

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 7 AUGUST 1946

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Brassington, Fortitude Valley) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

BLAIR ATHOL COALFIELD.

Mr. EDWARDS (Nanango) asked the Premier—

“In reference to the inquiry into the Blair Athol coalfield, referred to in the Opening Speech of last session, what have been the findings of the committee to date under each heading mentioned in such Speech?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

“Blair Athol is included in the sphere of operations of the North Australia Development Committee recently formed. The committee consists of the Prime Minister, the Minister for the Interior, and the Premiers of Western Australia and Queensland. Large scale development of the Blair Athol coalfield is now under discussion between the Commonwealth and the Queensland Governments.”

SPREAD OF BUFFALO FLY.

Mr. HEALY (Warwick) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“In view of the alarm expressed by graziers in the Warwick and adjoining electorates at the spread of the buffalo fly, would he advise what action, if any, has been taken to afford protection to stock in the southern and south-western portions of the State against this menace, particularly in view of the approaching summer?”

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook) replied—

“My department has appreciated the problem presented by the buffalo fly for some years and has made every effort to prevent the expansion of the pest into southern districts. We have been successful in delaying its progress considerably, and in the meantime are carrying out experiments in an endeavour to evolve a method for destruction even if not elimination. A water-soluble D.D.T. has been tested by this department and the C.S.I.R., and has proved very satisfactory in reducing fly-infestation. Supplies of this material will be available in quantities required for keeping the buffalo fly under control, either by spraying or dipping. Fly traps, which are successful on dairy farms, have also been evolved for keeping the fly under control. Recognising that the fly is a menace to southern States as well as to Southern and South-western Queensland, I have made

urgent representation to the Commonwealth Government that the menace should be regarded as a national one, and to assist in its control have advocated that supplies of D.D.T. should be made available at a reasonable rate to farmers. Precautionary measures have been taken for the spraying of stock with D.D.T. prior to entry from fly-infested to clean areas, and in other directions this department is doing all that is reasonably possible to control the menace.”

Mr. BRAND (Isis) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“1. What is the furthest point south at which the buffalo fly has been discovered?

“2. What action is being taken to combat the pest?

“3. What was the expenditure of the Queensland Government in 1945-46 on measures to limit the spread of the buffalo fly?”

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook) replied—

“1. The most southerly limit of fly infestation is roughly in a line from Roma through Miles, Chinchilla, Proston, to a point near Gundiah, on the North Coast Line.

“2. See answer to the hon. member for Warwick.

“3. £3,980 13s. 9d.”

INVESTMENT OF STATE FUNDS.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Treasurer—

“1. At 30 June, 1946, what amounts, derived from consolidated revenue (including amounts transferred to Trust Funds), were (a) invested in Government securities, (b) at fixed deposit, and (c) held in current account?

“2. What amounts of interest were earned under the above headings (a), (b), and (c), respectively, in 1945-46?”

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

“1. (a) £3,385,000; (b) £5,050,000; (c) £716,867; total, £9,151,867.

“2. (a) £125,422; (b) £91,437; (c) nil; total, £216,859.”

SAWMILLING LICENCES, TARA.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. Is it a fact that two returned soldiers, Messrs. G. and A. Marr, of Tara, have been refused a licence to cut timber on their father's grazing selection in the Dalby district?

"2. Is it a fact that the sale of the timber in question was restricted to existing sawmillers?"

"3. In the granting of sawmilling licences, is any special consideration given to the claims of ex-servicemen?"

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

"1 to 3. Following on an application by Mr. R. Marr, of Crowder's Creek, Cecil Plains, a quantity of about 1,000,000 superficial feet of cypress pine milling timber standing on part of prickly-pear development grazing homestead 10167, Dalby, being portions 7, 10, and 11, parish of Bingeyrang (lessee, W. Marr), was offered for sale subject to the following provisions as to bidding:—(i.) Bidding is limited in the first instance to the licensees (or their duly authorised agent) of licensed sawmills situated in Queensland who have available for transfer to the subject timber a licensed sawmill. The purchaser will be granted the right to transfer such mill to a site to be approved in the vicinity of the subject timber on the understanding that the licensed capacity of the mill on transfer to the subject timber will, if over 5,000 superficial feet, be reduced to 5,000 superficial feet per day. (ii.) In the event of no bid being received from a licensed sawmiller qualified as above, the lot may be reoffered immediately without any restriction as to bidding, subject to the condition that a sawmill licence will be granted to the purchaser to erect and operate a sawmill of a capacity of not more than 5,000 superficial feet per day on a site to be approved in the vicinity of the timber.' This is in accordance with the general policy of the department. The timber in question was purchased at auction by Jandowae Timber Co., holders of current sawmill licence No. 471."

SULPHATE OF AMMONIA FOR PINEAPPLE-GROWERS.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"In view of the extensive damage by frost to pineapple plantations, will he arrange for special supplies of sulphate of ammonia for the growers concerned?"

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook) replied—

"I would refer the hon. member to my statement in the Press this morning, where I advised that sulphate of ammonia would be made available to pineapple growers in the coastal area south of Isis Junction whose crops were frost-damaged."

COAL DEPOSITS, HUGHENDEN-JULIA CREEK.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. Is it a fact that a permit to test coal deposits discovered in the vicinity of the North-Western railway line, between Hughenden and Julia Creek, was refused?"

"2. If so, (a) what was the date of the application, (b) what was the name of the applicant, and (c) why was a permit refused, in view of the probable value of such coal to the Cloncurry mineral field and the Mount Isa mines?"

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

"1. An application for a licence to occupy for the purpose of prospecting for coal in respect of an area of 500 acres situated on Dutton River pastoral holding, 75 miles north-west from Hughenden and 60 miles north of Marathon—the nearest rail siding—was refused on 26 April, 1933.

"2. (a) The application was dated 4 April, 1933. (b) The names of the applicants were Henry Morell Bode and Gervase Roland Kirton. (b) The application was refused in view of the then existing policy not to grant coal prospecting licences and coal mining leases with a view to avoiding any increase in the number of producing mines, as those already operating were then regarded as more than sufficient to meet coal requirements, and were only able to provide intermittent employment for those engaged in the industry. However, an application by Mount Isa Mines Limited, dated 12 February, 1946, was made for an authority to prospect for coal in respect of an area of approximately 760 square miles lying north of the Great Northern Railway and between the Flinders River on the west and Torrens Creek on the east. This application was approved on 19 February 1946, and drilling operations are at present in progress."

SUBSIDIES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"What is the total amount to date of Government subsidies for the establishment of libraries for school children referred to in the Opening Speech of the 1945 session?"

Hon. T. L. WILLIAMS (Port Curtis) replied—

"The total grant in aid of school libraries to 30 June, 1946, is £2,390 9s."

ELECTORAL ENROLMENTS.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) asked the Attorney-General—

"Will he inform this House of the number of electors enrolled for each electorate in Queensland, and the date up to which such figures are compiled?"

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich) replied—

“STATE OF QUEENSLAND.

“STATEMENT OF ELECTORS ENROLLED IN EACH ELECTORAL DISTRICT AT 31 DECEMBER, 1945.*

“ District.	Total.
Albert	11,307
Arbigny	9,448
Barcoo	7,212
Barcoo	10,975
Bowen	8,888
Bremer	10,140
Brisbane	9,210
Bulimba	12,345
Bundaberg	11,981
Buranda	12,699
Cairns	11,248
Carnarvon	8,718
Carpentaria	6,379
Charters Towers	6,951
Cook	8,577
Cooroola	9,953
Cunningham	9,218
Dalby	10,797
East Toowoomba	10,451
Enoggera	13,372
Fassifern	9,995
Fitzroy	10,793
Fortitude Valley	10,409
Gregory	6,791
Gympie	7,534
Hamilton	12,018
Herbert	9,041
Ipswich	11,846
Isis	8,431
Ithaca	12,932
Kelvin Grove	12,798
Kennedy	10,524
Keppel	9,254
Kurilpa	11,513
Logan	16,544
Mackay	10,875
Maranoa	8,196
Maree	10,985
Maryborough	11,044
Merthyr	10,912
Mirani	9,272
Mundingburra	12,005
Murrumba	12,560
Nanango	9,739
Normanby	8,451
Nundah	13,095
Oxley	13,442
Port Curtis	10,852
Rockhampton	11,195
Sandgate	12,741
South Brisbane	12,277
Stanley	8,834
The Tableland	8,654
Toowong	12,072
Toowoomba	12,054
Townsville	10,880
Warrego	7,279
Warwick	9,578
West Moreton	9,067
Wide Bay	9,658
Windsor	11,770
Wynnum	14,135
Total	651,912

*Statement compiled to 31 December, 1945, the last date to which the enrolments have been completed. A canvass of the State is now in progress.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) asked the Treasurer—

“1. What is the total amount transferred to the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Trust Fund since June, 1945?”

“2. What is the present credit balance of that fund?”

“3. How much of such balance is set aside for railway purposes?”

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

“1. Nil.

“2. £9,151,867.

“3. £3,044,443.”

DROUGHT RELIEF FOR DAIRY FARMERS.

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“1. In the last 12 months how many applications by dairy farmers for drought relief have been (a) received, and (b) approved?”

“2. What is the actual amount of advances to date?”

Mr. H. H. COLLINS (Cook) replied—

“1. Under the Commonwealth/State Drought Relief Scheme 1,011 applications have been received and 860 approved.

“2. No advances have yet been made. As the amount applied for is considerably in excess of the sum available for distribution, representations have been made to the Commonwealth Government for an increased grant, and a decision is now awaited. The Drought Relief to Primary Producers Act of 1940 is administered by the Agricultural Bank, which is under the administration of the Hon. the Treasurer.”

RAILWAY SUPERANNUATION SCHEME.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) asked the Minister for Transport—

“What is the present position in regard to the Railway Superannuation Scheme referred to in the Opening Speech of last session?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Mirani) replied—

“Details of the scheme are being finalised preparatory to taking a ballot of employees as to whether they desire the introduction of the scheme.”

LIBRARY BOARD AND EXPENDITURE.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“1. What are the names of the members of the Library Board?”

“2. When was this board appointed?”

“3. What is the total expenditure of the board to date towards the cost of (a) schools of arts buildings, and (b) schools of arts libraries?”

Hon. T. L. WILLIAMS (Port Curtis) replied—

“1. The names of the members of the Library Board constituted under the Libraries Act of 1943 are:—Lewis David Edwards (chairman); James Cameron Slaughter, Richard Leggat, William Graham Hamilton, Andrew Kilpatrick Thomson, Bertram Robert Wright, and William Henry Brown, Librarian, Public Library of Queensland, to be ex officio member of the said board.

“2. The board was appointed on 8 March, 1945.

"3. The total expenditure on the board to date towards the cost of (a) schools of arts buildings is £18 14s. 7d., and on (b) schools of arts libraries, £3,273 8s. 7d."

WAR-SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. How many selections have been allotted to Service personnel under the provisions of the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act of 1945 and the War Service Land Settlement Act of 1946— (a) other than grazing selections, and (b) grazing?"

"2. How many Service personnel have been placed on farms for practical training purposes under the provisions of the first-mentioned Act?"

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

"1. (a) nil; (b) eight.

"2. The scheme for the training of ex-servicemen on farms is not administered by my department."

COAST PASTURES FOR DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Will he consult with members for electorates from Maryborough to Landsborough, and make such other inquiries as he deems necessary, with the object of ascertaining what coastal relief country, between those places, is available for starving stock during the continuance of the present drought? Will he also supply such information to those concerned?"

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Cook) replied—
"Yes."

ORDERS FOR LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) asked the Minister for Transport—

"What are the particulars of locomotive engines ordered within the past 12 months, showing names of suppliers, types of engines, and the respective prices?"

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Mirani) replied—
"Thirty-two engines ordered as under:—

	£	Per engine.
20 'C17,' Clyde Engineering Co., Granville, New South Wales, at	15,450	
6 'C17,' Walkers Ltd., Maryborough, at	15,645	
6 'D17' (Tank), Ipswich Railway Workshops, at	12,250	

The Clyde Engineering Company's tender was accepted owing to their capacity to deliver the locomotives one year in advance of any other tenderer."

VISIT OF DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

Mr. PIE (Windsor), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Has the Premier or the State Government arranged any State public or parliamentary functions in honour of our Royal Governor-General, the Duke of Gloucester whilst he is in Brisbane opening Queensland's Royal National Show?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"His Royal Highness will have one very busy day in Brisbane, and all functions have been satisfactorily arranged."

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

By-laws 453 and 454 under the Railways Acts, 1914 to 1946.

