

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 27 OCTOBER 1960

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS

SALE OF QUEENSLAND BARLEY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

“(1) Is it a fact that Queensland barley is being sold in New South Wales at 10s. 6d. per bushel, delivered, while the price to Queensland consumers is 11s. 9d. per bushel?”

“(2) If so, and in view of the transport charges and probable agents' commission involved in Southern sales, what explanation can he give for the differential in prices which so adversely affects the local consumer?”

“(3) What are the latest estimates of (a) yield from the current barley crop and (b) consumption requirements in Queensland?”

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick) replied—

“(1) The marketing of barley in Queensland is a matter for The Barley Marketing Board. This Board is a grower controlled organisation and does not represent the Crown. Consequently I am not normally informed of the prices at which The Barley Marketing Board makes its day to day sales. However, I have heard that sales of bulk barley have been made at 10s. 1d. per bushel on trucks Toowoomba, and down to 9s. 7d. per bushel on trucks Warwick and Dalby to Queensland buyers.”

“(2) As indicated in the answer to Question 1, the determination of sale prices of barley is a matter for The Barley Marketing Board and is not subject to Government control. The Board has, of course, the responsibility of selling the barley crop on behalf of growers to the best advantage of the growers. It is often the case in the sale of various commodities that different prices are realised on different markets. This is particularly so when competition on such markets is severe and the available supply exceeds local demand. In many commodities at the present time realisations from export sales are below those from domestic sales. I understand that the supply of barley to New South Wales from Queensland is a practice of long standing and that if this market were not supplied by The Barley Marketing Board it would be supplied through channels outside the Board, and the grain would in any event be lost to the Queensland consumer.”

“(3) The latest estimate of the 1960-1961 Queensland barley crop as compiled by the Division of Marketing of my Department is for a production of 3½ to 4 million bushels. Queensland consumption requirements of barley fluctuate considerably according to seasonal conditions and available supplies of other grains. However, the range in domestic consumption of Queensland barley in recent years has been between 1½ to 2½ million bushels per annum. This figure includes grain usage for all purposes including feed, malting and seed, and grain retained by the farmer for his own use. The figure is estimated, as it is not always possible to separate interstate sales.”

STATE INSURANCE PREMIUMS, COMPREHENSIVE MOTOR CAR INSURANCE POLICIES

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“(1) What annual premium is charged by the State Government Insurance Office on (a) £250 and (b) £500 Private Class Comprehensive Motor Car Insurance Policies subject to a no-accident bonus?”

“(2) What would be the premiums charged on the same policies taken direct with the Insurance Office, but where the vehicle is subject to a Hire-purchase Agreement?”

“(3) In cases where the hirer is entitled to a no-accident bonus and where his history shows him to be a good insurance risk, will he explain the wide margin between the two cases outlined in Questions (1) and (2)?”

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

“(1) (a) £14 7s. 6d.; (b) £18 6s. 6d.”

“(2) (a) £19 5s. 6d.; (b) £25 4s.”

“(3) Insurance rates are and must be related to the experience of a class and cannot be separately determined for each separate risk. The Australian wide experience is that claims in respect of vehicles under Hire Purchase are much higher than with other motor vehicles. Premium rates are fixed to reflect average claims experience.”

FREE RAILWAY PASSES ISSUED TO PENSIONERS

Dr. DELAMOTHE (Bowen) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

“What was the number of free annual rail passes issued to pensioners during the financial years ended June 30, 1957, 1958, 1959 and 1960?”

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) replied—

“The number of rail requisitions issued to pensioners during each of the financial

years referred to is: 1956-1957, 18,540; 1957-1958, 22,017; 1958-1959, 24,325; 1959-1960, 26,042. These requisitions are issued to enable pensioners to—(a) have a holiday; (b) visit relatives; (c) visit dangerously ill or dying relatives; (d) change place of residence; (e) attend public hospital for outpatients' treatment where such treatment is not available nearby. I would also inform the Honourable Member that whereas previously twelve months had to elapse between the date of issue of passes in the cases of (a) and (b), pensioners are now eligible to receive such passes at any time, once in each calendar year."

PAPERS

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

Report of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau for the year 1959-1960.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Co-operative Housing Societies Act of 1958.

Order in Council under the Fisheries Acts, 1957 to 1958.

Order in Council under the Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1960.

Order in Council under the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1960.

Orders in Council under the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1952 to 1958.

GOVERNOR'S SALARY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Governor's Salary Acts, 1872 to 1957, in a certain particular."

Motion agreed to.

STATUTORY SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill relating to certain statutory salaries and allowances."

Motion agreed to.

SUPREME COURT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice): I move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Supreme Court Acts, 1861 to 1958, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

DISTRICT COURTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice): I move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the District Courts Act of 1958, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

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

Debate resumed from 25 October (see p. 990) on Mr. Hiley's motion—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1960-1961, a sum not exceeding £1,365 to defray the salary of Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor."

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (11.10 a.m.): Having listened very carefully to the outline given by the Treasurer in presenting his Financial Statement, and to several of the speeches that have been made since its presentation, I am pleased to have this opportunity of commenting upon it.

Before doing so, I should like to take the opportunity of placing on record the appreciation of the Queensland Parliamentary Labour Party and that of the great volume of its supporters of the services rendered by those candidates who were defeated at the last State election. In doing so, I feel sure I am echoing the sentiments of many people who would not feel inclined to agree with the views of the persons I am about to name. I had arranged with the Leader of the Queensland Labour Party that I would refer to the matter during the debate on the Address in Reply. However, as I did not take part in that debate, I now take this opportunity of placing my appreciation on record. The Queensland Labour Party and its supporters record their appreciation of the services rendered to their constituents by the Hon. V. C. Gair, the Hon. W. Power, the Hon. A. Jones, and

Messrs. Foley, Gardner, McCathie and A. J. Smith. Mr. Jones and Mr. Power did not contest the election, and consequently, having retired of their own accord, do not come within the category of defeated candidates.

I do not wish to raise in this Chamber— or outside of it for that matter—the matter of differences between political parties, but I think it is fit and proper to record in the journals of this Parliament appreciation of the services rendered by these men who were prepared to stand by their principles and take the side of responsible government in this State. Beyond that I have no desire to say anything further on the subject.

I think it would be agreed that the Financial Statement presented by any Treasurer, judged from any angle, should be a very interesting document; sometimes it may be disturbing and sometimes comforting, as it is in one instance on this occasion where the Treasurer has announced a small reduction in a certain type of taxation. If the Financial Statement gave any evidence of planning for the future economy of the State it could be conceded that it would be an interesting document; on the other hand, it equally could be said that it could be very disturbing.

I would place the Financial Statement delivered to the Committee on this occasion in the latter category. The Treasurer delivered the opening part of the Financial Statement with an air that indicated economic buoyancy and prosperity. If one judged the book on its cover it could be said that everything would be all right for the future, but as he proceeded he brought in all the difficulties confronting the Government today as if it was the only Government that had ever been confronted with those difficulties. Despite his attempt in the early stages of his Financial Statement to convey a message of hope to the people of Queensland, he destroyed it as he went along. He mentioned drought, but Labour Governments had their share of droughts, just as Governments of the future no doubt will have to face up to drought periods in Queensland. If we are to judge the Government's interest in water conservation, irrigation and similar schemes by the reduced Vote for that work, the position will be a lot worse in future than it has been in the past.

The Treasurer referred to the unfortunate Medway Creek railway disaster. I think all hon. members would agree that it was most unfortunate, but similar things have happened in the past, and, apart from tragic events such as the Medway Creek disaster and the Camp Mountain disaster in 1947, I think I should refer hon. members to the considerable damage to the permanent way in the years immediately following the war, and even during the war, when Labour Governments were in office. On that point I have only to draw the Treasurer's attention to the destruction by flood of the Burdekin bridge and Mirani bridge, as well as other structures of a more or less minor nature

compared with those important bridges. So that is not the real cause of the Government's present financial position.

The Treasurer then referred to margins. Some years ago he said that one of the difficulties confronting the Government of the day was that they were faced with the introduction of the 40-hour week and the matter that he was pleased to describe as a "bonus" of an extra £1 a week that was granted at the time by the Industrial Court. These phases have no doubt been aggravated in the post-war period, but I should say they do not provide justification for the Treasurer's presentation of a document that indicates that the Government even at this stage are stone motherless broke.

Mr. Hiley: Rot!

Mr. WALSH: The Treasurer says it is rot. I shall give later some figures not manufactured in my mind, but figures presented by the Treasurer and others contained in the Auditor-General's Report. I think they should be accurate enough for the Treasurer. From these figures I shall be able to prove that in the three years the Government have been in power they have received nearly £18,000,000 more than was available to the Labour Government in their last year of office. Despite the fact that they have received much more assistance from the Commonwealth Government than the previous Labour Government, they still had to resort to higher taxation. The Treasurer cannot deny his own figures. If he wants to wriggle or struggle out of the position somehow, that is his business. He can put up whatever case he wants to put up in order to get out of it, but I will be putting to him the factual data he has presented to this Committee.

The Treasurer may recall that in 1956 he referred to the industrial situation and the problems created by decisions of the industrial courts. As he has mentioned margins, I think I should draw his and the Committee's attention to the views he expressed on that occasion. No doubt he will stick to his opinions, but nevertheless I think it is desirable that I should draw attention to his remarks at that time. He will find on page 733 of Volume 214 of the 1956-1957 "Hansard" that he is reported as saying—

"I shall show you how it can be approached. It is not a simple problem. We cannot solve it by presenting budget after budget, each year spending more money."

Of course, this is dealing with budgetary matters. I interjected at that stage and said—

"Would you tie the hands of industrial courts?"

The hon. gentleman went on—

"The emergency is such that even without tying their hands all responsible Governments should consider at least making some factual observations as to where the

economy of the country is going and invite the industrial courts to consider whether the present principles that govern their determinations are leading Australia into a tenable or untenable situation."

That is quite a pertinent observation. I am not complaining about the nature of the observation other than to say that it reflects obviously the Treasurer's outlook even on this occasion when he presented his Financial Statement to the Committee.

He proceeded—

"I should say that the Government's hasty shortening of the working week and the £1 a week bonus were equal culprits. I should say that both of those things caused a rift in the cost structure of Australia at a time when wiser councils should have realised that the 1950-1951 prices were not stable or likely to be maintained."

That was his approach then. If I quote his remarks on that occasion, having regard to his comments in the Financial Statement this year as Treasurer, I do not think it will be unreasonable for me to suggest that he is adopting exactly the same attitude as Mr. Menzies adopts in the Federal sphere when his Government desire to convey to the industrial tribunals of the country their feelings on the determinations given by those courts from time to time. Whatever way the Treasurer may wish to construe it, those were his remarks in the debate in 1956 and by his own statements he is inclined, as it were, to present a picture that can be accepted only as an attempt to influence the outlook of industrial tribunals in this State.

I realise that the Budget contains much informative matter. The tables presented by the Treasurer take quite a deal of understanding and, having to be read in conjunction with the Auditor-General's report, a good deal of research by hon. members is called for.

Before I come to the general theme of the argument that I wish to present to the Committee, may I quote these words of the present Treasurer. They are to be found at page 732 of Volume 214 of the 1956-1957 "Hansard"—

"It is almost two thousand years since the parable was written, 'Let us eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow we shall die.' As I look at the Budget presented by the Treasurer and as I ponder his political future I think this might well be described as the Treasurer's Budget in the terms of 'Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow he dies.'"

"It is an unhappy and unfortunate Budget, easily the unhappiest and most unfortunate he has ever presented. Although I have disagreed with them in great detail, in other budgets he has brought down I have been able to see the clarity of the purpose he seeks to serve. Here is a Budget completely lacking in purpose, showing no sign at all of courage in its financial programme, simply saying, 'We are facing a bad situation. We have

a number of reserves. We will spend them with all possible speed and finish at the end of the year stone motherless broke'."

I do not know of any more apt words that could be quoted in this debate to describe the Financial Statement that the Treasurer has presented to the Committee than his own words in 1956.

Mr. Coburn: Was what was spent wasted or was it spent judiciously?

Mr. WALSH: I am not arguing about that. The hon. member for Burdekin is not going to deflect me from the course I wish to take. I could refer to many matters on the Financial Statement, but having made up my mind what I wish to talk about, that is what I shall talk about. As to whether we were "stone motherless broke" at the end of the financial year referred to by the Treasurer, he knows from the documents that were presented here by him in September, 1957, that we had £3,813,000 in cash and £11,139,261 in investments. Let me drive it home to every member of the Committee that, even today, outside their short-term investments, the Government have very little more invested than when Labour left office, even with their increase of £17,900,000 in revenue as compared with the last year of the Labour Government. Let it be remembered that, in saying that, I am not taking into consideration motor-vehicle taxation or any revenue from loan raisings; I am simply taking into consideration revenues that come within Consolidated Revenue and the Trust and Special Funds.

No doubt the Treasurer will want to go back over the term of the Labour Government and produce data to show that they did not handle the finances of the State in a business-like way and that his Government are making a better fist of the job. I have already given the cash balance when his Government took over. I have here a document that I had taken out from my own records on 5 August, 1957, and I know he will take no objection to this. In any case, the report of the Auditor-General for 1957 will confirm the figures. Let me put it on record that the bonds included in the total of £11,139,261 invested in Commonwealth Government securities ranged in maturing date from 15 August, 1957, to 15 November, 1968. In the meantime the Treasurer has readjusted those securities in the measure he has brought down. I want to show how he has benefited from the previous Government's business-like control of their finances. He will not disagree with me when I say that on 12 May, 1958, there was an amount of £6,475,583 at cost price that would mature then and that the face value was £6,555,000.

I do not want to go through all the figures. I have them here, as I said, in the document I had taken out before we handed over the Government. There was a further amount—of investments maturing in September, 1962—worth £3,552,933 at cost price, the face value being £3,552,930,

and the other large amount was for securities maturing on 15 October, 1960, amounting to £816,236 at cost and £819,400 face value. All these have been readjusted and the Treasurer has informed hon. members of the transaction. I do not suggest that anything underhand was done. The Treasurer has been quite open about it and he has conveyed a great deal of information on these aspects in the various statements he has presented. It is good business. I am not arguing against it. What I am pointing out is that the amount shown for investments by the present Government, a little over £11,500,000, is not much more than the amount that was left to them when they took office.

Mr. Coburn: As long as that money was spent for the benefit of the people, what does it matter?

Mr. WALSH: I am not arguing about that, although I do not agree with the hon. member for Burdekin that the money was spent wisely. I am showing that this Government started off on a very good wicket.

Let us now have a look at some of the trust and special funds. One about which a good deal of comment was made was the Succession and Stamp Duties Suspense Account. Here again, the Treasurer was quite open and frank with the Committee. He withheld nothing about the handling of those funds. He told the Committee, in effect, that he had transferred approximately £1,591,000 from this account to Consolidated Revenue, £1,190,000 of which was used to offset the deficit for the year. The balance was just thrown into Consolidated Revenue and it improved the balance by that amount. But there is something that I should like the Treasurer to explain. I am merely putting the case from these tables, nothing more, and if some explanation is required of what the Treasurer did with what might be described at this stage as excess funds over previous years, he is the only man who can really tell us how they were dealt with. We all know that funds can be created either by statute or by executive minute, and they are being created.

Mr. Hiley: Tell me your difficulty. I shall be glad to help you.

Mr. WALSH: They are being created, even though the Treasurer has expressed the desire to get away from this multiplicity of funds, and on looking at the records now one finds this standing fund and that standing fund. The Treasurer still wishes to continue what he described as a synthetic type of accountancy. In a speech reported at page 733 of Vol. 214 of "Hansard" for 1956-1957, the Treasurer said—

"At least let us aim at figures which give the simple truth of the position, not the manufactured type of truth or the synthetic type of accounting truth that so sadly disfigures the budgetary records put before us."

Does he suggest that he has improved on that? The other day the hon. member for Barroona—I do not want to embarrass him—made a very worthwhile contribution to the debate. Even if the Treasurer does not agree with the hon. member's approach to the problem, I am sure he will concede what I say.

Mr. Hiley: He made easily the best contribution on the Budget.

Mr. WALSH: I said that I did not want to embarrass him. I do not know whether the Treasurer does.

Mr. Mann: It would take more than that to embarrass him.

Mr. WALSH: Going back to the year 1957-1958, the Budget estimate for stamp duty in that year was £3,150,000; the actual revenue returned was £3,631,843, or an increase of £481,843 over the amount budgeted for. The Budget estimate for succession and probate duties was £3,200,000, the actual revenue was £3,138,006, a decrease of £62,094. In 1958-1959 the Budget estimate for stamp duty was £3,650,000, the actual revenue was £3,749,300, an increase of £99,300. For succession and probate duty the estimate for the same year was £3,350,000, the actual was £3,376,763, an increase of £26,763. In 1959-1960 the Budget estimate was £4,250,000, the actual was £4,829,260, an increase of £579,260 over the estimate. The estimate for succession and probate duty was £5,130,000, the actual was £5,738,052, or an increase of £608,052.

I do not want the Treasurer to tell me that I know how these things are brought about. The figures are here and the Committee is entitled to know what has happened to this revenue.

Mr. Pizzey: How are you supposed to know beforehand who is going to die?

Mr. WALSH: I do not think the hon. gentleman knows much about this. The Treasurer does, and so do I. The hon. gentleman would have to go to a different school from the one he attended in the past to catch up on this.

Mr. Pizzey: You do not know who is going to die.

Mr. WALSH: This has nothing to do with the people who die. These are suspense accounts containing interim adjustments, not actual adjustments. The figures I quoted for 1959-1960 include the transfers from the two funds, stamp duties and succession and probate duty. Taking the combined revenue for 1957-1958 for stamp duty and succession and probate duty we get a total of £6,769,849. In 1958-1959 it was £7,126,063; in 1959-1960 £10,567,312. The revenue for 1959-1960 shows an excess over the 1957-1958 revenue of £3,797,463, and an excess over the 1958-1959 revenue of £3,441,249. Taking those two excess revenue periods together, for the two years the excess amounted to £7,238,712,

or £112,649 over the combined revenue from stamp duty and succession and probate duty in 1958-1959.

Is this the manufactured type of truth or the synthetic type of truth the Treasurer said was so sadly disfiguring the budgetary records of the past?

Let me get onto another table. I do not think that the Treasurer has any objection to my approach to this subject because it is factual.

Mr. Hiley: I am enjoying every minute of it.

Mr. WALSH: Taking revenue for 1959-1960 at £10,567,312 and the amount of £1,591,919 transferred to Consolidated Revenue—I see another figure used in the Auditor-General's Report £3,000 less than that—there is still an excess of £1,849,330 over the 1958-1959 revenue from stamp duty and succession and probate duty combined. Even if one allows the sum of £250,000 as the normal increase over 1958-1959, there is still approximately £1,600,000 that has probably assisted to return a deficit of only £164,674 16s. 4d.

The Minister for Education and Migration made a remark that suggests that what the Treasurer has done in this case would be in accordance with what has been done by previous Governments, but the Treasurer knows that that is not the case. These funds contain revenue that could be described as in the nature of—in part at least—interim assessments. The Treasurer pointed that out. He pointed out that after an examination of the budgetary approach to this question in practically every other State, Queensland was the only State with this approach in dealing with that part of the revenue. I am not accusing the Treasurer of trying to hold anything back because I think he has conveyed that to the Committee in very definite terms. If I remember rightly, he said that any refunds that had to be made as and when the actual assessments were sent out could be made from Consolidated Revenue.

I realise that this is one of the funds that the Treasurer saw fit to close, and payments under this heading are now made direct into Consolidated Revenue and not into the special funds, as they previously were. That is the Government's responsibility. If that is the way they want to handle their finances, well and good. It is no good our complaining of it here because it is the Treasurer's responsibility to handle the finances to the best advantage of the State as he sees it.

If I may say something on cash balances, here again, I suppose, the Treasurer will say that these aspects are presented no differently from the manner in which they were presented in the past by me when I was Treasurer. However, I hope again to be able to show that I was not required to dig into the Trust and Special Funds reserves to arrive at a cash position as outlined in this statement presented by the Treasurer.

On page 3 of the Financial Statement reference is made to the fact that the cash balance, as at 30 June last, in Trust and Special Funds, including funds invested "at call," was £3,845,558. Strangely enough, turning to page 4, under the heading "Cash Balances and Investments," we read—

"Treating surplus funds invested at 30th June, 1960, in the short term money market 'at call' as cash, the Cash Balances of the State amounted to £3,764,495, having decreased by £1,252,594 during the year."

The Treasurer will know that there is very little difference between the language used in the approach to the analysis of the figures under the heading "Cash Balances and Investments" on page 4 and that used on page 3, but the two balances are different.

I cannot be held responsible for feeling that members generally—or at least I personally—cannot figure that out. The language used is almost identical because in one it simply says,

"The Cash Balance at 30th June last of the Trust and Special Funds, including funds invested 'at call,' was £3,845,558."

On the next page I find that almost the same language is used, but another figure is given.

Now take cash balances. I know a speech on this subject can be very dry, in that it must contain a great deal of reference to figures. On other occasions I prefer to talk on other subjects. On page 26 of the Auditor-General's report upon the Public Accounts for the year 1957-1958 we find the cash balances comprising current accounts and at Commonwealth Savings Bank £3,105,457, and debenture deposit account (at call) £1,741,338, making a total of £4,846,795. I shall not deal with Trust and Special Funds at this stage as they are not material to the point I want to make about cash balances, although I shall probably come back to them later if I have the time. However, I think I should say that the Auditor-General had this to say, "Cash and investments available to the Treasurer at close of the previous year totalled £14,987,681 so that there was an increase of £1,073,901 in these resources during the year." That was the position after 11 months.

I now come to the position for the year 1958-1959. At page 28 of the Auditor-General's report on Public Accounts we find a summary of the resources in cash and investments of all funds. There can be no doubt about those things. The position is shown as follows:—

| "Cash balances— | £ |
|---|--------------------|
| Current Accounts and at Commonwealth Savings Bank | 3,315,531 |
| Debenture Deposit Account (at Call) | 1,701,558 |
| | £5,017,089" |

The comment of the Auditor-General is that this figure shows an increase of £175,000 over the previous year, the improvement being brought about by a decrease in Trust and Special Funds, in cash and securities held, amounting to £3,671,297, and a decrease in cash held in the Loan Fund of £174,410, and a decrease in accumulated deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund of £4,020,738. I am sure the Treasurer is not going to find fault with me for quoting figures taken from the Auditor-General's reports. For the year 1957-1958, to return a cash balance of £4,846,795, cash balances in the current accounts and at Commonwealth Savings Bank of £3,105,457 and in debenture deposit account (at call) of £1,741,338 were required. In 1958-1959 it required a debenture deposit of £1,701,558 to return a cash balance of £5,017,089, including, of course, the current accounts and the amount at Commonwealth Savings Bank amounting to £3,315,531.

But for 1959-1960 the Treasurer had to plunge the Trust and Special Funds to an overdraft of £3,954,442 to find £7,800,000 for short-term investments, to return a cash balance, according to his own figure, of £3,764,495. The Trust and Special Funds balance is shown at page 12 of the Auditor-General's report for 1960 as £6,071,530 10s. 10d. The same report shows Trust and Special Funds overdrawn to the tune of £3,954,442 at 30 June, 1960. The Treasurer cannot quibble at my approach to this matter. They are figures from page 4 of his own statement. He sets out that in the Consolidated Revenue Fund there was a debit of £164,675. The total debit is £4,119,117. It also shows that the Consolidated Revenue Fund, as shown by the Auditor-General, was overdrawn to the extent of £4,035,505. In short-term investments at call there is a credit of £7,800,000, and the Treasurer cannot deny that, after considering all those facts, the cash balance is £3,764,495.

After reading that, and going into those matters, might I say that the Treasurer's name, instead of being, Thomas Alfred Hiley should be Thomas Emden Hiley. In all my experience of politics no former Treasurer has "raided" the various Trust Funds and Suspense Accounts to the extent that he has.

To continue the analysis of the cash balances so as to make the picture complete on page 27 of the Auditor-General's Report for 1960 appears a summary of the cash balances and investments of all funds at 30 June, 1960, as follows: "Cash Balances—Current Accounts and at Commonwealth Savings Bank—Overdrawn £4,035,505." There is a total investment amounting to £19,285,773, including the short-term investments of £7,800,000. The Treasurer must agree, because he cannot get away from it, that he has excised the cash in the Trust Funds to enable him to produce a cash

balance below the amount that he took over. If he can invest the money, I am not complaining about that.

Mr. Hiley: Your contention is that we have less in cash investments than when we took over?

Mr. WALSH: No, I am not saying that at all.

Mr. Hiley: That is what you just said.

Mr. WALSH: I have already said that the Treasurer showed in his own report, if my memory serves me rightly, that there is approximately £11,520,000-odd in Government securities and so on.

Mr. Hiley: Thereabouts.

Mr. WALSH: When the Treasurer took over from the previous Government there was £11,139,000. We did not have the short-term investments. They were not available to the previous Government, as the Treasurer knows. He has admitted that the practice did not come into operation till recently. I think that again the Assistant Under-Treasurer, Mr. Riding, can be given the credit for initial advice on the early investment of surplus cash. Just as I gave him the credit I have no doubt the Treasurer will give him the credit due in this case.

Mr. Hiley: How would you imagine I could put £7,800,000 on the short-term money market and still have the same money lying idle in the bank? How would you reason that?

Mr. WALSH: I am not arguing that the Treasurer should do that, I am pointing out that as he had to invest this amount—

Mr. Hiley: Had to invest what amount?

Mr. WALSH: The Treasurer has invested it according to his own statement. Is he denying his statement on page 4 of the Financial Statement?

Mr. Hiley: No I am proud of it.

Mr. WALSH: The Treasurer shows that after taking into account the investment of £7,800,000 at short call, the highest debenture investment—

Mr. Hiley: Ever in the history of the State.

Mr. WALSH: The highest debenture investment prior to this Government coming into power was £1,799,000 and we produced a cash balance almost identical with the one the Treasurer claims. I have here some interesting data on revenue and taxation that I am sure the Treasurer will not appreciate. Again I can only rely on the figures presented in the Tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement. The first I intend to give appear in Table C2, on page 11, which sets out the sources of revenue for the years from 1950-1951 to 1959-1960. It shows that in 1956-1957 the State received from the

Commonwealth £29,415,183 whereas in 1959-1960 it received £40,479,905, or an increase of £11,000,000. Let the Government supporters stew over that!

Let us look at State Taxation. I suppose the Treasurer will make some excuse for these rises but, again, I can only give the official figures presented by him. The revenue received from State Taxation in 1956-1957 was £10,128,043 whereas in 1959-1960 it was £14,936,555, or an increase of over £4,800,000, which includes the sum of £1,888,407 transferred to the Consolidated Revenue Account. That is where there is the slight difference that I mentioned a while ago.

Miscellaneous receipts for 1956-1957 were £1,425,304 whereas for 1959-1960 they were £2,530,457, or an increase of over £1,000,000.

So last year the Queensland Government had £17,900,000 more than the Labour Government had in their last year of office, and that is not taking into consideration special forms of taxation like motor vehicle registrations.

