

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 31 AUGUST 1949

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Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

“I lay on the table of the House a copy of a report made by the Committee comprising the Solicitor-General, the architect to the Townsville Hospitals Board, the Deputy Auditor-General, and the quantity surveyor consultant to the architect appointed by Cabinet to investigate the construction costs of the new Townsville Hospital buildings being erected for the Townsville Hospitals Board, and to report the result of their investigations and determinations. The recommendations made by the Committee have been approved.”

Whereupon Mr. Jones laid upon the table of the House a copy of the report referred to.

STATE HOUSES BUILT.

Mr. CHALK (East Toowoomba) asked the Premier—

“1. Is it a fact, as reported in the Ipswich newspaper on 30 August, that when speaking at the Trades Hall, Ipswich, he stated: ‘That in the last two years 9,000 to 10,000 houses a year had been constructed by the Government’?”

“2. If such is correct, will he advise from what statistics such figures were taken?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

“1 and 2. No. What I did say was that in the last two years 9,000 to 10,000 houses a year had been constructed in Queensland. The figure I quoted includes the number of dwellings completed in Queensland by all builders, Government, private, and owner builders, and was taken from official records compiled under a joint arrangement between the Commonwealth Statistician and the Queensland Government Statistician.”

LAND-SALES CONTROL.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) asked the Attorney-General—

“Will he inform the House if the control on land and property is to be lifted in the near future?”

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory) replied—

“No. The question of this control is constantly under review by the Government.”

WEDNESDAY, 31 AUGUST, 1949.

The ACTING SPEAKER (The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, Mr. Mann, Brisbane) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

COMPLETION OF TOWNSVILLE HOSPITAL.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“In view of the long delay in the completion of the new Townsville Hospital and the threat by the contractor to abandon the contract unless consideration was given by the Government to investigate the cause of the losses incurred by him, will he advise if any action has been taken to investigate the matter, and if so, the result of such investigation?”

EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT'S LOAN SUBSIDIES.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Treasurer—

“1. Does he not consider that the Government's policy with regard to subsidies for local authority works, which provides for a sliding scale granting the local authorities with a high general works rate a higher subsidy than those with a low general or works rate, is an incitement to local authorities to strike a high general rate, irrespective of how such revenue from the ratepayers is expended?”

"2. Does he not consider that either a flat rate of subsidy or a sliding scale based on the need to develop an area, or the capacity of an area to pay rates would be fairer and less liable to abuse than the present system under which the Government virtually tell a local authority that the more it takes from its people in rates, the more the Government will grant in subsidies?"

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

"1 and 2. The subsidy rate is soundly based. It is determined according to the rate levied for general fund purposes. This rule aids the more heavily burdened and the progressive local authority. No sensible local authority would strike a higher rate to get comparatively little additional subsidy. There is no evidence that such action has ever been taken."

GALVANISED IRON, DARLING DOWNS.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. In view of the urgency of the need of returned soldiers and others for galvanised iron held for several months in store at Toowoomba and other places on the Downs, because the fixed price does not include the additional cost of motor transport of such iron, will he kindly advise when a decision is likely to be given as to whether or not such additional cost will be allowed?"

"2. If allowed, will the holders of such iron be allowed to sell it at the increased price to returned soldiers and others requiring it?"

Hon. G. H. DEVRIES (Gregory) replied—

"1 and 2. Early in this month, it was brought to my notice that a quantity of flat and corrugated iron brought by motor transport from the South was held at Toowoomba for several months and not offered for sale because of certain price control rulings, and I had investigations made with a view to releasing this iron to the public. I now find that these stocks have been used up—the flat iron in making downpiping and the corrugated iron in making tanks. I am advised that there are now no stocks of galvanised iron held in store at Toowoomba or at other centres on the Darling Downs which had been withheld from sale for the reason referred to above."

MACKAY POWER HOUSE COAL.

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

"Have any steps been taken by the Coal Board to divert coal supplies from the Mackay City Council power-house? If so, for what reason?"

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

"No. The Mackay City Council ordinarily obtained its coal supplies from Styx and Collinsville State coal mines. Since the Mackay City Council commenced operations at Nebo it has, up to 20 August, drawn 593 tons from the Nebo open-cut, which

was producing at the rate of approximately 230 tons per week. At that date it had on hand 358 tons of coal which it had purchased from the State mines. As the council stated, it was burning 70 per cent. Nebo coal with 30 per cent. other coal, no allocation from the State mines is yet necessary. It would appear that the stockpile at Mackay will last approximately seven weeks, which, following the recent strike, shows a better position than most other utilities in Queensland."

GLENROCK COAL DEPOSITS.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny), for **Mr. MAHER** (West Moreton), asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

"1. Has any geological report been obtained on the coal deposits at Glenrock in the Gatton district since that made by M. J. H. Reid nearly thirty years ago?"

"2. Is he aware that Mr. Reid only made a cursory examination of the surface outcrops on that occasion?"

"3. Has his attention been drawn to the following extract from Mr. Reid's report:—'The composition of this coal shows it to be classed with the Walloon type of coal, i.e., long flamed gas coal. The coal itself is of good quality, being quite up to the average of the Walloon coals now being worked?'"

"4. Will he authorise a prospecting shaft to test the deposit in accordance with Mr. Reid's very definite recommendation?"

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

"1. No, but I am informed that one of Brisbane's largest coal consumers, as recently as the hon. member's press statement, inspected this deposit and did not regard it as worthy of development.

"2. No. On the contrary, the report includes a detailed section of the seam and an analysis as proof of a careful examination of the exposure.

"3. Yes. Also to the sentences which immediately follow 'a glance at the 2 feet 9 inches section given above shows under what a great disadvantage the seam would have to be worked, on account of the number of stone and dirt bands. It is eminently a seam that could only be marketed after washing, as hand picking out of the dirt would make mining too costly.' It should be emphasised that all dirt bands were excluded in sampling.

"4. The driving already done is considered to provide conclusive negative evidence as to workability and no further expenditure could be justified."

PETROL RATIONING.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Do you consider that petrol rationing is necessary in this State?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"The Hon. the Prime Minister told the Premiers in Canberra that the importation of petrol would be restricted. He also

informed the Premiers that if rationing was not provided for inevitably, round about harvest time, the primary producers of this country would be left probably without petrol because of the well-known proclivity of city people to 'hog' it, and he suggested that rationing could be carried out either as a Commonwealth undertaking or the States themselves could either ration it or put up with having their quotas dealt with as the public liked. Every State is going to get a quota of petrol and what is to be done with it remains to be seen—whether it will be rationed or not.'

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948.

Order in Council under the Native Plants Protection Act of 1930.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 30 August (see p. 289) on Mr. Jesson's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government), (11.10 a.m.), who was received with Government "Hear, hears," said: First of all I regret the absence from this Chamber of Mr. Speaker on account of illness. I am sure you, Mr. Mann, like myself and the House generally, will be very glad to know that he is on the road to recovery and is convalescing.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. POWER: I also desire to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, particularly for the very able way in which they have carried out that job. It is apparent, from listening to their remarks, that they have first-hand knowledge of the requirements of the people and are keen advocates for any improvements that may be sought or brought about not for the benefit of any section but in the interests of the great majority of the people.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks of members of the Opposition and their criticism of the Government for their alleged failures. I was rather interested in the criticism of the Government of the hon. member for Windsor. I recollect that when the hon. member for Windsor entered this Chamber as an Independent he said he was unable to obtain any guarantee from outside financial institutions to enable him to begin business in this State, and as a result of the excellent legislation of the Government of the day a bank guarantee was provided for the hon. gentleman by the Government. I want to make it quite clear that the Government were not called on at any time in connection with their guarantee to that hon. member. The only point

in the matter is that had it not been for this Government's act in providing a bank guarantee the hon. member's companies would not be operating today in Queensland. That statement is borne out by a statement made by the hon. member himself. He said he could not get any backing from outside financial organisations, but this Government gave him backing. Notwithstanding that fact, today he is one of the greatest critics of the Government.