Regulation under the State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943 (16 May, 1946).

Order in Council under the State Transport Acts, 1938 to 1943 (27 June, 1946).

Regulations under the Inspection of Machinery Acts, 1915 to 1946 (13 June, 1946).

Return of all moneys advanced or expended under the Mining Machinery Advances Act of 1906 for the year 1945-1946."

QUESTION.

MR. SPEAKER'S RULING.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to remind hon. members that in accordance with the procedure of the House of Commons I ruled last session that the number of questions any one hon. member could ask on any day would be three. There has been a tendency on the part of hon. members to get beyond that number.

LIBRARY, REFRESHMENT ROOMS, AND PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS COMMITTEES.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier): I move—

"That the Library, Refreshment Rooms, and Parliamentary Buildings Committees for the present session be constituted as follows:—

'Library.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brand, Mr. Davis, Mr. Duggan, Mr. Dunstan, Mr. Morris, and Mr. Walker.

'Refreshment Rooms.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hiley, Mr. Jesson, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Maher, Mr. O'Shea, and Mr. Power.

'Parliamentary Buildings.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Devries, Mr. Hayes, Mr. Muller, Mr. Pie, Mr. Plunkett, and Mr. Turner.'"

Motion agreed to.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier):
I move—

“That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Copley, Mr. Decker, Mr. Hanlon, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Mann, and Mr. Nicklin, and that the said Committee have leave to sit during any adjournment of the House.”

Motion agreed to.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier):
I move—

“That a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by Order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing Returns and Papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members. That such Committee consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Clark, Mr. Collins, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Plunkett, Mr. Sparkes, and Mr. Turner.”

Motion agreed to.

SITTING DAYS.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier):
I move—

“That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the dispatch of business at 10.30 o'clock a.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week, and that on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and after 2 o'clock p.m. on Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all other business.

“2. That Standing Order No. 17—‘Debate on Address in Reply’—shall be construed as if 5.30 o'clock p.m. were substituted for 10.30 o'clock p.m. wherever it occurs in the Standing Order, and 12 o'clock noon for 4.30 o'clock p.m.

“3. That Standing Order No. 307—‘Days Allotted for Supply’—shall be construed as if 25 minutes after 5 o'clock p.m. were substituted for 10.30 o'clock a.m. in paragraph 5, and ‘5 o'clock p.m.’ were substituted for ‘10 o'clock p.m.’ in paragraphs 6 and 7.

“On the last day but one of the days allotted for Supply, the sitting of the Committee and of the House shall be continued until the whole of the Estimates for the year, the Supplementary Estimates for the previous year, and the Vote on Account for the ensuing year have been decided, reported to the House, and an Order made for the reception of the Resolutions. All such questions shall be put by Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, without amendment or debate.

“On the last day allotted for Supply, it shall be within the discretion of the Leader of the House to extend the sitting for the purpose of dealing with and bringing to a conclusion all the necessary proceedings for the founding and passing of the Appropriation Bill through all its stages. At 8 o'clock p.m., subject to the following proviso, the question under consideration and every question necessary to bring to a conclusion the proceedings of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means and the passing through all stages of the Bill shall be put by Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, without amendment or debate:

“Provided that if, at 8 o'clock p.m., the question for the second reading of the Bill is under consideration the sitting may be further extended to enable the mover of the motion or his deputy to speak in reply.

“4. On the days allotted for Supply, Government business other than Supply may be proceeded with until 12 o'clock noon, at which hour the proceedings on such business shall be interrupted and the business of Supply proceeded with.

“Business interrupted under this paragraph shall stand as an Order of the Day for the next sitting day.

“5. That, if occasion arises to put into operation Standing Order No. 249, the Standing Order shall be construed as if ‘11.30 o'clock a.m.’ were substituted for ‘4 o'clock p.m.’ and ‘5 o'clock p.m.’ were substituted for ‘10 o'clock p.m.’ in paragraph 2.”

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. HILEY (Logan): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, in the usual form, showing the number of Government employees at 30 June, 1946 (all departments), paid from Consolidated Revenue, Trust Fund, and Loan Fund, respectively.”

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES, 1945-46.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. KERR (Oxley): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, in the usual form, of expenses of Ministers for 1945-46.”

Motion agreed to.

FEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the payments made by the Government to barristers and solicitors for the year 1945-46, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received, respectively.”

Motion agreed to.

HOSPITAL STATISTICS.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley), for **Mr. WALKER** (Cooroora): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return for 1945-46 showing the following information relating to hospitals—(a) The total number of public hospitals under boards and not under boards, respectively; (b) the total Government contribution towards the maintenance of (i.) hospitals under boards, and (ii.) other hospitals; (c) the total Commonwealth contribution towards (i.) public hospitals, and (ii.) private hospitals.”

Motion agreed to.

EXPENSES OF OVERSEAS VISITS.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. BRAND (Isis): I move—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, in the usual form, of expenses incurred in 1945-46, of (a) Ministers on overseas trips, and (b) persons on Government business overseas other than Ministers or those accompanying Ministers.”

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FIRST ALLOTTED DAY.

Debate resumed from 6 August (see p. 19) on Mr. Wood's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 a.m.): At the outset I should like to join the mover and seconder of this motion in extending my congratulations to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor. I feel certain His Excellency will carry out the duties attached to his high office with distinction and credit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in this Chamber, and I ask that the Leader of the Opposition get a hearing in accordance with tradition.

Mr. NICKLIN: During the long public service His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor has given to this State he has been noted for his close attention to duty and for the manner in which he has worked and not spared himself in carrying out the many public services he has performed. I believe that he will carry out the many arduous duties attached to his high office in a fitting manner and I am sure all hon. members will wish him well during the period of his occupancy of his high position.

May I also take this opportunity of extending congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply on the very excellent manner in which they stated their case yesterday?

The Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor yesterday has probably been received by Government members with great enthusiasm as an excellent piece of pre-election propaganda, but by those of us on the Opposition side who recall similar speeches it is regarded with a great deal of scepticism. In recent years we have become used and hardened to long lists of proposed inquiries, investigations and promises, very few of which have materialised up to the present time; and I venture to prophesy that this Speech will prove no exception in that respect. Without being in any way hypercritical I think we can liken the Speech delivered yesterday to a glass of beer containing an overdose of froth.

Mr. Hanlon: It was very hard to swallow over there. (Government laughter.)

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes, it is hard to swallow. I do not propose to deal with the various proposals outlined in the Speech, because unless we are able to cure the acute industrial malaise with which we are now afflicted it is very unlikely that any material progress will be possible in any important direction. I propose, therefore, to confine most of the remarks I have to make in the Address in Reply debate to the outstanding subject of the industrial disruption and unrest that is widespread throughout the Commonwealth and within our own State at the present time and is having such a serious effect on the production of the essential necessities of life and on the further advancement of this country of ours. I wish to make brief reference in passing, however, to one of the points made in the Speech yesterday, the electrification of the suburban railways. This is a hoary old chestnut that has been dragged out of the fire by the Government and paraded again, no doubt because there is an election in the near future. It is an absurdity to talk about the electrification of the suburban railways while the present railway tracks are in the condition in which they are at the moment. It will take years of alteration and the expenditure of many thousands of pounds to eliminate the weaknesses and do the things that are essential to running at higher speeds and carrying greater loads on our railways, by electrification or any other means—eliminating curves, strengthening bridges, improving the permanent way, and removing many of the bottlenecks that exist in the suburban services about this city.

As I have said, apart from taxation levels, which are destroying incentive to work and to produce—which to a large extent is now outside the control of the State Government—the gravest problem this continent is facing at the moment is the industrial disruption and the general slowing-down of output. We have to realise that the whole future welfare of our State and the Commonwealth depends on increased production because it is from production we get improvements in our standards of living and any new orders we hope to see. Until we overcome this industrial unrest and this go-slowism permeating the community at present we have no hope of getting

any new orders or improvements in our living conditions. I submit this question is of paramount importance and one of the first problems to be attacked before we can hope for the advance we wish to see in this State.

I attribute the condition that exists in our community today very largely to the failure of Labour Governments to act up to their responsibilities in the enforcement of the industrial laws of this community. In recent years most of the strikes we have experienced have not been for the purpose of improving industrial conditions or removing injustices but have been deliberately fostered with the object of disrupting industry and reducing output in order that the present system will break down and be replaced by a new order of Socialism or Communism. That statement cannot be refuted when we look at the history of industrial trouble not only in this State but throughout the Commonwealth. Those responsible for bringing about this industrial unrest have been aided very greatly by the fact that Labour Governments, instead of punishing the guilty parties, have sought to appease them by granting various concessions; and it has been proved time and again that appeasement is a policy that never pays in the long run. This policy of appeasement followed by Labour Governments has enabled the disrupters of industry to become virtual dictators of many unions and to destroy democratic control by the rank and file of those unions.

At 11.45 a.m.,

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. NICKLIN: That is why the provisions as to secret ballots in our industrial laws have become largely inoperative. I wish to make it clear that I do not think that any policy of mass action against strikers is very practicable, but I do say emphatically that action, and drastic action too, should be taken against those directly responsible for bringing about many of the industrial troubles that we have experienced during recent months.

In the Opening Speech presented by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor yesterday it is indicated that there will be an amendment of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. No law is of any use unless it is enforced fearlessly and impartially. Let us look at some of the actions and lack of action in connection with breaches of our industrial law. When the bakers went on strike in April, 1945, they were dealt with promptly, but no action was taken in the case of parallel strikes by shearers in the far West of the State, and by bacon-factory employees, or in the case of the recent strike, which involved meatworkers, waterside workers and coal-miners. Under the Commonwealth Government, partiality in the administration of the industrial law has become the common practice. To this fact can be largely attributed the present condition of general indiscipline and crisis that has arisen to a great extent from the industrial troubles which have unnecessarily been forced upon the community of this State.

Yesterday we listened to an excellent speech on many principles of democracy by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, but I think he missed one of the most essential principles, the one on which the foundation of democracy is based. I refer to the impartial enforcement of the law which undoubtedly is the very foundation of that democracy for which we stand. In this respect I wish to quote an excellent statement by an authority on this point. I refer to Dr. C. K. Allen, Warden and Secretary of the Rhodes Scholarship Trustees, who said last year—

“We have to choose between two opposing principles; the view that policy and expediency are the supreme consideration and the view that justice is an end in itself to be pursued at all costs. The latter view is represented in our society by the rule of law, which is perhaps more vital to the health of democracy than any other institution.”

I heartily subscribe to that statement and say with emphasis that the failure to enforce the rule of law is fatal to the health of democracy. The sooner Governments stand up to their responsibilities and enforce the rule of law in this community the sooner shall we begin to make the progress that we should be making now.

To deal adequately with this subject, it is necessary for us to look back over the history of happenings in recent years within this Commonwealth of Australia and within this State; it is necessary to follow the sequence of events that have helped to destroy the rule of law in this country.

First of all, let us go back to a very critical stage in this nation's history, the period of February, 1942, after the fall of Singapore and three days before the first bombs were dropped on this country of ours at Darwin. The Prime Minister, the late Mr. Curtin, made a declaration that it was a case of fight or work for every man and woman in the Commonwealth. That was a declaration that all good citizens in this Commonwealth subscribed to, a declaration that all good citizens were prepared to carry out. What happened? Instead of the Commonwealth Government's setting an example to the rest of the community, we find that that Government, with the whole of the power behind it, issued with monotonous regularity National Security Regulations dealing with absenteeism and strikes in coal-mines, but these were treated with scorn and derision by the coal kings of Australia. By the use of that term I do not refer to the owners of the coal-mines but to communistic dictators who have no doubt earned such a title by their influences in the coal-mines of recent years.

Mr. Hanlon: National Security Regulations dealing with prices of commodities were treated with contempt by other people.

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes, but action was taken by the Commonwealth Government; rarely was action taken against the persons who broke the most important of the National Security Regulations. What I am complaining about is the fact that important regula-

tions dealing with vital things essential for the welfare of the community—for example, increased production of commodities—were treated with scorn by leaders in the coal-mines and no action was taken by the responsible Government of this country, a Government who were put there by the people of the Commonwealth and one whose actions would have been backed by the people of the Commonwealth if they had been prepared to take action. Let us consider too the contrasting action taken by the Commonwealth Government against C.C.C. workers. These workers were fined, in some cases up to £100, for breaches of National Security Regulations, but because they had no big strong union to back them up the fines were collected. No action whatever was taken against the coal-miners.

