

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 1957

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. A. R. Fletcher, Cunningham) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

ART UNION PERMITS.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition), for **Mr. MANN** (Brisbane), asked the Attorney-General—

“As the indiscriminate posting of art union tickets to members of the public has persisted as late as last week,—

1. What action has he taken to move against this practice in accordance with his statement that he would do so, as published in “The Courier-Mail” of 7 September?

2. How many permits for the conduct of art unions were issued in each of the months of June, July, August, and September, 1957, and what were and are the expiry dates of such permits?

3. To whom were the permits issued, and what organisations did they represent?”

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

“(1) In answer to paragraphs (2) and (3) of the Question I have attached a Schedule (which will be tabled) setting out details of all Art Union permits with

gross of more than £100. To add all those small Art Unions under £100 gross would not add any value to this Answer. With reference to paragraph (1) of the Question, and supplementing the particulars shown in the Schedule, I may say that I am well aware that for some years past there has been some lack of enforcement of Regulation 6 of the Art Union Regulation Acts and I, myself, have brought this under the notice of the then Attorney-General on a number of occasions. This state of affairs has caused me considerable concern, partly by reason of the inconvenience caused to people to whom books of tickets have been sent in contravention of the Regulation and partly because any large scale contravention of the Regulation could involve serious abuses. Since August 12, I have, with officers of my Department, taken action to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, books of tickets will not be sent to persons who do not wish to receive them. Checks are being applied to ensure that the number of tickets un-accounted for at the date of drawing of the Art Union will be reduced to a minimum. The vast majority of organisers are complying with the requirements of my Department, and if any cases of persistent contravention come under my notice, those cases, and the persons responsible, will be firmly dealt with. If the Honourable Member has any evidence of a recent case of indiscriminate posting of Art Union tickets I shall be glad if he will bring the case under my notice. Referring to the particulars shown in the Schedule, I may say that prior to August 12 there were some few cases in which a permit for an Art Union was issued to a branch of a political Party—the fund to be credited being shown on the application as 'Literary Fund'. So that this information will not mislead anybody, I desire to make it clear that no such permits have been issued since August 12, 1957. Even if some political Party activities could be regarded as coming within the term 'educational' there would be great difficulty in ensuring that the funds so specified are actually applied for that purpose. Moreover, it is felt that it would not be in the public interest for political Parties to compete with religious, charitable and educational institutions in the raising of funds by Art Unions. For the reasons indicated, and generally to protect the public interest, it is not the policy of the present Government to grant Art Union permits to political Parties."

Whereupon the hon. gentleman laid the Schedule on the table.

PRISON TREATMENT AT STUART GAOL.

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

"(1) Has his attention been drawn to a long statement published in the Townsville 'Daily Bulletin' of 4 October, wherein an

ex-prisoner named James Robert Punton claimed that the recent batch of tough-guy prisoners recently transferred from Boggo Road to Stuart were being given favoured treatment in food and conditions over prisoners who had good records for prison behaviour, and in addition to this Punton made other serious allegations as to the treatment of prisoners at Stuart?"

"(2) If so, in view of the fact that the public are quite concerned as a result of Punton's allegations, will he make a full statement to the House on the matter?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1 and 2) The Superintendent of the Townsville Prison reports that during February last several prisoners, transferred from Brisbane to Townsville Prison, were granted extra rations by the visiting surgeon because of the heavy work upon which they were employed. The grant of extra rations—meat and tobacco—for prisoners engaged on heavy work is standard practice. Bread is sometimes sliced before being given to certain prisoners as a security check. The rehabilitation grant to prisoners has been administered strictly. The Superintendent further advises that the statement that sick prisoners are left in cells while other prisoners occupy the hospital ward is untrue. The Government Medical Officer is the authority for committing prisoners to the General Hospital or the Prison Hospital ward. The library presently consists of 1,200 books and countless magazines and periodicals. The Superintendent has assured me that these transferred prisoners were, in all other respects, treated in the same manner as other prisoners at the Townsville Prison."

EX-SERVICEMEN AND CENTENARY COMMITTEE.

Mr. JESSON (Hinchinbrook) asked the Premier—

"In view of the fact that in the Report of the Meeting of the Centenary Committee dated Tuesday, 1 October, there is no mention of any Ex-Servicemen's Organisations being represented on that Committee, will he, if this is so, give consideration to appointing representatives from Ex-Servicemen's Organisations to that Committee including a Member or Members of the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"Organisations of ex-servicemen are represented on the Executive Committee, formed to plan the Centenary Celebrations, by Sir Raymond Huish, President of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. Among the items adopted for inclusion in the programme is one providing for a mass demonstration of loyalty by ex-servicemen and women and a giant re-union concert of ex-service and serving

personnel. The organisation of these functions will be handed over to a Committee representing all ex-servicemen's organisations and no doubt they will also be asked to take part in other features of the Celebrations."

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) asked the Premier—

"(1) Will he give consideration to the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee to investigate the effects of the present disastrous drought and ways and means of granting relief to farmers who are genuinely trying to keep their herds alive?"

"(2) Will he take immediate steps to check on availability of supplies of molasses and grain to farmers and other primary producers at present feeding stock and, if necessary, stop the use of molasses as a fertiliser during the currency of the present drought?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"(1) The Department of Agriculture and Stock is at present most active in connection with matters pertaining to the drought, and it is difficult to see in what way a Parliamentary Committee could accomplish anything which this or any other appropriate department cannot. In point of fact, a committee would have to rely almost completely on departmental resources. I would point out that droughts do not constitute a new experience for the officers concerned and it is not a case of investigating new techniques or new fields of endeavour at this stage."

"(2) That the Government is fully alive to the serious nature of the position and the urgent necessity to provide relief to dairy farmers and others is evidenced by the following facts:—(a) The Minister for Agriculture and Stock (Mr. Madsen) has already called a conference of representatives of grain marketing boards for today, and on 8 October, he approached the Sugar Board for all pertinent information in connection with supplies of molasses. The Sugar Board is treating the matter as one of urgency and is securing all possible information. (b) Provision has been made on the Estimates for 1957-1958 for the initial expenditure of £150,000 from the Drought Relief Fund. This amount will be exhausted at the end of the present week, and yesterday Cabinet approved the appropriation of a further sum for the purpose pending submission of a case to the Commonwealth Government for drought relief assistance. The Government's case is being urgently prepared and we propose to ask the Commonwealth to grant a subsidy on a £ for £ basis up to £250,000."

LIQUOR LICENSES, RAILWAY REFRESHMENT
ROOMS.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Is he aware that the Commissioner for Railways refuses to pay his share of the license fee imposed by the Licensing Commissioner on Railway Refreshment Rooms where liquor is sold, claiming to have the legal right to so refuse to pay, as the Crown cannot make any charge on the Crown?"

"(2) Has the Commissioner for Railways any legal grounds at all for refusing to meet the obligations imposed on every other owner of licensed premises, and if so, does he agree with such a manifestly unjust circumstance?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"(1) It is not that the Commissioner refuses to pay a licence fee, but rather that there is no liability upon him to make such a payment."

"(2) I understand the legal position to be as set out in answer to question (1) and cannot see that the circumstances are in any way unjust."

POLICE INQUIRIES INTO ESTABLISHMENT OF
MITCHELL ABATTOIR.

Mr. GAIR (South Brisbane): I desire to ask the Premier whether he has answers to the following question, which I addressed to him on 5 September—

"(1) As he was reported to have said at Mitchell on 30 July last that Police inquiries made into the Mitchell Abattoir were part of political resistance and interference to prevent establishment of the abattoir, that the investigation had been set in train without the slightest ground either legally or morally, and that the Liberal-Country Party Government would take steps to find out who was responsible for the instruction to the Police, will he inform the House (a) whether he has had an opportunity of investigating this matter as promised and (b) if so, whether the Government was responsible for issuing the instruction to the Police to conduct inquiries into the Mitchell Abattoir as alleged by him?"

"(2) If the Government was responsible will he name the Minister of my Government who issued the instruction?"

"(3) If not, will he inform the House who issued the instruction, the reasons for the Police inquiries and, if based on any complaint to the Police, will he supply the name or names of the person or persons who made such complaint?"

"(4) In the event of his inquiries revealing that the Police inquiries were initiated without the knowledge of any Member of my Cabinet will he make the *amende honorable* to me and my Cabinet

against whom he alleged political resistance and interference in the establishment of an abattoir at Mitchell and at other centres?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

"The statement I made at Mitchell was based on information given to me by a trustworthy and reliable source. It was not intended to convey, nor do I think it did convey, the impression that any Member of the previous Cabinet was responsible for the actions to which I referred. I think Honourable Members of this Parliament, and those outside the House who know me, would agree that I would be among the last to impute improper motives or actions where they did not exist and if the statement referred to created the impression that the former Premier (the present Honourable Member for South Brisbane) or any of his Ministers were involved, I should like to remove that impression. The enquiries directed against the Directors of the Inland Meat Co-operative Association Limited I have now ascertained had their origin in another source, but as the matter is of a highly confidential nature, I think there is nothing more I should say at the present time."

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulation under the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929 to 1954.

Order in Council under the Supreme Court Act of 1921.

Order in Council under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1957.

Regulation under the Fruit Marketing Organisation Acts, 1923 to 1956.

Report of the Toowoomba Local Abattoir Board for the year ended June 30, 1957.

Fifty-seventh Report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

ADVOCATES AND LAY MEMBERS OF THE INDUSTRIAL COURT.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra): Mr. Speaker, I desire to ask for your ruling on the conduct of members of this House—the language that they may use. As "The Courier-Mail" this morning, quite properly in my opinion, published a remark by Mr. Justice Brown, President of the Industrial Court, that laymen appearing before that court were bastard solicitors, I should like to know whether hon. members of this House may, in debate, refer to the lay members of the Court as bastard judges.

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions of this nature naturally require a certain amount of thought. I will give the hon. member an answer in due course.

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND ACTS AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

INITIATION.

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis—Minister for Education): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to repeal Sections Twenty-five and Thirty-one of the University of Queensland Acts Amendment Act of 1957."

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S PENSION BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (11.18 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to authorise the payment of a pension to Sir John Dudley Lavarack, Lieutenant-General on the Retired List of the Australian Military Forces, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, formerly Governor of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia, and to provide for his wife in the event of his death."

This Bill authorises the payment of a pension to Queensland's immediate past Governor, Sir John Dudley Lavarack, and in the event of Lady Lavarack's surviving him, to her. The pension is to be payable during life.

In the case of Sir John, it is to commence from 1 October of this year, that is, in effect, as from his retirement from office as Governor on 30 September. The rate of pension in his case is to be £1,000 per annum. Lady Lavarack, if she survives him, will receive half that rate, that is, £500 per annum.

Before reviewing, as I intend to review and as I think most material to this Bill to review, the personal history of Sir John Lavarack and the outstanding service he has rendered to Queensland, Australia, and the British Commonwealth, I feel it incumbent upon me to say something regarding the high, responsible and important office of Governor of a State such as Queensland.

Constitutionally speaking, Queensland has, so to speak, a triple personality, in that it is firstly a sovereign State, secondly a member of the Commonwealth of Australia, and thirdly a unit of that proud family of nations, countries and people called the British Commonwealth. But the Bill is concerned with

Queensland as a Sovereign State. As such, we recognise the sovereignty of Her Majesty the Queen acting through her duly appointed representative, the Governor.

Heedless and thoughtless people sometimes voice the opinion that the Crown, and consequently the Governor, serves no useful purpose in our constitutional set-up. Significantly, the same thing is whispered assiduously by devotees within our ranks of a system of government that is alien to our way of life. In passing, I wonder could one pay a greater tribute to the Crown as the fountain-head of our system of constitutional government than to refer to the freedom we allow to this class of devotees.

Be that as it may, all thinking and informed citizens, and above all every member of this Assembly who has a due sense of the responsibility attaching to his parliamentary office, must recognise the grave and onerous responsibilities that attach to the office of Sovereign of the British Commonwealth and to the Governor of the State as the Sovereign's representative.

It is, of course, true that, in accordance with the principle of the responsibility of the Government to the people through this Assembly, the Governor ordinarily acts upon the advice of his Ministers; but it is equally true that, in the final analysis, the Governor of the State has responsibilities from which he cannot shelter behind the Ministers. An instance of this sole responsibility is the power of appointing Ministers of the Crown.

The point I wish to make, and which I will state without further labouring it, is that the office of Governor demands that its holder be pre-eminent as regards character, reputation, and record of public service. It is equally important that the conditions related to service in the office should ensure that the holder is not disadvantaged by his tenure of it. This has been recognised by the Imperial Government since as long ago as 1865 when it legislated to provide pensions for Governors. The 1865 Act was replaced in 1911 by the Pensions (Governors of Dominions, &c.) Act, 1911, which, as subsequently amended, is still in force.

Briefly, the Imperial Act provides for pensions for persons who have served in the office of Governor of any part of the British Commonwealth for 10 years or longer. The pension is payable upon attainment of the age of 65 years or sooner retirement through permanent incapacity or abolition of the office. Four classes of pensions are provided, but, as the classification is made administratively, I regret that I cannot inform the Committee into which class Queensland would fall.

The rate of pension is based on unit values differing for each of the four classes. A unit is a month of completed service, and the values per unit for the four classes are, respectively, £7, £6, £5, and £4. Consequently, for 11 years' service in a Governorship in the first class, the pension is £922 per

annum. Having regard to the exchange differential, this approximates very closely to what we are providing in the Bill.

The Imperial Act does not extend to Governors who are appointed on the recommendation of the local Government. In anticipation of hasty criticism of this limitation, I point out that the obvious objective of the Imperial Act was to encourage the taking up of Government service outside the Homeland as a career. Not coming within this category, Sir John Lavarack cannot benefit under the Imperial Act. But my Government is of the opinion that he should receive comparable treatment, and in support of that opinion I think I cannot do better than outline to the Committee his career.

Sir John assumed the office of Governor on 1 October, 1946, and retired from that office on 30 September, 1957, thus completing 11 years' service as Governor of Queensland.

He succeeded Sir Leslie Orme Wilson, a man of great popularity who upheld the traditions of the office with dignity and honour. Sir John Lavarack was an eminently worthy successor and in his own way made an equally lasting and valuable impression on the citizens of Queensland.

He was untiring in his attention to his duties and at the same time most accessible to all who had problems coming within his province. He was ever-ready to assist and drew upon his great fund of common sense and knowledge gained from experience in advising either the Government or the ordinary citizen of the State. Undoubtedly it was this trait which served him so well in his very distinguished military career.

He joined the Australian Permanent Forces in 1905 and from then until his appointment as Governor of Queensland, after attaining the rank of Lieutenant-General, he served Queensland, Australia and the British Commonwealth with a singlemindedness that won him many well-deserved honours.

During the First World War he was awarded the C.M.G., the D.S.O. and the French Croix de Guerre. He was also mentioned several times in despatches. During the tenure of office as Chief of the General Staff of Australia he was made a Commander of the Bath and in the Second World War Knight Commander of the British Empire and was mentioned in despatches for services in Java and Sumatra.

He was entitled to wear with honour and distinction the 1914-15 Star, British G.S. Victory Medal from the First World War and the 1939-45 Star, North Africa Star and the Pacific Star. In addition he wore the Defence Medal, King's Medal and the Coronation Medal.

For services rendered to Queensland and the Crown as Governor of Queensland the Orders of Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George and Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order were conferred upon him.

A Queenslander of whom Queenslanders can be proud, Sir John Lavarack has now laid down the trappings of office to enjoy a well-earned rest, marred, unfortunately, by illness which has plagued him over the last few months. I am sure that all hon. members will join with me in wishing him a speedy recovery and the contentment he so richly deserves in his retirement after serving the State so well for so long.

In the Bill we offer him some tangible recompense for his years of service to the State as Governor. Without deprecating the emoluments of that office I think we can agree that they are, and never have been, such as would allow a holder to add substantially to his worldly wealth. That also is true of the service Sir John chose as a young man. But I do think in 1946 he could have elected to realise upon the rank and honours he had accumulated during his Army career. It is to his further credit that he did not do so but decided to give service to Queensland.

The Bill is essentially a tangible tribute to a very great and distinguished Queenslander, and I commend it to the Committee. It is only what the Parliament of the State should do to recognise in a tangible way Sir John's great record of service to Queensland.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.29 a.m.): The Opposition support this measure which makes provision for a pension of £1,000 a year during the lifetime of Sir John Lavarack and £500 a year for his wife, Lady Lavarack, should Sir John predecease her.

We recognise the very important work that Sir John Lavarack has carried out. Over the years during the course of the Address in Reply debate hon. members of all parties have joined in expressing appreciation of the distinguished way in which Sir John carried out his arduous duties. His work has not been easy. As the Premier said, it is a matter for regret that he relinquishes his duties of office suffering from ill health. The Government would be aware of Sir John's financial position and, I believe, apart from his military pension, the carrying out of the office of Governor without private means would not enable him to save a great deal of money. I know that it would not be doing Sir John any service by opening up in this debate the position of pensions generally, and I do not intend to do that other than to say that I hope to see the day when this nation of Australia recognises an obligation to all who have worked in the service of this country. I shall read some extracts from a letter written by Sir E. B. Lytton, the distinguished British diplomat, to Sir George Ferguson Bowen, the first Governor of Queensland, on his appointment. He gave him some advice which is as valid today as it was then. I quote—

“Remember that the first care of a Governor in a free colony is to shun the reproach of being a party man. Give all parties and all the ministries formed the fairest play.

“Mark and study the idiosyncrasies of the community; every community has some peculiar to itself. Then, in your public addresses, appeal to those which are the noblest; the noblest are generally the most universal and the most durable. They are peculiar to no party.

“Let your thoughts never be distracted from the paramount object of finance. All States thrive in proportion to the administration of revenue.

“You will as soon as possible exert all energy and persuasion to induce the colonists to see to their self-defence internally. A colony that is once accustomed to depend on Imperial soldiers for aid against riots, &c., never grows up into vigorous manhood. Witness the West Indian Colonies.

“Education the colonists will be sure to provide for. So they will for religion.

“As you will have a free Press, you will have some papers that may be abusive. Never be thin-skinned about these; laugh them off. Be pointedly courteous to all editors and writers—acknowledging socially their craft and its importance. The more you treat people as gentlemen the more they will behave as such.

“After all, men are governed as much by the heart as by the head. Evidence sympathy in the progress of the colony, traits of kindness, generosity, devoted energy, where required for the public weal, a pure exercise of patronage, an utter absence of vindictiveness or spite, the fairness that belongs to magnanimity—these are the qualities that make Governors powerful, while men merely sharp and clever may be weak and detested.

“But there is one rule that I find pretty universal in colonies. The Governor who is the least huffy and who is most careful not to over-govern, is the one who has the most authority. Enforce civility upon all minor officials. Courtesy is a duty which public servants owe to the humblest member of the public.”

We can judge the success of Sir John Lavarack as Governor by the way he carried out most of those maxims. We all agree that Sir John has served this State well. His appointment was a break from tradition in that he was the first of the native-born Queenslanders to be appointed to that high office. I am happy to share the feeling of the great majority of Queenslanders that his appointment and service both demonstrated that we can safely entrust to our own people the responsibility and the duties of the high office of Governor of this State.

I do not think we can cavil at the amount of the pension. It is hard to gauge with any degree of accuracy the amount of the pension. Under the Governors' Pension Act of 1956 in the United Kingdom a number of changes were made in the provisions relating to the pensions of the Governors of Dominions, colonies and protectorates, &c.

Under this Act the retiring age for receipt of a pension was reduced from 55 to 50 years, and provision was made for the payment of a pension to a Governor with less than three years' service as Governor provided that his combined service as Governor and in the civil service of the State amounted to at least 10 years.

Mr. Aikens: Did they have to make any contribution to that pension fund?

Mr. WOOD: As Governor, I do not think so.

Under British law it is provided that a retiring dominion governor who had gravitated to that position through the civil service of the United Kingdom, shall be paid a pension of £3,000 or such other sum as the Treasury may specify, or two-thirds of the yearly amount of the highest salary he had received as a permanent civil servant or as a governor.

Prior to the passing of the 1956 Act the maximum rate of pension for a governor or administrator of any of the dominions, exclusive of the British Isles, India or Pakistan, was £2,300 annually, and authority to grant such pension was vested in the Secretary of State acting with Treasury approval.

There was also power to grant pensions at reduced rates in certain circumstances, and provisions for gratuities. There was also an obligation on any fit person who had served as a governor and who had not attained the age of 55 to undertake further service, and in default his pension was forfeited. A pension was also liable to forfeiture if office was relinquished without Her Majesty's permission or for neglect.

Special provision was made for persons who, having been established civil servants, became governors.

We unanimously recognise the service of our retiring Governor. While it is hard for the Committee to assess accurately the amount of the pension, Opposition members are of the opinion that every person who has given service to his country should not have to spend his last days in financial anxiety or stress. In view of the outstanding work for Queensland by Sir John and Lady Lavarack, we support the measure.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (11.38 a.m.): I do not oppose the Bill, because I sincerely trust that it will usher in a new era and bring to an end the custom that has prevailed in this State, I think, since its inception, of looking after only what might be termed the tall poppies.

Under the Bill Sir John Lavarack without any contribution at all to any fund is to be granted a pension of £1,000 a year during his lifetime and, if he predeceases his wife, Lady Lavarack is to be granted a pension of £500 a year during her lifetime.

While it is admitted that Sir John and Lady Lavarack have given much service to the State, and that the State is correct in recognising their work for Queensland, I could not help thinking while listening to the words of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition that many old people in Queensland of the pioneer type who went into the burning West in the early days or into the fever-soaked jungles of the North and pioneered development in those places and made Queensland what it is today are now languishing in comparative poverty in the Eventide homes of the State.

I could not help thinking, too, that it has been the practice of the Government in the past to find lucrative sinecures for men in high positions who have been well paid during their time of service to the State. Magistrates, judges, top ranking civil servants and so on upon their retirement have been found lucrative sinecures to carry them on for many years after their retirement. I suppose there could be some justification for that, but I put it to the Premier that I hope we have seen the last of Government concern only for those in the top bracket. I hope that under his Government and indeed every future Government there might be a similar measure of concern for what might be termed the humble and ordinary people. If this Bill indicates that the Government are concerned not only with Sir John Lavarack and his good lady and not only with other top brass in the Civil Service who may retire and indicates that the Government are concerned with the old pioneer and the humble and ordinary men and women, then I shall be very happy to know it.

Mr. GAIR (South Brisbane) (11.42 a.m.): I support the measure because I believe it is the least we can do in recognition of the services of Sir John and Lady Lavarack during the past 11 years when he occupied the position of Governor of Queensland. As one member of the Government responsible for his nomination as Governor and as one who came in contact with him as a member of the Government during the whole period of his office, I am in a position to speak with some feeling not only of his services but also of his regrettable breakdown in health some months prior to the expiry of his term of office. Sir John, in addition to being a great soldier, Queenslander and Australian, distinguished himself in the field of battle and in the military services of this country. He was a strong man chiefly because he was of humble tastes and of easy approach, and he discharged his duties with humility and understanding. To summarise what I have been saying, Sir John was a conscientious servant of Her Majesty the Queen and the people of Queensland; his only desire was to give satisfaction. He successfully avoided Party politics but never entirely divorced himself from general politics in that he was interested in the progress and development of Queensland and the welfare of her citizens.

The position of Governor of a State is not an easy one. Whilst it might not entail a lot of hard work or duty which would involve deep and heavy thinking it is nevertheless arduous because the occupant of the office divorces himself from his relatives and friends to a great extent. He is expected to maintain the highest form of citizenship and is debarred from having freedoms which are available to every other person. By that I mean he could not elect to go onto the public beaches and into other public places with the same freedom as ordinary citizens in the community do. That might appear to be only a small thing, but it is a restriction of freedom. Furthermore, he and his wife are required to spend much of their time attending meetings and public and social functions, and that can become very arduous over a period of years. It can be said, I think, in truth that Sir John Lavarack has done an excellent job of work, and we were all very sorry that his health broke down prior to his retirement.

Lady Lavarack, of course, is entitled to a great measure of credit, too, for the part that she has played in the social life of this State and also for her part in the work of the public bodies engaged in philanthropic and charitable work in Queensland, particularly her work as head of the Red Cross. The success of any good man can be attributed to a great extent to his companion in life, his wife, and I am sure that Sir John Lavarack's success is due to some extent to the co-operation and support that he has received from Lady Lavarack since his appointment in 1946.

I support the Bill because I believe that we should recognise in this way the services of Sir John Lavarack. The question of whether or not the Governor is a wealthy man virtually does not enter into it. On the other hand, I think none of us would like to see a man who had occupied the position of Governor of this State being required, because of circumstances beyond his control, to live on the old age pension or being reduced to a state of indigence. It is unlikely that that would take place in the case under review, and if it did happen it would be a reflection on the people of the State or country who permitted such a state of affairs to exist.

This Bill to grant a pension to the retiring Governor of the State, and to his wife in the event of his pre-deceasing her, is a step which I believe has been rightly taken by the Government. The question was being considered prior to the change of Government. My Government had given thought to the payment of a sum similar to the amount paid to judges who have completed 10 years' service in the judiciary of Queensland, that is, a year's salary, which would amount to about £5,000. I think this idea of a pension is a better one because it also provides for Lady Lavarack in the event of the death of Sir John.

I support the Bill.

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (11.49 a.m.): I express my appreciation to the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Queensland Labour Party, and the hon. member for Mundingburra, for their support of the Bill. I am sure they have expressed the opinion of all hon. members that adequate recognition is due to Sir John and Lady Lavarack for the great service they have given the State.

I assure the hon. member for Mundingburra that the Government are just as appreciative of the needs of all sections of the community as he is and that the matter raised by him, which is outside the scope of the Bill, may safely be left in our hands. I thank hon. members for supporting the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

ROYAL NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (11.54 a.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to enable Brisbane City Council to transfer to the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland a portion of the land described in Certificate of Title Number 215621 and held by the said Council as a reserve for public park purposes.”

The purpose of the Bill, which is quite a simple one, is to ratify an agreement entered into by the Brisbane City Council and the Royal National Association for the transfer of a small portion of land at present part of Bowen Park. The Bill authorises the excision from Bowen Park and the inclusion in the grounds of the Royal National Association of an area of 8.9 perches. The Royal National Association requires the additional land to enable it to construct a proposed woodchop stadium. Legislation is necessary to bring about the exchange of property because the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association Act of 1931 prohibits the excision of any portion of land from Bowen Park. The 8.9 perches which it is proposed to excise by the Bill represents a corner of the park which at the present time is not being used for park purposes but as a rubbish dump for the park. It is not required for public park purposes. The Brisbane City Council holds the freehold title to Bowen Park under the Real Property Acts as a reserve for a public park. The Council will benefit very materially from the exchange of the land. The woodchop

stadium is to contain a toolshed and dressing-room accommodation which will be leased to the Council for nominal rental of 1s. a year. This accommodation will have a 72-foot frontage, extending the full depth of one side of the stadium. It will be complete with the necessary sewerage and electrical installations, plus shower-room and dressing-room for workers of the Brisbane City Council. At the present time the workers have no conveniences whatsoever. Because of the exchange of the land and the arrangement between the R.N.A. and the Brisbane City Council they will have the use of the new building to be erected by the R.N.A.

Mr. Gair: Without cost to the Council?

Mr. NICKLIN: At no cost at all to the Brisbane City Council. The lease is to be at a nominal rental of 1s. a year for a term of 25 years, with an option of a further term of 25 years should the Council so desire.

The R.N.A. will continue to be liable for rates for the land occupied by the portion of the stadium leased to the Council. In other words, the 8.9 perches will now become ratable and the rates will be payable by the R.N.A.

Bearing in mind the nature of the piece of land to be excised from the park, the purpose for which it is to be used, and the very excellent arrangement between the R.N.A. and the Brisbane City Council under which the Council will receive considerable benefit, I am of the opinion that the proposal is not only warranted but desirable. It will assist the R.N.A. to carry out their developmental programme. Because of the shape of the land where it is proposed to build the woodchop stadium it is necessary to have the small corner piece. The arrangement meets with the approval of both bodies and as the public interest is in no way disadvantaged I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.59 a.m.): In view of the circumstances outlined by the Premier, we can have no objection to the transfer of the 8.9 perches of land referred to in this Bill.