Mr. Sparkes: Has he not made a good job of it?

Mr. POWER: Certainly; I give him good marks for it, but I repeat that, on his own statement, he would not have been in a position to make a job of it, but for the financial guarantees of this Government.

Mr. Larcombe: Private enterprise broke down.

Mr. POWER: Private enterprise broke down, as the Treasurer interjects. Private enterprise was not prepared to trust the hon. member, and the proposal was put up to the Government of the day. This Government's legislation enabled that bank guarantee to be made to the hon. member. He is not the only person who has had a bank guarantee and I am not saying there is anything wrong with it, but at least he should be fair in his criticism of this Government.

Mr. Brand: When did you make this discovery?

Mr. POWER: The hon. member wants to know when I made the discovery. If the hon. member would spend more time in this House and less outside he would know what is taking place here. If you turn up the attendance records of the hon. member you will find his attendance is very, very bad, and even when he comes into the building he gets his name recorded and then he can be found in other places.

Mr. Sparkes: He does something of a sound constructional nature.

Mr. POWER: That is a matter of opinion.

Then we have the statement made by the hon. member for Windsor in connection with the Australian Workers' Union and the working of open-cut mines. The hon. member for Windsor has taken unto himself the right to tell the Australian Workers' Union, of which I have been a member for a number of years, where the men shall go and work. In reply I say to the hon. member that the Australian Workers' Union is master of its own destiny and it is not going to carry out any instruction or be guided by the stupid advice and statements made from time to time by the hon. member for Windsor.

I want to deal with one other matter, a statement made by the hon. member for Maree, before I get on to the full text of my speech. He stated that because he represents a school in a district that is not represented by Labour it is not receiving fair

treatment. That statement is cowardly and unfair and entirely untrue. I think every hon. member sitting on the Opposition side who speaks the truth will agree that during the time I have been Minister in charge of this department he has received fair and impartial treatment.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

Mr. POWER: I am dealing with the statement made by the hon. member for Maree. There are many members of the Opposition, including the hon. member who has interjected, who have thanked me for the fairness with which I have administered the department. I have never played politics. The statement of the hon. member for Maree is unfair, untrue, and cowardly. If the hon. member has any evidence he can submit to me that any officer of the department has not treated him in the same way as every other member I will have the matter investigated.

Mr. Luckins: I was referring to the putting in of the domestic-science part of the school.

Mr. POWER: I am glad to have the hon. member's qualification, which shows that it does not refer to my department.

Mr. Luckins: It never did.

Mr. POWER: He should make it quite clear.

Mr. Luckins: I made it clear at the time.

Mr. POWER: I have listened to a good many of the remarks by members of the Opposition and their criticism of this Government, particularly their statements that the Government have not carried out their promises to the people, and that they have fallen down on their job. I think that comparisons are very important. I have done a little research work during the last few days and I have looked up the policy speech delivered on 3 April, 1929, at Oakey by Mr. Moore, who was then Leader of the Opposition; and I shall make some comparisons of what Mr. Moore promised and what he did with what this Government have done. The only reason why I went back to the Moore Government was that they were the last anti-Labour Government Queensland had.

Let us see what Mr. Moore said on that occasion—

“With confidence restored private enterprise would bring about the revival of industry and industrial activity, which alone is the permanent solution of one of our greatest problems—the widespread unemployment of people who have the capacity and the willingness to work.”

The same gentleman promised further—

“We propose to do everything a Government legitimately can do to foster individualism and private enterprise—”

And this is most interesting—

“In that way only can any return to conditions of prosperity and freedom be accomplished. It is both our desire and

our determination to secure for Queensland more industry; for Queensland people more employment; for Queensland homes more happiness; for Queensland boys and girls more opportunities; for Queensland men and women that healthy self-respect and self-reliance which are and must continue to be the basis of every noble national aspiration.”

That is one promise, but I will deal with them all as I proceed.

Mr. Russell: There was nothing wrong with that.

Mr. POWER: There is nothing wrong with that at all, other than that the promise was not carried out. Each and every one of these promises was dishonoured. To the hon. member a promise means nothing. All he is concerned about is the price for his beef and cattle sent to England where the people are starving. His slogan is, “Give us more money and we will give you more goods.” That is the idea of the hon. member.

Mr. Muller interjected.

Mr. POWER: I would remind the hon. member of the cat that was found in the vat in the butter factory of which he is a director. In addition, the Australian Workers' Union had to prosecute that factory for not paying the award rates to employees. The hon. member knows that the organisation with which he was concerned was prosecuted by that union. Mr. Moore's promises continue—

“More work and wages in place of unemployment, doles and demoralisation;

“Expert exploration of all avenues likely to promote increased industrial activity;

“Greater opportunities for boys and girls to learn trades;”

There was one apprentice between the years 1929 and 1932!

“The encouragement of conciliation through round-table conferences and works committees;

“An impartial Arbitration Court and the enforcement of its decisions;

“The right to work;”

There was more unemployment in Queensland during those three years than ever before in this State.

“Workers' compensation; Increase to basic-wage standard;”

All hon. members know what happened to the basic wage. I will deal with that aspect later.

“Loans for Workers' Dwellings up to 90 per cent. of total cost, advances up to £1800;

“A vigorous mining policy;

“Tax reductions where circumstances permit;

“Restoration of democracy through an equitable redistribution of electorates.”

I now come to the notorious promise made by that Government. It was placarded all over Queensland—

“£2,000,000 for 10,000 jobs—”

with the slogan—

“Give the boy a chance.”

Let us see how these promises were honoured—and these are only a few of the promises made by the last anti-Labour Government who sat on the Treasury benches in this House. They gained control of the Parliament of Queensland by a political confidence trick but now let us analyse how these promises were honoured. Confidence was not restored to private enterprise during the period of the Moore Government's regime; on the contrary a greater number of people were declared bankrupt than ever before in the history of this State. They restored confidence to such effect that 1,154 people went bankrupt during the time they were in control of the State.

And was the promise of £2,000,000 for 10,000 jobs honoured? Unemployment reached its peak. When the former Labour Government were defeated there were 10,000 unemployed in the State but after the three years of the Moore's Government administration the number had increased to 26,000.

Moreover, while this state of affairs existed the Government of the day lent money from the Queensland Treasury to another State while the people of Queensland remained unemployed and hon. members opposite cannot deny that. Furthermore, the Loan Council drew the attention of the Moore Government to the drift of the State's finances.

Mr. Morris: Who was Prime Minister of Australia then?

Mr. POWER: I am not accepting responsibility for the actions of anybody else. I never have done and I am not likely to.

Another promise that was made was that every effort would be made to make the men and women of this State healthy, self-reliant and self-respecting. Let us see how they did it. They certainly gave them every opportunity of being healthy, because they sent them out into the wide open spaces where they got plenty of fresh air, compelling them to walk 25 miles before they could obtain 6s. worth of rations. The result was that our youths lost any self-reliance they might have had. When they found that as the result of the policy of the then Government their only homes were under the trees, they lost any self-reliance they had.

A promise of work and wages in place of unemployment and doles was also made. No attempt was ever made to honour it. At that time there was more unemployed in the State than ever before in its history. A greater number of people than ever before were on the dole, and those who were not on the dole had their work rationed, instead of having full-time employment, and their incomes were thereby reduced. Again, 8,000

men were sacked from the Railway Department. The Ipswich Road workshops were closed down and work was let to contractors.

