITH: If I had the time I would produce my correspondence with the Treasurer. When local authorities have been unable to raise debenture loans the Treasurer on numerous occasions has changed the loan to a Treasury loan.

Mr. Walsh: That is very true.

Mr. Pizzey: Were the finances of the shire sound?

Mr. SMITH: That is not the material consideration. The important thing is the potentiality of the shire. The Leader of the Opposition visited the area and criticised what the Government had not done. I shall be interested to hear his statement on what the financial houses are doing to assist local authorities. But for the assistance of this Government there would be no mining at Mt. Isa today. Funds were required to hold the then development of the mine until the directors could get more money to develop it. No financial House would loan the company a penny to pay wages and de-watering costs until the Government stepped in as guarantor for half a million pounds. The Leader of the Opposition did not tell the people that, and he did not tell the people what the financial houses were prepared to do.

Mr. Muller: The railway line to Mt. Isa is a disgrace.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member for Fassifern would not know. He flew to Mt. Isa and back. I should be interested to know where he travelled by train on that line.

Mr. Muller: From Hughenden to Cloncurry.

Mr. SMITH: I advise the hon. member for Fassifern not to say anything about this matter. I know the position and he does not. At the present time there are six goods trains in and out of Mt. Isa each day, in addition to mail trains. During the week a number of trains leave Mt. Isa with empty wagons. I shall get verification of that from the Minister for Transport and produce it in this Chamber.

Mr. Muller: You cannot get it in writing.

Mr. SMITH: I shall get it in writing.

The hon. member for Fassifern spoke there during the election campaign. The only listeners he had were a couple of old dogs and the Scotch pipe band playing across the river. They piped him in and they piped him out. He had no listeners as the people knew he was not interested, just as they knew the Leader of the Opposition was not interested in the area. They made statements along this line, "Tip out the Labour candidate and we will do something for you." He was piped out by the band, and he even complained of it to the newspapers on his return.

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The Federal Government are depriving this State of its fair share of tax revenue. Many millions of pounds in taxation come from this State and especially from my electorate since the mining boom started a few years ago. Do not hon. members opposite think that the Federal Government are entitled to hand back some of the money for the building of schools, hospitals and technical colleges? The taxation paid by Mt. Isa Mines is greater than the amount this Government have ever received from that company in freight charges. Do hon. members opposite think that the Federal Government should not put money into the building and reconstruction of that line to keep industries going?

Mr. Pizzey: What is the State doing?

Mr. SMITH: The State Government are doing quite a lot.

Mr. Muller: They get the money from the Commonwealth Government.

An Opposition Member: Have you not got a new hospital at Mt. Isa yet?

Mr. SMITH: Where can we get the money for it? No financial house will advance it. Financial Houses will be asked to supply £650,000 for the project. We can only build hospitals with loan money and the hon. members should know that hospitals are built with loan money.

Mr. Muller: You spend your money in the cities and not outside.

Mr. SMITH: What about the guarantee by a Labour Government to keep Mt. Isa Mines going to put it in the position it is in today? Why, only last March, the Premier said that the Government would build an all-weather road of 44 miles from Cloncurry to the Mary Kathleen uranium deposits. The first section has been started and we are waiting now for the Federal Government to come along and tell us that they will make available £10,000,000 for the reconstruction of the line from Charters Towers to Cloncurry and on to Mt. Isa.

Mr. Muller: Road construction is a State responsibility.

Mr. SMITH: I am telling the hon. member that. He should know that the more you poke at a cow in the bail the more she jumps.

Mr. Walsh: The Commonwealth will get quite a lot out of the development of the uranium fields.

Mr. SMITH: I agree with the hon. member for Mundingburra when he asked why the Commonwealth Government should not do more for the development of the uranium fields.

Mr. Muller: They will do something when the company is established.

Mr. SMITH: They will do nothing. Let the hon. member tell me what they are going to do. I heard on the wireless only the other night a statement by the Federal Minister for Supply that a nuclear power station was to be started at Mt. Isa. The Commonwealth Government will take all the money out and not put a penny in. I know what I am talking about. They are developing the Scottsville coal mine for further coal production.

Mr. Pizzey: How long do you think it will take to build a nuclear power station?