There are a few general remarks I wish to make on this matter. First, it should not be necessary to point out to the Government—I am sure they realise it as much as we do—the increasing tendency to encroach on our park lands. That does not apply in this instance where 8.9 perches, a mere pocket handkerchief, are concerned. Throughout the years I have noticed a tendency for many worth-while organisations controlled by public-spirited citizens to seek the use of park lands on which buildings are erected. Very often due to a change in circumstances the buildings become dilapidated and instead of being a public asset they are an eyesore. I urge the Government to keep firmly in mind a determination to resist any wholesale move to encroach on our public lands. It is obvious

that park lands are one of the big problems in big cities. It is not only the right but the duty of the Government or the Council who may be administering reserves to preserve the lands that they now hold in trust. While it does not apply to this Bill, I urge the Government as a general policy to resist the applications that will be made to them. No matter how worthwhile are the objects of the associations seeking the use of park lands, there is a bigger principle involved—the retention of those park lands for the use of posterity.

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (12.3 p.m.): In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, I might say that before approving of this project the Government examined the matter carefully, bearing in mind the desirability of retaining public parks. In view of the circumstances associated with this, it will be an advantage to both parties and it will not be a disadvantage to the general public.

Mr. Wood: We accept that in this case.

Mr. NICKLIN: I assure the Leader of the Opposition that we are fully aware of the tendency to apply for the use of park lands but every request will be closely examined by the Government before any park land is taken away from the public.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (12.4 p.m.): The Bill reminds us of the inadequate accommodation at the showgrounds. Over the years, with the growth of population and industry in Queensland, this shortage of accommodation has become acute. It is a matter that should concern not only the Government, but the Brisbane City Council. The Royal National Association has sought to purchase houses in the lower part of Gregory Terrace and in the side streets adjacent to it. The present area is not sufficient. The question of shifting the showgrounds to another part of Brisbane is of great importance. I have in mind the area used as a rifle range by the Army at Enoggera. The rifle range is gradually being surrounded by large housing estates, and it is becoming a nuisance to the residents of the area. It would be suitable as a showground and representations should be made to the Department of the Army to shift their headquarters and the rifle range from Enoggera to some other part of the city, perhaps outside the metropolitan area. There is ample ground at Samford and other places for a rifle range. The Royal National Association could then shift to this site.

Mr. Sparkes: Have you any idea what it would cost to do that?

Mr. LLOYD: That is not important, because eventually it will have to be done within the next 10 years. The cost will have to be met at some time. It could be met by all Governments—State, Commonwealth and Local Government. It is essential to find a new area of sufficient size. The rifle range could be taken over gradually, if not

immediately. Transport by train, bus or tram to the rifle range is adequate and a move to that area would overcome the traffic congestion at the existing Show, which is becoming worse every year. It is a matter of great importance to the city and the State of Queensland.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (12.7 p.m.): Space is of great importance to the Association, but the closeness of the area to all suburbs of Brisbane is one of its greatest advantages. I have been to the showgrounds in all the capital cities of Australia. Not one is as handy to the suburbs of those cities as the Brisbane showground is to the Brisbane suburbs.

Mr. Aikens: What about Townsville?

Mr. SPARKES: Townsville is a country town.

Mr. Jesson: What about Sydney?

Mr. SPARKES: The Sydney showground is not as handy to the city as the Brisbane showground is to Brisbane. It has been demonstrated in other parts of the world that show societies can build upwards, and the R.N.A. is doing that.

Mr. Lloyd: What about the people living in the houses nearby?

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. member has raised a subject of which he is not fully cognisant—the cost of shifting the showgrounds. It would cost millions of pounds.

Mr. Lloyd: It will have to be done at some time.

Mr. SPARKES: I do not think so.

There was a move at one time to push the R.N.A. out, and I thank the previous Government for resisting the attempt. I feel sure that the present Government will not take any action to disturb what I consider to be one of the finest Royal National showgrounds in Australia.

The situation is ideal for the people the hon. member is supposed to represent, although I do not think he does. I refer to the poorer people who want a showground handy to their homes.

The more space the better, but the R.N.A. is undertaking a very big programme. If the hon. member for Kedron can spare the time, I shall take him to the grounds and point out where the R.N.A. is building upwards.

Mr. Power: The Association has bought a lot of property in the area.

Mr. SPARKES: Yes, at very great expense, and the residents are happy about it.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that there should be no interference with city parks. The showgrounds are a park, a breathing space and so those who agree with

the Leader of the Opposition should say that there should be no interference with the showgrounds.

I hope, in fact I am sure, the Government will not disturb the Royal National Association.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

SUPPLY.

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Debate resumed from 8 October (see p. 407) on Mr. Hiley's motion—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1957-1958, a sum not exceeding £1,132 to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.13 p.m.): Now that the hurry and bustle of the election has subsided with an unfortunate change of Government we look forward to a Financial Statement for the betterment of the State and the people. In a Budget we look for two things, first the presentation of the previous year's accounts, secondly, we expect an outline of the policy of the Government. The Treasurer said that he had meticulously presented the accounts of the State in the form used by his predecessor. We have been in session now for some six or seven weeks and it is time that the Liberal-Country Government—

Mr. Gaven: The Country-Liberal Party Government!

Mr. WOOD:—gave an indication of the course they propose to adopt. I stand corrected by the hon member for Southport. He corrected me when I said the “Liberal-Country Party Government”. It is a very sore point with the two parties opposite. In effect it is a Country-Liberal Party Government. One of the great fears of the Government is that the emphasis will be changed, that a re-distribution of electorates will make it a Liberal-Country Party Government. It is a very real fear in the minds of members of the Country-Liberal Party. They may talk about internecine strife in the Australian Labour Party but they very much fear it in their own Country-Liberal Party when the change becomes more marked.

The House has been in session for six or seven weeks and the Government should now have outlined clearly and without equivocation the course that they intend following to put their policy into operation. You will

have noticed, Mr. Taylor, that so far the Opposition has been restrained. Members of the Government have mentioned it, but we have done it deliberately. I said in my first speech this session that we should be fair to the government and give them time to settle down. They have now had that breathing space, but look at the business paper and see what Bills have been submitted that are of any real consequence to the welfare of Queensland.

Mr. Nicholson: You left them so much mess to clean up that they have not had time.

Mr. WOOD: In spite of that interruption I ask, what indication have we in the Budget of things designed to promote the welfare of this State? After all, it is in the Budget that the Treasurer, on behalf of the Government, has his first opportunity of indicating the Government's plans of development. Hon. members will see here that there is a marked contrast between the extravagance and exuberance of the language of the policy speech and the negative, apologetic language of the Treasurer in his Financial Statement. Here is an example of this extravagant exuberance. The Deputy Premier said in his policy speech—

“First I would like you all to look at the glowing vista of development that lies ahead of Queensland. What can and must be achieved adds up to a most exhilarating story.”

Later on he said—

“It is a vision splendid that should inspire every Queenslander.”

Later again he said—

“This great State is waiting for its opportunity, an era of development which will create more and more jobs.”

Note the sharp contrast between the language of the policy speech and the negative, unimaginative language of the Financial Statement presented by the Treasurer on 26 September last. The Budget teems with alibis. One can turn page after page and find reasons why the Government are not going to do what they promised to do. I shall quote some of the alibis. Instead of a fulfilment of promises, we have excuses. I say in all seriousness that the Government cannot go on indefinitely with a policy of blaming the previous Government for its own inactivity. In replies to questions from this side of the House, in replies to interjections, and in speeches by Ministers, the emphasis all the time is on the actions of the previous Government, and the repeated emphasis of them gives the House the reason why the Government are not able to carry out their promises in their policy speeches.

Mr. Sparkes: They are still cleaning up the mess you left.

Mr. WOOD: Since the change of Government there has certainly been no change in the standard of decorum; it is not set by the hon. member for Aubigny. I do not claim your protection, Mr. Taylor, because I do not think any hon. member on this side takes his interjections seriously. There certainly has been a great decline in even his poor standard of decorum. Soon the Government must cease talking and deliver the goods. The goods were promised to the State in the policy speech delivered by the Minister for Labour and Industry and in the twin policy speech delivered by the Premier. The time for talk, the time for apology, the time for placing the blame on someone else's shoulders, has passed and the Opposition puts squarely on the shoulders of the Government the responsibility for translating into legislative action the growing words in the policy speeches.

Mr. Sparkes: If you had been in power 700 men would have been sacked.

Mr. WOOD: I will come to the question of employment in a moment.

Government members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope hon. members will allow the Leader of the Opposition to proceed with his speech in silence.

Mr. WOOD: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. If some hon. members opposite showed the same courtesy in the discharge of their duties as you do, Mr. Taylor, in the discharge of yours, we should have a model assembly.

From year to year members of the present Government when in Opposition tagged different labels on the budgets that were presented to the Committee for consideration. This Budget could fairly be termed a Kathleen Mavourneen budget. Remember the words of the song: “It may be for years or it may be for ever.” That is the whole essence of this Budget—“We won't be doing it this year; we may do it next year; we may do it the year after. It may be for years; it may be for ever.”

The Leader of the Liberal Party said in his policy speech—

“My colleagues and I are confident that we will be able to present a Budget which will enable our programme to be financed within the existing resources of this State.”

He was in no doubt about it. Although he criticised our use of loan and trust funds, he still said that he and his Government could finance their programme within the existing resources of the State. Contrast that with this statement in the Treasurer's Financial Statement—

“The Government is already convinced that, for the adequate development of the State and for the service of its people, the existing resources are inadequate.”

He is saying there exactly what we said year after year when we were on the Government side of the Chamber. We said that our resources were not adequate and that without a more benign approach by the Menzies-Fadden Government Queensland could never be developed to the full. Members of the Labour Cabinet said that year after year and it was greeted with scorn by members of the Country and Liberal Parties.

The Treasurer had this to say, too—

“ . . . there are no important changes in the broad pattern of this year's Budget in comparison with the last. No new tax is proposed; no important saving is anticipated; no substantial new expenditures are envisaged.”

In effect, he said it was a repetition of last year's Financial Statement. If last year's Financial Statement was a good one he will claim that his, too, is worthy of commendation. On the other hand, if last year's Financial Statement had its faults, he will be prepared to agree that there are faults in his. He has said that he has brought in no changes, that he is simply following the pattern of previous Financial Statements. It is no good the Government's seeking refuge in the claim that the Budget was prepared by the previous Government. The Treasurer has not actually made that claim but by interjection, and answers to interjections from this side of the Chamber other Ministers have suggested that the Budget was not really their Budget at all, that it was prepared by the previous Government. In his Financial Statement the Treasurer said—

“When this Government assumed office on the 12th August last, draft financial proposals for 1957-58 had already been formulated by Departments and responsible officers.”

But that does not relieve the Treasurer or his Government of the responsibility for presenting their own Budget. I well remember that during the fateful two days that saw the fall of the last Government either the Premier or the Treasurer of the day was giving as a reason why Supply should be granted for a longer period, that a new Treasurer would not have time to formulate his own Budget. Either the present Treasurer or Premier interjected, “You can safely leave that to us.” Hon. members will remember that and I think the present Treasurer will admit it. No-one can withhold from the present Government their right and responsibility to present their own Financial Statement and no-one can shift that responsibility to other shoulders.

Let me speak of education. Last Wednesday the Minister for Education made a very trenchant attack on the work of the Department of Education over the years. He produced a graph to show the decline in the expenditure on school buildings in Queensland compared with other States. It is a source of great disappointment to me that

his predecessor in office has not seen fit to say a single word in defence of the department he administered.

Mr. Power: He has plenty of time yet.

Mr. WOOD: He has had plenty of time already. He has been infrequently in the Chamber for seven weeks. It should not be left to me to defend our administration. I have never apologised for it and I am not going to start now.

Mr. Sparkes: You cannot defend a thing if it is not correct.

Mr. WOOD: The hon. member would not know.

I am greatly disappointed in the hon. members for Haughton and Carnarvon, both former Secretaries for Public Works. Although they have listened to very bitter attacks on the State Housing Commission, they have not said one word to refute the serious allegations.

Compared with other States there has been a decline in Queensland in the per capita expenditure on school buildings. The Minister for Education said that in earlier years Queensland led the other States but now it lags behind. He also said that Tasmania which had spent the lowest now spends the highest amount per capita on school buildings. That can be quite easily explained because not very long ago the school-leaving age in Tasmania was increased to 16 years, thus necessitating a greatly extended building programme in that State. Could it not be that as Queensland led the other States for so many years there was not a leeway to be made up, that the other States are only now beginning to catch up with us?

I say to the Minister that he can go into New South Wales—one of the States quoted by the hon. gentleman—where he will find the accommodation problem is much more acute than it is in Queensland.

Mr. Gair: Furthermore they build in brick and their labour costs are higher.

Mr. WOOD: Of course they are. I have seen the schools, I have seen the accommodation provided, and I invite hon. members of the Government to check in their own electorates to find out whether there is a grave shortage of accommodation in their own schools. It is no use coming here, as the Minister did, to refer to one school—Nundah—with an enrolment of approximately 2,000. I have always admitted that the maximum enrolment should be round the 600 to 700 mark. Because you find a school like Nundah that has been allowed to grow to an enrolment of 2,000 does not mean that the accommodation problem throughout the State is very acute. Compared with other States the accommodation in Queensland is at least as good. Hon. members may remember that when the Minister told the Committee that in 1954-55 the per capital expenditure on buildings in this State was 18s. 4d.

I asked the hon. gentleman what the per capita expenditure would be in the Estimates and the gentleman told me to ask him in 12 months' time. That is another example of this Kathleen Mavourneen attitude of which I speak. I took the trouble to work out the figure. The allocation for State school buildings this year is 17s. 5d. a head. This is the Government that promised to wave a magic wand and immediately bring about a transformation in the accommodation at our schools. The Minister complained because there was an allocation of 18s. 4d. per head in 1954-55. Since then costs have increased considerably, and this year the allocation is only 17s. 5d. a head. I throw it right back to the hon. gentleman. If he thinks it was wrong then, let him correct it now, as was promised in the policy speeches delivered by the leaders of the two parties. The Minister told us that he now does not believe that there should be a separate Works Department for the Education Department. The hon. gentleman admitted that he had been vociferous in his demands for a separate Works Department for the Department of Education. That cry was taken up by all members who were then on the Opposition benches. The greatest was the leader of the Liberal Party, the Minister for Labour and Industry. The reason given for the change of opinion of the Minister for Education must be classed as one of the most fatuous ever uttered—that there was no need for the arrangement now because he and the Minister for Public Works and Local Government are good friends. I never heard a weaker argument presented in this Chamber to justify any statement.

Mr. Pizzey: Because there is co-operation, not conflict.

Mr. WOOD: As I said, it is the most fatuous reason I ever heard given in this Assembly. When the members of the Government were in Opposition they repeatedly said that the Federal Government was more than generous to the Government of Queensland, and that Queensland received ample money to carry out all its requirements. I have heard speaker after speaker of the Country and Liberal Parties chiding us for complaining that no Commonwealth Government have ever given to the States the justice they deserve. I repeat that no Commonwealth Government have given full justice to Queensland or to any State, but when we made those statements in this Chamber we were met with ridicule by members of the then Opposition, who told us we had plenty of money. I remember the Premier time and time again changing his tune. In one Budget debate he accused us of raiding our trust funds to prevent unemployment. In the following Budget debate he accused us of not dipping into those trust funds.

Mr. Pizzey: Who are "us"? Last week you would not have anything to do with "us".

Mr. WOOD: I am speaking on behalf of the Australian Labour Party, in case the hon. gentleman has an immature knowledge of the political situation.

Hon. members were warned for years that the reserves were not inexhaustible. That is not a recent development. Members of the Cabinet issued warnings for years that the reserves of this State were not a well that would provide water indefinitely. We were laughed at when we made that statement, but the Government now sing a different tune. It is very easy to sit back and criticise, as Government members did for 25 years, in many instances criticising unfairly and without knowledge or appreciation of the position facing the Australian Labour Party in Government. The Opposition of that day is now asked to accept and discharge the responsibility of Government in the interests of the State and its people. The Government must prove they are worthy of the grave responsibility they have assumed. It is not enough for members of the Government to be members of a mutual admiration society. Hon. members have seen indications of that in this session. Government members have told one another what good fellows they are. Something more is expected of them.

As I said recently, some people say the Government have done nothing wrong. I repeat my statement that they have done nothing at all. I ask the Government to indicate to the people one major, positive step they have taken to promote the development of this great State.

Mr. Dewar: We beat you in the elections.

Mr. WOOD: With 43 per cent. of the total vote.

As a further example of this change in the governmental tune, the Treasurer had this to say—

"There is not the slightest doubt in my mind and in the minds of my colleagues that the pace of Queensland's development will be substantially retarded unless additional revenues are available to support its services and additional loan funds are forthcoming to finance the fixed capital improvements which will be required by an expanding community."

That is exactly what the Australian Labour Party has been saying for years, that the State can be fully developed only with sympathetic understanding and encouragement from the Commonwealth Government. Nothing has been said by the Government about the need for more sympathetic consideration by Canberra that has not been said more eloquently or forcibly by Australian Labour Party spokesmen over the years. Nothing has been said by the Government with conviction or determination that has not been said by those spokesmen for the Australian Labour Party Government who

went to Canberra year after year to plead with that Government and present Queensland's case.

Mr. Hiley: The only difference is that we have not said it so offensively.

Mr. WOOD: I shall come to that.

The Australian Labour Party Government never received any support from the Liberal or Country Party in their plea to the Commonwealth Government for more consideration. Regardless of the attitude of the Country and Liberal Parties in Opposition towards our plea to the Federal Government for more sympathetic consideration, we give them our assurance that we will wholeheartedly support them in any submissions they may make, no matter how they choose to submit them.

On the matter of courtesy, the Treasurer in his Financial Statement said—

“We have yet to be persuaded that the submission of inadequately prepared cases supplemented by provocative remarks in the Press can accord to the standards of responsible public finance or for that matter bring a readier acceptance from the authority to whom they are addressed. Queensland's case in this matter will be prepared and submitted courteously. I have no fear that, on such a basis, the State will receive anything other than fair treatment.”

What a most amazing statement! Let us examine it. Nobody can say, no matter who submitted it on behalf of the Australian Labour Party Government, that the case was either ill-prepared or badly presented. Nobody ever said that representatives of the Australian Labour Party Government went to Canberra with a bad brief. They knew their subject and they presented their case forcibly.

Mr. Pizzey: Whom are you referring to?

Mr. WOOD: Any spokesman who went down on behalf of the Australian Labour Party Government. If plain speaking was used it was provoked by a sense of grave injustice. Not only Queensland had to use provocative language. I urge the Treasurer to read some of the remarks of Mr. Bolte, Sir Thomas Playford and others. He will find in many instances their approach was more provocative than that of the Australian Labour Party Government in Queensland. The Treasurer should know that regardless of the approach—whether you go with boxing gloves or on your hands and knees—the attitude of the Federal Government is predetermined. It is all cut and dried before the representatives of the States meet the Commonwealth in conference. He well knows that. He knows that no matter what attitude is adopted by the States the result is the same. The various States have differing methods of presentation but, generally speaking, all have been united about their feelings of frustration and resentment. Go

to any State in the Commonwealth and you will find the feeling of frustrated resentment. I put this to the Treasurer: what should be the yardstick by which the State's requirements should be judged? Should the yardstick be the degree of courtesy used in making the submission? Is that the only yardstick? The State more courteous in its approach should receive the greater share? I do not think any hon. member will agree with that. It could mean that the State showing the Commonwealth the greatest degree of obsequious servility would be rewarded with the patronising condescension of an increased grant. I do not think any hon. member would want the degree of courtesy to be taken as the yardstick by which the contributions to the States would be made. There is only one yardstick. Let the Treasurer, the Premier, or whoever submits the case for the State, put up the case according to his light, by the best method whereby he can secure the most for his State. The only yardstick is the need of the State and the capacity of the Commonwealth Government to return to the States a fair share of the tribute that they have exacted in income tax.

The Treasurer went on to say—

“The real task of developing this State and its resources at the rate which we want to see would be far beyond the financial capacity of any Government. It is a task in which every citizen of the State, every person outside the State, who can be attracted to share in the task, must join.”

We do not quarrel with that invitation to anyone who wants to join us; but it is the responsibility of this Government to demonstrate their own efficiency. People anxious to assist the Government will be influenced by the efficiency that they demonstrate and the confidence that they create. We shall be glad to join with the Government in attracting new industries to Queensland, and we hope that they are successful. However, we make these two provisos: one, that no promises are given to any undertaking from any other State or from overseas that any action will be taken to break down our working conditions and awards in this State; two, that no competitor moving into this State be given advantages which place him over the local competitor. We regard the first of those provisos as most important. Subject to those two provisos, we will wholeheartedly support the Government in any move that they might make to attract capital and to attract new industries to this State.

We have heard a triumphant song sung by the Minister for Labour and Industry, and he has been joined in a duet by the Premier, about the great number of new companies that have come to Queensland. A figure of 60 was mentioned, two a day, and then 116. That made very imposing reading. The unknowing public would believe that, as a result of the hustle and bustle of the Deputy Premier, people were flocking to

Queensland to establish big manufacturing and industrial concerns. I submit that most of that is just plain eye-wash. A question was asked in the House, as hon. members will remember, and some of the information contained in the answer to it was set out in the first issue of the new Government publication "News Bulletin." We were told how the Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr. Morris, had rocked around the clock in encouraging the expansion of industries in Queensland, and with considerable jubilation "News Bulletin" told us that new companies were being registered in Queensland at the rate of two a day. Last week the Attorney-General, Mr. Munro, tabled a statement showing the number and the nature of the companies registered in Queensland during August and September. He excused himself from reading the statement on the ground of its length. I can well understand his reluctance to read out to the House the nature of a number of those enterprises, because they would have given hon. members considerable amusement in addition to debunking what is called the spectacular start to Mr. Morris's "Develop Queensland Drive." A Government presenting evidence of spectacular development would not win many plaudits from the public because its initial months of office had been distinguished by the introduction of companies committed to such highly developmental works as advising on hair and scalp, the acquisition and disposal of helicopters, the promotion of race meetings, speed and trial tests, selling and leasing of towels and uniforms, and so on. They were companies mentioned in the brilliant programme that had resulted from the Government's drive. Of course, there is another story, but it is not the exhilarating story referred to by the Minister for Labour and Industry, who said in his policy speech—

"First I would like you all to look at the glowing vista of development that lies ahead of Queensland. What can and must be achieved adds up to a most exhilarating story. Development on the big scale we look forward to must be undertaken by free enterprise and with new capital attracted to Queensland by a Government trusted by investors."

He went on—

"We recognise that there is a real job to be done and, first of all, we will create a climate for investment in the future of Queensland. We shall, because of the principles we uphold, attract capital to the State to develop its riches and to start new enterprises. And here, ladies and gentlemen, is the answer to the pessimists."

In the statement tabled by his colleague, the Attorney-General, we find the Deputy Premier's answer to those pessimists and it is very enlightening. Of 79 companies registered in Brisbane during August and September, 24, almost a third of the total, are concerned with real estate; 10 more are the

businesses of capitalists, financiers and money-lenders who, of course, would help us to get down to business with the 24 real estate companies as long as we had collateral security. Then we have seven lots of building contractors, nine companies concerned with running hotels and lodging houses, and from one to five companies which aim to do business in the categories of pastry cooks, spare parts dealers, carriers, photographic dealers, medical and chemical dealers, surgical supplies, motor dealers, electrical goods, radio dealers, office furniture makers, corset makers, advertisers, and what not. Although the registration of those companies has been hailed as witness to the spur to development given by the accession to power of the present Government, there is little evidence of this when we examine the statement tabled in Parliament last week. As I said, it is largely eyewash. With the exception of seven companies dealing with oil and mineral prospecting and exploration and a few small companies that propose to manufacture machinery, linoleum, cloth and joinery, the new companies are dedicated to the exploitation of the existing Queensland economy rather than to developing it in conformity with the pre-election forecast of the Leader of the Liberal Party.

So far there has been no positive step taken to improve the conditions of the ordinary men and women of the State. There is no indication in any of the projected legislation that such measures will be brought down for our consideration. We have seen the grave rise in meat prices. In spite of the laughter of some hon. members opposite, the increases have been grave to men and women wage-earners asked to pay an extra 10s. to 12s. a week without a compensating increase in wages. Moreover, the Minister in charge of prices has announced that fruit, vegetables, fish, household furniture and other things will be decontrolled. The serious feature of the announcement is that those items are not included in the "C" Series index. It does not matter how sharp their price rise, if an automatic adjustment did take place in the basic wage, the wage-earner would not be compensated because the commodities decontrolled are outside the range of the "C" Series index. It is so much nonsense for the Attorney-General and other hon. members to talk of healthy competition, of free competition and of a sound economy.

I believe that they are far removed from the problems of the ordinary man and woman, the father, mother and the children. While they may see evidence of plenty money circulating round the State, they do not realise that only a small share of the money reaches the pockets of the people who are hit the hardest by price rises. It is all so much nonsense to talk of healthy competition, to say that supply and demand will bring prices back to a reasonable level that anyone can afford. Experience has shown that the moment you remove controls you declare an open season for the exploiter.

I now ask the Attorney-General for some information about the prices of drugs used by chemists in dispensing. I am reliably informed that until a few weeks ago the mark-up in the price of drugs was 50 per cent. up to 10s., 40 per cent. from 10s. to £1, 33 and one-third per cent. over £1, plus a dispensing fee of 1s. 6d. I have a Press cutting of February, 1956, which states—

“The Prices Minister said yesterday that chemists' would be brought under price control if they sought exorbitant profits on certain of their lines.”

The warning of the Minister in charge of prices was issued in an attempt to prevent Queensland chemists from following the practice adopted in the southern States of making an over-all mark-up of 50 per cent.

Will the Attorney-General tell me whether I am right when I say that as from 25 September the Federated Pharmaceutical Guild's price list provided for a mark-up of a flat 50 per cent. on the prices of drugs? There has been no public announcement of it. I know that the prices are not controlled but if my information is correct will the Attorney-General through the Commissioner of Prices investigate the justice of any such rises and consider the declaration of those who are allegedly inflicting them on the public? I understand that chemists are allowed a mark-up of a flat 25 per cent. on the life-saving drugs supplied by the Commonwealth. There has been no change there.

If my information is correct and the over-all mark-up has been increased to 50 per cent. without one word of public notice I think that it calls for investigation by the Minister in charge of prices. We should not allow an open season for exploitation. I sound this note of warning: the exploiter is on the march again. He delights in the glib talk of healthy competition, free enterprise, prices finding their own level and so on. If he finds that the Government will allow him to march on with his exploitation he will not be influenced by any feelings of consideration for the welfare of his consumers. His one concern will be his profit. On behalf of the working people of the State I appeal to the Government to walk carefully before they interfere with the prices structure in any shape or form. Already we have all the indications of sharp upward rises in prices.

I had intended to spend some time on railway finance but I have not sufficient time left to do so. I shall reserve my remarks till the Estimates for that department are under consideration. I am quite certain that the Minister in charge of that extremely responsible department will be now finding out the great difference there is between promise and fulfilment. It is too early to be critical but I do say that I have seen no indication at all of any improvement in the railway service; rather, I fear the indications are of curtailment in the service. I have seen no indication at

all that the drift in railway finance will be arrested. I frankly admit that the present drought poses very difficult problems not only for the primary producers and the Government but for the department.

Mr. Hiley: The Minister expects increased revenue with less expenditure. That is a colossal improvement.

Mr. Hanlon: It would not be as a result of Mr. Duggan's work, would it?

Mr. Hiley: The Minister pays a tribute to dieselisation.