Let us now go a step further and come to October, 1944, when the High Court ruled that an award of the Coal Tribunal was contrary to wage-pegging regulations. The Minister for Labour, Mr. Holloway, issued a fresh regulation declaring all awards of the Coal Tribunal to be valid. This was another instance of action contrary to the rule of law. A Coal Tribunal was set up to deal with this matter, but because its decision was not politically acceptable to the Commonwealth Government that Government very obligingly issued a new regulation to overcome the decision given by this expert authority.

Furthermore, it is to be noted in connection with the Sydney abattoir that the union concerned publicly announced the adoption of new tallies and hours of work, much lower than those in force before. Again no action was taken, notwithstanding the fact that the products handled by the union were vitally required for Australia's war effort, vitally required for the people of Great Britain and our Allies. In November, 1944, the Labour newspaper in Sydney expressed regret that a meat worker had been fined for stealing meat because, as the paper said, it was contrary to the interests of industrial peace. When we have things like that going on in our community and gradually breaking down the rule of law, what hope can we have that better conditions will develop in Australia?

Lack of Government action is positively responsible for the industrial unrest that has developed in the community in recent years. We well remember the serious position that developed on the wharves when go-slow systems were instituted and frequent strikes brought about delays in getting away from this country vital material supplies and ammunition needed by our troops overseas and in the islands. Indeed, our American allies and our own military authorities had to combine to man the wharves with soldiers to load food for our troops and food for Great Britain, not at the rates of pay applicable to wharf loading but at the usual 6s. a day paid to members of the Australian military forces. We remember too that in July, 1944, a butcher at Portland, New South Wales, was penalised by the Government although an inquiry had shown that

he had committed no offence. The Commonwealth Labour Government authorised the building of a rival butchery where none was needed, because this butcher, Mr. Dargan, refused to accept the dictation of striking coal-miners. The Government broke down the laws of the Commonwealth at the instance of pressure brought by their political supporters.

Numerous instances could be quoted—and indeed they should be quoted—to show this gradual process of breaking down the rule of law that is taking place in our community over the years. A little later, in the same year, the Government persuaded—I use the word "persuaded" because it is one way of describing the Government's action—persuaded the Maritime Commission to restore cuts in war-risk loadings for the crews of vessels that did not travel North of Townsville. Yet we had a competent tribunal to deal with this very question and the judge who was the chairman of it resigned his position as a protest against the action of the Government. It is interesting to note that notwithstanding the fact that the war has been over for some considerable time, these war-loadings are still in force and being paid, with the result that crews on ships travelling up our coast still receive £10 to £15 a week and keep. The consequent huge losses on shipping are being paid in full by the Commonwealth Government and by the people, and I might say out of the taxes contributed by wage-earners on a level of £2 a week and upwards.

A little later again, from January to July, 1945, Communists were allowed to disrupt the sheep-shearing industry in Queensland and no action was taken by the State Government to deal with this industrial unrest, notwithstanding the fact that wool was urgently required.

However, a little later again in that year, August to September, the State Government did intervene in the Brisbane tramway strike, generally known as the roster strike, because the employer in that case was a non-Labour city council—and there was an election in the offing. The State Government decided to step in and take some action in connection with that strike, although they had not intervened in many other industrial disputes that had taken place here. And they intervened against the wishes of the Brisbane City Council, which was actually acting in accordance with the industrial laws of this State.

It is interesting to note and record at this juncture that at the same time as this industrial dispute was before the tribunal appointed by this Parliament to deal with industrial disputes in this State we had three Labour members of this Assembly going onto the public platform and openly advocating that the striking members of the Tramways Union should defy the Industrial Court and continue to break the law. What a position we have developed into in this community! What a position we have developed into when we find hon. members of this Chamber who are pledged to uphold the laws of this community going out and openly urging that

strikers engaged in an illegal strike should continue to defy the arbitration machinery that this Parliament had set up! It is fitting at this juncture to say that we in Queensland are proud of our arbitration and industrial laws. As the hon. member for East Toowoomba said yesterday, they undoubtedly lead the Commonwealth in the facilities and the excellent machinery provided to enable all parties to settle any industrial troubles and any disputes that may affect industry. Yet we find hon. members of this Chamber openly advocating disregard of those industrial laws and contributing very largely to this gradual breaking-down of the rule of law in the community that has been fostered and encouraged by Labour Governments.

What happened in strikes that were operating virtually at the same time as the tramway strike? Did the Government interfere in the sawmilling strike? No, they took no action there because it was not politically expedient, or because they saw there was no political advantage in doing so. I have already mentioned that at the same time there was an illegal strike in the bacon factories, but no action was taken by the Government.

The last item that I want to quote as contributing to the gradual breaking-down of the rule of law in the Commonwealth is the action that was taken by the communistic dictators on the waterfront when they declared black seven Dutch ships in Australian ports.

Mr. Hanlon: You left out the master bakers' strike.

Mr. NICKLIN: No, I did not. I said that the hon. gentleman and his Government took action in the case of the master bakers' strike.

Mr. Hanlon: We took the same action in every dispute.

Mr. NICKLIN: The hon. gentleman's Government took no action in the shearers' dispute and the first disruption in the bacon manufacturing industry.

Mr. Hanlon: Exactly the same action in each case, and you know it quite well.

Mr. NICKLIN: No. If the Premier looks through my proof tomorrow morning and reads what I have said today he will find that I have detailed all the industrial troubles that have occurred and the action or lack of action taken by the Government.

Mr. Hanlon: Exactly the same action in every one of them.

Mr. NICKLIN: I will say that in the majority of cases the "action" was no action at all, but where it was convenient for the Government to take action they did.

Mr. Healy: Tell us what Digby Denham did in 1912?

Mr. Hanlon: That is what he is worried about.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am not worried about what took place in the distant past, but I am worried about what is happening at the

present time. That is what we should be concerned at. We should apply ourselves to what we are going to do to prevent these things from happening in the future.

Mr. Jesson: Tell us what you would have done.

Mr. NICKLIN: I will tell the hon. member what we should have done, but I want in the first place to arrange these matters in their chronological order, particularly the events that led up to the present disregard of the rule of law and order. I will suggest the appropriate action later on in my remarks.

Let me get on with the point I was making when I was interrupted by the Premier. I was referring to the action taken by the dictators of the waterfront against the seven Dutch ships that were tied up in Australian ports. It is a pity to have to refer to this incident because it is undoubtedly a blot on Australian history to think that we had a supine Government in charge of the affairs of the Commonwealth that was willing to allow things like this to continue. Let us remember that those ships and crews all through the war provided an essential service to the fighting services of this community in that they carried them backwards and forwards from the war areas to the ports and kept up supplies to them. But because a small section, who are undoubtedly endeavouring to run this country and who very nearly succeeded, said that the seven Dutch ships had to remain tied up in our ports they remained tied up in the ports of Australia, and the Commonwealth Government were not game to take action contrary to the wishes of those dictators of the waterfront, who are undoubtedly framing the foreign policy of this country at the present time.

Let us make reference also to the Dutch destroyer that fought on the side of Australia throughout the war and was one of the few surviving Dutch ships. Let us cast our minds back to the battle of the Java Straits where the American and Dutch and Australian ships fought a hopeless action against overwhelming odds. This ship was a unit of the navy that then joined with us in that hopeless battle in the interests of democracy and the world, yet when she came to Australia wanting a few minor repairs to enable her to get back to her home country, just because these communist-controlled unions in the community said "Nay," we did not have a Government who were prepared to stand up and say, "These ships have to be repaired." Notwithstanding the fact there is a world shipping shortage and the Dutch required the services of these ships, they remained tied up in Australian ports for 10 long months, doing nothing but paying harbour dues and incurring expense. Eventually they were got away by using firewood, and later they were coaled at sea.

It is interesting to note that the only action in connection with this case taken by the Commonwealth Government was when the Prime Minister reprimanded the Dutch Consul

because the latter made a very mild protest against the blockade carried out against his country's ships.

At 12.9 p.m.,

Mr. DUNSTAN (Gympie) relieved Mr. Duggan in the chair.

Mr. NICKLIN: Under such circumstances as these—and there are hundreds of similar cases—can it be wondered that union dictatorship has flourished in Australia, and that with such encouragement it has become the virtual ruler of our industrial affairs? The occurrence of all these incidents I have quoted points to the gradual breaking-down of the rule of law and is definitely having a detrimental effect on this country of ours.

Let us come a bit nearer home. Let us look at the conditions that developed and were allowed to develop in this State. In order to deal with the position adequately I want to make brief reference to the history of industrial arbitration in this State. As I mentioned, we have excellent industrial arbitration. It is necessary that it should be amended and improved—that is essential in order that legislation be kept up-to-date—but everybody will admit that our industrial legislation is excellent and provides machinery that, if utilised by all sections of industry, would largely obviate—if not absolutely obviate—any necessity for strikes in this State.

The first Industrial Court in Queensland was established by the Industrial Peace Act of 1912. It is interesting to note that fact, because hon. members opposite very frequently make statements in this Chamber that they were responsible for the arbitration laws and the introduction of arbitration and conciliation in this State. Prior to that there was a system of wages boards, but no court. That Act declared a lock-out or strike to be illegal unless approved at a secret ballot of the employers or employees concerned. Very drastic penalties were enacted for any infringement of section 35 of that Act. These were directed mainly against the actual participants in the lock-out or strike and the association or union concerned. That seems to be the weakness—there was insufficient provision aimed personally at those really and mainly responsible for the industrial trouble. As has always been so in this State, there have been amendments and improvements to all our legislation, and our industrial legislation is no exception. The 1912 Act was repealed in 1915, but similar provisions as to secret ballots were included in the Bill that sought to replace it, and in a subsequent Act passed in 1916, although the penalties associated with lock-outs and strikes were drastically reduced.

It is interesting in reviewing the history of industrial legislation in Queensland to give one or two relevant quotations from the Parliamentary debates that took place at that time. As to the 1915 Bill, Mr. E. G. Theodore, who introduced it, made the following

comments—they are to be found in "Hansard" of that year at page 574:—

"I have no doubt that the awards made by this court will be rigidly observed by employers and employees alike. I think that this court is founded upon a correct foundation, and with the confidence established between both parties there will be no question but that the awards will be observed without the possibility of anyone ignoring them."

I think hon. members will agree with that statement.

Later, in the same debate, page 577, Mr. Theodore said—

"Under this Arbitration Bill, if it is given a fair trial in Queensland, we will find that all the differences in all the industries can be settled peaceably and amicably without this final resort to brute force. There are appropriate provisions in the Bill to secure the due observance of the awards and to punish appropriately those who fail to observe the awards. . . . It is not introduced in any partisan spirit; it is introduced with a desire to bring about permanent peace in the industries of Queensland and to establish a system which will entirely do away with the industrial dislocation and disruption that has occurred from time to time in the past under the more imperfect system which has prevailed. It is desired to reach the objective of a permanent and lasting industrial peace."

These remarks are particularly appropriate, and I think will be supported by all hon. members.

Speaking on a later amendment of the 1916 Act Mr. Theodore, as reported in "Hansard," page 449, said—

"We are making better provision in this measure and are trying to do away with strikes entirely. I think that under this measure strikes will decline and go entirely out of favour. Probably we shall never hear of strikes or lock-outs, but if there is a strike, then we have the machinery here to get the parties together to settle their differences amicably."

I think we can say that that prophecy has been largely borne out in practice until recent years, because Queensland certainly has not had the same industrial trouble as has been apparent in the other States. But a new set of circumstances has arisen that requires more drastic measures to ensure that the rule of law will prevail over those who are wilfully and deliberately flouting it. I repeat that we shall never get progress, we shall never get the new order or improved living conditions until we have a Government who are willing to stand up to their responsibilities and enforce the rule of law in the community.

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

Mr. NICKLIN: I thank the House for the courtesy extended to me.

I desire now to deal with the recent industrial trouble in this State. As I have mentioned already, no action was taken by the

Government against the striking shearers or bacon-factory employees, although very prompt action was taken in April, 1945 against the employers, for example, the striking bakers.

Mr. Devries: Whom are you blaming for the fact that no action was taken against the shearers recently?

Mr. Nicklin: I am blaming the Government. Whom does the honourable member blame, or to whom does he give credit for taking action against the striking bakers? I might mention that in addition to the bakers the milk vendors were brought to heel by Government action.

What is the history of Government action or lack of action in the recent strike, which lasted for the long period of 19 weeks, and cost this State countless thousands of pounds? It is hard to estimate exactly what the recent industrial trouble in Queensland did cost the State because the loss to primary producers as a result of the hold-up will never be definitely computed. We can say without fear of contradiction, however, that as a result of this unnecessarily long drawn out strike the primary producers lost tens of thousands of valuable cattle, the world lost tens of thousands of tons of valuable food and the wage-earners of the community lost wages that they will never regain, and on the whole the State suffered very greatly indeed.