What would have been the position today if we had not organised the day-labour system within the Department of Public Works? There are jobs to be done at Thursday Island, Coen and other places. I wanted to build a police station at Coen some time ago and the contractors were not prepared to go there. Had it not been for the day-labour policy of this Government buildings could not have been erected at Thursday Island or Coen.

We know it should be the duty of any Government to protect the boys and girls of today, who are the men and women of tomorrow. They should receive proper training and education to fit them for any vocation they desire to follow after leaving school. The Moore Government promised greater opportunities to boys and girls to learn trades. Yet only one child was apprenticed during those three tragic years, which the people of this State will never forget, and Queensland is now feeling the result of the inertia and inactivity of the then Government because we are short of skilled artisans. We have not sufficient skilled artisans today to train the boys who are seeking apprenticeship.

Now I come to one of the most glaring actions of that Government. They promised to encourage conciliation through round-table conferences and works committees. If ever there was a glaring example of disregard of promises by that Government we have it in this instance. Another promise was an impartial Industrial Court and the enforcement of its decisions. I have a vivid recollection of that promise in Mr. Moore's policy speech and I have read in “Hansard” the statement of the Attorney-General of that Government, Mr. Macgroarty. Despite the fact that they promised that the court was going to be fair, impartial and not interfered with, Mr. Macgroarty, the then Attorney-General, had this to say—

“We will ringbark the Arbitration Court at the earliest opportunity.”

When the people of the same political colour as hon. members opposite were in power they attempted to ringbark the Industrial Court, and when they could not get wages reduced by the court they passed legislation outlawing the Crown employees from the Industrial Court. I was a Crown employee at that time and I know that Crown employees were taken away from the jurisdiction of the court. Despite the protests and statements made in this House from time to time by hon. members opposite that wages and conditions of employees should be determined by the Industrial Court the Government of their own political colour reduced the wages of Crown employees by legislation. That was done by the Government of that time, yet hon. members opposite have the temerity to tell us what we should do with regard to the Industrial Court.

With respect to the right of men and women to work, the Government of that day made no attempt to start any building or works programme to relieve the unemployment position. Despite the fact that men and women in this State were unemployed money was lent by that Government to another State. When they decided to do something for the unemployed what did they do? They inaugurated schemes of casual employment under which the married men who were given work were paid £3 a week, a rate considerably lower than that fixed by the court. The Tory Government outlawed Crown employees from the Industrial Court and they laid it down that local authorities could not employ men unless they paid them £3 a week. They said, "If you pay any more than £3 a week the Government will not make the money available." I was a member of the Brisbane City Council when that condition was imposed by the Government of the day. Despite that hon. members opposite tell us that they are interested in the working class people of the State.

Another of their promises was to increase the advances on workers' dwellings up to 90 per cent. of cost. No buildings were built under their regime and it was left to this Government and to me as Secretary for Housing to introduce legislation to provide that people should have easier terms in getting their own homes—and we are going to make conditions even still better.

Let us see how the boys and girls of Queensland were looked after by the Moore Government. We hear a lot from time to time from hon. members opposite about the education of our children; they speak of secondary education, admissions to the University, and similar things and tell us what the Government should do. What did the Tory Government do for the children of the State? In the first place they limited the number of scholarships granted; a number of boys and girls were deprived of a secondary education.

Much criticism has been levelled at the present Government concerning the redistribution of electorates, but what took place when the Moore Government were in power? They attempted so to gerrymander the electorates as to keep themselves in power for all time.

In his policy speech Mr. Moore promised a redistribution of the electorates and the removal of "ghosts" from the electoral rolls. Let me deal first with the first promise.

The alleged equitable redistribution was carried out in such a way that 10 electoral seats were abolished but eight of them were Labour seats and only two anti-Labour seats. The allegation about "ghosts" being on the electoral rolls was without foundation. Here is an important aspect of the matter: people were compelled to leave their homes and walk 25 miles from police station to police station to qualify for rations, and while they were away from their homes their names were taken from the rolls so that they would be deprived of the right to vote. All these things were

done by the Moore Government—eight Labour seats abolished, and only two anti-Labour seats, one of the latter held by Mr. Peterson, who by the way, was a Labour rat—and all rats go the same way. As I have said, his seat was abolished and the then Premier said in the precincts of Parliament that his seat would be abolished.

Mr. Chalk: Tell us what your Government have done.

Mr. POWER: That is just what I am about to do. Then the hon. member will be able to take home copies of "Hansard" and in his leisure time compare the promises and performances of the Moore Government with those of the Labour Government. After he has done that, if he has any decency at all, he will get out of Parliament altogether rather than be associated with his political deceivers.

What have the Labour Government done? We immediately abolished the competitive examination for scholarships and substituted the qualifying examination whereby every child who passes the scholarship in any part of the State can get a secondary education. In addition we increased the allowance for scholarships. We provided baby clinics, medical services, manual and domestic training, increased compensation payments, and reduced the rates of interest on three different occasions.

Mr. Chalk: You have a halo.

Mr. POWER: I certainly have a halo and I am going to wear it. I have no intention of hiding my light or the light of my Government under a bushel. I will tell the people of Queensland what the Government have done. We are not ashamed of what we have done but if hon. members opposite had any shame in them at all they would be quiet about their own political performance.

The Government reduced the rate of interest on advances for houses. When the Labour Government were defeated in 1929 the ordinary working week was one of 44 hours, but the Moore Government endeavoured to increase employment by increasing the weekly working hours from 44 to 48. Today, as a result of Labour administration, the working hours have been reduced from 48 to 40. We established the State Government Insurance Office which, by the way, has compelled the private insurance companies to reduce their premiums considerably. We established the Public Curator's Office.

In their attempts to balance the budget, not only did the Moore Government make an attack on the children of the State but they also reduced the allowance to the orphans of the State. In addition, they reduced the allowances to widows and they imposed the relief tax on the boy selling newspapers on the street corner. Furthermore, they taxed the washerwoman who had to go out to try to earn sufficient to keep body and soul together and feed her children. I know the Opposition do not like this—they are squealing—nevertheless it is true and the truth

cannot be stated too often. So long as I remain in this House I shall be quite happy to tell the people just what was done and what was promised by their Government when in office and what has been done by the Labour Government.

The Labour Government also abolished relief work. We provided full-time employment. We abolished the rationing of work. We restored wages and conditions taken away by the Government of the day. We improved the conditions of apprentices and provided better training facilities for them.

As a result of Labour's policy, we find that production has increased in Queensland. We read on page 4 of the Governor's Speech—

"The number of factories operating in Queensland has reached a record figure of 3,642 compared with 3,087, the highest pre-war figure, in 1938-39. A total of 76,732 of our people (63,506 males and 13,226 females) were engaged in factory output which last year totalled £125,244,000 a rise of 25 per cent. over the highest value of output ever previously recorded for the State."

As I stated, today production has improved as a result of the policy of this Government, compared with the 1929-32 period, when 1,155 bankruptcies were recorded as the result of the policy of the then Government.

I want to deal with one or two other matters to show how this Government have helped the people and local authorities. We have heard a good deal of weeping by the Opposition as to the help given by the Government to local authorities. Who introduced the system of subsidies to local authorities? Why, the Labour Government. This Government have always been very generous to local governing bodies. The annual subsidies paid by this Government from 30 June, 1932, to 30 June, 1949, amounted to £9,935,772. That was money given by the Government to local authorities, money that they had not to repay. Before this Labour Government came into office no subsidy was given to local authorities.

In addition local authorities have been relieved of the payment of hospital precepts. From the date of the abolition of precepts to 30 June, 1949, the saving to local authorities on hospital precepts alone amounted to £1,906,318. For the 10 years ended 30 June, 1948, the expenditure by the Main Roads Commission on permanent works amounted to £13,210,373 and of this amount only £737,422 was charged to local authorities. In the same period £5,346,203 was spent by the Main Roads Commission solely on maintenance of main roads, and of this amount only £1,329,524 was charged to local authorities.