Mr. WOOD: We shall wait till the end of the financial year to see what the real position is. We hope that the Minister's expectations are realised. The railways are a colossal undertaking, employing approximately 30,000 and servicing over 6,000 miles of lines many of which run through sparsely populated centres. The Minister's predecessor laid the foundation of dieselisation and the State will reap the benefit. I see no sign of any improvement in service nor in greater efficiency. I was referring to the extra burden imposed not only on the primary producers and the Government but also the Railway Department by the tragic drought. I join with other hon. members in expressing the hope that very soon we will see the only practical solution to the drought problem—good, soaking rain.

Unemployment has been mentioned. I regret that the subject was dismissed in a rather curt manner in the Budget. I think the Treasurer made two references to it. In the first, he said, “Unemployment commenced to disclose a slightly unhealthy trend.” No-one can say that we have mass unemployment in this State, nor can we say that we are on the threshold of a depression; God forbid that we should ever see one again. Despite the opinion of economists none of us can be sure of the position ahead.

I recall that periods of financial stringency and most severe depressions have generally occurred when economists have said there would be no depression. After all, economists are not scientists, and there is no exact law for economy. Although all of us hope that there will not be a depression, we must always be prepared to meet it, because it strikes when we are least prepared. I repeat that I do not think Queensland is on the threshold of a depression, but something more than slightly unhealthy trends are apparent in the unemployment position.

I have here a statement by a London economist, Professor Paish, who was invited to Australia by some of the associated trading banks. Among other things he said, “Australia must be prepared to face more unemployment to stop inflation.” He spoke of the excess demands for goods and services, resulting in an excess demand for labour. This is his statement—

“If you are going to stop this excess demand, then you are going to have more

unemployment than you have now. It need not be very much more, but there must be more than at present."

The fact that a responsible professor would come to Australia and air those views is to say the least very disturbing. It brings to mind the words of Otto Niemeyer who came to Australia and said similar things before the 1929 depression.

I hope those words do not reflect the attitude of the Government to unemployment. The subject cannot be dismissed lightly. In the Financial Statement the Treasurer had this to say—

"The employment situation has altered from the 'over-full' level which had existed for most of the post-war period to one of a small percentage of what might be called true unemployment."

The Treasurer serves no good purpose by playing with terms. It does not matter to a man out of work what his plight is called. Although Australia may not be in the throes of a major depression, to him it is a depression, and just as acute as one in which thousands are thrown out of work. There is no situation more demoralising or heart-breaking than being out of work and not being able to find a job.

The Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads recently spoke of his plans for building roads throughout Queensland. The Budget does not stress this serious problem. I was very disturbed when I learned in the last three weeks that in Toowoomba 41 men in Main Roads gangs had received notices of dismissal. It is a depression for those men. Those good employees and their families now face want. I know many Main Roads workers in Toowoomba. I do not know of any more efficient men. I understand that in other parts of the State similar things are happening. The position is aggravated in Toowoomba because it is almost impossible for those men to find other jobs. Three or four years ago men who were dismissed could immediately obtain another job, but at the present time I am unable to find work in Toowoomba for those who have approached me. The position will be further aggravated by the prevailing drought.

The problem cannot be dismissed lightly. Positions are getting harder to find. One of the main responsibilities of the Country-Liberal Government is to see that jobs are available for those who seek them. It is useless to speak about percentages of unemployment. I think it was a man named Hytten who said that there should be an 8 per cent. pool of unemployed. That is all very good provided you are one of the 92 per cent. in work, but it is not so good for those unfortunately numbered amongst the 8 per cent. There is no doubt that the drift is here and it needs prompt action to arrest it. I urge the Government to use all their strength to see that the drift is arrested and we return to full employment.

In his Financial Statement the Treasurer said—

"No provision has been made in the Budget for any improvement in the general level of salaries and superannuation benefits payable to public servants or for basic wage increases."

That paragraph has a rather ominous significance, and I should like the Treasurer to reassure the Opposition on this point: should price rises mean a rise in the cost of living, steps will be taken to see that adjustments in the quarterly basic wage are not made? Is that the correct interpretation?

Mr. Hiley: No.

Mr. WOOD: No steps will be taken by the Government to see that the basic wage is frozen while prices continue to rise. I hope events bear that out.

Frankly, I think the public of Queensland have reason for disappointment in the Budget in spite of the erroneous promises given in the policy speeches. I see no visual evidence that the Government are anxious to carry out their election promises. If the Government do not do it now they will have lost the chance of carrying out their promises next year.

There is much to be done to develop the potential of this State in the uranium and bauxite supplies and the minerals to be found at Mt. Isa. No matter what Government are in power they would still be faced with the major developmental works on an income always limited. No matter how much they get by way of income tax reimbursements or loan moneys, they can still use more. I assure the Treasurer and his Government that we stand by what the Australian Labour Party has always stood for. No Commonwealth Government have ever given justice to the States. Their coffers are bulging with money that they have extracted by way of taxation. It has been reported by the Federal Public Accounts Committee that there are many examples of gross extravagance and wilful waste in Federal finances, not a matter of thousands of pounds, but millions. The Commonwealth Government, by just paring their own extravagance and waste could find a fair share of what the States are justly entitled to. We do not believe we have had that justice from any Commonwealth Government. We assure the Government that we want this great State to be highly developed and we are 100 per cent. behind them in their approach for increased justice for the State.

(Time expired.)

Mr. RICHTER (Somerset) (2.30 p.m.): I join with other hon. members on this side of the Chamber in extending congratulations to the Treasurer on the presentation of his first Budget. He is to be congratulated upon his practical approach, especially because on this occasion his time has been limited and his hands have been tied by the commitments of the previous Government.

The Leader of the Opposition criticised the Government because they had not taken immediate action and had no results to show in their first seven weeks of office.

Mr. Hanlon: They do not show any—that was his complaint.

Mr. RICHTER: They certainly show some. As I said, the Treasurer's hands have been tied because of the little time at his disposal and the commitments of the previous Government that could not be ignored.

The Leader of the Opposition also criticised the Treasurer's statements about an approach to the Federal Government. There is no doubt that this State has a vast potential awaiting development, but the ordinary financial resources of the State are inadequate for the purpose. It will be necessary to approach the Federal Government with a feeling of good-will and understanding if we are to get assistance for development. When the Treasurer spoke of courtesy, he meant a practical approach. It must be reasonable. The Federal Government have helped other States. Western Australia has Kwinana and South Australia was assisted at Leigh Creek.

Mr. Wood: South Australia was not satisfied.

Mr. RICHTER: Perhaps not. Tasmania was assisted with its aluminium works.

Victoria and New South Wales have been helped with the Snowy Mountains scheme. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that Queensland should get assistance too.

Mr. Graham: Can you advance any reason why we have not received it?

Mr. RICHTER: I shall tell the hon. member. Our Government, with its practical approach and its determination not to embark on foolish, half-baked socialist ventures, will get that assistance.

The Treasurer will be able to convince the Federal Government that the assistance to be given to Queensland will not be squandered on socialist ventures. Previous governments were not given assistance because they squandered what was given to them.

Mr. Davies: Has it been squandered on the Burdekin River scheme?

Mr. RICHTER: About £2,500,000 has been spent on it and there is still nothing to show for it.

Mr. Davies: Yes there is.

Mr. RICHTER: The previous Labour Government said that in 1947 Mr. Chifley promised to assist on a fifty-fifty basis. What a ridiculous statement! A report on that scheme was not made until 1950. And it was a critical one, so there could not have been any such promise.

Private capital and private enterprise must be encouraged to come to Queensland.

This cannot be done merely by advertising our potential. More will have to be done. First of all, it will be necessary to convince investors that the Government are sympathetically inclined towards them, and that they will not be hamstrung by restrictions and foolish regulations like profit-fixing in the guise of price-fixing. Private capital will come to Queensland only if it feels secure and if it finds Queensland more profitable for its operations than elsewhere. That atmosphere must be created and I think the Treasurer and the Government are creating it.

Mr. Davies: What about Port development?

Mr. RICHTER: The previous Government may point to isolated cases but nowhere near the number they have in South Australia or other States. Under the previous Government, with the threat of socialism and nationalisation lurking around the corner, investors were not game to come to Queensland because they knew they would not be secure.

Mr. Power: What was nationalised by the previous Government?

Mr. RICHTER: I will come to that in a moment. I believe the present Government will get results by giving investors security in every possible way. The Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads is working along the right lines on that. He has already given a good impression and shown he knows where he is going. That is the type of leadership that inspires confidence and trust. During the election campaign the leaders of both factions of the socialist party or the Labour Party, whatever one likes to call it—

Mr. Davies: The great Australian Labour Party.

Mr. RICHTER: Which is the Labour Party? Are they both labour parties? Both rival labour parties have stated that they would not welcome private enterprise to the State. The Leader of the Opposition this morning said that he would welcome private enterprise. How can he be taken seriously in view of the threat of nationalisation and socialisation that lurked around the corner the whole time? Socialism is the policy of the Labour Party and private enterprise will not come here with its finance with that threat hanging over its head.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members on my left to refrain from continuous interruptions. Interruption is disorderly.

Mr. RICHTER: A few moments ago an hon. member asked what the previous Government had done that threatened investment. Take the spineless handling of the shearers' strike. Does the hon. member

think that would encourage private investors to come to the State? Does he think it would give them a sense of security? Secondly, take the stand-and-deliver Act that they passed making the dairymen toe the line. What ridiculous legislation! Does he think private enterprise will invest money in Queensland when the Government of the day do that sort of thing? The Motor Spirit Distribution Bill demonstrated just how insecure investment could be under their Government. The Treasurer has pointed out that reserves have been whittled away by the previous Government. After 10 years of unparalleled prosperity it would be expected that the reserves today should be at an all-time high but instead we find they have been whittled away. The greatest strain on the State's finances has been the railways. Last year the railways placed a strain on Consolidated Revenue to the extent of £4,500,000. Of this amount £1,366,000 was a direct loss in running expenses.

Mr. Graham: How much interest?

Mr. RICHTER: The interest amounted to £3,212,000. I agree that interest on capital could perhaps be a charge on the State but surely it is reasonable to expect that such a venture should be able to pay running costs.

Mr. Graham: Do they pay in the other States?

Mr. RICHTER: I am talking about Queensland at the present time.

The railways are a State utility, a necessary service for the development and decentralisation of the State. I agree that perhaps it would be reasonable to say that interest charges on capital should be a charge against the State but again I say that private enterprise would be more efficient. It is management that is at fault, there is no question about that. I do not attach the blame for the inefficiency or bad management to any worker, to any officer of the department or to the Commissioner but to the policy of the previous Government which definitely allowed the department's efficiency to fall to an all-time low. I would not expect the position to be rectified in one year. It took the previous Government 25 years to get the railways into their present mess so you would not expect it to be cleared up in a matter of weeks.

Road transport has made inroads into railway revenue chiefly because the railways are so unreliable and inefficient, hamstrung by stupid regulations. It was my unhappy experience not very many months ago to travel from Emerald to Rockhampton. We were held up in the early hours of the morning at Duarina for about three hours.

Mr. Thackeray: Why were you held up?

Mr. RICHTER: Wait a minute. The pin holding the cantilever on the under-carriage of the engine became dislodged. They were jacking the carriage up.

Mr. Thackeray: What type of engine was it?

Mr. RICHTER: I do not know what type of engine it was; I am not interested in that. The pin came out of the cantilever. There is a large bolt at the end of the rod and the logical thing to do was to release the nut. I suggested that to the driver of the engine who agreed but said that the regulations prohibited him from interfering with adjustments. He rang Rockhampton and he was told to drive the engine in as it was and take the risk.

This happened in my own electorate, and I have documentary evidence to prove it. A man ordered a truck to transport cattle to Brisbane. He was told he would have to give seven days' notice. He contacted the agents through whom he was consigning his stock, they got in touch with the Railway Department and the truck was made available immediately. He yarded his cattle for the purpose of loading them and was told because the seven days' notice had not expired he could not load them. He then had the cattle transported to Brisbane by road. I have given a letter containing those facts to the Minister for Transport for investigation. Such pin-pricking tactics must drive business away from the department.

The shearers' strike is another glaring example of bungling. The refusal of the railways to cart the wool, definitely brought road transport into the picture, and it is still transporting wool and doing a tremendous amount of damage to our roads. As I said, I do not blame the Commissioner or any officers of the department. These gentlemen merely implement the policy of the Government. If this policy is weak-kneed and prone to outside pressures nothing but inefficiency will result.

Mr. Davies: Do you blame the last Minister?

Mr. RICHTER: I blame the last Government's policy, not anyone in particular. If the previous Government did not appoint the right Minister that is their fault. I trust and believe that the Cabinet will ensure that the railways develop into as efficient a service as the road transport. The transport of livestock and perishables must be expedited.

Mr. Davies: It has been during the past few years.

Mr. RICHTER: Not to any great extent. The railways are the lifeblood of the out-back, and will remain so for a long time. I do not think that road transport will take the place of rail transport, but we must give efficient service. The average, decent worker will respond and co-operate in an effort to clean up bungling, but he must be inspired by top-level action. The jobs of railway workers depend on efficient service being given by the department.

It is pleasing to know that the Forestry Department is to receive better attention than that given by the previous Government. It is vitally important that workers in the industry should have greater security and continuity of employment than in the past. I draw attention to the high royalty charges on timber, and the danger created by them. Already imported timbers are threatening the local market. The royalties charged by the State set the standard for private owners. The consequences are increased cost of home building and the threat to the industry of outside competition. I am pleased the Minister is in the Chamber. I draw his attention to the pest nuisance in these areas. Big forestry reserves have much undergrowth in which pests such as wallabies, kangaroo rats, bandicoots and others multiply. They do considerable damage to crops on adjoining farms. The undergrowth on forestry areas extends to these adjoining farms. The farmers cannot do anything about it because of the regulation that says no timber in a forestry area can be destroyed.

The Minister for Labour and Industry has promised to give the Police Department a better deal than in the past. The debate on juvenile delinquency was very interesting. With a stronger, more satisfied and more efficient police force, this and many similar problems will disappear. There are many glaring examples of poor living conditions for western police officers. In one case the police officer, his wife and family live in the only cottage in the town that has no electric light. It is not an isolated case in the outback areas. The officer has not this amenity, although he has asked for it.

Mr. Houston: Who was the member?

Mr. RICHTER: He was a Labour member. It is essential that officers in those parts of the State who are expected to cover vast unpopulated areas should be provided with two-way radio. It would save many miles of unnecessary travel when breakdowns occur.

I bring to the attention of the Committee the method of transportation of police officers in the West. An officer who is inspecting some outlying station is driven to the nearest police station. The officer at that station takes him to the next station, and so on. If air transport could be used, it would save a lot of time and man hours. This double work of going backwards and forwards is waste of money.

The Department of Education is another department that will receive attention from the Government. The correspondence system is doing a splendid job and the people are very pleased with it up to a point. Many mothers find it difficult to cope with the work expected of them.

Mr. Houston: It is hard to overcome.

Mr. RICHTER: It will be overcome. I shall leave it to the Minister to explain; I

do not want to steal his thunder. Mothers in the outback feel that some help is necessary.

(Opposition interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is far too much conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. RICHTER: Parents require help to send their children to boarding schools, but travelling expenses are costly. Parents desire to have their children at home more often. That is impossible under present travelling conditions, but if there were some system of air travel it could be done.

Mr. Jesson: For the big graziers?

Mr. RICHTER: No, for the families of working people. Families will not go out West because of the existing poor educational facilities. If they were able to send their children to school in one of the larger centres and have them come home periodically by air they would be happy to go out West. If that could be done we would get the right type of people in the West. We need more families there, and we need people to stay in the West.

It is regrettable that some members of the Opposition have seen fit to create a fear complex in the minds of the people. In his Address-in-Reply speech the hon. member for Maryborough spent most of his time in whipping up a fear complex. He spoke about the depression in the days of the Moore Government, and he used the words, "Throughout the length and breadth of the State there is fear."

Mr. Davies: Are they short of workers out there? I have 30 miners who will be sacked next week. They might be able to get jobs there.

Mr. RICHTER: The Leader of the Opposition disagreed with the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. Wood: Do not you think we need to fear unemployment?

Mr. RICHTER: The Leader of the Opposition said he would not create a fear complex so far as a depression was concerned, but not so the hon. member for Maryborough, who endeavoured to whip up a fear complex.

Mr. Davies: As a result of the Deputy Premier making his trip through industries along the coast of Queensland.

Mr. RICHTER: Both the hon. member for Maryborough and the hon. member for Ithaca were well off the beam in drawing attention to alleged dissension in the ranks of the State and Federal Governments. What they do not understand is that we are not under the domination of the Q.C.E. We do not have to toe the line. We are free to express our opinions.

Mr. Hanlon: They had you at their Caucus meeting.

Mr. RICHTER: We are free men and we reserve the right to be critical of one another. We do not live in fear. We do not have the Q.C.E. to tell us what to do.

The hon. member for Ithaca refers to my actions and criticises me as President of the Country Party for attending a meeting of the Parliamentary party. As President of the Country Party, I was invited to meet the Parliamentary party to discuss certain matters. I can understand the hon. member's alarm at such a happening and I am sorry for him. He and his political colleagues have been brought up in an atmosphere of fear, where a visit from the boss can mean only one thing—*toe the line or else!* That does not apply to members of the Country Party. As I said before, we are free men, but the Opposition obey the Q.C.E., right or wrong, wise or unwise.

Mr. Hanlon: What happened to Russell?

Mr. RICHTER: Mr. Russell was not expelled.

Mr. Hanlon: He just beat the gun.

Mr. RICHTER: As I said in my election speech, we in the Country Party and the Liberal Party are free men, and it will take more than wishful thinking on the part of hon. members opposite to break the solidarity in our ranks. I remind the hon. member for Ithaca—

Mr. Hanlon: Why are you picking on me?

Mr. Sparkes: You have gone the wrong way. He wants to bring you back to the straight and narrow.

Mr. RICHTER: The hon. member for Ithaca referred to socialism and said that the socialist policy of his party had kept it in office for 25 years. I remind him that the Federal Labour Government were turned out of office as soon as they attempted to implement the socialist plank of their platform.

Mr. Lloyd: It was a sorry day for Australia. Look what has happened since!

Mr. RICHTER: Socialism has also been responsible for the shambles and disintegration that we see opposite.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind hon. members on my left that they will have a full hour in which to express their views. They are continually interjecting, which amounts to interruption, and I ask them to allow the hon. member to proceed without interruption.

Mr. RICHTER: I ask hon. members opposite not to waste their time in trying to cause a rift in the ranks of the Government

parties. Surely they do not pretend that Dr. Evatt is leading a happy and contented A.L.P. Surely Mr. Cahill in New South Wales is not happy with the set-up there. Again we see the fear of expulsion.

An Opposition Member: Where do you get your information?

Mr. RICHTER: I do not need to get information. The dictatorial attitude adopted by the Federal Executive of the A.L.P. and the Q.C.E. is driving from its ranks all men of character and determination and if they continue in that attitude they will retain only a bunch of yes-men. The verdict of the electors of Gregory is an answer to Q.C.E. dictatorship. The A.L.P. put up its strongest and most capable candidate. It sent out the Leader of the Opposition as the campaign director, a man respected by everybody in the Chamber. He fought a very clean fight and did a very fine job. Despite that, the people of Gregory turned down the A.L.P. candidate because they were fed up with the Q.C.E. domination. I congratulate the Country Party candidate, Mr. Rae, on his victory in that Labour stronghold. He has been able to convince the people of Gregory that the domination of the Q.C.E. must be broken. These "prophets of gloom" apparently realise that they have no chance of getting the reins of government for a good many years and they are at present attempting to whip up a depression complex hoping to embarrass the Government.

I remind hon. members that savings banks deposits increased last year from £1,091,000,000 to £1,189,000,000, or almost by £100,000,000. Life insurance policies increased by £8,000,000. The number of motor-cars in Australia increased by 120,000. Is that a sign of depression? The greatest depression we have is in the minds of hon. members opposite.

In his speech the Deputy Leader of the Opposition dwelt at length on the Japanese Trade Agreement. He expressed a fear that Australian interests were not safeguarded by the agreement. He has completely ignored the realities of the agreement and the safeguards it contains. I do not think hon. members opposite understand the agreement.

Mr. Lloyd: Have you read the Treaty?

Mr. RICHTER: I have read it all. I know what I am talking about and I will give it to hon. members right now. The agreement provides that each of the contracting parties shall extend to the other most-favoured-nation treatment. Most-favoured-nation treatment means the ordinary tariff treatment. It is something less than British preferential treatment, and is extended to a very wide range of countries. In other words, we have agreed to treat Japan as one of our ordinary trading partners, as we treat some 30 other nations.

Mr. Lloyd: On the same basis as all foreign nations.

Mr. RICHTER: That is right. That is all we are doing. By Article II. of the agreement each country undertakes not to apply any prohibitions or restrictions against the other unless such prohibitions and restrictions are applied to all other countries. In all matters relating to the allocation of foreign exchange affecting transactions involving the importation and exportation of goods, each country undertakes to accord to the other country treatment no less favourable than it accords to any third country.

Article 4 provides that the treaty shall not be regarded as conferring any more favourable treatment on the trade of either country than the Government of any other country is entitled to under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Although Japan has not been extended the specific provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, we undertake to base our commercial relations with Japan substantially on the treatment accorded to other countries under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Article 5 is important. It is the answer to the hon. member for Kedron.

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think you know the treaty.

Mr. RICHTER: I know the treaty. I will debate it with the hon. member.

Article 5 provides—

“If, nevertheless, as a result of unforeseen developments, the Government of either country finds that any product is being imported from the other country under such conditions as to cause or threaten serious injury to producers in the country of importation of like or directly competitive products, that Government may, in respect of such product, suspend obligations under this agreement to the extent and for such time as may be necessary to prevent or remedy such injury.”

Mr. Lloyd: They must make their protest to Japan first and then negotiations will proceed before trade is suspended.

Mr. RICHTER: I can tell the hon. member what the treaty says. Consultations shall then take place annually. The agreement will remain in force for three years and will continue thereafter unless terminated on three months' notice. It boils down to this: if we find that the Japanese are doing harm to the trade of this country we can suspend that portion of the agreement.

Mr. Lloyd: You have to give notice.

Mr. RICHTER: We have to give notice to them. We cannot do it without first giving them notice. We give them notice and then we do the job. The wool industry, Australia's biggest industry, is supported to a very large extent by Japanese buyers. Japan is our second-best customer for exports. She bought 14 per cent. of Australia's total exports in 1956-1957. She is faced with an adverse trade balance with

this country. She bought from us goods to the value of £140,000,000 but exported to us approximately £12,000,000 worth.

Mr. Lloyd: That position will soon be changed.

Mr. RICHTER: It will have to be changed, there is no question about it. It is a matter of currency. The agreement guarantees the free entry of wool into Japan for the next three years. The Japanese Government firstly makes available a quota of foreign exchange each year for the purchase of wool. If we are able to sell wool to Japanese buyers 90 per cent. of the quota will be made available for the purchase of Australian wool. That was part of the agreement.

Mr. Houston: Where else could she buy wool of the same quality?

Mr. RICHTER: They could buy it anywhere but they buy it here at the present time. Japan also agrees to admit barley, sugar, meat, tallow and hides on a competitive basis. At the present time she imports much Australian wheat. She imports 75,000,000 bushels of wheat. Under this agreement she is prepared to take 15,000,000 bushels from us.

Mr. Lloyd: That is conditional on any other nation trading with Japan breaching the agreement.

Mr. RICHTER: No, that is not so.

Mr. Lloyd: Read it.

Mr. RICHTER: I have it here.

Mr. Lloyd: Fair average quality wheat.

Mr. RICHTER: There are two clauses. Japan is our best market for barley. We export about £11,000,000 worth, of which Japan takes almost £7,000,000 worth. This country depends on exports, mainly wool, to a large extent. This aspect of our economy must be safeguarded. This agreement will do that. As far as any threat to our local industries is concerned, Section 5 is a protection.

Mr. Lloyd: Read what happened to Canada and America in 1953-1954.

Mr. RICHTER: The hon. member will soon go back to 1932 when the Moore Government were in power. This agreement is a good one. The only reason why the Opposition oppose it is because they are trying to whip up fear in the minds of the people; they are trying to play on the sentiments of the people and arouse prejudice against the agreement.

I believe that our Treasurer has done a mighty good job in the short time at his disposal. His efforts are not a true indication of his capabilities. I hope the hon. gentleman will be presenting budgets for many years. Next year he will be able to give the Leader of the Opposition the answer to his question.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah) (3.18 p.m.): With other speakers, I compliment the Treasurer on his Financial Statement. I am sure it is generally agreed that the finances of our State are in very capable hands. We know that there have been other Treasurers of reasonable ability—speaking particularly of the immediate past Treasurer—but it is doubtful whether any previous Treasurer equalled the present Treasurer in breadth of vision and understanding. I doubt whether the Treasurer's business experience has been surpassed. We appreciate the way in which he marshalled the funds available to him to meet the important issues confronting the State. He has shown ability in concentrating his energies on certain issues rather than on spreading them over many things. The people will experience close co-operation between the State and Federal Governments because of the fair and realistic approach that will be made by this Government, through the Treasurer, to the Federal Government. Over the years we had the regrettable spectacle of Labour Governments viciously and unjustly attacking the Federal Government in an endeavour to cover up many of their own mistakes and shortcomings in relation to the financial position of the State. We heard many arguments over the last year about the method of approach and its effect on the financial position of the State. I recall, for example, that a former hon. member for Condamine viciously attacked the Government over a certain institution at Dalby. Because of the method of approach, the Government of the day decided that nothing would be done about it. Of course, something was done later.

This matter calls for a realistic and practical approach to the Commonwealth Government and it will be made by my Government.

In his Financial Statement the Treasurer said that consideration would be given to an application to the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

Mr. Gair: It will not be the first application.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Nevertheless, I shall be interested in the way the Treasurer handles the application and the benefits that may come to Queensland. I believe that Queensland has a good and urgent case for consideration by that authority.

I shall not touch on the finances of various departments, except one or two factors affecting the overall financial position of the State, including the present disastrous drought throughout Queensland. Men and women in country areas are working long hours for little or nothing in order to save their stock or cultivate their crops. It is possible that they will reap very little benefit from their work. I appreciate the Government's prompt action on drought relief. The administrative machinery should always be available for drought relief at short notice.

Mr. Gair: The Premier mentioned the projects that would have to be stopped to enable the Government to do this.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That may be so but only because the previous Government left the resources of the State in such a condition. I appreciate the prompt assistance that has been given in the circumstances.

In this age men claim that they are able to make rain if clouds of a certain height, temperature and depth are available. They are able to send a satellite flying around the earth if conditions are right, but I maintain that human beings are as dependent as ever on our Creator for many of the blessings that we enjoy. I appreciate, therefore, the Premier's call to the various churches to unite in a day of prayer to overcome the serious position. I believe in the old saying that more things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of.

Mr. Mann interjected.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not know what the hon. member for Brisbane implies by his remark.

Mr. Sparkes: Something about flying in the sky.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am sure of my attitude and I know that many people of the State appreciate the attitude of the Premier.

I was very much concerned at the action of the Federal Government in granting import licences for South African grain. There may be justification for it at the moment, otherwise the grain-growers of the State, including the maize growers of the Burnett area, the best grain-producing area of the State, would have been seriously affected financially, and in turn the State and the community would have been affected too. On account of the drought that position may not arise. I was pleased to learn recently that the Department of Agriculture and Stock did not recommend that line of action. The importation of cheaply-grown cereals will be watched closely in the future.

I was pleased to read in the Financial Statement that rural industries would continue to receive every encouragement from the several departments concerned. The Treasurer further said that experimental and research work were vital to the efficiency of primary industries and were largely the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. Many of us believe that primary industries play a big part in the general prosperity and wellbeing of the community. I agree with the Treasurer on the need for experimental and research work. The Departments of Agriculture and Stock and Public Lands have some excellent officers.

Mr. Davies: They have given great assistance over the years.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: They are a fine team of men, but in the past they have been severely handicapped through lack of funds to carry out their work. I know that because I have been associated with them.