It is only fair and right that I should recapitulate the main events connected with that strike because the Premier was congratulated recently by his Caucus on the firm stand he took. Yesterday he was congratulated also by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply on the firm stand he took in connection with the strike. Personally I should call it not a firm stand but rather a long stand because he certainly took a stand for a long time before he took any action whatsoever.

Here are the facts, and I ask honourable members to judge this case on the facts because that, after all, is the only way in which we can rightly judge it. First of all, a meat strike began on 7 March of this year on the flimsy pretext of a seniority dispute at the Murarrie bacon factory. The court at that time rightly suggested that the unions place the matter before it for decision. They refused to do so. On 27 March a general sympathy strike of all meat-workers was declared. On 19 June the strike was extended to include all coal-miners and water-side workers, and an effort was made at the same time to bring about a general railway strike. But that was only averted because four of the railway unions, who were not controlled by communistic leaders—and I refer to the unions of the guards, traffic employees, salaried officers and station-masters—refused to accept dictation by the Trades Hall Disputes Committee. Those unions obtained a restraining order from the Industrial Court, and I say that they deserve commendation and congratulation on the firm stand they took against leadership by the

Trades and Labour Council, which at that time had assumed control of the conduct of the strike.

It is interesting to note, in the compilation of facts associated with the strike, that no secret ballot was taken, as is required by law; in the case of the coal-miners even a request by members of their union to hold mass meetings before striking was refused by the executive of the union.

It is significant that the strike ended on 14 July, after having lasted for over 19 long weeks, during which great loss had been suffered by the people of the State. During that period the Premier and the Secretary for Labour and Employment held repeated conferences with the communistic leaders of the unions concerned—one union was deregistered by the court for illegal action taken during the strike—and members of the Trades and Labour Council. These persons were invested with a sort of prestige and status by the fact that they were in constant conference with the Premier of the State and the Secretary for Labour and Employment. But mark you, Sir, the law abiding citizens of Queensland and the industries of the State were suffering. These people became what one might term the Hollywood film stars of industry in Queensland. There was never any mention of enforcing law and order during the whole of the 19 weeks, as there was when the master bakers struck in 1945.

The strike was of such magnitude and duration that it had to come to an end, because of the increasing pressure of public opinion and by the opposition to it by moderate unionists. That was why the strike ended—not because of action taken by the Government. On 5 July the moderates gained control of the executive of the A.M.I.E.U. and carried a resolution in favour of a return to work. The other unions concerned had already stated that they would abide by any such decision. That was the end of the strike, and let this be noted: on the very next day, 6 July, after the strike had lasted for four months, the Government issued its so-called strong order for the resumption of work. It was issued one day after the unions had decided to return to work. This was the strong and firm action that the Government allegedly took in regard to an industrial dispute that had held up important sections of the people and important industries of the State for four months. They had been held up awaiting some action to be taken by the Government, the Government who were responsible for the conduct of affairs in Queensland, the Government who were responsible for seeing that the laws of the State were enforced.

It is interesting to note that a few days later, on 15 July, the Secretary for Labour and Employment, in reply to an excellent article published in the "Courier-Mail" by the hon. member for Logan, Mr. Hiley, had this to say—

"Though Mr. Hiley is evidently not aware of it, there are ample provisions in the Act for the imposition of personal

penalties where this is considered necessary and desirable. There is no need to amend the Act for this purpose.'

There is a candid admission by the Minister in charge of the department directly responsible for handling industrial troubles in this State that there was ample provision in the Act for the enforcement of penalties on those responsible for breaking the industrial laws. Although the strike lasted for four long months no action was taken by the Minister concerned. There was certainly no enforcement of the law in this case and, as the president of the Meat Union said, it may prove to be only the first round in a series of major industrial hold-ups unless the Government, assisted by this Parliament, are prepared to create an effective law and to enforce it impartially against those responsible.

That brings me to the point that in spite of the facts that the Government were being defied and that the industrial laws of the State were being defied and that industrial trouble was causing a huge loss of wages to the workers as well as a loss of valuable products to primary producers, no action was taken by the Government to seek the assistance of Parliament in dealing with the trouble. If the Government thought that they did not have the necessary powers to deal with the trouble, why did they not call Parliament together to amend the industrial law so that they could deal with it and end it in a short time instead of allowing it to last for four long months? If the Government had called Parliament together and if they had intended to take action against the persons who were fomenting industrial trouble they would have had the backing of every hon. member for any real action that they proposed to take to resolve this trouble. However, for some reason or other they refused to call Parliament together, this democratic Assembly that is the basis of the entire democratic set-up in this State, to help them in dealing with the trouble.

Mr. Hanlon: That was because we wanted to settle this strike. When you call Parliament together you have the opportunity of prolonging it.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am rather interested to hear that the Premier was interested in settling the strike but to many thousands of people in this State it seemed that he or his Government had no interest in the strike. They took no action to bring about any settlement of it.

These events relating to industrial trouble, which I have outlined in chronological order, including those associated with our own State, clearly show that the State Government, in common with their political fellows in the Federal Government, have no interest in the enforcement of the rule of law in this community and until the Government realise that they have the responsibility of enforcing the rule of law in the community we are going to have this lawlessness and the holding up of the community to ransom every now and again by these communistic controllers in some of the militant unions of the State.

In a Press statement on 5 July last I indicated some of the measures I think should be taken towards the enforcement of the industrial law. They included disqualification of persons from holding official positions in unions and the conduct of all secret ballots on union appointments and strikes by an independent tribunal. Our industrial laws deal just as adequately with the employers as the employees. So far as we on this side of the House are concerned, there should be no distinction between employer and employee if they break the law. The law should quickly and strictly deal with either if he sets about flouting the laws.

At 12.31 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. NICKLIN: As an amendment of our industrial laws has been forecast in the Governor's Speech I will reserve any further comment on this question until that proposed amendment has been brought down. In the meantime I wish to say with all the emphasis at my command that unless the Government are able and have the courage to protect the people, particularly the primary producers directly concerned, the people who suffer loss of employment and the housewives, from the tremendous sufferings caused by strikes they will deserve and they will receive the condemnation of the people in the shape of defeat at the next State elections.

I hope that the Government from now on will not allow themselves to be chased about by small minorities in the militant unions in this State but that they will discharge to the full their obligations to the people to administer the laws on the statute-book so that we shall be governed by the Government and not run about or be pushed about by a few irresponsible persons who have gained control for some of the militant unions. I hope that the Government will stand up to their obligations and thus prevent a recurrence of industrial troubles in the future.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) (12.32 p.m.): Before proceeding to the main items that I propose to touch upon in my speech I have a two-fold duty to discharge. Firstly, I wish personally to offer my congratulations to the Lieutenant-Governor on his elevation and to wish him a happy and prosperous term of office. Secondly, I desire to sincerely congratulate the hon. members for East Toowoomba and Bremer on the excellent speeches they delivered in this Chamber yesterday afternoon on the occasion of moving and seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. There are many people in the community who lament the alleged decline in the quality of speeches delivered in this Assembly. It is refreshing to see in these two new hon. members evidence that they possess qualifications that will enable them to express themselves clearly and intelligently. The experience they gained prior to entering this Parliament suggests that it will stand them in good stead in discharging their responsibilities to the community. I hope that both hon. members will represent their constituencies for many years.

I hope, too, that as they gain experience in this Parliament they will continue to make very valuable contributions to the debates that will take place in it.

Mr. Speaker, when you were called on to vacate the Chair to engage in business in your room you asked me to relieve you. It is with some regret I have to say that notwithstanding the steadying influences of the atmosphere that surrounds your Chair the debate had such an effect on me that I thought it desirable to ask the hon. member for Gympie, another member of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, to relieve me in order that I might go back to my seat and reflect on the grossly inaccurate charges that the Leader of the Opposition levelled against the Government. In the first forty minutes of his speech hon. members listening would be pardoned for thinking that this was the Federal Parliament, as except for the reference to the fact that the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech yesterday contained mention of much prospective legislation and an unwarranted assertion that it contained a recapitulation of promises contained in previous Speeches, his speech consisted mainly of an attack on the Federal authorities or on some instrumentalities beyond the control of this Parliament.

I only want to say this: that the industrial malaise the Leader of the Opposition said existed in Australia—which, unfortunately, is in part true—is not a sufficient reason for indicting this Government; and he did not proffer for the consideration of members any means of preventing an extension of this trouble or enabling the restoration of the conditions that prevailed before the war years. He seemed to be rather fearful that because of the alleged inactivity of the Government we shall before many years have passed have a form of Socialism or Communism established in this country. I with other hon. members will do all in my power to resist the introduction of Communism, but I should do all in my power to expedite the introduction of Socialism, because I believe it is only by its introduction that we shall be able to overcome many of the things that are responsible for the disturbances and confusion that exist in the world today.

During the closing portion of his speech, the Leader of the Opposition directed much criticism against the Government because of their handling of the meat dispute. I want to say here and now that however disastrous this industrial dispute might have been for many employees and producers, it cannot be fairly stated that the Premier was responsible for prolonging the strike by one day. I want to say very emphatically that the Premier did not give the fag-end of his time to the solution of this problem, but he set aside important business of State in order that he might be accessible at all times to interested parties in the dispute. It has been said the Premier created a status for Communist leaders that was undeserved. Who was representing those various conflicting interests? The Premier was not concerned so much whether they were Communists or arch-capitalists or Tories, but

that they were the accredited representatives of the various groups who were parties to the dispute.

Mr. Macdonald: Not even if they were Labour candidates.

Mr. DUGGAN: It does not matter who they were. If members of the Opposition are so concerned about accrediting people, I say that the accredited representative of the producers and the employers was not of such a type as would have enabled a reasonable compromise to have been reached much earlier than it was.

Mr. Macdonald: Have you authority on that?

Mr. DUGGAN: I will give the hon. member an authority. I think I am a good judge and the authority is contained in the remarks I now make. We have been charged with favouring Labour candidates at the forthcoming State elections, but I say here and now—and we shall see how far my forecast is out—that the managing director of the Murarrie Co-operative Bacon Factory will be a man who will press his claims for selection for a Country Party seat before we progress very much further. I say that his plebiscite prospects will be increased tremendously by the fact that he will be able to say to the producers, "Look at the militant stand I took on your behalf against the reactionary Premier and the Communist-controlled unions"—(Opposition interjections.)

Mr. DUGGAN: This is what Mr. Heading said. (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I wish to inform members on my left that they will have ample opportunity to reply to the hon. member for Toowoomba.

Mr. Macdonald: Is it not permissible to interject without interrupting?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is within the province of hon. members to give every other hon. member a patient hearing. They have the right of reply.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am thankful for your intervention, but I assure hon. members that your protection is not necessary in view of the way I am dealing with this dispute. The facts that I will give are irrefutable and are of such a kind that I feel hon. members opposite will be silenced effectively without your intervention.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must comply with the rulings and decisions I give.

Mr. DUGGAN: On 21 March, many weeks before the termination of this dispute, this gentleman, Mr. Heading, who was such a champion of the interests of the producers, said—

"We shall not budge one inch from our stand in this dispute."

Was that a conciliatory attitude to adopt? If that is to be the characteristic attitude of men involved in the negotiations to effect settlements of disputes it will be absolutely

impossible to get the degree of co-operation, toleration and cordiality at the conference table that is necessary for their termination.

I object very strenuously to the false statement that the Premier intervened only in cases where union advocates asked for his intervention and refused to intervene when the request came from other interests. The hon. gentleman has been charged with great readiness to intervene in the baking dispute that occurred in Brisbane many months ago, but all the Premier did on that occasion was to call the men into conference and tell them that he as Premier—at that time he was Acting Premier—would not tolerate from any section of the community action of a kind that was unconstitutional and would deprive the people of Brisbane or Queensland of basic food necessities. As the result of that conference the bakers' dispute was speedily settled. Did he show any reluctance to intervene at an equally early date in the bacon factory dispute? Did he give encouragement to Mr. Neumann in the initial stages of this dispute to continue on a course of action that this Government think wrong? No, he did not. He told Mr. Neumann that he would not accept from him as the authorised spokesman of the Meat Industry Employees' Union a threat to deprive the people of Brisbane of their meat. Is that not true? And is it not equally true that during the whole of the period of this dispute, as the Premier so aptly said, the only commodity in Brisbane that was plentiful was meat? It was true enough that in the history of meat distribution in Brisbane there was never a better quality of meat than during this period. The Premier has been most anxious at all times to help all elements in the community in this respect, and it is true that because of the action of certain men in the union they repudiated the spurious leadership that had arisen. I give them a full measure of credit for that, but if Governments, particularly Labour Governments, are going to act as strike-breakers and as men who are going to disrupt the unions the outlook for the workers in this State will be indeed very poor. I desire to pay the greatest tribute I can to the Premier for his actions in the recent dispute; he was able to demonstrate to the people that his attitude all along the line was consistent with the policy of conciliation and arbitration. He did take firm action where it was necessary to do so in the conduct of these negotiations, and his tolerance and fair-mindedness were such that he was able to effect a settlement without any resentment remaining in the minds of the great body of workers involved in the dispute. That is the important thing to remember.

