

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 6 AUGUST 1953

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Curtis Co-operative Dairy Association has approval to charge a higher price for the milk it sends to Proserpine, Bowen and Collinsville, on the distinct understanding that the Association freights milk from Rockhampton at its own expense in replacement, so that the Mackay consumer is not penalised. In these circumstances, I do not feel disposed to saddle the electors of Proserpine, Bowen and Collinsville with a further surcharge on the milk they purchase. The Commissioner of Prices has advised me that, in any case, the proposal of the hon. member to charge the public a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bottle extra on the retail price of all milk imported from Southern centres would not be practicable, as it would result in having two prices for bottled milk at Mackay."

CONTRACTS FOR PREFABRICATED HOUSES.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) asked the Secretary for Public Works and Housing—

"Will he prepare and table in this House a full statement concerning contracts entered into for the erection of pre-fabricated dwellings, setting out, *inter alia*,—

- "1. The particulars of each contract;
- "2. The present state of completion of each contract;
- "3. Whether any withdrawal or change has been allowed against the contractors' deposits;
- "4. The extent to which the conduct of the contracts are likely to impose any charge against the deposits lodged by the contractors?"

THURSDAY, 6 AUGUST, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.

MILK SHORTAGE, MACKAY.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS (Whitsunday) asked the Attorney-General—

"In view of the acute shortage of milk in Mackay with the resultant shortages in Proserpine, Bowen, and Collinsville, and the fact there has been two milkless days per week and curtailment on other days, and in view of the fact that people with young children and others who must have milk are vitally concerned, considering that at least 1,200 gallons of milk per week is obtainable from Mount Lareombe and more from further southern centres, will he confer with the Prices Commissioner with a view to allowing an increase of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bottle increase in the retail price of all milk imported from southern centres, taking into consideration that the local milk vendors and the Mackay Branch of the Port Curtis Co-operative Dairy Association are each prepared to bear their portion of the increased cost?"

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) replied—

"This matter has been the subject of representations made to me by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. F. Graham. The hon. member for Whitsunday is apparently unaware that at the present time, the Port

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) replied—

"1. French Contract—29 April, 1950, for 750 houses with electrical appliances for £1,603,751 and an arrangement for a further 136 houses for £290,814 with rise and fall provision in respect of freight, insurance, handling, purchase of local materials and wages in Queensland. Swedish Contract—24 May, 1950, for 700 houses with electrical appliances, for £1,322,668 with rise and fall provision in respect of freight, handling, purchase of local materials and wages in Queensland. The supplier has delivered 496 houses and it is not expected any further houses will be delivered. Italian Contract—28 July, 1951, for 1,000 houses, with electrical appliances, for £2,050,000 with rise and fall provision in respect of freight, insurance, handling and wages in Queensland.

"2. French Contract—As the French contract is the subject of legal action, the matter is sub-judice. Swedish Contract—Approximately 90 per cent. of the 496 houses. Italian Contract—Approximately 50 per cent.

"3. No.

"4. For the reason stated in answer to Question No. 2, I am unable to answer this question so far as the French contract is concerned. It would not be proper for me to express the opinion asked for in respect to the Swedish and Italian contracts."

PREFABRICATED HOUSES, HARLAXTON.

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) asked the Secretary for Public Works and Housing—

“1. When was the contract for the erection of prefabricated homes at Harlaxton, Toowoomba, let to the firm of Legnami Passoti?”

“2. For how many homes was the original contract?”

“3. When was work commenced on this project?”

“4. How many of these homes have been completed and passed by the Housing Commission to 31 July, 1953, and how many are under the course of erection?”

“5. How many of these homes have been sold or rented at 31 July, 1953, to the public, other than any which may be occupied by employees of Legnami Passoti?”

“6. What amount of money has been paid to date to carry on this particular project, and to whom, and what amount is being held pending correction work?”

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) replied—

“1. 28 July, 1951.

“2. It was originally intended to erect 300 houses in Toowoomba, but by arrangement with the contractor this number was reduced to 150.

“3. May, 1952.

“4. None, there being no water or electric light services provided by the Toowoomba City Council. One hundred and fifty are in the course of erection.

“5. None.

“6. Paid to the Contractor—Overseas, £157,000; In Queensland, £82,873; total, £239,873; Retention money held £17,916.”

EXPENDITURE ON RAIL TRACK, TOOWOOMBA-HELIDON.

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) asked the Minister for Transport—

“For the twelve months ended 30 June, 1953, what was the amount of expenditure by the Railway Department on the replacement, repair, and maintenance of the Railway track between Toowoomba and Helidon?”

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

“The information will appear in the Commissioner's Annual Report when issued.”

REDUCTION IN RAILWAY EXPENDITURE, JUNE, 1953.

Mr. GAVEN (Southport) asked the Treasurer—

“In view of the fact that for each month from January to May, 1953, there was a substantial increase in the expenditure of the Railway Department compared

with the corresponding month of the previous year, will he kindly explain the reduction of £653,422 in the expenditure for June, 1953, compared with June, 1952?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

“Questions relating to expenditure in the various Departments should be addressed to the hon. the Minister concerned. However, I advise the hon. member that where pays are made fortnightly it happens at certain intervals that twenty-seven pays, instead of the customary twenty-six, have to be charged in a financial year. This is as happened in 1951-1952, the extra pay amounting to £715,333.”

EXPENDITURE ON IRRIGATION AND HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECTS.

Mr. GAVEN (Southport) asked the Treasurer—

“What was the total expenditure to 30 June, 1953, from all funds on the following irrigation and/or hydro-electric projects, viz.—(a) Burdekin, (b) Mareeba-Dimbulah, (c) Dawson River (d) Border Rivers, and (e) Nogoa River?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

“These questions should be addressed to the Minister in charge of each of the departments concerned.”

TREASURY BALANCES, 30 JUNE, 1953.

Mr. PIZZEY (Isis) asked the Treasurer—

“What was the credit balance of the Treasury at 30 June, 1953—(a) cash balance, (b) total?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

“(a) £14,836,043. (b) £19,511,886.”

MARGARINE MANUFACTURE.

Mr. LOW (Cooroola), for **Mr. Plunkett** (Darlington), asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“1. Since August, 1951, on how many occasions has the Queensland maximum for manufacture of table margarine been increased and what was the date and amount of increase in each case?”

“2. What was the maximum allowed at 31 July, 1951?”

“3. What is the present maximum?”

“4. What was the total quantity of table margarine manufactured in 1950-1951, 1951-1952, and 1952-1953, respectively?”

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr—Secretary for Health and Home Affairs), for **Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Tablelands), replied—

"1. Six.

Date of Increase.	Amount of Increase.
	Tons.
11 October, 1951	.. 955
1 August, 1952	.. 2,220
21 August, 1952	.. 520
18 October, 1952	.. 1,000
28 March, 1953	.. 520
9 May, 1953	.. 1,000"
"2. 645 tons.	
"3. 6,860 tons.	
"4. 1950-1951, 482 tons; 1951-1952, 784 tons; 1952-1953, 913 tons."	

EXPENDITURE AND BALANCE, POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah) asked the Treasurer—

"What was the expenditure in 1952-1953 from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund and what was the credit balance of that Fund at 30 June last?"

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

"Full information will be given in the Financial Statement which will be delivered at a later date."

FIRE PRECAUTIONS, RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In view of the grave danger to life and property from bush fires under the present seasonal conditions, has he given instructions that every possible precaution must be taken by employees of the Railway Department to prevent and mitigate fires which may be caused by locomotives or by such employees?"

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

"Yes. Special attention of the staff was drawn to the matter per medium of the 'Weekly Notice' as late as 23 July, 1953."

NORTHERN HIGHWAY, KEEBAH-INKERMAN.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Transport—

"1. Has a scheme for the construction of the Keabah to Inkerman section of the Northern Highway yet been released?"

"2. If not, when is it anticipated such scheme will be released?"

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

"1. No.

"2. Following discussions and an inspection of the ground with representatives of the Ayr Shire Council, consideration is being given to a scheme for this section. Plans will be released to the Council as soon as possible."

PERPETUAL LEASE ALLOTMENTS, HEATLEY'S PARADE, TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"1. (a) When it is proposed to sell the perpetual lease building allotments in the Heatley's Parade area at Townsville, and (b) how many will be sold?"

"2. (a) Will these allotments be sold to the highest bidder (b) is there any limit to the number any person can buy (c) will persons owning homes or building sites elsewhere be allowed to buy?"

"3. Will he consider allowing all who are prepared to pay the price fixed by the Lands Department for any allotment to ballot for it, thus giving workers and people of moderate means the opportunity of acquiring a home site, which is impossible under the 'highest bidder' system?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando) replied—

"The following is a copy of the information supplied recently to Mr. C. G. Jesson, the hon. member for Hinchinbrook, in response to representations made by him in connection with the offering of allotments at Heatley's Parade:—'It is anticipated that about 600 allotments will be provided from the area being reclaimed at Heatley's Parade. The first section, covering about 70 allotments, has been drained and levelled, and is ready for street construction. Progress of further work and the date of offering the allotments for public competition are dependent on the availability of loan funds. Each allotment will be sold to the highest bidder of the capital value, and each purchaser will be restricted to one allotment. Furthermore, any person who is already the holder of a perpetual town lease in Townsville will not be eligible to bid for an allotment at the sale. The Government has, since the lifting of land sales control in 1950, given the fullest consideration to the method of making residential allotments available, and has decided that the present system of public competition, whereby the highest bidder of the capital value of an allotment becomes the successful applicant, is the fairest. With the restrictions as to persons eligible to bid for or acquire an allotment, there is ample opportunity for the genuine home seeker to acquire a building site at a reasonable capital value, having regard to prices being paid for freehold lands in the particular township.'"

PRICES FOR COLLINSVILLE COAL.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Mines and Immigration—

"1. What will be the price charged for Collinsville coal supplied to Korea or Japan?"

"2. What price is charged for (a) Collinsville coal and (b) Mount Mulligan coal supplied to North Queensland consumers on the quota fixed by the Government?"

“3. If the higher price charged for Mount Mulligan coal to North Queensland consumers is for the laudable purpose of keeping that mine in production, as the Minister is reported to have said in Townsville recently, why are only North Queenslanders compelled to carry the burden of this extra price; why not the Government meet the difference in price and so make all Queenslanders bear the burden of keeping Mount Mulligan mine in production?”

Hon. E. J. RIORDAN (Flinders) replied—

“1. The price charged for Collinsville coal for export will be the same as the price charged to local consumers.

“2. The present selling price of Collinsville coal is 58s. 6d. per ton for run-of-mine and slack coals, and 60s. per ton for screened coal. The Mount Mulligan price is 90s. 6d. per ton for all grades. As the result of basic wage increases in May last and on 3 August, consideration is at present being given to increasing these prices.

“3. The accumulated losses on the State Coal Mine, Mount Mulligan, up to 30 June, 1952, totalling £49,946, have been borne by the State as a whole. If the Mount Mulligan mine were closed, the overall cost of coal to all North Queensland consumers must necessarily be higher than the prices now paid and with consequent increases in all other costs.”

RAILWAY TO CALLIDE COALFIELD.

Mr. V. E. JONES (Callide) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. What is the expenditure to date on the Callide coalfield railway?

2. Has the work on this railway been discontinued or curtailed? If so, from what date and what are the details?”

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

“1. To 31 July, 1953, £402,391.

“2. Since construction of this railway was resumed in September, 1952, after being temporarily suspended the work has not been curtailed and is still proceeding. There has, however, been great difficulty in obtaining tradesmen and even holding labourers on the job because of the approaching completion of the work. Progress, therefore, has been slowed down, but work will be completed at end of August.”

STATE SCHOOL PUPILS PER TEACHER.

Mr. HEADING (Marodian) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“What was the average number of pupils per teacher in State primary schools in 1952?”

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Labour and Industry), for **Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory), replied—
“39.”

ELECTORAL ENROLMENT, 31 DECEMBER, 1952.

Mr. FLETCHER (Cunningham) asked the Attorney-General—

“What was the net electoral enrolment for Queensland at 31 December, 1952?”

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) replied—

“The net electoral enrolment for Queensland at 31 December, 1952, was 731,734. The enrolment at the close of the rolls for the last General Election was 737,579. Voting resulted in Labour obtaining 323,881, being 53.21 per cent. of formal votes cast; Country Party 117,094, being 19.24 per cent.; Liberal Party 134,006, being 22.01 per cent.; Communist 3,954, being .65 per cent.; Independents 29,769, being 4.89 per cent. Thus Labour secured 72,781 votes more than the combined totals of the Country Party and the Liberal Party. These figures do not truly reflect the magnitude of Labour voting, because there were eight uncontested seats held by Labour. It has thus been shown that the majority of the electors of this State recorded their votes in a highly intelligent manner.”

TRUST FUND EXPENDITURE TO SUPPLEMENT LOANS.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) asked the Treasurer—

“1. In reference to his answer to a question on 7 October last in which he stated that in 1952-1953 loan expenditure on works and services would be supplemented by the expenditure of £4,000,000 from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund and by the expenditure of a total of £5,273,734 from other specified Trust and Special Funds, will he kindly give the actual details for 1952-1953 of the supplementary expenditure in question?

2. In view of his numerous statements that the Government was spending an extra £10,000,000 from Trust and Special Funds in order to offset alleged reductions in loan allocations to Queensland by the Menzies-Fadden Government, will he kindly explain to the House why the expenditure from such Trust and Special Funds for 1952-1953 was £4,120,710 less than the amount authorised by this Parliament?”

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg) replied—

“If the hon. member, during the debate on the Appropriation Bill about to be presented, explains what he means I will be in a better position to answer his questions.”

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Proclamation under The Justices Acts, 1886 to 1949.

Orders in Council under—

The Queensland Law Society Act of 1927.

The Legislative Assembly Acts, 1867 to 1946, and the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1952.

The Landlord and Tenant Acts, 1948 to 1950.

Sixty-eighth Annual Report and Balance-sheet of the Union Trustee Company of Australia Ltd.

Orders in Council under—

The Post-war Reconstruction and Development Trust Fund Act of 1943.

The Racing Limitation Act of 1946.

The Succession and Probate Duties Act of 1904.

Proclamation under the Farmers' Assistance (Debts Adjustment) Acts, 1935 to 1945.

Regulations under—

The Explosives Act of 1906 (2).

The Land Tax Acts, 1915 to 1952.

The Motor Vehicles Insurance Acts, 1936 to 1945.

The Navigation Acts, 1876 to 1950.

The Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1952.

Orders in Council under—

The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Acts, 1944 to 1951 (4).

The Rural Fires Acts, 1946 to 1951 (6).

Regulations under—

The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Acts, 1944 to 1946.

The Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Acts, 1944 to 1951.

The Land Acts, 1910 to 1952 (2).

Regulations under—

The Weights and Measures Act of 1951.

The Inspection of Scaffolding Acts, 1915 to 1951.

Orders in Council under—

The State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1952 (20).

The Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Act of 1952 (3).

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I move—

“That the Standing Orders Committee for the present Session consist of the following Members:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Gair, Mr. Hiley, Mr. Munro, Mr. Nicklin, and Mr. F. E. Roberts.”

Motion agreed to.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting 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. Dewar, Mr. Graham, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Low, and Mr. Moores.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

TEMPORARY CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS.

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 1.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I move—

“That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the constitution of Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, the receiving of resolutions on the same day as they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day.”

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer): 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, 1939, and at 30 June, 1953 (all departments), paid from Consolidated Revenue, Trust Fund, and Loan Fund, respectively.”

Motion agreed to.

OVERTIME PAID IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. PIZZEY (Isis): I move—

“That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return showing the amount of overtime paid in each Government Department (all Funds) in 1952-1953.”

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha): I move—

“That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return, in the usual form, of expenses of Ministers for the year 1952-1953.”

Motion agreed to.

FEEES PAID BY CROWN TO BARRISTERS
AND SOLICITORS.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Clayfield): 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 1952-1953, stating the names of the recipients and the amounts received, respectively.”

Motion agreed to.

SITTING DAYS.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier) (11.30 a.m.): I move—

“That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the dispatch of business at 11 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.”

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (11.31 a.m.): I desire to move the following amendment—

“After the word—
‘Thursday’

insert the words—
‘and Friday’.”

I moved this amendment to this motion on previous occasions but with no success. On one occasion I was assured that many members of the Country Party who, like me, desired to return to their electorates, would support it but I received no support from that party, except that tendered to me by the hon. member for Burdekin.

Let us be frank and honest about the whole matter. Parliament will sit for 4 hours on Tuesday, 2 hours on Wednesday and then adjourn so that both parties can hold their caucus meetings on Wednesday afternoon. Parliament will then sit for 4 hours, or less, on the Thursday. Even if we sit the maximum time allotted under this motion for the first 10 or maybe 11 weeks of Parliament we shall sit about 10 hours a week. I realise that the duties of a parliamentarian are not confined to debates in this Chamber and that it is not possible for a member to be in the Chamber all the time. I realise that much of his work has to be done outside the Chamber, but I realise also that there are many members who have not any work to do either inside or outside the Chamber. I cannot assess the value of a good man on the work that is performed by a poor man, so I take the highest possible level and try to assess the work of a politician on good men in the Chamber—and there are some good men on both sides of the House.