Mr. SMITH: I am speaking about the apathy of the Federal Government. The Mt. Isa Mines Company is spending £20,000,000 on the development of their mining leases at Mt. Isa. The company is building a new big plant for steam to be generated by coal—a 60,000-Kw power station. If the company was interested in a nuclear power station do hon. members think it would be spending that money on a steam power plant?

Mr. Nicklin: Nuclear power stations are only in the experimental stage. You must have electricity in the meantime.

Mr. SMITH: Why should not the Federal Government do what other countries are doing—help in the development of nuclear power stations. There has been no development of nuclear power stations by the Commonwealth Government. The State Government will not get anything out of the development of uranium in this State except rent for the leases.

Mr. Muller: Mt. Isa Mines are very critical of the treatment they get from this Government.

Mr. SMITH: An official of Mt. Isa Mines was very critical of the Opposition in a conversation I had with him. He said, "What will we do if they ever get into power?" In 1925, when the enabling Bill for the construction of the Mt. Isa railway line was introduced all that the Opposition could say was, "The Government are building a railway line to a white elephant." Mt. Isa Mines know the position they would have been in if the Opposition had been in power when the mines were being developed. The Leader of the Opposition went to Mt. Isa two or three years ago, and although at that time five small uranium companies were operating, he did not visit one of them.

Mr. Gaven: When did you first go to Mt. Isa?

Mr. SMITH: On 1 January, 1924.

I was very interested to hear Opposition criticism of rail freights in this State. Only a few weeks ago the Premier sent me a letter setting out particulars of rail freights from Townsville to Mt. Isa. I think they are worth recording in "Hansard." The Premier wrote the letter in reply to complaints by an organisation in Mt. Isa about rail freights, and he sent me a copy.

These are the freights on the commodities mentioned—

	Per lb. d.
Bacon and Hams	1.82
Beans, dried	1.82
Biscuits	2.96
Butter	1.82
Cheese, luncheon (product of Commonwealth)	1.82
Cocoa	2.96
Coffee	2.96
Dripping	1.82
Eggs and Egg Powder	1.82
Flour, Queensland manufacture (minimum 1 ton)	1.05
Fruit, fresh	.8
Fruit, preserved	1.82
Groceries, not otherwise specified	2.96
Honey	1.82
Jam (product of Commonwealth)	1.82
Lactogen	1.82
Milk, preserved or concentrated	1.82
Salt, table	1.82
Sugar	2.03
Syrup	1.82
Tea	2.96
Treacle	1.82

There are no milk producers in my electorate, but I agreed with the hon. member for Southport. Go to any milk bar in Brisbane and it will cost you 11d. for half a pint. I sympathise with the dairymen, though we have none. We run the old bush cow down, tie her up to a tree and milk her. The butcher and the consumer do not get as much for their beef as the hon. member for Aubigny gets when he sells it at the abattoir in Brisbane.

I think the freight on the commodities I have listed is worth recording in "Hansard."

Mr. Nicholson: Is that your apology for your broken-down railways?

Mr. SMITH: Do not give me that. The hon. member has been whipping that old cat so long now that it is obvious he cannot find anything else to whip.

I had intended to ask the Attorney-General a question without notice but I thought I had better save it for my Budget speech. Only recently there appeared in the Press a statement by the Mt. Isa Chamber of Commerce to this effect—

"Owing to the high wages and freights on all commodities coming to Mt. Isa the prices to the consumer will have to be increased 50, 60 or 100 per cent." So the prices were increased. A few weeks later the statement was made that supplies were flowing into Mt. Isa much more cheaply

from Adelaide by train and from Alice Springs by road transport. Was there any reduction in the prices of those commodities to the workers and their families?

Mr. Power: I will have to send a couple of price officers there.

Mr. SMITH: I ask the Minister to send a couple of price inspectors there. Does the Leader of the Opposition suggest it is fair and just for anyone to increase his prices to the worker and his family because of increases in wages and freights in the State when in fact it is stated the goods are brought in much more cheaply from another State? It may amuse the hon. member for Fassifern but it does not amuse the Government and it does not amuse me.

Mr. Muller: Is it not a fact that Norman Smith is the wealthiest man in Mt. Isa?

