

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 1961**

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

### QUESTIONS

#### SALE OF RAILWAY TRUCKING YARDS

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) asked the Minister for Transport—

“(1) Is it a fact that the railway trucking yards situated at the Mount Edwards Railway Station on the now closed Mount Edwards Line have been sold privately for removal at the ridiculously low price of £2 10s.?”

“(2) Is it a fact that a similar set of yards situated at Aratula on the same line has been sold for the sum of £2?”

“(3) Is he aware that the total combined value of the two sets of yards is approximately £200?”

“(4) Will he take the necessary action in future to prevent further reckless disposal of unwanted Railway property?”

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

“(1 to 4) I deny that there has been any reckless disposal of unwanted railway property as stated by the Honourable Member for Fassifern. With his many years of political experience, I am surprised that he has allowed himself either to be recklessly misled by his informant, or to become so much out of touch with certain happenings in his own electorate. The circumstances in relation to the matters raised by his questions are as follows:—When the Mount Edwards Branch line was closed an inspection was made by the Department for reclaimable materials. A report on the condition of the cattle and sheep yards at Mount Edwards and Aratula indicated that it would not be economical to spend money dismantling them as most posts were rotted in the ground and most of the rails of the yards which were spiked to the posts were badly split and weathered. There were, however, six gates and one swing race attached to the yards at Mount Edwards and six gates, a swing race and a portable race attached to the yards at Aratula, which were considered to have value, and all these items were removed by the Department. All that then remained was unserviceable material, the removal of which would have involved the Department in considerable expense. To have allowed it to remain there would have led to the accumulation of rubbish, the creation of a fire risk, or possibly loss by theft. The Department, therefore, readily accepted offers of £2 10s and £2 for the unwanted material at Mount Edwards and Aratula respectively, subject to the purchaser undertaking prompt removal. It

cannot be agreed that at the time of the closure of the line the combined value of the two sets of yards was approximately £200. Similar yards at Kalbar, built at the same time and including gates, races, etc., were recently valued by the Valuer-General on the basis that they might be disposed of and allowed to remain on the present location. Even under such conditions his value of the yards complete was only £50.”

#### SALE OF TOBACCO LEAF, CLARE, MILLAROO AND DALBEG AREAS

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

“(1) What was the tonnage of tobacco leaf offered for sale and the tonnage sold from the Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg areas for each of the years since tobacco was first produced in these areas?”

“(2) What were the total gross receipts from the leaf sold from these areas for each of the years aforementioned?”

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick) replied—

“(1 and 2) It is regretted that complete details are not available to supply all of the information sought by the Honourable Member particularly in regard to the quantity of tobacco leaf offered for sale from various areas. Prior to 1957-1958 figures of sales of leaf from the Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg areas were grouped with other North Queensland coastal areas such as Ayr, Ingham and Woodstock whose leaf is sold on the same floor and listed in the same catalogues. However, I have had prepared a statement showing tonnages, etc., in respect of the three centres referred to for the periods 1957-1958 to 1960-1961. Information has also been prepared showing total figures for the North Queensland coastal districts for the periods 1949-1950 to 1960-1961. The statement I have referred to is of considerable length, and with the permission of the House I will lay it on the table.”

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

#### CONVICTION AND PARDON OF ANTHONY FRANCIS CAVANAGH

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East), for Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane), asked the Minister for Justice—

“(1) Has the Cavanagh Pardon Case as yet been thoroughly investigated?”

“(2) Has the matter been referred to the Crown Law Office for the purpose of finding some charge to levy against investigating police officers?”

“(3) Has the Crown Law Office been told to find some charge at all costs?”

“(4) Has it been suggested that they should endeavour to find evidence of a charge for conspiracy?”

"(5) Is it correct that legal officers in the Crown Law Office are giving opinions, differing one from the other, concerning these prosecutions?"

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowoong) replied—

"(1) Yes."