I repeat that we sit in this House for 4 hours on Tuesday, 2 hours on Wednesday and at the maximum 4 hours on Thursday. At the present time Parliament is under considerable criticism because of the decision

that has been recently reached by the Labour Party caucus to increase our salaries and allowances. I shall have something to say on that matter when it comes before the House, and I will make my stand on the matter definitely clear. There will be no backing or filling, ambiguity or casuistry on what I think.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: So let us then ask how we can justify a rise in salary or allowances if we are only going to—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: Here it is: it is on!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I want to say to the hon. member for Mundingburra that he has moved a specific amendment and he has no right to discuss any other matter than the amendment he has moved.

Mr. AIKENS: I thank you for your exhibition of impartiality, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: There is the whole position. It is all very well for members who live in Brisbane, and as a matter of fact you have only to be in Parliament for a couple of months to realise that the whole business of Parliament is arranged to suit those members who live in Brisbane, the whole idea being that Parliament shall be kept open as long as possible in the year. That is why we sit only 10 hours a week. Parliament is kept open as long as possible in the year so that most of the members of the Labour Party, who live in Brisbane, can use Parliament House as a club—it is the best possible club in the city—and so have some friendship and association while they come down to the House. When Parliament is opened all members are about the place and extra staff is appointed to the refreshment rooms and consequently members mingle round the House and visitors and constituents come to the House. There is a limited amount of public attendance at the House and consequently the longer Parliament can be dragged out the more salubrious and convenient it is for those A.L.P. members, absentee Labour politicians, who live away from their electorates and who live in Brisbane.

Everyone knows that when Parliament is in recess many members of the Country Party immediately go back to their electorates to live. The hon. member for Burdekin and I go back to our electorates to live and one or two isolated members of the Labour Party go back to their electorates to live, but the great bulk of Labour Party members come down to Brisbane to live the moment they are elected, consequently they like to have Parliament going as long as possible in order that they may not be lonely when wandering round the corridors and rooms of this House when Parliament is in recess.

Parliament was opened on Tuesday. It sat on Wednesday, it will sit today and then go into recess until Tuesday, 18 August,

simply in order to entice members of Parliament to come down here and to justify putting on the extra staff at Parliament House that is always employed when the House is in session, merely to make Parliament an extra sideshow for the Brisbane Exhibition. There was no justification for the opening of Parliament last Tuesday. It could have been opened, as it is normally opened, on the Tuesday following the Brisbane Exhibition. I should not have been here on this occasion—certainly I shall not be here on the next occasion if Parliament is opened merely as an extra side-show for the Brisbane Exhibition—but for the fact that I had to be sworn in and there were certain other things I wanted to do.

Let us end using Parliament as a convenience for Labour Party members who live in Brisbane. Let us do the work Parliament is appointed to do, let us get on with the job and put the interests of the people first. Let us try to give some return for the salaries and allowances we receive. Let us be honest, decent and consistent about the matter. Let us deal with Parliamentary matters while we have the opportunity to deal with them.

I commend my amendment to hon. members of this Assembly. I know the fate that it is going to receive but nevertheless, in order to be honest and consistent both with myself and the people who sent me here, I feel it my duty once again to move it, and I will move it at the beginning of every Parliament, while this racket goes on, in order to let the people know just how Parliament is conducted.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Is there a seconder for the amendment?

Mr. Coburn: I second the amendment.

Mr. AIKENS: That tricked you up!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Before he rises to a point of order, the hon. member will withdraw the innuendo in his remark that would trick me up. Let me instruct the hon. member, for his own information, that any amendment moved in this Assembly has to be seconded. I asked for a seconder in accordance with the procedure of the House. Now I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. AIKENS: Certainly I will withdraw it, and now I rise to a point of order and ask you to tell me when it has been necessary previously in this House for an amendment to be seconded.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to apply his attention to the Standing Orders. He will find an answer to his question there.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier) (11.39 a.m.): I oppose the amendment for reasons that should be

obvious. I have listened on many occasions to the utterances of the hon. member for Mundingburra. He frequently seeks to make his remarks in the role of a defender of democratic privileges, as if he were the only Parliamentarian who had a proper conception of the duties of a member of Parliament. He seeks to convey to people outside this House the impression that he is the only member who is punctilious in the discharge of his duties and that he is the only person who has the requisite qualifications to represent his constituency efficiently in Parliament, and in his own constituency. But I feel that the hon. member is condemned out of his own mouth and by his own utterances. I have with me the journals of the House for the last session. They disclose that we had 56 sitting days and that the hon. member for Mundingburra was absent on 12 of those 56 sitting days.

Mr. Aikens: And in his electorate for those 12 days.

Mr. DUGGAN: When Parliament is convened a member's place is in this House, not in some place away from the House, and all the flamboyant talk of the hon. member for Mundingburra that he was away on important business of the House has nothing to do with it. It is quite immaterial.

The hon. member's amendment to the motion specifically deals with meetings of the House and not with extraneous matters. It deals exclusively with the number of days on which Parliament shall sit and I say that when provision was made last year for this matter the hon. member himself was absent more than 20 per cent. of the total time. If the hon. member is so concerned about letting the people of Queensland know what hon. members of this Assembly do, let him reveal that bit of information to his constituents. If he does, they will know how hollow and how hypocritical this hon. member is, as he has been on so many other occasions.

It is not an unusual procedure for Parliament to be convened prior to the Exhibition. As a matter of fact, when the question arose I asked for the records of the House to be submitted to me. I found that in recent years on approximately 50 per cent. of the occasions Parliament has been convened before the Exhibition and approximately 50 per cent. of the occasions after the Exhibition.

Since I have been a member of Parliament, some 17 or 18 years, I have heard hon. members on both sides of the House express the wish that, if the business before the House was adequately dealt with, an endeavour should be made to terminate the session in time to enable them to return to their electorates and carry out duties associated with the festivities attaching to school break-ups and other functions that generally demand the attendance of a member of Parliament. This has not been done unless the business of the House has been completed. I see no great difficulty in disposing of some of the formal motions and other matters in three clear days so that the session might be brought to a close so much earlier. I want to say definitely that in a general way over the last 50 years

Parliament has been meeting in the early stages of session on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays only of each week and I have yet to learn that the business of the House is to be taken out of the hands of the Government and placed in the hands of an irresponsible private member of the House and I as Acting Leader of the Government am not going to surrender the right of the Leader of the House to dictate the order of Government business. If the hon. member for Mundingburra wants to know about the festivities of next week I tell him that with the Treasurer and other departmental officials I shall be absent at a Premiers' Conference that is of no less importance than two days' proceedings in this Assembly. Decisions will be arrived at at that conference that will have a tremendous bearing on the government of this State and it is essential that we attend that conference, because the time set is the only one convenient to the Prime Minister of Australia, the Federal Treasurer, and other Premiers.

I want to say, on the question of Friday sitting members of Parliament, that both private members and Ministers of the Crown have a good deal of work to do on Fridays. When Parliament is in session my diary is jammed full with appointments and deputations and other meetings, and if the hon. member wishes to peruse that diary of appointments it will show that my time—and this applies to other Ministers of the Crown as well—is fully taken up with departmental business. Private members also seek the opportunity on Fridays to go round to the various departments of State, which it is not possible for them to do when Parliament is in session. It is not, for one thing, always within the knowledge of a member that a vote will not be taken during his absence from the Assembly. Moreover, some departments cannot be conveniently approached prior to the commencement of business on a sitting day.

So the hon. member's amendment should be rejected, firstly, because his campaign is a sham and a hypocrisy, and secondly because it is time the responsible people of Queensland rejected pleas emanating from an hon. member with no sense of responsibility and one who has absented himself 12 days from the business of this House and who seeks to disrupt the order of business of the House by taking advantage—as of course he is entitled to do—to prevent the business from being presented here by this senseless amendment he brings forward. As I say, for the last 50 years it has been customary for this House to meet in the early stages of the session only on three days of each week.

For the several reasons that I have enumerated, I ask the House to discharge this amendment with a decisive vote that perhaps, if it does not silence the hon. member for Mundingburra—I know that it will not—will at least show the people outside that it has been put forward in an irresponsible fashion by an irresponsible member.

Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (11.46 a.m.): In considering this matter, I am bound to say that two dangers confront the institution of Parliament which it is our responsibility to

cherish and safeguard. The first danger lies in setting out too light a programme of work for each week, which apparently is the case that has been submitted by the mover of the amendment. But there is a second danger, and that is that Parliament should seek to compress its functioning into a few weeks of each year. If I had to choose between the two evils, I should infinitely prefer the first. In a democratic country, Parliament open and in session has a part to play that it cannot play when it is out of session. I go so far as to say that on that argument alone we should seriously consider whether we should entertain any proposal that would compress the weeks during which Parliament sits into a smaller percentage of each year.

Passing by the argument that the public interest demands that Parliament should be in session for a good portion of the year to provide the vehicle for matters of topical interest to be quickly examined where they should be examined, that is, on the floor of the House and not by Press statements, even by Ministers or by the Leader of the Opposition, I say that in a democracy Parliament is the place where public matters should be examined, and we should see that Parliament is kept open for as many weeks as possible to give that opportunity.

On the question of the functioning of Parliament, if the argument that we should sit on Fridays has any merit, the argument is equally strong that we should sit on Mondays also, and have Parliament in session for the longest possible time each week and the fewest possible weeks in each year. What would be the result of that? The main concern in most of the democracies is that we should endeavour to ensure that legislation is passed only after the fullest and most leisurely examination of it by those charged with the responsibility for its consideration. Sneaking from the point of view of the Opposition, we find it hard even under present conditions to keep pace with the legislative programme that is submitted by 10 or 11 Ministers rising in succession and presenting a variety of problems to this House. For the proper conduct of Parliament, it is essential that all members of the House should have an opportunity to consider adequately all legislation and to do research work and to make prepared and considered observations on the matters that are presented successively by Ministers, which though separate problems for them become cumulative problems for us.

Mr. Power: Your position has become worse by the reduction in the number of your members.

Mr. HILEY: In reply to that interjection, it is not the size of the dog that counts but the size of the bite of the dog.

This session will show how much fight there is in the dog. Whether the House is very evenly matched or not does not alter the principles debated or the arguments advanced.

It is very easy for an hon. member like the hon. member who has moved the amendment who has come here for nine successive years with the same clichés and the same illustrations and the same set of phrases falling

from his lips, such as "rat-infested Brisbane," which are familiar and nauseating. It is very easy for him to make a speech on any subject at any time. His speeches invariably bear witness to the fact that he never makes any preparation of his subject matter and never studies the Bills that come before the House so as to be able properly to discharge his responsibilities. On the test of the proper functioning of Parliament do not let us fall into the lazy, easy and convenient way of working a few full weeks and denying Parliament the opportunity of functioning as it should over quite a lengthy period of each year.

Coming to the question of the convenience of members—and that is an important factor—every member on this side of the House who represents an area outside Brisbane lives in his electorate and I, for one, should be very loth to be a party to any step to lessen his opportunity to spend an extra week-end in the bosom of his family or in the heart of his electorate. I believe that the touch of the representative with the people he represents is something we should lose at our peril.

Mr. Aikens: You said members on your side of the House.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. It is something to be encouraged—that members should have the freest and fullest opportunity of returning to their own electorate at week-ends. I have heard that that happens with greater frequency when the House does not sit on Friday than when it does. When it sits on Friday perhaps people whose electorates are further away are apt to say, "I will go every second week-end instead of every week-end."

I do not believe that democracy is improved by having members who represent country districts spend more week-ends in Brisbane. The whole instrument of democracy is dependent upon two working principles, one that the people must have frequent opportunities to watch the instrument of democracy working and to see and meet their chosen representatives. Lose that and you lose it at your peril. We have seen too much of that since Australia embarked on the hazardous experiment of putting the national capital in a remote place. One of the great complaints about the operation of the democratic system in Australia is that too few people have the opportunity of regularly meeting their chosen representatives when the Federal Parliament is in session at Canberra, as it is too far away and too remote and thus we run the risk of divorcing the instrument of democratic practice from the people it serves. So I say that on that test it is wise to accept the motion the Government submit and to refuse the amendment that has been proposed by the hon. member for Mundingburra.

This matter, which touches the great institution of Parliament, is important. There is no party interest in it. There is no suggestion that it should be considered narrowly on party lines or should be examined on a sheer party basis. Hon.

members on this side of the House have had no opportunity of sitting as a party and solemnly considering this matter, they have had no party direction about it. Every member is as free to vote on this as he is on any other important matter. I wish to make that clear.

With those observations I say plainly that we reject the amendment and support the motion.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (Mr. Aikens's amendment) be so inserted—put; and the House divided—

Resolved in the negative under Standing Order No. 148.

Mr. SPEAKER: I should like to remind the House that the hon. member for Mundingburra has in the first few days of this session made statements that he is not receiving fair treatment, and when the hon. member for Burdekin seconded his amendment he appeared to be surprised that that procedure was necessary. I read for his benefit Standing Order 89, on page 21 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly—

"An amendment proposed but not seconded shall not be entertained by the House."

Motion (Mr. Duggan) agreed to.

LIBRARY, REFRESHMENT ROOMS, AND PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS COMMITTEES.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I move—

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

Library.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Donald, Mr. Dufficy, Mr. Keyatta, Mr. Morris, Mr. Pizzey, and Mr. H. B. Taylor.

Refreshment Rooms.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chalk, Mr. Heading, Mr. Marsden, Mr. Plunkett, Mr. Rasey, and Mr. J. R. Taylor.

Parliamentary Buildings.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Müller, Mr. Pizzey, Mr. Smith, Mr. Sparkes, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Walsh."

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (11.59 a.m.): It would seem that this Parliament is getting off to its usual start, as the moment any hon. member opposes any suggestion or motion put forward by the Labour Party he brings upon himself a torrent of abuse. But I am getting case-hardened to that and can ignore it because there is no electorate in Queensland where the electors know more about its member and his activities than the Mundingburra electorate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I wish to inform the hon. member that he is not subjected to any abuse, because I see that there is no abuse, other than that provided for in the rules of debate. I ask him not to make such assertions, because they are a reflection upon the Chair.

Mr. AIKENS: As a conscientious Parliament representative, on the days that I do attend Parliament, at least I am here all day. I do not pay fleeting visits for a minute or two, like the Leader of the Liberal Party, who then departs to conduct his own business.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that he is speaking on a certain motion.

Mr. AIKENS: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, what does it matter? At the last election I received the most overwhelming victory of any member of this House and I entered this House on the plank in the platform of the North Queensland Labour Party that makes its members entirely responsible to the people who elect them and I exercise my rights in this House in the full knowledge that at the end of this session I shall once again go on the platform and make a public report to my constituents. I invite hon. members to come along some time and listen to what I have to say. The House is considering Motion No. 2 on the business paper which deals with the appointment of various committees, such as the Library Committee, the Refreshment Rooms Committee, and the Parliamentary Buildings Committee. Let us admit that appointments of these committees is perhaps the most putrid and hollow farce and sham ever perpetrated in this Chamber. I will see whether my bitter opponent, the Leader of the Liberal Party, is a member of one of these committees.

An Honourable Member: Is he?

Mr. AIKENS: What a tragedy he is not on any of them! What a blow to the ego of this megalomania!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: I challenge any member of any of these committees to mention any time that the committees have met.

Mr. Walsh: I will accept your challenge.

Mr. AIKENS: As a matter of fact, I was not pitching for the hon. gentleman. I knew I should get you in any time. I was pitching for one of the members of the Opposition. The challenge has never been accepted. I will now challenge him to tell me just what decisions have been reached and whether these decisions were carried out, because it is a well-known fact that on the rare occasions when these committees meet the decision of the committee has to be ratified by the Parliamentary Labour Party Caucus.

Mr. Rasey: That is not right.

Mr. AIKENS: Don't you come in! If you want an example of that, Mr. Speaker, let us take the manner in which our Parliamentary Librarian was appointed last year. Have hon. members of the Opposition forgotten that? I have no objection to the Parliamentary Librarian. I do not know the gentleman. I assume he is quite competent and efficient.

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Mr. H. B. Taylor: It would pay you to make his acquaintance.

Mr. AIKENS: If he is the hon. member's friend I will say he is a very amiable gentleman. Let us end this hollow farce and sham of these committees. The whole fact of the matter is this, that the Speaker is the Parliamentary Buildings Committee. What he says goes and his decisions are endorsed by the Labour Party Caucus. I do not know whether the Refreshment Room Committee ever meets or whether the Library Committee ever meets, but if they do I challenge the Treasurer—and he has accepted my challenge—to deny that the decisions made by these committees have not to be ratified by the Labour Party.

Mr. Walsh: I deny it, yes.