Mr. Hiley: That is why the Department of Agriculture and Stock has the greatest percentage of increase. Many of these field officers were grounded because they were not provided with petrol to enable them to move round.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I know that. Despite what the Leader of the Opposition has said the Government have taken very positive steps to do something worthwhile. I have travelled throughout the State to a limited extent since the election and I know that the people generally appreciate what the Government are doing. Under the previous Government excellent officers were handicapped by a shortage of funds.

The Treasurer has referred to the destruction of big areas of brigalow a subject that interests me in my private capacity because my aircraft has sprayed tens of thousands of acres of brigalow in the past. But there is still a great need for more experimental work. The Government have excellent men in Messrs. Everist and Johnson but their efforts have been restricted through lack of funds. Not only have they not had money to carry out experimental work in the destruction of that timber, but they have not had a car in which to move around. Instead of the State's enabling these men to do their experimental work, private persons and companies have had to come to their assistance. In one instance a chemical company said, "We will pick you up and take you out into the West or near-West so you can pick an area on which to carry out further experimental work." The officers of the department were taken out and brought back to Brisbane. When the experimental work is carried out next month, they will again have to depend upon some private citizen or company to take them out there in a car.

Mr. Sparkes: Disgraceful!

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is disgraceful that the former Government allowed that state of affairs to exist. The realistic approach of this Government will make a great difference, and the Treasurer has already indicated what will be done for these officers of the Department of Agriculture and Stock in regard to experimental work. Instead of showing some initiative, former Governments have allowed firms such as mine to supply aircraft and the chemical companies to supply chemicals free to enable these officers to try to find some method of killing lantana and groundsel, which cover millions of acres of Queensland. The former Government did virtually nothing to assist these men.

Mr. Hilton: Have you ever heard of the Co-ordinating Board?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. There again, the only way in which they could get anything done was by our supplying an aircraft, which involved us in considerable expense. Former Governments have always cried poverty when this question arose.

Mr. Gair: See how much money you can get.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am quite positive that there will be a change of attitude. The chemical companies have supplied large quantities of chemicals free to assist the Government.

The Treasurer referred in his Financial Statement to the healthy position of the State Government Insurance Office. I wish to draw his attention to the method of assessing the rate of premium for share farmers. Premiums are assessed on what they earn, and they receive only the ordinary benefits even though they are paying higher premiums. That situation existed under the previous Government, and there was no justification for their acting in such an offhand way.

I made representations to the former Treasurer about the insurance premiums paid by air-line pilots or pilots employed by the Light Aircraft Association.

Mr. Donald: They are fixed on the risk.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: They are fixed on the risk, but it does not apply. I could probably establish that by asking a question in the House as to what has been paid out to private air-line pilots or pilots of light aircraft during the year.

Mr. Donald: Would you be surprised to know that the coal-mines on the south coast of New South Wales pay a higher premium rate to insure their mine-workers than the companies pay for their pilots?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: What rate do they pay?

Mr. Donald: I could not tell you that.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: They must be high if they are higher than the premiums for air-line pilots, because they pay £10 in every £100. That would be all right as long as they were paid on that basis if they had an accident but there again they are paid ordinary rates.

Mr. Burrows: Would not the actuary know better than you what is fair there?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. As a matter of fact, the previous Treasurer admitted in the Chamber on a previous occasion that it was unfair and he told me that he was prepared to discuss the matter with me. In the meantime, of course, he has been defeated. I have no doubt that in the near

future it will be put to the Treasurer by a deputation from the various airline organisations.

I know the present Government will do something realistic about removing the burden of air tax imposed by the previous Government on people in the inland areas. They have not been encouraged to live there. It is also well known that the distance for free cartage of producers' own commodities is to be extended in the near future to something like a 75-mile radius. I ask that consideration be given to those in the outback who live just outside the 75-mile radius. They should be given the benefit of the limit, too, so that they do not have to pay for the 75 miles plus the additional distance. All the closely-settled areas like Kingaroy, Gatton and Laidley near the city will get the benefit of the legislation, but areas like Wandoan—which sends most of its produce, cattle and sheep down to Chinchilla and Dalby for sale—are outside the 75-mile radius.

Mr. Aikens: Are you a shareholder in any airline company?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, I am not, other than our own private company.

I commend the Ministers for the way they are facing up to their responsibilities. The Minister for Labour and Industry, the Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads, and others have brought a new interest, new life and vision, into the various departments.

Mr. Graham: New brooms always sweep clean.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That is quite true. It is worth while having a new broom, and it has been proved conclusively in this case. I have been gratified at the prompt and efficient way in which the Minister for Public Works and Local Government handles matters. It is a great source of satisfaction to the people of the Inland that the Minister for Education hopes to do something about a school of the air. The people of the West have felt this need for a long time and his action is another instance of the value of fresh blood and a new outlook. It will mean a great deal to those who have to learn by correspondence. I commend the Minister for his vision. The Minister for Health and Home Affairs has a sympathetic and realistic approach to problems and it is gratifying to see the work being carried out by his department. I could continue at some length but I have stressed the main points I wished to emphasise, so I will conclude by saying that I hope the Treasurer will carefully consider and adjust the matters I have brought to his attention.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (3.41 p.m.): I offer you my sincere congratulations, Mr. Taylor, on your appointment as Chairman of Committees. Since you have taken over you

have filled the office with great dignity and decorum. Therefore, any words from me would be superfluous.

I extend my congratulations to the Treasurer. I believe he has all the necessary qualities for a successful Treasurer. I very much doubt whether the Government could have made a wiser selection. He said that he felt some discomfort in presenting the Budget, but I did not notice any on his part. He promised that in future he would present a Budget which would more truly reflect the position of the State's finances. I am sure this would meet with the approval of every hon. member.

Prior to, during, and since the last State election campaign a large number of individuals and organisations have persistently attempted to convince the public of Australia, particularly the electors of Queensland, that there is some close affiliation between the Communist Party and the Australian Labour Party, that members of the Communist Party by some means or other have an influence on the policy of the Australian Labour Party. On behalf of every member of the Australian Labour Party I give that suggestion my complete denial. Nothing is further from the truth. These organisations have made deliberate attacks to try to discredit the Australian Labour Party in its work and objectives. In common with all who believe in the democratic way of life, we of the Australian Labour Party are concerned at the threat to democratic principles offered by the policies and techniques of Totalitarianism, Communism, Fascism, or any other party of the extreme right.

Freedom of expression, inquiry, criticism of trade union organisation, all implicit in the socialist faith, are denied under the system these organisations build. Democratic socialists (members of the Australian Labour Party) therefore challenge the fallacies of the teaching of these organisations, and resist the spread of their influence.

But, how best can a democratic community defend itself against this teaching and influence without abandoning the principles of democracy? How can democracy safeguard its institutions without resorting to repression? These are questions which should receive the closest attention and consideration from each and every one of us.

In Australia, Great Britain, Canada, the United States of America and other democratic countries, the working class possesses a wide freedom of organisation and expression. Different views held by particular sections of the working class or trade union movement can be freely expressed and argued out. Within the trade union movement itself opposing factions and leaders may, and do, compete for power in a democratic way.

Within the working class movement as a whole, rival parties, including the Communist Party and those of the extreme right, compete for the support of the workers. The

position is very different where the single party dictatorship prevails. There the workers do not enjoy self-government in the sense envisaged by democratic socialists. On the contrary, the working class is robbed of any real opportunity for self-government, of any opportunity to hammer out questions of political and economic policy in their own independent organisations. Democratic socialists have always argued that socialism will produce a more democratic society than is possible under capitalism. In particular, socialists claim that the substitution of public control of industry and economic life for private ownership of the means of production would give the rank and file of the community a larger share than they now have in the government of industry, and in deciding the economic policies and destinies of the country; therefore it would mean a larger measure of democracy. However, I would like to emphasise that socialism cannot produce a more democratic order if the public ownership of the means of production is achieved at the cost of those democratic liberties that the community already possesses. Socialism will mean a wider and more effective democracy only if it preserves, builds upon and enlarges the rights without which self-government is impossible in any form of society.

Freedom of thought, speech, inquiry, organisation, the right of the community to select its own government by choosing between competing policies and parties, the right to criticise and to reject a government, or a leader—without these a community cannot be said to be self-governing.

Democratic socialists are therefore bound to struggle against all forms of totalitarian government with all their might, because we have witnessed, where its influence is paramount, a harsh, repressive and at times tyrannical form of government.

Communists do not believe that socialism can be achieved by democratic, peaceful, parliamentary methods. They hold that capitalism will have to be destroyed by revolutionary action, though Marx himself expressed the opinion almost a century ago that in some countries, naming Britain and America, the workers might be able to take power peacefully. In any case, Communists differ from democratic socialists in having no reluctance to use revolutionary violence wherever its use seems profitable. In every country where they have been at all strong they have not concealed their scorn and hatred of gradualists, the parliamentary socialists, who, as a recent communist writer put it, believe that you can achieve socialism with the permission and co-operation of the capitalist class. Because they hold this view Communists are bound to be opposed by members of the A.L.P. in common with all democrats. Even if Communists were right in holding that Communism will not come peacefully by the normal methods of parliamentary government, it is still true that a democratic socialist society is unlikely to arise

from force and revolution. They have had little success in Australia in persuading electors to accept their policies, therefore they have not gained a footing within Parliament as they have, for example, in Italy and France. It is true that we had a Communist member—Fred Paterson—in the Queensland Parliament for a number of years and he earned for himself, and rightly so, the reputation of being the best behaved member in the House.

If we agree that Communism and Fascism are opposed to democracy, if we agree that it is necessary to fight to prevent the encroachment or triumph of Communism or Fascist ideas, we must agree on some common policy for the protection of democracy. No democrat will deny that democracy must protect itself against those who attempt to use force or violence to overthrow democratic institutions, that a democratic community cannot tolerate a conspiracy to subvert our political system, that it must find some way of dealing with people whose real object is to assist a foreign power. No democrat denies that if the Communist Party, or individual communists, or any other party or individuals are proved guilty of committing any of these offences they must be punished. But we must deal with specific actions, with actual offences of using violence, of committing sabotage or espionage, or with planning or conspiring to do so. The law should not suppress an organisation simply because in the opinion of the Government it is liable to commit these offences.

It seems reasonable to many people to suppress Communist organisations and impose restrictions on individual Communists merely because there is a danger that they may engage in acts of violence or treachery. There are many who are satisfied to argue that we know we cannot trust the Communists; we know that if they get a chance they will spy or use espionage, and therefore we must put them out of the way of doing the harm before they get the chance. This argument will not hold water. On purely practical grounds it may be questioned, and I question it, whether suppression of the Communist Party would in fact reduce the danger of violence, sabotage or espionage. If their party is banned, the Communists cannot meet openly or advocate their views and philosophies, but, driven underground, they can still maintain their contact with one another. They will have no trouble in bringing into their work new men unknown to the authorities as Communists. If they want to engage in sabotage or espionage, they can continue to do it or plan secretly for it. Even if they were a legal party they would in any case plan such activities secretly. I think we would be safe in assuming that. This is not the sort of enterprise of which the rank and file would be allowed any knowledge, thus the banning of the party would not

appreciably affect or make more difficult the carrying on of those activities which banning is supposed to prevent.

This, however, is not the most serious point. It is a dangerous and drastic breach of democratic practice for Governments to suppress organisations or impose restrictions on persons, not because of offences committed or known to be planned but as a precautionary or preventive measure. Preventive arrests of individuals and the precautionary destruction of political organisations because they are vaguely declared to be a danger to the security of the State are the favoured technique of the totalitarian States. It is something we must not permit.

The method is objectionable. It is incompatible with democracy because it allows the Government to silence unwelcome views by using the grave charges of sedition and treason although treason and sedition have not occurred or cannot be proved. It is an attack on political opinion under the guise of an attack on some criminal activity or offence. My objection to the banning of political parties and organisations as a preventive or precautionary method is that, if we adopt this method, we forbid, or at least impose severe restrictions on expressions of a certain kind of political opinion to guard against certain acts of violence, espionage or sabotage, although by doing this we do not really reduce the risk of these undemocratic actions. In short, we violate the democratic right of freedom of speech and opposition. We introduce a measure which has been characteristic of totalitarian States, for the sake of a very dubious result.

No doctrine is so wild and unreasonable that the members of the community should not have the right to examine it and make up their minds about it. Democratic socialists, of course, do not accept the Communist view that socialism cannot come by peaceful, democratic change. They do not believe that revolution will produce a free and better society for workers and others.

We must not overlook the fact that experience in Germany, Italy and Spain in the last 30-odd years shows that under certain conditions the property-owning classes are willing to abandon democratic methods and resort to armed force in order to smash the working-class movement and, indeed, even movements which stand for liberal reform. The poor support given to Communist candidates in each of the six States in the three spheres of Government, local, State and national, is an indication that democracy in Australia is not in jeopardy through the teaching and propaganda of the Communist Party. If there was any likelihood that it was, would it not constitute a terrible indictment of Australian democracy? In the contest between democratic and communist ideologies and policies all the advantages are on the side of democracy. I think every hon. member will agree that that is certainly true in Australia, Britain and U.S.A. People

in those countries have long been used to democratic institutions and methods and under them they have made great progress particularly in the last half-century not only in increasing their standards of living but also in their enjoyment of political power. Democratic habits and democratic ways of thought have influenced them deeply.

When we consider how those three countries have confronted the great crises of this century, two world wars and a world-wide depression, is there any evidence at all to suggest that the allegiance of the great majority of citizens to democracy is at all precarious or that communists even if they are conceded the widest rights of agitation and organisation have any prospects of making serious inroads into democratic allegiance or morale?

Again, granted that Communists are working tirelessly to engineer a revolutionary situation does it mean that in Australia they constitute a real threat to the security of the State? Are we to imagine that in Australia or in Great Britain or in the U.S.A. even a significant minority of people will lightly embrace revolutionary ideas or follow a revolutionary party? People do not easily accept the sacrifice and uncertainty that revolution involves. It requires great and widespread suffering, prolonged economic hardship or a long, cruel and unsuccessful war to persuade people to reject the institutions and the way of life to which they have been accustomed. History affords no reason whatever for believing that in democratic countries, if they can continue to provide tolerable conditions of life for the majority of their citizens, revolutionary parties will make any headway. The failure of Communism in the homeland, in Australia and in U.S.A. to make any headway in electoral campaigns shows how feeble a menace to democracy the advocacy of Communist doctrines really is in these countries. Let us examine the position throughout Australia and even in Queensland. In the 1955 Commonwealth election in the first preference votes recorded, the Communist candidates in New South Wales got 31,192 of the total votes recorded or 1.796 per cent.; in Victoria the figure was 3,280 representing .24 per cent. and in Queensland 6,851 or 1.088 per cent.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. DONALD: The Australian Labour Party got a bigger majority than any other party, which shows that that party is the people's party and that the present Commonwealth Government are a minority Government. The people have followed the policy enunciated by Dr. Evatt every time he has appealed to them as Leader of the Australian Labour Party. In South Australia 6,444 votes were recorded for Communist candidates or 1.448 per cent.; in Western Australia 1,231 votes were recorded or .676 per cent.; and in Tasmania 2,003 votes were recorded or 1.198 per cent. Throughout the Commonwealth the first preference votes recorded for

the Communists was 51,001 or 1.12 per cent. Therefore we have the answer as to how feeble they are against democracy in Australia. If we turn to the 1956 State election of the 66,268 votes cast, the Communist Party received 1,336 or .201 per cent.

We have had Australian Labour Party Governments in Queensland with only one break since 1915. The percentage of Communist votes at State elections in Queensland is .201. In South Australia, where anti-Labour Governments have been in office for many years, the percentage is 1.448. If there is any argument about which party fosters the Communist Party, figures recorded by the electors under democratic rule and at democratic elections where there is a secret vote and no chance of knowing how a person casts his or her vote and no chance of victimisation give the answer. Any hon. member who cares to go to the Parliamentary Library and do a little research can get those figures. They answer the charge of those who accuse the Australian Labour Party of harbouring and encouraging the Communist Party.

Government Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Low): Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr. DONALD: If I am annoying the people who do not like their insinuations and accusations against the Australian Labour Party being exposed, I cannot help that.

There is more weight in the argument that it is the influence of the Communists in the trade unions that constitutes their chief threat to national security. However, the evidence in Australia during the last few years indicates that Communists have nothing like the power they are alleged to possess of sabotaging industrial preparation or prejudicing the conduct of war, if war should come.

It must be admitted that Communists have achieved considerable success in the trade union movement because of their skill in fighting for better working conditions. I should not be telling the truth if I did not admit that. I have been a trade union official for many years, and I still regard myself as an industrialist despite the fact that I have been in Parliament for quite a number of years. I have worked alongside Communist officials; I know their skill, I know their efficiency, and I know their energy. It would be foolish of me to deny that. But is this a reason to conclude that the majority of trade unionists would accept their more general political doctrines or objectives, or that they would support them if they opposed a war or preparation for war in which this country was involved? No, of course it is not. Democracy in Australia is so strongly entrenched in the minds of Australians that there is no danger in allowing them to hear all that the Communists have to say in support of other social systems or

in denunciation of this one. I am not denying, nor do I wish to, that the Communist Party ought to be suppressed if it is discovered to be conspiring against the Government or the Constitution of the country. I wholeheartedly agree that a democratic government, like any other, must defend itself against conspiracy. The Australian Government, by the existing laws of the Commonwealth, already have wide powers to strike against conspiracy, sedition, treason and sabotage. If there is a Communist conspiracy, it should be destroyed without delay, although I am naturally opposed to the present Commonwealth Government. I have sufficient confidence in them, however, to feel that if there were any evidence at all of a conspiracy by the Communist Party or any unpatriotic action, treason or sabotage, they would not hesitate to take the necessary steps to have them destroyed.

A Government Member: Dr. Evatt would not.

Mr. DONALD: I refuse to answer inane interjections. The hon. member has no knowledge of the capabilities of Dr. Evatt. He has no knowledge of what Dr. Evatt has done for democracy. He has never read any of his works. He has refused to give Dr. Evatt the credit that everyone throughout the democratic universe has given him. Dr. Evatt has had praise lavished on him for the work he was able to do when he was connected with the United Nations. We have every reason to be proud of him. All Australians have every reason to be proud of him as a son of Australia. No-one can point the finger of scorn at him. In his scholastic ability, in his ability as a jurist or in his ability as a statesman, he is unequalled in the Commonwealth of Australia, but he has to go out of Australia for recognition. As for those so small that they cannot see beyond their own political opinions—it is they and they alone who make such statements. It is a tribute to Dr. Evatt that so much money and energy should be expended by his political opponents in an attempt to destroy him. It is a tribute, too, to his efforts on behalf of the working class and on behalf of Australia as a nation.

My next statement will not please members of the Government but it is true. Communists are extremely active in exploiting social and industrial tensions which have their roots in the general nature of capitalist society. These tensions have existed for some hundred years or more. The same tensions in the past gave rise to the trade union movement, the Wesleyan Church, the Australian Labour Party, the British Labour Party and its equivalent in almost every democratic country in the world—indeed, all those movements and individuals who have during the last two centuries been inspired by the vision of society in which injustice and poverty would no longer be allowed to exist.

In a large number of countries the method forced upon reformers has been that of revolution, but in the United Kingdom the Scandinavian countries, and the British Commonwealth of Nations, as well as in the United States, it has been possible to meet the demand for social reform by legislative measures—measures which have been designed to remove the causes of tension, and to cut the ground from under the feet of the revolutionaries by removing their most powerful weapon, the quite genuine discontent of a considerable proportion of the population.

Mr. Knox: How can the Labour Party help?

Mr. DONALD: I thank the hon. member for the interjection. I will answer that.

The present situation remains exactly the same. The revolutionaries on the present scene are the Communists and they exist because there are still unprivileged sections of the community. How can it be met? Let us first be clear about the attitude of those with other political viewpoints to these discontents of the community. In general the parties of the right are conservative. They believe in the conservation of the present system with relatively few minor changes to make it work more efficiently within the existing framework. They tend, therefore, to regard the economic and the social problems from which discontent arises as minor frictions of the economy and generally to minimise their importance. In the presence of vocal and energetic advocacy of these discontents, the conservatives tend to deal with the immediate inconvenience of the advocacy by trying to ban the advocates. Indeed, they go further and suggest that the discontents are themselves the results of the advocacy. This attitude must lead parties of the right to one of two positions. They may become completely authoritarian and forcibly suppress all expression of the discontents or they may redirect them towards an external enemy or to an internal minority such as the Jews. Otherwise, they may make such concessions as they think they can afford within the structure of the economy, as they wish it to be, and hope that those concessions will be sufficient to remove the discontents.

The position of the A.L.P. and the trade union movement needs more careful consideration. In the first place they themselves have grown into existence because they were the advocates of social and economic change and because they, or a substantial majority of their members, are very conscious that major discontents still exist. They also believe that relieving these discontents is more important than maintaining these existing social and economic structures.

Therefore members and leaders of the Labour movement cannot refuse to support the agitations arising from genuine social and industrial tensions just because the communists are also supporting it. They may feel great repugnance at the methods

used by the communists to air a grievance or force a change. They may feel that the grievance is being used as a means of attracting support for political manoeuvres that have little relation to the grievance itself. But they cannot agree that the grievance should not be raised at all or that traditional industrial and democratic political steps to alleviate it should be abandoned. Their aim must be to ensure that the methods used are those accepted as legitimate in our democratic society. This implies that they should be prepared to place themselves at the head of such agitations. It implies further that they should be able to show the sufferers that they are aware of the grievance and that they are able to secure a remedy for it within the existing democratic framework and that they can secure this remedy reasonably quickly. The fundamental fact about communist penetration into trade-union leadership is that these individual communists have shown themselves most efficient as trade-union leaders. They have been able to get grievances aired and remedied. The only way they could be displaced, indeed the only way they should be displaced, is by the demonstration to the rank-and-file trade union membership that the election of non-communist leaders and the adoption of more traditional policies will be equally effective in removing the fundamental grievances. To do so trade union members who are not communists but who have the necessary qualities for leadership should exhibit the energy and efficiency of their communist rivals. Interfering with the methods of trade union elections will do little to help. Interfering with the normal process of union agitation will make it increasingly difficult. Anything that will quicken the solution of industrial disputes through normal channels will greatly assist.

Mr. Aikens: They are squeezed today between the grouper and the communist.

Mr. DONALD: That is true. The non-communist trade union leader must always be aware that the day to day dispute is in itself only a symptom of the major disease of the economic and political system. The only real solution is the removal of the disease of capitalism. But they must also be aware of their responsibility to keep the body alive. They reject the drastic revolutionary surgery of the communist which in their view would mean the death of the patient. Nevertheless they must be sure that the patient does steadily improve and that the circumstances encouraging the disease are progressively removed. Non-communist trade union leaders, while constantly maintaining advances in the status and power of the workers, must show an awareness of the longer term strategy and have clearly in their minds not only the type of socialist economy they finally desire, but also the methods by which this can be achieved, without, in the process, losing that democratic system of political organisation which is equally vital.

The support gained by the Communist Party in any country is a direct measure of the social tensions existing in that country. The only way to reduce the political danger such a party represents is to remove the causes of these social tensions either by direct parliamentary legislation or by making sure that the traditional extra-parliamentary machine can work smoothly and effectively. Until this can be achieved nothing will stop the eyes of the discontented from turning to a country where there is, if not a better, at least a different system operating.

If democracy is to survive or transform itself into democratic socialism, as I trust it will, it must demonstrate that in the present and in the future it can deliver the goods. With this must go a deeper popular understanding of the meaning of democracy and of the danger to democracy of trying to defend it by totalitarian methods. I say very advisedly that if we continue to try and destroy the Communist Party and the evils arising from their ideology by using totalitarian methods we can expect to be disappointed, to meet failure and disaster. If we attack the Communist Party and the evils of what they preach we must use democratic means. If we fight Communism in a democratic way it will bring success, joy and final victory.

I wish to say a few words in connection with the coal mining industry of Australia, as distinct from the mining industry. Some reference was made to the mining industry in the Budget but no reference was made to the coal mining industry. At present the coal mining industry is going through another crisis, something similar to the one experienced prior to World War I. Despite record production figures produced by the miners during the war and post-war period they are rewarded by mass unemployment in New South Wales. The position is not so serious in Queensland. We must acknowledge that we cannot interfere with the economy of the coal industry in New South Wales which produces 80 per cent. of the black coal of Australia without affecting the economy of the industry in every State throughout the country. We have unemployed here but not to a great extent; but while one coal miner or other worker is out of work, it is too many. The Miners' Federation encouraged by the success of the Newstan colliery in New South Wales, managed by the Joint Coal Board of the Commonwealth and the State of New South Wales, are waging a campaign for the nationalisation of the coal mining industry. We know that it cannot be done on a national basis; it will have to be done by the State Parliament. In Queensland we will meet with opposition, and the finger of scorn will be pointed to the three State coal mines in this State. These mines have not done as well as they might but there is a reason for it. Take Mt. Mulligan where the people are threatened with unemployment due to the generation of hydro-electricity which lessened

the demand for their product. People should realise that the miners at Mt. Mulligan rendered a valuable service to the State and the nation for a long time. They provided coal at a cheaper rate than it could be purchased anywhere else. One reason why there was no profit was because the State mine was not allowed to increase its price when private enterprise did. Every one of us owes gratitude to the people who lived in Mt. Mulligan and produced coal. They were the pioneers. Nature has not been kind to Mt. Mulligan in its coal seam or in any other way. These people who live far from civilisation have rendered a community service. We have a wonderful mine at Collinsville but through mismanagement we have not achieved the results that were possible. The third is the Styx coalfield. There is no logical reason as to why these mines should not be operated as State enterprises, or lessen the arguments for nationalisation. In addition to the inspiration from the successful operation of the Newstan colliery is the record of the national coal industry of Britain. During the last 10 years the coal industry of Britain was nationalised. It was then on the verge of bankruptcy. This statement appeared in the "Telegraph" of 4 October of this year—

"Spent on Miners

"LONDON, Thursday (AAP): More than £1,250,000 was spent last year in improving social welfare for British miners. These include community centres, convalescent homes, sports fields and recreational facilities."

It is only a small paragraph hidden in the paper where it would not be conspicuous and where it would not be seen by those who believe in State-ownership.

The nationalised coal industry of Britain showed a profit last year of £12,500,000, despite the expenditure on development and expenditure for mine-workers amounting to £1,250,000.

The following article appeared in "Coal," the magazine of the mining industry, in the issue of January, 1957, volume 10—

"A special tenth anniversary message to Coal readers from the chairman of the National Coal Board.

"James Bowman, C.B.E.

"Ten years ago this month the British coal industry passed into public ownership. As the first big industry to be nationalised in Britain it was, if you like, a big experiment; and certainly it was a great event for all those of us who believed in nationalisation and had fought for it through many long years of depression.

"Service to the Nation.

"There can be no doubt that the nation has been splendidly served by the coal industry in the last ten years. In the post-war world, the British nation has clearly had to earn its living by production and exports more vigorously than ever

before. We were determined, and rightly so, to achieve full employment and maintain it. We wanted a rising standard of living for every citizen. Yet all these things depended on our having enough fuel and power for British industry. And that meant, quite simply, having more and more coal.

"Our industry has supplied that coal. In 1956 we produced seven tons of coal for every six produced ten years earlier. We provided over 85 per cent. of Britain's energy supplies for use in factories, in the home, and wherever else men or women use fuel or power to speed their work or increase their comfort.

"Moreover, we have served the nation not only with today's supplies of coal, but also by developing the industry for the future. Britain is going to need more and more coal in the future. Because we took over an industry which had been run down by years of depression and by the strains of war we had to rebuild its capacity for the future at the same time as we struggled with each year's production. This building for the future is now in full swing with our £1,000 million investment plan. We are creating a coal industry that will be so technically up-to-date and progressive that the nation will have every reason to be proud of it as a public-owned industry.

"What We Hoped For.