In July, 1942, motor-vehicle registration fees were reduced by 25 per cent., and notwithstanding the heavy increase in costs in the meantime the reduced rates have been continued. The aggregate amount of fees thus remitted has been £1,901,174.

Then we find that for political reasons people are talking about the neglect of the North. As a result of subsidies given by this Government to local authorities in the North much development has taken place.

I want to refer also to some of the beneficial legislation introduced by this Government to protect the people. I want to deal particularly with legislation for home construction and the legislation we introduced to protect builders of homes with regard to faulty roofing material.

I want to reply to some of the criticism levelled at me and the Government. Criticism does not worry me, but I reserve the right to reply to it. Some time ago letters appeared in the Press condemning the Government because we were importing iron from Japan. The reason why we are doing so is that we cannot get it anywhere else, and the people must be housed. Those who complained were the manufacturers of cement tiles; these people are rather annoyed because we are bringing the iron in. I am not going to put on any houses or allow anybody to roof houses with tiles that do not comply with the standard laid down by the Standards Association of Australia—not by me.

Let us analyse the cement-tile legislation and show what benefit this has been to the home-buyers and the home-builders. I find that in the metropolitan area there are 15 manufacturers of concrete tiles. We have taken 146 tests, 59 tiles have passed, 87 have failed, and there have been 22 prosecutions. I want to make it quite clear that my department wants to help the manufacturers of concrete tiles, but its main duty is to see that the home-builders are not supplied with a faulty article. Where we have tested tiles at the factory no prosecution has taken place; only when the tiles have been sold have we taken action to deal with these people.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: You lost one case.

Mr. POWER: We have lost one. The following shows the number of tests and failures in the country towns:—

District.	Pass.	Failure.	No. of Prosecutions.
Ipswich	2	1	..
Southport	1	2	..
Toowoomba .. .. .	..	9	2
Inglewood	3	..	..
Warwick	1	4	..
Maryborough	1	6	..
Bundaberg	2	6	..
Rockhampton .. .. .	..	6	1
Townsville .. .. .	..	2	1
Cairns .. .. .	..	1	..

Had it not been for the legislation of the Government these tiles would have been put on the homes and considerable damage would have been done.

I wish now to deal with the actions of the Carpenters' Union in reference to the men employed by the Queensland Housing Commission. Some time ago I addressed a meeting of workers employed by the commission. They informed me they wished to help the Government and the people by working on Labour Day and other holidays. Cabinet agreed that they could work on all holidays

except Christmas Day and Good Friday, which were holy days, and I agreed that they should not be allowed to work on those days. Despite the fact that the men on the job, by 100 votes to 5, said they were willing to work on those other holidays the union took unto itself the right to decide whether the men would work or not, and prosecuted them.

An Opposition Member: Commissar Dawson.

Mr. POWER: Commissar Dawson. I gave an undertaking. I said to them, "If you honour the awards of the court and stand by arbitration I can assure you I will see that you are not victimised by Gerry Dawson or any other Communist." I am happy to say that as a result of the action taken by me and other members of the movement a case was taken to court and Gerry Dawson and company were told that the Industrial Court was master of its awards and that the Communist Party was not going to dictate to the men as to when they were going to work.

Some little time ago the union fined a man named Conrad for having committed what it alleged was a breach of the rules. As a result of the decision of the court Mr. Conrad wrote a letter and asked that his money be refunded. This letter appeared this morning in the "Courier-Mail"; it was from Mr. Dawson:—

"In reply to your letter of the 15th instant, I return herewith a cheque for £3."

The "Courier-Mail" goes on—

"Mr. Conrad said last night he was not satisfied. This is why—

"Mr. Conrad took a leading part last year in the move of rank and file members against Mr. Dawson (as the union's State secretary) and the State management committee.

"He said he was fined £3 by the executive for alleging that, in his opinion, ballots of the Building Workers' Industrial Union were conducted solely for the benefit of the communist party.

"He paid the fine, and then on 15 August wrote the union's secretary demanding a refund within 14 days, and stating that otherwise action would be taken for recovery."

The reply was the letter I have read and the cheque. The "Courier-Mail" says—

"Mr. Conrad wants more. Last night he said: 'I intend to press for purging my name from the union's books on that charge.'"

Dawson forwarded the money but did not expunge from his records the record of the illegal action taken by the union on that occasion.

I want to make it clear to hon. members in this Chamber and every industrialist in Queensland that I have no quarrel with the rank-and-file members of any industrial union but I will not allow the Dawsons, the

Hansons, the Bolands or any other Communist organisation to tell me, while I am the Minister in charge of housing, how the department should be run.

Furthermore, a letter that appeared in the Building Workers' Journal is entirely untrue. It states that the Queensland Society of Bricklayers strongly condemned the action of the Labour Government. The secretary of that union telephoned me and said that that was entirely untrue, that they at no time had condemned the action of the Government. This shows to what depths the Communist Party is prepared to descend in its endeavour to discredit the Government and to get credit for the members of its organisation.

For a long time a number of industrial disputes and stopwork meetings were fostered in Queensland by the Communist Party. I addressed a meeting of men and explained that their actions were not hurting the Government.

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

Mr. POWER: I thank the hon. member for Wynnum, and hon. members for their courtesy. For a long time members of the Communist Party and Communists in control of the Building Trades Group were visiting Housing Commission jobs and endeavouring to cause trouble by pulling these men out for stop-work meetings. I pointed out to the tradesmen that any stopwork meetings they held would not affect me personally or the Government, that the only persons who would be affected as the result of these actions of the Communist Party were the men's fellow workers who were living in temporary accommodation and wanted to get homes. I told the men that it was time they realised that they should no longer be the bunnies and tell these Communists that they were going to stand by arbitration. I thank the employees of the Queensland Housing Commission most sincerely for the way in which they stuck to arbitration.

Some time ago a stopwork meeting was called by the Communist-controlled unions in Queensland of the employees of the Queensland Housing Commission: 694 men could have attended the stopwork meeting but only six attended. On the same day 654 employees of the Department of Public Works, to whom I had spoken, were asked to attend a stopwork meeting, but of that number only 13 attended. In other words, of approximately 1300 men who could have attended the stopwork meetings, only 21 were present. The time is long overdue when the workers of this country should tell the Communist Party that that party cannot dictate to them what they should do.

Mr. Sparkes: You will be looking for the Commos' votes soon.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member is always making some foolish interjection. The hon. member knows my views on Communism and Communists. They have been openly declared so that every person in Queensland may know. I will have no dealing with the Communist Party. The last

meeting I addressed was one at which a man named Nicholls, an organiser in the Carpenters' Union, went to the Housing Commission job in Grovely and brought with him a miner to address a meeting of the men. I had got information of their intention and naturally I went to the job. One of the officials said that the miner had no right to be there, and that he could not address these men. Eventually it was reported in the Press that there were 13 policemen there. That is untrue. At that time I was acting for the Secretary of Health and Home Affairs, who was out of town, and I called for a police report on the matter. I found that two local policemen had heard that the meeting was going to take place in the street and went to the place to make sure that those in charge had a permit. There were also two plainclothes policemen there, in all four members of the Police Force. I told Mr. Nicholls on that occasion that I did not want any police protection against anyone in the Communist Party. I repeat that: I am not afraid of any member of the Communist Party; I do not want police protection from the Communist Party.

I think I amply demonstrated that with my friend, Mr. Devries, at the display on Labour Day, some two years ago, when members of the Communist Party attempted to assault me physically. I want to let those people know that I am quite capable of looking after myself. Members of the Communist Party have come to my home and attempted to intimidate my son, my private secretary while I was out. Members of the Communist Party who were being ejected from Victoria Park arrived at my home one night when I was out, and tried to intimidate my family. My son got the police to remove them. Had I been at home I am quite satisfied that my boys and I could have ejected them without any difficulty. That is the type of anti-British and anti-Australian individual who is trying to dominate this country. There is no room in this country for those people.