In Table C 5, on page 18, the revenue is set out in terms of per head of population for the years from 1933-1934 to 1959-1960. Again, the years that are really relevant are the last year of office of the Labour Government and the first year of the present Government. The table includes the following in respect of amounts received from the Commonwealth—

| | Per head of Population | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|----|----|
| | £ | s. | d. |
| 1956-1957 | 19 | 15 | 0 |
| 1957-1958 | 21 | 3 | 3 |
| 1958-1959 | 22 | 7 | 4 |
| 1959-1960 | 25 | 2 | 5 |

Revenue from State taxation, per head of population, was £7 6s. 9d. in 1956-1957 and £10 6s. 3d. in 1959-1960.

Revenue from the Railways in 1956-1957 was £25 15s. 6d. per head of population as against £24 1s. 3d. in 1959-1960. Taking the total under all these headings, in 1956-1957 the revenue per head was £61 13s. 9d., and in 1959-1960 it was £71 4s. 0d.

Let us now take the expenditure per head of population, and I ask hon. members again to bear in mind the remarks of the Treasurer in 1956 that we could not go on spending more and more money year after year. I wonder what his answer will be to his own figures. The expenditure per head on railways in the last year of office of the Labour Government was £26 15s. 3d. In the year 1959-1960, under the present Government, it was £25 17s. 8d., or 17s. 7d. less than it was under the former administration. The Treasurer can take some credit for that, I suppose; but if that is so, why is there all this noise about the railways being the bogymen in the finances of Queensland?

If one looks at the column headed "Departmental and General Expenditure" in Table

C5, one sees that in 1956-1957 the expenditure per head is shown as £24 0s. 1d., and in 1959-1960 it is shown as £31 8s. 10d. In three years it has increased from £24 0s. 1d. to £31 8s. 10d.

Mr. Hiley: You would not expect us to keep on starving our servants as you did?

Mr. WALSH: Here is the other side of the story, which is the story that I want to tell. If the Treasurer wants to get behind the State bureaucracy and put them on a pedestal higher and still higher above the average working man in Queensland, he does not get my support. If he wants to follow the plan of Mr. Menzies and company in the Federal sphere and increase the salaries of the tall poppies in this State, he has no right to complain of the losses in the railways—none whatever.

Mr. Hiley: Why do you think I went on record complaining about the margins being carried up into the top levels?

Mr. WALSH: All I can say is that the Treasurer's attitude is against increases being granted to working men outside the Public Service, but he does not mind giving increases to employees who have the protection of the Public Service. I said that I had no objection to their getting a fair go, and they got a fair go under Labour Governments. If the Treasurer wants to sweat the people outside who are engaged in heavy industry, primary production, and so on, and keep them on the breadline while he brings the whole body of public servants up, he can take the credit for that, but I am not sharing it.

Again, these figures are not the manufactured type of truth to which the Treasurer referred; rather do they suggest that an explanation is required. If the revenue per head is shown in Table C5 on page 18, as £71 4s. and the expenditure is shown as £70 9s. 10d. on page 19 of the same table, am I entitled to suggest that there was a surplus of approximately £1,400,000? That is not the story, even though there is the noting at the bottom of the Table that the expenditure is exclusive of transfers from Trust and Special Funds to offset accumulated deficits.

Mr. Hiley: As long as you follow that course, you will be all right. Keep away from the half truth.

Mr. WALSH: I do not want to misquote anybody. Again I say that the Treasurer cannot be very proud of the Government's record in State taxation and various other phases of their financial policy. These figures are perhaps a bit boring, but they must be publicised so that more people will see them. These tables that are supplied to hon. members have a limited circulation, and so has "Hansard." I will go through the figures quickly. Table C5 at page 18 of the tables

relating to the Treasurer's Financial State-
ment contains the following figures covering
State taxation per head:—

| | £ s. d. | | Increase over previous year | |
|--------------|---------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
| | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. |
| 1945-1946 .. | 2 | 8 2 | | |
| 1946-1947 .. | 2 | 14 7 | 0 | 6 5 |
| 1947-1948 .. | 3 | 1 0 | 0 | 6 5 |
| 1948-1949 .. | 3 | 10 2 | 0 | 9 2 |
| 1949-1950 .. | 3 | 18 7 | 0 | 8 5 |
| 1950-1951 .. | 4 | 8 7 | 0 | 10 0 |
| 1951-1952 .. | 5 | 6 6 | 0 | 17 11 |
| 1952-1953 .. | 5 | 16 9 | 0 | 10 3 |
| 1953-1954 .. | 6 | 6 7 | 0 | 9 10 |
| 1954-1955 .. | 6 | 10 8 | 0 | 4 1 |
| 1955-1956 .. | 7 | 1 1 | 0 | 10 5 |
| 1956-1957 .. | 7 | 6 9 | 0 | 5 8 |

Now we come to the term of the present
Government—

| | £ s. d. | | Increase over previous year | |
|--------------|---------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
| | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. |
| 1957-1958 .. | 7 | 14 3 | 0 | 7 6 |
| 1958-1959 .. | 7 | 16 7 | 0 | 2 4 |
| 1959-1960 .. | 10 | 6 3 | 2 | 9 8 |

Do not let the Treasurer say that I am not quoting fully. The table shows that the increase in the last three years of Labour Government was £1 0s. 2d. In three years under this Government the increase totals £2 19s. 6d. per head.

The figures for the public debt tell the same story. In the three years the Government have been in office the debt per head of population has increased by £27 18s. 5d. The Treasurer shuddered a few years back when the debt per head was £186, but now it is up to £220 8s. 4d. I do not know what his reaction will be now. The table shows that there has been an increase from £269,319,683 at 30 June, 1957, to £322,424,113 at 30 June, 1960.

I wish to say a little about the railways, particularly about the Mt. Perry-Tirroan branch line. Because of the pressure of the Liberal Party, particularly the Treasurer, the Government have decided to close that section. I do not know whether Country Party members realise it but the closing down of lines in country areas is a very scientific form of sabotaging their interests. I understand that the latest financial returns for the Tirroan-Mt. Perry line show that the revenue on the section from Oakwood to Mt. Perry was £68,881. The expenditure was £113,574, the loss on working expenses £64,692, interest £14,212—a total loss of £78,914. I am given to understand by the Minister for Transport that only 19 per cent. of the total revenue is credited to the Tirroan-Mt. Perry section but it has had to bear over 80 per cent. of the losses. The area to be deprived of a rail service has no suitable alternative road system. It is very difficult country. If I can accept the word of the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity, the line running to the South Coast

is losing £900,000 a year. What do the Government intend to do about that line, remembering that there are excellent highways available to that area for any form of road transport? Yet they are closing the line that has been servicing the landholders around Mt. Perry. The service has been used by 37 dairymen to send their cream into Bundaberg. They are not in my electorate but I hate to see them being thrown to the wolves by the Government's closure of a railway line before making proper arrangements for other forms of transport. I have time only to make brief reference to the subject of the closure of railway lines.

I read in this morning's paper that a new secondary school is to be built at Southport within two years. I hope they get it within two years and not have the same experience as the Bundaberg people. In 1958 the Minister and his officers tentatively approved of a site on a very rich cane farm, but so far the Government have not even purchased the land. They have not finalised arrangements in that area. In the meantime the owner of the farm has been denied the right to use his property because he does not know what is going to happen.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CAMPBELL (Aspley) (12.10 p.m.): Hon. members opposite cannot deny the Treasurer's frankness in presenting his fourth Budget. It has been presented in such a manner that even those who are not conversant with these matters can readily understand it. The Treasurer has been ever-ready to meet any criticism posed by hon. members opposite. Furthermore, he has acknowledged that he has been confronted with some difficult problems that are not of his making but are the result of circumstances beyond his control. This Government is indeed fortunate to have a Treasurer who is such a skilled practitioner in these complex matters.

As a farmer I am somewhat disappointed at the reduction in the Estimates for irrigation, but those who work on the land are not unused to setbacks and we are fortified in the knowledge that this is a temporary phase and confidently look forward to increased allocations in the future. The reduction is offset to a marked degree by the great benefits that have accrued from the operation of the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act, which has proved such a boon during the present serious drought.

As a Government we do not claim any bouquets for the increased allocation for education because we are only doing what is expected of us in this regard, although the Department of Education is required to cope with a great upsurge of enrolments in all branches of education. Other States are meeting the problem in a similar manner. As a nation, we will be required to find increasing funds for education as we move further into the technological era. It has

been estimated that we are at present spending 3 per cent. of our national income on education and that the United States of America is spending 5 per cent., whereas the U.S.S.R. is spending 15 per cent. of its national income in this manner. This disparity poses a tremendous challenge to us if we are to maintain our place in the sun.

The increased allocation for health, whilst giving general satisfaction, is again what the community expected of this Government; but the maintenance of health services is causing considerable embarrassment to hon. members opposite. For years they have been threatening the electors that we would abolish the free hospital system, but the people have discovered that not only is this propaganda entirely false but that the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, Dr. Noble, has been willing and able to provide to the community a much more extensive health service than the Labour Party ever visualised. The people realise now that they have been "led up the garden path" by Labour propagandists.

The clamour for the reintroduction of price control has continued from the Opposition benches. It is very apparent that hon. members opposite delude themselves into believing that prices can be contained by being controlled. So much nonsense has been spoken by Opposition members on price control that I think we should look at the facts and let those facts speak for themselves. Let us start with the food and grocery items covered in the regimen on which the Bureau of Census and Statistics bases this part of its figures when preparing the "C" Series Index.

I have prepared a table of the price movements of food and groceries from 1945 to 1959. A study of these is very illuminating indeed, and it is a pity time does not permit me to read all of them and so have them incorporated in "Hansard," as I am sure they would be very interesting to hon. members. Instead, I shall give the Index figures for the following years, commencing with 1945:—

| Year | Index No. |
|------|-----------|
| 1945 | 966 |
| 1946 | 980 |
| 1947 | 1,055 |
| 1948 | 1,208 |
| 1949 | 1,332 |
| 1950 | 1,462 |
| 1951 | 1,823 |
| 1952 | 2,328 |
| 1953 | 2,413 |
| 1954 | 2,451 |
| 1955 | 2,526 |
| 1956 | 2,719 |
| 1957 | 2,648 |
| 1958 | 2,816 |
| 1959 | 2,972 |

The figure for this year has not yet been compiled.

As a complement to this analysis of price movements I have prepared a table showing

the percentage increase in the State basic wage for the corresponding years. In 1947 the State basic wage increased by 2 per cent. over the figure for 1946. The following are the increases over subsequent years:—

| Year | Per cent. |
|------|-----------|
| 1948 | 6.0 |
| 1949 | 7.5 |
| 1950 | 25.0 |
| 1951 | 25.0 |
| 1952 | 5.3 |
| 1953 | 4.0 |
| 1954 | 3.5 |
| 1955 | 1.3 |
| 1956 | 4.5 |
| 1957 | 1.7 |
| 1958 | 5.4 |
| 1959 | 5.3 |
| 1960 | 2.6 |

If the Labour Party's claim that price control can contain prices is true, how can hon. members opposite sustain it when the table I have just given shows that during a period when price control was rigidly enforced the cost of living, as reflected in the basic wage variations and in the "C" Series Index, fluctuated to a marked degree from year to year, and when the rise at times was considerably greater than it has been in the last three years during which price control has been successively relaxed.

Mr. Sherrington: You reckon they are being paid too much wages?

Mr. CAMPBELL: That is not my point. I am speaking about the claim of hon. members opposite that price control can contain prices. The table I have given demonstrates very forcibly that it has been possible to dispense with price control on a great number of items without producing the dire results predicted by the calamity howlers. Having presented the facts on which I base my argument, I would ask those who want price control resumed to say, "This item has increased in price successively because of the lifting of price control," or, alternatively, "price control should be resumed on this particular item."

I want to illustrate the position by drawing attention to certain price rises, not to highlight them but to show that despite the fact that during the period when price control was rigidly enforced there were tremendous increases in the prices of these various commodities.

An Opposition Member: What about the prices on the Melbourne Cup?

Mr. CAMPBELL: I think that question is a very real illustration of the principle of supply and demand which, after all, is the biggest factor controlling prices. A very good illustration will be found in starting prices at the races every week-end because those prices are fixed entirely by the law of supply and demand.

I have here a table showing that in 1945 the retail price of tea was 27d. a lb.; in 1950 it moved to 35d.; in 1955 it moved to 81d.; and in 1956 it moved to 79d. There has been a slight reduction since then. In 1945 the retail price for 7 lb. of potatoes was 8d.; in 1950 it was 23d.; in 1955 it was 50d.; in 1956 it was 85d.; and it has now moved back to 40d. That illustration shows that neither the operations of a statistician nor of the Prices Branch have been able to contain prices. There are innumerable factors in the price structure that must be considered. Let us avoid the vague generalities of price control, to which the Opposition are so prone.

Looking back over the years, I remind hon. members that up to 1948 price control was in the hands of the Commonwealth Government, which was at that time controlled by the Labour Party. There was a huge price-fixing staff, with heavy subsidy expenditure, and there were none of the legal limitations that beset State price control. The Commonwealth Government of the day had every opportunity to prove that price control was desirable and should be continued. The electors disagreed, and at a referendum rejected a proposal for continuing Commonwealth price control. They had many reasons for their decision. They realised that price control had contributed very considerably to the shortages and black markets of those days. They realised, too, that price control was ineffective except in time of war. It is worth recalling that in the four years from 1945 to 1948 inclusive, the prices of food and groceries increased by 25 per cent., despite the huge prices staff, despite the heavy subsidies and despite the absence of legal limitations.

The State Prices Commission took over in 1948. In the seven years from 1949 to 1955 inclusive, prices of food and groceries increased by 105 per cent.—an average of 15 per cent. annually. Clearly the Prices Commission in Queensland was also quite ineffective in controlling prices. In August, 1955, controls were lifted on a number of items, although the goods covered by the "C" Series regimen were continued under price control. Then followed two years of uneven movement, with an increase of 7.6 per cent. in 1956 and a drop of 10 per cent. in 1957. This was due largely to the price of potatoes, which I illustrated earlier.

In the three years since the Country-Liberal Government have attained office, prices of food and groceries have risen by an average of 4 per cent. annually—12 per cent. in all. This is a lower annual rate of increase than in the period from 1945 to 1948 when there was Commonwealth price control, and a far lower rate of increase than in the years of full State price control. It is a somewhat similar rate of increase to that in 1956 and 1957 when there was limited State price control.

The plain fact emerging from this analysis, and from a study of the subject, is that price control is the end result of the whole series of influences and pressures.

Let us look a little closer. Some items continue to be under State price control even since relaxations made by the Minister, notably those in February, 1959. Other items remain under a form of Commonwealth price determination even though freed from State price control. Other items are entirely free from control. It is worth examining the table to see whether the items that are entirely free of control have increased in price more than those items that are under control. The figures give no such indication. The biggest price increases are in various cuts of beef. Beef and other meats are still under price control. We have had increases in the price of sugar and in the price of butter, following detailed investigation by the Commonwealth, with adequate justification being shown for those increases. We have had an increase in the price of bread—and bread is still under price control. There is no indication that price control over the full range of items would have reduced the prices for the various items. All of us know that there is intense competition among food retailers. The only effect of the reintroduction of price control over the full range of food and groceries would be that those very popular and necessary corner shops would suffer at times from some error made in calculation. It would not lead to any major reduction in the prices of individual goods. In fact, it might well have the reverse effect. The "specials," of which the canny housewife takes advantage, might well become fewer and fewer.

I have concentrated on food and grocery items in the "C" Series cost-of-living index, but an examination of other groups would lead to similar conclusions. Clothing price indexes show an increase of 23½ per cent. from the September quarter, 1945, to September, 1948, an increase of just on 80 per cent. from September, 1948, to September, 1955, an increase of 3½ per cent. from September, 1955, to September, 1957, and an increase of under 6 per cent. from September, 1957, to September, 1960.

The miscellaneous group—covering fuel and light, household sundries, repairs and services, cinema, radio, newspapers, rail, tram and bus fares, tobacco, cigarettes, etc.—shows an increase of 9 per cent. from September, 1945, to September, 1948, of 63 per cent. from September, 1948, to September, 1955, of 13 per cent. from September, 1955, to September, 1957, and of 8 per cent. from 1957 to 1960. It is noticeable that big increases have occurred in the years of intensive price control.

It may be said that housing index figures—in other words, the group covering rent—will certainly be an exception to the case I have been building up. There was virtually no increase from 1945 to 1948, an increase

of only 19 per cent. from 1948 to 1955, an increase of 8 per cent. from 1955 to 1957, and an increase of 30 per cent. from 1957 to 1960. The increase in rents following the 1957 amendments to the Landlord and Tenant Acts was long overdue and gave a measure of justice to owners of rented homes. I stress that the increase since the original upward movement in 1957 has been small—.8 per cent. in the December, 1959-March, 1960, quarter, .6 per cent. in the March-June, 1960, quarter, and .3 per cent. in the June-September, 1960, quarter. There is no need for me to say, for it is obvious to all who look round, that the number of rented homes becoming available has increased, the number of new apartment and flat buildings has increased, and many older homes have been converted for occupation as apartments, as a direct result of this legislation.

Going beyond the question of the prices paid for items in the "C" series index, it is worth mentioning that, with improved living standards, most people in Queensland are spending their money on a wider range of goods and services. Many of these have not been under price control; others have not been under price control for very many years; but it is on items in this category that the increase in prices has been smallest, and on a number of items there has been a reduction. It should not be forgotten that many popular makes of motor-car have been reduced in price, not increased, and that that is the result of competition. The same applies to radio sets, and even to television sets. It is also worthy of note that the new consumer index, which is more closely related to present consuming habits, shows a substantially smaller increase than the "C" series index, and many more of the items in the new consumer index have been free of price control for much longer than the items in the "C" series index.

It has been claimed by hon. members opposite that price control is necessary to curb the activities of monopolies, but I have yet to hear from those hon. members what these big monopolies are. I suppose that Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd., being the only manufacturer of steel in this country, could be classed as a true monopoly, yet its prices compare favourably with prices overseas.

An interesting position is developing in the motor-car industry in Australia. In each succeeding year since the Holden car was introduced, General Motors-Holden's Ltd., whilst not being a monopoly, was tending to monopolise the Australian market. In the true spirit of competitive enterprise, their chief competitor, the Ford Motor Co. of Australia Pty. Ltd., have matched them with a comparable article, with quite dramatic results in sales. A more striking example will be found in the tobacco industry. For years Opposition members denounced the British-Australasian Tobacco Coy. Pty. Ltd. as a monopoly. But we find that, by enterprise and initiative, a firm such as Rothmans

can not only challenge British-Australasian Tobacco's supremacy but also make serious inroads into their sales. This, in turn, has stimulated B.A.T. to improve its product in order to match their competitor.

The Opposition's case for price control is based on catch phrases and slogans that, when examined, are devoid of substance. It is a pity that such slogans coincide with those used by the Communist Party, because this persuades the public to believe that both the Labour Party and the Communist Party have the same objectives.

Mr. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) (12.35 p.m.): As a newcomer—one who is serving his first term in Parliament and has not yet become well acquainted with its accepted customs and practices—listening to what was ostensibly a debate on the Treasurer's Financial Statement, but which in most cases has been an introduction of subjects and grudges having no relationship whatever to that document, the debate has been a revelation to me. Although it has proved interesting and enlightening, no-one, not even with the greatest stretch of the imagination, could say that the debate has been inspiring.

As the Budget must be regarded as one of the most important documents presented to Parliament, one would have expected all hon. members—particularly those who have occupied their seats for many years—to dissect the Budget carefully, analyse it, and make speeches appertaining to the State's revenue and expenditure. One would expect them to endeavour to find both undesirable and desirable features to submit to the Treasurer. Constructive and destructive criticism would have given the Treasurer a clear indication of their reaction to the Budget following an unbiased examination of it. An hon. member who could most aptly be referred to as Lord Haw Haw of Hawthorne had the audacity to make submissions. I can say without any fear of contradiction that his additions as well as his subtractions are far from reliable. I am reliably informed that he did not stay at school long enough to learn long division, so he would not have a "clue" on the Budget. I am convinced by his submissions that he would not know it was Good Friday until he got a hot-cross bun.

Another hon. member talked about the forage ration for a creamy pony during a period when the State is experiencing its worst drought. Another hon. member accused the Government of being responsible for a deficit of some millions of pounds over a period of years. I do not know whether he adopts the same approach to the family budget where he may have the mother-in-law all the time. As each year passes we have either a deficit or a surplus, but whatever they may be, like mothers-in-law, they automatically disappear or recur. I firmly believe that all the knowledge many hon. members have of figures relates to those who frequent

the beaches at Surfers Paradise or Mooloolaba. When the hon. member for Burdekin was speaking the Deputy Leader of the Opposition declared that the Opposition must always disagree with any Government submissions no matter how right they might be or what benefit they might bring to the people of Queensland. He made that interjection during the speech by the hon. member for Burdekin, one of the most constructive in this debate. I congratulate the hon. member who made it.

Mr. Hanlon: The hon. member for Kedron did not say anything like that.

Mr. HOUGHTON: Yes he did; how silly can one get! If that policy is to be adopted by hon. members opposite the debates in this Chamber would become farcical and without purpose as every hon. member must agree. No-one would know whether the Opposition were expressing their sincere beliefs or were merely talking with their tongues in their cheeks.

Mr. Hanlon: You sit in Parliament as an Independent. We are waiting with interest to see you vote against the Government; you have not done that yet.

Mr. HOUGHTON: Surely hon. members opposite will not make statements contrary to their belief simply because they accept the dictum that it is always their duty to oppose and never to approve any action by the Government to meet the problems confronting them, whether they are right or wrong or of benefit to the country.

Mr. Mann: That is not true.

Mr. Davies: Give us the actual statement by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition so that it can be ventilated.

Mr. Coburn: When I was speaking he said it was my duty to oppose it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOUGHTON: If hon. members opposite sheepishly followed the attitude suggested by the hon. member for Kedron, to oppose all beneficial legislation and any wise action by the Government no good would be achieved. No useful purpose is served by debate if criticisms are inaccurate and allegations unfounded. I suggest that every hon. member should dissect the Budget and carefully consider every aspect of it. Let them accept what is good and praise it. They may, of course, condemn anything that is harmful and offer constructive suggestions to the Treasurer for his consideration. He may accept them and thus be able to submit a better Budget.

The Budget for this financial year was prepared during a period when the State was experiencing its worst drought on record, one that has had a very detrimental effect on the State's economy. The situation was aggravated by the margins, increased wages and quarterly adjustments, all of which

meant a great increase in the wages and salaries bill. The Budget has been designed to provide the maximum amount of employment under existing circumstances, to expand services and to maintain the tempo of development that has been evident in the past two or three years.

I think all hon. members would agree that the two most important factors in the well-being of the people are health and education. It is very gratifying and encouraging to know that in a most difficult year, when finances are anything but buoyant, owing to a prolonged drought and steep increases in wages and salaries, the Treasurer has allocated to the Department of Health and Home Affairs and the Department of Education substantially increased amounts—to the former £18,074,375, an increase of £1,056,635 on the allocation for the previous year; and to the latter £17,952,700, an increase of £3,040,594.

The vote for the Department of Education is for services only and is exclusive of the amount to be expended on the enlargement of University buildings, new primary and secondary schools and classrooms, a teachers' training college and many other buildings required for education. If the amount for these facilities was included in the allocation for the Department of Education, the vote, as the Minister for Education informed hon. members by way of interjection last week, would have been closer to £25,000,000 than £18,000,000.

The Leader of the Opposition heaped encomiums on the Government for their generous treatment of education. He said—

"I am glad that the Government are providing £17,000,000 for education but they are no more entitled to make political capital out of it than we would be to attack the Department of Education merely to gain political capital. The welfare of the children and the beneficial results that accrue to the community from having suitable syllabi and curricula to have adequate training both academically and technically are what count."

The Leader of the Opposition thereby endorsed the generous treatment of the Department of Education by the Treasurer, and I agree with his remarks. Education and health are two of the most important responsibilities of Government.

The Leader of the Opposition then made certain comparisons in an effort to prove that the percentage increase in the Vote for the Department of Education was higher when his Government held office than it has been under the present Government.

He said—

"In 1954-1955 the Labour Government's vote for education was £8,700,000. In our last year of office the figure was £11,300,000, representing an increase over the three-year period of 29.8 per cent. Since the present Government have assumed office admittedly in money terms

the figures have gone up from £12,300,000 in 1957-1958 to £15,100,000 in 1959-1960, but this represents only an increase of 22.7 per cent. On a percentage basis we had better figures in our last three years of office."

The Leader of the Opposition is not so dull as not to know that when comparisons are made they must be made with relation to the same things, or the same sums of money. However, he deliberately did not do that. He calculated the percentage increase of expenditure on education during the term of his Government with the figure of £8,700,000 as a base, but he used the figure of £12,300,000 as a base in his calculations on the allocation to the Department of Education by the present Government. Had he used the base sum of £8,700,000—as he did when he calculated the percentage increase during the term of his Government—to ascertain the percentage of increase in the allocation by the present Government, he would have found that whereas the percentage increase that his Government were responsible for was 29.8, the percentage for the present Government would not be 22.7 as stated by him, but 73.5.

The Leader of the Opposition deceives no-one but himself and those who wish to be deceived by comparing two things that are not related to the same thing. If he had gone further and calculated the percentage increase on the £8,700,000, which he took as his base amount for calculation and computation of the percentage increase for his Government, he would have found that this year's allocation shows an increase of 117.8 per cent. I congratulate the Minister for Education and the Government on their ability, and the benefits they have conferred on this department.

Following the Industrial Court's recent announcement that the salaries of school teachers were to be increased, on the same day as that announcement appeared in "The Courier-Mail" some few weeks ago, this statement appeared—

"To meet the education budget it probably also would be necessary to eliminate vocational training for 7th Grade in 1961."

It now appears that schools throughout Queensland have been circularised accordingly and headmasters have been asked to prepare their time-tables for 1961 based on the elimination of vocational training for 7th Grade. This decision involves a very serious issue and I submit the following for very earnest consideration. Vocational training for males is not terribly important, if a lad is not going into the field of higher education. But if he is going to follow a trade, he is apprenticed in due course and receives trade training for the particular calling.

If a girl cannot go on to high school because her parents cannot afford secondary education or because she lives in an area where the facilities are not freely available,

she leaves school after 8th Grade and more or less depends on her own resources in facing up to life from then on.

Years ago both boys and girls received a full day a week vocational training but, with the change of policy in recent years, it has been reduced to half a day a week. Children who live in the poorer areas and who receive vocational training in the 7th and 8th Grades are better equipped when they leave school. The girls can cook and make simple garments as a contribution towards feeding and clothing themselves. I think all hon. members will agree that that is very important these days. The restriction of vocational training will in the long run impose hardship on the poorer families in these days of high prices.

The suggestion that a girl can become proficient with only 10 months' training in the 8th Grade cannot be sustained, particularly when it is remembered that that is the Scholarship grade. Officers of the department should think very seriously before they decide to reduce this training for girls. What could be more important to children, particularly those who are under-privileged?