"This technical restoration of the industry, this revival of progress and enterprise, was clearly something which miners and management alike hoped would flow from nationalisation. But it was not all we hoped for. We wanted to see the pay and status of all who work in the industry restored to levels worthy of the vital place which coal has in the British economy. I believe this has been done. The rewards and working conditions of the coal industry today are vastly improved. Amenities such as pithead baths and health centres have been increased, along with measures to reduce accidents, so that we can report splendid progress in improving the health and safety of our workers.

"But we expected even more of nationalisation than this. Surely we expected a much greater spread of opportunity for everyone in the industry to develop his talents to his own and the industry's advantage. We expected more opportunities, and more training so that people could make use of them. And it is a great pride to me that I can say we have achieved both these objectives. There is today an equality of opportunity in the coal industry second to none. Both on the mining side and in the offices the openings for promotion are there for all who have the necessary skills and talent. And to develop such skills and talent there are training schemes of every kind. There is no longer any question of family connections or

financial interests affecting the advancement of any individual in the industry. Amongst the lads who come in today are the leaders of tomorrow.

"A New Spirit.

"Our greatest hope of nationalisation was that there should be a new spirit in the industry, but this was the most difficult thing of all to achieve. The many long years of bitterness could not be forgotten overnight. But in ten years we have gone a long way towards creating the spirit of partnership, and the ideal of equal co-operation in a common task, which we believed a nationalised industry should develop.

"In this field I would pay tribute to the contribution which the various trade unions have made. At all levels of the industry individuals and representative organisations have found, I believe, a new respect for each other and a genuine comradeship in the task of winning coal for the nation. Of course, trade unions still exist to foster their members' interests, and management still has to provide leadership and take decisions; and we still have occasional differences of opinion or misunderstandings. But the spirit, even when we disagree, should be quite different from the traditional struggle between workmen and owners which was so particularly bitter in the coal industry.

"The Future.

"These ten years, then, have been ten years of revolution in coal; a revolution in methods and equipment, a revolution in attitudes of mind. But no revolution, and no industry, can stand still—least of all the coal industry.

"The future challenges us as much today as it did in 1947. I am confident that the years ahead will see us adding more and more to the industry's great record of achievement."

That is not a trade union journal or a journal of a Labour Government but one of the conservative Government of Great Britain. It is a definite tribute to the foresight of a British Labour Government and a vindication of Labour's policy for the nationalisation of the coal industry.

Mr. HHey: The cost to the consumer would still be double what it is here.

Mr. DONALD: Our coal is probably the cheapest in the world. In the British Isles they are winning as much coal year after year as we claim to be in our seam of coal at Blair Athol. That should give hon. members an idea of the magnitude of the coal industry of Great Britain. It is only natural that they are having great difficulty in getting the best grade of coal. Coal has to be washed as we do in the West Moreton field, but the nationalisation experienced in Great Britain has not been anything but successful.

I do not think that we should be humble in our approaches to the Commonwealth Government. If the Treasurer thinks that we are entitled to the same benefits as are granted to West Australia it is not being humble and going down upon our knees to ask for the same help as that granted to the other States. We have the same disabilities in Queensland as exist in those States.

Whilst we recognise that a sound immigration policy is essential for the development of our State it is not generally recognised that every migrant is an extra cost to the State and an asset to the Commonwealth. It should not be forgotten that for every migrant who comes to Australia the State Government have to provide certain services such as transportation, hospitalisation, medical attention, education and police and all those things cost money. On the other hand, every time a migrant smokes a cigarette or cigar or imbibes alcoholic beverage he is adding revenue to the Commonwealth. For those reasons the Commonwealth Government should be more genuine and helpful than they have been in the past.

In his Financial Statement the Treasurer said he thought that the Commonwealth Government should share in the cost of the road to Mary Kathleen. That is a very reasonable suggestion and a logical request, and I trust that it will be acted upon. He said that the road has a high potential for inclusion as a defence project and I do not think anyone will disagree with that. In addition to being a valuable means of transportation it would be a valuable asset as a defence road.

We all agree with the Treasurer's statement that the development of the North is a real Australian responsibility, and we hope that his case to the Federal Government will be given sympathetic consideration and will succeed where so many other requests have failed. If he succeeds it will not be because past Premiers and past Treasurers of Queensland State Governments have not presented good arguments or put their cases in a logical way. It will be because they have been unable to make the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer see eye to eye with them and give justice not only to the case they were presenting but also to the State of Queensland. I think political bigotry had something to do with it. It is high time that the Commonwealth Government gave Queensland's case more favourable consideration. If the Treasurer can break through, he will be rendering this State valuable service.

Whilst it can be said that the natural increase in our population is satisfactory, our gain from migration is anything but satisfactory. There are a number of reasons for this, and perhaps the principle reason is that Queensland is the last State in which migrants arrive. They get off the ships at Perth or Fremantle, or they go on to Adelaide, Melbourne, or Sydney. On only

rare occasions do the migrant ships call at Queensland ports, and the ports at which they disembark are often thousands of miles from where work is waiting for them. They have to come to Queensland by train from Sydney, and I think that might be one of the chief obstacles to their coming to Queensland.

When we speak of migrants, our thoughts immediately fly to Mrs. Ryan in Victoria and the magnificent work she did for this State when she was Queensland's representative at the Queensland Tourist Bureau in Melbourne. She met every migrant ship that came to Australia, and when there were migrants on board who were coming to Queensland, whether they were from Great Britain or from foreign countries, she welcomed them, made them as happy as she could, and gave them some sound motherly advice. I take this opportunity of paying my tribute to Mrs. Ryan for her magnificent work. She is in fact a wonderful Queenslander.

Mr. Aikens: She might be mentioned in the New Year's Honours List.

Mr. DONALD: If she is mentioned in the New Year's Honours List by those who have power to bestow honours on her, I say that she is a person who deserves it.

We have been crying out for people in Queensland, and there should be plenty of work for those people because Queensland must be developed. Much has been said about Queensland's great potential. If we cannot find gainful employment for people, we should not induce them to leave their homelands. If many of the migrants have the same experience as the unfortunate gentleman who called on me one day last week, it is a very bad advertisement for this State. This man, a Bulgarian, was naturalised in Adelaide seven years ago. He appeared to be of above average intelligence, physically fit but very depressed. He had every reason to be depressed, because for 10 months he has been unable to get a job of any sort. He has been walking round this city for 10 months, willing and anxious to work in any position. He is now left without a penny and his wife is bedridden. Is it any wonder the man is depressed? We want migrants; we want the State developed. It is bad enough to be out of work amongst one's friends and relatives. What must it be like to be out of work without a friend to turn to, not a penny to bless yourself with, and thousands of miles from your home? One case such as that is a severe indictment on our economic system. We should see that those cases do not exist on a large scale.

It was very pleasing to hear the Treasurer protest against the Commonwealth Government's allocation of loan money to Queensland. For years the Queensland Government have complained about the inadequate treatment accorded to this State. I trust that he will succeed in obtaining justice in this very important field. The State cannot develop as we think it should unless we obtain a fairer share of the loan money available.

The construction of annexures to public hospitals for seniles is a step in the right direction. Anyone who has had the opportunity to go through the mental hospitals must have been struck with the overcrowding, just as they must have been impressed by the nursing attention given to the old people. I forget the matron's name, but she went to the trouble of buying dye and colouring the bedspreads and mosquito nets to make them more attractive. In her ward she is giving more comforts than in other wards, though not as many as her patients deserve, and there is less overcrowding and more privacy. The attendants at mental hospitals are paid far more than nurses in public hospitals and if annexures to general hospitals are constructed I do not want to see the Department of Health and Home Affairs paying those old peoples' attendants less than they are getting at mental hospitals at present.

The new farm ward at Goodna is a revelation. I am sure the Minister for Health and Home Affairs will be pleased to take along any hon. member who cares to inspect it. He will be amazed at the comforts provided for patients. The appointments in the kitchen, the toilets and the recreation room are equal to anything in any hotel in Brisbane.

Mr. Gair: Has this all happened since the election?

Mr. DONALD: No, it has not.

Mr. Gair: Of course not!

Mr. DONALD: I went there before the election. I am trying to impress on hon. members the work of the previous A.L.P. Governments, the ward stands as a monument to their administration.

I compliment the Treasurer on the speech he delivered at the Insurance dinner at Ipswich recently when the Insurance Commissioner presented a cup to the office with the most points for insurance business during the year. His speech would have done credit to any Labour member of the Committee. It was a tribute to the State Government Insurance Office and to the foresight of the Labour pioneers responsible for the Government's decision to embark on insurance business. It is nice to know that he threw away any political feeling that he had and paid that tribute. He was followed by Mr. Grimley, who surprised the large audience which was not confined to insurance people when he compared the rates of premium in Queensland with those in other States and in other parts of the world. If the hon. member for Barambah had discussed his complaints with the Insurance Commissioner he would have learned that they are without foundation. If it were left to private enterprise he would be paying much higher premiums than he is. It is to the credit of the State Government Insurance Office that its insurance is cheaper now than when the office was established in 1917.

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It would perhaps be to the advantage of hon. members to appoint someone to go along to see Mr. Grimley. I am sure he could give us a better return for the £2 a week we pay into the present superannuation scheme.

(Time expired).

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (4.41 p.m.): After my speech on the Address-in-Reply I had hoped that I would be able to devote an hour on this debate to my beloved North Queensland and to inform the new Government just what could be done and should be done so that North Queensland could get the square deal long denied it.

Mr. Coburn: I will do it.

Mr. AIKENS: If the hon. member for Burdekin will do it I will collaborate beforehand with him to the fullest in the broom cupboard.

Last week we had what old hon. members know as a Dorothy Dix question. The State Electricity Commission drew up a series of Dorothy Dix questions and handed them over to the Minister in charge of electricity, who passed them over to the hon. member for Flinders who asked the questions in the House. I do not blame the hon. member for Flinders because he is new here and probably does not know anything about Dorothy Dixism. The very next day the State Electricity Commission drew up for the Minister the answers to its own questions. I would not have minded so much if the questions and answers had been factual and relevant to the points I raised in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, but they were clouded with a smoke screen in a futile endeavour to cover the real issues.

While talking about Ministers and their departmental heads let me make this observation: far too often in the life of the last Government it would not have taken very much imagination for hon. members to actually see the ring in the nose of some Ministers by which their departmental heads used to periodically lead them up the garden path. I hope that we are not going to see any more distressing exhibitions of that sort of thing from this Government or any other Government.

When a Minister allows himself to be used as a Dorothy Dix-er he does so for one of three reasons—bribery, political pressure or flattery. From my experience I would say that the last is by far the most dangerous and the most potent, particularly when it is used by departmental heads who have become adept at it through many years of experience. I issue that warning to the Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads or any other Minister who might feel disposed to blithely accept the flattery and adulation that is heaped upon him from time to time by his departmental heads.

Let us get down to the whole substance of the T.R.E.B. matter. I regret that I have to weary hon. members with it again. I have

been charged with being irresponsible. I may be irresponsible, I may even be irrepressible, I may even be irredeemable, but I am not a liar and I am not a stooge. This is the whole crux of the matter. Are my statements true or false? Whether I am irresponsible or not is quite by the way. No one has ever denied that the Charters Towers Electric Light Company which was a private company, would eventually be taken over by the T.R.E.B. Ayr, Ingham, Bowen and Townsville were local authority electric light undertakings and were taken over with no payment of cash, but Charters Towers, being a private company had to be taken over when it was by the payment of public money to private individuals. And that is a very important point. In order to make sure that my statements were true and factual—and I am sure this is a shock to the Electricity Commission—I saw a copy of the minutes of the T.R.E.B. relevant to this question and took extracts from them. Hon. members may be surprised as to how I did that. Hon. members know as well as I do that the T.R.E.B. is a tyrannical monstrosity which is run on the lines of a secret society. No-one could see the minutes at the T.R.E.B., but due to the action of the hon. member for Haughton who was the previous Minister, consequent on statements I made in the House, the T.R.E.B. now makes a copy of its minutes available to the constituent local authority, Ayr, Ingham, Thuringa, and, in this case, Townsville. The moment I knew that the town clerk at Townsville had a copy of the minutes of the T.R.E.B. I went along as a ratepayer under the Local Government Act and I asked the town clerk to let me have a look at the minutes, which he did. I examined them and took relevant extracts from them. I want to be honest in the matter. I am prepared to make these extracts available to any member who wishes to look at them or any member of the Press or, if necessary, I shall lay them on the table of the House.

Mr. Burrows: We could look at them up there. They are made open for inspection.

Mr. AIKENS: They are not. If the hon. member says that they are open at the T.R.E.B. for inspection, he lies; and he knows he lies. I cannot be franker than that. As I said, no-one doubted that the Charters Towers Electric Light Company was going to be taken over, but the whole sum and substance of the position was when it was going to be taken over. Everybody knew that the Charters Towers Electric Light Company was tottering, and that its plant was falling into decay. Everyone knew it was in a bad financial position; and the Minister, in his Dorothy Dix reply, confirmed that. In reply to Dorothy Dix Question (i.) the Minister said—

“The Company was unable to finance the installation of additional generating plant required to meet demand;”

Not only was it in bad state of repair, but it was in bad financial odour with the investing public and could not raise the money needed

for the plant—as the Minister admits in his Dorothy Dix reply. Again, I repeat, the question was: how quickly could it be taken over? Let me be honest about the matter. The Electricity Commission wanted it taken over as quickly as possible because they were afraid that if it was not taken over as quickly as possible there would be a failure of electric light and power to Government institutions at Charters Towers—Eventide Home and the new mental hospital, the general hospital and the other governmental instrumentalities. I suppose they can be excused for taking it over as quickly as possible. As an instrumentality of the Government they wanted the people of the Townsville area, as consumers of the T.R.E.B. to bear a financial burden that rightly belonged to the Government.

The Electricity Commission did not say to the Government, “The Charters Towers plant is breaking down. The Eventide Home, the mental hospital and so on at Charters Towers will not have power, and therefore the Government will have to prop up the Charters Towers Electric Light Co.” Instead of being honest and saying that, the Commission conceived the idea that T.R.E.B. should be urged to rush in and take over the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. The date of the take-over is the all-important point, not the take-over itself, because that had to come in any case.

The Electricity Commissioner who represented the Minister knew very well that he could rely on the vote of Alderman Sherriff, because Alderman Sherriff is known as “Smith’s sycophant.” I am informed, and I believe my information to be correct, that the only speech he ever makes at T.R.E.B. meetings is, “Yes, Mr. Smith.” The Commissioner’s vote and Sherriff’s vote were not enough, because there were six members on the Board, one representing the Hinchinbrook Shire Council, one representing the Ayr Shire Council, one representing the Thuringowa Shire Council, two representing the Townsville City Council, and Mr. Smith. No-one knew better than Electricity Commissioner Smith that the three country members, Ford of Ayr, Row of Ingham, and Wordsworth of Thuringowa, were definitely against the premature taking-over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. In the first place they knew it was bad business, and in the second they knew and said that the premature taking-over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. would interfere with rural extensions in the T.R.E.B. area. Of course, Sherriff agreed to vote for the take-over the moment Hopkins declared for it. Hopkins and Sherriff both belong to the same clique in the T.C.A. that controls the City of Townsville. Hopkins and Sherriff are elected by their T.C.A. cronies to T.R.E.B., and so it was absolutely and vitally necessary for Hopkins’ vote to be secured. Hopkins came to that vital T.R.E.B. meeting. All the other meetings and motions and the other eye-wash mentioned the other day by the Minister have

nothing to do with it. Those are inconsequential. The vital motion was, "Are we going to take over the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. as quickly as possible and save it from collapse in the interest of the Government buildings in Charters Towers and at the same time justify the price to be paid for it?" Hopkins came to that vital T.R.E.B. meeting, knowing that his father was a shareholder and a director of the Charters Towers Electric Light Co., and knowing, as everyone knew, that in 19 months—and I shall deal with that period in a moment—the plant would be in a state of absolute collapse and could be bought for the proverbial handful of bottle tops. Knowing that his father was a director and a shareholder, he at that meeting voted with Sherriff and Electricity Commissioner Smith for the immediate taking over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Co., against the votes of Row, Wordsworth and Ford, the vote then being three—all, and Sherriff having given his primary vote for the immediate take-over, then gave his casting vote and the whole rotten deal was completed. The issue was whether the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. should be taken over on 1 January, 1956, or when the transmission line from Townsville got to Charters Towers in August, 1957, a vital difference of 19 months.

The manager of T.R.E.B. at the time—and this is disclosed in the minutes—spoke strongly to the Board on the subject. This is the extract from the minutes—

"The manager expressed strong views on the problems the Board would have to face in the premature taking over at such short notice."

The expert advice of their own manager did not deter Messrs. Smith, Sherriff and Hopkins from voting for the premature taking over. I repeat that it was the vital vote and the only vote that mattered. Two pages were devoted in Votes and Proceedings and much space in "Hansard" to the Dorothy Dix questions and the Dorothy Dix answers and it is all so much dishonest eyewash. Without Hopkins's vote and Sherriff's casting vote, the price therefore would have been many thousands of pounds less than the £100,000 paid. Hopkins's action gave his father and co-director in the Charters Towers company all that extra money with which to set up the Charters Towers Loan and Finance Company which operates in place of the Charters Towers Electric Light Company.

The Treasurer is in charge of this debate and he would, I suppose, know as much, if not more, about ordinary business methods than any other ordinary member in this Chamber. If he were buying a car in bad repair, and everybody knew it was in bad repair, would not he pay a higher price today than in 19 months' time when the car had fallen to pieces and was in a state of complete collapse and probably off the road? I think the Treasurer would readily work it

out for his Government and for the edification of the Minister for Mines how much extra the T.R.E.B. paid for the Charters Towers Electric Light Company on 1 January, 1956 when there was no need and no justification for taking it over before August, 1957. Alderman Hopkins is held out to the people of Townsville by his aldermanic colleagues at every municipal election as the paragon of public morality. He went into the vital meeting and exercised his vote. I have no doubt if we are going to get down to splitting legal straws he was legally entitled to exercise his vote. The question I ask every hon. member listening to me is: does he believe he was morally right in exercising his vote? If there is any hon. member who believes Hopkins was morally right in exercising a vote he knew to be vital and a vote which he knew would bring many extra thousands of pounds into the hands of his father and co-directors of the electric light company, let him stand up or for ever hold his peace. Let me put it this way, and I put it to the Treasurer: I know that you cannot put anything over him when it comes to business, but let us assume that a Bill was introduced into this Chamber for the Government to take over one of the companies of which the Treasurer is a director—

Mr. Hanlon: Was a director.

Mr. AIKENS: Deem it that he is still a director—

Mr. Hiley: The position is clear, as Standing Orders debar me.

Mr. AIKENS: If the Treasurer has a pecuniary interest.

Mr. Hiley: Being a director of a company would be a pecuniary interest but if my father or my son held shares I would have no pecuniary interest.

Mr. AIKENS: That is the point. I am sorry that I said you were supposed to be a director. If a Bill was introduced into this Chamber for the Government to take over a company of which your father was a director and shareholder, you would have every legal justification for casting a vote in favour of the measure but would you remain in the Chamber and cast your vote or be guided by moral principles rather than legal quibble?

Mr. Hiley: I would make my decision as to whether it was proper to take it over, and having reached that decision I would not hesitate to exercise my vote.

Mr. AIKENS: If that is the hon. gentleman's attitude, politics in this State have reached a pretty low ebb, lower, perhaps, than in any State of the United States of America. If the hon. Treasurer would walk into this House and vote for the acquisition by the Government of a company of which his father was a director, then he has a much lower moral standard than I previously gave him credit for.

Mr. Nicholson: Why should not he, if he thinks it is morally right?

Mr. AIKENS: If he thinks it is morally right, I say that he has a much lower moral standard than I previously gave him credit for. I would not do it, and I have never yet been held up to anyone as a paragon of moral virtue. If any close relative of mine was a director of a company and a Bill was introduced into this Parliament to acquire that company, I think I should have the moral decency to walk out of the Chamber while the Vote was being taken, particularly if, as in the case of Hopkins, I knew that my vote was the vital vote and that my vote would mean many thousands of pounds extra being put into the hands of my father and his co-directors.

Mr. Hiley: Has it ever occurred to you that it might be morally weaker to walk out of the Chamber than to record your vote? Think that one out.

Mr. AIKENS: I put this question to the hon. gentleman now that he is being polemic about it. If he was called upon as a business man to buy an undertaking that was obviously falling to pieces, admittedly in bad financial straits and in bad financial odour, and he could buy that undertaking at a high price today and a much lower price in 19 months' time, when it would be to his advantage to buy it because the transmission line would be there in 19 months' time, when would he buy it?

Mr. Hiley: I should want to look at those premises. All I can say is that the Government have been advised that it was bought at an attractive price on the day on which it was purchased.

Mr. AIKENS: That may be so; but it should never have been bought until 19 months' later when the transmission line got there. That is the point.

Mr. Hiley: I have never known you to be right in your facts in this Chamber yet, and I refuse to accept your premise now.

Mr. AIKENS: I ask the hon. gentleman to wait a moment. I have here an extract from the actual minutes. "Councillor Row moved that the takeover date from the completion of the transmission line from Woodstock to Charters Towers. That was seconded by Councillor Ford. In favour of the amendment were Row, Ford, and Wordsworth; against the amendment were Smith, Hopkins, and Sherriff. There was a casting vote against by Sherriff, and the same voting for the motion." Will the Minister deny that this fact is clearly recorded in the minutes of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board?

Mr. Hiley: The best that you ever would be capable of presenting to the Chamber would be half the truth.

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. Treasurer is squirming. I will tell hon. members why he is squirming: because Spencer Hopkins, the father of all the Hopkins, is a big shot in the Liberal Party in Townsville. Now hon. members have got the whole truth. I did not want to introduce that.

Mr. Hiley: He has never been a member of the Liberal Party. You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. AIKENS: Is it not a combined Country-Liberal Party?

Mr. Hiley: You are squirming again.

Mr. AIKENS: There is no squirming about it. We have the hon. Treasurer where we want him. Let him try to squirm out of this one. We have the Minister's statement that Alderman Hopkins declared his interest in the Charters Towers Electric Light Company before he cast that vital vote. There is no record in the minutes that he declared his interest in the Charters Towers Electric Light Company before that vital vote, but there is a record in the minutes several months later showing that he declared his interest in that company on an inconsequential motion.

If he declared his interest on the first occasion, why was it not recorded in the minutes? And if he declared his interest on the first occasion, why was there any necessity for him to declare it again on the second occasion? And why was only the second occasion recorded in the minutes?

Mr. Hiley: Let me get it clear from the muddled explanation you are giving us. It is clear that you are tainting Hopkins with some fraud. Are you alleging fraud against Mr. Neil Smith, too? It is just as well to make it clear because he is the public official concerned. Are you charging Neil Smith with fraud?

Mr. AIKENS: I said that Neil Smith was anxious to get the T.R.E.B. to take over the Charters Towers electric light authority so that the people of the Townsville and district area of the T.R.E.B. could be made to shoulder a financial responsibility that rightly belonged to the Government, and the Treasurer cannot get out of it by all these accusations or pumping questions to me. I know just where the Treasurer stands in the matter; I know whom he is trying to defend; I know just what the people of Townsville think, and I know what I think.

Mr. Hiley: I am only trying to follow you. I remind you that it was not our decision.

Mr. AIKENS: Let me put this right up to the Treasurer: if, in the opinion of the Treasurer, Smith and Hopkins and Sherriff were right, in voting for the immediate and premature taking over of the Charters Towers

Electric Light Co. by the T.R.E.B., then he must admit that Row, Wordsworth and Ford were wrong. He cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Hiley: What I want to know is: do you say they were honest or dishonest?

Mr. AIKENS: If he is going to praise Smith, Sherriff and Hopkins for their action, then he must condemn Row, Wordsworth and Ford. He cannot have it both ways. Bear in mind that Row was the Country-Liberal Party candidate for the Hinchinbrook seat at the last State elections, so he is condemning a member of his own political party. Now let him try to squirm out of that!

Mr. Hiley: You find dishonesty in everything you look at. You cannot understand that men can have, with full honesty, a variation of opinion as to whether something should or should not happen. You try to suggest that every decision that is made at a board meeting on a divided vote is a contest between the honest and the dishonest. Do not talk rubbish!

Mr. AIKENS: I have already said in this Chamber that my conception of public morality is now vitally different from the Treasurer's and, in view of his interjection, let me say that my conception of public honesty is vitally different from his.

Mr. Hiley: So is mine different from yours—very different.

Mr. AIKENS: I am pleased to know that.

Mr. Munro: It would not be in your favour if your opinion differed from the Treasurer's.

Mr. AIKENS: That is the hon. gentleman's opinion. There again I demonstrate that I am not a political yes-man, but that I have an opinion of my own, that if it were put to the average man in the street that the Treasurer of Queensland had admitted that he would vote in the Chamber for a motion for the Government to take over a company of which his father was a director, he would have the same poor opinion of the Treasurer's public morality as I have. It is my opinion that, in ordinary common decency, he should not vote on such a motion or have anything to do with it. He should say, "My family is concerned. It means more money in the hands of my father and his co-directors and I will have none of it. I will let the other members of the Assembly decide it and I will keep aloof and apart from it."

Mr. Hiley: Will you be clear about this? I am endeavouring to discover even a vestige of evidence that there was some dishonesty on the part of a public official. That is where my responsibility lies. This decision was made by the Government that preceded us. I am listening intently for any suggestion of dishonesty made against a public official. If you have anything to say on that I will listen to it.

Mr. AIKENS: I will state it for the hon. gentleman again. The Charters Towers Electric Light Co. was obviously in a state of disrepair and in a bad financial position.

Mr. Hiley: I have heard all that.

Mr. AIKENS: We all knew that the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. was going to be taken over by the T.R.E.B. I think even the Treasurer will admit, if grudgingly, that it would be in the interests of the T.R.E.B. only to take over the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. when its transmission line got through from Townsville to Charters Towers and it could be assured of supplying a reasonable amount of electricity to Charters Towers. When the amendment was moved by Row.

Mr. Hiley: There could be many other factors.

Mr. AIKENS: I am suggesting that the only factor in Neil Smith's mind was that he wanted the Charters Towers Electric Light Company taken over because he knew that if it was not done immediately it would break down completely before the transmission line got to Charters Towers. He knew that the Eventide Home, the new mental hospital, the general hospital and the other Government instrumentalities at Charters Towers would be short of light and power. He said, "Let us take it over as quickly as we possibly can," which they did. He said, "Let us prop it up with all our man-power, with all our money and with all our technical know-how to keep it going as long as we can until the transmission line gets through from Townsville." That is what actually happened.

Mr. Hiley: I cannot see that taking it over would prop it up.

Mr. AIKENS: It did.

Mr. Hiley: Unless they put extra plant in.

Mr. AIKENS: They did not put extra plant there.

Mr. Hiley: They kept going until the line got through?

Mr. AIKENS: Yes.

Mr. Hiley: Which disproves your whole case.

Mr. AIKENS: It does nothing of the sort. It was kept going only with extra man-power, extra T.R.E.B. money, and extra technical know-how from T.R.E.B. Had they not taken it over it would have collapsed much earlier than it did.

We were told that it was a good going concern. It was going, all right; it was going down the drain! This was a company with a paid-up capital of, in round figures, £58,000 in £1 shares. The price paid was the equivalent of £100,000, or nearly £2 a

share. In the opinion of the Treasurer and State Electricity Commission it must have been a very profitable company to warrant the payment of nearly £2 for every £1 share held by the shareholders.

Mr. Hiley: That is the value of the assets taken over.

Mr. AIKENS: Well, the value of the assets taken over! We were told in the reply of the Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads that it was a going concern. I will show hon. members how much a going concern it was. I challenge the Treasurer to have a look at the minutes and deny that in the T.R.E.B. minutes of 26 January, 1956, 25 days after he took over, the manager submitted his estimates for the year up to the end of June, 1956. They showed an estimated loss for the first six months from 1 January, 1956, to 30 June, 1956, of £3,895 in the operating fund, and £5,073 in the trading fund, a total loss of £8,968 for six months. Yet there is the company that the Minister for Development in his Dorothy Dix reply would have us believe was a good going concern. It was going, all right; going right down the drain!