Mr. AIKENS: How easy it is for some people to deny anything! I really hope, although I know I hope in vain, for some members of the Country Party and the Liberal Party who are on these committees to stand up in the House and tell the House what they have told me personally about the operations or non-operations of these committees. I do that. Let us be honest. Let us have some of this honesty that the hon. the Acting Premier proclaimed and that he says he alone possesses. Let us have an honest discussion on the operations and activities of these committees. Let some of the members of these committees—I will not name them because I do not want to break their confidence—stand up and tell Parliament and the people, through the Press, what they told me personally about the operations of these committees.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier) (12.6 p.m.), in reply: I do not want to detain the House very long, but at least it is refreshing that we have an apologia coming from the hon. member for Mundingburra with regard to the work he does when he is here for the 44 of the 56 Parliamentary sitting days. In characteristic fashion he made an allegation that the committees that are under discussion at the moment did not meet. When that was refuted, he then, in his customary fashion, changed course and challenged us to reveal decisions reached at those various committee meetings. After all, he has no particular right to demand to know what was done until some decision is arrived at irregularly, improperly or wrongly. He then has his right in this House to raise it as a matter of privilege or on any other appropriate occasion. But what a reflection on the hon. members who are named in this motion to refer to them in such scathing terms as the hon. member for Mundingburra has done! If it is true—I question whether it is—that the hon. member for Mundingburra has been informed by members of these committees of some mis-happenings then at least I, if I were a member of those committees, should be very disinclined on any future occasion to convey any information to an hon. member who treats it so dishonourably.

Mr. Aikens: I never sought it; it was volunteered to me.

Mr. DUGGAN: I do not accept that because I think hon. members, the members of these committees in particular, have been here long enough to know how dangerous it would be to trust the hon. member for Mundingburra with any information, when he seeks by his words in this House to twist it to his own advantage. Therefore, I repeat, I do not accept that statement.

These committees have been called together on any occasion when business would justify their being called together. These are not committees that are called upon to discharge functions day by day or even week by week. If it is a question of spending a sum of money on Parliamentary buildings, it might require an inspection by the committee and this might take some hours before a certain recommendation was submitted, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Department of Public Works. When those works were completed there might not be another occasion for the committee to be called together for months.

As far as the Library Committee is concerned, we have a particular appropriation and the only thing requiring the committee to be called together would be possibly the appointment of a librarian or some other appointments or alterations to the library. It might also be that a disproportionate amount of money was spent on a particular type of reference work in the library and the committee thought that should be corrected. Certainly they are not matters that require the committee to be called together on frequent occasions.

I want to say deliberately here that the decisions of these committees are not submitted to the Parliamentary Labour Caucus for ratification. I do not know of any occasion when a matter has been referred from any of these committee members, but if a committee member felt that he would like to raise some aspect of a decision reached by the committee he has a perfect right to do so. I am not a member of the Liberal Party or the Country Party and so do not know whether any members of those parties have raised committee matters within their parties, but if they did they had a perfect right to do so, in just the same way as any member of the Labour Party would have a perfect right to mention the matter in Caucus if he felt that a decision of the committee should be corrected in some way or if he wanted some information for his own guidance. In the whole of my Parliamentary experience it has not been the practice to refer decisions of these committees back to Caucus for ratification. For that reason I submit that we should proceed to appoint these committees in the way in which we have done in the past.

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Acting Premier's reply has closed the debate.

Motion (Mr. Duggan) agreed to.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

APPOINTMENT OF MR. D. FARRELL.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I move—

“That Mr. David Farrell be appointed Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.”

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.11 p.m.): I should say that the appointment of Chairman of Committees of the House is almost as important as the appointment of Mr. Speaker, if not more important, because this House, if I can rely upon my memory, is more often in Committee than in what might be called a general sitting and therefore we are under the control of the Chairman of Committees more often and for a longer period in the aggregate during the session than under the control of Mr. Speaker. It is as important therefore that we have an impartial Chairman of Committees as it is important that we have an impartial Speaker. I want to be as charitable as I can with regard to Mr. Farrell, but I do not know of any hon. member of this Assembly who is satisfied with some of the exhibitions he gave us last year as Chairman of Committees; I am charitable enough to put that down to his inexperience. I remember, when we talk of impartiality emanating from the Chairman of Committees, that when I was making a speech on one occasion a member of the Labour Party who is now the Secretary for Public Works and Housing deliberately provoked me by a series of interruptions and when I was replying to that hon. member the Chairman of Committees named me and I was suspended for a week. Later the Minister openly boasted to the Country Party Whip that he had deliberately provoked me in my reply in order to secure my suspension. At that time, when the Chairman of Committees called me to order and threatened to name me—this is in “Hansard” and was truthfully reported in the Press—I said, pointing to the Labour member, “Don't name me, name this dill.” But I was the man named and I was the one suspended, but I must say, in justice to the hon. member for Maryborough, that he was not the Chairman of Committees on that occasion as it was the present Speaker who subjected me to that little bit of persecution.

However, that does not matter. I rise today because I have a fair amount of regard for Mr. Farrell and the sincere hope that in this session, at any rate, we shall not be subjected to some of the outrageous decisions given by him in the past and that he will allow hon. members to continue their speeches in accordance with parliamentary procedure and the Standing Orders. I wish him well, but I want to say that I will not put up, in this session at least, with some of the exhibitions I put up with in a spirit of friendliness in the last session of Parliament.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier) (12.14 p.m.), in reply: I rise to reply because in some quarters it might be construed that silence on my part

was an indication that I agreed or that my party agreed with the hon. member's observations. I want to say that the hon. member for Maryborough has the complete faith and confidence of hon. members on this side of the House, and I am sure that he will faithfully carry out the duties of Chairman of Committees and that he will be anxious to observe faithfully the rules and Standing Orders for the protection and benefit of hon. members of the Opposition.

I repeat that I rose to express the confidence of this side of the House and I hope that it will reflect itself when the motion is submitted to the House.

Motion (Mr. Duggan) agreed to.

SUPPLY.

VOTE OF CREDIT—£34,000,000.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

Mr. SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that the following provisions be made on account of the services for the year ending 30 June, 1954—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland (exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account) the sum of £16,000,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds the sum of £12,000,000; and

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account the sum of £6,000,000.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the chair.)

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (12.16 p.m.): I move—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1953-54, a further sum not exceeding £34,000,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State.”

Hon. members will appreciate that it is the customary procedure to introduce an Appropriation Bill at this early stage of the Session. It is necessary to enable Parliament to authorise further Supply for the current financial year.

I am sorry that the hon. member for Mundingburra has left the Chamber, as I want to take the opportunity while I am on my feet of refuting certain statements that have been made about the operations of the various committees that have been appointed by Parliament. I will do that before proceeding with the other aspects of my Bill.

As a member of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, I should like to say that that committee has met several times at my own request. Consequently, I have knowledge that it has met and that it has discussed matters relating to Parliamentary buildings. It has arrived at decisions that

have been recorded by the Clerk of this Parliament, who acts as secretary to the various committees. It is so much humbug for the hon. member for Mundingburra to get up in this Chamber and endeavour to create the impression that the various committees the House elects do not meet from time to time to discuss the business with which they are entrusted. The numerous improvements that are effected round Parliament House are all the result of decisions made by the Parliamentary Buildings Committee. It might as well be known that in giving consideration to providing better seating accommodation, which for many years has been pressed for by members on both sides of the Chamber, there has been a suggestion that we might supply the hon. member for Mundingburra with a more comfortable seat so that he might remain in it a little more often than he has done in the past. (Laughter.)

The final Appropriation Act for the financial year 1952-53 sanctioned Supply for State requirements for a short period of this financial year, but to enable the Government to meet expenditure up to the passing of the Estimates and the final Appropriation Bill, it is necessary to obtain further Supply today. Funds are needed to maintain Government services, such as education, medical and health, railways, and services generally, and to pay salaries and wages to Crown employees, &c.

In addition, moneys are required to finance Government loan works, to provide advances for the Agricultural Bank, and loans and subsidies to local bodies, and for many other purposes of great importance to the State.

In the Bill that I am about to present for consideration, provision will be made for the following appropriations—

Consolidated Revenue		
Fund	£16,000,000
Trust and Special		
Funds	12,000,000
Loan Fund	6,000,000
		<hr/>
		£34,000,000

The amounts approved in the Appropriation Bill that was passed by Parliament at this time last year were as follows:—

Consolidated Revenue		
Fund	£14,000,000
Trust and Special		
Funds	11,000,000
Loan Fund	6,000,000
		<hr/>
		£31,000,000

The increases asked for, compared with the corresponding Bill last year, are—

Consolidated Revenue		
Fund	£2,000,000
Trust and Special		
Funds	1,000,000
		<hr/>
		£3,000,000

It should be fully appreciated that the increases sought are the result of the increase in costs of maintaining State services and their administration.

The Supply sought in this Bill will form part of requirements to be included in the Estimates for 1953-54, which will be presented to Parliament with the Treasurer's Financial Statement and are, therefore, only "on account." These sums are considered to be adequate to cover expenditure to the end of November, which should obviate the necessity for a further Appropriation Bill, a circumstance that would arise if the margins were too fine. Because these amounts are "on account" they can in no way affect the sums to be finally granted by Parliament, which of course will be the subject of debate in the Committee of Supply.

Naturally I shall have a good deal more to say after hon. members opposite have spoken if, as I imagine they will, they take advantage of the occasion to discuss the various problems in which they are interested that affect the finances of this State.

Mr. Muller: That is very meagre information.

Mr. WALSH: I thought I had supplied the hon. member for Fassifern with the very fullest information. I have given him the amounts and I have shown him the increases this year over last year and I have no doubt he will get on his feet and ask for whatever other information he requires. I am not entirely aware of what the hon. member may have in his mind and I cannot anticipate it, although I may make an attempt to do so. He asked his question in such a tangled manner that I could not understand it, nor could the officers of my department. I have no doubt that I have the answer, but if the hon. member will make it a little clearer I shall be in a better position to answer it, and there will then be no misunderstanding between the questioner and myself.

I think hon. members will agree that during the past financial year the Government have certainly looked after the finances of the State very well, despite the niggardly treatment we received from the Commonwealth Government. (Opposition dissent.) I cannot understand why hon. members opposite should not have a clear picture of the treatment that Queensland is getting from the Commonwealth Government, compared with the treatment they have given to the other States. It is very clear to me. I have no doubt in my mind that the other States of Australia are getting a far bigger hand-out from the Commonwealth Government than this State is getting. It would appear that many ex-Queenslanders, including Sir Arthur Fadden, have been appointed to the Federal Cabinet and my great concern today is that there is evidence of the fact that in this Chamber too there are many members of the Opposition who by their words and their actions desire to indicate to the people that they also are ex-Queenslanders. It is full time that members of the Opposition took the Queensland point of view and not the Commonwealth

point of view, and it is nearly time that they at least gave a little advice to Sir Arthur Fadden and a few of his colleagues in the Federal Government and told them that they had some obligation and responsibility to this great State, which they allegedly represent in the House of Representatives and the Federal Cabinet. It is high time members of the Opposition showed some concern for the lack of consideration that Sir Arthur Fadden and other Ministers in the Federal Cabinet generally have shown for the problems of Queensland.

As hon. members realise, I never attempt to take time away from them. As far as they are concerned they have the day ahead of them and I have a limited time in which to reply. I shall listen very attentively to the remarks they make in the course of the debate and I shall do my best in reply to supply them with the information that they require.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.25 p.m.): The Treasurer has used his usual box of tricks in order to pull the wool over the eyes of those people who do not know the whole of the facts of the financial position of Queensland. He has again seen fit to dodge the real issue and throw the blame onto someone else. My first duty on this occasion should be to congratulate the new hon. members who have entered this Parliament. We on this side of the Chamber are fortunate in having a very able representative in the new hon. member for Cunningham, who has taken his seat for the first time. There are several new hon. members on the other side of the Chamber and for their benefit we should have a clear-cut understanding as to just where we are in order that they might know those hon. gentlemen who are leading them on the Government benches. They, like the people of Queensland, are being deceived very badly, and have been so deceived during the last 12 months.

I want to say for the benefit of those new hon. members on the Government benches that I hope their stay in this Parliament will be a happy one, because I can assure them it will be very short. I want to assure them also, if they are not already conscious of the fact, that their entry into this Chamber has been as a result of misfortune and misunderstanding. The depleted numbers on the Opposition benches has been due to that fact. The hostility that was displayed during the recent State election, fostered by the Treasurer, the Premier and others has already been dissipated, as is conclusively shown by the result of the Senate election. The people are beginning to have their eyes opened. They no longer listen to the rubbish that emanated from the men on the Government benches during the State election. The result of that election was very definitely due to the ruthless campaign of vilification waged against the Menzies-Fadden Government. There is no doubt that the truth has not been told and during the time at my disposal I propose to tell it—at any rate to tell just a few home truths.

The Treasurer, in his usual manner attempted to belittle me when answering a question of mine this morning. He adopted that course in order to save his own skin. I asked a simple question that any child in Grade 4 could understand and I have no doubt the Treasurer understood it only too well. He had no answer to it and then politely asked me to please explain what I meant by it. That is typical of his tactics.

The question was a simple one. He has endeavoured during the last 12 months or two years to tell the people that this State has been starved of funds by the Commonwealth Government. The answer to my question, which was a very simple one, was in keeping with the insidious propaganda we have heard throughout the length and breadth of Queensland during the last 12 months. The Treasurer has endeavoured time after time to emphasise that in order to keep the workers of Queensland engaged at work he had been called on to spend £10,000,000 from the trust and special funds to supplement loan funds.

Mr. Walsh: Where did you get that £10,000,000 from?

Mr. MULLER: From the hon. gentlemen and other members of his Government. Some stated that the amount was £8,000,000 and others said it was £10,000,000. The Treasurer said if it were not for that nest-egg that the Government had put aside—and the Premier used the argument again and again—chaos would have been supreme in Queensland.

Mr. Walsh: That is true.

Mr. MULLER: Let the hon. gentlemen listen again to the question I asked. It states—

“1. In reference to his answer to a question on 7th October last in which he stated that in 1952-1953 loan expenditure on works and services would be supplemented by the expenditure of £4,000,000 from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund and by the expenditure of a total of £5,273,734 from other specified Trust and Special Funds, will he kindly give the actual details for 1952-1953 of the supplementary expenditure in question?”

Mr. Walsh: That makes a little over £9,000,000.

Mr. MULLER: The second part of the question reads—

“In view of his numerous statements that the Government was spending an extra £10,000,000 from Trust and Special Funds in order to offset alleged reductions in loan allocations to Queensland by the Menzies-Fadden Government, will he kindly explain to the House why the expenditure from such Trust and Special Funds for 1952-1953 was £4,120,710 less than the amount authorised by this Parliament?”

Hon. members will mark the words, “less than the amount authorised by this Parliament.” As a matter of fact, the statement is quite untrue, but of course that is typical

of the propaganda that Labour engaged in during the last 12 months in particular during the vicious and wicked election campaign. Labour has sought to spend every bit of money it could get its clutches on, and to spend it on public works, whether they would be reproductive or not. Hon. gentlemen opposite “get away with it” under the guise of food-production. This propaganda has gone down the throats of a number of people who are not in a position to examine the facts. An effort has been made to scare the wits out of the people by telling them that they are likely to lose their jobs, but when you look at the figures you will find that more men are engaged in public works and works generally than 12 months ago and that there were more 12 months ago than there were 2 years ago.

Mr. Walsh: And no thanks to the Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. MULLER: I am talking of the Commonwealth now; there is no sign of any depression or of unemployment and no-one knows that better than the Treasurer. I will give the Committee the actual sums of money supplied to Queensland during the last 12 months to show that the statements made by the Treasurer and his colleagues are plainly not true. The Commonwealth Government have provided this Government with more money than any Government have had in the history of Queensland and Australia. However, before I get on to that I should like to know from the Treasurer whether this Bill that he is submitting this morning has the approval of that supreme economic council, the Queensland Central Executive of the Australian Labour Party. It is useless for this Parliament to be discussing important business if it still has to be submitted to the Queensland Central Executive.

Mr. Walsh: Don't be childish. (Interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MULLER: I am wondering whether the hon. gentleman has any difficulty with members of his own party, just as he has had in another matter recently. Seeing that he is a member of the Queensland Central Executive, will he use that body to cane the back-benchers of his party generally?

Mr. Walsh: You are not suggesting that I am in the same boat as you are with Madsen?

Mr. MULLER: Even if I were in the plight that the hon. gentleman is in I should not lean upon him as the appointed body to direct the Government of the day. When we reach that stage our democratic system in Queensland is in jeopardy. I congratulate Madsen on taking the stand it has, not that I approve of what it did. Parliament is supposed to be the supreme body. In this case there is not much between the two. Neither the Queensland Central Executive nor the Government are right. The difference between the two is only a matter of a straw. One of them is asking for something and the other is merely not willing to go the whole way. In an effort to attract public sympathy they go

part of the way, but the point I am making this morning is that I cannot see what right the Queensland Central Executive has to take the stand it does—and we all realise that it is being inspired by the Treasurer himself to do these things. He endeavours to hoodwink hon. members of this Parliament whenever it suits him and now, in order to straighten up those hon. members of the Labour Party who do not agree with him he adopts the unsportsmanlike attitude of getting somebody else to cane them. I mention that so that new hon. members of the Assembly will know exactly where we are going.