Mr. Decker: Basher Power!

Mr. POWER: I can assure the hon. member that I am quite capable of thrashing him, too.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I hope hon. members are not going to resort to fisticuffs and that they will connect their remarks with the question before the House.

Mr. POWER: I can assure you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I have no intention of resorting to fisticuffs, but the hon. member called me basher; and I am not afraid of any member of the Opposition.

Statements have been made that members of this party are associated with the Communist Party. We know that is not true, and also know that members of the Opposition, members of the Tory Party in particular, have been elected to the Federal Parliament as a result of the preference vote given to them by members of the Communist Party.

Figures are available to prove that. As an example, take the election of an alderman at Baroona. A man by the name of Kenosky was the Communist candidate and when we analysed the voting we found that a large number of Kenosky's supporters gave their votes to the Opposition.

Mr. Morris: Tell us about Port Curtis.

Mr. POWER: I leave that to the hon. member for Port Curtis. I am dealing with matters affecting the electorate I represent.

Let us analyse some other figures in the municipal elections. Take the municipal election at Wynnum. Where did Bailes's votes go?

Mr. Decker: We do not know. We did not see the ballot papers.

Mr. POWER: At least the hon. member should have enough intelligence to know. He should have been able to see when the contingent votes were counted that Bailes gave his votes to the anti-Labour candidate. There is just as much danger from the Fascists as there is from the Communists. Quite a number of people today have Fascist tendencies.

Mr. Aikens: Have a look at those photos in the House in connection with Cilento.

Mr. POWER: Let the hon. member look at his own photo. He has no need to go further than that. He is the greatest bully in the House who would stand over everybody.

Mr. Aikens: I will stand over you by the time I am finished.

Mr. POWER: I can assure the hon. member that he will be flat out doing that. No doubt my remarks about the Communist Party are hurting the hon. member, but I repeat that while we are watching the activities of the Communist Party we should be watchful of the activities of the members of the Fascist Party also.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (12 noon): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat has gone to great lengths with his usual old 1929 cry.

It is not my purpose at the moment to deal with that, as I propose to touch on matters of which I have a practical knowledge, particularly land matters and the conditions of the people on the land. I speak with some feeling because as a lad of not quite 15 years my guardians thought it better to take me away from school and put me on the land. This was not because of my brilliance at school but rather the contrary. At that age I was sent out onto a property in the western part of New South Wales between White Cliffs and Wilcannia, containing approximately 2,500,000 acres and shearing over 250,000 sheep. The hon. members for Warrego, Gregory and Barcoo will know the type of country in that area. When I went onto this property my wages were 10s. a week.

Mr. Power: Too much for you.

Mr. SPARKES: Too much for me, says the hon. gentleman. If he had gone there he probably would have made a better speech than he did this morning; at least he would have brought back with him a little practical knowledge of what the people on the land have to put up with.

I mention these things, Mr. Acting Speaker, to show that I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I put in a little over two years on this property and I apparently showed better results on the land than at school because I eventually became overseer of the property.

That brings me to what the hon. member for Keppel said. He thought fit the other day to level a tirade of abuse against me, saying that I was a low-wage man. I first came into this House in 1932 and the first thing my friends across the Chamber tried to do was to find out what wages I paid and the conditions I gave my men. I have yet to find an hon. member on that side of the House who can prove anything against me so far as the men I employ are concerned. Such hon. members, who merely talk, have never employed men in their lives and if they do want to work them night and day for nothing. This hon. member—he was probably singing his swan song because he realises that his time has come, and like the man in the water, he will grab at anything—went on to say something about conditions obtaining in 1933. He said, “Away back in 1933, what did the hon. member for Aubigny do? He wanted to employ men for ringbarking for £2 a week and beef.” Quite so. I make no apology to this House for what I said in 1933. In that year—you, Mr. Acting Speaker, were not in the House, but the hon. members for Normanby and Rockhampton were, and they can tell you that things were bad—the late Mr. Hynes, who was then Secretary for Labour and Industry, used to come into this House at the back—he was not game to come in by the front door—because of the numbers of unemployed present.

Mr. Power: A legacy of the Moore Government.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. gentleman walks in like a simple little dingo pup—not that I am suggesting that he is a dingo.

Let us examine the position to see what terrible crime was committed. In 1928 the Labour Government were in power, and I now go back to the time when that late and beloved gentleman, the Hon. D. A. Gledson, was Secretary for Labour and Industry in the Labour Government in that year. On 30 September, 1928, he said that there were 115,176 unemployed in the State of Queensland, or 29.5 per cent. of the workers.

Mr. Power interjected.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. member had ample time in which to make his speech. He boasted that he was telling the people what the Moore Government had done. I am now telling the people what the Labour Government did.

Mr. Power interjected.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. member had enough time in which to make his speech. He was even granted an extension of time, but he wants to continue to speak. He does not like to hear the truth.

Mr. Power: It is not true.

Mr. SPARKES: The Hon. D. A. Gledson went on to say that the report was the result of a special investigation made by a special sub-department created for the purpose of investigating unemployment alone, and represented the result of almost two years' research. Here is the interesting part: it is said that it was never intended to be published, as it became the subject of recrimination on the part of members of the Labour Party and the Labour Movement. They did not want this published.

This was in 1928 and the Secretary for Public Works does not like it. I intend to bring the figures right up to date. As the hon. gentleman went back into history I must of course go back with him. In 1933, admittedly after the Moore Government had been in power for three years, unemployment was still there. It had been created by the Labour Government and it had not gone. But let us have a look at some other figures. In 1933 the price of greasy wool was 9.28 pence per lb. Now that the hon. member for Warrego is here he will appreciate the point I make. Today the price of greasy wool is nearer 50d. per lb.—a vast difference. In 1933 the price of beef cattle was about £1 a 100 lb., whereas today it is about 60s. a 100 lb. Can anyone contradict me on that? Although I have closed up the Secretary for Public Works, I do not want to have it thought that I think every hon. member opposite should be silent.

Now I come to the statement about the payment of £2 a week and beef in 1933. Was that not better than the greatest curse ever inflicted on the State in the form of the dole and unemployment? I came into the House about that time and I do not regret what I said. My own boy was only a mere lad at the time and I said that I would rather see my boy dead than have him go on this cursed dole, the greatest curse ever inflicted on the young people of Australia.

A Government Member: You would rather let them starve.

Mr. SPARKES: I have a right to say what I think, and this is where the hon. member comes in and makes a goat of himself. I would not rather let them starve. Is it not better that they should get £2 a week and beef and at the same time be in a position to develop their country? Let me tell the hon. member that £2 a week and keep then represented almost £3 a week and keep today. That was because of the purchasing power of money.

Mr. Aikens: That was more than many railwaymen were getting at the time.

Mr. SPARKES: It was.

I only mention this because the hon. member for Keppel told the House what a low-wage man I was. Let the hon. member—or anyone else for that matter—come out on to my property and see whether he can find any low-wage man. Let him talk to my men. I have men in my employ who have been employed by me for 30-odd years. I appreciate what my men have done. That rather answers the hon. member's question.

Mr. Foley: Did you pull the bags from under your men in the early hours of the morning?

Mr. SPARKES: I have been waiting very patiently for the hon. gentleman. There is no-one in this House that I respect more.

Mr. Foley: Answer my question.