Mr. Hiley: The estimated value.

Mr. AIKENS: The Treasurer is beginning to shuffle and twist all over the place. I have shown that it was in a state of collapse—

Mr. Hiley: It worked right through.

Mr. AIKENS: It did not.

Mr. Hiley: You just said it did.

Mr. AIKENS: Ford and these other fellows wanted to take it over in August, 1957 and yet here we have a statement by the Mayor of Charters Towers on 20 May, three months before they wanted to take it over, three months before it would have been taken over if Hopkins had not cast his vital vote, in which he said that the old electricity company had reached a stage of hopeless collapse. Is the Treasurer prepared to stand up in public, or even here, and call the Mayor of Charters Towers a liar for saying that the company had reached a stage of hopeless collapse in May, three months before Ford, Wordsworth and Row wanted to take it over?

This will appeal to the technical nature of the hon. gentleman—

“Resolved that the budget for Charters Towers be incorporated in the Board’s general budget for the year 1955-1956 and that application be made to the Minister for approval to expend the sums set out as emergent expenditure.”

There we have a company which by May had reached, according to the public statement of the Mayor of Charters Towers who is now a member of the T.R.E.B., a stage of hopeless collapse. There we have the manager’s advice against the premature taking-over by the Board. There we have a

statement of losses incorporated into the general budget of the Board, yet the Treasurer throws out his chest, or what goes for a chest, and says, “It does not matter whether they were making a loss or not. It does not matter what the Mayor of Charters Towers says or not. It does not matter if the purchase price was the equivalent of £2 for a £1 share, I am here to justify the action of the son of my pal Spencer Hopkins.

I have here a circular issued by the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. Ltd. in which, in order to justify the transformation of the old Charters Towers Electric Light Company into a money-lending concern that was going to lend money at 20 per cent., it goes on to say that part of their assets are—

“State Electricity Commission debentures 4½ per cent. due 31st December, 1956, £62,250.”

They take the whole lot over. They did not mention that the interest was due on that date. The other entries give you the basis on which the debentures were due on 31st December, 1956. We had the statement from the Minister that debentures were not due until some time in 1966. Here again there is a difference between the Minister and the directors. I take it they were responsible for the issue of the circular signed “John P. Francis, Chairman of Directors of the Charters Towers Power and Electric Light Co.” In this circular with incorrect information they make this point in order to justify the transformation of the electric light company into a loan and finance company.

Mr. Hiley: Are you relying on this document or attacking it?

Mr. AIKENS: I am relying on it. I am not like the hon. gentleman; my eyes are not blinded by prejudice.

Mr. Hiley: You told us it is unreliable in information.

Mr. AIKENS: It is over the name of J. P. Francis, a lawyer. I can understand therefore how such a statement could be unreliable. I am going to show that even in the issue of this circular they could not be honest.

Mr. Hiley interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I have got the hon. gentlemen squealing like a brumby stallion. Will you please keep quiet. I have taken what you have given to me; will the hon. gentleman be quiet and take what I have to give to him. I quote from the circular—

“The debentures held by your Company might therefore be expected to realise little more than £90 per £100. The net amount available for distribution would be about £68,280 made up as follows:”

They go on to show the balance sheet of the company, and show that after liquidating income tax and sundry expenses there would

be a balance of £68,280 for distribution to the shareholders if the company was wound up.

The circular later issued by the company goes on to say, "...from which a final liquidation dividend of approximately £1 3s. 4d. per share could be paid." The little shareholders in the company have not received any dividend for last year, or for this year, and they would be quite happy to be paid £1 3s. 4d. a share for each share they hold if the company could be wound up.

The Minister says that that statement issued over the signatures of the chairman is false, because in his recent reply he said that the £100 debentures are worth £94. If we take the Minister's word as to their worth, the company could be wound up and the little shareholders could be paid within a couple of pence of £1 5s. for every £1 share they hold, and they would be happy to receive it.

Mr. Hiley: The market price varies daily. It could go up or down.

Mr. AIKENS: This document is not a year old. It was issued only a few months ago and the price of £90 per £100 was used as justification for not winding up the company but for converting it into a loan and finance company. The Minister said that if they wanted to do so they could sell at £94. I assure the Treasurer that the small shareholders of the company would be quite happy to receive £1 5s. or even a couple of pence less than £1 5s. for the shares they hold. But the Treasurer knows that if the company is wound up, the directors lose their jobs, their fees and whatever perks are attachable to the directorships of that company.

I do not know whether the Treasurer was in the Chamber when I first dealt with this matter, but in this document the directors say they are going to convert 12,500 debentures at par, cash their fixed deposits of £12,500, making a total of £25,000, and on that £25,000 they are going to collect interest of £5,000 a year on hire purchase and loans.

This may be of interest to the Minister for Local Government because I can remember his speaking time and time again as a member of the Opposition on the subject and condemning hire-purchase companies for their interest rates of 15 and 20 per cent. Yet the directors of the Charters Towers Electric Light Company, as a bait to the shareholders have told their shareholders that they can get only £90 for each £100 debenture, that they are going to raise cash to the extent of £25,000 by the sale of some of those debentures and the conversion of their fixed deposit to cash, and on that £25,000 they are going to make £5,000 a year, or a flat rate, discounting bad debts, accountancy charges and so on, of 20 per cent.

The Minister for Local Government, if he is as consistent and sincere as he was as a member of the Opposition in attacking the predatory hire-purchase companies, may investigate the magnificent set-up in Charters Towers and the need for the winding up of the company so that the little shareholders would get their money. The Treasurer has assumed the role of Defender of the Faith, that is, whatever faith he happens to hold for the time being, but, if he really wants to get to the bottom of this, I invite him to peruse all the minutes and the relevant documents on the take-over. I invite him to thoroughly investigate it, if he can find the time. I know he is a busy man. I think I know him well enough to say that if he does so he would come into this Chamber and say, "If I had been a member of T.R.E.B., I would not have voted for the take-over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Company on 1 January, 1956, for £100,000. As a businessman and guardian of the money of the people of the Townsville area, consumers of T.R.E.B., I would have waited until the transmission line got to Charters Towers in August, 1957, when I could have been assured of a continuous supply of electricity for Charters Towers by a coupling of the transmission lines of the undertakings, and I would have been able to acquire the undertaking for very much less than the amount paid for it on 1 January, 1956."

I say again that I am absolutely astonished to hear the Treasurer admit that he would come into this Chamber and vote for the Government acquisition of a company of which his father was a director. He can square that with his own conscience. He has a right to his opinion and a right to express it, and I have a right to mine. I say that I could not be dragged here by a team of bullocks to vote for the acquisition of a company in which any relative of mine was a director or a shareholder. It would be grossly and morally wrong to do so although perhaps legally right.

Let us settle this thing once and for all and let there be laid on the table of the House, seeing I am not going to get the public inquiry that I want, all the relevant minutes of the T.R.E.B. dealing with the take-over and see if the Minister for Mines—

Mr. Hiley: If you are charging Neil Smith with dishonesty, I will personally examine the record.

Mr. AIKENS: Where is the dishonesty so far as Neil Smith is concerned? I am telling the Treasurer that he wanted the take-over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. because he wanted the Townsville consumers on the T.R.E.B. to bear the financial responsibility which should be borne by the Government.

Mr. Hiley: Are you charging him with dishonesty? Be clear about it. Are you charging him with dishonesty?

Mr. AIKENS: The Treasurer is not going to put words into my mouth. He is one of the smart boys of the Government, but not smart enough to catch me. If what I have said in the Treasurer's opinion constitutes dishonesty, let him go right ahead with it. If what I have said about Neil Smith constitutes dishonesty, and the Treasurer claims his right to his opinion, go ahead with it.

Mr. Hiley: If you cannot make clear charges, I cannot listen to innuendoes, but if you charge him with dishonesty I will personally examine the record.

Mr. AIKENS: We have reached an amazing state of affairs in this Chamber, when I, a member of this Committee, can stand up as I have done and produce documents, copies of minutes, and factual statements from all concerned—and I have invited the Treasurer to investigate all the statements I have made—and the Treasurer pontifically like Hitler in the Reichstag says that I have to make a charge of dishonesty against a Government official before he will move. What a state we have reached! I doubt if the Minister for Mines has ever looked at the minutes or the relevant documents. I say that advisedly and quite calmly.

Mr. Hiley: You run away from my suggestion.

Mr. AIKENS: I have not run away.

Mr. Hiley: Make your charge.

Mr. AIKENS: My charge is this: That the State Electricity Commissioner as representative of the Government on the T.R.E.B. urged and voted for the premature taking-over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Co. by the T.R.E.B. in order to pass the financial buck from the Government to the Board in the maintenance of the supply of electric light and power to Government instrumentalities in Charters Towers.

Mr. Hiley: Do you say it is improper?

Mr. AIKENS: Yes.

Mr. Hiley: Improper?

Mr. AIKENS: It is.

Mr. Hiley: Wrong-doing on the part of a Government official?

Mr. AIKENS: I should say that I would not do it.

Mr. Hiley: Are you declaring your charge?

Mr. AIKENS: Do you want me to express your opinion or mine?

Mr. Hiley: I want your opinion to be on record.

Mr. AIKENS: My opinion is that if I were in Mr. Neil Smith's position I would not have done it. If I was in Ald. Hopkins's position I would not have done it. I should have considered it improper if I had done it.

Mr. Hiley: To be clear about it, I would not ask any public official to accept your standard of morality.

Mr. AIKENS: The sooner every public official in Queensland accepts and conforms to my standard of morality and my standard of public honesty, the better this State will be for everyone who lives in it. That throws that right back in the hon. gentleman's teeth. He can sit there and try to be facetious and flippant and smart. It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to put on a turn for the edification and amusement of Government back benchers, but I have my own standard of morality and public honesty. I have been before the public in Townsville for the last 21 years. The hon. gentleman can go to Townsville and ask the people there what is the basis of my continued success at the polls. It is this: If I form the opinion that anything is wrong, I never rest until it is brought to the surface and completely and fully investigated. All I ask is that the hon. gentleman investigate this.

Mr. Hiley: You have made no charge.

Mr. AIKENS: Why should I stand up and say "This man is dishonest" or "That man is dishonest"? I am simply saying what I should have done had I been in his position. I should not have done it, and I consider I would have acted improperly if I had done it. Of course, any excuse will suit the hon. gentleman to dodge his obligations or to squirm out of the half-challenge that he made.

Dr. Noble: When is the Council election?

Mr. AIKENS: This has been going on for some time. We could not get very far with the previous Government, and it is obvious that the Treasurer has come in here today to see that we do not get very far with his Government. But he owes it as a duty to his Government to look into this matter, do not make any mistake about that. If the hon. gentleman does not look into the matter and have a complete and full investigation, in my opinion he will be recreant to his trust as Treasurer of this State.

Mr. Hiley: The Minister for Mines has looked into the matter and told the House what he found.

Mr. AIKENS: I tell the hon. gentleman again that I do not believe the Minister for Mines ever saw the minutes; I do not believe that he ever saw the relevant documents. I honestly and conscientiously believe that the questions were prepared by the Electricity Commission and answered by them.

I say that these matters in connection with the take-over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Company—the payments made, the vote on the payments and so on—would have remained a close, deep, dark secret if I had not raised the matter previously in this Chamber during the Address-in-Reply debate and if I had not raised the matter in the columns of "The Townsville Daily Bulletin", because no-one can get at the minutes of the T.R.E.B. I think I have done a public service to the people of Queensland, particularly those in the Townsville Regional Electricity Board's area, by raising the matter, by letting them know what was paid for the Charters Towers Electric Light Company, by letting them know that Alderman Hopkins did vote knowing that his father was a director of the company, and by letting them know everything about it. I do not agree with the complete veracity of the answer given by the Minister the other day, but I think I have done my duty to the people I represent in the area. The Treasurer is probably better acquainted with financial matters than the Minister for Mines. If he wants to do his duty, he will go on and make a complete investigation, then stand up in the House and tell us what he would have done had he been a member of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. There is the challenge that I throw out to the hon. gentleman. I know that he gets upset when anyone crosses him, but that is my attitude on the matter. That is my standard of public morality, my standard of public honesty. If the hon. gentleman has a different standard, all I can say is that I pity him.

I wish to congratulate the staff of the Parliamentary library on a very fine photostat that they have produced, and perhaps the Treasurer will want to cross swords with me on this. I refer to an article in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" of 21 September, 1957, under the heading "Overspending by T.R.E.B. is claimed." It is the Press report of a meeting of the Thuringowa Shire Council held in September. The Thuringowa councillors are all farmers and graziers. They attack the T.R.E.B. on many of its financial methods and many of its actions.

Among other things the article says—

"Cr. Batley claimed that T.R.E.B. wanted the money because they wanted to continue to waste it.

"Cr. Innes said 'he had once seen three people on the job of reading meters, and had since seen two—one to open the gate for the other to go in and read the meter. They were using a vehicle which was practically brand new, of the best possible type, and one of the heaviest they could put on the road.' Cr. Innes added, 'This was instead of a light vehicle, which would be suitable and economical, and one man, who could open his own gate. In pretty well every department of T.R.E.B., there is over-spending.'

"Cr. Batley: They make some money.

"Cr. Wordsworth: They spend a lot too.

"Cr. Innes: That's the trouble. A lot of it is unnecessary.

"Cr. Innes said 'T.R.E.B. claimed they were using the money to provide rural communities with power. In the Bohlevale direction, they had gone about six miles from Townsville, yet claimed they were doing the residents a good turn. These boards were set up to provide for the rural communities,' he added.

"Cr. Batley said 'the guarantee system was a good little poultry farm for T.R.E.B. They have a good little golden egg coming in, and they don't want to get rid of it,' he added.

"Cr. Innes' motion, seconded by Cr. Batley, was carried."

I am sorry I cannot read all of it but I will make it available to the Treasurer, if he will read it, to show that responsible people like the councillors of the Thuringowa Shire Council and everyone else in the Townsville area except the apologists for the members of the T.R.E.B. think, as I do, that, if I may use the vernacular, the T.R.E.B. is on the nose. If the Treasurer really wants to get his accountancy teeth into something that is very juicy and that should be examined and masticated by someone with an unbiased mind, let him take on the T.R.E.B. and find out where their millions have gone and why they are spending them. Let him find out why these double-column headline spreads appear fairly regularly in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" and why they come not from men like me who are branded by the Treasurer as irresponsible, irrepressible and irredeemable but from men of the same political colour as himself, men who are not attached to any working-class organisation but graziers and farmers who should know what they are talking about.

Mr. Hiley: Thank you for your personal tributes to me. I shall pass them over to my colleague who administers the department and I shall discuss the matter with him.

Mr. AIKENS: He will probably know as little about it as he did about the take-over of the Charters Towers Electric Light Company. If the Treasurer intends to pass it over to the Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads, he may as well pass it back to me. Nevertheless, he can pass it over to him, not that I think he will do anything about it.

The regional board was set up in the first place to give power and light to the farming community. But that is just what it has not done. It has given power to the towns—to Ingham, Townsville—not that it needed it, because it had its own power—Ayr and Home Hill and it is going to give it to Bowen and to Charters Towers, but it is not giving the power to the farmers and the graziers in between those towns.

Mr. Sparkes: And those are the men who want it.

Mr. AIKENS: Yes, those are the men who want it and those are the men who should get it. They are the salt of the earth. I advise the hon. member for Aubigny to be very careful with his interjections in support of what I say because in a moment he will come in for a blast from the Treasurer for being irresponsible, a liar, and a man of low public morality and one thing and another.

The T.R.E.B. is not fulfilling the purpose for which it was established. The Minister cannot deny it; the Treasurer cannot deny it. It is wasteful; it is extravagant; it is tyrannical, and no-one can deny that, either. And yet every year when I raised the question in this Assembly to the previous Government I was stalled off, pushed aside, and told, "Oh well, you have only got a snout on the T.R.E.B." I raise it again today and all I ask is that at last someone will pull the T.R.E.B. into line for its wasteful expenditure, its extravagance and its failure to fulfil the purpose for which it was established, namely, the provision of electric light and power for the people in the country, the people who really need it. Even though they took over our fine and prosperous electric light authority in Townsville we did not mind. From the very start we were quite resigned to the fact that we might be called upon to pay a higher tariff for electricity. Again we did not mind because we realised that as an important commercial and transport centre we lived on the back country. We said, "If we can contribute even in an indirect way to the prosperity, convenience and comfort of people in the country we are only too happy to do it because we live on the country."

(Time expired.)

Mr. LONERGAN (Flinders) (5.41 p.m.): At the outset let it be clearly understood by the hon. member for Mundingburra that I am not indulging in personalities. I hope I never descend to that. I was not in the Chamber when the hon. member made his attack on an officer of the Charters Towers Electric Authority, but reading between the lines, knowing the hon. member as I do, knowing he bases all his political issues on personal lines, I realise that he has made an attack on this gentleman. I know him by sight but I can say with all honesty and sincerity that I have never spoken to him in my life. While I am in the Chamber I will defend anyone who is slandered by any hon. member. We all know quite well that persons outside the Chamber have no opportunity to defend themselves. Many people accept the statements made here as the Gospel truth but we all know how often the opposite applies. That was my reason for asking my questions. The hon. member for Mundingburra said that they were handed to me to ask. I assured the people of Townsville and an alderman of the Townsville City

Council that if there was anything I could do to bring the truth to light I would be quite happy to do it and I also assured them that I would do it on a future occasion. I know that the Townsville City Council have no representative here. The hon. member for Townsville only goes near the North when there is an election.

The CHAIRMAN: Did I hear the hon. member for Mackay say that it was a lie?

Mr. Graham: No. I did not make that remark.

Mr. LONERGAN: That was my reason for asking the questions. I wanted to have the truth brought to light. I accept the answer to the questions. We all know that the Townsville municipal elections are to be held early in the New Year. The hon. member for Mundingburra bases his campaigns on personalities. I may be doing him an injustice, and if I should find later on that I am wrong I will apologise. It would appear that he is doing a little window-dressing for the municipal elections next year. He was a candidate for municipal honours at the last two elections and he failed to gain a seat. Whether that is a good thing for the council or not I do not know. I have nothing against the hon. member personally, but I call a spade a spade and trust I always shall. I can assure hon. member or any other hon. member that they will have my wholehearted support in exposing corruption, but, on the other hand, if any hon. member uses his position to slander another person I shall defend that person.

I wish to congratulate the Treasurer on his Budget, which was based on the Budget of the previous Treasurer. We look forward with interest to next year's Budget which, I feel sure, will be one of which we shall all be proud. The Treasurer is a man of undoubted ability. Immediately the hon. gentleman gets to his feet he inspires confidence. I prophesy, that the State will prosper under his guidance. Unfortunately our finance reserves are at a very low ebb. The Main Roads Fund is virtually non-existent, consequently many improvements in the way of new roads will have to wait. I think a big improvement will come about next year and we will get the roads for which we have waited for so many years. I commend the Treasurer for placing a true picture of the financial position of the State before the people. As hon. members recollect, the previous Treasurer showed a credit balance of £15,000, whereas in actual fact there should have been a deficit of over £500,000. It is nice to be able to show a surplus but no one should practice deception. That will not be tolerated by the Treasurer or the Government.

Certain metals are falling in price. Zinc has fallen to such an extent that it is unproductive. I understand that Mt. Isa loses £1 a ton on it. Our railways are showing a loss and that will have an effect on next year's

Budget. It is a matter of concern to the Minister for Transport and the Government. However, I feel that with the co-operation of the railway employees who realise that they have a battle ahead of them to regain much of the trade that has been lost to road transport, next year the department will be in a much sounder position. Road hauliers who carry wool and wheat from the western area over the border have made considerable inroads into railway revenue. The main factor in the increase of road haulage is the strike in the shearing industry and the action of railway men in refusing to carry the wool shorn at a rate set by the Industrial Court. They acted in defiance of the law.

The result is that railway men today, instead of getting the overtime they look for, are receiving only a little over the guaranteed amount. The answer to the problem is service comparable with that provided by transport hauliers.

There must be a big increase of engine power to ensure that wool put on trucks on the West will reach wool stores in four or five days. That is the only way in which the department will regain this trade.

A section of the graziers mistakenly believe that they should be loyal to road hauliers simply because the hauliers carried the wool last year. I do not subscribe to that view, because on that occasion road hauliers demanded £3 a bale more than the departmental charge and in that way exploited the graziers. In a mistaken sense of loyalty some graziers are sticking to those road hauliers.

Mr. Houston: Are you attacking the road hauliers?

Mr. LONERGAN: Not at all.

Mr. Low: Those who do not pay tax should be attacked.

Mr. LONERGAN: Yes.

That is the only way in which the department can regain the trade and overcome some of the losses of the past. It is a logical assumption that with increased revenue the losses will decrease. The reverse was the case under the previous Government—the greater the revenue the greater the losses. I challenge the Opposition to deny that. It does not say much for the administrative ability of the previous Government and Minister for Transport.

Mr. Hanlon: The Treasurer paid a compliment to the previous Minister.

Mr. LONERGAN: I do not suppose the previous Minister had the final say. He would be directed by Cabinet, I assume, and possibly he would have effected certain reforms if his hands had not been tied because of fear that some railway employees would be offended.

I recently met some railwaymen in my electorate. They were more than surprised at their treatment by this Government. Quite a number were concerned about the change of Government and thought they would lose their jobs. That was stated from the platform on more than one occasion. They were told that if they did not vote for Labour they would be putting themselves out of a job. They realise they have been led up the garden path in more ways than one. Some of them, the honest ones, admit that they are pleased about the change of government. They realise that no undertaking can stand huge losses without inevitable unemployment.

Mr. Houston: Do the Government guarantee that there will be no sackings in the Railway Department?

Mr. LONERGAN: It is the Government's policy to make the railways pay, or at least to reduce the huge losses of that department so that there will be continuity of employment for railway workers. I have a soft spot in my heart for railway men as I worked in the department for many years. I enjoyed my stay in it as I made many good friends and I met some very competent men. Under the former Government our railways failed and the service was deplorable. Nobody would have growled if they had given service. I do not know what service the people in the South received but the service in the west was shocking. I do not say it was on account of the rank and file. I repeat a story I told in this Chamber; it is worth repeating. On one occasion a train crew were booked to load some cattle at a siding. Loading operations would take about three hours. After the cattle had been loaded the train was hauled into the station yard about half a mile away where the train crew said that they were going to take a 10-hour break. The cattle were allowed to stand in the sun for 10 hours.

Mr. Thackeray: Whose fault is that?

Mr. LONERGAN: The fault of the administration.

Mr. Walsh: Did you bring it to the notice of the administration? How would the administration know?

Mr. LONERGAN: It has been brought to the notice of the administration. In conversation with a high-ranking railway official who told me of a similar incident I remarked, "Why don't you mention it to the administration?" He said, "As soon as we do that they run to their Parliamentary representative and we have to reinstate them." I know what happens because I have been on the job. I have told people in the electorate that if any railway man does his job and is victimised I will fight for him, but if anybody neglects his job and fails to pull his weight, as some do, he cannot count on me.

Mr. Davies: You have only made one charge and it is against the workers.

Mr. LONERGAN: The hon. member would not know whether I had made a charge or not.

The lack of roads in the Flinders electorate is exercising the minds of the people and it is a sore point with them. Our roads are simply shocking. After my Address-in-Reply speech one of my friends said to me, "Bill, you stretched it a bit far." I assured him that what I said was the honest truth, that in the whole of the Flinders electorate there is not one mile of bitumen. At previous elections we heard Australian Labour Party candidates promise the people many things, especially good roads. They said, "We will give you a bridge here and another there," but so far none of the promises have been carried out.

It would be of great interest to many hon. members, particularly those representing city electorates, to visit the Far West during the wet season to see what the people there have to put up with. It needs only 50 points of rain to prevent your travelling on the roads, and once the watercourses begin to run it is months before you can turn a wheel. It is said that what you have never had you never miss. That is not borne out in this case, because the people do miss the roads. In the case of illness in the outlying areas, if there is no landing strip nearby the unfortunate person has to get to hospital the best way he can. Promises were made by former Governments. The previous member is reported in "Hansard" on a number of occasions as saying that he intended making strong representations to the Government with a view to correcting these conditions. Evidently his representations fell on deaf ears, because that state of affairs still obtains. It is a disgrace to Governments that have paid only lip-service to people in the country areas over a number of years. I remember that one Minister in a previous Labour Government said that on a per-capita basis the people of that part of the State were well treated. I suggest that we look at it on an earning capacity per-capita basis. What is the result? We all know that the real wealth of the country is produced by the man in the country, and if our requests were considered on that basis the people in Flinders in particular would have no cause to complain about roads and other amenities. The present position has gone on for many years, and now that there has been a change of Government, and a Government sympathetic to the needs of the people in outback areas is in office, I look forward to a great improvement in the conditions in Western Queensland.

Unfortunately the programme will be restricted somewhat by lack of funds. The Government should spend their money wisely and try to conserve their funds. Previous Governments squandered money on big enterprises the ultimate value of which was

doubtful. I refer particularly to the Burdekin Dam project. I believe in such schemes if they are economically sound, but I have yet to be convinced that it will contribute anything to the welfare of the State.

Mr. Hanlon: Would your opinion be better than that of the late Sir John Kemp?

Mr. LONERGAN: I do not know what his opinion was. When the dam is completed what is to be grown? It is not enough merely to grow it; you must have markets for it. It was suggested that sugar-cane should be grown. I am not an authority on the sugar industry but even at that stage it was obvious to all that in a few short years they would not be able to dispose of the sugar, and that has been borne out.

Mr. Jesson: You do not know anything about sugar if you talk like that.

Mr. LONERGAN: In one thing I differ from the hon. member for Hinchinbrook. I know a little about sugar whereas he knows nothing about it. On the main road from Charters Towers to Gilliat a distance of 380 miles, we have not one bridge. All hon. members will agree that that is a poor recommendation for the previous Government.

Mr. Jesson: Why do not you get off their backs and tell us something constructive?

Mr. LONERGAN: I could not tell the hon. member anything constructive that he would understand.

Mr. Davies: Have you any metal roads out there?

Mr. LONERGAN: None at all.

Mr. Davies: What has the shire been doing?

Mr. LONERGAN: Out there they have been limited by finance as the hon. member knows most shires have been. They control large areas and they cannot carry out the necessary road works. I contend that roads are the responsibility of the Government, not of the local authority. After all, we pay high Main Roads fees, but what do we get in return? Just a sticker for our wind-screens!

We have not only one problem, but a whole series of them, and education is one. The previous member for Flinders said on a number of occasions that he hoped to get the school re-opened at Nelia. I have often hoped the same. I feel sure that within the next year it will become a reality and will give the people of that small township what they are entitled to. They may not have the required attendance to start, but once the school is established people will come to the area. They do not care to go to a town without a school and, judging by the previous Government's form, without any prospect of one.

That applies to Hughenden, too, because throughout the whole electorate we have not one high school. Through discussions with the Minister for Education I know that if the required numbers are there the high school will be established. It is long overdue. Unfortunately, the children of the workers suffer most. The man on the land and the businessman have the means to send their children away for secondary education, but the worker cannot afford to. The previous Government held themselves out to be the champions of the worker, but when it came to brass tacks they did little about improving his conditions.

On Wednesday last, I think it was, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke of the way the Press hold the Queensland Parliament up to ridicule. I agree that Parliament should be respected by all. At the same time the respect to which any institution or individual is entitled is governed by the manner in which the members conduct themselves. I can think of occasions when the prestige and dignity of Parliament have been lowered by the conduct of hon. members in the Chamber. I can recall one hon. member shouting across the Chamber to another hon. member to shut his gob. That is not a very nice thing to say. At times the hon. member for Mundingburra makes some very crude remarks. I am no lilywhite, but there is a time and place for everything. I go further and say that not only are his remarks sometimes crude, but in some instances they have been really obscene. I do not know whether it was only a coincidence or whether it was done deliberately, but recently when there were school children in the gallery the hon. member made a very coarse remark. It caused me embarrassment at the time. The person in charge of the kiddies immediately took them out of the gallery.