"(2) The matter has been referred to the Crown Law Office for the purpose of considering whether on the evidence any charges are open."

"(3) No."

"(4) No."

"(5) The question of any further action has not been fully considered."

APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

"(1) Why was the appointment of a special committee to study land valuations announced from Surfers Paradise by a Private Member of Parliament, particularly since the Minister had been nominated as Chairman of the Committee, as reported in 'The Courier-Mail' of September 1, when that function normally belongs to the Minister for Local Government?"

"(2) Who was responsible for determining the personnel of the said committee?"

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

"(1 and 2) No special committee to study land valuations has been appointed by the Government. Valuations, together with other local problems, are, in accordance with Government practice, always considered by the Local Government Parliamentary Committee. The personnel of the Local Government Parliamentary Committee are appointed by the Government Party Members."

DELAY IN LOADING GOODS AT ROMA STREET  
RAILWAY STATION

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Transport—

"Is there any substance in the charge that a shortage of railway employees is delaying the loading of goods on to North bound trains at Roma Street by up to six and a-half hours? If so, will he take the requisite action to remove the causes for complaint?"

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

"Some unloading delays did occur at the Roma Street yards on Tuesday last. These were unfortunately due to illness of checkers, plus the fact that a number of consignors have shown their keenness to take

advantage of the fast goods service to North Queensland in preference to other Northern services, and are endeavouring to arrange their deliveries to Roma Street so as to take the fullest advantage of such fast service. Certain business houses are to be commended for the part they are playing in a revival of business back to the railways, and Tuesday's happening is regretted by the Railway management. However, very definite steps are being taken by the Commissioner in an endeavour to avoid a recurrence of the excessive queueing of vehicles, although it must also, I am sure, be appreciated, that such is not without some difficulty because of the location, the size and the layout of the Roma Street yards."

PATROL LAUNCHES FOR FISHERIES BRANCH

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"In view of his statement published in the 'Telegraph' of February 13 last that the patrol launches being used by the Fisheries Branch were too heavy and too slow and his inspection in Sydney of prospective substitute launches of shallow draught and high speed, have any such launches been ordered and what progress has been made towards a more effective service by fisheries inspectors?"

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

"Pending finalisation of the estimates for the current financial year no orders for launches have been placed. However, the intention is to have fisheries inspectors in Moreton Bay equipped, this financial year with a 30-foot launch and a 21-foot cabin cruiser, both with designed emphasis on speed and shallow draught. I hope to be in a position to call local tenders for these craft at an early date. It is also proposed to appoint two additional fisheries inspectors this year, one at Southport and the other at Tewantin. It is also proposed to progressively equip fisheries car patrols throughout the State with small but fast runabout hulls with outboard motors and trailers."

COST OF ROADS, NORTH-WEST QUEENSLAND

**Mr. DONALD** (Ipswich East), for **Mr. LLOYD** (Kedron), asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"What is the estimated cost of the proposed construction of the roads (a) Normanton-Julia Creek, (b) Mount Isa-Boulia and (c) Georgetown-Mount Surprise?"

**Hon. E. EVANS** (Mirani) replied—

"(a) £1,300,000; (b) £967,000; (c) £997,000; total, £3,264,000."

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN NECESSITOUS  
CIRCUMSTANCES

**Mr. DONALD** (Ipswich East), for **Mr. LLOYD** (Kedron), asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

“(1) Is special assistance made available to assist in the education of children of parents who are widowed, aged, or are war pensioners and who may not wish to apply to the State Children Department?”

“(2) Is similar assistance available to parents who are in receipt of unemployment and/or sickness benefit from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services?”

“(3) If this assistance is not available to those in receipt of unemployment benefit, when was this assistance discontinued?”

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

“(1) Special assistance is granted by my Department to parents in receipt of Relief Assistance from the Department of Labour and Industry, for the purchase of books and school requisites for their children attending primary schools, and who are included in the Relief Scale of the parents. This policy was established in 1935 and has not been varied at any time since by successive Labour Governments, nor by the present Government.”