Again, consider the backward child who finds school a great burden and a daily dread. It is well known that girls in that category are among the finest craftswomen. The suggestion that they should not receive the benefits of vocational training seems to indicate a lack of a sense of proportion—a further indication that the matter should be carefully considered before declaring that the training would be limited to the 8th Grade—

Mr. Pizzey: About 70 per cent. of students go on to high school, you know, where they have the opportunity for another two years. The proportion might be even higher.

Mr. HOUGHTON: That is so, but I think the Minister will agree that there is a lack, which I am bringing to his notice.

The finances of the State are such that vocational training will be limited. Why not make it finish in the seventh-grade year instead of the eighth-grade year? It is well known that, if there were a choice, children sitting for the Scholarship would be better left free in their Scholarship year. Finally, I stress that up to 30 per cent. of the children, perhaps more, leave school after the eighth-grade year, and to take away from them any part of their training, particularly vocational training, would be a retrograde step and detrimental to the children concerned.

In his Financial Statement, the Treasurer sounded a note of warning that the rate of increase in subsidies and loans is fast moving beyond the capacity of the Treasury to finance and that earnest consideration will have to be given to bringing this form of assistance to local authorities into perspective with the State's resources and the many pressing demands being made on them. This can only be construed as a warning that a

reduction in the existing rate of subsidies to local authorities is contemplated. I hope it is only a warning, because local government, as I think all hon. members will agree, is an integral part of the government of the State and has contributed much to the State's well-being and advancement. All subsidies must be approved by the Government; therefore the works must be of an essential nature.

Many local authorities are having great difficulty at present in financing their works programmes and the services for which they are responsible, and a reduction in subsidies would place a great financial burden on them, a burden that in many cases they would be unable to carry. I sincerely hope that the Treasurer will give further consideration to this matter before arriving at any decision, because I believe that if present rates of subsidies are maintained the development of the State will continue, and a reduction in subsidies can only be a disadvantage to the State as a whole.

After giving details of the Commonwealth limitation of loans to the States to £230,000,000 for the 1960-1961 programme, the Treasurer stated that this was an illustration of the manner in which State works programmes are firmly tied to the chariot wheels of the Commonwealth cash budget. He said that it exposed the whole function of the Loan Council to a Commonwealth domination that could hardly accord to its original conception. This contention could be applied with equal truth and force to the domination of the local authorities by the State Government, so it behoves the Government to treat the local authorities as generously as possible.

A matter in which I am deeply interested is the provision of a boat harbour at Redcliffe. Among the items of expenditure from the Commonwealth Aid, Marine Works, Fund in 1959-1960 was an amount of £42,498 for the provision of a boat harbour at Manly. I do not deny Manly those facilities, but the needs of Redcliffe would be equal to, if not greater than, those of Manly. I urge that serious consideration be given to the Redcliffe proposal so that an early start can be made on the construction of a boat harbour.

In support of my claims for Redcliffe I point out that in the last financial year the Scarborough Fish Board depot handled 800,947 lb. of prawns, 268,532 lb of fish, and 153,122 crabs. Peninsula Food Products, a firm managed and controlled by Mr. Jack Barry, who has done an excellent job for the fishing industry, handled 350,000 lb. of prawns on its own. Of the State's total prawn yield of 2,263,306 lb., the total taken from the Bay and processed through the Scarborough Fish Board and Peninsula Food Products amounted to 1,150,947 lb., or over 50 per cent. of the State's harvest. With

all sincerity I suggest that those figures alone are sufficient evidence of the need for a boat harbour at Redcliffe.

I do not set myself up as a kerbside engineer; I do not suggest that the boat harbour should necessarily be built at Redcliffe. When I speak of Redcliffe I refer to the Redcliffe Peninsula as a whole. There are competent men handling the affairs of the State who could say whether it should be constructed at Scarborough, Woody Point or Redcliffe. Qualified people would be able to recommend to the Government the most advantageous site for such a project. As the Commonwealth Aid, Marine Works, Fund had an unexpended balance of £72,405 at the end of the financial year, it is obvious that the Government have ample funds for the construction of this facility.

Opposition speakers have been disposed to regard the new formula for calculating tax reimbursement by the Commonwealth to the States as less advantageous to the States than the old formula based on population. The new formula, based on the States Grants Act of 1959, contains a factor of 1.1 per cent.—known as the "betterment" factor—to compensate the States for the increase in the average Commonwealth wage. After a close examination of the two formulas I am firmly convinced that the States will be much better off financially under the tax reimbursement arrangement than they were under the old formula.

Mr. Mann: Provided increases in the basic wage are not so great, when any benefit will be paid back in payroll tax.

Mr. HOUGHTON: They will be entitled to more than they would be under the States Grants Act of 1959 and they would not be beholden to the Commonwealth for any special supplementary grants. The new formula was agreed to unanimously by the Commonwealth and all States in June, 1959, and will operate for a term of six years. As the tax grant for the year is based on the increase in the average Commonwealth wage during the preceding year, there is a time lag equivalent to one year. I will grant that. It is a lag between the increase in the wage and the adjustment of the tax grant.

This lag will undoubtedly affect the States for one year and I should think that they have a case for a special non-recurring Commonwealth grant to help them cope with the problems directly created by margins, wage and salary increases, and the time lag I mentioned. It would be in the form of a compensatory repayment to meet the heavier financial burden. I am convinced that the "betterment" factor in the new formula will be very effective and will take care of the financial position in the future.

To indicate how much better off we will be under the new financial agreement when it becomes fully effective, I will compare the position for the years 1958-1959 and 1959-1960. Under the agreement for the financial

year 1959-1960 the total tax reimbursement grants were increased from £205,000,000 in 1958-1959 to £244,500,000 in 1959-1960, but after taking into account the special grants to the claimant States the total revenue grant for 1959-1960 amounted to £252,800,000, or about £27,000,000 more than in the previous year. That increase of £27,000,000 compares with an average annual increase in general revenue grants in recent years of about £17,000,000. That is a very substantial increase.

The Commonwealth Statistician's preliminary estimates for this year indicate that the financial assistance grants payable to the States under the States Grants Act of 1959 will be £276,970,000, which represents an increase of £23,400,000 over those for 1959-1960. I think hon. members will agree that those figures indicate very forcibly how much more beneficial to the States the new tax reimbursement agreement will be than was such under the old formula, and the grants to the States will increase progressively until the year in which the agreement expires.

I have looked through the various items in the Estimates, and should like to draw the attention of the Committee to several of them. I take first of all the Vote for Prisons in the Department of Justice Estimates. It will be seen that the allocation has been increased by £54,428, and that the staff has been increased by 19. Then I turn to the Vote for the Titles Office which shows an increase of £48,996, but in this instance the increase in staff is only one. I think all hon. members will agree that those facts indicate there are too many chiefs and not enough Indians. The Government should consider all factors before deciding to shower extra amounts on or endow the department that takes care of offenders against society. The position in the Titles Office warrants close scrutiny. I should say it is one of the most important departments of any Government service. I am firmly of the opinion, as was submitted recently in this Chamber, that the high cost of land in many instances can be attributed to long delays in the processing of documents by the Titles Office. I do not condemn the staff, but I should say from a perusal of the Estimates that further staff is needed in the department.

The Vote for the Survey Office in the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation Estimates shows an increase of £84,591, the staff of the department having been increased by 24. That denotes a great trend in development during the last two or three years. The increases in the Vote and the staff of themselves prove the trend. I do not think a person who has offended against society should be kept down, but I do think that those who have not offended against society should be given at least equal treatment in allocations, so that the handling of documents and other work performed on their behalf will not be hindered. Delays in the handling of documents have been responsible for an

increase in cost of land development, and I urge the Government to look very closely at that matter. The community as a whole is affected. If a person is developing a large parcel of land, say, on the North Coast at a cost of £200,000, and is paying 5 or 6 per cent. interest on borrowed money, delay increases the cost to the purchaser.

The time lag in the processing of documents by the Titles Office means increased costs and I think all hon. members will agree that those increases are eventually passed on to the purchaser. The increase on that account could be a considerable proportion of the purchase price. No action can be taken under the Act until the documents have been dealt with by the Titles Office, and the greater the delay in that office the greater the cost to the buyer. I firmly adhere to the view that everyone is entitled to a home, and this Government, and all other Governments, should encourage home-ownership to the greatest possible extent.

I sincerely believe that the Treasurer has done a good job in the presentation of the Financial Statement, and I congratulate him. It is quite clear and concise. He is suffering from the same trouble as many local authorities and other people who are charged with the responsibility of carrying out government with limited funds available to them. I think we are all agreed that we have champagne tastes and beer purses. That is the situation facing the Treasurer.

I support the Opposition speakers and members of the Government who have attacked the cut that has been made in the finances of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. It is a retrograde step. The Government should make available at least as much money as was allocated last year. I sincerely believe that, with the costs that have been incurred by way of increased salaries, this allocation should have been greater. I should be quite happy if the Treasurer reviewed it and made an allocation equivalent only to last year's allocation, if he found that he had not enough money available to increase it. As the Treasurer has no more funds available to him I suggest that he should budget for a greater deficit. If it behoved the Commonwealth Government to pay £48,000 for 40 perches of land at Surfers Paradise, the Treasurer should use the Commonwealth Bank to make further funds available for this department, which is so important. The Government should look into it quickly.

If the statement in the Press this morning is correct, that is, that there is likely to be an increase in politicians' salaries, has the Treasurer made provision for that item in his Financial Statement? I do not subscribe to any suggestion of an increase. I believe, and members of the Opposition must likewise believe, that if the Government can find ways and means to increase the salaries of politicians, they should find ways and means to develop the State.

I sincerely urge the Treasurer to budget for a greater deficit. I wholeheartedly favour a greater deficit to increase the development of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply.

Mr. HEWITT (Mackenzie) (2.38 p.m.): As I did not speak during the Address-in-Reply debate, I should naturally like first to say a hurried "Thank you" to my very good supporters over the years in the old Mackenzie electorate, and to my many good supporters in the new area, and those who have remained in it after the redistribution of boundaries. As politicians, we naturally need that support and must have those people behind us at election-time. If they were not behind us our jobs would be much more difficult. I thank them all again. In losing some of the old Mackenzie area I believe I have lost one of the best areas in the State. I feel sure that in the years that lie ahead the Peak Downs and Clermont areas will become very prosperous. It has already been shown what can be done there in agriculture and as the years go by we will see even greater areas under the plough and further development in the semi-downs and brigalow belt.

Mr. Duggan interjected.

Mr. HEWITT: I can answer that interjection with ease. As the Leader of the Opposition well knows, I came into this Parliament before there was a split in the Labour Party and if I had contested that district again I feel sure I would have had very little difficulty in winning it.

This afternoon I want to deal particularly with the necessity for a closer land-settlement policy to develop Queensland quickly and bring population and production into an area that has been neglected over the years. I refer to the brigalow belt of the State, which extends from Collinsville in the north to Goondiwindi in the south and embraces an area of some 23,000,000 acres of which only 8,000,000 are either fully or partially developed. Sir William Payne said in his report that the brigalow lands were our richest grazing lands. We should heed the note sounded by him and do all we can to push their development forward. It will be difficult because the initial development of brigalow country always entails a fair amount of expense.

Looking back over the years we find that in 1926 the Commonwealth agreed to make £126,000 available annually for six years to the Queensland Government for the purchase of wire and wire-netting, repayment to be over 25 years with interest at 5 per cent. If the Commonwealth could do that then, they should come into a scheme such as this. If they are not prepared to, then I suggest to the Treasurer that he include in the schedule to be presented to the next Loan Council meeting an amount of some hundreds of thousands of pounds for the development of the brigalow belt.

I have taken at random some 27 properties in Central Queensland alone, totalling 1,700,000 acres, with a carrying capacity of 44,470 head of cattle. If those properties were fully developed they would in no time be carrying 150,000 to 180,000 head. Surely that is the sort of development we need to prevent unemployment, which is always a problem in Rockhampton with the short season for fat cattle. If we cannot get finance from the Commonwealth or from the Loan Council, I urge that we be big enough to consider calling on private enterprise to help develop the land.

Only today I checked with the Department of Public Lands and learned that one man had been offered a new lease over a fair-sized property under conditions requiring only that he do 2,000 acres of ringbarking and 300 acres of cultivation during its term. He did not accept and, later, he sold out to the Australian Estates Co. Ltd., one of the best tenants in Queensland. When they applied for a new lease the developmental conditions imposed on them were very much more substantial. I wholeheartedly agree with that, because large companies should be forced to develop their lands. In two or three years they have already pulled approximately 3,000 acres of brigalow scrub and put 1,500 to 2,000 acres under the plough. It is only common sense for the Government to allow transfers in cases like that—perhaps not on a large scale, but where the property is isolated and the tenant has such easy conditions. If others are prepared to do the heavy developmental work and employ very many people, they should be given every consideration, too.

As I said, if we as a Government are unable to develop this brigalow belt, we must give private enterprise an opportunity of developing it. L. J. Hooker Ltd.—as we all know, Sir Arthur Fadden is keenly interested in that company—is turning its eyes to the development of this brigalow land, and I am sure it is only a matter of time before it puts a proposal to the Government for developing the land and settling people on it. I am concerned to think that this land, and perhaps the profits from it, should go to a company such as L. J. Hooker Ltd. The Government are duty-bound to proceed with the closer settlement of the brigalow area, and if they are unable to do so we must turn to private enterprise.

Sir William Payne has stated what he considers is a living area in the brigalow belt, and we must ensure that the area is adequate. All hon. members have seen the many failures that have occurred when living areas are inadequate. I have always contended that we must adopt a commonsense basis and design the blocks to cater for the average settler, not the most efficient settler. Some people get the idea that because one man makes a success of a particular area, the design is successful. I do not support that view. I believe that we should work

on the average and err on the side of generosity. When all is said and done, there is always an opportunity of subdividing at a later date.

Another way of developing brigalow lands would be to make the tenures similar to those for stud leases. I believe that if the leases are made attractive, the tenants will be able to obtain the necessary finance to carry out heavy developmental work. Some hon. members will probably say that I am advocating that we should give leases over very large tracts of land for long periods. Far from that being so, I believe that if a lease is given of a living area for 40 years, the balance of the lease could be for 30 years on the terms existing prior to the extension.

We realise that these things will mean a considerable change in Government policies, but we must show common sense in our desire to bring about the necessary quick development. Over the years we have seen far too many instances of settlers being given inadequate areas, especially when marginal lands have been cut up. Too often we have seen people placed on dairy farms that were far from suitable and where they could engage in dairying for only six or seven months of the year. That has caused much heartburning and financial embarrassment to many good Queenslanders. Surely we should learn our lesson and proceed with a sound policy for the development of the State.

Naturally, I am interested in the development of the brigalow belt, because I have lived all my life in Central Queensland and in that area we have some of the best of these lands. I suggest that no area has greater scope for development which would benefit the whole of the State, and no doubt the Commonwealth Government because increased production and income naturally would be followed by increased taxation.

Labour Governments of the past have initiated some successful land settlement schemes. I am not being altogether critical of them, but I am putting forward a scheme that I believe is for the good of the State. We have seen the development of the schemes in the Monto-Mundubbera area and the settlement that followed the development of the brigalow land. No doubt the hon. member for Port Curtis would agree with me because he is conversant with the area. It is regrettable that some of the previous Government's schemes were not successful.

Having dealt with the development of the brigalow land I naturally turn to the subject of irrigation. I do not want to be a "knocker" of any scheme in the State but unfortunately there are three settlements in my electorate that have brought hardship and financial embarrassment to the settlers. When a settlement has been established for many years corrective measures are not easy. Recently the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation paid a visit to the area and saw for himself the conditions throughout

the Dawson Valley. There are three settlements now. One on the old Theodore township site has been going since 1926. I am sorry to say that even today these settlers are facing hardships. In most instances they have next to no equity in the properties they own. Unfortunately the previous Government decided to establish another settlement at Gibber Gonyah on the western bank of the Dawson River. The former Minister for Public Lands, Mr. Muller, visited the area at the request of the then Leader of the Opposition. After his investigation he made a speech in the Chamber on 8 November, 1956, in which he said that the land on the western bank, known as Gibber Gonyah, was suitable neither for agriculture nor irrigation. Having cost hundreds of thousands of pounds, unfortunately the scheme had to be proceeded with. Today these farmers are in such bad circumstances that they have asked for a complete redesign of the area to give them an equity in their farms. Some of them have debts in excess of £8,000. If they sold their farms at auction probably they would realise no more than 60 or 70 per cent. of their mortgage. If a farmer were killed his wife and children would be forced off the farm with no money. It is an unhappy prospect for people who have given a lifetime to a district. One farmer who had a mortgage of £7,800 on his farm was killed in a sawmill where he was working to try to keep his farm. The highest bid for the farm at auction was £3,200; subsequently the bank sold the farm for approximately £4,000. Therefore the only money available to his widow and children was through worker's compensation. That is a shocking state of affairs. Since Mr. Fletcher has been Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation he has visited the area and he realises that it is something that we, as a Government, must try to correct. It is to be regretted that the previous Government should go on with a settlement on the other side of the Dawson River when they already knew of the failure that was taking place on the township side. It makes one wonder whether it was being used purely as a political football with the people living in the area as the football.

The settlers in the Moura area face the same problem; they must be granted additional areas to have any chance of survival. When the Minister was in Theodore those men put their case to him, pointing out the difficulties they were facing, and stressing very strongly the grave need for taking some early action. Such men as John Rogers, Roy Fairweather and others are really good farmers and excellent Queenslanders, but they have no hope of succeeding without help. Therefore, I urge the Government and the Minister to look into these problems as quickly as possible and try to do something to help that area.

I make the following suggestions for helping these farmers: firstly, they must be convinced that the Government are interested in their problems as farmers; secondly, efficient

technical help must be made available in Theodore to guide and assist the farmers with their farming problems, which, I assure hon. members, are many and varied; finally, a co-ordinated effort is necessary, by farmers and the departments concerned, directed at putting value into the farms in this area.

Turning now from irrigation to another subject vital to the people of Central Queensland—the necessity for establishing public abattoirs in that area—I will be brief in my remarks. There has been much discussion in Central Queensland on the establishment of a district abattoirs board, which is vital to the progress of the district and its most important industry. No other centre in Queensland is comparable with Rockhampton in this matter because statistics disclose that Central Queensland is by far the greatest beef cattle-producing district in the Commonwealth. Within the vicinity of a 150-mile radius of Rockhampton it is estimated that there are approximately 2,250,000 cattle. Therefore, when considering the establishment of a public abattoir, the influence on the district's most important industry should be remembered. Until the present time the district and the city of Rockhampton have been dependent on the cattle industry.

Although much publicity has been given to the establishment of a district abattoir, arguments are rife on whether the Central Queensland Meat Export Company should or should not be given the killing franchise. To my mind, if they were given the franchise it would be a retrograde step.

Mr. Thackeray: I wholeheartedly agree with you.

Mr. HEWITT: Great numbers of cattle bypass Rockhampton each year for slaughter at southern works. To give the Committee a reliable guide it is probably necessary to quote the relevant figures of fat cattle spelled at Bajool since 1955. These figures do not include cattle sold by private treaty or through many of the leading auction saleyards such as those at Gracemere. The figures are—

| Year | Head bypassed Rockhampton |
|------|------------------------------|
| 1955 | 52,000 |
| 1956 | 88,842 |
| 1957 | 124,161 |
| 1958 | 145,077 |
| 1959 | 200,000 |

The above figures indicate a very definite increase from year to year.

Recently a statement appeared in "The Morning Bulletin" in Rockhampton, attributed to the secretary of the A.M.I.E.U., to the effect that the granting of the killing franchise of the District Abattoir Board to the C.Q.M.E. Company would possibly increase by 300 the number of meat-workers employed during the off season. When making that statement Mr. Maxwell seems to have overlooked altogether the main principle, that the establishment of a public abattoir would provide facilities for meeting not only local consumption but would

encourage southern operators to slaughter their cattle in Rockhampton for export through Port Alma.

Surely, in view of the facts I have given, it is only fair to say that a district abattoir must provide more employment, as it is confidently expected that southern buyers who now purchase large numbers of cattle in the Central Queensland district and send them to southern works would kill at least a good portion of the number where they are purchased instead of shipping them south for slaughtering. It is common knowledge that five operators have already signified in writing that they are willing and ready to use the abattoir when it is established. Furthermore, one of the companies, Tancreds, is already actively interested in transporting supplies from their meatworks at Bourke to Sydney, a distance of some 300 miles, by refrigerated rail and motor transport.

If hon. members attend the Gracemere saleyards on a Monday, they will see practically every large meatworks company represented, as well as numerous outside buyers, which only serves to emphasise the district's importance as a great cattle centre. As one who has been actively engaged in the industry since World War II, I have no hesitation in saying that there has never been a season when vast numbers of fat cattle were not available. In addition to the meatworks, we supply to butchers in both the North and the South large numbers of fats, with Townsville often purchasing in excess of 1,000 a month. The number coming out of this rich Central Queensland fattening land is definitely on the increase, and with pasture improvement and further developmental work in the brigalow belt it can be expected to increase at a far greater rate than ever before.

It is not my desire to have an argument with the Central Queensland Meat Export Company, which has fought tooth and nail to obtain the franchise for itself. I pay full marks to the manager for his skill in conducting the case for the company he represents, but as a true Central Queenslander I have no alternative but to support a public abattoir as I conscientiously believe that it would increase employment, benefit the city, and help the producer.

Summing up, I make the following points:—

(1) A district abattoir for Rockhampton is vital for the district's progress;

(2) I feel that every city is entitled to capitalise on its most important industry; therefore, I trust that estimated expenditure on the project does not outweigh sound judgment. We have cattle numbers far in excess of other areas that have successfully operated abattoirs, and a potential practically unlimited.

(3) Last, but not least, the C.Q.M.E. Company's attitude in endeavouring to prevent further killing facilities in Rockhampton. This, when considered with its acquisition of works in other areas, leads

me very definitely to believe that it opposes a public abattoir because of its own interest, and I feel sure that little thought has been given by it to the district's progress.

As I stated previously, the case presented for C.Q.M.E. Company by the manager was presented with a great amount of skill and warrants the company's praise, but to most Central Queenslanders it would appear to be a retrograde step to allow the franchise to pass to such a company. Therefore, I urge the Minister and the Government to back the District Abattoir Board, and have a public abattoir established at the earliest possible date.

I should like now to deal with a few events in the central area during this year that in my opinion strengthen the argument for a public abattoir at Rockhampton. As I said earlier, we have the great brigalow belt of country, the downs area, Clermont, Spring-sure and the Dawson and Callide districts. When those areas are fully developed even greater numbers of cattle will be sent to Rockhampton than are sent at the present time.

I shall give a few instances of the actions of the Central Queensland Meat Export Company that I do not agree with. The company only this year claimed that it was impossible to send meat interstate from Rockhampton, having tried to do so over a period of some 20 years. In view of this claim it was strange to find on numerous occasions this year that the company was sending from Rockhampton to the Sydney market up to six wagons, or approximately 300 head of cattle. As late as March this year numerous people who had been supporting Lake's Creek and Swifts for periods of up to 20 years were selling their fat cattle elsewhere. Both works, that is, Swifts and Lake's Creek—quoted £7 10s. a 100 lb. for export bullocks, while southern operators were offering £8 5s. a 100 lb. One week after approximately 6,000 cattle were sold, these two companies came up to the same price as the southern companies were prepared to pay. In other words, they were trying to tell us that they were unable to forecast their business seven days ahead. The people in the area who have given a lifetime to developing the land have been in the hands of these two companies for years. To break this monopoly I strongly urge the establishment of a public abattoir.

I am wholeheartedly behind the Callide people and other Central Queensland members in their desire to have a power-house erected at Callide. Having had many discussions with the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity on this matter, I am fully conscious of the great need to have a power-house there if it is the most suitable site in Central Queensland. We desperately need a power-house in Central

Queensland and if Callide should be the most suitable place, I am 100 per cent. behind it.

Before concluding my speech I should like once more to express my thanks to the people in my electorate and members of the Young Country Party branches in my area. They have done a really wonderful job for me and they are trying to ascertain problems and needs of the people in the electorate. We must have these people to tell us what is necessary, because they are on the spot. Once again, I express my sincere thanks for the job they have done.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (3.7 p.m.):
On Thursday or Friday of last week I made some notes of the Treasurer's speech and I am sure that the thoughts expressed by him have seriously disturbed members of the Government. Members of the Opposition also are disturbed by the matters he raised but have been fully aware of them for a long time. I wish that various members of the Government had centred their remarks on particular aspects of the problem raised by the Treasurer. From notes that I made I wish to quote one or two of his statements. First of all he said—

"I am prepared to make it perfectly clear to this Committee that with a rigidly controlled credit in the gilt-edged field and the banking sector while the private sector runs free, the position is utterly untenable and the gilt-edged market is lurching to doom and destruction."

Later he said—

"If somebody does not check it soon I hate to think of the consequences in the two fields I have mentioned."

He continued—

"Whether banking control is destroyed through the front door or the back door, it is in danger of destruction by some of the forces that are operating in our credit field."

Later the Treasurer proceeded to say—

"I was going to go further than that. This is not a party political problem—the Government certainly do not regard it as such."

He offered to let the Leader of the Opposition peruse the document privately, and said he hoped to make it available to him and to receive suggestions from him. This is what he said—

"I should be glad if he could spare me some time subsequently to give me his advice on the various suggestions I have made."

It is always interesting to note that it is only when a Conservative Government find themselves up against it and in difficulties—really bogged down—that they come to the Australian Labour Party seeking advice and help. On all other occasions they tend to belittle us in the eyes of the community and associate us with all the "isms" in the

world. In every way they try to belittle us and speak of us as a party not worthy of serious consideration in dealing with the affairs of the nation.

Moving on from there, I draw the attention of the Committee to portion of a statement by the New South Wales Labour Premier, Mr. Heffron, at a conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers held in Canberra on 24 June last. I shall quote one or two passages from it because they are worth placing on record and I believe they have the support of the Treasurer of this State. A more vigorous approach to the problem when confronting the Commonwealth Government, more of the attitude of angry men who fear that the rights of a Sovereign State are being taken away from them and that this portion of the Commonwealth is being sadly neglected, might bring more results. Mr. Heffron said, "Australia is not going bankrupt."

One could be excused for believing that that was the situation—and I shall quote further extracts later—after listening to the Prime Minister and his various Ministers, who claim that they are not in a position to make necessary grants to the State for essential development. One could be excused for thinking that we had become a poverty-stricken nation. This is something that must do damage to the prestige of Australia in the eyes of the world, particularly in those thickly-populated countries to the north of Australia, but we know that that is not so, and Mr. Heffron ably expressed the thought that was in the minds of the A.L.P. Opposition, and, I believe, in the minds of members of the Government, as they would admit if they felt that they were in a position to express themselves openly and if they had the courage to do it fearlessly so that Queensland could have its case publicly presented to the Commonwealth. Mr. Heffron said—

"Australia is not going bankrupt. In both the primary and second industries we are doing particularly well and investment is at a very high level. Big companies are showing profits that they have never shown before and it is not asking for the impossible to ask that something along the lines we have suggested should be done. You, Mr. Prime Minister, can say 'There is no hope,' but I do not think you ought to dismiss it in that way. The Commonwealth is all right. It is in the box seat. It is in charge of the financial affairs of the country."