However much the Leader of the Opposition has availed himself of the opportunity to draw attention to the disturbed state of industrial affairs in Australia, he offered no solution other than to state the fact that mass action against strikers was undesirable and that some specific action should be taken against the leaders of strikes. What is the reason for strikes? Can it be said that they are just some hasty or impulsive action of

the workers because of irresponsible trade-union leadership? It may be true, I freely admit, that members of unions have become perhaps uninterested in union affairs and have enabled men who do not believe in the democratic way of life to get control of some unions, but it must be remembered that this discontent is not confined to this State. Discontent is prevalent in all countries in the world today, and to indict this Government because it is alleged that a particularly disturbed set of conditions obtains in Australia today is unfair, because the basis of the charge is untrue. In the great United States of America, where capitalism has had free rein, there have been strikes of such a kind that the economic life of the community has been brought to a complete standstill. We find that with the revocation of controls there a tremendous increase in prices has occurred. We see, for instance, that the wage-earners in the community have great difficulty in finding accommodation at a price that they can afford to pay.

Mr. Macdonald: That is not peculiar to America.

Mr. DUGGAN: No, but it is accentuated there, and I say, with the possible exception of Great Britain, where they have a Labour Government newly installed, all countries in the world are suffering industrial troubles today as a result of the aftermath of the war and the terrible damage that was done because of the war.

Now I find it necessary to return to the notes that I have prepared for this speech. It is obvious, in perusing the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, that the session will be a very long and important one. It is very natural that after the cessation of hostilities there should be greater scope for the Government to proceed with legislation than was possible during the war years. For that reason, much legislation of importance to the State of Queensland, perhaps of a controversial kind, will be presented in due time for our consideration. The proposals of the Government cover such a wide diversity of subjects that they emphasise once again the increasing responsibilities, problems and complexities of modern Governments.

The Address in Reply debate, covering such a wide range of subjects as it is permissible to hon. members to discuss, necessarily gives all of us an opportunity of introducing into it subjects of a domestic, national or international character and of giving them such treatment as they think they deserve, without confining themselves to the usual rules of relevance to the precise question before the chair.

Without intending in any way to detract from the very meritorious contributions already submitted and those that in the days to follow will come from other hon. members, I wish to say that I know of no matter that is more singularly appropriate to offer for the consideration of hon. members in this debate than an examination of the state of affairs that exists in Australia today. For many years thinking people have directed attention, by word of mouth and by well-

written Press articles, to the problems confronting democracy in this and other countries where similar political systems prevail. Because we were able to mount an offensive during the war years that earned the commendation of many impartial observers from other countries, many people who were previously fearful of the state of democracy felt that Australia had regained some of the virility and vitality of an effective and efficient democratic system of government. In this war we were able to put in the field about six infantry divisions, we were able to send a flotilla of small ships for attachment to the Royal and American navies, and we were able to provide many squadrons of aeroplanes to comb Pacific areas and to bomb the cities of Germany and Italy and to participate in the desert campaign of Africa. While we were doing that we were able to supply the food requirements of many millions of American service men in the Pacific as well as provide military material and equipment for forces who were in the Middle East. People do not seem to appreciate the fact that such a contribution by a small nation had a very important effect on the conditions that are present in Australia today. It is unfortunately true that because we live in such stirring and troublous times the problems of government have become accentuated. There are people who view with very grave disquiet the signs, some of which were referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, that are present in Australia today.

We have on our hands problems of unprecedented proportions. The demobilisation and civil re-establishment of hundreds of thousands of ex-service men and women is, by reason of its scope and complexity, the greatest social problem facing Australia, and the extent to which we can cope with it and its associated problems will largely determine the unity and stability to be achieved in this country in the next few years. I believe it is pertinent, in a debate of this kind, to ask whether our political structure, our social fabric and the spirit of our people are equal to the tasks ahead of us. I believe that unless members of this Parliament and like Parliaments can re-ignite an enthusiasm for democracy and what is meant by it the outlook for this country in the future is poor. For some time, together with thousands of others of our people, I have been pondering over the question as to the most effective way this problem could be resolutely and successfully attacked—this problem of chaos, confusion, disorder and unrest that is prevalent in all countries of the world today. An idea crystallised itself into a possible solution from my reading of an article that sought amongst other things to give a more positive definition of democracy, a better definition than any I had read previously and one that was particularly appropriate to the present position in Australia. During the past 50 years the word "democracy" has been bandied around in such a fashion by people in all countries that it means different things to different people. Too few have a clear conception of what it

means, and the consequences are, as the writer I refer to so aptly said—

"Such confusion leads at best to misunderstanding; at worst, to the betrayal of millions of men who can be seduced by the glamour of a word into a form of servitude which is the very antithesis of democracy."

Before examining the state of democracy in Australia, therefore, it is necessary to explain what is meant by the word. Democracy is three things. It is an attitude of mind, a way of life, and a form of government.

Democracy as an attitude of mind exists where the citizens of a community respect, consciously or unconsciously, the rights and views of their fellows; where any attempt to impose the will of minorities or restrict the freedom, within the law, of the individual is fiercely and swiftly resented; where independence of mind and courage in defending principles are still admired qualities.

Democracy as a way of life exists in a community in which every citizen, irrespective of race, religion, social position, or political belief, has an equal opportunity to fill that role for which his inclinations and abilities best fit him; in which the law protects the weak against the strong; in which the right within the law of the individual to mould or change his life to suit himself is unchallengeable and in which freedom to hold any opinion and to express that opinion is a fundamental right.

Democracy as a form of government exists when a country is governed by a body freely elected for a limited term by the majority of the people; when that elected body legislates and administers for the benefit of the community as a whole, and not for a section or sections of the community; and when freedom of debate and criticism of government policy is allowed to parliamentary oppositions and to the electors.

It is possible for one or more of these conditions to be present at any one time, and, conversely, it is possible that the absence of one of these elements can produce confusion and weakness in our economic and financial structures, leaving distress in its train. If democracy is to be recognised as it should be, it must be recognised as a living faith and not as it is generally represented, merely by a code of rights and obligations, a guarantee of personal liberty or a method of government. If the spirit of democracy dies in a people, then those manifestations of democracy must collapse soon after.

I believe that democracy is worth striving for and that there is the incumbent obligation upon all members of Parliament and on all men carrying positions of public responsibility to choose every means and opportunity of directing the attention of the people to the need to revive and restore democracy if we are to give effect to the aspirations of the Australian people. It is true that today very strong efforts are being made to undermine it and in many quarters even to overthrow it. Someone must tell the people what is happening and what is required. There

seems to be a grave reluctance on the part of responsible men to tell the people the facts of the international situation and the facts of the internal and domestic situation.

It is only when these facts are presented fearlessly and courageously to the people that we can prepare a plan that is capable of welding them together into one solid body marching forward, to see that effect is given to their aspirations and all our pleas for a higher standard of living are made possible. I believe that if that responsibility is not accepted we are paving the way for the disintegration of democracy and the lessening of the influence of the Parliamentary institution, and by doing that for the establishment of a dictatorship, whether of the Left or of the Right.

It is true that today democratic spokesmen everywhere are on the defensive. Wherever legislators so they are asked why one Government do this or some other Government do that. Very rarely do we find people acclaiming with enthusiasm the decisions of Governments. It is a regrettable sign and a regrettable tendency in national affairs that people are obliged to adopt the defensive role, and particularly when representatives of the people are obliged to do so. It is in the main due to the fact that vociferous minority and pressure groups are waging a relentless war, and directing attention to some individual hardship, to some inconvenience from which the people are suffering, and to the fact that it is not usually possible to adjust these things quickly soon after the cessation of war.

We find men taking advantage of the unfortunate situation in which many returned soldiers find themselves today. They are quoting the frequently quoted cynical lines—

“When war is near and the battle high,
‘God and the soldier’ is the cry,
When war is over and wrongs are righted,
God is forgot, the soldier slighted.”

It is true that that condition of mind obtains with many people today. We are apt to forget the sacrifice and the contributions that these men have made. It is our obligation to see that we place before the people in the community the obligations that we owe to the men who made it possible to preserve the democratic system. We find that men cannot be quickly absorbed into the economy of the nation. They cannot have the type of houses that they require and they cannot have them quickly. They cannot have the choice of material with which they would like to clothe themselves and their families. And so they become bitterly resentful.

On the other hand, we have another section of the community who waxed fat during the war years because of some special circumstances that placed them in a position to acquire easy money, by cornering a commodity and selling it at an inflated price, or engaging in hazardous and dangerous work that carried big pay. These men are uneasy now they see the means of easy money now leaving them and they feel that there is something wrong with the system that does not protect them and give them the power

that they previously had of acquiring large sums of money during the war period. On the other hand, there is the right-thinking and right-acting citizen who has manfully striven to obey Government regulation and direction but who because of Man-power and other controls was not able to leave his employment, but was subject to an excessively heavy burden of taxation. If he has had to change his house he has had to pay an increased price for rent and he has had only a minimum increase in wages. He is resentful because he has not been able to get so much as others in the community who have not done so much as he has. He feels that he, the right-thinking and right-acting citizen in the community, is being penalised because of his obedience to the law.

I have expressed some fear of the future because of the conditions that exist in Australia today. I mentioned earlier that there were vociferous minority groups in the community who were endeavouring to whip up some enthusiasm amongst their supporters and potential supporters to effect a change in the system of government in this country.

Mr. Pie: Do you mean the Communists?

Mr. DUGGAN: They are a minority group, but there are other minority groups besides Communists in the community who seek to establish a system of government repugnant to the ideals of a democratic Australia. They are able to pursue their enthusiasms with an evangelical zeal that we might well copy. The only thing we should be unwise to emulate is the facility with which they extricate themselves from difficult situations, for, having suggested a course of action that results in disaster to themselves, they seek by the pamphlets they distribute and the Press statements they circulate to suggest that they sponsored an altogether different line of conduct. I refer specifically to the recent meat-industry dispute, where the communist section, who were so decisively routed, were able to issue Press statements that the return to work was in accordance with their prescribed policy throughout the whole dispute. I mention that as an illustration of the devout fanaticism that enables these people to effect a complete somersault in the hope that it will not be observed by the right-thinking section of the community, and at the same time hope that their poisonous doctrine will be assimilated by the people. There is, also, a wide distrust of authority. There appears to be, even in responsible sections of the Press—and the Leader of the Opposition bore this out—a feeling that even if authority elects to deal with somebody who has carried out an anti-social act, or who has in some way impinged on the law, the person concerned must be held up as a martyr. Take the case of the man who thieved meat in Sydney, and whose case was exposed by the leader-writer of a paper because he had done an anti-social act. It was said that if he was dealt with an industrial upheaval would be provoked and that in it many people would suffer. Unfortunately we find that type of thing developing in the community.

This is due to the fact that because democracy has been on the defensive so long we in this country have encouraged the mediocre in all things. Mediocrity has been fostered by too many in the community. We do not look for the courageous man to represent us in Parliament; we look to the average man to become our representative instead of selecting men who would inspire people to follow them. In other words, instead of having representative men moulding public opinion we have the public constantly seeking that man who will bow to public opinion and shape his course accordingly.

Mr. Maher: Do you say they want pliant tools in Parliament?

Mr. DUGGAN: Circumstances exist outside Parliament that make it very difficult for a man to resist being a pliant tool, because no matter how great a statesman a man may be, he must under present conditions suffer criticism if he emphasises that statesmanlike quality in the Legislature. Consequently if we spend time in catering for the standard of mediocrity that unfortunately is rampant in all divisions of the community today we shall find it bringing with it its attendant suffering.

Mr. Pie interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: Even a man who has been noted for his militancy may upon his election to Parliament, if he has the courage to express Labour's philosophy and the correct Labour policy, be accused of being a Fascist.