The Treasurer's exhibition this morning when he asked for a question to be made plainer is typical of his tactics. He has made a number of public statements during the last year, all more or less along the lines of misleading the public in his endeavour to put the Commonwealth Government in a bad light.

Mr. Power: He has put them in a bad light.

Mr. MULLER: The Attorney-General knows that nearly all the Treasurer's statements were untrue.

Mr. Power: I do not. They were all true.

Mr. MULLER: The Attorney-General knows they were untrue. Unfortunately the people did not know it during the election campaign. We cannot blame them for believing statements made by the Treasurer or a Minister of the Crown, but the point is that many of those statements were untrue. This Government have not been deprived of funds and have not received worse treatment than they did from the Chifley or other Labour-controlled Commonwealth Governments. Only a few weeks ago the Treasurer endeavoured to mislead the people in a way that should never be repeated. He endeavoured to confuse them by referring to grants that were made many years ago. In a futile endeavour to prove that this State was receiving poor treatment at the hands of the present Commonwealth Government, he referred to grants made in 1910 and 1912 and sought to link them with grants made under the system of uniform taxation, when he knew that they had nothing whatever to do with the moneys made available under uniform taxation.

Mr. Walsh: They are still Commonwealth grants.

Mr. MULLER: But made in an entirely different way. The special disability grants that the Minister mentioned referred to those made as far back as 1910 and 1912, but he did not tell the people that.

I should like to point out to hon. members also that the Australian Labour Party is not the real friend of the working people. The true friends of the working people are on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. Power: You told that to the electors during the election campaign and they did not believe you.

Mr. MULLER: If I were the Attorney-General I should endeavour to develop something greater than a mere Brisbane outlook. Let me remind hon. members that our social services were introduced by non-Labour parties. The Deakin Government, for instance, introduced old-age pensions.

Mr. Walsh: At the behest of the Labour Party.

Mr. MULLER: The Treasurer does not like to hear the truth. A non-Labour party introduced old-age pensions, as the records that I can produce will disclose. And it will be found that every increase was made by non-Labour parties.

Mr. Power: They were forced to do it by the Labour Party.

Mr. MULLER: The hon. gentleman is always talking about wage-slashers and baby-starvers but who reduced wages most during the depression period?

Mr. Power: The Moore Government.

Mr. MULLER: The hon. gentleman will find that the largest wage cuts were made by the Labour Party. I remind the Chamber too that the main reason why industrial arbitration in Australia has not come up to expectations is that the courts have been contaminated by Labour; Labour must carry that responsibility. If matters had been left to the discretion of the court we should not find ourselves in the position we are in today. The Treasurer says that he has not sufficient money but it is not money, it is the 40-hour week that has been hindering us. Why was not the court allowed to make its own decision with regard to hours before the 40-hour week was introduced? The Treasurer knows that when the measure was introduced in this Chamber we were told—and I think he contributed to the debate—that the granting of a 40-hour working week would bring about much satisfaction and contentment in industry and that actually more work would be done and production would be greater in a 40-hour week.

Mr. Walsh: I was outside looking in during that period.

Mr. MULLER: Our late Premier made a strong point of that and the Leader of the Opposition assured the then Premier that those who enjoyed a 40-hour working week would ultimately find that it was an expensive luxury.

Mr. Walsh: Legislation enacted here cannot direct the Federal court.

Mr. MULLER: It did in that case. Prior to the court's making any movement in the matter action was taken by Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania, as those States approached the Federal Court to bring it about as a universal change. Those States told the court at that time that they were not concerned about their inability to finance public works; they thought that there would be no embarrassment whatever. But what happened? In the first year of the operation of the 40-hour week wages rose by 10s. a week. The measure was introduced in 1947

and began to operate in January, 1948. In that year the basic wage rose by 10s. a week and in 1949 there was a further rise of 10s. and in 1950 it rose by 31s., which increase included a special prosperity loading. Since that time we have had small increases in the basic wage but the fact of the matter is that over the last 5½ years wages have increased by £5 a week. As against that let it be said that for the previous 26 years from 1921 to 1947 wages rose by approximately 24s., in other words by approximately a shilling a year, whereas a rise of £5 in 5½ years represents an increase of approximately a pound a year. That is where the trouble began. The Government are quite wrong in laying the blame at the door of the Commonwealth Government. They should place it where it rightly belongs.

What better example could we have of how this increase in wages has got ahead of our capacity to meet it than is found in the Railway Department? The Government are now advocating the building of the Dajarra railway and once again they are asking the Commonwealth Government to supply the finance, not knowing just where the money will come from. Only the other day the Acting Premier asked what was the answer to it all. Labour is now caught in the meshes of its own little plan; it cannot finance the work that it set out to do, largely because of the introduction of the 40-hour week.

I readily admit that increased prices for our export products have made some contribution to the present position—I realise that those prices have increased—but the greater part of the trouble is due to the shorter working week and the fact that we are not producing enough for our own needs. It is not a matter of a shortage of funds, but of not making the best use of the money we have.

I should now like to draw the attention of hon. members to these figures, which relate to Commonwealth payments to Queensland since 1949-1950. In 1949-1950 income-tax reimbursements amounted to £11,540,000, but by 1953-1954 they had jumped to £22,500,000, an increase of 95 per cent. The Treasurer does not appear to want to listen to this.

Mr. Walsh: I know the figures so well, you are only wasting your time.

Mr. MULLER: In 1949-1950 loan approvals amounted to £9,035,000 whereas in 1953-1954 they increased to £22,950,000, an increase of 154 per cent. With regard to wages, in 1949-1950, which was the last budget year of the Chifley Government, the Federal basic wage for Queensland reach £6 13s. It is now £10 18s., which represents an increase of 64 per cent. The figures I have quoted show that there has been an increase of 64 per cent. in wages, 95 per cent. in income-tax reimbursements and 154 per cent. in loan approvals. How can anyone argue that this State has been starved for funds? No-one knows better than the Treasurer that in these abnormal times, when there is such a demand for money, loan moneys have fallen short of requirements because the cost of works is so high.

And now let us see what the Menzies-Fadden Government have done to help this State. In 1950-1951 there was a shortage of money for loan works and the Menzies-Fadden Government provided £114,000,000 from Commonwealth taxation to make up the deficiency. In 1951-1952 they provided £153,000,000, in 1952-1953 they provided £130,000,000 and in 1953-1954 they will probably make up another £100,000,000. That represents a total in four years of £497,000,000 to finance our loan-works programme. How, in the face of those figures, can anyone argue that the States have been starved for funds? We have had much more money than we have ever had in the past, but still this Government are broke. Because of their policy of extravagance and waste they have not sufficient money to go round, and they are trying to lay the blame at the door of the Commonwealth Government.

That is the story in a nutshell. I ask the Treasurer whether he can reply to those charges. He has had ever so much more money than was available in the past.

Mr. Walsh: There is nothing to reply to.

Mr. MULLER: When you come to the question of percentages the money made available to him in one case was 150 per cent. more, notwithstanding the fact that wages increased by only 64 per cent., which is quite enough. Ample funds have been provided and there is not the slightest doubt about the effect of the honourable gentleman's policy.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) (12.51 p.m.): The speech of the hon. member for Fassiferu reminds us of Thomas Bracken's poem "Not understood." He said that at the last election the people of Queensland did not understand and as a result his party were defeated. As a matter of fact, at the Federal elections, too, Labour got a greatly increased vote over that scored in previous years; it was a moral victory for Labour at the Senate elections. The State elections gave an overwhelming victory for Labour because of the ideals, principles and record of Labour Governments. The people understood only too well and the defeat of hon. members opposite was not due to any lack of knowledge or understanding.

I sympathise with the hon. member because it is very difficult for him to put forward a reason why this Government or this party came back with 50 members while the Opposition had only half that number. The hon. member's speech and his logic supplied one reason why they are in the Opposition. He spoke of the alleged extravagance and waste of the present Government. If any Government in Australia or in the world have been prudent and careful not extravagant it has been the Queensland Labour Government. Facts and figures prove that. We do not rely upon statements alone. They are backed and supported by facts and figures. The Labour Government of Queensland have a record of 14 surpluses in the last 15 years. Is not that evidence of prudent and careful control? Is that not evidence

of sound management? Is there any Government in Australia or any other part of the world with a record like that—14 surpluses in the last 15 years? Yet the hon. member talks about waste and extravagance!

What about the party the hon. member was associated with between 1929 and 1932? What about their mismanagement? In the first year they were in power they had a deficit of £700,000, in the second year £800,000, and in the third year over £2,000,000, a total deficit of over £3,500,000 in three years. Yet they talk today about economy, prudent control, and the necessity of avoiding extravagance! They were extravagant. They mismanaged. They cut in every way and got further into the mire, the greater their deficits the greater their mismanagement.

The hon. member, instead of discussing finances fairly and fully, as he should have done, had two complaints, two laments. First of all he said that the Labour Government's supporters misrepresented the issue at the State election and that was the reason why Labour won. His second point was that the Federal Government were being unfairly attacked. Does the hon. member know about the speech delivered by the hon. member for Warwick? Does he know what he said about the Federal Government? Of course he does, just as well as I do. Let me remind him of what the hon. member for Warwick, his own colleague, said about the Federal Government.

Mr. Aikens: Are you referring to the present member for Warwick?

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes, Mr. Madsen. This is what is contained in a report in the Warwick "Daily News" of 10 July, 1953, only last month.

The heading is—

"Mr. Madsen's Scathing Attack on Federal Government.

"Dairy Produce Prices.

"Dairymen throughout Queensland are registering their strong disapproval of the method adopted regarding the determination and announcement of dairy produce prices.

"The President of the Eastern Downs District of the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation (Mr. O. O. Madsen, M.L.A.), described the Commonwealth Government's decision as 'a deliberate injustice to dairy farmers and their families.'"

He stated further—

"Cabinet's decision to dishonour the Government's guarantee to the industry 'has not fooled anybody, except the politically blind.'"

"The Cabinet elected to disregard principles and dishonour agreements and promises."

"The Government had earned the scorn of all who believed in truth and honesty. They had kindled the wrath and earned the distrust of producers in the dairying industry."

Mr. Madsen added, according to the report, that—

"No Government had ever promised more and dishonoured so much."

(Government laughter).

The hon. member for Fassifern is his colleague, yet he says that Labour is unfair to the Federal Government.

Mr. Aikens: Did not the hon. member for Fassifern threaten to have him expelled?

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes. The hon. member for Warwick contended that the Federal Government had dishonoured its principles and had in consequence incurred the wrath of producers. He emphasised that point when he said—

"No Government had ever promised more and dishonoured so much."

That was not the utterance of an hon. member on the Government benches but of a colleague of the hon. member who just resumed his seat. As the hon. member for Mundingburra interjected, there was a sequel to that slashing attack by the hon. member for Warwick on the Federal Government.

Mr. Rasey: Their bosses are going to expel him.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Of course. This is what "The Telegraph" said on the 23rd July last—

"A move for the suspension of certain party members is foreseen at the State Country Party conference in Brisbane next week.

"The move, which is likely to be made by the Acting Parliamentary C.P. Leader (Mr. Muller) will be directed at party leaders who, as leaders of the dairying industry, have openly criticised the Commonwealth Government over its decision not to increase butter and cheese prices."

Hon. members opposite talk a great deal about freedom, yet here the hon. member who has just resumed his seat and his party are resorting to intimidation and suspension of a colleague because he had the temerity to criticise the Federal Government. Yet we are led to believe that anti-Governments are a Government based on freedom, the spirit of tolerance and the recognition of the rights of members of Parliament! The hon. member for Warwick, because he criticised the party led by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party in this Parliament, has been threatened with suspension and ostracism. I am told that the hon. member for Warwick has since toed the line. The Labour Party is very mild in its criticism compared with the criticism that has been levelled at the Federal Government by the hon. member's own colleague, the hon. member for Warwick, and other hon. members.

Mr. Low: You don't believe all you read in the newspapers?

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member cannot wriggle out of this incident. There is no denying it. There is the report and it is

true. It is the most slashing attack ever made by an anti-Labour man on an anti-Labour Government in Queensland or Australia, yet the hon. member for Fassifern complains that the Labour Party has criticised the Federal Government unfairly.

A Government Member: They could not whip him into line.

Progress reported.

MEMBER SWORN.

MR. T. M. CROWLEY.

Mr. Thomas Martin Crowley, having taken the oath of allegiance and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the Electoral District of Cairns.

SUPPLY.

VOTE OF CREDIT—£34,000,000.

COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the Chair.)

Mr. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) (2.17 p.m.): I was replying to the hon. member for Fassifern. The nature of the speech of the hon. member for Warwick is another Warwick egg. I did not think we should have lived to see two Warwick eggs in our lifetime. The hon. member is complaining that the Labour Party have been unfairly criticising the Commonwealth Government; he should read the speeches of his own colleagues, particularly the hon. member for Warwick, whom I have mentioned. This hon. member made a speech on the administration and legislation of the Federal Government that makes the attacks of the Labour Party sink into insignificance.

The hon. member for Fassifern repeats the parrot cry we hear about the loan allocations, in reply to Labour's attacks upon Federal administration, the parrot cry that "The present Federal Government are giving you more than the Chifley Government gave you." My reply to that is they should be giving us more.

Mr. Muller: What are you grumbling about?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I will tell the hon. member in a moment the increase is too small.

First of all, the population of Australia is increasing, the obligation of the nation is increasing and the purchasing power of money decreasing; therefore, to equate the amount with the Chifley Government's amount, the present Federal Government would have to give a substantial increase. And let me point out that it is not the nominal contribution to the State that counts but what is left to the Federal Government after they have levied taxation and taken the money from the people of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Muller: You say taxation is too high now.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Honestly, that is what I say.

Mr. Muller: You want them to give more.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I do not want them to give more taxation, I want the Federal Government to honour their pledge and promise to reduce taxation. In 1951-52 the Federal Government collected £919,000,000 in taxation, an amount unprecedented and unparalleled at that time.

That Government promised to reduce taxation, yet in their first year they levied £415,000,000 more than the Chifley Government had levied under their last budget. In the three years from 1944-1945 to 1946-1947 the Chifley Government expended £796,000,000 on defence, whereas the Menzies-Fadden Government have spent only £533,000,000 for that purpose in their three years of office, so that it is no good bringing forward the bogey of defence expenditure when we have proof that the Chifley Government spent enormously more on defence than the present Federal Government have spent.

Mr. Lloyd Roberts: Now give us the comparison on social services.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Before I am finished I will give all the comparisons the hon. member wants. Take the taxation collected by the present Federal Government. In the three years ended June last they collected £2,522,000,000 in round figures, by way of taxation. Why, it makes one's brain reel trying to grasp the significance of the magnitude of those figures, never previously approached in the history of the Commonwealth! In those three years they collected almost £1,000,000,000 more than the Chifley Government collected, in a similar period, so that on the score of taxation and allocation of moneys, the Federal Government are collecting enormously more now, after paying the reimbursement grants, than did the Chifley Government. In view of that, what is the use of talking about some slight increase to the States when, before that increase was made, the heavy hand of taxation was placed upon the people of Australia, including Queensland, to the extent of more than £2,522,000,000. These facts prove conclusively that the present Federal Government have broken faith with the people in taking from them by way of taxation more than is good for the economic health of the nation.

Let us look for a moment at what is said by some leaders of industry concerning this policy of extracting terrific taxation. In "The Courier-Mail" of 11 June of this year Mr. Knox, the chairman of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, is reported as having said—

"Taxation in Australia was eating into the capital resources of industry, reducing productivity and living standards."

Further, we find this in "The Taxpayers' Bulletin"—

"Taxation can play its proper part but it is being most improperly applied when primary production, industry and commerce are being choked by it."

"These may seem strong words but they are the truth. The Government is not satisfied with preventing expansion and development of useful industries; it is improperly taxing the same profits twice, as in the case of company profits. This is a penalty on free enterprise and private investment."

Here we find anti-Labour authorities denouncing this crippling taxation policy of the present Federal Government.

The hon. member for Fassifern referred to the increasing costs in industry and endeavoured to attribute them to the 40-hour week and higher wages. Can he not see that this tremendous burden of taxation has bumped up costs in Australia enormously?

Mr. Muller: What brought the taxation about? It was the 40-hour week.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The taxation was brought about by the Menzies-Fadden Government. Instead of fulfilling their promise to reduce taxation they drew this enormous sum from trade, industry, commerce and the workers generally. And hon. members opposite know that.

Another factor bringing about high costs in industry is the higher rate of interest and well the hon. member for Fassifern knows that. The Chifley Government, in their last year of office, raised over £200,000,000 at 3½ per cent. on long-term loans but the present Government have bumped the interest rate up to £4 10s. per cent. for Commonwealth loans and, indeed, local authorities today are paying 5 per cent. for their money. In this mad scramble to get money they have been forced to pay this huge rate. We know that they cannot do this economically and that many are faced with insolvency.