“(2 and 3) See answer to (1).”

SOOT NUISANCE, REGIONAL BOARD,  
TOWNSVILLE

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“Has any action been taken or is proposed to be taken to minimise the damage and inconvenience caused by the discharge of soot from the chimneys at the Townsville Regional Electricity Board's power house on Murder Island, Townsville, and, if so, what?”

**Hon. E. EVANS** (Mirani) replied—

“I am advised by the Commissioner for Electricity Supply that the Townsville Regional Electricity Board, with the approval of the Commission, has placed an order for the supply and installation of additional equipment at the Power Station designed to further reduce the emission of grits.”

INVESTIGATION OF DEVELOPMENT AND  
VENDING CORPORATION

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Justice—

“(1) Has the Auditor-General's Department begun an investigation into the affairs of Development and Vending Corporation in Queensland?”

“(2) Have the company's books been seized?”

“(3) Is he aware that William Phillip Walsh, a man with a criminal record, was involved in a £403,000 sale of molybdenite mining leases at Mount Perry to DAVCO?”

“(4) Is it a fact that DAVCO has not observed a provision of the Companies Act in that it has not lodged trust deeds which are required to show where moneys the company received had been lodged and also that it carried out business in a proper manner?”

“(5) Is he aware whether DAVCO took any action to ensure that interest payments to machine owners would be safeguarded?”

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—

“(1) No. It would appear that the Honourable Member is confusing this company with a firm of a somewhat similar name.”

“(2) No.”

“(3) No.”

“(4) This matter is the subject of enquiry. At this stage I am not aware as to whether or not there has been a breach of The Companies Acts.”

“(5) See answer to Question 4.”

WONBAH MOLYBDENITE MINE, MT. PERRY

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“(1) Does he consider that the Wonbah molybdenite mine near Mt. Perry, situated on Mining Lease 107, is a payable proposition for a major company?”

“(2) Does he consider that the mine was worth £403,000?”

“(3) Is he aware that the ‘Queensland Government Mining Journal’ of October 20, 1943, reported that the Wonbah mine had a possible reserve of only 10,000 tons of metal?”

“(4) Is he also aware that on the expected recovery rate of 0.66 per centum, only sixty-six tons of molybdenite would be recovered from the reserve?”

**Hon. E. EVANS** (Mirani) replied—

“(1) The mine was a prospect worthy of further investigation and development in order to establish whether or not substantial reserves of ore existed. Information available to my Department is that the present holder has done little constructive work in the direction of attempting to prove further reserves.”

“(2) No.”

“(3) The geological report referred to was made 18 years ago on the work then done. The estimate of possible reserves of 10,000 tons therein was ore, not metal.”

“(4) In view of the fact that the work done recently has not increased the estimated reserves of ore, the simple arithmetical problem worked out by the Honourable Member is correct.”

## INDOOROOPILLY TOLL BRIDGE

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury): I desire to ask the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on September 5—

“In view of the reported statement in the financial columns of ‘The Courier-Mail’ of Wednesday, August 30, that the company operating the Indooroopilly toll bridge had already announced a thirty-five per centum ordinary dividend—

(1) What was the original cost of construction and subsequent expenditure on the bridge?

(2) What is the amount of toll collected since it commenced operation?

(3) Will consideration be given to a termination of the franchise in accordance with the original agreement which provided for a determination of the length of franchise based on repayment of the cost of the bridge plus a reasonable return of profit on the original outlay?”

**Hon. E. EVANS** (Mirani) replied—

“(1) The fair original cost was £124,129 5s. 6d. The costs incurred in connection with the operation of the bridge, including the amounts paid in Income Tax, as reported by the company to the Commissioner of Main Roads, have totalled £326,267 0s. 7d. up to February 14, 1961, the usual reporting date.”