How many of the outspoken statements from this side of the House have been challenged by men who should support them? As I have been saying, we expect statements that will give a lead to the community. Take the meat strike, in which the minority said they were defeated because of the reactionary attitude of one or two Ministers, whereas it was because of the courage and foresight displayed by some of the leading members of the Government, headed by the Premier, that we were able to terminate that unfortunate dispute so satisfactorily.

Mr. Maher: It solved itself.

Mr. DUGGAN: I dealt with that point this morning and I pointed out it did not solve itself. Its settlement was due to action taken at the proper psychological and constitutional time. Too many of our people, instead of looking for high standards in Parliament and business and industrial unions, look for the higher standards only in the stadium, on the racecourse or in the glamorous beauty of the female form on the beaches. That seems to be the type of excellence they desire—that of the stadium, on the racing track or on the beaches. Unless we can change that attitude of mind, which is unfortunately prevalent, democracy must lose the fight it is engaged in.

If we are interested in the extension of democracy we must passionately fight for it. The alternatives to democracy are made possible by the ignorance, apathy, prejudice and inertia of the people. It is only because of the existence in Germany and other countries of men who with the power of

oratory were able to persuade the unthinking people that an improved way of life would result from their following their slogans and their catch-cries, that certain events were possible. The suppression of personal liberty followed. Men were batoned and thrust into concentration camps, and anybody who offered a criticism was ruthlessly cast aside. It is because those conditions are present that such forces are able to grow in a community.

If I have said strong things, it is only because the times call for strong words. If we are able to effect these changes it is necessary that the people shall be told the truth, and one of the truths they must be told is that the cost of conducting a war is tremendous and is not confined to the maimed or dead bodies of the soldiers participating in it. It is shown in the fact that the surplus and reserve stocks have been exhausted and inadequately replenished and by the obsolescence of capital equipment and the rising of price levels. It is shown because price and income structure are not appropriate to changed circumstances, and because of the transfer from production of war goods to civilian requirements. It is also due to the fact that there is a shortage of certain types of skilled labour and certain types of female labour. It is due to the fact that there has been a contraction of spending power by civilians engaged in war-time production. It is due to the impact of international trade decisions which have affected this country. Those are some of the things that are responsible. These factors were largely beyond the immediate control of the various legislatures of this country. The internal situation, however, is one that causes thoughtful people the gravest anxiety. Widespread industrial unrest, absenteeism, and all other like things are directly due to some of the causes I have mentioned. The solution lies in an intensive educational and publicity campaign directing the people's attention to the needs of the community and stimulating their efforts to meeting them. There will be no solution unless the people are made acquainted with the economic problems affecting them.

Unless there is co-operation from all sections of the community, there is no hope for a speedy and effective cure of the ills that confront this country. It is necessary that there should be a comprehensive economic, financial and trade survey. Following this there should be an over-all plan that will set up targets for the various sections of the people in the community to reach. Knowing the targets and what is required to maintain the standard of living and increase it and to maintain our trade markets overseas, some sort of survey will be necessary. When these targets are reached it will be necessary that there should be a drive for greater production, and there should be rewards commensurate with the increased effort required; these rewards to take some form of security of employment, extension of social services, increased cultural opportunities, the provision of more amenities in the community, and the opportunity to each

man to follow the trade or calling for which his inclination or ability fits him.

It is necessary that at an early date there should be a constitutional convention of all the States of the Commonwealth, because of the decision of the High Court that ruled in favour of the Commonwealth on uniform taxation some time ago, which undoubtedly lessened the effectiveness of the States as the major contributing factors in the reforms I have mentioned, and that convention should be enabled to determine the additional powers necessary for the Federal Parliament. In exchange for such powers there should be increased delegated authority to the States and power to State instrumentalities to administer the policies determined by the national Parliament. If something on these lines is done, together with an effective disciplining of the people—the politician and the judge equally with other elements in the community—and an effective decentralisation policy, we shall do much to overcome the ills rampant in Australia today; they can be corrected only if we approach the problem in the light I have endeavoured to place before hon. members for their consideration today.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) (2.27 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, for the first time for many years this Assembly approaches its duty within a community at peace with its neighbours. Unlike similar occasions in recent years at this opening of Parliament, we find that the uniform virtually disappeared from the streets. No longer do warships throng our harbours or aircraft patrol our skies. We look for the end of the accompanying features of war-time control, which are disappearing more slowly, the end of rationing and other purely war-time controls to let us realise that peace is indeed in our midst. Just as in these early spring days we sense the summer that lies ahead, so most of us today are beginning to sense that era of peace for which we waited so patiently and from which we expected so much. The struggle over these war years—and it has been a titanic struggle—leaves us all with the sense of the struggle that lies ahead in the early years of peace. Most will be equally conscious that here again we have a collection of problems of tremendous nature and import, challenging the best ability of the whole of the nations if we are to make the first steps towards the winning of the peace.

War-time legacies—we could describe them as such—are the rehabilitation and re-employment of all the members of our armed forces. Coupled with these are such things as land-settlement schemes and pension schemes for those who are disabled, and the dependants of those who are lost, and last but not least, the financial problem involved in the interest and redemption of the high war-time debt. These would appear to be the problems of mountainous proportions that we must recognise as facing us in the early peacetime administration of Australia. But let us assume that Australia is blessed with Governments that can meet every one of these problems successfully and quickly. What then? Will that in itself be sufficient to ensure that Australia will win the peace?

I propose to submit to this House at least two major aspects, and failure to deal with these aspects that I intend to present could mean that all the success in dealing with purely war-time legacies could still result in failure.

I take it that it is unnecessary to remind this House of the geographical position of this country in relation to the continent of Asia. Living as we do, far distant from every other land mass on this globe, other than the continent of Asia, I think we have got to recognise that Asia and the nations of Asia will play an ever more relevant part in the fortunes of Australia in the years that lie ahead. Therefore, I ask the House to remind itself of this: if you study the vital statistics of, shall we say, British India, you find that in the decade between 1930 and 1940 its population increased by approximately four millions per annum. When we study India's problem and realise that nature's balancing factors of famine and disease, which over the centuries have kept Asia's population in check, are no longer playing the part they were in creating the equilibrium of the Asiatic population and that what is happening in British India—where every year the population increases by more than half the number there are today in the whole of Australia—will follow in the rest of India, in Malaya, in Java, will follow in the Philippines, in China, Japan and the other Asiatic country, Soviet Russia, may we be justified in feeling that the peril that so nearly confronted us in 1941 has gone for ever? Then we almost knew the real peril of Asiatic invasion. When we weigh the cold hard facts of population, we must see that the peril of 1941 must inevitably be repeated unless most serious steps are taken to avert it. The more I ponder over our problem in Australia and the more I ponder over our problem in Queensland, the more firmly convinced do I become that if we are to take the first step towards winning the peace we must immediately, and with haste, set upon the full development of Queensland, the full and immediate development of its population, the full and immediate development of its resources and the full and immediate development of its industries.

Mr. Power: Russell Roberts's ten thousand Japs.

Mr. HILEY: If we fail to do it, we shall have the ten million Japs., the time that apparently the hon. member for Barooka so eagerly awaits. This problem of the development of the population of this State and the whole of the Commonwealth is too immediate in its concern to allow of any pushing aside, to allow of any saying that this is something that might be tackled 10 or 20 years hence. We may not be given the time in which to face up to what is our clear responsibility.

Here I suggest that we might now refer to His Excellency's Speech to discover just what indication is given of the Government's attitude towards this grave problem that faces us. I studied that Speech carefully and listened with careful attention to the speech of the mover of the Address in Reply.

As I listened to and later read the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech and the maiden effort of the hon. member for East Toowoomba, the thing that frightened me was the glib self-satisfaction that fairly exuded from both of those speeches. So far as migration is concerned, there was but a fleeting reference to it—a reference that says in effect that "My Advisers now recognise that immediate migration is desirable, and it is hoped out of some conferences listed that some immediate action will be taken." If I heard the hon. member for East Toowoomba correctly, an indication was given that it was hoped to have a modest initial target on this question of migration. As I listened to those speeches the thought occurred to me with telling force of how frequently Labour, in spite of its attitude of always being right, is so frequently wrong.

Let me remind you, Sir, of some instances over recent years in which Labour has had to change its attitude and legislative programme completely and had to give effect to points consistently advocated by its opponents. In the Federal sphere for years Labour's attitude with regard to the means test has been something that we on this side of the House have consistently held to be wrong. We have held that insistence on the means test was a premium to the spendthrift and the ne'er-do-well. Now after years of arguing the question we find that in 1946 the Federal Labour Government are showing a disposition to recognise that the stand they have taken for so long is wrong and that the means test is unjust and undesirable.

Just as they are about to change their attitude on that issue, let us look to what has happened during the war regarding their attitude towards compulsory service. Labour has never hidden the view that compulsory service in the needs of this country was something that should never have been permitted, yet it remained for a Labour Government to develop a degree of compulsory service not only in the military field but in civilian employment for which if you search the whole of Australia's history you will find no equal. It is true that a threat faced Australia the like of which Australia had never known. The Labour Party changed its views on basic principles. And so you find very interesting examples of how Federal Labour has been wrong. Take the traditional attitude adopted by it to the question of taxation, particularly choosing between direct methods and indirect methods. If one cares to read the speeches of early leaders of the Australian Labour Party, by men alive to the distinction between the effects of direct and indirect taxation, one will see that those early Labour leaders saw the dangers of indirect taxation and its effect upon the community, yet it remained for a Federal Labour Government to impose a degree and total of indirect taxation for which, if you search the whole of the history of Australia, you will find no parallel. Their attitude towards indirect taxation too has changed.

But let us examine their attitude towards the question of taxation generally. During the war, to meet the needs of the nation,

scales of taxation were fixed that many Labour men believed should be continued into the days of peace, thus to achieve Labour's objective of socialisation, using high taxation to achieve that end.

Here again Labour was wrong, and it is just about to admit that it was badly wrong. Labour neglected the lesson that could have been learnt from Soviet Russia in the early twenties, and neglected the lesson that Lenin learnt from hard experience when he imposed his famous wheat tax in 1921, when he said to the wheat-growers of Russia, "You, the wheat-growers, will be permitted to retain a certain quantity of your production, but anything over that will be taken by the Government." What happened? History is clear. Within two years Lenin found that Russia, one of the world's great wheat-producers, a country that exported wheat from all its ports, was faced with national starvation. Within two years of his imposing that tax which deprived his people of all incentive, Lenin had to admit, even in Soviet Russia, that such a principle of taxation, even in a Bolshevik community, was hopelessly wrong. And where Lenin was in 1921 to 1923, Chifley in Australia and the Labour Government are about to be in 1946. With the records of declining production and faced with all other consequences of the absenteeism and industrial unrest that springs from such a vicious influence, Australian Labour is about to admit that it has been wrong in its attitude on the subject of taxation.

Mr. Foley: Yet productivity has been increasing every year.

Mr. HILEY: I am endeavouring to contrast the attitude in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech and the speech of the mover of the Address in Reply with the picture that Labour is always right. I have mentioned a few points in recent political history to show that Labour is often wrong.

A Government Member: You are referring only to Federal matters.

Mr. HILEY: Having now drawn the suggestion that I was referring only to Commonwealth matters, let me proceed to deal with them from the standpoint of the State Government to show where they have been found to be equally wrong. I intend to refer to two matters on which within the lifetime of this Parliament the Labour attitude has changed, and in respect of which it admits it was wrong. One classic example is that in relation to the necessity for the eradication of T.B. from the milk herds of this State. You, Mr. Speaker, cast your mind back to the last election campaign when such a step was stressed in the policy advocated by the Queensland People's Party. You will remember that members of the Government Party thundered against such a step as being entirely unnecessary, and as being only an attempt on the part of the party to which I belong to frighten the people into believing that there was an evil that should be averted. What happened? Within 12 months the Government saw fit to change their mind and introduce a Bill, the very introduction of which was an admission on their part that

Labour had been wrong up till then. We now have the Minister submitting figures to show the degree of condemnations which lead every thoughtful person to have no doubt that there was a very real menace that should have been averted.

For the second classic example of a change of attitude, we come to the question of migration. Over the years organised Labour has not positively opposed migration but it has done little to help it.

A Government Member: Bring out those 10,000 Japs?

Mr. HILEY: The plain fact of the matter is that if we have regard for the soaring Asiatic population and if we have regard for our geographical position, we can overcome every one of these war-time legacies and still lose the peace if we do not populate this country and populate it sensibly and rightly.