Mr. Menzies interrupted but Mr. Heffron said he would not promise that he was going into Federal politics. He continued—

"The increase hits us, but it does not hit you for the reason that your income tax collection is going on and you do not have a lag every year. The sales tax and the pay-roll tax also go merrily on, but that does not happen to the States, and consequently you are not hit with the same severity as we are."

He added—

"Over the years you have been carrying on with high deficits and have been doing well. You have been lending the States and the taxpayers back their own money. Generally speaking, you have been doing pretty well. You have been going on with public works."

So we have the position there set out by Mr. Heffron. The Treasurer, Mr. Hiley, and the Premier, put the case on behalf of Queensland, and we know that the Prime Minister's answer was "No," despite the heavy costs that had been added to the State's burden by the high increases in wages at that time after the agreement had been made. As we all know, while the State's expenditure has greatly increased, Commonwealth revenue from increased taxation and extra payroll tax and various other sources has increased through the higher costs placed upon the shoulders of the State.

To return to the Treasurer's invitation to the Leader of the Opposition to offer advice and render what assistance he could to the Cabinet, I should have felt there was more sincerity in the Government's plea if they had sought the assistance of the Leader of the Opposition in considering ways and means of tackling the problems associated with railway deficits in this State. Who in this Chamber is better fitted to offer advice and to be taken into conference than the present Leader of the Opposition? He was Minister for Transport in Queensland in the difficult period after the last war when the railways were endeavouring to rehabilitate themselves after the wear and tear of the war period. As far as I am aware, his 10 years in office was a longer term than that of any other Minister for Transport in the history of Queensland. I intend to remind hon. members who so constantly refer to the shortcomings of Labour administrations of what the then Minister for Transport did to place the railways in a sound position. Had it not been for the action taken by Mr. Duggan, we certainly would be in a much worse position than we are today.

Linked with this question is the closing of some branch lines throughout Queensland. What more important subject could have come before the Chamber for discussion, particularly by Country Party members, than the wisdom or otherwise of closing these branch lines? I believe that the closure of these lines is a matter not for departmental decision, not for Cabinet decision, but for a decision by this Assembly as a whole. Almost every electorate in Queensland is affected by the closure of these branch lines, and I believe that hon. members should have the opportunity of expressing themselves on this matter. It was most necessary that the Railway Estimates should come before the Chamber on this occasion, and it is to be regretted that they are being kept pigeonholed to avoid public criticism of the Minister for his failure to extricate the department from its present sorry position.

Mr. Ewan: Who was Minister for Transport in Queensland during the war years?

Mr. DAVIES: I am going to deal with the 10 years during which the Leader of the Opposition was in charge of the Railway Department.

When the present Minister for Transport was a member of the Opposition, he took every opportunity, whether his information was correct or not, of criticising the administration of the present Leader of the Opposition and gave no credit where credit was due. The attitude of the Leader of the Opposition has been in marked contrast, because during the four years of office of the present Government he has made no attempt to boost his own record or place before the House the results he achieved during his term as Minister for Transport. I intend to place on record, for the benefit of those who may have forgotten, and particularly for the benefit of those hon. members who are new to this Chamber, some of his achievements. Before doing so, I remind the hon. member for Roma, who interjected a short while ago, that in 1952, when criticising the then Government, he complained most bitterly and said—

“Yet not one mile more of railways has been built!”

Today he is supporting the tearing up of miles and miles of railways, something that will affect the well-being, happiness and prosperity of hundreds and hundreds of farmers in the State. I challenge him to deny that he made the statement I have just read. He also said—

“Since the Socialist Government assumed power, the accumulated losses from 1 July, 1932, have amounted to £13,900,380, including the £5,000,000 anticipated deficit for the current year. It looks as if the time were ripe to take stock of the position.”

Later he said—

“I suggest to the Minister . . . that the time has arrived . . . for the Minister to set up a committee of businessmen . . .”

They are supposed to be a Government comprised of business men and members of various professions. But what do we find today? What a sorry mess they have made! He went on to say, “I want a railway line from Quilpie to Eromanga.” I just do not know how that fits in with the various schemes put forward by the supporters of the Government, but I shall have much pleasure in comparing them with the hon. member's previous statement. He wanted a railway line from Wandoan to Taroom, and another from Dajarra to Camooweal. What has happened about all these railway lines?

What have this Government done to implement these proposals? When he sat in Opposition the present Minister for Transport said—

“If the losses incurred by any department are to bring bankruptcy to this State, it is those that have been incurred by this department.”

Later he said—

“We are budgeting for a deficit of 3s. 8d. for every mile that we operate a train in Queensland.”

But this year, for every mile run by the trains in Queensland, he is budgeting for a loss of 7s. 0½d., even though on an earlier occasion he had said that a loss of 3s. 8d. per mile would bring economic chaos to Queensland. He further said—

“But if the railways are to cost us a loss of £5,000,000 to £6,000,000 a year, the matter is so serious as to call for prompt investigation.”

He also said—

“If this loss was occurring in any business organisation its administrators would be immediately asked to do something to reveal to the people just where that loss was occurring.”

Why will they not put the Railway Estimates before the Committee so that we could reveal to the people of the State just where the losses are occurring? The Auditor-General's report reveals that in 1959-1960 the percentage of working loss on adjusted capital was £2 12s. 7d. per £100, which added to the Treasury interest charge of £3 19s. 3d., makes a total of £6 11s. 10d. per £100 capital.

In another statement the present Minister for Transport said—

“Air-conditioned trains in Queensland are in keeping with the best trains in other States.”

I shall give in detail a little later what was done by the Australian Labour Party Government to improve the Queensland trains. He had something else to say, and I notice that the hon. member for Condamine is following in his footsteps. The Minister for Transport continued—

“Inefficiency is the main reason for the falling off in the Department's revenue.

“What has been done during the past few years to increase the number of locomotives and railway wagons, and in keeping trucks in good repair? We must let it be known to railway employees that it is the Commissioner's duty to run the railways in accordance with the policy of the Government, not a policy of appeasement.”

He went on to say—

“To find the reason for the lag in repair, we must look at the workshops because the slow repair rate is the main

cause. Union dictatorship has been responsible for many of the problems. There is a grave deficiency in output."

Evidently that is why the hon. member for Condamine wanted to sack 9,000 or 10,000 railway men. He said they were loafers, and in "Hansard" dated 11 October he praised a man who advocated sacking one-third of the railway employees.

Mr. Ewan: That is not true.

Mr. DAVIES: According to this document that I have here there are 28,434 employees in the Railway Department and one-third of 28,434 is 9,500—9,500 are to be sacked! What did the Treasurer have to say about 9,500 railwaymen being put out of work? I add my voice of protest to that of others. These men are good, solid workers in this State. Statements like that will result in the resurrection of the spirit that many think has died. Evidently the present Government have no policy on the Railway Department.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I rise to a point of order. My attention has been drawn to the fact that the hon. member for Maryborough has said that I stated that 9,000 railwaymen should be sacked. I have never made that statement. It is objectionable to me and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Low): Order! I ask the hon. member for Maryborough to accept the hon. member's statement and withdraw the remark.

Mr. DAVIES: I certainly accept the statement and I withdraw the remark.

Mr. EWAN: I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention, Mr. Low, to the fact that the hon. member for Maryborough did not withdraw the remark.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member if he withdrew the remark.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, in deference to you, Mr. Low, I did withdraw.

I notice on page 4 of the report of the Public Service Commissioner that the number of employees in the Railway Department has decreased by 862, in spite of the many statements we have had from the other side that no men have been dismissed from the railways in this State.

I move now to a statement by the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, which reads—

"If I could not run the Railway Department at a profit, I would get out."

If the Minister for Health and Home Affairs has not resigned at least the former Minister for Public Lands was thrown out. I also have a statement by the present Deputy Premier, Mr. Morris. Let us see what he has to say about the railways. For many years we were forced to listen to a tirade of abuse of the Railway Department by

hon. members opposite when they were in Opposition. Now they are on the Government benches the railways are facing ever greater deficits than before; the employees are in a state of discontent and there has been total failure to come to any understanding with transport organisations. Members of the present Government are not pleased at being reminded of these statements. Mr. Morris said—

"The Government should appoint a commission of five or seven business men to run the railways in this State."

I ask the Government what has been done in this direction? Is there any sincerity in those statements or any intention of carrying them out now?

Some hon. members may remember this statement by the hon. member for Wavell in a speech some years ago—

"It is long past the time for the Government to see that their own employees do more in the interests of the country."

He is a man who has violent opinions on union leaders in this State. He adds his comments to those of Dr. Noble. The workers of Queensland are beginning to realise the value of the Government's statements and, instead of representing 43 per cent. of the people, after the next election the Government will get less than 40 per cent. of the vote and the Labour Party will be returned as the Government of this State.

There are differences of opinion on railway finances on the opposite side of the Chamber. Some members of the Government say that the railways should pay their way but the hon. member for Merthyr said—

"Anyone who thinks the railways should pay is back in the horse and buggy days."

He said that he believed it was wrong to expect the department to pay and added—

"Such a concept is still in the horse-and-buggy days."

Where are the Government going? Let us have a look at the position as revealed in the Auditor-General's report. The deficit for three years totalled £17,162,445. This is another reason used by the Commonwealth for continuing its interest in University education alone.

Thirdly, he said—

"At the conference between the State Premiers and Commonwealth representatives in August, 1953, the Premiers raised the matter of the Universities and pointed out how embarrassed they were. It is the only time I remember when the State Premiers raised the question of Commonwealth payments for education as a specific subject."

In working expenses alone the railways showed a deficit of £6,082,368, excluding the interest bill of £11,000,000. Over the last decade the total deficits amount to £39,000,000. It is important to remember

that the number of train-miles last year was nearly half a million less than in the previous year.

I now come to a very interesting table. We find that for three years in which the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Transport in the previous Government the department had a credit balance, or showed a profit on running costs. These are the figures—

| Year | Profit £ |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1950-1951 | 217,270 |
| 1953-1954 | 952,125 |
| 1954-1955 | 525,170 |

I ask hon. members to compare those figures with the following results in the three years of office of the present Government—

| Year | Loss |
|-----------|----------------|
| 1957-1958 | 2,000,000-plus |
| 1958-1959 | 1,250,000 |
| 1959-1960 | 2,627,537 |

The records of the department for the last three years reveal that apart from the relaying of lines, no undertaking of any importance has been commenced. The major task of relaying lines was started when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Transport in the Labour Government. We know that approximately £2,000,000 has been spent on that work, but apart from that no great amount has been expended in modernising the railways in any part of the State. The present Minister has been endeavouring to run the railways as a profitable business. He has endeavoured, as he said he would, to make the railways pay, but he has failed. The Government have expended some money in the purchase of locomotives, carriages, wagons, and rail motors, but the amounts are all comparatively small. Let us consider what was done when the Labour Government were in office.

Mr. Houghon interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: Now we hear an interjection by the Independent who has already proved that he is a loyal supporter of the Country-Liberal Government. He showed in his speech today that he was striving to get on the front benches of the Liberal Party.

The Minister in charge of railways in New South Wales some time ago in a very excellent exposition on the subject said that at no stage after World War II had the Commonwealth Government come to the assistance of the States in helping them to rehabilitate their railway systems. The suggestion was made in the early post-war years, while Labour was in control, that the Commonwealth should give the States some financial assistance by way of compensation, or a special grant for the rehabilitation of the railway systems. Nothing has come of it.

I point out that in the period from 1947 to 1955, 177 new locomotives were put in service. The utilisation of diesels must be considered when we are discussing the subject

of railways. The utilisation of diesel-electric locomotives which were introduced by the Leader of the Opposition when Minister for Transport, saved the railways from almost certain financial annihilation. Through that factor the department was able to relieve the chaotic congestion in rail yards which followed the last war and the tremendous increase in trade. In 1951, 20 diesel-electric locomotives were ordered for the heaviest main lines. In 1952, 12 lighter diesel-electric locomotives were ordered from Walkers Ltd. for the Mt. Isa line. On the "up" run to Toowoomba loads with B.18½ steam locomotives were limited to 230 tons. By employing large diesel locomotives the load was increased to 425 tons—nearly twice as much. The load on the "down" run with a B.18½ steam locomotive was formerly limited to 470 tons, but with a diesel locomotive it is 650 tons. In 1948, 20 B.18½ steam engines were ordered, and 15 in 1949. The passenger train traffic in the State was revolutionised by Mr. Duggan when he was Minister for Transport. He undertook the most impressive rail-car construction programme ever undertaken in Queensland, when nearly £4,000,000 was spent on building eight air-conditioned trains. Incidentally, it is to be noted that the ninth has not yet been completed by this Government.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member for Roma claims it was wrong for us to provide better trains for the people in the Far West. Let him travel by train instead of by motor-car and he will appreciate to the full what these trains have meant to the people who are pioneering the country 1,000 miles from the capital city. If only he could understand just what these trains mean to the travelling public of the State! As I said, the ninth train is not yet completed. Eight trains were completed by the Labour Government, and, after five or six years, the ninth train is only now nearing completion. The first "Inlander" train was put into service on 12 February, 1953, with first-class and second-class sleeping cars. It must be remembered there are no second-class sleeping cars in other States. It also has first-class and second-class sitting cars. They are all luxurious steel trains, with fluorescent lighting and hot and cold showers. It has been suggested by some Government supporters that the trains were too good for the workers.

From 1 July, 1947, the following improvements to the railway service were also made by the Labour Minister for Transport: 30 new suburban cars, 12 new sitting-cars of the Sunshine type, 3 composite sleeping and dining-cars, 66 brake vans, one new dining-car, 44 second-class brake vans, two new rail-motor trains each with a 102 h.p. unit and two trailers, and six 4-car diesel motor-trains. Between 1947 and 1956, 8,821 wagons were added to the service.

To show the increase in tonnage, in 1947-1948, 5,232,206 tons were carried and 8,212,294 tons in 1954-1955, which represents an increase of 57 per cent. In the same period there were built 100 cattle-wagons with steel underframes, 200 bogey louvred cars for fast freight trains, and 50 steel refrigeration cars. Between 1947 and 1956, the Redbank workshops were constructed and the wagon repair shops at Wacol and Too-woomba and other workshops in the State. Nearly £1,000,000 was spent on new machinery and workshop modernisation, a modern copying lathe and taper pins system and other new machinery.

I ask hon. members to bear in mind what has been done by the present Government. The elimination of the rack section on the Mt. Morgan railway line as from 19 April, 1952, cost £364,130, and was the work of the Australian Labour Party. Between 1947 and 1955 297 miles of track were re-laid at a cost of approximately £2,250,000. The welding of rails was not introduced by the present Government. It was introduced by the Australian Labour Party Government, who completed 100 miles. Improved machinery was given by the Labour Party Government to the men working on the railway track.

The hon. member for Roma said that not an extra mile of railway line had been built in this State, but this Government are going to pull up hundreds of miles of line. Nine miles 11 chains of railway line were built to the Callide coalfields under Mr. Duggan's administration. The Rannes-Thangool line, which was opened on 9 November, 1953, cost £425,000. Then there is the Cairns railway station. It would do hon. members on the Government side good to get out in the country and away from Queen Street. It would broaden their outlook.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: I lived for years in the Dawson Valley.

Mr. Hewitt: You speak of Walkers Ltd.

Mr. DAVIES: Sarcastic remarks about the future of Walkers Ltd. is not becoming to a Country Party supporter when Walkers Ltd. is struggling and doing everything possible to survive. Every time I raise the problems of Walkers Ltd., we find the Queen Street outlook of the members of the Government. They attempt to ridicule me every time I remind them of the problems confronting the shipyards, whose position is so critical that, when current work is completed, they will have to close down because not one boat is lined up at present.

I remind hon. members opposite that the Cairns railway station, built at a cost of £385,000, was opened on 6 August, 1955.

Whether or not there is agreement on the need for electrification of the suburban lines, it must be admitted that it is absolutely essential to go ahead with the quadruplication scheme, because the present system will not

carry a very much greater increase in traffic in the city. That work was started by the Minister for Transport in the Labour Cabinet.

We have heard the Labour Government taken to task for failing to improve the working conditions of railway workers in distant places. We agree that perhaps much more could have been done. If it had not been for World War II we certainly would have done much more. From 1860 to 1915 this State was in a sorry mess when people of similar political colour to hon. members opposite representing the graziers exploited the State for their own selfish interests.

Mr. Dewar: I do not represent the graziers.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member is one of their descendants.

From 1947 to 1955, 134 new cottages were erected at a cost of £225,378—33 of them in the southern division, 54 in the central division, and 47 in the north. There were 142 single men's quarters built at a cost of £38,676.

Mr. Ewan: And have you been in them? Aren't they shocking?

Mr. DAVIES: Perhaps they are, in comparison with the hon. member's standard of living, but certainly they are much better than the tents previously provided, before the Labour Government required the department to provide huts. They put hot-water systems in camping quarters, too, at nine centres. Moreover, 1,318 huts were built in various parts of the State—300 ordered in April, 1954, another 309 in December, 1954, 100 in June, 1955, and 300 in November, 1955, at a total cost of £150,000.

Members of this Government talk about improved amenities. Let them go into many of the various Government buildings in Queensland and they will find that, with the natural growth of departments, there is a great deal of work to be done.

In the Railway Department the Labour Government did more in one year than this Government have done in their whole term of office. In 1954 a new amenity block was built at Woolloongabba at a cost of £3,553. In Maryborough was built one of the finest amenity blocks in the State at a cost of £21,079. It is a model, an example to private employers. Shunters' amenities in Maryborough, a special building, cost £1,000. A special amenity block at Willowburn cost £3,150. At Mungallala tenders closed on 22 March, 1956, for camping quarters valued at £16,500. All that is convincing proof of the magnificent work that was done by the A.L.P. Government to stabilise the Railway department after the tremendous strain placed on it through World War II. During the last four years nothing has been done that can in any way compare with the achievements of the Australian Labour Party. The Government have merely carried on with the

ordinary administration of the department, and what a sorry mess they have made of that!

Now I want to deal with a few of the statements that have been made about industrial disputes in Queensland. The other day the Deputy Premier came into the debate to resurrect the old "Communist" cry and he attempted to put fear in the hearts of the people of the State because a Commonwealth election will shortly be held. We know how insincere the Prime Minister is on the subject of Communism. When asked about Communism in Australia, Mr. Menzies said in London in June—

"I would say there is no danger. They are of a minority. They are very active and full of vigorous and evil intentions, but they are not a major factor."

I am not afraid of the Communist influence in this country, because the Australian Labour Party has protected and will continue to protect the people of this State against Communist infiltration. The Australian Labour Party is not being infiltrated, but I am not so sure about what is happening with some members of the Liberal Party. We hear much about the dangers of Communism, but little about the dangers of Fascism. Hon members should remember that the last two world wars were fought not against Communist countries or Communist Governments, but against Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Militarist Japan. What guarantee have the parties opposite, with their loose form of membership, that they have no men in their ranks who are associated with the Communist Party, the Fascist Party, or other similar parties?

A Sydney newspaper recently drew the attention of the people of Australia to the fact that I have just mentioned. The article said—

"Mr. Menzies seems in some strange fashion to have forgotten that only a decade-and-a-half have passed since a large number of the people of the world were engaged in a life-and-death struggle against three totalitarian regimes.

"They were Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Militarist Japan.

"Not one of them was a Communist country. They were, in fact, the implacable enemies of Communism. In the end, they were at war with Communist Russia.

"Did they, then, belong to the free world?

"Falangist Spain, under the dictatorship of General Franco for more than 20 years?

"The only slightly less authoritarian Portugal, the Premier of which (Dr. Salazar) has been virtually supreme ruler for a quarter of a century?

"South Korea, until this year governed by a completely corrupt and coercive administration?

"The Latin-American Dominican Republic, so ruthless a dictatorship that Washington recently withdrew recognition of it?"

"What is happening in the world today is a struggle between true democratic freedom and terrorism."

The Australia Labour Party is fighting not only Communism but every other "ism" that is contrary to democratic beliefs.

I also draw the attention of hon. members to the statement of the Deputy Premier in this Chamber that industrial disturbances have cost this country so much that they are one of the chief factors affecting the serious economic situation outlined by the Treasurer in his Financial Statement. I refer to the "Statistical Report of the Queensland Coal Board" for the year ended 30 June, 1960, and here I would remind hon. members that the Miners' Union is led by a Communist, Mr. Millar, who was unopposed in his last election to office. The number of man-shifts worked on the West Moreton coalfield was 485,922, and the percentage lost through industrial disputes was 1.68, through accidents 0.01, through sickness 6.84, and through absenteeism 1.64. What do we find if we take the country as a whole from 1947 to 1959? The number of disputes reached its peak in about 1952-1953, and is now the second lowest. I am referring to disputes involving a stoppage of work of 10 man-days or more.

Mr. Ewan: What are you reading from?

Mr. DAVIES: The "Monthly Bulletin of Employment Statistics" issued by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. In 1947 1,338,728 working days were lost. In 1959 the figure is 365,039, only one-quarter of the 1947 figure. In 1947 the number of workers involved was 327,137. The number goes up to 505,000-odd, dropping to 282,000-odd and 237,000-odd in the last two years.

If Communist influence was so successful in infiltrating into union administration would one not expect this record to show an increase in the number of days lost and the number of workers involved in industrial unrest? But it shows the very opposite.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: Even when we quote the figures of the Commonwealth Statistician we are still "knocked" by hon. members opposite.

I had intended to deal at length with the Commonwealth Government's attitude towards education, particularly their failure to recognise their responsibility towards secondary and primary education. I had intended also to deal with the very disturbing thoughts expressed by responsible Ministers of the Menzies Government concerning education. However, I shall not be able to cover all that ground but the most disturbing suggestion that arises from the discussion is that Queensland and New South Wales get plenty of money.

This was said—

"If they would make their hospitals and railways pay they could use the millions

they lose on those services to develop their country, on education services, and so on."

Government Members: Who said that?

Mr. DAVIES: If I had time I would go through the whole of the discussion. That statement was made by a responsible Minister of the Commonwealth Government. I shall deal with the matter as fully as I can in the few minutes I have left.

At the National Educational Conference held in Sydney on 21 May, 1960, the Hon. R. J. Heffron, Premier of New South Wales, said—

"Education today is in every sense a national problem."

Hon. J. B. Bloomfield, the Minister for Education in Victoria, said—

"While the States are said to be autonomous bodies, in point of fact their sovereignty has been removed by the financial set-up.

"I am concerned that this magnificent country of ours is in danger that the many primarily important functions which are rightly committed to the States may languish for want of the means to provide for them."

One of the arguments used by Ministers in the Menzies Government is that if they are to make any further grants they will need to direct education, but because the States do not want that they are keeping out of that field.

The Commonwealth have concerned themselves only with the education of those whose parents can afford to support them to matriculation standard, and then only to a limited degree. They have not been interested in the education of young people for careers for which university education is not required. The Commonwealth Government have refused to interest themselves in any form of education apart from university education.

In 1958 Mr. Menzies gave reasons for this lack of interest. They were threefold. Firstly, referring to the Chifley Labour Government he said—

"The Commonwealth Government of the day very wisely provided the Commonwealth reconstruction training scheme."

The Prime Minister said that this committed the Commonwealth Government to a continued provision for universities. Secondly, he said—

"We instituted the Commonwealth scholarship scheme. It had been foreshadowed before we came into office, and we put it into operation. I am not denying this was, in reality, a piece of joint effort on behalf of our predecessors and ourselves."

The Commonwealth reconstruction training scheme did not provide only for a University

education but also enabled ex-service men to complete education of other kinds, so Mr. Menzies' argument is not sound.

The Chifley Labour Government not only foreshadowed a scheme for scholarships for University students but also for secondary students. That is what the Australian Labour Party is endeavouring to interest the Commonwealth Government in today. Every education authority has been to the Commonwealth Government in an endeavour to get them to interest themselves in it. The Walker Committee and the Commonwealth Office of Education set up by the Chifley Government had reported on the wastage of students in the latter years of secondary education. The inter-departmental committee that was set up to investigate the subject made a submission to the Chifley Government late in 1949. Final consideration of its submissions was deferred until after the elections. The new Government received the final report entitled "A Report on Educational Wastage at the Secondary Level."

The Menzies Government adopted the proposals for Commonwealth scholarships for University students—a limited number, which I would like to deal with later—but rejected the recommendation for a scheme of Commonwealth bursaries for secondary-school pupils to cover the gap between the school-leaving age and the University-entry age.

The third reason is very disturbing. Are not all the States and the Commonwealth thought to be equally concerned with Australian development? In March, 1958, the Labour Premier of Western Australia, Mr. Hawke, put forward at a Premier's Conference the suggestion that a joint Commonwealth-States commission of inquiry should investigate secondary, technical and primary education in the States. The Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, spoke first of the fact that the proposal could easily have tremendous results on the Commonwealth's own finances and therefore the proposal did not attract him. The Australian Labour Party states that it is not a question of whether we can afford to educate, but whether we can afford not to educate. Mr. Menzies promised to give full and adequate reasons why such a commission of inquiry should not be instituted.

In June, 1958, at a Premier's Conference, Mr. McEwen, Acting Prime Minister, who is reputed to have Liberal Party leanings, was asked by the Premier of New South Wales to hasten Mr. Menzies' considered reply. On 2 July that year they were sent to the Premiers. On this occasion Mr. Menzies did not mention his first reaction against the proposal—that it would cost the Commonwealth a lot of money. The previously-mentioned three reasons were again set out and, in addition, Mr. Menzies stated that it was a fact that the States had large resources of money of their own and also by way of Commonwealth grants, and could decide how they would allot those resources

on current and capital expenditure—on education, among other responsibilities. That, I suggest, will add to the line of thought put forward by the hon. member for Baroona when discussing the future of the free hospital system of this State.

It is interesting to note the weakness of this alarming approach to the grave problem and that, according to tables IX and X in Appendix C of the White Paper on National Income and Expenditure, 1958-1959, in the year 1948-1949 the States spent £26,000,000 on education. In the year 1958-1959 they spent £109,000,000—over four times as much. In the year 1948-1949 they spent on schools and the like, by way of capital expenditure, £3,000,000 and in 1958-1959 they spent £29,000,000—almost ten times as much. An examination of figures of revenue and outlay for and by the States reveals that in no other respect has State expenditure increased fourfold and in no other respect has the States' income from their own resources, much less from Commonwealth grants, increased fourfold, let alone tenfold. Education is accounting for a proportionately increasing amount of the States' capital and current expenditure.

The Labour Premier of New South Wales, Hon. R. J. Heffron, stated this year—

"Education today is in every sense a national problem. If we are to survive as a nation we must educate our people. The old slogan has been, 'Populate or perish.' I think we can add to that, 'Educate or perish.' We have a territory as large as that of the United States; we have a fabulous potential; all that is necessary is a population which is highly educated and highly trained. We spent at the rate of a million pounds a day to carry the war to a successful conclusion. If we could do that then, in these piping times of peace we can do a better job than we are doing by way of providing finance for education. This is a problem that belongs not only to the States but to the Commonwealth as well."