The Menzies-Fadden Government are taking their economics from conservative professors who know nothing of the realities of the position of Australia. Between 1929 and 1932 the Moore Government in Queensland made the same blunder, for that Government took the authority of armchair professors who knew nothing about the realities of the situation. As a result there were chaos and disaster in Queensland and the same thing is being brought about in Australia today.

Furthermore, we want to bear in mind that the higher wages being paid today have been brought about in the way I have mentioned because the higher taxation has forced up the higher cost of living and wages have gone up accordingly. The present Federal Government contend that they have cured inflation but there have been 12 or 13 increases in the cost of living since they came into power and wages are adjusted to equate the increases in the cost of living. Increases in the cost of living come about by the high rate of interest and the high taxation and the refusal on the part of the Commonwealth Government to help the States control the cost of living. I know that when I was Minister in charge of prices Queensland made recommendations to the Federal Government to co-operate with us and help us to get over the

difficulties of Section 92 of the Federal Constitution, but nothing was done. All the time the blame was being placed on the worker and the introduction of the 40-hour week and higher wages. Nothing was said by hon. members opposite about high taxation or the higher rate of interest.

Mr. Kerr: Who paid the highest taxation? Industry?

Mr. LARCOMBE: And does not industry pass it on to the workers? Taxation is an element of cost and the hon. member knows that and it is no use suggesting that industry has to bear the cost, because it is largely passed on to the worker. I well recollect how hon. members opposite used to say that the workers of Australia were working for the Chifley Government. If they were working for the Chifley Government three years ago how much harder are they working for Sir Arthur Fadden today? They are weighed down by an enormous burden of taxation that is destroying incentive, initiative and enterprise. With every increase in wages the Federal Government receive a corresponding increase in taxation receipts, not because of any constructive act of theirs but because they have allowed the cost of living to go up and up and with every increase the worker has to pay higher taxation.

Sir Arthur Fadden says that the increased number of taxpayers is due to the better conditions of the country but the fact is that today taxation is being taken from numbers of workers who were free of it under the Chifley Government on an equated purchasing power basis.

And so, Mr. Farrell, I submit that the speech of the hon. member for Fassifern was just a smoke-screen speech. He wants to divert attention from the enormities of the Federal Government. He knows there is a Federal election next year and he has set out early in his plan of trying to tone down the sins of omission and commission of the Federal Government in order to try to score a victory over Labour at that election. However, from the trend of public opinion and the substantial improvement in Labour's position, I do not think he will be very successful. At the last Federal election, throughout Australia the Labour Party polled almost 300,000 votes more than the anti-Labour parties. How can the hon. member for Fassifern explain that?

Mr. Muller: The people were deceived. That is why.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member says that the people were deceived. What an insult that is to the intelligence of the people of Australia! The hon. member said that also about the people of Queensland, that they were deceived as the result of Labour propaganda and returned a Labour Government. He can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but he cannot fool all the people all the time, if I may paraphrase the dictum of a famous American statesman.

I say that this Queensland Government have shown good management and sound

control, we have paid our debts and shown surpluses, we have provided substantial employment, we have stimulated production, and we have increased industry and development, despite the tremendous handicap that the Federal Government have imposed upon us with their policy of credit restriction and high taxation.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (2.32 p.m.): I think that in this debate, which is as wide as the earth, as the saying is, it is only fair that I should introduce a matter that affects the welfare of the average working man and woman. It deals with a racket that is being worked in the sale of electrical appliances. I know that in these modern days most homes are equipped with various electrical appliances, such as jugs, toasters, irons, stoves, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and so on, and I hope to see the day in the very near future when every home in Queensland will be fully and completely equipped electrically so that the burden of housework that now falls on the housewife will be considerably reduced, if not entirely eliminated.

Because electrical appliances are so popular and so necessary today, unfortunately many racketeering firms are taking advantage of the demand for them in order to cheat the public, and I use that word quite advisedly. I know that I have only 25 minutes in which to speak, so I will not spend very much of it in a general preamble or in condemnation of the schemes and the rackets that are being worked, but will get to the very gravamen of my case.

I will deal first of all with what is known as the warranty that is given when any electrical implement or appliance is bought on time payment or on hire-purchase agreement and, as is always the case when I speak in this Chamber, I will buttress my arguments with incontrovertible facts and with documents to substantiate them. I will make those documents available, as I always do, to any member of this Committee or of the public who cares to peruse them.

I will deal with a typical case. I could have brought several down. It occurred in Townsville, but I have no doubt that the same racket is worked all over Queensland, and I should not be surprised to be informed that it is worked all over Australia. It is the case of a reputable citizen who bought a refrigerator from a big Townsville firm. The price of the refrigerator—not that the price matters very much—was £146.

The purchasers signed this hire-purchase agreement to pay it off in 24 months at £5 0s. 2d. a month. The warranty is similar to most of these warranties. It reads—

“For a period of five years we will free of charge replace or repair the hermetically sealed system including the Presmetic unit, the evaporator and the condenser and the connexions used therefor, or any part thereof, proved to our satisfaction to be defective in material or workmanship. . . .”

It then goes on with another warranty but the first clause is the warranty with which I wish to deal.

The unit of this refrigerator became defective during the period of the hire-purchase agreement and consequently the firm, in accordance with its warranty, supplied a new unit or, rather, supplied a reconditioned unit to replace the unit that had become faulty. To the astonishment of the hirer, that is, the working woman who bought the refrigerator, she received an account from the firm from which she bought the refrigerator, for £2 4s. 7d. for the cost of the installation of the unit in the refrigerator—the removal of the former unit and the installation of the reconditioned unit. When she went to the firm they say, “Yes, the account is quite in order. We did not guarantee to replace or repair the unit in the refrigerator; but we merely guaranteed to replace or repair the unit, not to install it.” That means if I bought a refrigerator at Camooweal from a firm at Townsville all the firm will do is to supply a unit and I have to pay the cost backwards and forwards. I am just a layman applying my layman’s interpretation to these legal clauses and I should say that any unfortunate person going to buy an electrical appliance and being given such a warranty would automatically think the firm would replace the unit in the refrigerator.

Mr. Nicholson: How long had they had it?

Mr. AIKENS: It was well within the time of the warranty.

Mr. Nicholson: Was it a three-year guarantee?

Mr. AIKENS: It was a five-year guarantee.

Mr. Nicholson: How long had it been installed?

Mr. AIKENS: I do not know but the warranty was for five years. I should be pleased to hear the hon. member explain this matter. The warranty was for five years. I do not know much about legal matters. I am only looking at this from the point of view of the average person who walks in to buy a refrigerator or any other electrical unit and is gulled into a false sense of security by the terms of the warranty. I suggest to the Attorney-General, if it comes within his department, that he should very rigorously tighten up the law with regard to hire-purchase agreements in order to protect the buyer from the deception and this gross form of cheating. It goes on all the time.

I will not develop that argument any further but I do suggest that the Attorney-General should have a look at the law with regard to hire-purchase agreements and see whether he cannot devise some way in which it can be tightened up to protect the purchaser under hire-purchase agreements as they exist at the present time, because at the present time unfortunately he has to pay for the installation of a unit that is covered by a five-year warranty and by the hire-purchase agreement.

It is only to be expected that the Townsville Regional Electricity Board would outdo all private firms in this particular regard but

the Townsville Regional Electricity Board has adopted an attitude that is quite foreign to my conception of ordinary justice and I am informed that it does so under a special order in council gazetted by this Government. When I questioned its officers on their peculiar and monstrous attitude in this regard they said, "You cannot blame us, we have authority from the Government to do it under an order in council."

Take the case of a person who buys an electrical appliance from a private firm. If the purchaser, after having had it for six months or so, found that it was useless and faulty to such a degree that it was of no further use, no matter how much reconditioning and pampering he did with it, he could say to the company, "Take this machine back, you can keep my deposit and instalments, and you can take the machine out of my house, and I will be the loser to the extent of my deposit and instalments." If the firm was dissatisfied it could then take the hirer to law. That is how it should be both to the firm and to the purchaser, but the Townsville Regional Electricity Board does not believe in recourse to law.

There is a case of a man named Stringfellow who lives in Richmond Street who bought a washing machine from the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. It was faulty right from the very start. His wife received a shock from it. They tried to patch it up and he even had his house re-wired, but failing to get it adjusted, and tired of being messed about with it, he said to the board, "Take the machine back; I am willing to forfeit my deposit and all my instalments on the machine, and you can do what you like with it." The Townsville Regional Electricity Board said, "Not on your life; we do not take any machine back; you continue paying your instalments on that faulty, useless and dangerous machine until it is paid off, otherwise we will cut off your light and power from your home." The man's electric light and power account was paid up to date, but he had to bow to the board's decision in order to keep light and power connected with his home. The board said, "We won't go to law; we do not want to be bothered about the law; we don't want to be bothered taking you before a stipendiary magistrate; once you take the machine out of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board's saleroom, whether its condition is good, bad or indifferent, you will pay for it, otherwise we will cut your light and power off."

Mr. Riordan: You do not want us to believe that.

Mr. AIKENS: Perhaps the Minister will believe documentary evidence—a document issued by the Townsville Regional Electricity Board itself.

I am going to give him a much more monstrous case. This is a case of a working woman, Mrs. M. P. Stevenson, 23 Eleventh Avenue, Railway Estate, Townsville. She bought an electric stove from the Townsville Regional Board. It was a satisfactory stove. She had had it for five years, when she found that one of the hot plates was defective, and

she sent to the Townsville Regional Electricity Board to have it replaced. The board sent its employees out and replaced it. While replacing it one of the workmen said, "That is an old-fashioned switch," and messed about with it until it was broken. It was in good order when the workmen came out. In the course of time she received an account on 5th February, 1953. It is here for the Minister's perusal. It stated: Two hours of labour at 12s. 6d. per hour, £1 5s.; transport, four miles, at 1s. 3d., 5s.; one switch—the one they deliberately or carelessly broke, £1 6s. 4d., and then four other items, the total amount being £9 4s. 3d. The working woman, Mrs. Anderson, went into the Townsville Regional Electricity Board and said, "I am quite satisfied with the job you did; I am quite satisfied with the hot plate; I have no other complaints to make but I am not going to pay for the switch that was broken by the carelessness or stupidity of the men, as it was in good order when they came to my house and started to mess about with my stove. They were examining it, acting the goat, and finally broke it." The lady said that she would pay for every other matter but the switch. She was told by the officials of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board that it was true that the switch was broken by the Townsville Regional Electricity Board mechanics. There was no doubt about that. She was told, however, that it was about time the damn thing was broken and that she had had it for the new switch. She said it might have lasted another five years but they said, "It's about time someone broke it," and also, "You pay for the whole amount including the broken switch." She replied, "No." The Minister says he does not believe that reputable men would do this.

As I said, it was on 5 February when she got the first account but what I am about to read is what she received on 28 April. In the meantime she was arguing about her liability to pay for the broken switch. The Townsville Regional Electricity Board did not go to law. It did not say, "O.K., we will sue you, and we will sue you for the amount we consider you owe us for replacing the broken switch"; or "We will go to law and let your case and our case be heard and let the magistrate decide." It did not do that, because it knew the magistrate would throw the Townsville Regional Electricity Board case out of Court and decide in favour of this unfortunate woman.

I hand the Minister these documents with the compliments of myself, Mrs. Stevenson, and every unfortunate person who lives in the Townsville Regional Electricity Board district. This account is the amended account dated 28 April for the same amount "To Home Repairs £9 4s. 3d." A final notice in red is pinned on that reads—

"Your attention is drawn to the attached account for £9 4s. 3d. for services rendered. If payment is not made within twenty-one days of date thereon electricity supply will be disconnected until the amount of the account together with a fee of ten shillings and six pence for reconnection has been paid."

Would the Minister like to have a look at this? This is the sort of thing that goes on in the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. Never mind about the law and going to the courts. These are matters apart and distinct from the supply of electricity to the homes. The electricity account is paid regularly. There is no doubt about that. The other case of Stringfellow's was in connection with a hire-purchase agreement and this is in connection with an account for repairs on which the Townsville Regional Electricity Board could have had recourse to law. In neither case did it go to law. In both instances it said, "Pay what we say you owe or within 21 days we will cut off the light and power from your home."

The Attorney-General is looking at these documents and I think that if he goes into the matter with his legal advisers they will suggest that the law with regard to hire-purchase agreements in general be tightened up to protect the buyer. I know the Attorney-General, with all his little peculiar characteristics, with which we are well acquainted, has in the main the interests of the workers at heart. I know he will have a look into it, no matter what he may say in this Chamber. He might stand up in this Chamber and say, "I do not take any notice of the hon. member."

Mr. Power: In future do not forget to tell to the people what you have said here.

Mr. AIKENS: I do. Come along to one of my Regent meetings, and I should like some of the other Ministers to come too.

I suggest to the Minister for Mines that he have a look at the authority of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board to go outside the law and make a law for itself under which—or under the law they say the Government have made for them—it can say, "We are not going to any court to enforce any claim we make and have the magistrate make a decision but we will issue an account and say, 'Pay up or off goes your electric light and electric current to your home.'"

I have been very temperate in my approach to this matter. I have not used any of the extravagant language I am accused of using from time to time. There are the documents, the facts, and the names. They are there for anyone to see and I do hope that the Ministers concerned will take cognisance of them.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Clayfield) (2.50 p.m.): I should like now to revert to the question of finance for the State and to mention one or two points that have come to my notice in my journeys round the country. I think we are all impressed with our first approach to earning money. If we have earned it the hard way we are careful to save it. As we go on into business we quickly learn that £1 saved is £1 earned, and when I travel round the country and see the large Government undertakings that absorb the greater part of the money of which the Treasurer is custodian I examine them to see to what extent money has been wisely spent and to what extent money has been wasted. This year I have been up to the electorate of the Secretary for Public

Lands and Irrigation and looked at his favourite Nogoia Dam. I also went up to look at Peak Downs in order to get a better knowledge of the venture in which the Queensland Government spent a lot of money. Over the years I have been to a number of irrigation projects because, even though I am a city member, I am very much interested in the development of this State through irrigation. I think the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation appreciates that I never criticise unfairly and that whenever I do, I try to be constructive.

Mr. Foley: You get the wrong slant on things occasionally.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: If the Minister thinks I have the wrong slant in preferring weirs to his spectacular major dams, perhaps I am entitled to my point of view just as he is entitled to his. Of course, the public decide ultimately because they are the people who pay the money.

Reverting to my point that £1 saved is £1 earned, I say that the Treasurer should study that aspect of his finances a little more closely. He is the custodian of our money and as such should be very careful to examine all the ventures on which the respective departments spend money.

Mr. Walsh: Give us something constructive and I will listen to you.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I will. For instance, I have no criticism to offer of our essential services. We know perfectly well that essential services must go on, that their cost is increasing and that this cost must be met, but while the Treasurer wails about the Federal Government's not giving him enough money to spend as Cabinet obviously determines money shall be spent, I think he might examine whether money previously given has been wisely spent or whether some of it could have been saved.

Mr. Walsh: Point out where it could have been saved and where it has not been spent wisely.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I wrote a certain article in reply to something the Acting Premier had to say a little while ago, and I quoted only four instances.

Mr. Walsh: You should have paid me the courtesy of sending me a copy.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: The Treasurer can read the whole story in "The Courier-Mail" of 3 July.

Mr. Walsh: It did not appear in the classified advertisements.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: If the Minister's intelligence stays on the level of classified advertisements I cannot expect him to read the leading and special articles appearing on page 2.

If money is spent on a pointless venture I think it is unwisely spent. I do not like to use the word "wasted" because I think that wherever water is conserved some useful purpose might be made of it. However, one of the most striking illustrations of pointless

spending is to be found in the Dimbulah area when one examines what this Government have spent on ventures that to my mind are impractical. There they started off with a £7,000,000-scheme for a dam on the Walsh River, but because somebody came along and said he had a better idea, after much money had been spent the Government scrapped the scheme and started on a £19,000,000-venture, something that has yet to be proved. As a matter of fact, they have not got all the information yet and the estimate of £19,000,000 is only speculation.

Mr. Foley: You would not expect the same results with a dam and a weir as with two dams?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I appreciate the Minister's defending the proposal he put before the Chamber. The defence is not necessary. The Government, apparently for no other reason than showmanship, put three weirs in the Dimbulah area at a cost of £232,000 to cater, on the Minister's admission, for 32 farmers. This was the limit of their capacity, which means that the Government were willing to build constructions or weirs at a cost of £7,000 or £8,000 per farmer, but they charged the farmer nothing whatever for taking delivery of the water. Was that wise spending? Frankly I think it was money that could have been saved and one weir would have been sufficient if the Government wanted to impress upon the tobacco-growers in the Dimbulah area that the cheapest form of tobacco production was by means of irrigation. The Bruce weir is the best of the three and the less costly of the three and it is the one that serves the greatest number. That weir could have proved what they wanted to prove and in respect of the other weirs I think the expenditure was wasted.