“(2) Tolls and rentals received to February 14, 1961, have totalled £708,608 18s. 9d.”

“(3) The arrangements which led to the building of the Indooroopilly toll bridge were made in 1931 when the depression was at its height and, as well as creating a measure of employment, provided a means of access between the city and the western suburbs of Brisbane. The company which undertook the financial risk was entitled to recompense. The franchise is governed by the provisions of the Tolls on Privately Constructed Road Traffic Facilities Act of 1931 and an Order in Council issued under that Act on November 19, 1931. Section 19 of the Act sets out the specific method of calculating the reimbursement to the company of the ‘fair original cost’. The expiry date of the maximum period of the franchise is February 14, 1971. The Act gives the Government power to determine the franchise before then, after giving twelve months’ notice, but, unless the fair original cost has been recouped in the manner specified in the franchise, the Government would be required to pay a considerable sum to the company by way of compensation. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, there is still a balance of the fair original cost remaining to be recouped. The taking of action

under the portion of the Act dealing with the cessation of the owner’s right to collect tolls would not be warranted at this stage as it would involve the payment of heavy compensation.”

## ORDERS IN COUNCIL UNDER LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT

**Mr. HANLON** (Baroona) asked the Minister for Justice—

“(1) With reference to Orders in Council under the Landlord and Tenant Act tabled by him on August 22, 1961, under which the application of parts of that Act ceased to apply to certain premises as described in the schedules thereto, why, in three of the five Orders in Council tabled, is the schedule confined to the Real Property description rather than also adding a description more easily identified such as street name and number and district, in lay terms?”

“(2) Will he consider in the future adding such details to these Orders in Council as under present procedure a Member of this House would be obliged to make a search to identify the premises referred to in the Order in Council?”

“(3) What are these details relating to the three Orders in Council referred to above?”

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—

“(1) In the three Orders in Council referred to by the Honourable Member in his Question, the premises are situated on the whole of the land which is adequately described in the Real Property description. The practice is that where only part of the premises is affected by an Order in Council, then it is necessary to give a more detailed description of these premises than in the case where the property affected is the whole of the property concerned, e.g., the Order in Council may apply only to a number of rooms in a building. In this case, the number of rooms in the building would be described by their numbers and consequently, the Order in Council would have to have a more detailed description than just a Real Property description. In some cases in the past, where the whole of the land is described in the Schedule, further information is also included in the Schedule in order to identify a particular building.”

“(2) Yes.”

“(3) In the Order in Council dated April 13, 1961, the Order referred to the City Mutual Building, 307 Queen Street, Brisbane; in the Order in Council dated April 20, 1961, the Order referred to business premises at Waterworks Road and Monoplane Street, Ashgrove; and in the Order in Council dated June 29, 1961, the Order referred to the Queensland Insurance Building, 371 Queen Street, Brisbane.”

CLOSURE OF FOUNDRY IN MOULDERS SHOP,  
IPSWICH RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

**Mr. DONALD** (Ipswich East) asked the Minister for Transport—

“Is it the intention of the Department to close the foundry in the moulders shop at the North Ipswich Railway Workshops? If so, why?”

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

“The original plans of the new workshops at Redbank provided for the establishment of a modern foundry capable of meeting all likely requirements of the Department, and for the space vacated at Ipswich to be utilized for other necessary purposes. I understand that the Foundry and Smithy Block at Redbank is 60 per cent. complete.”

GOVERNMENTAL DENTAL CLINIC AT INALA

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“In view of the location of Inala and its comparative isolation from the existing dental hospitals in the Brisbane area and in view also of the large juvenile population in this area, will he give consideration to the establishment of a Government dental clinic in this suburb?”

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga) replied—

“The Honourable Member may rest assured that the claims of Inala for the establishment of a Dental Clinic will receive full consideration in the over-all plan for the expansion of Dental Clinic services in the outer suburban areas, as facilities and dentists become available. I feel sure that the Honourable Member will agree that the allocation of dental services must be made in relation to the over-all claims of the State. There is, and has been, a shortage of dentists, with the result that some large portions of our country districts where there are no private dentists, have been without a dental service. The first priority must be given to such districts.”