The development of our country is the task of the six States and the Commonwealth. There should be an equal partnership of seven. I do not think there is any suggestion of a partnership, judging from the proceedings of conferences from time to time between the State Premiers and the Prime Minister, and by the way the Prime Minister deals with the State Premiers.

If Mr. Menzies and his Government are not aware of the educational requirements of this country and the shortage of finance to meet those requirements, he and his Government should resign and hand over to a Labour Government to meet this crisis in educational development. If the Commonwealth considers the States are neglecting education by not appealing to the controller of the purse-strings for financial assistance specifically for education, is it not a Commonwealth Government duty to raise the problem at a Premier's Conference, or call an

emergency meeting for a full and open debate on educational requirements? Electors in States should realise that the Commonwealth Government are spending lavishly on education in Canberra. They are throwing money around like water on educational facilities and buildings in the Federal capital. All money expended by the Commonwealth Government on education in the Australian Capital Territory comes out of revenue. The Commonwealth does not have to pay interest on loans.

Mr. Menzies and Liberal-Country Party speakers bandy money figures about in an endeavour to make the story of educational development appear impressive. This is also done in relation to pensions, social services and other things—all in an endeavour to deceive the electors. The total amount spent on education by the States and the Commonwealth in 1949-1950 was £32,000,000. Today it has risen to £110,000,000. An increase of about three and a-half times appears to constitute substantial evidence of increased assistance but it must be remembered that the number of students has increased tremendously. The current costs, not the capital costs of running these schools have gone up by approximately 100 per cent. Costs of buildings and materials generally have advanced. When we consider the increased number of students and the increased costs of running schools at the same real level, it is found that the amount of real money spent on education per head of the students in the schools has fallen in the last 10 years, despite the extraordinarily large amount of money being spent.

Likewise, the amount of expenditure on technical schools has fallen very considerably per head of students involved. Then there are the extra-school activities such as art galleries, music, adult education, libraries, public museums and physical fitness, where development has not kept pace with the development of the economy in general.

How do we compare with other countries in this matter? Reference to the International Year Book of Education for 1957, which was published by the International Bureau of Education, an agency of UNESCO, reveals the amount expended on education in the various countries. On the common basis of expenditure in terms of U.S.A. dollars, Australia spends 22.4 dollars per person per year on education, compared with 56 dollars in the U.S.A. The U.S.A. makes a big amount available for education under the Defence Vote, and that is one way we should be able to get money to increase our expenditure on education in this country. The amount spent in the U.S.S.R. cannot be compared by reason of the activities undertaken under this heading. The expenditure per head, however, is 201 dollars.

In 1958-1959 New South Wales spent £42,000,000 on education, or 53.6 per cent.

of its total tax reimbursement from the Commonwealth, which amounted to £76,000,000, and £10,000,000 or 18 per cent. of its total Loan allocation of £55,000,000.

On 15 July, 1959, the Chancellor of the Oxford University, who was Chairman of the Commonwealth Education Conference held at Oxford, had this to say—

“In these stirring days, education is not merely exciting. It is one of the great challenges of our age. It was H. G. Wells who said, ‘Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.’”

I am very sorry that time will not permit me to tell the whole story.

Mr. Sullivan: We are not.

Mr. DAVIES: Of course you are not. You are not concerned about the worker, as you indicated recently. This matter is a serious problem, but you are not concerned about it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is not addressing the Chair.

Mr. DAVIES: I am amazed that you should think I was, Mr. Taylor, knowing the great respect I have for you and the impartiality of your decisions.

Open entrance scholarships on Senior results were granted from 1951. Up to 1954-1955 all attaining the necessary standard received scholarships. This year, 1960, about 750 above the qualifying mark did not receive a scholarship. What could be more serious to hamper the development of the country? There were approximately 750 students in the State who were up to the standard required to enable them to profit by higher studies at the University, but who were not able to get a scholarship because the Commonwealth Government refused to increase the grant. There are only slightly more than 400 offering each year, and this year the position will be far worse.

Hon. members should give this matter very serious consideration and take particular note of the facts I mention. The Prime Minister and leading members of his Ministry have stated on several occasions that the States are receiving ample allocations of money, and that it is up to them to see that their various departments are made to pay, and they have referred to the railways in New South Wales. No doubt they have in mind the hospital scheme in this State and will say, “Make your railways pay and do away with free hospitalisation, and you will have enough millions to deal with education.” That is the attitude of the Federal Government at present and it certainly makes a very sad story. It is a matter that must be borne in mind as it is of great importance. We must not neglect our Government departments. The Government may claim they are making the best of everything and doing

everything possible, but the Vote for the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply has been reduced by £500,000. We have seen what has happened in times of drought. We find that the Forestry Vote has been neglected. We cannot afford to neglect forestry development, for the time will come when we shall have to depend on our own native forests and our plantations for our timber requirements.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEWAR (Wavell) (4.7 p.m.): I should like to congratulate the Treasurer and the Government for once again bringing an open mind and a serious approach to the financial problems of the State in view of the overall amount available for the next 12 months. I did not propose to speak for very long on the Financial Statement, but some of the comments made by the previous speaker lead me to believe that I should refer to them.

Mr. Smith: Are they worth it?

Mr. DEWAR: Well, hardly, but if somebody does not give him an honourable mention the day may come when people will forget he is here.

The hon. member for Maryborough impassionately accused this side of the Chamber of being uninterested in the education of the children of this State. At the outset I should say that when the hon. member for Maryborough talks in terms of insufficient Commonwealth scholarships and bursaries, and the amount of money made available to this State, or any other State, and expecting our children to go on to higher education, he does not need to don the cloak of a man who stands alone on the bridge to proclaim it. He has many friends in the Chamber when he makes such a statement. We share whatever problem he has in his mind on the shortage of money for this most important field of community life. When he utters such an impassioned plea and accuses hon. members on this side of the Chamber of not being interested in the children of the State, he is like the proverbial “shag on the rock.”

If ever a Government showed themselves to be coldly and calculatedly uninterested in the welfare of the children of this State in the field of education, it was the Government of which he was a member. For that very reason, despite the fact that we have added something like 25 per cent. or more to the Education Vote in the years since we became the Government, we are labouring to overcome the lag that was created by the A.L.P. Government in this very important field. We have been in office only three years, but during that period we have established more high schools than were established by the previous Government in all the post-war years, from 1946 to 1957. Furthermore, the intake into our high schools has exactly doubled since we assumed office

and we are coping with that influx in a much better way than the previous Government coped with half the number.

The hon. member for Maryborough accused the hon. member for Roma and other members of the Government of being completely uninterested in the accommodation of the workers, and in particular workers employed by the State. He said we were concerned only with giving them tents to live in. We inherited from the Labour Government more tents than the wheat-growers on the Downs will reap bags of wheat this year. We have practically wiped out the use of tents by workers. The only tents you will see today are those of itinerant workers—men moving from place to place. We have almost wiped out the tent population from the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, from the Forestry Department, and from the Department of Main Roads, and we have gone a long way towards eliminating tents from the railways. From what I was told in North Queensland I understand that the type of tent accommodation prescribed by Labour was such that a man did not need to take a bath; he could have a bath when he was in bed. That was Labour's attitude to the workers of the State—a ridiculous state of accommodation, particularly for North Queensland. The whole approach of the present Government has been to wipe out the iniquitous treatment of the workers and gave them something approaching reasonable comfort. I am sure the Treasurer will support me when I say that in each of the departments I have mentioned we have practically wiped out the use of tents for the accommodation of workers and we have greatly improved on the standards set down by Labour.

The hon. member for Maryborough criticised the Deputy Premier's reference to the Communist Party and quoted what the Prime Minister said in London about there being few Communists in Australia and his statement that he was not very greatly concerned. On interjection the hon. member for Maryborough made an impassioned plea and he said, "I am not afraid of the Communist influence. I have faith in the Australian Labour Party." What a sorry star to have faith in! The Australian Labour Party's approach to Communism in this country is along the lines of their approach to the Communist Party Dissolution Bill away back in 1952.

Mr. Donald: Approved by the people of Australia!

Mr. DEWAR: Who backed it? Who frightened the people into their approval? What did that Bill seek to do? It sought to do only two things:—firstly, to prevent a member of the Communist Party from holding office under the Crown, and secondly to prevent a member of the Communist Party from becoming an official of a trade union. In addition, it put the onus of proving that he was not a Communist right on the man himself. There is an onus-of-proof clause in at least 20 of the Acts passed by the Labour Government in Queensland, yet they

objected to it on behalf of their friends the Communists. That is what we found the Australian Labour Party doing about Communists. They wanted to make sure that the Communist Party would have the opportunity and the right to take control of the trade-union movement and, if need be, to infiltrate into the Public Service.

What about the attitude of the Labour Party during the war? I do not like repeating stories, and I have already told this story twice in the Chamber, but it seems that Rip Van Winkles like the hon. member for Maryborough will persist in sleeping most of the time and do not hear these things so we are forced to repeat them. I was in the R.A.A.F. at Bradfield Park in Sydney back in 1944 awaiting embarkation to go to America for training in the Air Force. What happened there? When the unions on the wharves refused to load ammunition and food for our men in New Guinea, did the Australian Labour Party Government then in office take steps to deal with these people, these traitors to the country? Not on your life! They used to drag the troops, men like ourselves awaiting embarkation, out at 5 o'clock in the morning, line them up, and take them down to load the ships. That is how they treated us. Don't talk to me about the Australian Labour Party!

The hon. member for Maryborough referred to a statistical return showing that in the coal-mining industry on the Ipswich field, of approximately 456,000 man-shifts only 1.5 per cent. was lost, and he praised the fact that that union was led by a Communist.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. I did not praise the fact that the leader of the Miners' Union was a Communist. I simply said that, despite that fact, the workers did not have much industrial trouble.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! What is the hon. member's point of order?

Mr. DAVIES: I ask the hon. member for Wavell to withdraw the insinuation that I was praising a Communist.

Mr. DEWAR: I accept his apology.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. DEWAR: The hon. member for Maryborough quoted the figures and said that the leader of the union was a Communist, and I gathered that he was applauding the fact that a union led by a Communist had such a low rate of industrial disputes, a rate so much lower than that of unions led by members of the Australian Labour Party. I thought he was citing the example that that union, led by a Communist, was able to do so much better than unions led by members of the A.L.P. I was surprised to hear that from a man who says he is not afraid of the infiltration of his party by the Communists.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is stating that I am praising the Communists at every opportunity I get. I ask for a withdrawal of that remark.

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

Mr. DEWAR: I do so.

Mr. Walsh: What would you say if somebody called you a Fascist?

Mr. DEWAR: The hon. member can say what he likes about me as long as he spells my name correctly.

There are one or two other facets of this debate that I wish to deal with, and I refer particularly to the difficulties under which international students in this country are labouring, and one or two aspects of Cabinet decisions in the field of youth work in our schools.

I have first-hand knowledge of some of the problems that are faced by many of the students from overseas who are studying at the University of Queensland. Approximately 6,000 or 7,000 of these students have come to Australia to study at our Universities, and I think we now have about 700 or 800 at the University of Queensland. They provide us with the greatest opportunity for public relations work that we have in our community. We are continually told, both citizen and statesman alike, of the need to improve our relations with our Near-East neighbours, and I am referring now particularly to the people of India, Pakistan, Malaya, Indonesia, and so on. Many of those who speak in this way do so because Australia, a large country with an area of 3,000,000 square miles and a population of 10,000,000 people, is vastly under-populated, and we have close to our shores people in small countries with very dense populations. The fear of many people is that our Near-East neighbours might in the future, as Japan did, cast greedy eyes on Australia. Since the war we have thought more about the Communist influence that has spread through China and threatened many other countries not very far from our shores.

These young people who come to our land to study at Australian Universities, to learn our way of life and what they can of modern sciences, come as ambassadors from their countries. They constitute the greatest opportunity for Australia to send ambassadors back to the countries from which they come. But I am very concerned at the fact that many of them are not returning to their countries as happy in their minds about Australia as they were when they came.

They come here full of optimism, not only with the idea of learning more about our modern approach to agriculture and the various sciences, but with the idea of learning how we live. They come here imbued with the spirit of the brotherhood of man,

with a desire to learn about other countries, and with the idea of taking that knowledge back to their own lands. But many of them leave feeling dispirited and go home virtually broken-hearted.

An Opposition Member: Why?

Mr. DEWAR: I do not know what the percentage would be but there are sufficient who come into that category to make it a cause for concern to those who should be concerned. I am asked why they leave with these feelings. Their main problem is accommodation—the difficulty of getting into Australian homes. There is a certain amount of reticence to accept them because of the colour bar. Although they say that Australians are the least colour-conscious of all the white races there is still a certain amount of reticence. Many students are more or less being kicked from pillar to post, moving from one type of temporary accommodation to another. In many respects much of the accommodation available is not very satisfactory.

The other problem many face is their lack of knowledge of the English language. They realise it is a problem they have to overcome, but meanwhile students without a good knowledge of English are under a severe handicap trying to understand lectures. This gives rise to a further problem about which the Federal migration people do not appear to be very helpful. Of the 7,000-odd Asian students in Australia 80 or 90 per cent. are not Colombo Plan students, but are here of their own volition and at their own expense. They are virtually in the position of a person temporarily resident in Australia under a permit. A problem has arisen with those who fail in their examinations. Before they have time to get over their disappointment and decide whether or not their fathers can afford to keep them here to do a "post" or another year's study, they receive letters from the Immigration Department wanting to know when they intend to leave the country.

Many young men and women have been granted "posts" under those conditions, which are hardly conducive to their passing their examinations. They have hanging over their heads the threat that if they do not pass the "post" they will be "turfed" out. The whole approach is wrong. It is a wonderful idea to bring to this country Asian students of as many nationalities as possible, particularly our Near Eastern neighbours, both under the Colombo Plan and at their own expense, but there needs to be a realignment of thinking on the approach to it. It is not sufficient that we say to these young people, "Our University is here; pay the prescribed fees and you can get the tuition and sit for your degree examinations." These young people have problems that our own students do not encounter, of which the basic one is accommodation.

Theoretically there exists an organisation to look after these young people. It is known

as the Co-ordinating Committee for Overseas Students and it comprises some excellent citizens of this country. In their annual report they tell their own story and in the final paragraph of their last report they say—

“While some overseas students, particularly private students, may be either unaware of the facilities offered by the Co-ordinating Committee or diffident about informing the committee of their needs, other students had availed themselves of its services being offered. The committee is anxious to make close contact with all overseas students and to this end seeks the co-operation of the various national student groups already in existence in Brisbane. The Committee wishes it to be known that it will be glad to organise services additional to those now being offered if students so desire.”

The committee admits that students may be unaware of its existence and I am afraid that that is so. Many of these students are not aware that this Co-ordinating Committee exists and that seems to me to be the death-blow of the committee itself. If it is functioning and is not able to impress upon the migrants' minds that it wishes to help them, surely there is something wrong with it.

I believe that, because of this problem of accommodation and because these Near-East students are not getting into the homes of Queenslanders and Australians in other States and learning our way of life and to understand our points of view, we are not making the most of the opportunity that exists with these young people coming into this country to build lasting good relations with our Near Eastern neighbours.

Mr. Newton: Do you think the Commonwealth Government should supply the money to support your scheme?

Mr. DEWAR: Yes. As I said, far too many of these students are not getting into the homes of our people. This co-ordinating committee have arranged for some of them but that is only scratching the surface. There are thousands of them who do not get into our homes.

Mr. Hughes: It is a most desirable form of public relations.

Mr. DEWAR: Exactly. Thousands of these young people never get into a Queensland home. How can any young person come to this country, faced with the barrier of limited knowledge of the English language, which he must learn before he can adequately understand the education made available to him, and go back to his own country as an ambassador from Malaya to Australia, or vice versa, when he has not learned anything about our way of life?

Mr. Hanlon: Don't you think the University Students' Association can do a lot?

Mr. DEWAR: I hope it can and I hope it does. I do not know. All I am saying is that not enough is being done for these young people. It behoves Parliament, the Government, the University Students' Association and every worth-while citizen to do something about it. We should all take cognisance of the fact that it is extremely important to promote good relations with people from the Near East. If one of these young students goes back to his country with the opinion that Australia is a good land, that the people are broad-minded, that they know and appreciate our problems and want to help us, what better ambassador could we have? Every young student from those countries who talks in that manner is worth millions of pounds in propaganda value. On the other hand, those who go back dissatisfied with our treatment of them and who tell their countrymen that the going has been too hard and that they have not been welcomed into our homes and have not learned our way of life from average citizens, destroy the good relations between our countries. And, irrespective of the numbers of visits to those countries by members of Parliament, business men and union leaders, the harm that is done cannot be undone.

I implore the Government and the people to take an interest in this matter. It is a real problem, but it can be overcome. By overcoming it we will create the best possible relations between Australia and countries of the Near East, which is something that we all agree is needed.

Mr. Newton: A lot of information is set out for these students on the notice boards at the University.

Mr. DEWAR: They are not getting into the homes of the people.

Mr. Newton: I have seen it myself.

Mr. DEWAR: I repeat that these students are not getting into the homes of Australians.

Mr. Newton: That is a different argument.

Mr. DEWAR: That is my argument.

Mr. Newton: Your argument is to get them into the homes of Australian people; my argument is that information is being put before them on the notice boards about the things that are offering for them while they are in this country.

Mr. DEWAR: We have to get them into Australian homes so that they can learn the Australian way of life, and learn to appreciate the problems as the average man in Australia sees them. Let the average Australian learn from these students the problems of their countries.

Mr. Hughes: And take a really human interest in them.

Mr. DEWAR: Yes.

The following article appeared in the "Telegraph" of 20 October—

"This week, the student councillor of the Queensland University, Dr. H. W. Thiele, announced the appointment of an officer to deal with accommodation problems from 1 December to 31 March."

The fact that that move has been made indicates that there is a problem. But it does not matter what this officer, Dr. Thiele, or the Committee does, unless we as average Australians are prepared to take these people into our homes. The answer is as simple as that.

Mr. Houston: What percentage of these Asian students are living in private homes?

Mr. DEWAR: I would only be guessing if I gave a percentage, but I should say it would be well under half. The majority group together and rent flats, but they do not meet Australians in that way. They might as well be living in Singapore. If they could study at the Queensland University and live in Singapore, their position would be no different. They are living in flats as Malaysians and Pakistanis and are not mixing with Australians or learning the Australian way of life.

Mr. Newton: Some of them live in hostels.

Mr. DEWAR: When they live with other Australian students in hostels, the position is ideal. That is the point I am leading up to.

Dr. Noble: University colleges.

Mr. DEWAR: A very small percentage live in University colleges.

Mr. Hughes: Your complaint is that there are too few?

Mr. DEWAR: Yes. I am not complaining about what is being done; I am stating that we have to do a great deal more, because far too many of these Asian students are not receiving the ideal treatment I think they should be receiving in this country.

Some years ago the Brisbane Rotary Club sponsored a very worth-while project known as International House, and endeavoured to raise sufficient money to build a hostel of the type Dr. Noble mentioned as being at the university college. Depending on the money available, a hostel would be built or provided in an existing building at which these young people would be invited to stay with Australian students. Many of our own students have no permanent abode and must find accommodation. The ideal is not to get a building for Malaysians, Pakistanis or Indonesians, but to have an international set-up with people of varying nationalities living in a group.

Mr. Newton: Do you believe in having clubs with an international outlook such as they have down in Sydney and Melbourne?

Mr. DEWAR: Yes. I think there should be that intercourse between people of varying

nationalities. That is the only way to get international understanding and to learn how the other man lives; to learn his problems and help him with his, and let him help you with yours. That is the only way to get an international understanding and a brotherhood of man.

The Brisbane Rotary Club started on this project, but it has not had the necessary backing because this problem seems to be too far away from our local problems. We all have our particular interests; some may be interested in spastic children and others in the subnormal children, the Xavier Society, the Mater Mothers' Hospital and so on, because these things concern the people of our own land. The matter of which I speak concerns people who are too far away for most of us to be worried about them. These people are our neighbours; we are all our brothers' keepers. We need friends in the Near East; we have them, but we can fritter away that friendship by our lack of proper treatment of young international visitors from these countries.

Mr. DEWAR: Some Governments have indicated that they are prepared to back this scheme. Mr. Bert Martin, a former ex-governor of the Rotary Club has given a good deal of his time to the International House project. They have nearly £15,000, but that is insufficient to get backing for a scheme of this nature. There have been promises of help from the State and Federal Governments, and from at least one Government in the Near East, but it is too intangible. Nothing has been done but talk; something more than talk is necessary. I confess that I personally have not done much, except what has been required of me financially. But, when all is said and done, that is only money. Great effort is needed in this matter, and I hoped that by bringing it to the notice of the Committee others may be seized with the need to do something about it.

I hope the Premier and the Treasurer may consider spear-heading a movement in the community to have something done about this very important matter.

Mr. Mann: Why don't you get Rotary and Legacy interested?

Mr. Dewar: Rotary are interested but they have been disappointed. Frankly, they are not getting very far because of the apathy of the average citizen; it is too far away for him to be interested. But it is not too far away; the people of the Near East are our neighbours.

Mr. Graham: It is another demand on the public pocket; that demand is too big.

Mr. Dewar: Something like 16 major charities in Brisbane today are "door-knocking" once a year. There are so many demands on the public purse that unless a particular need is brought home to the people—for the spastics, the sub-normal children, the Xavier Society or the Montrose Home—it is getting hard to get money even for the

normal charities. Because the need of which I now speak is outside the ambit of thinking of the average man, it has not taken on with the public.

Believe me, I know of nothing that is more important to Australia's future as a nation than to establish the best possible relations with our Near-East neighbours. The young students who go home to Asia are virtual ambassadors for Australia in their own countries. If we can send them home satisfied with our way of life, satisfied that we are interested in their problems and satisfied that this is a country of the type they would like theirs to be, any money spent in doing that will have a greater and more lasting value than much of the money spent on overseas missions in governmental, semi-governmental and private walks of life.

Mr. Newton: Don't you think the Commonwealth Government should do something towards that?

Mr. DEWAR: Yes, I do. All Governments should. I have not gone into the figures, but I will do so when I have the time. I am inclined to think that the Commonwealth Government might consider diverting some of the money that is being made available under the Colombo Plan to helping provide accommodation for these young people. There are 7,000 or 8,000 Asian students attending Australian universities, somewhere between 700 and 800 of them in Queensland, but only about 10 per cent. come under the Colombo Plan while the remaining 80 to 90 per cent. are paying their own way. It seems to me that much of the money being used under the Colombo Plan could well be used in this field. If we can adequately accommodate the young people who can pay their own way in the universities, we will be achieving exactly what we set out to do under the Colombo Plan. We will also be doing it much more easily because we will be sending back as ambassadors happy people satisfied with the deal they have got here.

Before I close, let me express my extreme pleasure at the following announcement, which appeared in the "Telegraph" of 19 October:—

"Pools to Open for Courses

"Brisbane's 20 State primary school swimming pools will be allowed to open during the Christmas-New Year vacation.

"But the Education Minister, Mr. Pizzev, said today the pools could be used for only one purpose—to supplement the current learn-to-swim campaign."

I express without equivocation my pleasure at this move because it is something that has been close to my heart for a long time. The subject was mentioned in the report of the Committee on Youth Problems and I congratulate the Minister for Education and the Cabinet on their decision. I believe it is a very forward step and, together with other plans to be brought to fruition in ensuing

years, it will go a long way towards modelling the minds of our young citizens towards positive thinking.

As the Minister pointed out, the plan to open the school swimming pools over the Christmas period is mainly to supplement the "Learn-to-Swim" campaign already existing in the schools, but that is capable of wide interpretation. I hold the view—and I am sure the Minister will agree with me—that if a child can already swim, he should not be debarred from taking part. Ideally, once a child is a proficient swimmer he should be trained to be a proficient life-saver.

There is no end to the possibilities of the scheme. Many children in the schools are capable swimmers and I should not like to see them debarred from participation if indeed the school committees can arrange for an instructor on life-saving to train them. Each of us is his brother's keeper. It is not sufficient that we should learn to swim to save our lives, because we have a responsibility to our fellow-man. If every one of our children was trained in the rudiments of life-saving and could go to the assistance of another child who could not swim, how much more important those children would be in the community. How much more important the child becomes to himself, also, because he becomes a citizen who has a responsibility to his fellow-man. I think that is the greatest thing we can inculcate into our rising generation.

I understand that, generally speaking, the plan will work along the lines that the school committees will be responsible for enrolling the pupils, organising classes, and arranging finances, including the collection of fees and paying expenses. Any surplus moneys will be paid to the school committees' funds. The committees will pay the instructors, make arrangements for the operation, maintenance and cleaning of pools, and exercise a general supervision over school property. The Department of Education will approve of instructors engaged by school committees and provide the names of suitably qualified teachers who would be available. It will pay the costs of filling and cleaning the pools once a week and of operating and cleaning filtered pools. It will be laid down quite definitely that only qualified instructors will be allowed to engage in this work, and the rate of payment will be laid down by the department. It will also be laid down that these instructors can take no more than 35 pupils and that if there are more than this number a second instructor will have to be engaged.

In general, the Department of Education will lay down a set of rules for the running of this scheme, of which I heartily approve. I believe that any school committee that is interested in going into this field will find it very easy to co-operate with the department. A scale of fees will be arranged between the department and those concerned. I have

nothing but praise for the scheme, I agree that it is a step in the right direction, and I heartily commend Cabinet for its decision.

Mr. Pizzey: The initiative will have to come from the school committee.

Mr. DEWAR: Yes. Any school committee desirous of embarking upon the scheme need only approach the department. I am sure they will find the department very co-operative.

An Opposition Member: Who will obtain the revenue?

Mr. DEWAR: Any profits that are made after the instructors are paid will go back to the school committee. The department will arrange for suitable instructors and the committee will pay them. The department will pay the cost of filling and cleaning the pools once a week, and, in the case of filtered pools, it will also pay the cost of filtering them.

Mr. Mann: Does the department subsidise the installation of filters?

Mr. DEWAR: That is done already. As a matter of fact, there has been an entirely new approach, and I am not saying this in a political sense. I commend the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues on their recent decision in regard to swimming pools. The hon. member who interjected knows as well as I do that the standard practice was to subsidise on a 50/50 basis the bare necessities of stands and pools. Only in the last two or three months Cabinet have decided—

Mr. Walsh: To cut it down.

Mr. DEWAR: They have not cut it down. They do not look at it in the way that hon. members opposite looked at it when they were in office. They look at it through rose-coloured glasses, not with jaundiced eyes.

Mr. Walsh: The Treasurer has given a warning that he is going to cut it down.

Mr. DEWAR: No. If the Treasurer is going to cut anything down, he does it first and tells us about it afterwards. The Nundah State School has started a Friday night swimming club. Already 300 children have enrolled. Any child aged 8 years and upwards who can swim more than one length of the pool can join the club. The department has undertaken the whole of the cost of painting the stands and installing lighting. The policy is designed to help school committees.