Mr. Bruce: Better hold it now as long as you can than follow the Q.P.P.'s policy of bringing Japs in.

Mr. HILEY: It all depends on what the Secretary for Public Works refers to. If he imagines for one minute that I in advocating immigration am advocating other than immigration of acceptable white races, then he should know me better than to suggest any such thing.

Mr. Bruce: A member of your party made that statement. (Interjections.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HILEY: Associated with this question of migration is the question of developing the resources of this State and its industries. I welcome those references in the Lieutenant-Governor's speech to several directions in which resources and industries were to be examined if not encouraged. I hope it will not stop at an examination. I hope that every reference made to such matters as electrical extension, hydro-electric power, water conservation and the like will be followed by sound planning and instant action. I am concerned about speed in this matter. I am not content to hear that migration might follow when this country gets back to normal. We do not dare wait till then. Although I agree that it might be infinitely preferable to have our affairs so regulated that migration can take place in a settled community with housing freely available and with jobs ready planned for people to take, I do not think Australia is in a position where she can afford to wait for those very desirable things. We have to take chances similar to those taken by the United States of America over the great period of its influx of population. We have to take chances not dissimilar to those taken by our own grandfathers when they came to this country. They did not wait for a home to be built first; they did not wait for a job to be ready the minute they set foot on these shores. We Australians pride ourselves on our virility. Have we after two generations of soft living so lost our resilience that we

are not prepared to take any chances? If that is so, we deserve to lose this country, as assuredly we shall if we fail to answer this first basic problem.

There is one adverse feature that intrudes into the picture of the development of the resources and population of this State to which no reference is made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. I refer to the impact of uniform taxation. I regarded uniform taxation as being an admirable war-time measure, but it must be regarded now as something that has been grafted on our financial set-up as a permanent fact. Let me refresh the memories of hon. members. During the war, after the need for war-time finance had been stressed, a uniform taxation plan was devised, but that plan was expressed as being a temporary measure. It was to continue for the duration of the war and for 12 months thereafter. At the time of its creation very clear understandings were given by the Commonwealth authority that it would in fact be purely temporary and the taxing power would revert to the States on the expiration of the agreed term.

I think most hon. members will be aware of the extent to which that plan was resisted, even as a temporary measure. Mr. Forgan Smith was quickly alive to its significance; so alive that he deemed it desirable to challenge the passage of that measure before the High Court of Australia. It is almost a Gilbertian touch, but I believe that the very fact that Mr. Forgan Smith and the other State Premiers chose to challenge the legality of that temporary measure was the real incident that led to its permanent grafting on the Australian set-up. It was not until the High Court of Australia delivered its judgment in that case that the Commonwealth Government really saw their potential power. What happened is a matter of history. In the last year of the agreed temporary plan what did they do? In spite of the clear agreement that the plan was to be temporary, they are going to take advantage of their legal opportunity and make it permanent. That again is a matter of history. The House will recollect that the then Premier fulminated against what he regarded as the greatest piece of deception, the betrayal of what he regarded as an honourable undertaking entered into between the several components of the Federal structure. Mr. Cooper fulminated against the decision, which he said would lead to a State cribbed, cabined and confined. But Canberra was in the full surge of war-time dictatorship. Mr. Cooper met with no more success than the butcher of Portland. He should have been a Communist, and Chifley would have eaten out of his hand.

Queensland emerges from the war period to grapple with her problems with her full sovereign powers sadly impaired; no longer is she the mistress of her affairs; no longer can she determine the vital questions of policy. From now on the Commonwealth will be in a position to exercise a greater and greater influence on purely State determinations.

The full effect of this also may not be immediately apparent. We must remind our-

selves that the immediate effect of the income-tax plan on the Queensland Treasury was temporarily beneficial. It did guarantee to the States a revenue probably greater than the States would have been willing to levy if they retained their own taxing powers. It did enable the States to build up very impressive reserves, which are substantially intact. The existence of those very impressive reserves will cushion the impact of this great challenge to our sovereignty for the first few years of peace, but quickly that position will change, and deferred expenditure from the war years will make heavy demands.

That is not the whole story. Let us mention a few of the matters that will make heavy demands upon the Queensland Treasury. The raising of the school age has had necessarily to be deferred under present conditions in which buildings cannot be erected, but it is something that this community eagerly awaits. That will bring about a vast increase in the requirements of the Department of Public Instruction alone. There will be a great increase in scholars and there will be an increase in the call for teachers to give the necessary tuition.

Another direction from which a heavy load will fall on the Queensland Treasury is from a real reclassification of the salaries of the public servants when this State has one. Some half-hearted reclassification took place last year at a time when the community was greatly disturbed, when the war was scarcely over and when wage-pegging was still a regulation of the land. We have not yet solved the problem of making the Public Service really attractive as a career and until we have done so the State cannot hope to command the services in the next generation of those who should enter the Public Service. There again a great call will come to the Queensland Treasury.

Then we must consider our railway system, and I cannot do that without paying my tribute to the miracle of service it was able to render during the war, in spite of physical disadvantages. I remain impressed with the fact that if this State is to avoid serious embarrassment to its Treasury and is to give to its people an adequate transport service, we have to be prepared to spend not thousands but millions on our railway system to give to the wonderful body of men who managed during the war years the real tools to do the job decently.

At 2.56 p.m.,

Mr. DUNSTAN (Gympie) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. HILEY: The Queensland railways are lacking in what I would refer to as really modern rolling stock. We still find it having to grapple with the tasks that a little place like Tasmania managed to tackle, particulars of which I hope to place before this House on a suitable occasion this session. The financial requirements of the Railway Department, in order to fit it properly, will have to be measured in millions.

So too will other matters to which reference has been made. To develop our population and expand our State schemes such as the hydro-electric scheme, to which reference has been made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, must be proceeded with as a work of great urgency. They too will have their requirements in millions. So it goes on. We want other electric development, and we hope that the Regional Electric Authorities Bill will speedily bring this about. Therefore, in direction after direction the Queensland Treasurer will be in a position where he must command many millions per annum more than he has been able to command in the past. Such a great need is where I see the danger in uniform-tax. No longer will the decision whether Queensland shall do these things be solely that of this Legislative Assembly. From now on we may have to vary our financial plans to the extent to which Canberra says we are permitted to have the additional money. When I ponder over the vast area of Australia and the vast nature of the problems that constantly arise within such a vast country, I tremble to think that we shall be able to obtain from one centralised administration in Canberra all this State should get.

Mr. HILTON: Loan business has been centralised there for years. It has nothing to do with taxation.

Mr. HILEY: In the spending of our finances the Consolidated Revenue of this State is by far our greatest spending fund, and to the extent that borrowing imposes a charge on the Treasury to pay interest and redemption it would be folly to imagine that the Loan Council in itself is a complete answer to the financial needs of this State. It is not.

I submit that we must be in a position to command our own Consolidated Revenue Fund if we are really to develop this State as I think we should.

I am not blind to the advantages of a single taxing authority in Australia. If it is at all possible, I should like to see it retained, but I do want to see us do one thing only. I want to see us re-write the provisions of our Federal Constitution that govern the financial relationship of the States and the Commonwealth, and I want to see them re-written in such a way as will ensure that the States do command their revenues as a matter of right, and I want to end somehow the position where the State's only hope of revenue is to accept grants made to it from year to year by a Government at Canberra, and to end the position where that Government, dissatisfied with what Queensland might do on one issue, will seek to take it out of our hides on another. That, I submit, is a very real danger of our present position. Take, for example, what appears to be happening in rail unification. There you have a problem of Australian significance and of particular significance to this State, and already, because the Commonwealth now controls the whole of the Australian purse, you find the Commonwealth Government calmly

saying to the State of Queensland and the people of Australia, "We will proceed in those States where we are given our way. If Queensland does not choose to bow to our dictates she will not share in the expenditure that is contemplated under this heading."

Mr. Pie: We shall share in the cost.

Mr. HILEY: Queensland citizens will share with all citizens of Australia on the Australian liabilities, but as a State there will be no charge upon us and no advantage to us until we join in the scheme and spend the money within the State. I feel that just as we are starting to see the evidence of strong-arm tactics from Canberra on this railway question so, as the years go on and our state of immediate affluence fades, we shall find in direction after direction that Canberra will endeavour to call the tune. So I suggest as a remedy that we should seek a re-writing of those particular sections of the Federal Constitution.

There is one other direction in which I feel that no matter what we do with our war-time arrangements, no matter how successfully we may populate this State and develop its industries, we can still lose the peace in the years that lie ahead. I believe that the greatest challenge that lies before this and other Governments of the world today is the challenge of endeavouring to arrange full employment for its people. Whatever our views may have been on such a subject in the generations that have passed, I prefer to believe that in 1946 the people of Queensland are of a mind where they expect of any Administration holding the reins of government that they will make a serious and bold effort to command the great benefit of full employment for its people.

So that we might be quite clear as to what is meant by this term "full employment," let me quickly distinguish between what economists term frictional unemployment and basic unemployment. By "full employment" I do not contemplate a state of society where no person is ever unemployed for a day. Let us suppose that you try to aim at such a state. You would immediately bring about a set of conditions where the free change of employment by citizens was prevented, where, for example, the ambitious young man who chose to leave a job either to travel or to improve his lot was restricted, where a person who elected to change the locality of his employment was hampered and where parents who choose after discharging the heavier task of rearing a family were prevented from moving and where a wage-earner who wished to change his employment might be restricted from following his calling.

That class of change is what the economists call frictional unemployment. No notice of it is taken in aiming at this objective of full employment. By full employment, therefore, I refer to the state of affairs in the community where there is always an equal volume of work offering to the labour available to

take it. It is the condition in which every man in the community can command within his locality and within his particular calling or classification in which he is skilled the hope of work. I suggest in the new spirit we find has been brought about at the end of this war that the attaining of full employment must be something to challenge the effort of this and every other Government in Australia.

(Time expired.)

Mr. THEODORE (Herbert) (3.9 p.m.): I join with previous speakers in offering my congratulations to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor on his attaining the very high office he now holds. I believe that His Excellency will carry out its duties and obligations with credit to himself and the State. Although his elevation to that position was criticised by some persons outside, his appointment is a recognition of the meritorious services he has rendered to this State, and I trust that he will enjoy the good health that will permit him to hold it for a long period.

I wish also to offer my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. Both hon. members by their fine speeches made a good impression, and their presence in this House will be an asset to the debating strength of this House. I wish each a long and successful political career.

There are some very urgent and important questions with which we must concern ourselves—subjects that have been mentioned in this House on previous occasions—of vital importance to the people of this country and, in fact, to our very existence. To those problems I may refer later, but at present I wish to make some reference to the industry with which I have been associated for so long and which is today experiencing in the shape of a drought one of the greatest disasters it has ever faced. A chapter of disasters has led up to the position in which the industry now finds itself.

The cane that is now being harvested was held up by heavy rain in the planting season, and that has had a detrimental effect on the crop. In many districts it is essential to plant early in the planting season in order to have anything like a good crop.

Mr. Pie: You are better off up there than they are in the southern areas.

Mr. THEODORE: Yes, we are not so bad as they are. Then the crop suffered from two cyclones, one just before Christmas and the other early this year. Since the cyclone and the attendant flooding early in February last there has been very little rain. The district that I represent, Innisfail and Tully and surrounding areas, where there are four mills, has had only from $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch of rain since then—an extraordinary state of affairs when we realise that last year for the first six months of the year the rainfall had reached 170 inches.

Mr. Pie: What are the mills?

Mr. THEODORE: The four mills in the Herbert electorate are Tully, South Johnstone, Mourilyan and Goondi. To make matters worse grub infestation has been particularly bad in two or three mill areas. It was especially bad at South Johnstone, but not so bad at Tully. That has had a very serious effect on the crop because in many instances large areas of cane had to be ploughed out.

Mr. Pie: What would be the estimate of the damage?

Mr. THEODORE: The Tully mill, instead of crushing 240,000 tons, will be all-out to crush 170,000 to 180,000 tons. Some of the other mills would have a smaller crop.

Mr. Nicklin: The further south you go the worse it becomes.

Mr. THEODORE: Yes. Early in the year Mackay gave the indication of having a very good crop, perhaps a bumper crop, because of the early good rains, but dry weather and frosts followed, and an enormous quantity of cane was destroyed. I believe that the damage arising from frost following upon the dry weather has reduced the sugar content to as low as 3 c.e.s., whereas it is generally recognised that mills will not take cane testing less than 7 c.e.s.

Mr. Pie: What is the normal sugar content in Mackay?