Coming to the other end of Queensland, I have had a lot to say about the Border rivers. The Border Rivers Authority had to urge the Queensland Government to get on with the job of finding out how costly the first weir in the area was going to be. The answer the authority got was that instead of costing the original estimate of £10,000 it was going to cost £103,000 and it was still only a rock-filled timber weir. I feel that some lack of proper supervision is responsible for that terrific expenditure of money on one weir. I know all the circumstances. The Minister may tell me about the floods and the other difficulties but the fact seems to remain that those floods and those difficulties will continue until the New South Wales Government do something.

Mr. Foley: In the building of weirs, that is a risk you have to take.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: I appreciate that, but it seems that the risk has been against the Government in all these things. For example, the risk was against them in the case of the weir at Mundubbera, which cost £172,000 but should have cost only £60,000.

In the case of the Border Rivers Scheme the Queensland Government should be very emphatic in saying to the Border Rivers

Authority, "We will not proceed with one more weir until the New South Wales Government fulfil their responsibility of building a dam that will prevent floods." Flood mitigation is the first duty of the Border Rivers Authority, but it is composed mainly of officials of the New South Wales Government. How could they tell the New South Wales Government where to get off? The Queensland Government, however, are in a different position; they are a partner with the New South Wales Government. Both Governments are supposed to be putting in the same amount of money, half a million pounds each. By the time the Border Rivers Scheme is completed it will be millions of pounds each, not half a million pounds. With all that money available to spend, this partner at least should take a very firm stand with the other partner and say, "Any engineer will tell you that floods will continue to wash away the weirs we have built unless they are controlled by the building of a major dam where it was intended to be built." I think it was at Mingoola.

To my mind, this is one of the matters that the Treasurer, as the custodian of our funds, should put very plainly to the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, or to the Cabinet for that matter. The Minister in charge of the department does not make the only decision as to whether these major projects will proceed; it must obviously be a Cabinet decision, and the Treasurer must look to the whole Cabinet for a direction as to what money shall be allocated for each project.

And so, Sir, an opportunity is available, when we are asking the Committee to approve of this appropriation, to warn the Treasurer and the Cabinet to conduct the business of Government just as if they were the owners of a private business. They would expect to save money where it could be saved, they would expect to spend every penny wisely and they would expect to continue in business. Unless they carried out those principles of business, they would be bankrupt before very long. But this is the public's money. The Government do not go insolvent because of the mistakes they make; they get more money.

The continual cry of this Government is, "Why do not the Federal Government give us more money?" Surely they must appreciate that the Federal Government have already investigated some of these ventures? I am not going to discuss those other ventures at any length; I do not wish to. I rose merely to give a warning to the Treasurer that the finances of this State are not being handled in the businesslike fashion of a private company, because the responsibility of earning the money or of getting it is not that of the Cabinet. If every member of the Cabinet was responsible for making sure he got the cash in before he spent it, I think the spending of the money would be carried out in the wisest possible way. I wished to make these few comments to let the Treasurer know that we feel very strongly about wasteful spending, pointless spending, and even reckless spending.

Mr. BROSAN (Fortitude Valley) (3.5 p.m.): I rise because of inferences, insinuations and actual accusations by the hon. member for Mundingburra, on the matter of repairs to an electrical appliance in the home of a person in Townsville. I draw the attention of hon. members again to the hypocrisy of this hon. member who poses as the real friend of the worker, the trade-unionist, and, as he calls them, the real people, the working-class people. In other circumstances I should say it would be the case of a new broom sweeping clean, but he would not know, whether it was new or old, how to sweep clean. On this occasion he maligns trade-unionists so that he can have some further acts for his political circus, which he calls a meeting, so that he can have something to put to the people and say, "Look what I did!" He stands here and says that good unionists deliberately broke a switch by their stupidity, meddling and carelessness. This paragon of virtue attempts to say that these men, who are required by an Act of this State to hold a certificate, are meddling, stupid and careless, and his authority is an unskilled person, a person without knowledge, the householder in question.

Mr. Aikens: The woman who owned the stove?

Mr. BROSAN: That is right, the woman who owned the stove. What electrical knowledge would she have? What authority would she have to say that these people meddled or were stupid? If the reference to stupidity was to the hon. member I should agree with the good woman and so would every other hon. member. This hon. member who poses as the friend of the worker says, "I am for the worker," but he only wants to gain a political point against his opponents, the Labour Party. He stands up here and has his remarks recorded in "Hansard" so that he can go to his circus, which he calls a meeting, and read from "Hansard" to good solid trade-unionists without fear of any action being taken against him.

Mr. Walsh: He should read your speech too.

Mr. BROSAN: Of course he should, but he would not have the courage to do it. Yesterday he quoted the advice I gave him and said he would do battle at a time and date and on a subject matter of his choosing. He has challenged Cabinet Ministers to go to his meetings—I'll accept his challenge and go to his meeting and even pay my own fare. Let him suit himself—he can choose his own weapons.

Mr. Walsh: You will embarrass him.

Mr. BROSAN: Nothing would give me more satisfaction.

Mr. Aikens: You know that I am a very sensitive soul?

Mr. BROSAN: I know that the hon. member is sensitive, but if he would shift over a bit he would not be quite so sensitive. He has made an accusation against men who are required to serve an apprenticeship

and obtain a certificate of efficiency in order to earn a livelihood. His accusation jeopardises their livelihood and their tickets, and if his accusation could be substantiated before the Electrical Workers Board the men concerned could be deprived of their tickets, and thus be denied the opportunity of earning their livelihood in the trade. I repeat that for the benefit of the hon. member for Ballyhoo, I mean the hon. member for Mundingburra, so that he can stand upon the stump—not the one on which he took the poison—and scream his head off, but he should remember he is attacking good Trade Unionists. He will say anything at all in this Chamber.

I am no authority on the warranty question. Therefore, I would not get up in this Chamber and debate something I did not know about, but the hon. member for Mundingburra has no such scruple. He got up and "blew his top" about a warranty that was elucidated and explained in a few minutes by the hon. member for Murrumba. We know how the hon. member for Mundingburra questioned the warranty and made a fuss about it, yet when we had it elucidated by an hon. member familiar with the subject we found everything was in order. The warranty provides that for one year the purchaser will get his replacements and service and that for five years he will get his replacements but for the remaining four years he must pay for all labour costs.

Mr. Aikens: It does not provide for anything of the sort.

Mr. BROSAN: The warranty speaks for itself. That is why the hon. member for Murrumba asked him such a pertinent question—how long was it since the machine was installed? The warranty distinctly provides that labour costs must be paid by the purchaser after the first year. In that case there is nothing that the Attorney-General can do about the matter—not that he would take much notice of the outburst of the hon. member for Mundingburra, but in his usual efficient way he is willing to inquire into every well-founded complaint. In this particular case the Minister need not be troubled with the emanations from the broom cupboard.

Mr. CROWLEY (Cairns) (3.12 p.m.): I was surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Clayfield concerning the very important irrigation project that is being carried out at Dimbulah. In fact, it is one of the greatest irrigation schemes that are being carried on by any Government in Australia. Hon. members opposite are always crying out for the Government to settle men in the back country, but when the Government launch a project that has that purpose for its objective and do a good job its members rise and condemn the scheme without acquiring a first-hand knowledge of it. The hon. member for Clayfield has been going about the State for several years posing as an irrigation expert. I am sure that in his own mind he realises that the dams being presently constructed at Dimbulah are for the purpose of giving immediate relief to the

settlers living close to the project itself. When the full scheme is completed it will serve many farmers in the area on the highlands. In fact, it will do a great job not only for closer settlement in that area and the development of that part of the State but it will have a marked effect on the economy of Queensland. Those people already settled in the Dimbulah area are doing a good job and are well pleased with the work the Government are doing. It is not right therefore that people who do not understand the project should condemn it. Both the Minister and the Government are engaged in a mighty irrigation job in the Dimbulah area that will react on the prosperity of Queensland.

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) (3.14 p.m.): As is usual, an Appropriation Bill has been brought down by the Treasurer at the beginning of the first session of this new Parliament. We on this side of the Chamber are quite appreciative of the fact that it is essential for any Government to have the funds they require to enable them to carry out their policy for the development of the State, therefore the Opposition have no desire to delay the passage of the Bill. However, we should be lacking in our responsibilities to the people who elect us if we did not choose this occasion to make a few remarks about observations we have made during the period between the times when the last Parliament went into recess and the new Parliament was elected.

The Treasurer, in introducing the Bill, followed the course of previous Treasurers namely, sought some clothes line on which to hang his washing, in order to distract attention from the actions of his Government.

Mr. Walsh: He has an open book.

Mr. CHALK: I know the Minister has an open book. I am certain he has. I do not want to think his book is closed, but the point I want to make is this: that the Treasurer on this occasion has followed the line of former Labour Treasurers in this Parliament. We on this side were quite certain that on this occasion he would attack the Federal Government. We had no doubts about it, realising from his past performances over the years that he would come into this Committee and refer immediately to what he terms the niggardly treatment of the Menzies-Fadden Government to the State Labour Government. Although some of the things the Menzies-Fadden Government have done may not have appealed to the Treasurer of Queensland and his followers, these actions were taken in the best interests of the whole of the Commonwealth. I resent the hon. gentleman's referring to members of the Opposition this morning as anti-Queenslanders. We are not anti-Queenslanders.

Mr. Walsh: Of course you are.

Mr. CHALK: We are Queenslanders but not politically biased as are the hon. gentleman and many of his followers. The Treasurer should remember that Queensland is part of the Commonwealth. I agree that Queensland has to be developed, just as other parts of the Commonwealth have to be developed, but

during the last Senate election we found evidence that Queenslanders were beginning to realise that although the medicine that was administered by the Menzies-Fadden Government was given to clean up the mess left by the Government of the late Messrs. Chifley and Curtin, some of the medicine was essential and has made for the development of Queensland. The Treasurer cannot deny that. We had evidence of it in the last Senate elections. I repeat that the difference between the Treasurer's view on the development of Queensland and that which we on this side hold is the Treasurer's political bias towards the Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. Walsh: Are you including the hon. member for Warwick?

Mr. CHALK: Whatever the hon. member for Warwick has had to say, at least he was prepared, when the position was fully explained to him, to admit that he was wrong. That is more than the hon. gentleman has done today. The Treasurer goes to Canberra with a mind that is politically warped. It may be a sound mind so far as his ideas of development of the State are concerned, but it is a mind that is politically warped and consequently to mention Mr. Menzies or Sir Arthur Fadden to him is just as bad as mentioning the Communists.

That is the point I make. I hope the hon. gentleman yesterday listened to the two maiden speeches in this House.

Mr. Walsh: I was making one at the Local Authorities Conference.

Mr. CHALK: If the hon. gentleman was attending a Local Authorities Conference then I say quite fairly that he was doing quite right. I believe the local authorities of Queensland are very concerned about the development of the State. They are holding a conference in Brisbane and the hon. gentleman was doing right in attending it. But let me suggest to him that he read the speeches made yesterday by the hon. members for Condamine and Nash.

Mr. Aikens: We heard it. There is no need to repeat it.

Mr. CHALK: I have no intention of repeating the speech of the member for Condamine, but it would be good also for the hon. member for Mundingburra if he took some notice of it. I am not attempting at the moment to develop the speech that was delivered yesterday but I am trying to point out that it was a reasonable and well-balanced speech although I do not agree with all that was said in it. The second speaker yesterday, the hon. member for Nash, delivered a typically Labour speech and gave a typical example of the attitude adopted by the Treasurer when he goes to Canberra. I suggest to the Treasurer that when next he goes to Canberra he take the advice of the new hon. member for Condamine.

Throughout the past 12 months the Treasurer has cried that this State has no money. He has endeavoured to mislead the people of Queensland into believing that Queensland is just about broke, and that

those who have been responsible for that state of affairs are the present Federal Government, but the hon. member for Fassifern proved conclusively this morning that Queensland received more money in the past 12 months than ever before in the history of the State, and I challenge the Treasurer to deny that.

Mr. Walsh: I never deny facts.

Mr. CHALK: I am pleased to have from the Treasurer the admission that Queensland has received from the Menzies-Fadden Government more money than was ever made available to this State by any other Government. That is something that the people of Queensland should be told because we heard the Treasurer saying repeatedly during the recent election campaign—and he has been supported by the Acting Premier—that this is the worst time we have ever experienced and that the sole cause of it is the Commonwealth Government. Now the Treasurer admits that at least he got more money.

Mr. Walsh: And had to spend more.

Mr. CHALK: Why has he had to spend more?

Mr. Walsh: Because of the inflation brought about by the Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. CHALK: I knew the Treasurer would put up the inflation bogey. He has had to spend more simply because of the colossal extravagance of the scatterbrained schemes that the present Labour Government have been undertaking in this State. There is no need to enumerate them this afternoon. The people of Queensland know all about Peak Downs, the prefabricated housing contracts and the tremendous amount of money that has been spent by the Railway Department. I admit that much of the money spent by the Railway Department has been rightly expended, but what has been done to stop extravagance within that and many other departments of the State? It is no use the Acting Premier going to the Ipswich Railway Workshops, as he did a few days ago, and telling the employees there to do up the top buttons of their shirts, put their caps on straight, polish up their engines, and then, as a soothing pill, saying, "Boys, if you do these things I assure you that you will not lose your jobs."

Mr. Morris: Who said that?

Mr. CHALK: The Minister for Transport at the Ipswich Railway Workshops last week. That was the text of his address.

Mr. Aikens: To whom did he say it?

Mr. CHALK: To the railway employees. Why does he not face up to the responsibility of ensuring that there is a fair return for the money the Government pay to these men? I say advisedly that Queensland must be concerned not with the amount of money but with the service we receive in return for that money. There are too many schemes in hand for the development of Queensland and these can be responsible for the unsound financial position of this State, particularly in the years ahead of us.

We have also heard the Treasurer on numerous occasions speaking about the shortage of money and how the financial position affects local authorities and other bodies. I put it to that hon. gentleman that what is vital to the State is not how much money he is getting from Canberra but the service he gets in return. Unfortunately in Queensland we have too many schemes that are only partly finished. Instead of putting up one or two good schemes for the development of the State we have Ministers going throughout Queensland talking of development here and there, laying foundation stones here and there, and turning a sod somewhere else and then moving off, and finally when they arrive at the colossal sum that will be required, what do they do? They even "dingo" on soldier settlement and say, "We are sorry we have not got the money for it" when they know very well all the money was provided for it, but they spent it elsewhere.

I want to sound a word of warning, that whilst we on this side of the Chamber may be fewer in number than we were in the last session, we feel that the people of Queensland are beginning to realise that this hoodwinking of them as has been carried out by the Labour Government, over the years, must come to an end. The people will find out during the next three years that whilst we may be in depleted numbers we are still fighting in the interests of Queensland and ultimately we shall win through and prove to Queenslanders that the Government who have been in office for so long have been the ruination of the State rather than an advantage to the State.

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) (3.28 p.m.): I rise to reply to some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Clayfield in connection with irrigation matters and to point out to the Chamber that there is no need to make a plea to the Treasurer to watch the expenditure on irrigation in this State. I can assure that hon. member that the Treasurer keeps in close touch with the expenditure in virtually every department and does not hesitate to stand Ministers up for an explanation if he finds it necessary to do so.

The policy in this State with regard to irrigation is only now gradually developing. In recent years, with no engineering or technical staff available, we made an attempt to carry out some sort of a policy to conserve water and we started, naturally, with the smaller streams and small weirs. The hon. member for Clayfield stands for construction of small weirs throughout the State. The Government are not going to cut out completely the construction of small weirs in various parts of Queensland but, as I pointed out in a broadcast some little time ago, so far as the cost of conservation per acre-foot is concerned the cost of the small weir is out of all proportion to that of the big dams we have in view in various parts of the State. Some of the small weirs have cost £200 an acre-foot and it is naturally difficult to get any sort of return over a long number of years when costs are as high as that. The average cost of the

small weirs that have been constructed to date works out at somewhere in the vicinity of £45 an acre-foot. At the Tinaroo Falls dam, which is part of the big Mareeba-Dimbulah scheme, our engineers tell us that their costs are as low as £25 an acre-foot. In the case of a bigger project again—the Burdekin River dam—they tell us that costs will be reduced to £3 an acre-foot of water conserved. Can you wonder, therefore, that the engineers advise us that we should go in for the bigger projects rather than the smaller ones?