Mr. Houston: For nothing?

Mr. DEWAR: Yes. It is a recent Cabinet decision. If the hon. member wants to get in on it he had better get moving. It is the new Governmental approach on these matters. There is no niggardly treatment any more. They had better get a Government representative in the hon. member's electorate. Details of the Government's intention were published in the Press. Cabinet reached this

decision, which is part of the new approach to the utilisation of school facilities outside school hours. I believe it will play a great part in the moulding of future citizens, and I commend Cabinet for this step in the right direction.

At the risk of being accused of having only one thing on my mind, let me refer to an article that appeared in "The Sunday Mail". I hope that I am not misquoting the name of the organisation, but I think it was the Licensed Victuallers' Association or the Queensland Hotel-keepers' Association—at least its name was indicative of a body of hotel proprietors—who said that they were going to seek amending legislation so that young men of 18 years of age would be permitted to drink in public bars. Their argument was that if youths were old enough to fight for their country they should be permitted to drink in hotels. I have an open mind on that matter. They said they would also ask for legislation that would have the effect of keeping young children out of beer gardens after 6.30 p.m. I can do nothing but commend that move.

Mr. Mann: You should reject the 18-year-olds drinking, too.

Mr. DEWAR: I made no comment on that. At the moment I am commenting on the exclusion of children from beer gardens after 6.30 p.m. We made a similar suggestion in the recommendations of the Committee on Youth Problems—and I congratulate the "Telegraph" newspaper for keeping our suggestions alive.

Mr. Walsh: Be careful or you will not get your name in "The Courier-Mail" any more.

Mr. DEWAR: Some people live for publicity and some do not.

At the time it was suggested that we would be running up against the interests of the liquor trade in making that recommendation. I did not believe that. I am talking about the distributors of liquor now. I did not believe it because two men who run hotels are particularly good friends of mine—

Opposition Members: Ah!

Mr. DEWAR: They are in Rotary with me. They are very good citizens or they would not be in Rotary.

Mr. Walsh: I hope they are licensed hotels.

Mr. DEWAR: So do I. They indicated to me how repugnant it was to them to see children in their beer gardens. Therefore I did not consider that we were cutting across their views. It would not have made any difference if we had, because we put it in our report as we thought it was right; we still do.

I was very pleased to see that comment in the week-end Press by that association of hotel-keepers. When the Government are next thinking of amending the Liquor Act consideration should be given to ensuring, if

not by legislation then by regulation or in some other manner, that children are not permitted to go into beer gardens after 6 o'clock or 6.30, or whatever time they think fit. It is not sufficient to legislate that children must not go into beer gardens at that time; we must also see to it that the gate is shut to prevent people getting round the law by leaving their children outside locked in motor-cars.

A colleague of mine has said that we should have a law dealing with those who contribute to the delinquency of minors. I agree. He said that he would class people who lock their children in cars outside these places as contributing to the delinquency of minors. I want to make sure that, if legislation is passed to prevent children from entering beer gardens at certain times, a loophole is not left through which some people can escape.

Finally, I appeal to every hon. member to inculcate into the public mind the need for action in regard to Asian students and the other matters I have mentioned.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (4.57 p.m.), in reply: This year's Budget debate has followed the typical pattern of allowing hon. members to raise an infinite width of subject covering items such as aboriginals and beer gardens, probing every part of the State and dealing with almost every aspect of it by illustration. I did not detect in any of those more general matters any attack on the Government to which I should reply. Of course, various suggestions were made and I propose to confine what I have to say to those observations that dealt with the finances of the State.

I feel impelled to say that that does not leave me a great number of suggestions to deal with, because a very small percentage of hon. members chose on this occasion to confine themselves to financial subjects. Mixed in with some quite pointed and well-informed observations were two or three on the subject of the Budget that I and my officers have found completely incomprehensible. Whatever message they sought to convey, I must confess, completely eluded me.

As I listened to some of them I was reminded of that lovely story of Sir William Morris Hughes who on one occasion was sitting on the front bench in charge of the House and getting rather testy and irritated while someone spoke for about an hour. When his relief came in, in order to pick up the threads from Sir William he asked him first, "How long has he been speaking?" Whereupon "Billy," after the question was asked two or three times at increased pitch so that he could hear it, proceeded in that inimitable manner of his, and with real Australian fluency, to say that the "So-and-so" had spoken for an hour, and that he thought

he would never sit down. So the relieving Minister said, "What was he talking about?" "Talking about?," said Billy, "He didn't say."

I must confess that as I listened to some of the observations on the Budget I was surprised to find items to which I cannot reply because I could not find the message that was being conveyed to the Committee.

I shall deal with the two main points or observations—perhaps three. The first was the suggestion that the State is drifting into a position of real financial difficulty. Then there were some observations on the subject of rail quadruplication, and finally there was much comment from a number of hon. members on the reduced vote for irrigation. I propose to say something on each matter.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made rail quadruplication one of the main points of his attack. At first he suggested we had stopped the work, and later he qualified that to some extent by saying we had slowed it almost to a standstill.

I have had to make this point before: I do not know to what trouble the hon. gentleman goes to study the Budget and the various supporting papers that are put into his hands and into the hands of all hon. members before they address themselves to this important matter.

If the hon. member for Kedron had looked at the Estimates he would have found the following figures for appropriation and expenditure or pure quadruplication:—

| Year | Appropriation | Expenditure |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1955-1956 | 480,000 | 536,000 |
| 1956-1957 | 550,000 | 643,000 |
| 1957-1958 | 650,000 | 860,000 |
| 1958-1959 | 992,000 | 1,004,000 |

In the year just concluded, 1959-1960, although the appropriation was reduced to £750,000, it was possible through short-spending in other loan funds to maintain expenditure on quadruplication at slightly above the expenditure for the previous year, and it reached the record sum of £1,031,367. If he takes the trouble to look at the Estimates this year, he will find that the amount appropriated is £1,276,000, an all-time record, even making allowances for an escalation in wages.

It is obvious that he did not study these figures before he made the statement that the Government had stopped work on quadruplication, and later that we had slowed it down to a standstill. He threw into his review of the Budget impressions he formed from some partial observations of some of the functioning of quadruplication. As so many hon. members have expressed themselves on the subject, I think I should give the whole picture so that they will understand what we are doing and the purpose.

Quadruplication first emerged in railway policy in the year 1947, when it was wrapped up in a common parcel with electrification.

It was simply dismissed at that time as a slight extra in the programme of electrification. In 1947 its total requirement or estimated cost according to the committee that inquired into it was a relatively few million pounds.

It first appeared as a separate item in the railway works programme for 1950-1951. Its total estimated cost was £2,091,000. In the subsequent year's programme it was shown as £3,420,000, the following year £4,500,000, and then for three years running, which takes us to the end of the period of the previous Government, it was shown at the round figure of £5,500,000. That was the estimate of the total requirement for quadruplication. In our first year in office the railways again put the programme down at £6,000,000 as the requirement for the cost of quadruplication. In our first year in office it was perfectly obvious to us that this was simply a figure pulled out of the sky; there was no proper estimate; there was no detailed plan. In fact, it is still not complete, as I will show hon. members.

Mr. Duggan: That is completely untrue. We had Mr. Webster, the chief engineer in New South Wales, on it for a period of 12 months. Part of the trouble was that they could not make him available to us for long enough to do it. He is probably one of the greatest authorities on quadruplication in the Commonwealth.

Mr. HILEY: Does the hon. gentleman say there was a detailed assessed plan of the cost of quadruplication?

Mr. Duggan: No, but you say this figure was pulled out of the air.

Mr. HILEY: The figures put down for quadruplication were simply pulled out of the air.

Mr. Duggan: You are trying to justify it now.

Mr. HILEY: When we started to press the department to get some reality in the estimate in 1958-1959, they then came in with an estimate for the quadruplication of £15,500,000. The latest figure, or the most recent figure, is £20,014,300. It is perfectly obvious that this loose approach to a commitment of this nature involved an expenditure of magnitude and stupendous moment, unrealised at the time by the Railway Department, because nobody had sat down and planned and taken out detailed estimates to know what its true cost was going to be. Without any complete plan so that they knew where they were heading they started working here, there and everywhere, from Northgate to Corinda.

Mr. Duggan: What was your plan for £100,000,000? When you were in Opposition you said we should spend £100,000,000. I went through your plan and you had all sorts of pneumatic tyres and all sorts of things. We have not seen one single item of them. I

went through your speech the other day and you have not done one single thing that you advocated when you were in Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HILEY: Let me finish. The hon. gentleman is always very restive under the whip.

Mr. Duggan: No, I am not.

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member is always very restive.

Mr. Duggan: You think you are the whipmaster all the time; that is the trouble.

Mr. Hanlon: You do not seem to be able to answer questions.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HILEY: The next thing I draw attention to is the Government's approach. The Government felt that to get any use out of the quadruplication, on which there had already been spent approximately £9,000,000, it was essential to stop this disjointed approach. Until the last section was completed no value could be got out of the money expended, and the present policy is to concentrate on finishing the section between Roma Street and Corinda, where it may be used. I ask the Committee to observe that from Roma Street out as far as Mayne, although there is no quadruplication section, in a single way there is at least the facility of a duplicated line because there is one section running round through Normanby, and the other section through Brunswick Street out to Mayne. Our observation is that there is not the same degree of pressure as there was in the single section with no alternative relief between Roma Street and Corinda.

The next thing I think I should draw attention to is that anyone who studies the reports of the Commissioner for Railways will come to no other conclusion than that the load on the track has fallen since this scheme was first conceived, and that the number of passenger journeys has shown a steady fall over the period. The tonnages of goods carried are also down. Over that same period trains have been built to a larger size, more powerful locomotives are being used, and, to carry the same volume of goods, fewer trains are required.

The Government's policy on quadruplication is to finish the section on which so much work has been done and try to get some value out of the £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 that has already been expended.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. HILEY: I am talking about quadruplication, not about the whole of the roads.

Mr. Duggan: I can quote you the figures if you like. Even on your own estimate you have risen from £15,000,000 to £20,000,000.

Mr. HILEY: I said the most recent estimate for quadruplication is £20,014,300.

Mr. Walsh: It could go up to £100,000,000 ultimately.

Mr. HILEY: What! Quadruplication? The hon. member must be out of his mind.

Mr. Walsh: The way you are talking about it now, it could.

Mr. HILEY: What I am trying to tell the Committee is that we have now asked the department to take out what never existed before, and that is some proper plans and estimates. This is the figure they now come up with. Our complaint is that the job was commenced with no clear picture of what was involved. The railways themselves did not know. We drifted into this great financial commitment, and at least we are setting out not to stop quadruplication but to get some sensible recovery out of the vast sum of money that has already been spent.

The next subject on which much was said was irrigation. It is quite true that the Vote for irrigation is down this year. Again let me tell the Committee some of the reasons that actuated the Government in reducing it this year and see what the reaction is to some of those considerations. The policy of the Government is to examine an irrigation project not merely in the light of the size of the concrete or masonry construction or of the area of water it will impound. In our judgment, those things are wasted unless they can be tied to an opportunity for successful settlers. We believe the cause of irrigation is harmed, not helped, by building a great dam, impounding a magnificent quantity of water and starting settlements on which settlers cannot possibly live. If that is irrigation, it is not the type of irrigation that interests the Government.

The second measure we apply is the measure of capital outlay per settler for whom provision is made. The third is that we look for some slight degree of return. I will illustrate each of those. First let us look at one or two projects. There is a whole host of them that could be referred to. Let us take, for example, the figures of the average amount of money needed per settler settled on an irrigation project. Take the St. George settlement. The charge to the State is of the order of £918,000. Advances to settlers in that area are £96,000. There are 18 settlers. The amount spent on the average per settler accommodated on that area is £56,337. £56,337 to settle one settler!

The Dawson Valley project, which, it is true, was constructed a good deal earlier, shows up much better. The charge to the State to date is £1,460,000. Advances outstanding are £109,000, that is, advances from the Agricultural Bank. There are 61 settlers, and the average amount that had to be outlaid by the State to settle each settler on the scheme was £25,722.

In the case of the Burdekin scheme the expenditure by the State was £3,213,000.

Advances outstanding are £950,000. There were 144 settlers settled on the Burdekin and the average expenditure per settler was £28,910.

Mareeba-Dimbulah, which, quite frankly, can be regarded as the most promising of the big schemes, at this stage is only half developed, and I ask hon. members to bear that in mind when they hear these figures. So far the State has expended £12,730,000, there are 251 settlers, and the average cost per settler is £50,768.

I do not need to tell you, Mr. Taylor, that it should be possible to secure land settlement, even irrigated land settlement, without an outlay as high as £50,000 per settler in some cases, and that has been one of the disturbing factors that has worried us. We think that these schemes start off with the settler over-capitalised and the scheme over-capitalised, and that, no matter how well the scheme progresses, the capital outlaid in order to get one man settled makes that type of settlement a very doubtful economy.

Mr. Hilton: If you study the history of other major schemes throughout Australia, you will find the same over-capitalisation. Millions of pounds have been written off all of them.

Mr. HILEY: Some of them have been much better than others.

Mr. Houston: Do you take into account natural development?

Mr. HILEY: If I took that into account, our outlay would be higher. When the State commences a scheme in a new area, it is necessary to provide roads, schools, police stations, and so on. If we took the total expenditure, the expenditure for each settler would be much higher.

Mr. Houston: That dam will affect far more than the number of settlers you have mentioned. It will supply other parts of the State.

Mr. HILEY: The position with Mareeba-Dimbulah is that whilst there will be temporary use of the water for electricity purposes, every gallon of the water in the Tinaroo storage will eventually be needed for irrigation. That is why we have to build a dam on a tributary of the Barron River for a hydro-electric station.

Mr. Houston: Have you calculated the number of gallons a year that each settler would use?

Mr. HILEY: The number of settlers is 250 at the moment, but there will eventually be an increase. However, the cost for each settler will still be very high. I could not tell the hon. member the number of gallons that will be used by each settler. The Department of Irrigation and Water Supply will quote it as the number of acre-feet, and it will vary with the crops that a man grows.

I want hon. members to contrast that type of result with the result under the newer approach used when my colleague, Mr. Muller, was in charge of this department. He introduced the Borumba dam and the Moogerah dam. In each case the estimate is that there will be a small return on the capital outlay. I should have given hon. members our experience with some of these other schemes, but I shall give them later. For the Borumba dam, the estimated capital cost is £2,340,000. It is estimated that the revenue will be £40,350 against an annual expenditure of £14,000, giving a surplus of £26,350, which will at least provide a tiny contribution towards the interest and redemption on the sum outlay.

Mr. Hanlon: That is not a developed area, is it?

Mr. HILEY: The point is that it is better at this stage of a country's development to materially improve the productive capacity of established farms that are reasonably close to markets than to spend fantastic sums establishing one new settler in an area remote from markets and with all the attendant problems.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. HILEY: I know my colleague, the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, is concerned about that. Within a very short period there can be over-production of tobacco in Australia. I do not think that will happen at Tinaroo. I think they will sell their leaf when many other places shut up. At the moment the market is very fully supplied, and buyers will be discriminating. The Western Australian leaf has been of rather poor quality and buyers will not have it at any price. The same thing could happen in some of the other areas. No-one should imagine that there is an unlimited tobacco market in Australia. Local leaf is providing about 35 per cent of the Australian demand, and the feeling in the industry is that there is a limit to which that percentage can be pushed.

The second dam that Mr. Muller started was at Moogerah. The estimated capital outlay was £1,382,000, the estimated revenue £27,000, the estimated expenditure £10,000, with an estimated surplus on operations of £17,000, giving a return of 1.2 per cent. on the total amount expended.

Mr. Hilton: No new settlers.

Mr. HILEY: But an infinite increase in the production of existing settlers.

Frankly, we have gone as far as our revenue capacity will allow us with the type of dam that costs enormous amounts to establish but does not in many instances pay even its annual operating costs. The increased interest on the State Public Debt is a matter about which I have made open reference to several hon. members, including the hon.

member for Bundaberg. He acknowledged that the increasing servicing of the Public Debt was a problem that had to be recognised. One of the ways we recognised it during Mr. Muller's regime was to try to find a more productive method of providing irrigation, and he started Borumba and Moogerah, both of which promise a much better performance than those I am about to refer to.

The capital cost figures I am about to quote are taken from the Auditor-General's report. The capital cost of the St. George project was £863,119, collections for the year amounted to £9,362, and to run the project we had to expend £18,091. We had a deficiency of £8,729 on the year's operations. The Dawson Valley scheme shows a surplus of £8,894. It was established many years ago when construction costs were much lower. The Mareeba-Dimbulah scheme, as I indicated earlier, is showing much better promise, and last year showed a surplus of annual income—water charges and so on—over annual outgoings for maintenance and supervision, of £5,174. The three Burdekin projects are treated separately in the accounts. Dalbeg showed a deficiency of £1,451, Millaroo a deficiency of £4,605, and Clare a deficiency of £7,827.

The total expenditure by the Government to date on the St. George, Dawson Valley, Mareeba-Dimbulah, Dalbeg, Millaroo, and Clare projects has been £16,381,000. Deducting the surpluses from the deficiencies we find that the annual deficiency in merely running these schemes is a net deficiency of £8,544. The interest and redemption each year on that £16,000,000-odd, which has to be found out of the general revenue of the State, is £860,000 a year.

Mr. Walsh: It is a Treasurer's headache.

Mr. HILEY: It is a State headache. That is why Mr. Muller, when Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, said to Cabinet, "We have to find some better method for irrigation in which the outlay by the settler is reduced and the chances of at least covering our annual charges are improved." It was on that basis that he brought to Cabinet the Borumba and Moogerah schemes, both of which appeared to be a considerable improvement on the other schemes I have mentioned.

Mr. Walsh: The State could benefit from these things in the years to come.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, but it is the old story of somebody starving to death while they are waiting for the gold-mine to come good.

Mr. Walsh: You must plan ahead.

Mr. HILEY: I agree, but you can plan so far ahead that you starve in the meantime.

Mr. Colin Clark, who gave this State such distinguished service for many years, repeatedly warned, in regard to the planning and development of this State, about embarking upon schemes the dividends from which

would come 50 or 100 years hence when there was so much developmental work that would bring a current return, waiting to be carried out.

Mr. Hilton: Taking the Australian position as a whole, the Commonwealth Government are already receiving by way of increased taxation, excise and so on a big return from the developmental work carried out.

Mr. HILEY: I could not agree with the hon. member more, and until there is a change of attitude it will be impossible for the States to keep appropriating these funds for schemes on which they will get a long-distance return, unless they get a better share of the proceeds that the Commonwealth receives. I think that is a fair summary of the position.

Mr. Walsh: I think it is a bit late; the Commonwealth has the handcuffs on the States now.

Mr. HILEY: We might be able to shake them loose a little.

Let us be quite candid about this matter. Looking at several of the lessons we are learning from our appropriation practices in the past, we see that mistakes that have been made have to be corrected. Take, for instance, the St. George scheme. The former Minister for Public Lands was a practical farmer of many years' standing and after several visits to St. George and observation of what was going on there, together with discussions with the settlers, he came to Cabinet and told us that he was very much afraid that the lands at St. George were not suitable for most types of cultivation under irrigation. The soil was too dense, too puggy, would not drain well and, because of that, its capacity to grow crops under irrigation was not what was desirable.

Mr. Hilton: When the scheme was first considered, experts in the Department of Agriculture and Stock gave a report different from that.

Mr. HILEY: That could be so.

An Opposition Member: Their areas were too small.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. I do not need to remind the Committee of the unhappy experience in the Burdekin. There again a great deal of expensive work was carried out on soils that proved unsuitable, and where agricultural and cultivation problems, such as nut grass and a build-up of salinity in the soil were never properly assessed, and it had to be found out by unhappy experience.

Mr. Bennett: There is good soil in the Burdekin.

A Government Member: You would not know.

Mr. Bennett: I lived there for 25 years.

Mr. HILEY: Is it because the soils in the Burdekin were so suitable for irrigation that

this Government and the Commonwealth Government have had to write off hundreds of thousands of pounds to save War-service settlers there from bankruptcy? It shows how easy it is to be lulled into a sense of security through inadequate testing. We must not again run into any of those traps. We cannot afford to repeat a situation in which young men, full of high hope and courage, are prepared to devote years of their lives battling and putting in all the money they have, simply because nobody has taken the trouble to properly probe and test and to ensure that when the water is put there and when the farms are established they will, in fact, be reasonably capable of profitable working.

The result is that we have through the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply found it necessary to take a tighter grip on some of the engineering projects. I remind the Committee of the costs of the Marian Weir and the Bonshaw Weir. Those are two cases in which frankly there was a faulty engineering approach. You, Mr. Taylor, are familiar with the Bonshaw Weir. I think each of the weirs on the MacIntyre River was expected to cost approximately £30,000. The Bonshaw Weir—if it has not been washed out four times, it has certainly been washed out three times.

Mr. Hilton: Once.

Mr. HILEY: And the river has gone round the end twice. I have seen photographs of it. The soft soils on the banks have simply allowed the stream to go round it.

Mr. Hilton: That was in the big flood a few years ago.

Mr. HILEY: Yes.

Mr. Walsh: Slight erosion.

Mr. HILEY: Slight erosion! The plain fact of the matter is that against an original estimate of £30,000, the Bonshaw Weir has cost the State to date, according to the Auditor-General, £270,825. We think that some of these things have been happening because they have been rushed a bit too much; that there has been too much of an effort to get a big spectacular thing to wave before the public and blow the trumpet about for political purposes.

Mr. Hilton: I do not think that is a fair statement. If the engineers and the experts urged the construction of these things, whom are we to be guided by?

Mr. Walsh: It sounds as if you are not as generous as I was when Treasurer.

Mr. HILEY: In this direction I am regretting the hon. member's generosity.

Mr. Walsh: Still a good bet.

Mr. HILEY: Would the hon. gentleman say the Marian Weir is a good investment?

Mr. Walsh: I am not saying anything about the Marian Weir.

Mr. HILEY: Would he say the Arthur Jones Weir was a good investment? Arthur Jones was one of the loveliest men who ever sat in this House, and the greatest disservice ever done to his memory was the naming of this useless block of concrete on the Burnett after him. What about that one on the Alice River near Barcaldine—another completely and utterly useless weir? The only purpose it serves is as a place where the young people of Barcaldine can go with their trailer speedboats on week-ends. They at least get the advantage of a swimming pool near the town, but as an irrigation project it is a scandal.

Mr. Walsh: What is the return on the Nanango Weir?

Mr. HILEY: I have the full list here. The Nanango Weir on Barker's Creek cost £21,656, and I have no revenue recorded against it.

The Government do not propose to turn their back on irrigation; what they propose to do is to follow further along the path initiated during the period when the hon. member for Fassifern was Minister. He set out to get irrigation works where they would serve relatively more people for every £1,000,000 expended and where at least—far from losing money on the annual conduct—we would recover the cost of the annual conduct and get a little contribution towards interest and redemption of the outlay. I think that fairly sets out the attitude of the Government on the subject of irrigation, and explains the little easing-back that occurred this year.

Mr. Walsh: Is there any assistance for farm water supplies?

Mr. HILEY: We are extending that every year.

Mr. Walsh: They are turning down the investigations in the Bundaberg area.

Mr. HILEY: Probably they have been swamped out. It is so popular that they have probably been swamped by the number of applications coming in. It is one of the things that is dearest to my heart because we do not have to spend £25,000 or £50,000 on a settler to get a worth-while result. In some cases, for an expenditure of as low as £1,500 or £2,500 we are able to provide a settler with a fluent water resource where previously he was without it. In other words, our money goes much further with the farms water supply scheme. It is something that is terribly dear to my heart and that is why each year we have been adding to it. I can tell hon. members that I should like to see it go much higher. It is one of the best of the lot, and on top of that we get full recovery of the money. That enables us to make repayments to the Loan Fund and help other settlers in their turn by the capital revolving.

These notes may appear a little disjointed but I will endeavour to go through the

speeches of hon. members. The hon. member for Condamine suggested that when loans were made available by the Central Bank or the Agricultural Bank redemption should not commence until the property is brought into production. The Agricultural Bank extends a period, in the case of a loan to a settler in a new development, in which no demand for redemption is made, and thus allows the new settler to get into production. There is no fixed rule but it is generally up to three years; on occasions it has gone up to five years. If there is any doubt as to what has been said, the explanation will be in "Hansard" for the guidance of any hon. member who may be advising one of his constituents in a new development area.

The next matter that attracted considerable discussion—I thought we had exploded this bogey last year—was that once again doubt was cast on the value of the new tax reimbursement formula. The plain fact of the matter is that this State gained much from that new tax reimbursement formula. Let me again remind the Committee of the trend of the figures. Starting from 1956-1957 the tax grant was £27.3 million; that was £2.7 million over the previous year. The next it was £30.8 million, or £3.5 million over the previous year. The next year, 1958-1959, which was the last year of the old basis, it was £31.9 million, an increase of £1.1 million over the previous year, and the average annual increase over the six years of the previous arrangement was £1.7 million a year.

Let us look at what happened in the first two years under which this new scheme was operating. In the first year we jumped from £31.9 million to £36.4 million, an increase of £4.5 million. This year we go up again to £39.9 million, a further increase of £3.5 million against the average increase of £1.7 million over the previous six years. In the first two years of the scheme's operation, our average increase has been £4,000,000. Had we stuck to the old formula and had the measure of assistance from the Commonwealth Government remained at the level demonstrated in the last year of the old formula, we would have been at least £2½ million worse off. I say quite plainly to the Committee that, had it not been for the better formula, we could never have withstood this year's requirement of £4,000,000 for margins.

Mr. Walsh: When you refer to margins, are you referring to them as applying particularly to the Public Service?

Mr. HILEY: Yes, to employees of the State.

It is quite true that the corrective factor on wages always lags one year behind and, if the movement in wage levels carries the normal quarterly adjustment of a moderate amount, a few shillings, it can be encompassed without any harm or any strain on

the system. In this year there comes, completely new, completely unexpected, and of very great magnitude, this margins requirement of £4,000,000. We will catch up with it next year. It is quite true that the lag was never designed to take care of an increased amount of that magnitude. The hon. member for Burdekin, I think it was, suggested that there should have been a two-part grant, in much the same way as you pay your pay-as-you-earn income tax, your workers' compensation premium, and so on, and I might say that we tried to persuade the Commonwealth to do that but they would not play ball. They said, "You have this arrangement—it is expressed to last for six years—and we are not going to alter it."

Mr. Newton: Labour had the same problem with two marginal increases—in 1954-1955, I think it was—and that was on the old formula.

Mr. HILEY: If there is another, and substantial, movement in the general wage structure, then the formula will produce a period of difficulty in the year in which it is felt. If we catch up in the next year, I still prophesy what can be discovered by anyone who cares to study the effects of that "betterment" factor when it comes to the closing years of the six-year agreement. I will tell you now what I think the Commonwealth will realise, and that is that the cumulative effect of the "betterment" factor by the time we come to the 4th, 5th and 6th years of the arrangement will hit the Commonwealth pretty hard. Take for example—and this is a quick way to look at it, in precise arithmetic—the margins cost us an extra £4,000,000. Next year the effect of margins, through our formula calculation, gives that £4,000,000 plus 10 per cent., so we pick up £400,000 because our wage structure goes up £4,000,000. That carries on right through the life of the formula; each subsequent increase means plus 10 per cent.—plus 10 per cent., and so on. If anyone sits down and works out the figures stretching out to the end of the sixth year, I think you will agree with what we have concluded, and with what I am pretty sure the Commonwealth realise. That is that this "betterment" factor will leave them hanging onto the tail of the tiger, which will drag them far over the financial landscape unless the cost of living completely stabilises and stops the inflationary whirl in which we are living.