Mr. SPARKES: Let us turn over the pages of history. We find in Hansard for 1933 that the hon. gentleman, who was then hon. member for Normanby—and he will stand up to anything he said; that is why my opinion of him is so high—said that he believed in higher wages because it gave the workers a higher purchasing power. What happened in relation to the price of butter? The price of butter decreased from 1s. 3d. a pound before the hon. gentleman's Government was returned to power to 6d. a pound when his Government were in power. That reduction came under a Labour Government. Someone will say that is not right. I am sure that the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government will not come in to have his nose cut off.

Mr. Foley: Quote the year.

Mr. SPARKES: I have quoted the year. "Hansard" reveals that the hon. gentleman interjected—a very unusual thing for him to do—

"That was because of the lower purchasing power of the people."

That is why the price of butter fell to 6d. a pound. That was when his Government were in power. The price was 1s. 3d. a pound before his Government came into power. I have always said that I wondered why hon. members opposite voted the money for such a publication as "Hansard," as it could always be used to hit them in the mouth.

That disposes of the hon. member for Keppel. That hon. member went on to refer to local government work. My experience in public life has brought me into contact with two prominent public servants, namely, Mr. Payne, now president of the Land Court, and Mr. Kemp, Co-ordinator-General of Public Works. Strangely enough, I met these two eminent public servants, who have done such good work for this State, in my district. Twenty years ago Mr. Payne was handling the repurchase of the Jimbour estate, while Mr. Kemp, as Commissioner for Main Roads, was in my shire investigating developmental roads. I mention this because it is rather interesting. Mr. Payne, as usual, made a success of his investigation of Jimbour. He put it on a sound foundation. Mr. Kemp came along at our invitation. I was chairman of the shire and when driving along

with him, he turned to me as we got on to the wide expanse of the Jimbour Plains and said to me, "Sparkes, you want a lot of roads." I said, "Yes." He then made what I consider was a historic statement, and one that members like the hon. member for Cunningham and the hon. member for Warwick will appreciate. He said to me, "Well, they have got to come, because this area is destined to become the greatest wheat-growing area in Australia." At that period they were not producing enough wheat to feed their fowls. The accuracy of that prophecy is to be found in the fact that that area, with other areas on the Downs, comprises the greatest wheat-growing belt in Australia; and I doubt whether there is any area outside the small plots in England that show a return of a greater number of bushels to the acre.

The hon. member for Keppel went on to say that he built roads and he did this and that. Members of Parliament do not build roads—that is the work of local authorities—they merely introduce deputations and Mr. Kemp decides where the road is to be built. If one goes to Rockhampton, where the Keppel electorate is situated, one is hardly outside the site of the city before one is off the bitumen road; yet the hon. member said there was bitumen everywhere.

Mr. Burrows: There is a bitumen road to Yeppoon.

Mr. SPARKES: How much bitumen road is there between Gladstone and the hon. member's beloved Callide? A snake could hardly crawl over that road. Here we have one of the greatest coalfields in the State within a stone's throw of Gladstone, yet you can hardly get the coal out. There is no railway to bring it in quickly. Yet Government members say how they have developed this great State of ours. What an indictment of the Government! I sympathise with the hon. member for Port Curtis. I have travelled a great deal and, apart from Sydney, I never saw a harbour that equalled the Gladstone harbour.

Let us examine the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton, who said there was nothing wrong with the Government's treatment of the North, and that everything there was excellent. I asked why there was this constant complaint from the North, if everything was all right. The hon. gentleman made out that the North is brighter and better than ever and much more behind the Government than ever.

The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat made some remarks about the municipal elections and how the people voted but I find on examination that in the municipal elections at Ayr, Hughenden, Townsville and Innisfail the A.L.P. candidates were virtually wiped out and for the benefit of those who do not know it "A.L.P." means the Australian Labour Party. That would scarcely show that the people were behind the Government.

Townsville was at one time the stronghold of the Labour Party but because of the Government's neglect of the North at the

municipal elections the A.L.P. ran a very poor third in a field of four; in fact the Commos nearly pipped them. The winners were the New Deal for the North League, which is really our party. Second place was taken by the party of my genial friend from the North, the hon. member for Mundingburra. The A.L.P. ran third, with the Commos a close fourth. The hon. member for Rockhampton was merely indulging in wishful thinking when he said the North was quite happy.

The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat made a marvellous speech so far as his department is concerned. I will admit that my electorate has been given careful consideration. He contended that it was detestable to say that unless electorates were represented by the Labour Party they would get nothing. I admit that that is a detestable thing for any Labour candidate to say. I am sure the hon. members for Fassifern, Warwick, Cooroora and Mirani will tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that they say that if the electors want to get something done they had better put in a Labour man—that nothing will be done unless the seat is held by Labour. They used to tell me that I should never get a bridge over Oakey Creek unless the district was represented by a Labour member, but I had the pleasure of having the hon. gentleman come to my electorate and open that bridge, I can even point out where the slogan has been stuck on trees.

A Government Member: Has it ever happened to you?

Mr. SPARKES: It did not influence the votes in the Aubigny electorate. The electors there are sensible people and a Labour man could not be rammed down the farmers' throats. The farmers know too much for that, having worked their way on the land.

Iron is a vital necessity to this State and it is one of the greatest and most crying shames that a Government can sit on the Treasury benches today knowing the state of affairs that exists in the supply of iron in Queensland and not take the necessary action. Within my electorate cattle are starving for the want of tank iron to supply troughs and tanks. Returned soldiers are unable to have a roof placed over their heads for the want of iron. The rotten thing about it all is—and I say "rotten" advisedly—that the iron is available. I have been told, and I know for a fact, that if the warehouses were given the opportunity to bring to Queensland by road transport all the iron that is necessary the people would be happy. I do not wish to imply that the present Attorney-General is in any way responsible for the existing circumstances. He has been in that position a short time but he knows that I have put my case on behalf of returned soldiers to him on many occasions. He has been somewhat hampered. No-one knows better than he the need for this iron. What do we find? A ridiculous, stupid action on the part of this Government. We had the Acting Premier standing on the floor of this Chamber and stating that he

would not allow the few extra pounds a ton for freight to be added to the cost of this iron and that if the iron is to be sold it will have to be sold at such-and-such a price. Yet the Government of whom that very man is one now permit the importation of iron at £90 a ton when the Australian iron could be sold at £50 a ton, iron manufactured by our own white Australian people. It can be bought at about £40 a ton and it will cost about £10 a ton to bring it up by road.

Mr. Morris: £6.

Mr. SPARKES: What is a pound or two when it is a matter of the supply? What does a pound or two matter to the poor unfortunate soldier and others who have dairy cows starving because they cannot get iron? The Attorney-General knows that iron was lying in Toowoomba, Oakey, and Dalby and the Government threaten to prosecute the man there because he sold the iron. I said to him, "Sell it, sell every damn sheet of it to the people and if the Government have guts enough to prosecute you, let them have a go!" It is a crying shame. As I walked into this House today, I received this reply—paid wire from a returned soldier in Jandowae—

"Now six weeks since you tried arrange delivery of my iron. No word to date. Position desperate. Can you do something. Definitely urgent."

That is from a returned soldier.

This morning, too, I received a letter dated 28 August, which starts off with—

"I am writing you in desperation."

This again is from a man who says he is a returned serviceman, having served six years 19 days in the Royal Australian Navy, getting his discharge at the cessation of hostilities. He says he is writing in desperation, hoping that I can help him. Approximately eight months ago he began to build a home in Goombungee. He applied to the Co-ordinator-General through his contractor for the release of roofing and tank iron and releases were granted, the material to be supplied to him by Fitzpatrick's hardware store in Oakey. He says—

"All I have received to date has been excuses for the non-fulfilment of the above material."