RETICULATION OF WATER TO CAPE  
PALLARENDA

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“With further reference to building sites at Cape Pallarenda, would he investigate the possibility of acquiring through the Queensland Housing Commission the 103 allotments designed on Survey Office map, No. P. 796.8 in Sections 3 to 11, Town of Pallarenda, and assist the Townsville City Council to bring water to the area from the Old People's Home site nearby?”

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

“I see that the Honourable Gentleman now realises his earlier error. There are

no already surveyed allotments in the hands of the Crown at Cape Pallarenda. As your present question now correctly states, they are merely a designed drawing on a survey map. The Commission now has land at Townsville to accommodate over 400 families. All this land is situated reasonably close to the city, and essential services, including transport, are presently available. The development by the Commission of the 103 designed, not surveyed, allotments at Cape Pallarenda—5½ miles by road from the Post Office and lacking most services—would be a long-range project. Rather than permit the Commission to tie up this land for some years before it would be developed, I prefer that it remain under the control of the Lands Department. If there are requests from private persons desiring home sites in this locality, that Department can survey and release allotments as required.”

GERIATRIC WARD, TOWNSVILLE GENERAL  
HOSPITAL

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“Has any decision been reached with regard to the reconstruction of the geriatric ward at the Townsville General Hospital?”

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga) replied—

“Building programmes at each hospital where large projects are involved, must be geared to Loan monies available and a consequent priority system. It is felt that the new psychiatric unit will take priority over the geriatric unit.”

WESTBROOK INQUIRY

**Mr. DONALD** (Ipswich East), for **Mr. BENNETT** (South Brisbane), asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“(1) When is it expected that the completed report on the Westbrook Inquiry will be furnished to him?”

“(2) Will it be tabled in Parliament for the information of Members and, if so, when?”

“(3) What fees are payable by the Crown Law Office for the appearances respectively at the inquiry of Mr. Jack Aboud and Mr. J. D. McGill?”

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga) replied—

“(1) In two or three weeks.”

“(2) Yes.”

“(3) Mr. Aboud has been paid £1,475 5s. in full payment. Mr. McGill has been paid 500 guineas on account and has not yet rendered his final claim. It is expected that the total amount payable to Mr. McGill will be in the vicinity of that paid to Mr. Aboud. These payments are those usually payable in the circumstances.”

COMMONWEALTH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR  
BEEF-CATTLE ROADS

**Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman) asked the Premier—

“Will he indicate to the people of Queensland whether he and his colleagues, who attended the recent discussion in Canberra with Mr. Menzies and his advisors, are completely happy with the allocation of the £4.35 million to Queensland to be spent over five years with the the proportion of money received by the other States of the Commonwealth and western Australia in particular?”

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

“Queensland has received this money as a straight-out grant, without any strings attached to it for the specific purpose of constructing beef roads in the Gulf country. The Government is satisfied that it is a worthwhile and decisive contribution to the development of North Queensland. I believe the question of assistance this State receives from the Commonwealth for developmental purposes is far too important to warrant the making, for purposes of party political propaganda, of odious comparisons with benefits derived by other States.”

**Mr. Thackeray:** You're a ratbag.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member for Rockhampton North referred to another hon. member as a ratbag. I ask him to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Thackeray:** At the same time I ask that you—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! If the hon. member refuses to withdraw the remark I shall have no alternative but to name him. I will give him another opportunity to withdraw.

**Mr. Thackeray:** I refuse to withdraw.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Therefore, I have no alternative but to name the hon. member for Rockhampton North.