Mr. Newton: Does that apply to quarterly adjustments, too?

Mr. HILEY: Yes, it does.

Mr. Walsh: As far as the Public Service is concerned, it does.

Mr. HILEY: No, the corrective factor is on the average wage level in Australia.

Mr. Hilton: What about the immediate benefit to the Commonwealth Government by way of extra taxation? You referred to that.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, I know. That is one of the distorting factors. I have gone candidly on record as saying that I think it is unfair.

Mr. Hilton: But that is a big compensating factor with the Commonwealth so far as the 10 per cent. "betterment" factor is concerned.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. I still think it will be found that, by the fifth and sixth years, they will have their tongues hanging out when they find out what the figure is going to be.

Mr. Walsh: I will be surprised if they do not get it back from you—with a profit, too.

Dr. Delamothe interjected.

Mr. HILEY: I had better not spend too much time on this, if the hon. member does not mind. I had better carry through or it will upset some plans.

Let me quickly refer to one or two other statements that were made. Inevitably the question of unemployment was raised and I do want to correct one statement. I have no doubt it was said in the belief that it was true. The hon. member for Hawthorne said—

"It is a proven fact—and this is borne out by figures—that our percentage of unemployed is higher than that in any other State."

That is not true. The September, 1960, figures have been released by the Commonwealth Statistician for every State. The percentage of unemployment in Queensland was shown in the table at 1.1 per cent., and I have never hidden my view that I do not like to see it as high as even 1.1 per cent. I always like to see unemployment kept as low as it is humanly possible to keep it. But it is true that in Western Australia the rate was 1.2 per cent., and in Tasmania it was 1.4 per cent., so the hon. member for Hawthorne was incorrect in saying that it is higher in Queensland than in any other State.

It was also said that we had done a tremendous amount of sacking of Government employees, and the whole implication was that we were employing fewer people than were employed by our predecessors in office. Here we have some very interesting figures. They were put into the hands of hon. members not by me but in the Public Service Commissioner's report that was tabled in the Chamber recently. One hon. member quoted extensively from the report. I ask hon. members to have a look at the table showing that in the year 1956 the employment by the Railway Department, the Department of Education and Migration, the Department of Main Roads and other departments and services, totalled 65,618. In 1957, at 30 June, the number fell.

Mr. Newton: It was a bad year.

Mr. HILEY: It was a bad year for the Labour administration, because they sacked hundreds of building workers and this Government re-employed them.

Mr. Newton: The Commonwealth Government were responsible for that.

Mr. HILEY: The number fell to 64,067 in 1957. What has happened since then? In 1958 it rose to 65,325, and today it is 67,084.

Mr. Hanlon: Does that include Mr. Gair?

Mr. HILEY: It will be 67,085 now.

I want to make it clear that it is impossible for any Government to keep every man in a constant job in a constant place. When one hon. member was developing this theme, I referred by interjection to the rather tart expression by the then Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Hon. J. B. Chifley, when he said—I do not know his precise words, but this was the effect of them—"It is beyond the capacity of any Government to continuously provide employment for every man in a position where he is able to continuously hold his wife's hand under the shadow of the town hall clock." If we refer to the tables, the plain fact is that Labour, in its last year in office, had reduced the number of its employees, and they did that, mark you, in spite of being in a position to hand over very substantial cash reserves of £15,000,000, as the hon. member for Bundaberg said. That is what I always used to taunt him with—that there was a good deal of the miser in his make-up when he was quite prepared to sit on millions of pounds of cash in investments and at the same time put off hundreds of building workers. As a matter of fact, as was shown when we came into office, our immediate predecessors in office had passed a Cabinet decision to dispense with the services of 800 railway workers immediately after the election, and we know the trouble we had in saving them from being sacked.

Mr. Hilton: That had not been passed by Cabinet.

Mr. HILEY: If that is so, the hon. member's ministerial colleague marked the papers incorrectly, because I personally saw a document endorsed by him authorising their dismissal from the Monday after the elections.

Mr. Walsh: You know that Cabinet could not do that. The department takes the responsibility. You could not make a Cabinet decision that so many employees are to be put off.

Mr. HILEY: I actually saw the initials of the responsible Minister, who was the Hon. Thomas Moores. I saw them myself on the papers authorising the dismissal of 800 men.

Mr. Walsh: That decision would have been made by the department long before Mr. Moores became Minister for Transport.

Mr. HILEY: All I can say is that the only ministerial authority on it was that of the Hon. Thomas Moores. We did not carry it out. We managed to keep these men on—with considerable strain and inconvenience.

Mr. Newton: There have been 300 building workers dismissed this year from the Department of Public Works.

Mr. HILEY: There will always be some dismissals. As has been disclosed in answers to questions asked in the House, the fact of the matter is that the number of employees in the Department of Public Works at this moment is the highest it has ever been. There have never been more tradesmen employed by that department. In certain industries you cannot keep a continual rolling sequence of jobs so that every man is in completely unbroken employment.

Mr. Newton: It is only because you have many men employed on the University building in Townsville that it has picked up in the last few months.

Mr. HILEY: What about all the high schools and all the other public building that is going on?

Mr. Newton: They have not started yet.

Mr. HILEY: Oh, dear!

The next matter I want to deal with concerns the observations about the "starving" of the North. I have some figures to give hon. members, although I realise the source of the complaint does not carry much weight with the Committee. But as similar statements are made so often it is necessary to give the Committee figures. They are taken from a summary prepared by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works that analyses the capital works and developmental expenditure. They show the per-capita expenditure of the several divisions of the State. In the Northern Division the per-capita expenditure on capital works and development as shown at £72.4 or £72 8s. In the Central Division it is £54 6s., in the Southern Division, excluding the metropolitan area, £50 4s., and within the metropolitan area £25 16s. The analysis clearly shows that on a per-capita basis the Northern Division of the State gets the biggest expenditure per head of any division. Of course, I am not quarrelling with that.

Mr. Walsh: Allowing for the depreciated currency your figures are almost identical with those when the Labour Government were in office, but the Opposition at that time would never believe it.

Mr. HILEY: At least the hon. member agrees with me on this point, but the hon. member for Townsville South is not right in his arguments. I sometimes wonder whether he ever knows what is going on around him. If he would come out from under that tree of knowledge, and get around, he would see what is going on, and not seriously make such observations.

I want to spend a little time in saying how much I appreciate the contribution of the hon. member for Baroona, who obviously spent a great deal of time analysing the Budget and studying its implications. I

think that he was careful in his observations. He dealt rather considerably with the tax reimbursement grant, but I think I have already made some answer on that point. He raised the matter of the Succession and Probate Duties Suspense Account, as did also the hon. member for Bundaberg. I do not think that any of the hon. members who have spoken so much about this matter would criticise me for the lack of complete disclosure of what the Government did, and why they did it. I have told the Committee year after year that we had no chance of getting extra money from the Commonwealth Government while they were able to point to our reserves. We had to deliberately get rid of those reserves in order to convince the Commonwealth Government that we must have extra help or we cannot carry on.

Mr. Walsh: Do you agree that is a poor approach on the part of the Commonwealth? The thrifty State is not going to get any consideration.

Mr. HILEY: Wait a minute. Would anyone give extra help to people sitting on millions of reserves?

Mr. Walsh: They gave to other States like South Australia to enable them to reduce their taxation.

Mr. HILEY: That might be, but they were not sitting on millions of reserves. It was an embarrassing position.

Mr. Hilton: The Suspense Account is not a reserve.

Mr. HILEY: In every other State in the Commonwealth it was recognised.

I do not know whether it has ever occurred to hon. members that, in getting rid of these reserves, we could very easily, instead of showing a deficit in those years, have simply brought in some of those trust funds as Labour always did. They never hesitated, and they produced patterns of balanced budgets. I know hon. gentlemen opposite might wonder why it is that their taunts about deficits never took the smile off my face. One of these days it will dawn on them where those deficits that they are talking about have gone to. Where is this great overdraft that, in their minds, they built up as an encumbrance on the future conduct of this State?

As a matter of fact, it was good tactics for us to not only get rid of our reserves but to allow our accounts to present a pattern of deficit in order to be more telling with the Commonwealth.

Mr. Newton: Is that how you made your big splash in the first two and a-half years of office?

Mr. HILEY: Hon. members opposite say it is a big splash; each year we are spending more. We have not gone back. It will slowly dawn upon the minds of hon. members opposite that this year's Budget is a record Budget. It has not occurred to them yet.

1960—2L

Mr. Hanlon: You told us in 1956 that the Government should spend less, not more. That was your solution of the problem.

Mr. Walsh: Mr. Menzies says you are only mortgaging your future by providing for deficits. That is Mr. Menzies' approach.

Mr. HILEY: Do you still feel we should—

Mr. Walsh: I am not agreeing with him.

Mr. HILEY: Look at the accounts and see where the deficits are. One of these days the whole plan of this will dawn on the hon. member. I am sorry if I have succeeded in frightening him.

Mr. Walsh: In your own words you warned this Committee that once you have to start funding deficits out of loan moneys you are in trouble.

Mr. HILEY: I could not agree with the hon. member more, but we have not funded them out of loan moneys so far—not one penny.

The hon. member for Burdekin suggested that there should be a research section in the Treasury. We have a small research section. It was there when I took over the portfolio, and I found it to be extremely useful. I make extensive use of its services in a vast variety of fields. It is impossible for me to further burden officers who are already fully employed, or expect them to use their leisure time to probe and delve for information. It is only by having an organised research section that that is possible, although I suppose I should like to have a bigger section. The Treasury is one department in which the administrative staff has been held in tolerable check, and for the time being only a limited amount of research is possible.

The hon. member for Burdekin put forward a constructive suggestion as to a provisional grant from the Commonwealth. The suggestion of a provisional grant was put forward to the Commonwealth Government, but the proposal was not accepted by them. At least we are able to predict now with tolerable certainty not only our revenue for the year, but also the broad pattern of our revenues for the six-year period, and that was something we could not do previously.

Mr. Bromley: What about stamp duties?

Mr. HILEY: I am discussing revenue and the tax grant. The hon. member has reminded me of the point that actual receipts in stamp duties and succession duties are often at variance with the Budget, and under each of those headings last year we got more than was expected. I point out that the major factors influencing the quantum of stamp duty are the scale of land transactions in the community, on which conveying duty is based, and on activity in the share market. Those are two very important

directions from which stamp duty flows, and they are totally unpredictable. We cannot tell in advance that there is going to be a land boom. If it comes and there are many sales at high prices, the State collects stamp duty proportionate to the turnover, and, although we estimated that there would be a fairly active real-estate market, we did not dream it would surge to the extent it did in the last 12 months, and to that extent the State was fortunate in getting a few hundred thousand pounds more than the estimate.

Mr. Duggan: What are your views about the trend in land sales? Do you think they will continue at approximately the same level as last year?

Mr. HILEY: That is hard to say. We have estimated a modest increase. I cannot see any collapse in land values. My concern rather is that the trend should continue to a far greater extent than it has in the past. In the Budget we have estimated a modest increase in activity.

In the case of death duties, it is even more difficult to predict the death of a particular person or a number of persons. The Premier of New South Wales told me last year, with a grin on his face, "It is very easy for me to balance my budget. Two of the right people died and they were worth £1,500,000." Death duties are the sort of duty that I suppose in a long period average out, but there can be cycles and with the progression in rates of probate and succession duty more revenue can come from this source in one year than another.

Mr. Lloyd: But probate would not be declared in the year of death. Would that be interim assessments?

Mr. HILEY: As a matter of fact, in the really big estates, as there are businesses tied up in them, very often the solicitors and executors will come to the department and ask for an interim grant of probate, and will pay in several hundred thousand pounds so that that grant can be given. The business has to be conducted, and the staff has to be paid and the dealings carried on, and to get that quick grant of probate we have been getting perhaps 85 per cent. of our total entitlement in this matter, whereas with the smaller estates there is not the same reason for urgency and it may take six or nine months before the executors file the particulars so that we may assess them.

Mr. Lloyd: You are able to speed them up.

Mr. HILEY: That may be so.

The hon. member for Burdekin sought the net result of the rail freight increases. It was computed by my officers that the effect of rail freight increases on the basic wage would not exceed 2s. a week. A 2s. increase

in the basic wage would cost the Government a total of approximately £330,000 a year, of which £242,000 would be related to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The anticipated annual increase in rail revenue as a result of the variations is of the order of £2,000,000 a year. Whilst nobody regrets more than I do that this is a factor that adds more to the cost-of-living index, on the balance of things we were forced into the position where we had to seek an extra £2,000,000 of rail revenue. In doing so, we have to expect that during the year we will have to pay a wage increase of the order of £242,000, on the other side of our Consolidated Revenue Fund.

A matter the hon. member for Baroona referred to—I know he said it without any malice—was the way in which we had access to some of the trust accounts in the past and he left the Committee with the feeling that we were handling some of our accounts in a way that was somewhat remiss. I think the best thing to do is to remind him of what was done when his own Government were in power in relation to the Hospital, Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund. During all the years hon. members opposite were in power they simply drew from that fund according to their need. If they were flush, they drew lightly; if they were short, they drew heavily. The best example to be found is in 1955-1956, a year in which they published a deficit even after drawing heavily on the Hospital, Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund; they showed £1,723,000. In that year they drew on the accumulated funds in the Golden Casket Fund to the extent of £1,251,413. We have transferred the entire balance over to our revenue and each year we exhaust it. The result is that for the last two years—and it is also the estimated position for this year—the balance of the fund at the end of the year has been nil. In other words, we take what the Golden Casket earns in the year—not a penny more or a penny less—whereas in previous days they took either a lot, or a little, according to the general state of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Mr. Lloyd: Is that no longer used for the specific purpose?

Mr. HILEY: If the hon. member studies the accounts of the Hospital Vote he will see that the product of the Hospital Fund is carried directly into and taken from the amount required for the conduct of hospitals.

Mr. Lloyd: You can understand the creation of a fund being used for the specific purpose of maternal and child welfare.

Mr. HILEY: Quite true. We do not only accept it; we entirely support it and continue it.

Mr. Lloyd: It is correct.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, exactly.

The charge was that we were playing around with these funds and distorting the

clear picture of the results. I have tried to show that truly the boot was on the other foot and that Labour used the Hospital, Motherhood and Child Welfare Fund as the French peasant uses his sock—they pulled it off at will. The amounts used to jazz around. I have a table here covering 15 years. Sometimes the balance was down as low as £141,000. One year the Labour Government built it up to £2,971,000. Another year, when they were short, they drew £1,251,000 out of it on top of the full intake for the year, and still show a deficit of £1,700,000. In that year, the fact of the matter is, the true deficit was to the order of £3,000,000. The very complaint that the hon. member raised I throw back at him. He simply drew attention to something that was going on in the past and going on to a considerable extent.

Mr. Burrows: You have to admit that the money that was spent by the Labour Government was honest. Most of it was spent on capital works on hospitals whereas now you finance them out of loans.

Mr. HILEY: No, that would not be right. If the hon. member looks it up he will find that is wrong.

The hon. member for Norman came out with one of the most extraordinary statements I have ever heard in the Chamber. It was a classic example of a man talking about something he obviously knows nothing about. He told the Committee—and he was quite unrepentant about it—that Queensland produced two-thirds of Australia's primary exports.

Mr. BROMLEY: I rise to a point of order. The Treasurer said the hon. member for Norman said that.

Mr. HILEY: I meant the hon. member for Hawthorne. I am sorry. I am giving him his old guernsey. It was not Mr. Bromley; it was Mr. Baxter. The total exports, excluding re-exports, from Australia last year were £919,000,000. Of that figure, shipments from Queensland were £181,000,000, or 19.74 per cent. There is no denying—indeed I have often asserted it—that Queensland exports more per capita than the Australian average. We should be proud of that. But to spoil a perfectly good and sound argument by stupidly asserting that Queensland exported two-thirds of the Australian total—I told him at the time he must be out of his mind to make such a statement. Having said so, I felt obliged to give the Committee that information.

Mr. Mann: He might have had his guernsey on back to front.

Mr. HILEY: If not back to front, certainly upside down.

The final matter I want to refer to is the contribution today by the hon. member for Bundaberg. Here I must say that the hon.

member, who just squeezed into the Parliament by the skin of his teeth, and who just squeezed into the debate by the skin of his teeth, too, proceeded in the manner that we who know him have come to understand so well—

Mr. Hilton: He was not the last speaker.

Mr. HILEY: No, but he was not far from it.

Mr. Hilton: He was away ill for a few days.

Mr. HILEY: I am sorry to hear that and if that is the explanation I hope he is soon well. If I drew a wrong inference, he is completely excused. However, he came out with a great torrent of figures picked at random from the Financial Statement and supporting tables. All I say, in kindness to him, is that he will never even faintly comprehend the public finances of the State until he learns to look at the whole picture and then to judge each little figure according to the part it plays in relation to the whole. Several of the matters he raised showed that he was completely confused in what he tried to present to the Committee. For example, he made very much of the claim that there was a difference in the published cash balances as at 30 June 1960. He quoted two figures from pages 3 and 4 of the Financial Statement to confirm what he had said. The cause of his confusion was very simple. One figure was the cash balance of the Trust and Special Funds while the other was the cash balance of all the funds of the State; that is all. He took several minutes this morning to parade this as though it were some fantastic error.

In another case he drew attention to the fact that two balances were set out, different figures. In each case, he said, he was quoting from the 1960 Financial Statement. It is quite true that he was, but in one case he was quoting the balance at the end of the year and in the other he was quoting the balance at the beginning of the year. All I can say is that he has worked very hard and earnestly but without understanding his task. I suggest that he has a singular gift for making mountains out of molehills, and I believe that when his fate inevitably overtakes him at the end of the life of this Parliament, he might be very wise to set up in competition with some of those commercial concerns that specialise in the same field.

I am grateful to hon. members generally for the way in which they have received the Financial Statement. There was no distinct hard tone of complaint, and I have dealt fairly fully with two of the principal matters that were stressed.

Item (Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor) agreed to.

Progress reported.

TREASURY FUNDS INVESTMENT ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (7.32 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

I presented a full outline of the contents of the Bill on the introductory stage. It contains only these simple enabling measures to allow the Government to make more fluent use of the short-term money market. There was quite a useful debate on the introductory stage, and I have nothing to add now.

Mr. DUGGAN (West Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (7.33 p.m.): As the Treasurer said, perhaps no good purpose would be served by recapitulating the arguments that were used on the introductory stage of the Bill.

I think the Opposition's case broadly was that although it was fitting that proper use should be made of the funds available for investment on the short-term money market—it seemed obvious from the illustrations given to the Committee that they should be used in that way—it was because of the inflationary factors that do not seem to be adequately controlled by the Federal authorities, aided and abetted to some extent by this Government, that the Government were able to capitalise on this situation. To a degree I think the Treasurer agreed with that. Certainly we have no adequate control over the movement of money. That is determined by the Central Bank and the Reserve Bank, and also by Government policy generally at a Federal level, and we have to follow those movements. All we can do is take advantage of them, and as pointed out, the Treasury, with the Treasurer's approval, is using these short-term money market investments.

I think that sooner or later the Government will have to clamp down on interest rates. With the credit restrictions now being applied, I think interest rates will go even higher. I directed the Treasurer's attention this morning to a statement by a political observer in Canberra in a late issue of “The Australian Financial Review”, which revealed that it was possible to get up to approximately £4 12s. per cent. on these short-term moneys. That was with companies taking the taxation into account. I think some of the figures he gave were for lesser sums. This article indicated that many of the hire-purchase companies would have to review their short-term interest rates as well. Obviously if they are going to move their interest rates to higher levels in the sale of bonds cognisance will have to be taken of that position. The Treasury Department is not the only one that has the pulse of the loan market. Many shrewd

people in their private capacity, and indeed the banks themselves and others in command of liquid assets, are in a position to exploit the situation as it occurs from time to time.

I believe that there is no real incentive for the Treasurer to try to curb this inflationary factor. He said in a speech earlier today that he is very happy with the decision reached at the Loan Council about the new formula covering tax reimbursement on the basis that if costs go up, although we have an interim period before we get it, we have a 10 per cent. “betterment” factor, by which virtually we can make a profit of 10 per cent. on the inflationary cycle. I think that is the final position we reach in these matters. That is the sort of argument that is used about fees generally. There is not always a case for, say, architects to put up their fees. They have no more detailed work to do in the preparation of plans, but the cost factor is very different on 6 per cent. of £25,000 and 6 per cent. on £100,000.

With the depreciation of money values costs have gone up four times in the building industry. As money values have depreciated the return to the architect, working on a percentage basis of the building cost, has increased proportionately, and no increase is warranted in the percentage levied for the preparation of plans. So also with this “betterment” factor. If we are to have a constant spiralling of prices and costs, and we get 10 per cent. on it ultimately, there is no incentive for anyone to grapple with the inflationary problem. That is the only point I think that is linked up with this matter. How are we going to curb this inflation? High interest rates will not do it. That makes the servicing of industry ever so much more expensive.

The Treasurer paid me the courtesy of showing me some of his submissions on this matter, and I must confess I am in general accord with the great majority of them. But it indicates that he is apprehensive of the movement of interest rates other than short term. But obviously it must have an impact on the short-term market also because they are trying to get people to invest funds that might otherwise be idle. They are offering these attractive interest rates for short-term investment.

The Treasurer expressed the hope that the fixed-term interest would stabilise itself but on the views currently available on this matter I do not think he is entitled to expect that interest rates will remain at these levels. I consider that the tendency will be for them to increase unless there is a major change in Government policy or the policy of the Central Bank. However, it is a very interesting subject, and could well be an occasion for us to express our views on this matter. However, the specific question the Treasurer is inviting attention to tonight is whether we agree with his taking advantage of the short-term money market. Of course, we

must adopt the sensible view about something that brings in, from memory, £100,000 to the State. Anybody on this side would be foolish to oppose that principle. For those reasons we support the Bill.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (7.40 p.m.), in reply: I made the point in closing the Budget debate that this 10 per cent. "betterment" factor is a help to the State, but remind hon. members that just over one-third of our total incomes escalates with inflation. Take, for example, Crown rents, which are quite an important sector of our income. The escalation there is long delayed because of the only periodic review. The same thing happens in quite a number of other fields of revenue where charges are fixed by regulation and where it is only after a number of years that the Government are impelled to make a revision of the charge.

Mr. Burrows: That is countered by the fact that when a deterioration takes place and deflation operates you are just as long in suffering any effect as you are in reaping the benefit the other way.

Mr. HILEY: We have not seen deflation yet.

Mr. Burrows: I am afraid you will see it quicker than you expect.

Mr. HILEY: Now, don't be a pessimist.

Mr. Burrows: As Treasurer, you have a vested interest in this.

Mr. HILEY: All I observe is that in the balance of things, so far as this State is concerned, there are some directions in which inflation tends to help us and there are plenty of other directions in which it operates the other way or leaves us where we are. In the balance, we are in about a static position.

The matter of interest rates on the short-term market was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. I think I have made it clear to the Committee on many occasions my concern over any prospect of interest rates generally in this community rising. I went on record within the last three or four weeks expressing my concern over what I felt was—and I think I used the term—"midsummer madness" in the field of short-term interest rates.

Since I said that there have been two refreshing incidents and one other in reverse. There is again free speculation in the financial journals that England will do what I prophesied she would—drop her interest rate between now and Christmas.

Mr. Lloyd: About a-half per cent., I think.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. That is at least one welcome trend. The other is that, whereas I reported on the last occasion on our experience on the short-term market, where we got as high as £4 3s. 9d. and averaged a rate of

about 4 per cent. or better, over the last fortnight the market has been so flooded with money seeking investment that money cannot be placed and the best rate we have been able to secure is £3 10s., while other money has been accepted as low as 2½ per cent. Those are two good features. In other words, there has been a return towards a saner level on the local short-term money market; there is a prospect of a drop in the English bank-rate, only small but helpful and satisfying for all that.

Then, the adverse one that has caused the Premier and me concern which we expressed in appropriate places is that the annual issue of seasonal Treasury notes which are issued by the Commonwealth Government with Loan Council approval for the purpose of tiding over the seasonal requirements until the income tax collections begin to flow in in March and April have this year been issued at a higher rate than last and at a discount which means that the effective benefit to the holder, without any question of taxation concession, is £3 19s. per cent. I cannot see why in the circumstances operating today the Commonwealth Government have been persuaded to increase the rate and issue at such a discount against the background at the moment with the surge of money flowing onto the short-term market and with the best rate offering £3 5s., and in some cases you cannot get your money placed.

Whether the decision is caused by the rather cumbersome method operating in the Loan Council because of submission to six Premiers and delayed replies and whether the roller, as it were, started its circle at a time when the rates were high and completed it in changed conditions I do not know. That may be the explanation but this high rate is something that the Premier and I have gone on record as regretting. I mention that to the Committee as a matter of interest because it is such a contrast—a rise in the rate of seasonal Treasury notes against the position in the short-term money market and the prospective bank rate drop in England.

Mr. Lloyd: I think it possibly goes back to the 1949 Bank Act.

Mr. HILEY: That is on the hon. member's mind as the Moore Government used to play on Mr. Power's. I love to hear him say it. It is a familiar note; it is like a familiar melody.

I think I have answered the two points raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

SENATE ELECTIONS BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (7.47 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

As I said at the introductory stage, under the Commonwealth Constitution this Parliament was given the right to make laws determining the times and places for the election of senators for the State of Queensland. All of the States have passed Acts in conformity with Section 9 of the Commonwealth Constitution. The Queensland Act was passed in 1903, but there is one feature of it that causes some difficulty in these modern days. The Act fixes the Treasury Building, William Street, Brisbane, as the place of nomination as well as the place for declaration of the poll. It is not very convenient, and the Commonwealth Government have requested the Queensland Government at a convenient time to amend the Queensland Act to make the place of nomination and place of declaration of the poll more flexible than it is at the moment. We have altered that provision and at the same time have taken the opportunity to bring the Act up to date by making it conform in regard to the nomination and election of senators with our State electoral law.

The Bill gives power to fix the dates of election and places and time of nomination. The Act being repealed fixes the place as the Treasury Building, but under the Bill the place of nomination and declaration of the poll will be left to the discretion of the Governor in Council and I suggest the Governor in Council, as is done in other States, will appoint the Brisbane office of the Commonwealth Electoral Officer as the place for nomination and declaration of the poll. However, if that is not a convenient place, it can be altered at the will of the Governor in Council.

The Bill further provides that nominations must be in by noon on nomination day, which is in accordance with the State electoral law.