There has been no question of showmanship about our irrigation works. The hon. member referred to an alteration in the plans for the Mareeba-Dimbulah scheme. It is true that Mr. Lang, a very talented engineer from the South, was engaged to organise our staff and to make an attempt to speed up irrigation works in this State. In his scheme it was necessary to construct two large dams and quite a number of small diversion weirs. However, Mr. Lang was invited by the engineer in charge of the Snowy River scheme to go down there and help him. A better offer was made to him than we could make, with the result that he left Queensland. We then used the services of a very experienced engineer in the person of Mr. Nimmo. He examined the whole scheme; he knew it, because he had worked on it for periods prior to Mr. Lang's looking at it. Mr. Nimmo advised us that he could do the job with one dam on the Tinaroo Falls site and a big weir on the Walsh River. That shows the difference between the opinions of two engineers to whom we looked for advice. Mr. Nimmo's proposal was the cheaper and we accepted it. The whole matter was explained when I introduced the motion seeking permission to go on with that scheme. It is useless for a layman, such as the hon. member for Clayfield, to argue whether these things are right or whether they are wrong. To a great extent we must leave such matters to engineers.

And now we come to the Border Rivers Scheme. The hon. member has visited that place, and so have I. I admit that he has taken a very keen interest in what we are doing in this State—he has visited almost all the sites where we have attempted irrigation and has got all the information obtainable—but as I pointed out a short while ago by way of interjection, he does at times get a wrong slant on the position. A little while ago we estimated that we could build the Bonshaw Weir at a figure that was much below the actual cost. What happened? When an engineer starts to construct a dam he has to take certain risks with floods. As a matter of fact, we are taking those risks now in the construction of the Burdekin Gorge Weir. We are speeding the work up as much as possible. We are pouring concrete in as fast as we can, not knowing when the Burdekin River will come down in flood and destroy much of the auxiliary work that has already been done. That is what happened in the case of the Bonshaw Weir. We had a series of piles almost across the river and were waiting for timber to bind them so that they would hold against any reasonable flood, but the water came down before we

could bind them and virtually all the piles were washed downstream and in many cases smashed to pieces. The result was that virtually the whole of the work had to be done over again at a time when our costs were much higher than when we began.

You cannot blame this Government for increased costs generally. When the Curtin Government were in power they introduced a scheme that stabilised the prices in Australia over a period of three years. No-one can argue against that statement; the price level between 1943 and 1947 varied by only 11 points. But what has happened since? Prices have been allowed to run away and costs generally have increased. The cost of all items of material has increased and every motor-driver and indeed every tradesman we employ has to be paid increased wages. Our costs were increased first because of the mishap arising from the flood and secondly by the general increase, for which the Government cannot be held responsible.

The hon. member argued that we should have built the big dam first but what was to happen in the meantime? What was to happen to the farmer in the interim? Do hon. members realise that investigations were made and designs prepared over a period of ten years before work was begun on the Eildon Dam in Victoria and, indeed, the investigation and designing are going on at the present time in connection with the Mingoola Dam? At the moment New South Wales engineers are working on the Mingoola Dam plans but we thought it was good policy in the meantime to proceed with the construction of the smaller weirs to give the farmers some security and at the same time enable us to determine whether the irrigation of the soil would lead to success in the growing of tobacco and other crops. That experience and knowledge will be of undoubted value to us. These are things that you must take into consideration if one is to be fair.

In addition to the increased cost in respect of the weir to which I have referred, there are also increased costs in other directions. However, we should take into account the indirect benefits to be obtained in greater production, in increased population and other factors associated with irrigation, which must be a great advantage to the State. In this respect we cannot point to a monetary balance sheet and prove that we have balanced the ledger but we can look at the matter from the point of view of the indirect benefit to be obtained. For instance, we must consider the increased revenue that will flow to both the Commonwealth and State Governments indirectly because of the greater production, the increased population and the greater wealth generally. Looking at the matter from that point of view no-one can condemn the projects that have been launched by this Government so far. We have not, as the hon. member suggested, thrown overboard our policy of smaller weirs. We have a number under construction at the present time, and we propose to go on with the bigger projects too because our engineers favour them because of the lower cost per acre-foot in the conservation of water. Consequently

we will proceed with our five big projects, the Border Rivers Scheme, the Dawson, the Nogoia, the Burdekin and the Mareeba-Dimbulah schemes. When we have completed them, assuming we receive generous assistance from the Commonwealth supplemented by our own resources, the food problem that we hear so much about will be virtually solved. We can by developing half of the total area that will be served by these projects, under fodder production, turn off over 1,100,000 steers every year, not to mention fat lambs and other products. That will virtually solve our food problem in Australia, which our food statisticians are so much concerned about.

When one tackles the problem of irrigation and criticises various projects he must do so from the broad point of view, taking into consideration all the governing factors together with the risks being undertaken by the engineers and mounting costs for which the Government are not responsible, and if that is done I feel sure that we shall come out trumps.

Mr. LLOYD ROBERTS (Whitsunday) (3.41 p.m.): At the opening of the 32nd Parliament an Appropriation Bill was introduced for amounts aggregating £18,000,000. At that time I thought the amount very high, but each succeeding year it has grown and grown until today the Bill we are considering seeks to make provision for a sum of £44,000,000. That shows that in a 3-year period our appropriations have increased by over 100 per cent. Everyone will agree that even though there has been a considerable rise in expenditure the increase this Bill asks for has not been justified. I suggest that as the proposed expenditure is not wholly along productive lines it is a big contributing factor to the present inflationary trend.

The speech by the hon. member for Rockhampton amused me. I realise that he is getting on in years and that consequently he might wander a bit. I believe he did so when he blamed the Menzies-Fadden Government for the increase in interest rates. He more than any other hon. member should know that that is incorrect, that the question of interest rates is handled by the Loan Council which consists of the Premiers of the various States and on most occasions when the Premiers attend that conference the State Treasurers accompany them. It is not therefore a mistake when the hon. member makes a statement like that. He knows better. His statement was made purely with the idea of misleading the people or, as I said previously, because the years are catching up with him.

No Government in the whole of Australia have a more unenviable record in the imposition of taxation than the Queensland Government. We know that uniform taxation has been in operation in Australia for some time, but notwithstanding that fact, if the Government find any little avenue that can return something in taxation they plunge into it boots and all. We all know the income they get from the taxation on transport—railways,

road and air. I do not know of any other Government in Australia who tax air transport.

We know of the increase in valuation pushed onto land so that the land tax will be lifted to a larger amount. Last but not least is the heavy motor-vehicle registration fee. This is another tax and when recently I heard a rumour that it was the intention of this Government to place a tax on push bicycles I said "I don't believe it; that will pull them up," but knowing of their past performances I should not be surprised if it was the intention of this Government to tax push bicycles. I know that they already are taxing what virtually amounts to a push bicycle. An old-age pensioner has a push bicycle that I do not suppose would be worth more than £5 or £6. On the front wheel he has attached a little Berini engine, 32 c.c., approximately one-third h.p. It does 185 miles to the gallon and its top speed would be about 12 to 15 miles an hour. This old chap rides along the road at maybe 5 miles an hour. I really believe that a person could walk faster than he rides on the push bicycle but he is compelled to pay £2 5s. for registration, plus 7s. 6d. for a driver's licence, plus compulsory third-party insurance to about £2 12s. 6d., bringing the total to over £5. This old-age pensioner has to pay this to ride along the road when perhaps he is physically incapable of walking the distance. This is not hearsay. I have not the slightest doubt that this rumour that it is the intention of this Government to tax push bicycles will become a reality in the very near future.

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer) (3.48 p.m.): I really do not know that I have much to reply to. I have heard nothing very constructive from the Opposition. I did think I should at least have had a few remarks from them that would have helped me in formulating the Budget that I will eventually present to this House. Always I listen very carefully to constructive suggestions that are made but as usual they have come from the Government benches.

The pettifogging argument we have just listened to from the hon. member for Whitsunday seemed to cast some reflection on a gentleman who has rendered very good service to the community. He has been a member of this Parliament since 1912, with the exception of a short break of three years. If the mind of the hon. member for Whitsunday is as clear and if he can render such good service to the community as has the hon. member for Rockhampton has rendered and is still rendering today he will have something to be very proud of. I know of few men who show greater loyalty and greater consideration and it ill becomes any member, the hon. member for Whitsunday or any other, to refer to the declining years of the hon. member for Rockhampton. My only hope is that when I reach his age I am as active in mind and body as he is.

Government Members: Hear! hear!

Mr. WALSH: I followed the movements of the hon. member for Toowoong very closely, knowing that he has a mind that can be applied to figures and that he has at least the capacity to dissect them intelligently on some occasions, if not all. I have noticed that he has very astutely stayed out of this debate because he knows full well that he has not yet reached the stage in the deliberations of Parliament when he can make an intelligent approach to the financial position of the State. Of course, we can understand the action of the hon. member for Fassifern, who has been in several clashes with the hon. member for Warwick recently, despite all the protestations from the other side. I thought I might have had the opportunity of witnessing that incident in this Chamber and I was prepared to act as second for one of them.

The hon. member for Fassifern would tumble into this thing and start to dabble in things about which he knows very little. If he had been speaking about butter, pigs, pumpkins or potatoes, we would have listened because we have a great respect for his views on rural matters. We have that respect because we know that at least he has had some experience in these things but, with all due respect, and having regard to my own limited knowledge of finance, I suggest that he should be very wary about stepping into a discussion of the matters he mentioned today.

The hon. member for Fassifern referred to the Queensland Central Executive of the Australian Labour Party and he really flattered me when he said I had the capacity to influence the movements of a body on which trade-union officials and representatives, men who work and live in a very hard atmosphere, men of great experience who are not likely to be pushed about at the beck and call of the Johnnie-come-latelies like myself, predominate. He has mentioned pressure by the Queensland Central Executive on the Government. That has never happened in my experience, and I have been associated with them for a long time. I do remember, however, that in about 1948 the then hon. member for Windsor, Mr. Bruce Pie, took it upon himself to challenge the validity of an agreement that had been entered into by the then leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Hiley, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Nicklin, in connection with the question of salaries. Even though I was not a member of this Assembly I do remember that during the luncheon adjournment Mr. Bruce Pie got in touch with the executive of the Queensland People's Party and insisted that the executive of that party should take the matter out of the hands of the Liberal Party in this Parliament, that it should dictate policy and that Mr. Hiley should no longer honour an agreement he had entered into with the Premier of the day.

Mr. Muller: Is that where you got the idea from?

Mr. WALSH: Never mind about where we got the idea. The point is that it becomes the hon. member to raise this question when he knows full well that there is more dictation to his own party and to the Liberal Party from outside influences than ever existed in the Labour Party. Day by day big

interests, financial and other, are determining the policy his party must follow. We see instances of that frequently when important measures are brought down for discussion here. On those occasions we see vested interests frequenting the lobbies of the House and handing instructions to hon. members opposite from time to time. We saw that frequently in the days when Mr. Bruce Pie was here. Often we saw him coming in with briefs that had been carefully prepared by people outside the House and I suggest that the hon. member for Fassifern and his colleagues would do well not to raise that phase of activity.

The Government have never submitted to the dictates of any outside body but have always conformed to the policy of the Australian Labour Party platform, which the public know full well. It is in printed form and is available for them to read and every three years when the party goes to the electors the people know what they are voting for.

Mr. Morris interjected.

Mr. WALSH: I have never run away from our socialistic policy in Queensland because when I look round me I see that we have the best hospital system of any State in Australia, one that is unequalled in any part of Australia. And, what is more, we have the word of noted experts from abroad in Dr. J. R. Paterson and his wife, the cancer research experts, who were invited to come to Queensland. They originally went to New South Wales to report on the establishment of a cancer research clinic in that State. We invited them to Queensland they told the Government that they had seen the best cancer clinic in the Southern Hemisphere in this State.

Mr. Morris: Nonsense!

Mr. WALSH: Of course, the hon. member wants to deny the statement of a man and woman whose opinions we respect. In addition, when I see that under Labour's policy our butter and bacon factories, with the exception of one, are co-operative factories and that 50 per cent. of our wheat and flour-milling capacity is co-operatively owned, why should I run away from our socialistic policy? So far as Socialism in this State is concerned, every phase of our activities has been accepted by the people of Queensland since 1915, with the exception of one three-year period. I do not want to waste my time on the unintelligent approach made by the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha to these things. I have respect for the judgment of the electors of Queensland, because they are the people who have supported the Socialist policy of this Government over the years.

However, although those are very interesting sidelines, there are a few points that I intend to put on record that the hon. members for Fassifern and Mt. Coot-tha will not relish. As usual, I shall stick to facts and quote my authorities, unlike some hon. members opposite who get up and make all sorts of wild statements, some no doubt because of their ignorance of the actual facts and some because probably they do not mean them. I am generous enough to say that.

The hon. member for Fassifern asked me a question yesterday and I told him that if he dealt with the matter today during the course of the debate on this Bill and explained what he really meant I should have a better opportunity of determining what answer he required. If the hon. member wants to write the answer out for me, I will have a look at it and see whether it is the answer I should give. Probably that is what he wants me to do. Very good. Although he spent a very brief time on the substance of his question I am not much further ahead, but I have gleaned from his remarks that he has got somewhat tangled up with the three different funds that operate within the structure of public finance. As the hon. member for Toowong fully appreciates, there is a Consolidated Revenue Fund, Trust and Special Funds, and the Loan Fund.

Mr. Muller: I am aware of that.

Mr. WALSH: Why the hon. member would want to concentrate on the Trust Funds and quote a figure to show that £4,000,000 less has been spent than was actually authorised by this Parliament, I do not know, especially when he was making out a case to show that we had such generous treatment from the Menzies-Fadden Government. The treatment that we received from the Menzies-Fadden Government in the way of financial contributions can be seen in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, in which the taxation reimbursements are included.

Mr. Muller: I mentioned those things.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member mentioned that, but he is getting all his funds tangled up. The Trust and Special Funds have nothing to do with the Menzies-Fadden Government. They are our own revenues. They are revenues that we have earned in this State and have set aside under various headings.

Mr. Morris: They are the funds you have conserved because of the generosity of the Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member had better save himself. If he proceeds to argue along those lines he will merely disclose his utter stupidity.

The hon. member for Fassifern went on to say—and I am subject to correction here—that the increase in wages was something like 65 per cent.

Mr. Muller: That is so.

Mr. WALSH: The overall wage increase is not a factor to be considered when dealing with our revenue expenditure. The 65 per cent. the hon. member quoted as the increase in the basic wage, and so on, may represent one side of it but there are other sides to be examined. I invite the hon. member again to study the documents that are placed before the Chamber. If he examines carefully the Financial Statement that I brought down last year he will see set out under the various headings the increases that took place during the previous 12 months in interest, sinking-fund, wages, and other expenditure. One thing that the hon.

member has overlooked is that the interest rate, having been increased almost, I should say, at the direction of the Commonwealth Government—

Mr. Morris: You said "almost."

Mr. WALSH: I will give the hon. member the story. When it is remembered that the interest rate was 3½ per cent, when the Chifley Labour Government were in power and that it is 4½ per cent. under the present Federal Government—

Mr. Muller: Why was it increased?

Mr. WALSH: I will tell the hon. member why. When it is realised that the interest rate has been increased to that extent, hon. members opposite should be at least intelligent enough to know that that is another charge against the revenue of this State.

Mr. Muller: We are aware of all these things.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member, by the very nature of the question that he asked, obviously did not disclose his awareness of these things.

Mr. Kerr: You disclose what your own unspent Trust and Special Funds balances are.

Mr. WALSH: Here is the expert auditor from Sherwood coming in! He is asking me to disclose what the unspent balances are when the farmer from Fassifern has already told him that the figure is £4,120,000. If the hon. member for Sherwood will look up the page of the Estimates—I think it is page 115—he will see that approximately £41,000,000 was authorised by this Parliament in the various trust funds, and he will see what the balance is. The farmer from Fassifern has told the expert auditor from Sherwood what the position is.

Mr. Muller: At least the farmer from Fassifern is honest. You are not.

Mr. WALSH: I will take that interjection as one made not in an insulting way. If I did take it as being made in an insulting way I should say something insulting in reply.

The fact is that the hon. member for Fassifern has endeavoured to get away from the charge that has been made against the Menzies-Fadden Government of niggardly treatment of this State, by going back to 1910.

Mr. Muller: You went there; I didn't.

Mr. WALSH: I never mentioned 1910 up to this minute.

Mr. Muller: You never mentioned it, but the fact remains that you were referring to it.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member tried to impress on the Committee that this was something that had been going on for the last

40 years and there was nothing new about it. The hon. member should know that Section 96 of the Commonwealth Constitution provided that until 1910 special grants were to be given to those States that were supposed to suffer certain disabilities because of federation, and that cannot be denied. It was to be continued after 1910 until otherwise ordered by the Parliament of the Commonwealth. I suggest that the hon. member should look at the Constitution and see whether that is right or wrong.

Mr. Muller: That is right.

Mr. WALSH: We have reached a stage in our development when the States that were supposed to suffer a disability because of Federation are now far ahead of Queensland in industrial development. Last year, or perhaps it was the year before, I quoted from the Budget Speech of Mr. Playford, the Premier of South Australia, in which he said that he expected that as from then they would no longer require any assistance from the Commonwealth Government. Those are not my words, those are the words of Mr. Thomas Playford, the Liberal Country Party Leader in South Australia. He made it quite clear that they had reached the stage of development when they would no longer depend upon the Commonwealth for further assistance, but they still get the overall contributions and Commonwealth grant, which is approximately £8 a head more than this State gets.