What an indictment of any Government! I do not know this man's particular case, but I will take any hon. member of the Government tomorrow to see the other man's property. He will see the four walls of the house erected and the little kiddies living there without cover. How can hon. members of the Government sit here complacently when such things take place? We have the iron and can bring it up by road. What is wrong with us that we have to import it from Japan? Why, the Government are aiding the very country that killed our boys! Talk about Pig-iron Menzies, here is the iron the people want being produced in our own country, yet they are importing it.

Mr. Power: We are bringing it in. Menzies was sending it out.

Mr. SPARKES: They are helping these people just the same, yet they will not allow the products of our own white workers to be brought up here.

Mr. Power: They will let them bring it up.

Mr. SPARKES: What a stupid interjection when they will not allow them to add the cost of road transport. They will not let them sell it. It is lying there in tons in Dalby.

Mr. Power: It is not lying there.

Mr. SPARKES: It was lying there.

Mr. Power: It was not.

Mr. SPARKES: It was, and the hon. gentleman was one of those who were going to take it from Toowoomba, use it for his houses, and let the returned soldiers starve. That is the type they are in the Government.

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. The statement by the hon. member that I was going to take iron from Toowoomba and use it on houses is entirely without any foundation whatever, and I ask that the hon. member withdraw it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to accept the Minister's denial.

Mr. SPARKES: I accept his denial but the fact remains that the iron was there and the Deputy Premier said in this House he would not allow them to sell it. The people can go hang!

Mr. Gair: Be rational.

Mr. SPARKES: Let the hon. gentleman go up and see these returned men who want iron for their houses.

The same position obtains with regard to petrol. The men in the country do not know where they are. Everybody you see says, "Oh, I must be off and hoard up some petrol so that I shall have it when I want it." Why does not the Premier say something will be done? Why this backing and filling? Why are not the statements made by Mr. Fadden being denied, if they are not correct? Why does not the Government take the people into their confidence? One hon. member opposite said, "I will not allow you to advertise." Good heavens, what next will they do? Iron and petrol are the life blood of the man on the land and surely the Premier of this great State can make some statement about the petrol position. You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and every other hon. member know that people are hoarding petrol because they think it will be rationed next week. The Premier said that there will not be enough for the harvesting. Is it any wonder people are rushing in to buy every gallon they can? When it is stored it leaks and deteriorates. This sort of thing should not be allowed to continue.

There are no politics in my statements. The Attorney-General can tell you that I have made representations to him concerning these people who are crying out for iron. He knows

that I do not bring this matter into the House for the sake of publicity. I saw him six weeks ago, as he mentioned this morning in his reply to me. A prominent Labour man said to me the other day, "Jim, we will buy up as much iron as we can and give it to these people." No, I will not name him. He was only trying to do the decent thing for his people.

Mr. Jesson: Did he not call you Mr. Sparkes?

Mr. SPARKES: Let the hon. member answer the charge I make against his Government about the non-supply of these vital things. Petrol, like coal is the lifeblood of the people. Without it they cannot travel nor can they carry on their business. What is the position of a man doing his milking by machine? If you take away his petrol you take away his very existence. His very life and welfare can be snapped away from him overnight. In the Maranoa electorate there are hundreds of men who want iron and wire. It cannot be brought up from the South by road. What a lousy and stupid thing to do! I appeal to the honourable and sensible men on the Government side to do away with these prohibitions. Don't import iron at £90 a ton when it can be brought from the South at £40 a ton with the road freight added. Let the people have it. I make these remarks in all sincerity and I know that there are many hon. members opposite who agree with me.

Mr. CROWLEY (Cairns) (12.34 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to support the Address so ably moved and seconded by the hon. members for Kennedy and Fitzroy. His Excellency's Speech was an excellent one, showing the people the good work that has been carried out and will be carried out by the Queensland Government.

I desire to express my appreciation to the Governor for his courtesy and attention to the people of Queensland generally.

Let me now revert to the subject of the forgotten North, as it is alleged to be by hon. members opposite, and to the part played by hon. members opposite, the Liberal Party, the Country Party, and the Communist Party and the Aikens Party. They can all be members of the one party to be known as the "Aiking" Party because they are always aching about something they know nothing about. Mr. Lawrence, the Leader of the North Queensland Development League is also manager of Dalgetys Ltd., in Townsville. Let him encourage his principals, Dalgetys Ltd., to treat the wool in the North, to do something for the far North, instead of sponsoring something that he is not capable of sponsoring. Dalgetys have fleeced the wool-growers in the North for years and years just as the C.S.E. Co. and other capitalist organisations that support the Liberal Country Party have fleeced them. The people of the North would suffer at their hands should they be able to return a Government to power. The Labour people are the only people who will look after the useful people of this State and they are all I am concerned about. It was proposed to establish woollen mills at Charters Towers but

they could not get the necessary material because Dalgetys and similar companies threatened to close on suppliers' accounts if they supplied material to the mills. That is the class of business that they sponsor.

Mr. Aikens: You got all that out of "The Worker."

Mr. CROWLEY: "The Worker" is not a bad paper after all. A circular was sent to the local authorities in the North and one was received by the Mulgrave Shire Council and here is the comment on it by Mr. Griffin, a Country Party candidate for Cairns on three or four occasions—

"I think there is a political touch about the league, though I don't say it is not trying to do good work."

Mr. Aikens: You will get the tail of your shirt burnt.

Mr. CROWLEY: The hon. member will be thrown out, just as his party was thrown out at the last municipal elections in the North. When he was first returned to Parliament he had a mandate from North Queensland but he has no mandate from North Queensland today. Just as he was thrown out as a northerner so will he be thrown out of Parliament as a member of Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition has associated himself with this campaign about the so-called forgotten North. I was astounded to hear him say that he sneaked into a meeting at Townsville unobserved. What a statement for the Leader of the Country Party to make—that he entered a meeting unobserved! There must be something wrong with the hon. gentleman when he can enter a meeting unobserved. His position should demand that he be noticed wherever he goes in the State. However, let me say in all fairness to the Leader of the Opposition that he is a decent man and one whom we all respect. Under a system of democratic government we must have an Opposition and while we have a Leader of the Opposition of the calibre of the present gentleman we shall be all right. A good Opposition makes good government and healthy opposition is welcomed by any Government worthy of their salt.

In condemning the treatment of northern, central and western Queensland hon. members opposite and others are at the same time condemning men like T. J. Ryan, E. G. Theodore, W. Lennon, W. N. Gillies, W. McCormack, J. Larcombe, J. Mullan, W. Forgan Smith, J. Stopford, P. Pease, M. P. Hynes, J. Dash, W. Bulcock, H. A. Bruce, T. A. Foley, E. J. Walsh, J. O'Keefe, A. Jones, H. H. Collins, G. H. Devries, and E. G. Jesson. These men played a particularly important part in the development of northern, central and western Queensland. They are or were members of the Labour Party and I am proud to be a member of the Labour Party and proud to know that these men played such an important part in the party and in the development of the State.

In 1914 Labour first came into office after 55 years of Tory rule. In that year the Cairns district, which has an area of 30,900

square miles, had a population of 45,000. In 1916 the quantity of goods that passed over the wharves at Cairns was 150,744 tons. In 1948 it had increased to 174,218 tons. It must be borne in mind that the railway from Cairns has been operating since 1924 and that it carries twice as much tonnage as is transported by sea. The progress of the far North has doubled in that short period.