Under the present law also the Governor in Council fixes the polling places, and it is necessary as a result for those polling places to be declared in an Order in Council. In practice he fixes the same time and places as are appointed by Commonwealth law. The Bill dispenses with what is merely a formality by providing that the poll is to be conducted at all polling places in the State appointed under Commonwealth law. In other words, the provision of the Bill lays down now that the polling places shall be those appointed under Commonwealth law for the conduct of—

Mr. Duggan: I forgot to ask you earlier if it would not have been possible for them to take away altogether from the States this question of making an administrative decision.

What was the impediment to their handling this matter completely and asking us to surrender our powers on it, and their handling it wholly?

Mr. NICKLIN: Personally, I am not in favour of surrendering too many powers to the Commonwealth Government. They have enough at the present time, but we cannot help that. This is an application under the Commonwealth Constitution, and after all, the Senate is envisaged under the Commonwealth Constitution as being a State House.

Mr. Hilton: I think it makes it simpler for the nominations to be made by the State.

Mr. NICKLIN: It makes it simpler for the filling of a vacancy, if a vacancy occurs. The vacancy is filled by the State concerned. It is necessary to retain the power we have under the Commonwealth Constitution and to make the law that is necessary for the election of Senators to represent Queensland.

The other provisions are that polling day will be a Saturday, the same as under our electoral law, and they specify the Commonwealth law on polling hours, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., or whatever the Commonwealth law may be from time to time. It would be impossible in practice to depart from the Commonwealth polling hours and have one set of hours for the House of Representatives elections and different hours for the Senate elections. I frankly admit that I should like 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and not 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. as under the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

There is provision also for emergency powers as contained in our own Electoral Act on the return of the poll, or the return of the writ, or for the meeting of any other difficulties that may arise. As hon. members know, from time to time in Queensland if an election is held in the monsoonal period of the year it is very difficult to take a poll because of floods and things of that nature. Under our electoral law power is given whereby the poll can be deferred for a week or a fortnight, and extended time may be given for the return of the result of a writ from specific polling places. We have included that very useful provision in our own Act, by this amending legislation. That is a provision that does not exist in similar Acts in the other States. In Queensland, where we have cyclonic weather, it is very good to have that power.

This Bill is introduced as a result of representations made by the Commonwealth, particularly on the provision of the Bill that makes the Treasury Building the place of nomination and the place of declaration of the poll for the election of Senators in this State.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (7.53 p.m.): I do not think this measure is likely to incite very violent friction. It is obviously a machinery measure designed for the purpose of making

more elastic certain administration in voting on the Senate. I did ask whether it could have been possible to leave it to the Commonwealth authorities, but I overlooked just for the moment the question of this Parliament exercising its rights to nominate a Senator in the event of the death of a Senator. The retention of that power is very desirable if we could assume that the Senate is in fact acting as the custodian of the State's rights. Of course it has long ceased to function in that way. If it were an effective custodian of the State's rights, there would be no need for the various Premiers' Conferences and other things that take place periodically. We all know that the Premiers' Conference and the Loan Council meetings, for all practical purposes, are the medium chosen to protect the rights of the States. We very seldom hear arguments advanced that are not along parallel lines to those advanced by the respective Premiers. With one or two very notable exceptions throughout the Commonwealth, invariably Senators vote in accordance with party decisions. Whatever might be the decision in the Lower House, it is invariably reflected in the Upper House, the Senate. The members attend joint meetings of the parliamentary Caucuses and the decisions made are equally binding, whether they are Liberal Senators or Country Party Senators or Labour Senators. They are all binding on the Senators of the party and they vote accordingly in their respective jurisdictions—the House of Representatives or the Senate.

The Premier said it is 57 years since there was last occasion to make an amendment, and I hope that, before the next 57 years elapse, there will be no need for us to worry about further amendments of this kind, that by then that the Senate will be but a memory, like the Legislative Council. I once challenged the Premier—not very seriously, because I knew he was not very keen to accept the challenge. I said that if the standard of Government declined in this State so much as to require reversion to the bicameral system of Government, he might restore the Upper House. I do not imagine that even in his desire to serve the needs of Queensland he would be so optimistic as to lend his support to a campaign for that purpose. Still he might. Seeing that he holds himself forth as a knight in shining armour, as protector of the liberties of the subject, he might join with us in moving for the abolition of the Senate, in which event there will be no need to occupy time on amendments like this 57 years from now.

I agree with him that the proposed amendments to the legislation are certainly necessary and desirable, and minor in character though they have an important application to the conduct of Senate elections, and the machinery for that purpose, including the holding of elections for the Senate. For that reason it is appropriate that the Premier should co-operate with the Commonwealth

authorities and introduce legislation along these lines. The Bill should meet with the approbation of every member of the House.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to.

Committee

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

Clauses 1 to 9, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH LANDS BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (7.58 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Bill is quite simple. It is a Bill of a kind that is usually dealt with as a private Bill, but it has been the practice of various Queensland Governments over the years to treat measures of this nature dealing with churches and other religious bodies as public Bills instead of introducing them as private Bills.

It deals with the land at present held by the All Saints Church on Wickham Terrace. On 6 July this year, the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt, Mr. Graham Hart, Q.C., introduced to me a deputation comprising Mr. St. John, Diocesan Registrar of the Church of England, and the Rev. Mr. A. P. B. Bennie, Rector of All Saints Church. They said they required the assistance of the Government to enable the All Saints Church of England to lease or sell the land on which the old All Saints rectory stands. As the land was designated for the use of the Church by an Act of Parliament in 1924, it is necessary to introduce legislation to enable this to be done.

As a result of the conference that Mr. Hart had with the Parliamentary draftsman, the Bill was drawn up and introduced into the House some time ago. When we were considering the introduction of the Bill, we thought it advisable, instead of dealing with only one portion of the land, to include in the Bill power to enable the trustees to deal with the whole of the land concerned with the All Saints Church and the attached rectory. That has been done in this Bill.

Provision is also made for all moneys derived from the exercise of any of the powers to be applied for the benefit of the parish of All Saints.

The history of the All Saints Church lands is that they were granted in trust for Church of England purposes. Subsequently a small area was taken for road widening purposes, and in 1924 statutory powers were given to the trustees of the All Saints Church lands to mortgage those lands for the purpose of financing church improvements. Under that

1924 Act the exercise of these powers was subject to the consent of the Brisbane Synod of the Church of England. These powers are repeated in this Bill, but the consent is taken away from the Brisbane Synod and given to the Diocesan Council, which gives authority for the exercise of the powers to be given to the All Saints Church trustees.

The Bill will facilitate the work of the parish, and will enable them to sell, mortgage, or lease, lands surplus to their requirements, and any proceeds received as a result of that action will be used for the benefit of the parish of All Saints.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (8.3 p.m.): I merely wish to indicate that the Opposition are in full accord with this proposed amendment. I was glad to learn from the Premier that it is intended to give the trustees power not only to deal with a specific part of the land but also to deal with other lands under their control. There are many reasons why these things were not envisaged when the powers were given to them originally—the development of the city, the development of our transport system, and all the other things that very often determine the effective location of a new church building or series of church buildings. I know that some of the other denominations have been able to sell land. Transport House was owned, by the Roman Catholic Church, and I think Archbishop Duhig sold it to the Government because it was thought to be undesirable to have a children's school there. Because of the increasing value of land, it was no doubt thought that they could secure sufficient money from the sale of that land to enable them to build a new school in another locality. I think the same arguments are exercising the mind of the Anglican Church. They are not out for any personal gain. Whatever is done is for the benefit of the respective churches, and I rose to my feet merely to say that the Opposition, and indeed all hon. members on this side of the House, are only too happy to support the Bill.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, schedule and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

CITY OF BRISBANE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS (Whitsunday—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (8.7 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

I explained at the introductory stage that this is a very simple Bill. I elaborated to a considerable extent then and suggested that there would be little need for comment, at least by me, at this or the Committee stage. It is not my intention to take the Bill through that stage tonight as there may be some matters hon. members need to discuss at that stage.

Now that they have had an opportunity to read the Bill hon. members will realise that in the City of Brisbane area there will be 28 wards as against 24 previously, bringing the council wards into line with the State electoral boundaries. The method of filling casual vacancies between the date of the introduction of the Bill and the end of this year is defined. Should a vacancy occur after the end of the year, and before the council election to be held prior to 30 April, it is not necessary to fill it.

The Bill provides that where the words "returning officer" are referred to in the Act, in future they shall be read as "chief returning officer"; where "assistant returning officer" is used now, in future "returning officer" will appear. It will be remembered that the reason for this amendment to the law is to expedite the issuing of postal votes in the last few days, because in the past delay has been caused by their having had to go to the returning officer, who in turn had to forward them to an assistant returning officer.

That covers the main points of the Bill, and I commend it to the House.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (8.10 p.m.): I am thankful for the offer of the Premier and the Minister in charge of the Bill not to proceed with the Committee stage tonight.

I should like, on behalf of the Opposition, to have an opportunity of saying something on one or two clauses in the Bill. I am grateful to the Premier and the Minister for postponing the Committee stage to a later period.

I spoke strongly on this Bill during the introductory stage and I indicated what our attitude was and that we wished to protest and to use this Chamber to ventilate our views on the reason for its introduction.

The way in which the Bill is presented puts the Opposition in a somewhat difficult position in that to vote against it would be tantamount to contributing to a state of chaos in the electoral machinery and the administration of the city of Brisbane.

I must confess that every person who is aware of the position appreciates the difficulties confronting the administration if they use rolls different from those used for the election of members to this Assembly. I think certain advantages accrue from a common roll. If the administration was compelled to use rolls that conformed to a lesser number of boundaries than 28 it would cost

the City Council very much more than is involved in paying the salaries of the additional four aldermen. From that point of view we have to be realistic and admit that if the Government accept the responsibility for saying, "There shall be 28 aldermen in the city of Brisbane," we have to face up to the realities of the situation and make it work as smoothly as we can. Of course, we on this side of the Chamber know that, if we did vote against the Bill, there would still be 28 aldermen elected; the Government will proceed with its plans and we would then be accused outside of trying to obstruct the administration of the city council and of adding to the cost of ratepayers by opposing this Bill.

I want to make it abundantly clear that we feel that the purpose of the Bill initially was not to improve the efficiency of the city of Brisbane. It confers no benefit on the ratepayers of Brisbane. All that it does, if the fact that 28 should be the number of aldermen is established, is to facilitate means whereby those men can be elected at a lesser cost to the ratepayers than would be the case if there were 24 aldermen.

As I say, our attitude has been conditioned in this matter by political reasons which caused the Government to bring this in as a consequential measure to their own decision, on the electoral redistribution, to create additional seats in the metropolitan area. It is extraordinary that a party that is committed to serving the country as a Country Party in the coalition Government, which is committed to a policy planned to encourage decentralisation and the promotion of industries in the country, becomes a party to a scheme whereby country representation in this Assembly is reduced by one and there is additional representation in the metropolitan area. We know, of course, the horse-trading that went on and who is responsible for it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the issues in this Bill.

Mr. DUGGAN: I appreciate your point, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to go on record as being irrelevant on this matter but the Bill causes us to protest at the background of events that preceded its introduction. I hope I am not breaking the Standing Orders when I say that, because the Opposition have very firm views on it. I do not want it to be said afterwards that nobody opposed it. I do not want it said, "All this talk about the redistribution; then the Opposition voted for the measure when it came before the House." We have previously registered our opposition to it and we register it again now. We do not think that 28 aldermen are justified. I may have to qualify that statement by saying that we have never at any stage said that the aldermen entrusted to work for the ratepayers of Brisbane are men who do not carry out their jobs with great enthusiasm. Indeed I believe that, in

administration, they make themselves available more readily and frequently than, perhaps, do members of this Chamber representing metropolitan seats.

Mr. Houghton: Would you favour the amalgamation of wards and a reduction by half in the number of aldermen?

Mr. DUGGAN: I often think it is not so much a matter of getting a numerical result as it is of getting the majority. If the hon. member had asked me if I would rather have a Council of 12 aldermen with seven Labour men, I would answer, "Yes", but I would not agree to the suggestion if there were to be seven C.M.O. aldermen, or if some other arrangement of that kind was to be introduced. Everything depends on the representation and the character of representation, whether in this Chamber or elsewhere. I should not be averse to having 40 members of Parliament, if we had sufficient secretarial assistants, providing the A.L.P. had more than 20 members in the Parliament. I do not want to canvass that point, but I do think the Opposition is entitled to say that we are obliged out of sheer necessity to approach this measure from the angle that we dislike the background of it. We protest very strongly about the reasons responsible for its introduction, and we charge the Government with responsibility as the authors of this plan. They must accept full responsibility for what has happened. But on the other hand we do not want to be obstructors and be merely foolish in our opposition to the proposal.

I hope I have made myself quite clear. I am making no attack on aldermen or charging them with loafing; I am making no suggestion that we think it is right and proper that there should be 28 members of Parliament and a lesser number of aldermen; all I am saying is that there should not be 28 metropolitan members of Parliament and that we would not then be faced with the problem.

At this stage I indicate to the Minister that we do not approve of the Bill, but we do not propose to vote against it. The Committee stage will provide an opportunity of voicing our objections in a specific way and, if we think fit, moving amendments to bring the Bill into accord with our wishes. I have already indicated in a general way our attitude to the Bill. I am grateful to the Minister for his courtesy in agreeing to postpone further consideration of it to a later stage.

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (8.17 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill. Following the redistribution of State boundaries, it is obvious that we have to be realistic and take this course in respect of the Brisbane City Council. If the Bill had not been introduced the civic administration would have been forced either to retain the present number of aldermen, which would to some extent have been impracticable, or undertake redistribution of boundaries, which would have been a costly procedure and would have incurred the displeasure of the citizens. The Bill brings

about uniformity and will keep down the cost of civic elections. This item in the council budget is considerable. Up to £35,000 is required for by-elections. If the Bill had not been introduced the council would have had to undertake the very costly task of redistribution. A canvass of the wards would have had to be carried out by the police and special rolls prepared. In the interests of economy the Bill is very sound and desirable. It provides for the same number of aldermen in the civic sphere as there are metropolitan members in the State sphere.

Mr. Davies: It is an unfortunate state of affairs.

Mr. HUGHES: It will be fortunate for the city of Brisbane in that there will be 18 anti-Labour aldermen and 10 Labour aldermen in the council. That is the best thing that could happen for Brisbane. I have listened very intently since the introductory stage of the Bill and I regard the opposition to it only as a smoke screen. There has been a tongue-in-cheek attitude to the Bill. I admire the adroitness of the Leader of the Opposition in being able to walk the tight-rope so that he can hold public opinion no matter what happens in bringing this measure to fruition.

Mr. Davies: There was no tight-rope.

Mr. HUGHES: That tight-rope will undoubtedly become a noose for the hon. member in two and a-half years' time.

There can be no really justifiable cause for complaint by the Opposition because this Bill follows the precedent—not slavishly—set by the late Hon. E. M. Hanlon following the redistribution prior to 1952, when the same number of metropolitan seats for Parliament was adopted in the council sphere. It can be said that if on economic grounds alone it was justified by a Labour Government, there can be no justifiable criticism now from the Labour side of the House.

It must be admitted that the city of Brisbane is growing, and as its population increases there is a need this year to follow the example set in 1951. It cannot be reasonably argued by Labour that because it was right for them to do it when they were the Government, it is not right to do it now because there is a Country-Liberal Party Government. When the opposition put forward to this Bill is analysed, it can be seen that not only has there been some woolly thinking, but a smoke screen has been set up. In the not too distant past I recall reading a Press article in which the Leader of the Opposition was reported as having said—

Mr. Bennett: Are you supporting the C.M.O. candidate?

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, and it will be done to some good effect. I remember reading this article in the not too distant past, in which the Leader of the Opposition said—I am sure he will not deny that it was printed over his name—that aldermen in the council were worse than useless. It triggered off quite

a lot of hot temper in many places, and in particular in the hallowed corridors of the City Hall there was much odium and dissension in the ranks of Labour.

Mr. DUGGAN: I rise to a point of order. If the hon. member wishes to quote me from a Press article I shall be glad if he quotes the article and identifies it so that I may check it. At no time did I put my signature to the statements that have been attributed to me.

Mr. HUGHES: Let us now analyse the basic facts in this matter. Following the redistribution, and considering economic factors, I believe there is a necessity for 28 aldermen and a Lord Mayor in Brisbane. I say that in the pious hope that the additional aldermen on the council benches will understand fully their duties and responsibilities, and above all that they will clearly and rightly realise that the infamous section of the City of Brisbane Act, Chapter 59, sets out very clearly their responsibilities and the small extent to which aldermen are able to carry out their responsibilities of office. It sets out the duties of aldermen, but most of the real work of the council in relation to Registrations and the use of land many other vital things, is not done by the elected representatives of the people—by men who are answerable to the people—but by unelected officials who often act as bureaucrats or autocrats in making decisions that affect the daily lives, the happiness and the welfare of the citizens. I know I cannot pursue that argument at any length now but I will have more to say about it at a later stage. I certainly hope that the extra aldermen will be cognisant of their responsibilities to the city and will be enabled to cater for the requirements of their constituents, to take adequate and necessary steps to see that the rights of the citizens are preserved and that a full measure of justice and fairness is done to the people of the city. It is to be hoped that they will seek amendment of the infamous Chapter 59 and accept fully and wholeheartedly their responsibilities to the people.

The City Council handles domestic matters that might be said to be dear to the hearts of the citizens, matters affecting civic amenities, the needs of a growing city in this modern age, and the building up of prestige. All these matters come within the ambit of the responsibilities of aldermen but they cannot discharge them faithfully, wholly or well while they are handcuffed to the extent that they are, while they are gagged to the extent that they are, and while they are fettered to the extent they are.

Mr. Davies: I was wondering what was wrong with their administration.

Mr. HUGHES: Any administration would suffer in the same circumstances. The administration of the city of Brisbane suffered a great deal from three years of inept Labour administration. It has not so suffered since and

it can be said here and now that the Citizens' Municipal Organisation is a non-political party. (Opposition laughter.) It certainly is. Personally I had my eyes opened early in the piece and I am happy in the knowledge that the best thing that ever happened to the city and to the country was the adoption by the people of all these principles of the Liberal Party and the anti-Labour C.M.O. So the C.M.O., a non-political party, is able to provide, within defined limits I have indicated, some degree of justice to citizens of Brisbane and some measure of progress and prosperity, but its members are restricted by the bureaucratic actions of others. You may regard them as bureaucratic and others may not; depending on which end they are at, whether they are looking at them from the applicants' point of view or from the Board's point of view. However, the C.M.O. is not able to do all that it should be able to do. Its members should be allowed to carry out their full responsibilities, being answerable only to the people of the city.

Mr. DEAN: I rise to a point of order. I submit that the hon. member is misleading the House and that the Brisbane City Council has full control of the affairs of the city. We do have full control. We meet every Tuesday afternoon and we consider reports of committees and discuss them and we either pass a particular minute——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must state his point of order. He will have an opportunity to speak in the debate later.

Mr. HUGHES: What the hon. member for Sandgate has said can be proved wrong. Otherwise why have so many groups of people found it necessary to protest against the administration and against those in authority and to allege that aldermen of the city council do not provide the works and services and the needs of a particular area, as the hon. member well knows? It may be said that those who are discharging the responsibilities of aldermen of the city of Brisbane are not able to give a full measure of service to their electors. I hope that the additional number of aldermen will raise their voices and use their weight of numbers, and that the Government, in the light of the knowledge gained in the future, will amend the City of Brisbane Act in other particulars. I hope its scope will be widened.

I know I am out of order in canvassing this line of argument at any length, but I think I have made my point quite clear. I believe it is necessary on economic grounds to have 28 aldermen in the Brisbane City Council, and if they are sincere and are prepared to give a full measure of public service, they can deal effectively with the domestic problems of the city. The committees are able to play a limited part in the progress and development of the city and in providing useful services for the public.

An Opposition Member: You are certainly opening the door very wide.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not allowed to do that. That is why my remarks have been so brief on this occasion. I hope that these aldermen, now and in the future, will not only face up to their responsibilities——

Mr. Donald: If they are Labour aldermen they will, don't worry.

Mr. HUGHES: That is what I am afraid of. In 1952 Labour said to the people, "Vote us into office and we will sewer the city in eight years." That was the biggest hoax ever put over an unsuspecting public. I am afraid that a similar political trick may be perpetrated once again, and by some quirk of fate or accident a Labour Council may be returned to office. That is why I am making these remarks. I hope that the public, being realistic and knowing that the administrative benches of the City Council are best occupied by the party with men of ability in its ranks, will elect a C.M.O. council.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I have shown quite a lot of tolerance to the hon. member. I do not want this to develop into a campaign for the city council election. I am going to ask the hon. member who is speaking now and hon. members who speak in future to speak to the principles of the Bill, otherwise they will be asked to resume their seat.

Mr. HUGHES: I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I admire you for your impartiality in hearing me and then, in such a nice way, keeping me within the confines of this Bill. I appreciate it, and I will certainly not prostitute the privilege.

Some clauses of the Bill do overcome anomalies that now exist. Clause 3 of the principal Act is amended by inserting before the words "returning officer" the words "chief returning officer," and that will enable a postal vote to be taken more properly and fully. Mr. Slaughter, as the chief administrative officer of the council, is the chief returning officer, and he will be responsible. Others will be appointed as returning officers, and every opportunity will be given to people who wish to do so to record a postal vote. That clears up one of the presently-existing anomalies in civic elections.

Clauses 4 and 5 give protection by providing the method of filling an extraordinary vacancy prior to the general election, which must be held before the last Saturday in April. Cabinet has paid appropriate regard to the rights of the citizens in the contents of the Bill. There is every justification for 28 aldermen in the city of Brisbane to safeguard those rights. I trust that they will discharge their civic responsibilities in the manner demanded by the citizens. There is a tremendously big job to be done in Brisbane.

Because of the financial burden the Brisbane City Council has to carry, some of its undertakings could well be carried on by other authorities. It is not only economically sound, but right and proper that the number of wards in the city of Brisbane should be increased in accordance with the precedent set over many years, when redistributions of State electoral boundaries have been made in the past. Aldermen have a great responsibility to the people who elect them, and in discharging their responsibility they would do well to take particular note of the aspects I have mentioned.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (8.36 p.m.): Like my Leader, I believe that in discussing the Bill it is not a matter of whether we should have 24 or 28 wards. Unfortunately, that decision has already been made by Parliament despite the opposition of the Australian Labour Party. The only issue under consideration at the present time is whether or not the electoral machinery for the city council should comply with the electoral machinery provided by the boundaries for the State Parliament. Taking into consideration the costs involved it is logical to make the electoral machinery for the city of Brisbane comply with the electoral machinery for State seats, but it is a question of relativity. If we had 28 aldermen like the present hon. member for Kurilpa it would be 28 too many.

It has already been stated in the House that Chapter 59 gives far too extensive powers to the Registration Board. That is the ordinance dealing with the various committees and boards of the Brisbane City Council. Perhaps to some extent that board does have more powers than would be considered reasonably necessary by the average person. But the hon. member for Kurilpa should clearly understand that Chapter 59 is merely a city council ordinance, and it has been in existence for more than 20 years. The only alteration the C.M.O. has made to that ordinance has been to extend the powers of the board, and increase the number of members on it. It is rather strange that the hon. member said nothing about it when his own party were increasing the powers and number of members. The C.M.O. could have eliminated the board entirely by an ordinary amendment to Chapter 59. As a matter of fact, it has been the C.M.O. administration that has abused its powers most in usurping what should be the powers, functions and authority of aldermen in council. The abuse that has crept in is evident in the City of Brisbane Town Plan Act of 1959. That Act was designed, in the main, to create a committee to formulate a town plan for the city of Brisbane. It has no authority in the council to direct or advise any constituent committee or board of the council and yet we see that committee issuing directions illegally and invalidly in relation to individual blocks where certain C.M.O. aldermen have a special interest.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has been given some latitude as was the hon. member for Kurilpa. This Bill deals with two items, the provision for 28 aldermen as against 24, and for their election. I ask the hon. member to stick to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. BENNETT: I jotted down the points made by the previous speaker and I noticed that he was only called to order on one point. I naturally thought that, if he was in order on the various 13 points I noted, I might be.

Mr. SPEAKER: I advise the hon. member that my attention was distracted for some of the time during which the hon. member for Kurilpa was discussing these matters. I did not realise the hon. member had got off the track but when I did realise I called him back onto it. I sincerely hope the hon. member will not waste the time of the House discussing anything outside the scope of the Bill.

Mr. BENNETT: I appreciate that point, Mr. Speaker, and I do not intend to waste the time of the House.

The Bill relates to the electoral machinery and constitutes the electoral boundaries that will apply at the next council elections and the hon. member for Kurilpa, I suggest, will be sadly shocked at the result.

My final observation is on the present Lord Mayor's entry into the field of competition at the next election. It is strangely significant that he decided for quite a long time that he would not be seeking re-election. Then, rather significantly and by strange coincidence, his announcement of his return to the field coincided with Mr. Gair's decision to put a Q.L.P. team in the field also. There appears to me to be some strange co-operation between the two parties.

Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS (Whitsunday—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (8.44 p.m.), in reply: I do not believe that there is any cause for further comment on this Bill. It is rather humorous to sit on the sideline and watch the tide come in and go out and the wheels go round. I was amused tonight when the Leader of the Opposition said that he wanted to protest particularly at the background of this Bill and at increasing the number of aldermen from 24 to 28 as it conferred no benefit on the people of Brisbane. A leopard can apparently sometimes change his spots, as it is not so many years ago and well within the memory of some hon. members in this Chamber that, when the hon. gent's Government were in power, a redistribution was made in 1949 and on that occasion the number of aldermen was increased from 20 to 24, just as on this occasion it has gone from 24 to 28. Was he concerned about the background on that occasion, or did he believe no benefit was then bestowed on the people of Brisbane by an increase in the

number of aldermen? I should think the common-sense attitude would have been that increased representation was necessary. Between the days of the Forgan Smith Government—and the redistribution at that time—and the Hanlon redistribution in 1949, the city had developed considerably and population had increased tremendously.

In the last 10 years we have heard the hon. member for Townsville South say frequently that the increase in the population of the metropolitan area each year is equivalent to the population of Townsville. From memory, I think the present population is approximately 600,000.

If 24 aldermen were needed in 1949 or 1950 to deal with the affairs of the metropolitan area, no sound, thinking person could cavil at the proposed increase of four.

On numerous occasions in this Chamber I have said that in my opinion there is no place in local government for party politics. I have no particular experience of Brisbane aldermen, but from what I have heard they have done an excellent job—and I am not referring to the aldermen of any particular party. The requirements of their constituents are many and varied. The Brisbane local authority is second to none in Australia, and possibly none in the world.

Mr. Walsh: Have the Government given any consideration to the introduction of preferential voting?

Mr. ROBERTS: A wily old bird is the hon. member for Bundaberg. He delights in bringing forward that little matter. He has had a copy of the Bill and, although it is said he cannot read, he could easily get someone to explain it to him. Of course, he knows its provisions. As a front-bench member of the previous Government, he would realise that no responsible Minister would disclose Government policy in answer to such a question.

Motion (Mr. Roberts) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 8.52 p.m.