Mr. THEODORE: It is 13 to 14, according to the time of the year. An early estimate of sugar production this year was 740,000 tons, but the present estimate is 518,000 tons, including the New South Wales crop, which is estimated at 40,000 tons.

Mr. Pie: What is the usual production of sugar in New South Wales?

Mr. THEODORE: That is just about the New South Wales crop. New South Wales usually produces about 40,000 tons of sugar.

Mr. Brand: They will be down on that estimate too.

Mr. THEODORE: Even that estimate may be reduced. Because of the smallness of the crop and other difficulties, most mills are crushing only two shifts. That is uneconomical, but is unavoidable because the industry cannot get the necessary labour. That fact adds to the industry's difficulties, because it increases overhead costs.

Mr. Pie: What is the cause of that?

Mr. THEODORE: Insufficient labour available. That may not reflect the true position, but the fact remains that insufficient labour is offering in North Queensland because there are no unemployed there. There may be a fair number of unemployed in other districts or towns, but it must be remembered that although men elsewhere may be unemployed very few may be competent or willing to undertake the work of a cane-cutter. It is very laborious work. We have not had the best of cane-cutters for the last five or six years.

At 3.17 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. Pie: What does the average can-cutter earn?

Mr. THEODORE: His earnings vary according to the quality of the cane and his efficiency. The members of some gangs earn up to £3 a day each, but members of a medium gang, working in the same cane, may not earn more than 35s. a day.

Mr. Brand: The average is about £2.

Mr. THEODORE: There is a great difference between the output of gangs. Gangers have the right to select their own men. If a ganger happens to be a gun cutter, he reserves the right to select men who will keep pace with him. Consequently, that gang turns out a lot of cane. At the beginning of the war the industry had men cutting cane who had for the previous 20, if not 25, years returned to that work each year. Owing to the arduous nature of the work they had collapsed and the industry saw them no more.

Mr. Pie: How many months' work do they get in a year?

Mr. THEODORE: It varies from four to six months. Before the war the mills improved their crushing plant considerably, with the result that they completed their crushing in four and a-half to five months. The slow crushing rate today which is due to the factors I have mentioned, will affect the length of the season.

Many mills still have some of last year's sugar stored in their sheds. The mills were called upon to extend their storage capacity in order to hold sugar because it could not be shipped overseas owing to scarcity of shipping. In fact, the shipping problem was such that large quantities of sugar remain at the sugar mills for months. That is causing great difficulty to some mills, some of which have up to 2,000 tons in their sheds, as they may have to store the present season's sugar on top of it. Last year's sugar is deteriorating fast, and it is likely to deteriorate further if the new season's sugar is stored on top of it. I do not know what the position would be today if we had a big crop of sugar. The shipping difficulty presents a serious problem. The amount of 11 tons per gang per hour has a serious effect on the matter of shipment of sugar.

Mr. Pie: There is no go-slow up there.

Mr. THEODORE: There is no go-slow in the cane mills, but the fact remains that there is a delay in getting the sugar away; and the damage thus caused to the industry affects the workers as well as the farmers. It is out of the question for them to build more sugar storage; and unless they are able to get it away they will have to close down, which would be a very serious matter for the growers and the workers in the industry.

Mr. Pie: There is no chance of closing the mills with the shortage that exists.

Mr. THEODORE: You cannot manufacture sugar unless it can be shipped or you have somewhere to store it. The loss to the industry this year was estimated at approximately £1,750,000, but I think it will be more than that, and it represents a serious loss to the workers in the industry and the whole State.

I wish to make reference to the future policy in regard to Empire preference. This is by no means certain because the International Sugar Agreement has not been renewed, but has been carried on from year to year by protocols.

Mr. Pie: There is an agreement until 1951.

Mr. THEODORE: There is a Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, but that is a different thing. The agreement to which I refer was entered into in 1937, and since the war it has been carried on by protocols; the only alterations being that the quotas are to be inoperative. Moreover, the signatories to the protocols recognised that a review of the agreement was necessary and should be undertaken when the time was opportune. I mention that to show that we have no indication whatever as to what the new arrangement will be when it is reviewed. As far as the sugar industry is concerned, therefore, the preferential agreements are in the air until a new agreement is entered into.

Another matter causing concern to the industry, combined with these other problems, is the gradual decrease in the home-consumption price from £24 in 1935 to £21 18s. last year. With this reduced price there has been an increase in distributing charges—increased cost of bags, loading and handling charges and shipping freights. The retail price to the consumer was reduced in 1933 from 4½d. to 4d. per lb., and despite all attempts by the industry to have that half-penny restored the price remains at 4d. The industry is faced with the problem that although the price remained constant during the war years it has had to pay considerably increased prices for other commodities such as fertilisers, farm implements, and wages, and the cost of living has increased.

Mr. Luckins: Does it show a loss on production now because of these increased costs?

Mr. THEODORE: During the five or six years of war the producers have been unable to obtain such requirements as fertilisers, implements, and material for improvements and labour, and the result is arrears of work. The application of fertilisers and lime alone will involve considerable expense, and I think that the producers will find themselves in a position of great difficulty. Representations by the industry time and again to the Commonwealth Government, with the aid of the State Government, to have the half-penny a pound restored have been without success, but because of the arguments that can be put forward today serious consideration should be given by the Commonwealth Government to its restoration.

As yet I have not seen the report of the Royal Commission on Soldier Settlement in the Sugar Industry. I do not think it has yet been submitted to Parliament, but from the evidence that has appeared in the Press it would appear that each soldier should be allotted 120 tons of sugar, 800 tons of cane, as the minimum living quota. I am firmly of the opinion that soldier settlers should be provided with sufficiently large areas to enable them to undertake some other form of production.

They should be enabled to produce rotational crops to avoid the gradual deterioration that we know is taking place in our sugar-cane lands. We are doing nothing to replace the organic matter that is taken from the soil each year. A tremendous body of material is removed from the cane-fields each year. By the continual use of artificial manure abundant crops have been and are being produced, but I know that deterioration is taking place. Any man who has a practical knowledge of soils and who has carefully watched what has been happening in the cane-fields must have noticed the altered texture of the soil, which is due solely to our failure to replace the humus that is necessary to keep the soil productive. This cannot be allowed to continue. We are only custodians of the land for the time being, and future generations will suffer by our inattention to this important phase of agriculture. The present method of fallowing and of rotating legume crops has been beneficial to a certain extent in the cane-fields, it has helped to keep the soil productive, but that is not enough. The farms should be large enough to allow of the planting of rotational crops every four or five years. The areas thus used could be devoted to cattle grazing, dairying or the production of other crops, and I believe that we made a serious mistake in not paying attention to this important phase of agriculture earlier. Of course, it will take some years before any great benefit is noticed, but there will be a gradual improvement all the time. The deterioration that is now taking place, together with the erosion that is being caused by wind, rain and rivers, is creating a loss that even those who are engaged in the industry do not realise and certainly a loss that is not appreciated by the people of the State in general. We should profit by the mistakes of the past. We should have new farms so surveyed that soldier settlers may have enough land to rotate their crops. Not only would this assure the soldier settler of success but it would mean that the land would produce for generations after the present cane-fields have ceased to be of practical use in the growing of sugar-cane.

Mr. Pie: How many soldiers do you expect to settle under that scheme?

Mr. THEODORE: We should not put on any more soldiers than the land is capable of supporting profitably.

Mr. Pie: How many do the Government estimate settling in this way?

Mr. THEODORE: A few minutes ago I said that I had not seen the Royal Commission's report. I take it the hon. member

heard the Premier say yesterday that it, together with other reports, would be tabled shortly. I am eager to see it, because I feel that as a result of being able to weigh the tremendous amount of evidence placed before it, the Commission has been enabled to submit very important recommendations indeed.

I believe that it is very necessary, wherever we undertake to settle our ex-servicemen, we obviate the mistakes that have been made in the past. I suggest, notwithstanding the success of the El Arish settlement, that the blocks there were not large enough.

Mr. Pie: What size were they?

Mr. THEODORE: From 30 to 40 acres and probably up to 55 acres according to the nature of the country.

Mr. Pie: And what should they have been?

Mr. THEODORE: They should have been twice as big so that the occupants could undertake some other form of agriculture. Men should be able to rotate their crops and engage in other forms of farming so that the quality of the soil may be preserved. It is necessary in the settlement of our ex-soldiers on the land to give them areas large enough to combine other forms of farming with the production of sugar-cane. A sugar tonnage will be allotted to them that they will be able to produce on any part of their land. They could grow sugar-cane on a piece for a few years and then turn that piece to milk or some other crop.

Mr. Pie: Milk is not a crop.

Mr. THEODORE: No, but it is a form of production and one for which we can always find a market. I submit that the production of milk in Northern Queensland would readily find a market. I have no hesitation in saying that my idea is not to cut the assignment down but to give each man the opportunity of extending into some other form of agriculture. This will all mean the production of wealth to the country, and besides will give encouragement and incentive to the settler to succeed.

Amongst the great developmental works to be undertaken in North Queensland will be the production of electricity and the utilisation of the energy of our northern rivers. I am only sorry that we cannot discuss today in this House the possibility or practicability of the utilisation of our rivers to the fullest extent for irrigational purposes as well as the production of electricity. The drought we are experiencing today is one of the most serious we have ever had, and it will cause tremendous loss to this country. We should be prepared to spend millions of pounds in an effort to prevent such disasters from ever occurring again. It might not be practicable to carry out some of the greater schemes spoken of both in and out of this House, but I think we should aim at the utilisation of

our natural resources to their fullest capacity. We should not hesitate to have a searching investigation into these matters.

Mr. Pie: That is being done now?

Mr. THEODORE: Investigations have been carried out within certain limits. Some progress has been made by the State Electricity Commission in conjunction with the Cairns Regional Electricity Board in a preliminary survey of the possible development of the Tully Falls for hydro-electric purposes. Complete development of this project, which will cater for the electricity requirements for the Far North for many years, will involve the expenditure of £2,000,000 and will mean much in the progress of this part of the State. I understand that eventually electricity will be supplied from this source throughout the area, perhaps from Cooktown in the north to link up with the Townsville system in the south and to Mt. Garnet and beyond in the west, and at charges that should attract all kinds of industrial enterprises. That is what I advocated five years ago, and have been advocating on and off ever since. It is a practical plan, and it is pleasing to know that at last we have reached the stage where we see such a scheme coming to fruition. In the chairman of the State Electricity Commission, Mr. S. F. Cochran, we have a very fine and able man.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. THEODORE: He is determined to carry out his job for the benefit of the people of the State.

Mr. Pie: Free from political influence.

Mr. THEODORE: He will use his best endeavours to carry out an enterprise of this kind to the fullest possible extent.

Besides benefiting the Far North of Queensland and the State in general, the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme has an important strategic and economic value from an Australian viewpoint, and it is therefore a national work. This is shown by the great use made of this part of the State for defence purposes during the war, and the demand for electricity for such purposes. For this reason I think that the Commonwealth should take its share with the people of the far North and with the State in the development of the Tully Falls for the benefit of Australia as a whole by making available financial assistance in the form of a subsidy or a grant. I believe that the State Government will approach the Commonwealth Government with the object of having the necessary finance made available for this very important work.

Plans have been prepared for the carrying out of certain works, including roads and other public works, in the Herbert electorate, totalling £40,000, that were delayed because of the war. These are very important undertakings, and I hope they will be begun shortly, and that at any rate they will not be delayed any longer than necessary. Unfortunately

they will not achieve the purpose that I have in mind of providing a great amount of permanent work in North Queensland when the sugar season is finished. It is well known that when the sugar season is over the wet season sets in, and work is held up on that account.

That is one of the difficulties that have always been present in North Queensland. Notwithstanding that, a great effort will be made to employ these men in the various districts in the North.

The Governor's Speech makes reference to the development of our forestry. The control of existing forests is a matter that should be undertaken at the earliest possible moment. It is of immense importance. Our forests should be worked properly, for by this method care is taken that no uneconomic attack is made on them. Some of the best forests in this State exist in the Herbert electorate. The great danger confronting us is the possibility of finding ourselves in the position that the United States of America finds herself in today. It was not realised when she built her great paper mills and logging works that the population would treble itself in 60 years, but that has happened and has resulted in the closing of a number of pulping factories and their removal to other sites because supplies gave out. It is our bounden duty to benefit from the experience gained in that country.

Mr. Pie: I hope you will tell your Government that.

Mr. THEODORE: I am telling the Government that.

(Time expired.)

Debate, on motion of Mr. Power, adjourned.

House adjourned at 3.48 p.m.