I have a list of works, together with the expenditure involved now in progress by the Main Roads Commission in North Queensland. As this list discounts the oft-repeated statement of neglect of the North by the Government I will read it for the benefit of hon. members. It is as follows:—

Local Authority.	Name of Road.	Amount of Order in Council.
Atherton	Atherton-Boar Pocket ..	3,030
Cairns ..	Cairns-Port Douglas ..	13,937
	Cairns-Tableland ..	13,086
Cardwell	Maalan-Sutties Gap ..	9,821
	Tully-El Arish ..	23,929
	Northern Highway No. 8 (Tully-Cardwell)	19,562
	Northern Highway No. 8 (Ingham-Cardwell)	9,278
	Tully-Jarra Creek Area ..	13,193
Cook ..	Cooktown-Shipton's Flat	2,181
	Laura-Coen ..	8,154
Douglas	Rex Road (Julatten-Cassowary)	5,244
	Black Mountain (Kuranda-Julatten)	4,140
Herberton	Herberton-Evelyn ..	20,750
	Tully Falls ..	2,474
	Tully Falls-Culpa ..	40,715
Hinchinbrook ..	Northern Highway No. 8 (Townsville-Ingham)	97,953
	Mount Spec ..	11,494
	Abergowrie-Oak Hills ..	27,045
Johnstone	Japoon-Silkstone ..	8,063
	Innisfail-Mourilyan ..	21,710
	Maalan-Sutties Gap ..	6,208
Mareeba	Davies Creek ..	7,508
Mulgrave	Gillies Highway No. 16 (Cairns-Tableland)	9,571
Thuringowa	Townsville - Hervey's Range	1,197
	Northern Highway No. 8 (Townsville-Ingham)	50,841
Townsville City	Mount Spec ..	24,785
	Cape Pallarenda ..	11,881
		467,250

(Interjections.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Hilton): Order! I warn the hon. member for Aubigny that if I find it necessary to call him to order again for irrelevant interjections I will name him.

Mr. CROWLEY: The following is a list of works authorised for construction by the Main Roads Commission but not yet commenced:—

Local Authority.	Name of Road.	Amount of Order in Council.
Cardwell	Northern Highway (Tully-El Arish)	5,262
	Northern Highway (Tully-Cardwell)	7,239
	Maalan-Sutties Gap ..	6,137

Mr. Wanstall: Are you giving the rainfall?

Mr. CROWLEY: I am glad of that interjection. It is a rainfall for the people of North Queensland. The hon. member should realise that when these thousands of pounds are spent in North Queensland it is just like rainfall to the people. I am glad of his interjection and helpful advice.

Local Authority.	Name of Road.	Amount of Order in Council.
Cardwell ..	Northern Highway (Ingham-Cardwell)	1,015
Dalrymple ..	Northern Highway (Mt. Garnet-The Lynd)	16,901
Douglas ..	Cook Highway (Cairns-Port Douglas and Port Douglas-Mossman)	2,186
	Cook Highway (Cairns-Port Douglas)	866
	Cook Highway (Mossman-Daintree)	25,972
	Cook Highway (Port Douglas-Mossman)	301
	Kuranda - Julatten (Forestry Access Road)	5,807
Eacham ..	Peeramoon-Boonjie ..	1,460
	Middlebrook ..	1,487
	Maalan (Forestry Access Road)	13,031
	Maalan - Sutties Gap (Forestry Access Road)	7,744
Hinchinbrook ..	Northern Highway (Ingham-Cardwell)	18,399
Ingham ..	Forest Beach ..	9,533
	Northern Highway (Townsville-Ingham)	18,399
Johnstone ..	Japoon-Silkwood ..	420
	Innisfail-Bombeeta ..	1,541
	Bruce Highway (Cairns-Innisfail)	2,254
	Tully-EI Arish ..	5,664
Mareeba ..	Mareeba-Kuranda ..	3,138
Mulgrave ..	Bellenden Ker-Russell	250
Thuringowa ..	Northern Highway (Townsville-Ayr)	11,496
	Burdekin Highway (Townsville - Charters Towers)	15,860
Townsville City and Thuringowa	Burdekin Highway (Townsville - Charters Towers)	16,824

Mr. Sparkes: Where are you getting these from?

Mr. CROWLEY: That money has been going into the North. Those are only some of the figures. I can assure the hon. member that by the time he is finished listening to me he will know that the North is well looked

after by the Labour Government, following the many years of neglect by Tory Governments, who were in power for 55 years.

In the Northern Division of the State, the Main Roads Commission has under its jurisdiction 5,112 miles of roads gazetted under the Main Roads Act. Of this mileage 1,207 have already been constructed and yearly allocations are made by the Commissioner for the maintenance both of the constructed lengths and the unconstructed length.

During the past 29 years, since the inauguration of the Main Roads Commission, the following amounts have been expended on construction of main roads in the Northern Division:—

	£
Atherton and Evelyn Tablelands	1,508,000
Coastal and sugar areas ..	3,336,000
Western and grazing areas ..	1,105,000

Total: Permanent works £5,949,000

(Note: An amount of £373,000 expended on the Burdekin River bridge construction is not included in these figures.)

Of this large amount only £604,000 or 10.15 per cent. is debited to the local authorities concerned and the annual repayment including interest is only £36,500.

In the same period the following funds have been expended on maintenance of main roads in the Northern Division:—

	£
Atherton and Evelyn Tablelands	296,000
Coastal and sugar areas ..	960,000
Western and grazing areas	316,000

Total: Maintenance .. £1,572,000

Of this amount only £409,000 has been charged to local authorities, equal to 26.02 per cent.

The above figures include State highways (which are constructed wholly by the Government and the local authorities do not pay anything towards construction costs), main, developmental, secondary, farmers', mining access and tourist roads and tourist tracks.

Here are particulars of loans and subsidies granted to local authorities from Townsville north—

APPROVALS—LOANS AND SUBSIDIES TO LOCAL BODIES 1ST JULY, 1932, TO 30TH JUNE, 1949.

CAIRNS.

Authority.	Treasury.			Debenture Loans.	Total.						
	Loans.	Subsidies.	Total.								
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		
Cairns City Council ..	79,654	1	8	77,472	12	5	157,126	14	1		
Cairns Hospitals Board	23,777	10	0	2,369	6	0	31,146	16	0		
Cairns Fire Brigade Board ..	11,350	3	5	389	16	10	11,740	0	3		
Cairns Harbour Board	..	..	..	5,833	17	0	5,833	17	0
Cairns Regional Electricity Board ..	64,751	6	4	13,779	2	10	78,530	9	2		
Cairns-Mulgrave Water Supply Board ..	3,000	0	0	26,991	5	0	29,991	5	0		
Totals ..	£	187,533	1	5	126,836	0	1	314,369	1	6	
							1,545,339	9	0		
									1,859,708	10	6

The Treasury,
Brisbane, 25th August, 1949.

These are the details for the Townsville area—

APPROVALS—LOANS AND SUBSIDIES TO LOCAL BODIES 1ST JULY, 1932, TO 30TH JUNE, 1949.
TOWNSVILLE.

Authority.	Treasury.						Debenture Loans.	Total.		
	Loans.		Subsidies.		Total.					
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.		
Townsville City Council	139,111	4 8	632,125	6 9	771,236	11 5	1,135,052	0 0	1,906,288	11 5
Townsville Hospitals Board	12,613	11 4	13,176	0 9	25,789	12 1	380,500	0 0	406,289	12 1
Townsville Fire Brigade Board	2,856	1 6	1,068	4 9	3,924	6 3	8,800	0 0	12,724	6 3
Townsville Harbour Board	60,000	0 0	15,514	10 1	75,514	10 1	..		75,514	10 1
Townsville Regional Electricity Board ..	26,198	19 0	30,881	12 5	57,080	11 5	1,541,508	1 6	1,598,588	12 11
Totals ..	£ 240,779	16 6	692,765	14 9	933,545	11 3	3,065,860	1 6	3,999,405	12 9

The Treasury,
Brisbane, 25th August, 1949.

I come now to the Atherton figures.

Approvals—loans and subsidies to local authorities—Atherton Shire Council, loan £55,076 13s. 4d.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Has the hon. member for Cairns the permission of the House to continue his speech tomorrow?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

The House adjourned at 12.56 p.m.