Mr. Muller: That is another matter.

Mr. WALSH: Of course, the hon. member would say that is another matter, but he cannot get away from the facts because they are found in the various official documents presented to the Federal House itself. Then we have Western Australia, with its population centralised in a very small area, and here again we find that up to the end of June 1952—I have not got later figures—Western Australia was receiving £12 a head more than this State in overall Commonwealth contributions. They got more than that. The combined tax reimbursements and special grant amounted to about £23 a head compared with £11 17s. 0d. in Queensland. The hon. member for Fassifern, the Acting Leader of the Opposition, can argue whichever way he likes, but he cannot get away from those figures. They are there. They are not the figures quoted by Sir Arthur Fadden and his supporters. It would be futile for me to argue that the tax reimbursements remitted to the States are not greater today than they were two, three or five years ago. Of course they are. But the comparison I want to make is what Queensland is receiving and what is remitted to the other States of Australia, and the comparison I want to make, too, is the amount of revenue collected today by the Menzies-Fadden Government in both direct and indirect taxation compared with that collected by the Chifley Labour Government. If we do that we get a better picture of what Queensland is getting and we can decide whether this State is getting its fair share.

Mr. Morris: So long as you give the percentage spent on social services too.

Mr. WALSH: I will willingly oblige the hon. member. Whether the case is for or against this party we have always stated it quite openly. Social services have come into the picture. That was one of the points made by the hon. member for Fassifern when he referred to the introduction of old-age pensions. He contended that those social services had been introduced by anti-Labour Governments. I suppose to a point he is technically correct.

Mr. Muller: And in every other way correct.

Mr. WALSH: I am glad the hon. member made that observation because I will prove it to be otherwise and in this particular case I shall have to quote my authority, so that there will be no doubt about it. I commend to the hon. member for Fassifern and his colleagues the book "Australia's Awakening" written by W. G. Spence. From that book the hon. member will get quite a lot of information concerning the early struggles of the political Labour and industrial pioneers of this great Australian Commonwealth. I do know that at that time Alfred Deakin was in power as a Liberal Prime Minister. There was then a combination somewhat similar to what we have in the Opposition today, but they were termed Conservatives and Liberals. The Labour Party then was just about coming into the political picture because of the great industrial struggles of the 90's. We find that the so-called Liberal Government in effect included the Conservative Party and that it did have in its programme and platform certain progressive measures. The late Sir Samuel Griffith and others were responsible for quite a number of reforms. About that time the Labour Party made an approach to the late Mr. Alfred Deakin. He was a man by the way, who did not seek or accept titles and honours. That approach came when the Conservatives were not prepared to line up with him in regard to certain measures he submitted. The Labour Party pointed out to the late Mr. Deakin that it was not prepared to support him unless certain of their conditions were complied with. An unusual happening in Australian political history occurred then, when a written alliance took place between the political party of which the late Alfred Deakin was the leader, on the one hand and the Labour Party on the other hand. They entered into a written alliance whereby the Labour Party would give support to Alfred Deakin to continue in office as Prime Minister if he carried out certain reforms that were put up to him at that time by the Australian Labour Party. So that there will be no doubt about it I would refer the hon. member for Fassifern to page 390 of W. G. Spence's book "Australia's Awakening," which is to be found in the Parliamentary Library. That book reveals that negotiations took place between two sections in the Commonwealth Parliament, the Labour Party on the one hand and the party led by the late Alfred Deakin on the other. The book proceeds to say—

"The alliance was in writing, and was agreed to at a joint meeting of the two parties held on 7 September, 1904."

Seventeen conditions are enumerated. Included in the general platform that was part of the alliance, was condition No. 15 which stated—

“Old Age Pensions on a basis fair and equitable to the several States and to individuals.”

If the hon. member has any doubt about my interjection this morning that the Liberal Party at that time was forced to introduce that measure he now has it on authority that there was a written alliance and it was a condition of support from the Labour Party that old-age pensions should be introduced. On 24 June, 1903, Mr. King O'Malley asked Sir Edmund Barton, the then Prime Minister, whether in view of the large surplus of Commonwealth revenue shown by him the day before, would he immediately bring in a Bill to establish a system of national old-age pensions. The reply was to the effect that the surplus went to the States and to do it would lead to the financial embarrassment of the States and anyhow there was not sufficient. It can be seen that the Labour Party can take credit for the introduction of old-age pensions; similarly it can take the credit for the introduction of workers' compensation in Queensland.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. WALSH: Despite the fact there may have been a Tory Government in power it was at the behest of the Labour force in this Chamber that workers' compensation was introduced into this State.

Mr. Muller: Look at the record right down the line and see the increases made from time to time by the Country-Liberal Party.

Mr. WALSH: Our record is so good that I will not run away from it. I am prepared to give hon. members the story of the growth of social services. I realise that from 1931 to 1941, 10 years of continuity of anti-Labour Governments, no progress was made in the establishment of further social services, with the exception of child endowment. Child endowment in 1941 followed the measure introduced by the so-called Lang Labour Government in New South Wales prior to that date.

Mr. Muller: The greatest increase on record has been brought about by the Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. WALSH: I am always only too happy to accommodate the hon. member and I will give him dates, figures and everything else in regard to social services, if he wants this information.

The hon. member for Lockyer referred to the mess that Curtin and Chifley left this country in. What a tragic statement!

Mr. Chalk: The hon. Mr. Curtin—

Mr. WALSH: Irrespective of whether you call them the hon. Mr. Curtin and the hon. Mr. Chifley, that statement is not true. I recall that in 1941, with millions of Asiatics at our back door ready to stab us, Menzies and Fadden were fighting and bickering with other sections within their party as to who

should be leader of the Parliament; and that was during a period of the greatest crisis in the history of Australia.

Mr. Muller: You are getting back to your usual tactics.

Mr. WALSH: Of course they are my usual tactics when I have to reply to the warped mind of the hon. member for Lockyer. It was he who said that Curtin and Chifley left this country in a mess and it is appropriate that I should remind this Committee that Menzies-Fadden had left the country in such a mess that no longer could the Parliament of Australia entrust the affairs of the nation to Mr. Menzies or Mr. Fadden. So it was that for two years from October, 1941 till Curtin led the Labour Party in the elections of 1943, the Labour Party actually directed the destinies of this nation in both Houses of Parliament without a majority. Yet the hon. member for Lockyer has the hide to say that Curtin left the country in a mess! What gratitude to a man who, like thousands of men and women during the war period, gave his life fighting for this country!

Mr. Muller: We have heard that story twenty times already.

Mr. WALSH: And if we get the same provocation the hon. member will hear it another twenty times.

Then we have the Chifley era. Mr. Chifley took over during the latter stages of the war and his Government were confronted with the great problem of rehabilitating the 800,000 men and women engaged in the various services connected with the war effort.

Mr. Muller: You forgot to mention the Brisbane line.

Mr. WALSH: There is a Brisbane line now with Menzies and Fadden so far as finances are concerned. Their slogan is, “Nothing north of the Tweed.” At no time in the history of our country was the economy of Australia more stable than it was during the period when Mr. Chifley was Prime Minister and Treasurer of the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, it was not until after his death that his political opponents and the anti-Labour Press admitted that he would go down in the history of Australia as one of the first 20 great Australians. According to the hon. member for Lockyer, those two men left Australia in a mess! In addition to getting Australia into a mess prior to 1941, we find Menzies and Fadden in an even bigger mess now. Despite all the talk we hear, I should say that the Labour Government of Queensland returned Menzies and Fadden at the last election. If the Labour Government of this State had not included in their works programme the expenditure of £9,500 000 from their own resources to keep the men and women of this State in jobs, if the people of Queensland had suffered the bitter experiences of the workers in Victoria and New South Wales, I have no doubt about what the result would have been. Fortunately, the people of Queensland had their jobs and their security protected by the Labour Government of this State, and it was because of that fact that they overlooked the misfortunes of their

workmates in the other States who were suffering the bitter experience of unemployment in thousands upon thousands in the various industries.

Mr. Muller: And Menzies and Fadden will win the next election, too.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member is very optimistic, but I think that now I should give some more facts about social services because there is nothing like giving real facts. It is well known that prior to 1943 the only social services in existence were the old-age and invalid pensions which, as I have pointed out already, were introduced as a result of insistence by the Labour Party. That was one of the conditions upon which the Labour Party kept the Deakin Government in office. Then there were the maternity allowance, introduced by the Fisher Government, and child endowment, introduced it is true by the Menzies-Fadden Government. I have never denied the fact. I have pointed out that there had been a child endowment scheme in New South Wales under a State Government and I remind the hon. member for Whitsunday and others who are so interested in social services that the late John Curtin was a member of a royal commission that inquired into child endowment many years ago when the recommendation was made that it should be brought in on a Federal basis. That shows again that Labour has been very closely associated with that social service.

Those were the only three that were in operation prior to 1943. In that year a referendum was taken of the people. Again in 1946 another referendum was submitted to the people by the Chifley Government and as a result of that referendum certain powers were handed over to the Commonwealth that gave it the constitutional power it did not have to extend social services. When we look down at the numerous social services mentioned in the document presented to Parliament by Sir Arthur Fadden we find funeral benefits, age and invalid pensions, widows' pensions, maternity allowance, child endowment, unemployment and sickness benefits, community rehabilitation, hospital benefits, pharmaceutical benefits, nutrition-of-children benefits, medical benefits to pensioners, miscellaneous health services, tuberculosis benefits, and rental rebate. There are approximately 15 or 16 social services enumerated there and only two have been introduced by the present Government.

Mr. Morris: All have been extended by the present Government.

Mr. WALSH: I have already pointed out that the referendum only conferred authority on the Commonwealth Government in 1946, but it was the Labour Party that laid down the plan.

Mr. Dewar: You know perfectly well that the committee was set up by the Menzies-Fadden Government.

Mr. WALSH: If the hon. member for Chermiside can produce evidence that the Menzies-Fadden Government set up any committee prior to 1943 for the extension of these social services—

Mr. Dewar: You are on.

Mr. WALSH:—this is the place for him to bring the evidence forward. I am quoting from an official document of the social services in operation. The so-called medical benefits for pensioners is an extension of the medical and hospital and pharmaceutical benefits brought in by a Labour Government and the only single social service introduced since 1941 by the anti-Labour Government is the so-called nutrition-of-children benefits—free milk to schools.

Mr. Morris: Opposed by Labour.

Mr. WALSH: There might be some justification for that when you come to consider that it will cost some millions of pounds to give to children in capital cities the so-called free milk that will not be available to children in the country schools because the Commonwealth will not meet the expense that would be involved. Why is it that I cannot have the free-milk scheme extended to my area? It is not because of any action on the part of this Government but because the Commonwealth Government have not approved of the extension of the service.

Mr. V. E. Jones: They approved of it in 1950.

Mr. WALSH: Let the hon. member go to the Department of Public Instruction and see whether he has approval to get it in his schools. He knows very well that he has not.

I have pointed out how the social services originated and by whom they were brought in. Without running into millions of pounds, let me give you a few more figures. Both 1942-1943 and 1943-1944 were war years—this country was still at war—and for the edification particularly of the hon. members for Mt. Coot-tha and Whitsunday, I should like to point out that the percentage of the total expenditure on defence and social services to the national income in 1942-1943 was 50.32 and that in 1943-1944 it was 47.07.

Mr. Morris: Give them separately.

Mr. WALSH: I have given them separately, defence and social services. Taking the combined totals, it is shown that under Labour 48.66 per cent. of the national income was spent on defence and social services.

An Opposition Member: Forty per cent. on defence and 8 per cent. on social services.

Mr. WALSH: In 1950-1951, under the present Government, the percentage was only 12.76 and in 1951-1952 it was only 12.45. The average for those two years was 12.6 per cent. The hon. member says there was so much for defence and so much for social services. How does the hon. member think a Labour Government could have extended social services when it was expected that every penny-piece should be directed towards the war effort?

Mr. Lloyd Roberts: Why should you combine them? That is misleading.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member says, "Why should you combine them?" I am not sure whether I have the table here, but hon. members can rest assured that I have it somewhere and it will prove very conclusively what I am saying, having regard to the fact that social services were introduced by a Labour Government and that the percentage could not be expected to be as great then as it is today. The important thing to remember is that a Labour Government introduced social services.

Mr. Morris interjected.

Mr. WALSH: I have already made that clear. I am still saying that the Labour Party introduced social services. Neither the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha nor anybody else in the Opposition can point to any social service that was in operation prior to the introduction of the original old-age pension, which was forced upon the anti-Labour Government of that time. I can assure the hon. members that they will get the other figures, because I know they will be in favour of the Labour Government.

Mr. Lloyd Roberts: We should not get them if they did not.

Mr. WALSH: I leave that to the hon. member but anything I give is on a factual basis.

There is something I should like to say in the light of the criticism contained in statements made from time to time about uniform taxation. We have been told that the Menzies-Fadden Government are very sympathetic as far as Queensland's taxable capacity is concerned. We are being told, according to Press statements, that they are prepared to make special financial provision for Queensland if taxing powers revert to the States. It has been made quite clear by this Government that we have always been willing to resume our taxing powers. We were the highest-taxed State in the Commonwealth prior to uniform taxation and we have never made any apologies for it. We have had a better standard of living than that of any other State, whether in connection with our industrial code, our health services, our hospital system, our low cost of living, or the percentage of unemployed. All those things were applicable to Queensland under the taxation policy of the Labour Government prior to uniform taxation. What have we to be ashamed of if we kept our people in work? But we have reached the stage where the Commonwealth has placed itself in the position of extracting millions of pounds from the taxpayers throughout the Commonwealth and using the revenue for capital expenditure on various projects, some of which have been mentioned in "The Courier-Mail" and in other organs—new post offices and new buildings in the Australian Capital Territory, going up by the dozens while other places in remote areas in Queensland are suffering from lack of efficient postal facilities. The Menzies-

Fadden Government are extracting their money from the people and using it for capital expenditure. This money is being extracted from the taxpayers by the very Government who are trying to make out that they are very sympathetic towards Queensland and have been generous to this State. Let me say right here and now—and this has been made quite clear by the Premier—that we are prepared to take back our taxing powers but we are not prepared to impose higher income taxation for the purpose of meeting our financial disabilities while the Commonwealth continues to feed the other States that have a higher taxable capacity than Queensland, according to Sir Arthur Fadden himself. We are not likely to be tied up by any agreement that will place this State in the position of having to hand over the preparation of its Budget to Sir Arthur Fadden and his other bushrangers in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr. Muller: What other bushrangers do you mean?

Mr. WALSH: Well, political bushrangers. The fact, as I see it, is that they want to keep Queensland away from the Commonwealth Grants Commission and for that purpose they want to pass special legislation to give Queensland a special grant. Whichever way it goes, we want our taxing powers back, the same power to tax as existed before uniform taxation went over to the Commonwealth. Despite all this talk about simplicity in forms, the machinery phase of taxation, let me tell hon. members that it was in operation before uniform taxation was taken over by the Commonwealth. We have no objection to that at all but as far as the incidence of taxation is concerned if we are to retain our sovereign rights it cannot be a matter for the Commonwealth to dictate to Queensland what taxation policy we should pursue.

Mr. Kerr: You want a special grant in addition?

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for Sherwood apparently has not been paying much attention to his own colleagues, because Sir Arthur Fadden, the Federal Treasurer, has expressed great concern for Queensland's disability in the event that taxation powers are restored to Queensland, while both the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, and Sir Arthur Fadden, in order to win the Senate vote and the next House of Representatives vote, say that they will make special provision so that Queensland will not be tied to any condition that will trail us behind the barrow of the Commonwealth. We cannot dictate to the Commonwealth whether it will make that provision. I would point out, however, that the Commonwealth is extracting millions of pounds from Queensland, therefore why should not this grant be given? Why should the Snowy River project, which is extracting millions of pounds from the whole of Australia for the benefit of New South Wales and Victoria only, or why should the Leigh Creek railway in South Australia be built at the expense of Australia, or why should

substantial expenditure be undertaken in Tasmania and Western Australia with Commonwealth money and not one Commonwealth project of a developmental nature proceed in Queensland as a result of financial assistance from the Commonwealth? These matters have been freely stated in "The Courier-Mail" in special articles by Mr. Elgin Reid, its Canberra correspondent. His articles go to show that this is the only State where a developmental project is not proceeding with financial assistance from the Commonwealth.

Motion (Mr. Walsh) agreed to.

Resolution reported, received and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

COMMITTEE.

VOTE OF CREDIT—£34,000,000.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the chair.)

Hon. E. J. WALSH (Bundaberg—Treasurer): I move—

"(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1953-54, a further sum not exceeding £16,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1953-54, a further sum not exceeding £12,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1953-54, a further sum not exceeding £6,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account."

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received, and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

ALL STAGES.

A Bill founded on the resolutions was introduced and passed through all its stages without amendment or debate.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Acting Premier): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 18 August, 1953."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.52 p.m.