Mr. SMITH: I might be and I might not, but I do not care; the hon. member can sling personalities at me. What I have come to me through the unfortunate death of my parents. They are the ones who worked for it. I have said before in this Chamber that what I have come by inheritance from my mother and father, and I am not ashamed of that. For 8 years I worked for Mt. Isa Mines. I saved my money to go into business with my parents. I went to work at Kuridala when I was 16. If the hon. member slings personalities, I will sling them back. Make no bones about it. I do not rob share farmers. I do not take the blood and sweat out of them and bank the money they earn. The hon. member does. He makes them work 24 hours a day, hail, rain or shine. He makes them sweat!

The hon. member for Aubigny complained because the A.W.U. did not have a secret ballot over the shearers' strike. Why did he not advocate a secret ballot for the graziers? I have heard the graziers criticise Gunn. What is fair for one is fair for all. Why did not the hon. member for Aubigny advocate a secret ballot to see whether the sheep-growers would accept the old or the new rate? They did not want to do that. I can get tough too. All through the debate I waited for the Opposition to suggest organising, not only the A.W.U. shearers, rouseabouts, station hands, boundary riders and musterers in the western part of the State but also the graziers with the object of holding a secret ballot on whether they would accept the decision of the Industrial Court. They were afraid to do it. Small sheep men in my electorate have said, "Why doesn't Gunn give us a chance to say something about the strike?"

The hon. member for Aubigny talked about supplies coming to Mt. Isa. This appeared in the "North Australian Monthly" of August, 1956—

"Tennant Creek is Progressive.

"Copper ore from the Peko is sent by road-train 322 miles south to Alice Springs, thence to Port Kembla and South Australian ports.

"Supplies for the mine and the mine mess come not only from the south, but from Townsville and Cairns. Timber for underground and structural purposes is supplied by Cairns Timber Ltd. This is railed 900 miles to Mount Isa, then transported by road 430 miles to the Peko.

"There is considerable traffic on the Stuart Highway through Tennants Creek which is situated 630 miles south of Darwin."

There are more supplies going from Mt. Isa and to the Northern Territory than are coming down. I confirm that by an item appearing in the "Townsville Bulletin" on 18 September. It reads—

"Road Transport Big N.T. Business.

"Owing to inadequate shipping and slow turn round of ships, lack of berthing space, etc., at Darwin, more and more commodities are being transported to Darwin from the south and Queensland by overland means—by rail to Mt. Isa or Alice Springs, thence by road transport. In either case, it means a road haul of 1,000 miles."

Mr. Muller interjected.

Mr. SMITH: You cannot tell hon. members opposite anything. It is no wonder the poor old dairyman is in the position he is in today when men like the hon. member for Fassifern are handling his interests. I now know why the hon. member for Southport has to fight such people on the Milk Board as the hon. member for Fassifern.

The statement continues—

"Outback Transport also makes regular trips to Mt. Isa moving about 50 tons a month from that railhead. Mt. Isa is 1,054 miles from Darwin by a good bitumen road. The freight charge is £25 per ton."

Rail transport costs 34s. for nearly 700 miles which is approximately £17 a ton, and they charge the difference for the few hundred miles by road transport. I have not time to read all the statement. There is more going out to the railhead at Mt. Isa and to the Northern Territory. (Opposition interjections.) The hon. member for Hinchinbrook warned this Government of the interest of certain Federal Ministers in the co-ordinated road transport who were going to use the Northern Territory railways or the South Australian railways for their own financial purposes.

Mr. Nicholson: How many shares have you got?

Mr. SMITH: None. The hon. member is only jealous. If I had not earned everything I have honestly the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Fassifern

would have bashed me with it when they came to Mt. Isa during the last election campaign. If those hon. members had had anything on me do you not think they would have bashed me with it. (Opposition interjections.) I have listened to dirty insinuations and scurrilous statements about Labour members during the 1950, the 1953 and the 1956 State elections but when they came to the Carpentaria electorate they could not find anything to say about the Labour member there and they went away with their tails between their legs. The Leader of the Opposition came to Mt. Isa before the 1953 elections to hold an executive meeting in the huge Kennedy and Carpentaria electorates. The meeting was held in the soldiers' hall and there were not more than six people attended. There were no people from Longreach or Muttaborra or Emerald; there was nobody from Cloncurry, Burketown, Croydon, Camooweal or Dajarra. The six people who attended were officials of a certain organisation. Not one business man attended the meeting.