**Mr. Duggan:** Mr. Speaker, you have given the hon. member an opportunity to withdraw. I ask you to allow him to reconsider your request and I appeal to him to do so. Certainly the remark was unparliamentary, but it was provoked by an unparliamentary expression by a Minister. I think you might subsequently consider asking for a withdrawal of that remark. I join with you in asking the hon. member for Rockhampton North to withdraw his remark, and I ask you to extend to him a final opportunity to do so. I ask you also to order the withdrawal of the other remark made by the Minister.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I did not hear the remark passed by the other hon. member. In fact, I do not know what it was. I did hear the

remark by the hon. member for Rockhampton North. If anyone can throw light on the previous remark he may do so.

**Mr. Thackeray:** The Minister for Transport called me “a pinhead” and in retaliation I called him a “ratbag.”

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that that is an unparliamentary remark, and I ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr. Chalk:** If the remark I made was accepted as being applicable to the hon. member, I withdraw it.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I shall give the hon. member for Rockhampton North a further opportunity to withdraw his remark.

**Mr. Thackeray:** I accordingly do so.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I repeat to all hon. members my warning in regard to cross-firing and interjecting during question time.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO DISCHARGED  
PRISONERS

**Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman) asked the Minister for Justice—

“(1) How much money has the Comptroller-General of Prisons paid or authorised to be paid to prisoners on discharge during the years 1958-1959, 1959-1960, 1960-1961, under section 42 of the ‘Prisons Act of 1958’?”

“(2) How many rail warrants have been issued to prisoners on discharge during the same years?”

“(3) How many meals have been authorised to be supplied to discharged prisoners during those years?”

“(4) What institutions have supplied those meals?”

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—

“(1) 1958-1959, £20 6s. 6d.; 1959-1960, £87 3s. 6d.; 1960-1961, £128 6s. 2d.”

“(2) 1958-1959, 565; 1959-1960, 575; 1960-1961, 632.”

“(3) 1958-1959, 9; 1959-1960, 13; 1960-1961, 5. There is every opportunity for prisoners to become aware of this facility and no request for a meal ticket has ever been refused. Many prisoners have pension moneys or other means available on discharge. State Government Relief is also available and paid to discharged prisoners. No provision was made for bonus payments or issue of meal tickets prior to the introduction by the present Government of ‘The Prisons Act of 1958’ which was assented to on December 16, 1958.”

“(4) The Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul Society by arrangement with these bodies.”

**COST OF CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE WORK, CLEVELAND-LOTA RAILWAY LINE**

**Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman) asked the Minister for Transport—

“With reference to his reply to my Question on Wednesday, September 6, regarding money spent on construction and maintenance work on the recently closed Cleveland-Lota railway line—

(1) Will he inform the House if it is true that concrete culverts were constructed on that line during 1960, being completed in June, 1960, and that the lines were then pulled up in June, 1961?

(2) Did he know when the culverts were being constructed in 1960 that the line would be closed shortly afterwards?

(3) If he did know, does he not consider the construction of these culverts a waste of public money?”

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

“(1) Yes.”

“(2) No.”

“(3) See answer to Question (2).”

**CROWN LAND, BERSERKER RANGE ROAD, ROCKHAMPTON**

**Mr. THACKERAY** (Rockhampton North) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“With reference to his answer to my Question on Wednesday, August 31, 1961, relating to the Mount Archer-Berserker Range proposed road scheme—

(1) As no tender was received, will the Crown make land available along the proposed route to the Rockhampton City Council for subdivision? If so, on what terms, and will the land be freehold or leasehold?

(2) How many acres will be available?

(3) Will the land at the summit of the proposed road be declared a National Forest or Park? If not, will he inform the House if any land will be available to the Rockhampton City Council or commercial interests?”

**Hon. A. R. FLETCHER** (Cunningham) replied—

“(1 to 3) The Honourable Member for Rockhampton South, in the capacity of Mayor of the City of Rockhampton, recently raised with me on behalf of his Council the question of the proposed Mount Archer Road. The Mayor sought advice whether land will be made available to the Council and on what terms in the event of the Council constructing the road. I am having the Mayor's request examined and he will be advised as early as possible of the decision thereon. At this stage my inquiries have not been completed and I am not in a position to advise further in this matter.”