Mr. Wood: You were not fair in your comment about the hon. member for Townsville. What you said about him was not right.

Mr. LONERGAN: What was that?

Mr. Wood: That he goes to his electorate only at election time.

Mr. Jesson: He would not know.

Mr. LONERGAN: The hon. member for Hinchinbrook lived in Ingham for years. Once he got into Parliament he never went back.

I shall conclude by repeating that I believe the dignity of Parliament should be upheld, but unfortunately there are some hon. members who do not subscribe to that view.

Mr. HANLON (Ithaca) (7.28 p.m.): Firstly I join with other hon. members in congratulating the Treasurer on presenting his first Budget. I do not congratulate him on his Budget but on the presentation of it, because undoubtedly it is an ambition he has cherished for many years. I am sure it

was an ambition he never expected to realise. However, in the role of fairy god-mother, the hon. member for South Brisbane has transplanted hon. members opposite to the Government benches, giving the Treasurer an opportunity to introduce the Budget for this financial year.

I think the hon. member for Port Curtis, early in the debate, mentioned that the present Treasurer when in opposition was unchallenged as the financial brains of the Country-Liberal Party. Possibly with good reason many people today regard the Treasurer as the real brains, financial or otherwise, of the new administration. They might look to the Premier for the flashing smiles and personality that endear him to everybody, irrespective of political convictions. They possibly look to the Deputy Premier for the hustle and bustle and noise, but when it comes to the brains—and I do not mean that in any offensive sense, the administrative brains—they look to the Treasurer. Therefore it is particularly disappointing to find the Treasurer presenting such a barren, listless, unimaginative document for his first financial statement. We hoped that he would bring to his new position some of the qualities we saw in him when he was a member of the Opposition. Members of the Government benches noticed the hon. member's talent not only for sizing up a situation but for outlining a pattern of action which, although we may not completely agree with it, was always comprehensible and workable, but we find a strangely different gentleman since the hon. member has occupied the position of Treasurer. When he sat in Opposition he was prepared to stick his chin out and venture opinions, even though occasionally he took a wallop on the chin, as he did from the late Mr. Lacombe. I recall one particular occasion when Mr. Lacombe was Treasurer.

Last year when the Treasurer was a member of the Opposition he applied these words to the Budget of his predecessor, "Here is a Budget completely lacking in purpose, showing no sign at all of character." As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, on the hon. gentleman's own testimony we can with truth apply those same words to this year's Budget, because we find him telling us that there will be no important changes in the pattern of this year's Budget in comparison with last year's—no new taxes, no important savings, and no substantial new expenditure. That means that to all intents and purposes this Budget is the same as that presented by the hon. gentleman's predecessor, which he described as a budget completely lacking in purpose. I believe that the Treasurer has to a certain extent condemned his own Budget. In his Financial Statement he likened the financial policy of past Labour Treasurers to the maid who carefully sweeps the dust from the floor and then hides it under the carpet. After perusing this Financial Statement I suggest instead of having dust under the carpet we

now have the Treasurer under the carpet—scarcely an improvement. The hon. gentleman refuses, at the moment anyway, to face up to the questions that should be answered, and prefers to fall back on the excuse that the Government have not been in office long enough to make any real predictions as to their policy during the next 12 months. We believe there is more to a budget than the mere presentation of accounts. Most of the credit for that should go to the hard-working public servants who virtually compiled the Budget for the Treasurer. The Treasurer has avoided giving any indication of the Government's attitude on a number of matters affecting the finances and welfare of the State. As an understudy of Labour Treasurers the hon. gentleman pointed out the urgent need to get away from Labour's policy. Apparently he is now content to let things run along as they have been for another 12 months.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. HANLON: During the two-day session that brought about the defeat of the late Government, the hon. gentleman said that he was quite able to prepare his own Budget. If hon. members refer to "Hansard" they will see, as the Leader of the Opposition said, that when the late Treasurer pleaded for an extension of Supply on the ground that the incoming Treasurer would not be able to prepare his Budget the hon. member for Coorparoo replied, "You just leave it to us; we will do it all right." This excuse of lack of time is a very lame one when we recall those remarks.

Mr. Dewar interjected.

Mr. HANLON: The peter is not the only things that will have been tickled when the hon. member finishes with the people in three years.

The Treasurer has stressed the change in the presentation of accounts. He made a great song of it, that the public were being lulled into a false sense of trust by surpluses brought about by withdrawals from reserves, and undisclosed losses in State mines. The Treasurer proposes this year to make appropriations to cover these losses and so face the position that exists.

I have not been in Parliament very long, but those who have will know that this has for a long time been a complaint by the present Treasurer. It is not something that justifies the bally-hoo in which he and the Press to some extent have indulged. There has never been any secrecy about it. The former Treasurer pointed out from time to time and freely acknowledged that it could not go on indefinitely.

Mr. Sparkes: Why get so worried about the previous Treasurer?

Mr. HANLON: I am not worried about the hon. member for Aubigny. His only interest is chasing £55-a-head steers around his property.

Mr. Sparkes: The only thing that worries you is that you have not got them.

Mr. HANLON: If the hon. member likes to give me a couple, I will accept them.

While it may be said that the Labour Government have shown small surpluses in recent years when they should have shown sizeable deficits, it can equally be said that for a number of years small deficits were shown when sizeable surpluses could have been shown, so things even out more or less.

I was rather surprised to hear the statement by the hon. member for Flinders that the public now know Queensland is not making £15,000 profit, as he called it, but that a loss of £1,500,000 has been sustained. I should say that since the current Financial Statement the average man in the street is more confused than ever regarding State finances.

Mr. Dewar: That may be in Ithaca.

Mr. HANLON: The people of Ithaca compare more than favourably in intelligence with the people of Chermiside, with all due respect to them, judging by the members returned for the respective electorates.

The public are more confused than ever on the public accounts of Queensland. A number of people have said to me, "What a crook this fellow Walsh must be. He got away with £1,500,000. He embezzled £1,500,000, but Hiley found that much short when he assumed office as Treasurer." I do not pretend to be a defended of the former Treasurer, but he does not rank with the big-time embezzlers in the one-and-a-half-million-pounds class. The blatant attempt to thieve the goodwill and name of Labour by the ex-Treasurer and his associates may be comparable with and as censurable as the theft of £1,500,000, but I do not think the former Treasurer should be put in the big-time embezzling class. That is the impression, however, of many people in the State since the present Treasurer made the statement and the Press gave publicity to it—that the accounts had been falsely presented in the past.

The average man in the street is not concerned about what is done with the Post-War Reconstruction and Development Fund or whether amounts are overdrawn from the Hospital, Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund. He is not interested in the financial intellectualism of the new Treasurer. What he looked for in the Financial Statement and what we of the Opposition looked for and were not able to find was an indication of the way the Government propose to utilise their finances with greater effectiveness than Labour administrations of the past. All we have is a statement that the new Treasurer is content to follow the lines of his Labour predecessors for at least 12 months. Surely the affairs of the

State cannot be in a bad way if things can stand still for 12 months. In four and a-half lines in his Financial Statement he unblushingly absolved himself from the election promises made by the Country and Liberal Parties only a couple of months ago. He said that greater costs and the normal expansion of services to cater for the increasing population absorbed the major portion of the expected increase in revenue and have excluded the possibility of the immediate implementation of many new and improved services planned by the Government. As my Leader has reminded me, that is another alibi and as my hon. friend from Warrego would say, the Treasurer has "given the big ignore" to those people who supported the Government on the basis of what they promised to do for the people of the State. He also casually referred in the Statement only a fortnight ago to "some drought conditions." Very little else was said about the drought that exists. We now find that an appropriation of £150,000 has already been exhausted in this financial year and a Cabinet decision only yesterday was to the effect that Cabinet had allocated a further £237,000 for this purpose. In my opinion the Government have been shamed into it by the fighting speech made by the hon. member for Port Curtis when he indicted the new Government on their inactivity in looking after the people in the country so badly affected by the ravages of drought.

The Treasurer also referred to the slightly unhealthy trend in unemployment. The hon. member for Kedron placed the unemployment figure at between 7,000 and 8,000. Apart from a pious wish to maintain current levels of employment the Treasurer said very little about the matter. Perhaps like his Federal colleague Mr. Holt he is going to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. I point out to both hon. gentlemen that the unemployed might make their position more than slightly unhealthy when election time comes round.

There was no reference in the Budget to the effect of the Japanese Trade Agreement on the unemployment position which was so effectively discussed and dealt with by the hon. member for Kedron. The Treasurer seemed loath to discuss the fits and starts financial policy of his colleagues in the Federal sphere and failed to mention the shocking neglect they have shown of the urgent need for the development of this State. He should not touch on that very much. I do not blame him because it would show his Federal colleagues up in a bad light.

I am in complete agreement with the Treasurer that existing resources are inadequate for the proper development of the great resources of the State. It is true that progress of major developmental works such as the Tully Falls hydro-electric project, the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation project, and

the Burdekin River irrigation development scheme and provision of basic necessities such as homes have been slowed by the need to carry out such a multiplicity of tasks on resources insufficient for any.

But I cannot agree that Queensland Labour Governments have had any alternative but to press on regardless of the position. When the hon. member for Port Curtis urged the Government to give drought relief, which has since been given, the Treasurer asked if he should draw funds from Tinaroo or anywhere else to meet drought relief. Mr. Taylor, I ask the Treasurer now what he believes should have been left undone by Labour Governments in this State, and, more important, what changes are implied in this system of priorities that the Government propose to introduce. I am sure that the people in those parts of the State where developmental works are being carried out by the Government will be very interested in the order of priorities to be worked out by the Treasurer.

Because of the difficulties under which Queensland Labour Governments have carried burdens that rightly belong to the nation as a whole, I believe that we can take considerable pride in what has been achieved. The Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme, which was completed recently and opened by the Premier, is one example. I did not read that the Premier had told the people in the Tully Falls area that he believed that the project should have been deferred for 10 years, that the Government should have proceeded with something else. As the Premier visits different parts of Queensland, I shall be very interested to hear him tell the people in the areas where these developmental works have been carried out which works he thinks should have been left undone by Labour administrations in the past 10 years or so.

Mr. Watson: Clare would be one.

Mr. HANLON: I shall wait for the Premier to go up and tell them that.

When this Tully Falls scheme was being investigated, I think the Premier complained that the Labour Government in Queensland were trying to do too much. I do not remember his reminding the people at the opening of the scheme of those sentiments that he expressed before he took over the government of the State. If we had listened to him and his political colleagues, we should have very few projects today of great benefit to the people. The political predecessors of the Country-Liberal Party, whatever alias they used in those days, told us that the Story Bridge would be a white elephant. I should hate to think where we would be without it today.

Mr. Lloyd: Like the Intermediate Hospital.

Mr. HANLON: Like the Intermediate Hospital, as the hon. member for Kedron interjects.

I think we all agree with the Treasurer that he should consider an approach to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. As the hon. member for Bremer said earlier, we shall be very interested to hear what conclusions he arrives at. I understand that an approach was made by Labour Governments, but the time has again come to decide whether we should become a claimant State under the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The hon. member for Kedron pointed out that the benefits are attractive but that there are certain pitfalls, and it will require some study before the Treasurer can give us any information on that point. I venture to suggest that had Sir Arthur Fadden treated his native State in anything like the same way as he has treated other States our need to take this step would not be nearly so acute. Surely the Commonwealth Government will realise soon the national value of having developmental works carried out in Queensland and so hasten to our assistance, irrespective of whether the case is presented courteously or discourteously. The Treasurer, in a vain attempt to defend the Menzies-Fadden administration, implied that Queensland Labour Governments endeavoured to make political capital out of their representations and so destroyed the value of their case. That is so much eye-wash. As I said in the Address-in-Reply debate, I can remember when time and again the Premier, the Treasurer and officers of the State Treasury were congratulated by the Commonwealth Treasury officials and by the Prime Minister himself in the case presented for the State. It is ludicrous to imply that it was not presented courteously. Even if it were presented discourteously, it is not much of a tribute to the statesmanship of the members of the Federal Government, and particularly Sir Arthur Fadden, who is himself a Queensland, that they would allow that to deter them from helping to develop Queensland in the national interest.

The Treasurer, even in his Financial Statement, mentioned that two applications have been made to the Commonwealth for assistance for the road to Mary Kathleen to open up the uranium field and that both had been rejected.

Mr. Evans: That is not true.

Mr. HANLON: I am relying on what the Treasurer said in his Financial Statement. If the Minister for Development wishes to argue with the Treasurer, let him do it some time when I am not speaking. That appears in the Financial Statement. If he has not read it, I advise him to do so. The Treasurer said that already two applications had been made to the Commonwealth to assist the State with the building of the road and they both had been rejected, but he hoped that a further application would be successful.

Mr. Evans: It was made by me and it was successful.

Mr. HANLON: That does not in any way alter the fact that the other two applications should have been granted too. If there was need for the road and for help by the Commonwealth it should not have mattered whether it was the present Minister or the Minister of another Government who applied. If the case was there, the money should have been forthcoming.

Mr. Dewar: Better salesmen selling the goods now.

Mr. HANLON: Political bias would be more appropriate. Let me enlighten the Minister for Development, although he might have been ahead of me with the decision to assist the State. On page 13 of the Financial Statement the Treasurer said—

“The burden of providing the full cost, to this State, of the Mary Kathleen road to initially serve the uranium field in far north-western Queensland promised to impose a serious drain upon our resources. This road has a high potential for inclusion as a defence project, and although two applications made to the Commonwealth Government in 1956 were not successful we are still hopeful that some assistance may be forthcoming.”

Mr. Evans: Well, it was successful.

Mr. HANLON: And I am very pleased to hear it.

Mr. Jesson: Why was not it in the papers?

Mr. Evans: It has been published.

Mr. HANLON: This document is only a fortnight old and if that decision were in any way recent I think the Treasurer would have indicated it in his Financial Statement. Anyway, the matter is not important, but I corrected the interjection of the Minister for Development that it was not true that two applications had already been made to the Commonwealth before assistance was forthcoming.

Mr. Evans: Not by this Government.

Mr. HANLON: I am not interested in which Government made the applications. I am interested in the development of Queensland. That is something the hon. gentleman should be interested in.

Mr. Evans: Only one by this Government and that was successful.

Mr. HANLON: The Treasurer has made much of the need for private investment capital for the development of Queensland and we wholeheartedly agree with him. We agree, too, that public developmental schemes cannot be the sole means of development. We will be very happy to see any expansion that the Government can bring about with private investment in Queensland.

We shall be very happy to see any expansion in Queensland that can be effected with the aid of private investment. On the other

hand, I cannot agree that public developmental work is not a dominant factor as the Treasurer would have us believe. In planning the development of the State in the public interest the Government must play the leading part. They have to create the basic conditions which result in development and accelerate development. It is particularly important to the Australian Labour Party that the Government must ensure that the benefits of such development are participated in by the people of the State who contribute to it. The Government must ensure that the people are not exploited in the sole interest of private investment capital. We are only too happy to welcome private investment capital, but we do not believe in allowing any form of private investment to exploit the people. I hope hon. members opposite will be just as watchful of the public interest.

The Treasurer has pointed out that we are witnessing exciting opportunities for the development of the great mineral resources of the North. I hope that both State and Federal Governments will see that this development is in the required direction, that a working pattern is set so that the State gets the benefit of its riches and that the people participate fully and fairly with private investment capital in the benefits of development of this area.

The Leader of the Opposition has already pointed out very effectively the type of ballyhoo publicity engaged in by the Government, particularly the Minister for Labour and Industry, about the attraction of capital to the State. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that although great play was made of the number of firms that have registered in Queensland since the Government took office, it is very hard to find more than four or five that are in any way connected with reasonable and substantial development in Queensland.

In the past, hon. members opposite have had a great deal to say about the window-dressing of the Labour Government. I have never seen windows done up so deliberately only to collapse so quickly as the window prepared by the Minister for Labour and Industry. The supposedly great firms which have come to Queensland in the last two months were exposed by the Leader of the Opposition as just a collection of people trying to exploit the State's economy. During the recent election campaign the hon. member for Mount Coot-tha told the people that three months after the return of the Country-Liberal Party Government he knew new business concerns that would invest £3,000,000 in Queensland. I challenge the Minister for Labour and Industry to tell me anybody who has invested £100,000 since the new Government took over.

The Treasurer appeared loath to give any indication of the Government's intention. It is interesting to look back on some of his ideas only 12 months ago, to see if there is

anything which might give a clue to what might be done by the incoming government. He told us that there must be some easing of governmental spending. Apparently he has abandoned this idea, temporarily at least, because it is proposed to spend the whole of the revenue available to the Government this financial year. I have no quarrel with that as long as the money is spent wisely. If the Treasurer is of the opinion that there should be a reduction in governmental spending, he could apply that principle with greater force to the Commonwealth Government, particularly where the Commonwealth Government are spending money in fields where the State Government could do the work more effectively. I suggest that he should get together with the other State Governments to make submissions along these lines to the Commonwealth Government.

The Menzies-Fadden Government have shown a lack of respect to the States and they might not take notice of it. The Government should put up a case to eliminate the duplication of activities carried out by the Commonwealth and the State. As a result of the elimination of duplication of some activities the State Government would have more finance available and could carry out the work more efficiently than the Commonwealth Government. The most significant comment of the Treasurer during last year's Budget debate was the statement that the Government would vacate the rental field in housing. As the hon. gentleman is Minister for Housing as well as Treasurer the observations made then are particularly interesting. I can understand the desire of the Government to vacate the rental field because there are decided disadvantages in State landlordism as far as housing is concerned. However I hope that the Treasurer, despite his conviction last year that the Government should get out of the rental field, will abide by the words of the Administrator, that there was still a need for rental homes in Queensland.

Mr. Mann: It is quite possible that the Treasurer has already started to implement the idea.

Mr. HANLON: It is quite possible, as the hon. member for Brisbane interjects, that the Treasurer has already started to implement the idea mentioned last year of taking the State away from the rental home field. Again I say that we should be very careful of the needs of people who cannot afford to purchase a home for various reasons and there still remains an enduring need for these homes.

Mr. Dewar: We are very conscious of it.

Mr. HANLON: The hon. member did not get into the Cabinet. His opinion may not be Cabinet's. Speaking of housing, I cannot help but remark on the offhanded manner in which the Treasurer has disposed of the housing promises made to the people during the election campaign. I do not hear

any interjection at the moment from the hon. member for Chermiside who was so vociferous a few minutes ago. The Treasurer, in the Financial Statement, casually mentions the delay in the resolute attack on the shortage of schools and homes. Some months ago the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, Dr. Coombs, urged the building industry towards greater efficiency because he forecast that a substantial increase in residential building would be necessary from 1960. He forecast that from 1960 there would be a higher marriage rate following the rise in the birth rate after the depression and the increase would be reflected in an increased demand for housing. If the Treasurer can tell us in 1957 that there is going to be a delay in the resolute attack of the Government on the housing shortage, what will be the position in 1960 when there will be a greater need for increased activity in home building. Obviously, as I pointed out in the Address-in-Reply debate, the Treasurer and State Governments generally are bumping their heads against a brick wall in trying to overcome the housing shortage unless the Menzies-Fadden administration do something about it. They are the people with the power and the finance to overcome the shortage. The Prime Minister while blithely tripping around the world gets out of touch with the needs of the people. He has said there is no housing shortage, the only shortage being of bricks and timber. While that is his attitude the housing shortage will not be overcome. Indeed it will not be overcome until the Australian Labour Party assume office in Canberra.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of increases in the basic wage. In the Financial Statement the Treasurer said the Government have made no allowances for general increases in Public Service salaries or the basic wage. There have already been substantial increases in meat prices and whether justified or not those increases have an effect on the basic wage when it is next adjusted. The hon. member for Aubigny claims that the basic wage should be 10s. more than at present. If the Government intend to do justice to wage-earners according to the idea of the hon. member for Aubigny, there will be an increase of 10s. in the basic wage.

Mr. Sparkes: I suppose you would support that?

Mr. HANLON: We could be misled by the remarks of the hon. member for Aubigny if we did not know the attitude of the Country and Liberal Parties to basic wage increases. The Treasurer told the Leader of the Opposition that the Government would not be a party to freezing the basic wage. I hope "Hansard" heard that remark flung across the Chamber by the Treasurer, in reply to the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition that the Government may follow the traditional Tory practice in other States of freezing the basic wage. I am at a loss to understand the Treasurer's denial, in view

of the increased meat prices and some indication from the Government that they intend to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act. That would cause an increase in the basic wage. It is surprising to learn that the Treasurer has made no allowances for an increase which would appear to be forthcoming if the Government do not intend to freeze the basic wage.

I should like to take the opportunity now to pay a tribute to the former Minister for Transport, Mr. Duggan, on his administration for 10 years of the Railway Department.

Dr. Noble: I thought you were going to praise Mr. Moores.

Mr. HANLON: He was not thought of by anybody in the State as Minister for Transport. He was just a fill-in.

The Treasurer indicated by way of interjection that the Government gave full credit to Mr. Duggan for the economies that he effected. The Treasurer mentioned particularly dieselisation which will result in a substantial saving in the coming year of something like £869,000. I predict that the present Minister at this time next year will be clothing himself with glory for achievements that have resulted from Mr. Duggan's administration of his department.

We expect to have to put up with a certain amount of this inherited glory that the Government are basking in at the moment. They are taking credit for achievements that took place just before they came into office and I cite an instance that took place in my own electorate. After considerable representation in the last 12 months by me along with the committee of the Bardon Infants' State School there was a decision of the former Government made before 3 August last to extend that school to a full primary school. Previously it was only an infants' school going up to Grade 3. I have found that the Liberal Party are basking in the glory of that decision to extend the school and today people are being given the impression that now the Liberal Party are in power they will see the school go ahead and that it will be completed. We have to put up with that to a certain extent but I do hope that the work done for the railways of this State by Mr. Duggan as Minister for Transport will be recognised in the years to come by hon. members opposite.

I recommend to the Treasurer that some examination be made of the accounting system in the Railway Department as to the charging of freights. I think that there are large amounts which are not collected in freight and possibly some examination of the system by the Treasurer might mean an improvement in that direction. I am not blaming the staff of the Railway Department but I venture to suggest that there would be tens of thousands of pounds in freight not collected by the department in a financial year.

Mr. Hiley: Have you any lead on that?

Mr. HANLON: I am of that opinion.

Mr. Watson: Why are you of that opinion?

Mr. HANLON: From observations of the rather loose system of accounting in the charging of freight. There are lots of charges which go astray with no intention of dishonesty. They are not charged to the people who should be paying them and I think it would pay the Government to make a minor examination of the system in use.

Mr. Hiley: Do you know whether it refers to whole truckloads or individual consignments?

Mr. HANLON: Possibly to whole trucklots as well. I could not say.

I am sorry the hon. member for Somerset is not in the Chamber for he saw fit to remark about the Labour Party administration in Queensland and the fear complex that had been created in the minds of the people, particularly in those coming into Queensland to invest money. I have not seen anything like the fear complex that the parties opposite, with the expert assistance of the so-called Q.L.P. put forward concerning the Australian Labour Party. They have developed that fear complex to the highest degree possible trying to give the people the impression, as the hon. member for Bremer pointed out early today, that the A.L.P. is synonymous with the Communist Party.

Mr. Power interjected.

Mr. HANLON: A Communist candidate has never opposed the hon. member for South Brisbane in 25 or 26 years.

I wish to join with the hon. member for Bremer in making it very clear that the Australian Labour Party is just as violently opposed to the Communist Party as it is to the Country-Liberal Party. In fact, we reject the philosophies of the Communist Party even more violently than we reject the philosophies of the Country-Liberal Party.

I think I ought to examine briefly the respective philosophies of the Communist Party, the Country-Liberal Party, and the Australian Labour Party.

Theoretically, the Communist Party operates on the basis that the State knows what is best for the people of the State and the State itself and, accordingly, they instruct the individual what he is to do, and they back their instructions with force where necessary.

Dr. Noble: That is what you do in your party.

Mr. Gair: The majority of the party says one thing, the minority says another.

Mr. HANLON: The members of the Q.L.P. have shown a marked reluctance to get onto their feet in this Chamber in the last few weeks. If they have anything to say, I suggest that they get onto their feet and say it instead of wasting my time by making speeches from their seats.

The Communist Party regards freedom of choice as unnecessary. It believes that the forces of the proletariat, as they call the working classes, will ultimately rise and achieve a dictatorship of their own by revolution. This happy state, or unhappy state as we should regard it in a democracy, is their objective in theory. In practice in Communist countries it just develops into a form of dictatorship under Stalin or some other tyrant.

The philosophy of the Liberal Party is that there should be in the community a maximum of freedom of individual choice, with the economy being geared by the response of individual consumers to the producers who are endeavouring to satisfy their needs. They claim that by a natural law of supply and demand what is needed is produced and the people get what they need, the greatest freedom being achieved at the same time.

The Australian Labour Party rejects both those theories. It rejects the Communist theory because, as I have said, even if it does satisfy the needs of the community—and we would disagree with that—it does so as a complete negation of the basic freedoms that we regard as fundamental—freedom of choice, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of law. The hon. member for Bremer has already referred to that.

We reject the philosophy of the Country-Liberal Party because we have found that it subjects the great masses of the people to the most ruthless and acquisitive people in the community, people who are prepared to go all out for profit at the expense of the community in general. We in the Australian Labour Party believe that we can substitute for both these philosophies a sense of social partnership in which the things that are needed and not necessarily the most profitable are produced. But as the hon. member for Bremer pointed out, we shall never at any time or in any way be associated with any form of philosophy that denies the fundamental freedoms which are sacred to democracy.

I believe that the people of this State and the people of Australia have been hoodwinked for many years by this form of fear complex that the associates of the hon. member for Somerset put forward in the Commonwealth and State spheres until it was stolen from them by the Q.L.P. Mr. Menzies has used the fear complex very successfully for many years in the Federal sphere. I do not blame those who may have been misled by the Q.L.P. or the Liberal and Country parties in the past, but the hon. member for Somerset, who made so much noise about the fear complex forced on people entering the State because of what a socialist Labour Government would do, should know better as he has a much greater political knowledge than the average person in the community.

I hope the Liberal and Country Parties will honestly try to follow the pattern of government set by the A.L.P. over many

years. I know the Treasurer has brought to his office a great power of application and capacity for hard work, not that that has been lacking in A.L.P. ministers in the past; but we should like to have from him some indication that the Government intend to deal with a number of questions that have been outlined by hon. members on this side. I hope he will take the opportunity to do so as the debate progresses.

Mr. HILTON (Carnarvon) (8.22 p.m.): I take the opportunity, as a member of a party of destiny in the State, to make some observations in this all-important debate. This is the first occasion on which I have had the opportunity to deliver a speech while you have been in the Chair, Mr. Taylor, and I congratulate you on your appointment. Your benign but nevertheless strict personality will do much to ensure the orderliness that is so desirable and indeed essential to dignified debate in the Chamber. I realise that in the existing circumstances you have at times a difficult task to perform, but I feel sure you will rise to the occasion.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HILTON: I congratulate the Treasurer on his Budget for two reasons: (1) he delivered it in his usual polished manner, and (2), in that delivery and in his presentation of the Budget and Financial Tables he gave a very emphatic endorsement of the sound financial policy pursued by the former Government of the State. He was quite fair in much of his comment.

I will refer to some parts of the Financial Statement later, but at the outset I desire to make some observations on housing. I do not do that because of certain snide remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition this morning.

Mr. WOOD: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to the word "snide." What I said was said openly and fairly in the Chamber. I find the term "snide" objectionable and ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word "snide."

Mr. HILTON: I used the adjective in this sense—

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

Mr. HILTON: I withdraw it, certainly. But I used the term in this sense—that the Leader of the Opposition, probably knowing from the lists circulating amongst the Whips that I was to speak, thought he would make a little capital out of the fact that I had not spoken up to that stage on the question of housing.