The hon. member for Fassifern visited Mt. Isa during the last election campaign. He had no audience. He talked so loudly that he had to take off his hearing aid so that he could not hear himself. If they had been able to prove anything against me, it would have been mentioned during that campaign.

Mr. Nicklin: That is not so.

Mr. SMITH: They would have tried to scandalise me, as they did every other Labour member in Queensland. They were treated as dingoes and hunted out of the electorate.

Mr. Pizzey: If Joe Bukowski held a meeting there, would you attend?

Mr. SMITH: I think it is the duty of the local member to attend the meeting of any visiting speaker in his electorate as a matter of courtesy. I attended the meeting of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Pizzey: He had one listener.

Mr. SMITH: That is all, and he was very mild.

I shall now deal with a matter of more importance. We know the trouble experienced by the hon. member for Belyando. He was charged before a Royal Commission and convicted; and his reputation was ruined for life. The charge was the same as that levelled against him in the lower court in Brisbane. The magistrate dismissed the charge on the ground that the evidence was that of one man against the other, corroborated by hearsay evidence which was not admissible. He was convicted before the Royal Commission with no right of appeal. That is in contrast to the treatment of two accused persons in Cloncurry last month. They were committed for trial by the coroner on a charge of manslaughter. The trial commenced about a fortnight or three weeks ago.

Counsel for the defence made certain submissions to the presiding judge, Mr. Justice Jeffriess. They contended that statements by one man against the other were not admissible. One of the policemen made a statement to Chief Inspector Donovan condemning the other prisoner. They argued for two days and on the third day Mr. Justice Jeffriess ruled that the evidence did not establish a case against the prisoners as it was capable of an innocent construction. As I have said, the evidence in the Foley case was the word of one man against the other. The magistrate dismissed the charge, but the hon. member for Belyando was convicted by the Royal Commissioner and condemned without any right of appeal. Counsel argued the point that there was one man's statement against another and Mr. Justice Jeffriess agreed that the evidence was not admissible in the Supreme Court because it might have an innocent interpretation. The case was thrown out and the charge dismissed against the two men. Why were not the charges against the hon. member for Belyando dismissed? Hon. members of the Opposition attacked Mr. Hickey. Tom Foley has been crippled for life; his wife lies in her grave and I repeat Mr. Justice Jeffriess threw this case out of the Supreme Court because it was just one man's word against another. Do not hon. members of the Opposition think that the same thing might apply to the hon. member for Belyando? Bell made a charge against him. I ask the Premier and the Attorney-General to delve thoroughly into this matter and have it taken up by the Crown Law Office; if necessary get independent legal advice from the South. Every effort should be made to clear the hon. member for Belyando of the charges made against him by the presiding justice of the Royal Commission. In the Magistrates Court one man's evidence against another is not admissible. In the Supreme Court at Cloncurry Mr. Justice Jeffriess threw out the case of the two men charged with manslaughter. He would not let it go to the jury because it was one man's evidence against another.

Mr. Nicholson interjected.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member would not know. There are mug bush lawyers.

Opposition Members interjected.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SMITH: The report of that case was in the Press.

Mr. Muller interjected.

Mr. SMITH: Why does not the hon. member stand up and do the decent thing? The hon. member for Belyando has been crippled for life. I leave the matter to the decision of the fair and just people of the State.

I am going to ask the Government to commence an inquiry at the earliest possible date by Royal Commission or in some other legal way to ascertain why a man called Jorgensen lies in his grave at Mt. Isa. I am going to ask the Government to commence a Royal Commission to ascertain the reason why Jorgensen is lying in his grave at Mt. Isa tonight. I do not set myself up as a member of the judiciary. He lies in his grave, the cause of his death unknown. It cannot be denied that he died by some means other than a natural death. The people of my electorate want the most exhaustive inquiry into it.

(Time expired.)

Progress reported.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

DATE OF PRESENTATION.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition inquired this morning whether I could indicate when the Auditor-General's Report was likely to be available and I undertook to have inquiries made and to inform the House.

The Auditor-General has informed me that his report should be available for presentation to Parliament one day next week.

The House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.