Mr. JESSON: I rise to a point of order.

Government Members: Sit down!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will take the point of order.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member just made the statement that the Government Whips conferred and found out he was going to speak. I did not know till after lunch that he was going to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to accept the explanation.

Mr. HILTON: I did not make any such statement—"because of the fact that the Whips knew I was going to speak." I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that it is my business when I speak in the Chamber. I wish to assure him that I am at all times quite capable of defending any of my administrative actions in the past and particularly I want to assure him that if I needed any assistance for defence I certainly would not look to his inexperience to assist me.

Dealing with the irresponsible comments about the Zillmere contract I point out that the contract was entered into by the then Government prior to my appointment as Minister for Housing. I know some hon. members of the Opposition do not like that fact made public. They asked certain questions to try to embarrass me. The Government of the day accepted the contract and I agreed with their acceptance of it. They finally accepted it after the late Sir John Kemp, Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, had examined the proposal and had lengthy discussions with the firm concerned.

Dr. Noble: You went overseas and chose the houses, did you not?

Mr. HILTON: Not at all. The hon. gentleman has been in the Chamber for many years, the question has been discussed time and time again. He knows very well that that is not true. It is typical of his attempts to misrepresent all along the line. The Treasurer and his colleagues will put him right on that point.

Mr. Dewar: How many houses came in as a result of your trip?

Mr. HILTON: Quite a number. I am talking about the Zillmere homes which have been the subject of questions and much discussion. It is interesting to point out that the then Premier, the late E. M. Hanlon, intimated to the public by medium of Press statements, that when the first contract for imported houses was entered into the Government were prepared, if necessary, to lose £1,000,000 on imported houses. If hon. members have any doubts they can refer to the newspapers about April 1950. At the time the object was to try to take positive action to relieve the severe housing shortage. The Queensland Government were not alone in their desire because the then Minister for National Development in the Federal Government, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey, was appealing to all State Governments to disregard

many formalities and to enter into contracts as soon as possible. He pointed out that time was the essence of the contract. In those days there was ample money for housing but as we all should know there was a great shortage of manpower and materials. Obviously the late E. M. Hanlon made the observation about the Government's being prepared to lose £1,000,000 on imported houses primarily because the late Sir John Kemp told him that the houses would be of pine construction and would naturally involve the Government in additional expenditure on maintenance. When criticisms and all sorts of nasty innuendoes are made let us at least be fair and look at the background to the housing programme.

Mr. Aikens: Had it not been for the support of the Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey probably the scheme would not have been gone on with.

Mr. HILTON: Quite so. In 1950 a Bill was introduced to subsidise the importation of homes to the extent of £300. It is interesting to peruse the minutes of Commonwealth-State conferences. I admit that troubles arose with the contract. I admitted it in the first speech I made about the Zillmere contract. I took the trouble to search the files and I found a reference in the minutes of the May 1950 conference that technical officers had said it was not necessary to immunise these timbers. They suggested that the houses be built a certain height from the ground so that the flooring could be renewed without difficulty. That would be the first part of the house attacked by borers. In 1951 when we were not happy about the timber we wanted to take steps to immunise the timbers coming in. Despite the fact that the Commonwealth quarantine officers had given the O.K. Dr. Welch, then Director of the Housing Division of National Development intimated that it did not warrant the expenditure of £80 to £90 a house to immunise the homes that were coming in. He told the conference of technical advisers that it would be better to get the homes in and put men on to carry out maintenance as required.

Mr. Dewar: Why did you want them immunised after?

Mr. HILTON: Because we were not satisfied. As hon. members know, they were imported in association with the Commonwealth Government, and because the Commonwealth Government were paying a £300 subsidy on imported homes they laid down many conditions. We were not happy and we brought the matter up to know what the position was in the other States.

Mr. Dewar: You do not suggest that they prevented you from immunising them yourselves?

Mr. HILTON: We took their advice. They were in a position to lay down conditions when the £300 subsidy came into

operation. The subsidy was to offset the cost of imported houses compared with houses constructed in this State. Any suggestion by the State Government could be rejected by the Commonwealth Government if it meant increasing the subsidy paid by the Commonwealth Government. That was the maximum subsidy. If the cost was only £100 more they would just pay that.

Mr. Dewar: You said that you were prepared to lose £1,000,000. That would be cheap today.

Mr. HILTON: I am telling the hon. member that the Commonwealth and the States were all interested in these things. On a previous occasion I quoted Mr. Casey's speech which can be found in "Hansard." That is the reason—because the Commonwealth technical advisers rejected the idea at the time. Costs started to rise and the £300 subsidy was far from adequate.

Mr. Aikens: Now the Commonwealth Government are getting out from under.

Mr. HILTON: Hon. members know what happened since then. Because of the innuendoes which have been made during this session I take this opportunity to point out the salient and important facts regarding this contract.

Mr. Dewar: You say that was in 1951. You knew the borer was there in 1952.

Mr. HILTON: 1952. As the Treasurer intimated the services of the Forestry Department and the Housing Commission worked satisfactorily watching for the borer. It has also been discovered in the South. The matter of immunisation also needs amplification. Almost 12 months ago the Government agreed that those houses affected by the European house-borer should be immunised in the manner now proposed. £50,000 was proposed approximately 12 months ago. A deadly gas was to be used and the occupiers had to be consulted. Money petered out. The Government, on the advice of the committee handling the problem continuously since 1952, agreed to that process of immunisation. That was for houses that had been affected.

Mr. Hiley: It was a Cabinet decision. It went through Cabinet.

Mr. HILTON: That is true.

Mr. Dewar: About four years after you knew the borer was here.

Mr. HILTON: The then Government had a committee working on it and were prepared to take the advice of forestry officials who had been consulted from the initial stage in the importation of pine homes. The Commonwealth people also were consulted.

I have given the opinion of Dr. Welch, the then Director of the Housing Division of the Department of National Development. It is all very well to cry about the present

situation. The Premier at that time said he thought there would be losses on imported homes but I do not apologise for importing them. I knew only too well the many problems, but the fact remains that the importing of those homes was a big contribution to a solution of the housing shortage. Even if £150,000 has to be made available now for treatment, it represents the cost of only about 50 homes, and consolation can be drawn from the fact that the homes have been occupied for the full period by 2,000 or 3,000 people. I think the sum mentioned by the Treasurer is adequate for treatment. The subject should not be discussed without knowledge of the background. It should be treated objectively. Nasty insinuations are not warranted.

Mr. Dewar: The houses at Inala are also affected.

Mr. HILTON: And the borer is in houses in other States. If maintenance men in those States are not employed to make careful checks, the position there will be more drastic than in Queensland.

Mr. Aikens: It will be worse than the prickly pear.

Mr. HILTON: Quite so.

I wish the Treasurer well in his efforts to overcome the housing shortage. The problem should be dealt with apart altogether from party politics. I always approached it on that basis. It is one of the greatest social problems in Australia.

Whether the guarantees to non-profit terminating building societies will result in the building of more houses, I do not know. The previous Government endeavoured to encourage co-operative societies, but the Queensland Housing Commission terms were more advantageous than those offered by building societies and those who could not obtain finance from private institutions wanted workers' dwellings built by the Queensland Housing Commission.

It cannot be denied that early in 1954 the housing position in this State was the best in the Commonwealth. At that time I made a speech on the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement, and I quoted the table on housing deficiencies submitted by the then Minister for Migration, Mr. Holt, which revealed that Queensland was in the best position of any State. The figures were quoted by Mr. Holt at the migration conference in December, 1953. I repeat them for the edification of hon. members. The deficiencies in homes per 100 families were 12 in New South Wales, 7 in Victoria, 6 in Queensland, 7 in South Australia, 8 in Western Australia and 2½ in Tasmania. After a very exacting survey early in 1954 it was generously estimated that the housing shortage in Queensland was not more than 3,000 homes. At that time I sounded a note of warning about future trends, because finance from building societies, private institutions

and banks was drying up and private construction of homes was declining very rapidly. That decline has since been continuous, and the shortage of homes in Queensland is now about 9,000, if I remember correctly the figure given by the Treasurer.

Mr. Hiley: Those are the recorded applications but how many of them are alive, I do not know.

Mr. HILTON: Unfortunately the shortage has grown considerably since that favourable position was achieved in 1954.

The Zillmere homes has been one of the hobby-horses for the hon. member for Cherm-side since he has been a member of this Chamber. He spoke about the writing down of the valuation of those homes and made references to fires that occurred out there. He did not say who burnt any material. Obviously the Housing Commission had no legal warranty to step into the contract until such time as the contractors gave us the warranty.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. HILTON: There was a fire out there and I think the insurance claim was paid to the firm concerned. The hon. member for Cherm-side implied that the Housing Commission had a fire out at Zillmere, but I know nothing of it. I know that a fire occurred and certain material was burnt, and I know that one of the ships bringing a load of pine from overseas was delayed for six months and that when it did arrive a lot of the timber was destroyed because of fungus rot. Because of adverse and unwarranted criticism of our programme in respect of imported houses, as Minister for Housing I requested the Commissioner to appoint an independent panel of competent men to make a survey of the homes and arrive at a fair valuation of them. That panel consisted of Mr. L. M. Conrad, President of the Queensland Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Mr. G. J. McCarthy, President of the Institute of Quantity Surveyors Incorporated, Queensland, and Mr. C. P. Hornick, Past President of the Master Builders' Association.

Although they did not act in an official capacity, they were a panel of men appointed to examine and report on those imported homes and make an estimate of the reductions that should be made in order to arrive at a fair valuation. This was brought to my mind because the other day the hon. member for Cherm-side suggested that the Zillmere homes should be written down to about £1,500. The committee intimated that the relative costs between the conventional Queensland wooden home and the imported homes were in respect of the Italian houses, 15 per cent. less than the local house, in respect of the French houses, 25 per cent. less, and for the Swedish houses 30 per cent. less. On that basis the overall average cost of the French home should be £1,756, the Italian home £1,976, and the Swedish house

£1,646. The idea of writing down was nothing new. Some action had to be taken in that direction. I would not like to see anybody buy one of those homes until the borer trouble was completely eliminated, if that is possible.

Mr. Aikens: The writing down of the capital value will not get rid of the borer.

Mr. HILTON: Not at all. It was just in case people wanted to buy. At that time the borer trouble had not reached any significance so far as deterioration in the homes was concerned. Some people wanted to buy them and we wanted to sell at a fair price. Those are the prices suggested by the expert panel.

Whilst I congratulate the Treasurer on his Budget as one representing a country area, I am disappointed that there has been a definite repudiation by the Government. I am prompted to say that, because during the election campaign the Premier and his followers stumped the country talking about the stepping up of Main Roads work in Queensland. He said, "Not enough is being spent in this direction. We will see to it that more money is spent on main roads." In his policy speech the present Premier said—

"The £1,000,000 that was collected last year under the State Transport Facilities Act will be diverted back to the building of roads and bridges, while a share of Loan funds will also be made available."

That did not imply that in future some action might be taken along those lines. The Premier made the statement that the £1,000,000 collected in the last financial year, plus a fair share of loan funds would be diverted to the construction of main roads in this financial year. I have perused the tables submitted by the Treasurer, and the increase in Main Roads expenditure, excluding the extra £300,000 of Commonwealth aid that he expects, is about £46,000. There is nothing in the tables to indicate that £1,000,000 will be diverted from moneys collected under the State Transport Facilities Act. In his Financial Statement, dealing with Main Roads, the Treasurer said—

"The difficulties confronting the Government as a result of the depletion of reserve funds have already been outlined. A similar position exists, following the reduction or exhaustion of credit balances in certain operational Trust Funds. One such instance is the Main Roads Fund, which had a credit balance of £1,468,382 on 1st July, 1954. Since that date the tempo of road construction has been stepped up to the extent that at the 30 June last all receipts into this Fund, together with the aforementioned balance, had been fully expended. The Government is now faced with the necessity of having to take extraordinary steps to avert a heavy reduction in Main Roads employment and a curtailment of this essential activity."

The Premier stated very definitely in his policy speech that the £1,000,000 would be used in this financial year to step up the construction of main roads and highways. I say logically and fairly that the Budget contains a very definite repudiation of the promise made by the Premier in regard to main roads when he delivered his policy speech.

I also wish to challenge the Premier on soldier settlement. He said in his policy speech—

"As an agent State Queensland soldier settlers would get the benefit of all contributions by the Commonwealth which are a gift whereas State contributions are a repayable loan."

In case that evidence is not convincing enough, in the "Brisbane Telegraph" of 25 September 1957, in the column "As I See It," the Premier said—

"With Queensland an agent State soldier settlers would get the benefit of all contributions by the Commonwealth—which are a gift, whereas State contributions are a repayable loan."

I think that clearly implies to soldier settlers who have not yet been settled on the land that if Queensland became an agent State they would be settled on selections free by the Commonwealth Government and would not have to repay one penny of loan money. If I am wrong in this I shall humbly apologise; but I do not think the Premier has any warrant for making that promise, and he has made it on two occasions. To my knowledge, no legislation passed by the Commonwealth Government at any time, nor any decision given by the Commonwealth Government at any time, has indicated that under any circumstances would soldier settlers in Queensland receive gifts to enable them to be settled on the land and that they would not have to repay any Commonwealth money. Briefly the position is that under agent-State conditions soldier settlers would be no better off, but rather worse off, than under principal-State conditions. They are settled on perpetual lease under the latter. They have to pay for the capital improvements effected thereon but their annual rent is 1½ per cent. of the value of the land. Under agent-State conditions they are first of all settled, if the Commonwealth approve, on land under perpetual lease tenure and they pay 2½ per cent. rental. After 10 years, and only after 10 years, they will be permitted to convert to freehold land. Obviously the fact that they have to pay higher rents would be to their disadvantage. They would not be any more favourably circumstanced under agent-State conditions than under principal-State conditions.

Mr. Dewar: That is a very wide statement.

Mr. HILTON: It is a factual statement. I invite the Premier to prove me wrong. If I am wrong I will apologise, because I made it my business to question high executive officers of my department on this point when I was Minister for Lands. I delved back through the files to find out the real position and I have some understanding of what the Government of the State have done in that direction. I propose to give the Committee a very brief resume of what has been done.

Mr. Dewar: Are you asserting there is no advantage to the ex-service man under agent-State conditions?

Mr. HILTON: So far as the ex-service men are concerned, no. The advantage that might lie with the State is along these lines: under agent-State conditions the Commonwealth insist that they own the land. They make all the money available on the condition that they own the land and that they get the rent for it.

Mr. Hiley: That is right. They buy it from the State. They pay us out in full.

Mr. HILTON: Not straightout.

Mr. Hiley: They buy the land from the State.

Mr. HILTON: Not at all. They pay for the land resumed by the State.

Mr. Hiley: You do not understand it.

Mr. HILTON: I do understand it.

Mr. Hiley: They buy it from the State.

Mr. HILTON: They make the money available. Let us put it this way: in some States freehold land had to be purchased, and I will deal with how the agent-State position arose. Originally the Commonwealth Government insisted on all States being principal States but Tasmania had no land settlement organisation and pointed out the impossible position it would be in so the Commonwealth agreed to Tasmania's being an agent State. From that point of view the Treasurer is correct in his remarks. As Western Australia and South Australia were then receiving grants under the Commonwealth-States Grant Commission that leniency was extended by the Commonwealth to them. But in the initial stages of the Scheme the Commonwealth insisted that Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland should be principal States. I repeat quite freely: they make all the money available to settle the soldiers in the State when agent-State conditions obtain, but that is not a gift to the soldier settlers.

Mr. Hiley: No, that is right. They buy the land, if it is leasehold, on a freehold basis and they pay the State for it.

Mr. HILTON: They pay the people who own the land because the State would do the resumption for them.

Mr. Hiley: And if the State owns the land they pay the State for it.

Mr. HILTON: Not now, no. That point does not come into it.

Mr. Hiley: Yes, they do.

Mr. HILTON: Even conceding that, if the land is resumed fair and reasonable compensation has to be paid and the Commonwealth pay that when agent-State conditions prevail. That is not a gift for the soldier settlers. Conversely because they have to take it under perpetual lease and they are not allowed to convert it for 10 years, they have to pay a rental of 2½ per cent. as against 1½ per cent. charged under the land laws of the State. The Queensland Government did a magnificent job in soldier settlement. I do not know of any other phase of governmental activity that has been so shockingly misrepresented as soldier settlement in Queensland.

Mr. Hiley: You say that the Government did a magnificent job. Quantitatively your proportionate performance was about one-tenth of the other States.

Mr. HILTON: We will analyse that statement. I am glad the Treasurer made that observation. It is well known that in Queensland there were more forms of assistance to ex-service men than in any other State. Whenever criticism is levelled no account is taken of the most effective scheme of assisting ex-service men by medium of the special legislation introduced under the Agricultural Bank Act. Ex-service men were given the option of an advance of up to 90 per cent., no interest and redemption were payable for three years. They were allowed to choose land that suited them for any primary industry that suited them. The scheme has been eminently successful but no credit is ever given when these false criticisms are levelled at the Government.

Mr. Dewar: There was nothing wrong with that scheme but the volume of the total assistance is what we are criticising.

Mr. HILTON: I challenge the Treasurer and the hon. member for Chermside or any hon. member of the Government to produce figures of the number of ex-service men that have been settled on the land by medium of Government assistance in each State that will show Queensland in a worse light than any other State.

Mr. Walsh: How many of them remain on the land in each State?

Mr. HILTON: Exactly. I argue that the position will redound entirely to the credit of Queensland. Let me give hon. members the facts and figures on this important question. Since the inception of the scheme, in which Queensland acted as a principal State, 453 farms were made available in the dairying, mixed farming, sugar and tobacco districts of the State, and the Agricultural Bank has advanced the soldier settlers on these farms a total of approximately

£4,154,000 for the purchase of improvements, farm machinery, stock, and for working capital.

A further 4,400 ex-service men have been settled on the land by the Government, making 72 farms in the Wandoo area and 90 grazing blocks in various parts of the State available for ballot exclusively amongst ex-service men under the special provisions of the State land laws; granting cane assignments or increased cane assignments to 257 ex-service men in respect of farms already owned by them or on which they hold an option to purchase; by granting priority right of purchase in respect of the sale of farms carrying cane assignments, under which over 750 ex-service men availed themselves of this concession; and by the Agricultural Bank rendering generous financial assistance under the special provisions of the Agricultural Bank Acts for the purchase of and/or improvement of existing farms to the extent of about £6,150,000. The greater part of this amount was advanced with an interest and redemption-free period of three years and no other State in the Commonwealth granted such a concession. I challenge any hon. member of the Government to produce facts and figures from other States to prove that ex-service men have been settled on the land by the Government to a greater degree than in Queensland.

Mr. Hiley: If you can convince the R.S.L. of that you are a champion.

Mr. HILTON: I should be happy to ask them to produce facts and figures. Obviously all the statistics of the other States are not available to me. The Queensland ones are.

Mr. Dewar: You make that assertion.

Mr. HILTON: I make that assertion because I know what has been done in the other States. The Commonwealth-States scheme was carried out in West Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, where land had to be purchased at great capital cost and a limited number were settled. They did not have areas in which priority was given to ex-service men as we did in Queensland in respect of grazing selections and others. They did not have an Agricultural Bank that made generous concessions as we did in this State. If hon. members disbelieve me I challenge them to prove that I am wrong. I challenge the Premier to prove his statement that Commonwealth contributions are given freely to ex-service men is correct.

Mr. Ewan: Are you proud of your efforts at Clare?

Mr. HILTON: Let us deal with the trouble at Clare. Everybody knows that some settlers at Clare ran into difficulties. When the Commonwealth and States first inaugurated the scheme they visualised that no matter what Government were in power they had to handle it on the basis of experience gained after World War I. and there

would have to be writing down of capital costs, so conditions were written in providing for a sharing of the writing down of capital costs by the Commonwealth and the States. With the Agent State it is on a 50-50 basis and with the Principal State it is two-fifths Commonwealth and three-fifths for the State. I saw the figures relating to Clare and during the first year some of the settlers made £6,000 to £7,000, but because of other factors coming into operation—the tobacco combine affecting them and the over-use of arsenical sprays by some settlers, and weather conditions—there was a decline in returns. Some of the settlers have done very well and others have had medium success and others have been failures. There have been failures in other parts of Australia too; nobody can deny that.

Mr. Ewan: Can you name any one settler there who is financially sound?

Mr. HILTON: Yes. We appointed a special committee to investigate the matter. That committee has made certain recommendations. You cannot blame the Government because in the first year of operations the tobacco-growers did very well, but some, the same as in other parts of Queensland, were not suited for the land, despite the fact that a committee of experts assessed the experience and reliability of applicants.

Mr. Ewan: The Government appointed them.

Mr. HILTON: I know. A number of men of the same political persuasion as the hon. member were on that committee too.

Mr. Ewan: I cannot help that.

Mr. HILTON: The Government cannot help it either. It is interesting to recall that the Commonwealth Government in 1954, according to the statement by Mr. Kent Hughes, envisaged the terminating of soldier settlement in Queensland by the end of 1959. After much negotiation a conference was held and the Commonwealth agreed to pay £1,000,000 for every £2,000,000 that States paid. They knew only too well that the Queensland Government were limited by loan money made available by the Loan Council, influenced as it was by the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government said, "We will give you £1,000,000 for every £2,000,000, but you will have to pay interest on it." In addition, they wanted to impose other stringent conditions. That was not acceptable, because at that stage the Commonwealth had spent practically nothing in Queensland, against million of pounds spent by the Queensland Government. In 1954 it cost between £10,000 and £13,000 to settle one man on the land under the terms of the Commonwealth-States Agreement.

I shall now revert to the Treasurer's speech. It is interesting to recall some of his previous comments in this Chamber. I have read again the speech he delivered in

1955, one of the best he delivered in this Chamber. He said he was treating the matter objectively, and he made an impassioned and penetrating appeal for consideration of the financial position of all States on a non-political basis. He now states that Queensland's poor financial position can be attributed to the discourteous approach of the previous Government. I recall the words he used regarding the financial policy of the Commonwealth Government in a speech in 1955. If ever anyone uttered devastating criticism of the Commonwealth Government that would arouse their ire, it was uttered by the Treasurer on that occasion. This is his statement at page 522 of the 1955 "Hansard"—

"The Commonwealth receive the revenue in the first instance in the year in which it imposes the tax and they again receive the money after recirculation when it comes back as contributions by the State in accordance with Sinking Fund requirements. The system is stupid, illogical and incomprehensible."

In speaking of those moneys he said, "They should reach the States and local authorities as free grants." I agree entirely with that statement.

Even before 1955 he drew attention to the trend in the financial relationship of the Commonwealth and the States. I recall that in 1955 he said he would send a copy of his speech to the Prime Minister for his perusal. He accuses the former Premier and Treasurer, without evidence, of discourtesy in their approach to the Commonwealth Government, but surely no-one ever offered more caustic criticism of Commonwealth control and direction of finance than the Treasurer on that occasion.

In the same speech he commented on the financial position in Queensland. The theme of the speech was that there should be a brake on Government spending and some action on hire purchase. He commended the financial policy of the then Government on the accumulation of reserves, and stated quite clearly, and this is only two years ago, that it would be ridiculous for this State to approach the Commonwealth for a special grant. In dealing with the speech of the then Treasurer he said—

"The second point the Treasurer makes is that Queensland's share of both tax reimbursement and loan allocation is shrinking and that conversely other States are proportionately increasing their shares. Both those statements are true, but the causes justify very careful thought.

Continuing he said—

"I have not the slightest doubt that the State is paying for its reserves. The Commonwealth attitude to special grants under the Curtin, Chieffy and Menzies Governments has always been to relate them to proved needs."

Again, that is quite true, but I make the observation that two years ago the Treasurer intimated that it would be futile for Queensland to make any approach to the Commonwealth at that time for a special grant because of the reserves then held by the State. He lauded the then Treasurer for achieving Budget equilibrium during other years and complained that he was not showing the full surplus. Twelve months later, however, he stated that the time was ripe for an approach to the Commonwealth Government. To show the way he commended the Queensland Government in 1955 in a very penetrating and interesting speech, I quote his remarks as follows:—

"Our present difficulty as a nation is largely one of over-spending and under-saving principally by citizens and partly by Government. In fairness it must be said that Queensland shows out better in this regard than any other State."

I throw those remarks back to the supporters of the Government in this debate who, in recent times, have spoken with reckless abandon regarding the financial policy in Queensland. The present Treasurer, the admitted financial brains of the Government, lauded Queensland for the policy being pursued and he had the decency and fairness to say that Queensland showed out better than any other State in Australia.

Mr. Hiley: You are not suggesting that the reserves of two years ago are present today?

Mr. HILTON: Not by any stretch of the imagination. The hon. gentleman said that they would diminish in 1955-1956 and again in 1956-1957. Although the Treasurer with his financial capacity can make very entertaining and enlightening and analytical speeches on finance, he made the point that in our economy it is impossible to predict in one year what will happen in the next. In 1955 he was lauding us for our policy and he said it was no good approaching the Commonwealth Government for a special grant, but 12 months later he said that the time was ripe to approach the Commonwealth Government. In his Budget this year he repeats that we should approach the Commonwealth, but in a courteous manner. As a man of business experience he knows that whilst words might be used in a Budget speech, the Commonwealth Government will not be influenced by courtesy or sentiment in their dealings with any State Government, particularly when the Treasurer intimated in 1955 that he was going to send a copy of his speech to the Prime Minister, a speech in which he took the Commonwealth Government to task for their financial policy. How will he be able to make a special plea for Queensland when he was one of the most daring critics of the present Commonwealth financial policy in Australia? No-one can deny that fact. It is all very well to adopt

one role or attitude when one is in Opposition but when the responsibility of government is entrusted to one, the tune is entirely different.

Mr. Gair: He drew attention to the fact that the Commonwealth was not helping in any Queensland projects.

Mr. HILTON: That is quite true, and I think he used the argument that they would not do so because we had sufficient finance of our own to carry out those projects. Admittedly we displayed some ability in that direction. Again I am reminded that in 1955 he said that Queensland was spending all it was capable of spending and that if we got any more money from the Commonwealth it would only be added to our already overloaded reserves. The Treasurer indicated that in every phase of development in this State in 1955 we were spending to the absolute limit of our physical resources, that is, our manpower and material, so he cannot very well logically state now that priorities will have to be applied and certain projects relegated because of lack of funds. As our reserves have been depleted so badly in the last 12 months, perhaps that argument is valid up to a point. However, what has occurred has substantially proved that the attitude adopted by the previous Government in regard to three weeks' leave and other matters was sound.

I am glad that the Treasurer has had the opportunity of enlightening some of the people who have no comprehension of State finances, because they have now learnt the bitter truth—that the attitude of the previous Government was sound and correct and that the introduction of three weeks' leave would only have added to the unemployment that is now manifesting itself in parts of Queensland. I am not an alarmist; I do not wish to create any fear complex. I certainly hope that there will be no unemployment. Unfortunately there are some trends in that direction and we now hear members of the official Opposition complaining about unemployment. A few months ago the cry was "Give us three weeks' leave. It won't cost anything. It won't cause any unemployment."

Mr. Mann: All you were asked to do was carry out a policy that you subscribed to.

Mr. HILTON: We never subscribed to a policy that a gang of hatchet men should go round the country and interfere with democratic Government as we interpreted it and understood it. As I said on the public platform, never in my public life have I subscribed to a policy of a gang of hatchet men going round the State trying to ensure that their whims and fancies based on illogical premises should be adhered to. I would prefer to leave public life rather than do that. Any sound Labour man realises full well that the attitude of the Government was correct, because unemployment has grown even without three weeks' leave. Obviously

the position would have been much worse and there would have been much more unemployment if the absurd demands by Bukowski, Egerton, and their fellow hatchet men had been recognised and implemented by the Government of this State. I repeat that I belong to a party of destiny. We are guided by genuine Labour ideals and motives, and we shall re-educate the masses and again build a noble edifice on the ruins created by the hatchet men when they broke down and destroyed the great Australian Labour Party.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.21 p.m.