**DAY-LABOUR EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTS, BRISBANE AND TOWNSVILLE UNIVERSITIES**

**Mr. NEWTON** (Belmont) asked the Premier—

“(1) How many day labour employees, including skilled and unskilled, were employed at the University, Brisbane and Townsville, by the Co-ordinator-General's Department at July 31, 1960 and 1961?”

“(2) What is the number of contracts at present being carried out by private contractors at each University?”

“(3) What other new contracts or day labour projects will start before December, 1961, at each University?”

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

“(1) The number of day labour employees at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia, under the control of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works as at July 31, 1960, was 154 and at July 31, 1961, 176.”

“(2) Contracts being carried out at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia, are—Buildings 4, installations and services 7, a total of 11.”

“(3) No other new contracts or day labour projects will commence before December, 1961, at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia, but approval has been granted to the Department of Public Works for the erection of the Refectory Building at the Townsville University, and work on this building has been commenced by day labour. It is anticipated that approval of expenditure for extensions to Wings 2 and 3 at the Townsville University may be granted before the end of December and that this work will also be carried out by day labour.”

**NEW COURT HOUSE AND PETTY SESSIONS OFFICE, MAREEBA**

**Mr. ADAIR** (Cook) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

“When will work be commenced on the construction of the proposed new Court House and Clerk of Petty Sessions Office at Mareeba?”

**Hon. H. RICHTER** (Somerset) replied—

“A tender has been accepted for the erection of a new Government building and for improvements to the Court House at Mareeba. It is expected that work will be commenced in the near future.”

**HOUSING COMMISSION HOMES, MOSSMAN**

**Mr. ADAIR** (Cook) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“Owing to the number of applications for rental and purchase of Housing Commission Homes at Mossman, will he give consideration to the building of several more homes in the area?”



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

“At July 31, 1961, the Clerk of Petty Sessions, Mossman, was only holding eight applications of nil priority for rental accommodation and the erection at present of further houses for rental would not be warranted. The Commission holds three allotments at Mossman and would erect a house on any of the sites selected by an eligible intending home owner.”

#### FORESTRY ROAD TO BAILEYS CREEK AREA

**Mr. ADAIR** (Cook) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

“Owing to the considerable amount of timber now being cut and transported out of the Baileys Creek area and the large stands of good millable timber still to be cut, will he have an officer of the Forestry Department visit Baileys Creek with the view to giving consideration to the construction of a forestry road to these timber stands?”

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—

“Officers of the Forestry Department have visited the Baileys Creek area from time to time. Logging of privately owned timber is proceeding in that vicinity, but urgency for logging of Crown timber is confined to a small area for which satisfactory arrangements have been made. There is only a relatively small area of Crown land of reasonable topography in the Baileys Creek area, owing to the alienation of the more accessible land. However, the area is listed for investigation regarding the provision of access as soon as urgent requirements elsewhere are met.”

#### COMPENSATION CLAIMS EXAMINED BY CARDIAC BOARD

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“In view of the amount of dissatisfaction with the procedure necessary for an injured worker to obtain compensation for cardiac injuries—

(1) How many of the claims dealt with by the Cardiac Board have been admitted and how many rejected since its inception?

(2) Is there any appeal open to an unsuccessful claimant on any point of law where a claim is disallowed following on a finding by the Board?”

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

“(1) Fifteen claims have been admitted and thirty-six rejected.”

“(2) I would draw the Honourable Member's attention to the provisions of subsections (5) and (6) of Section 14 C of The Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1960.”

#### PAPERS

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

Report of the Chief Safety Engineer, Chief Inspector of Machinery, Scaffolding and Weights and Measures for the year 1960-1961.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under the Co-operative Housing Societies Acts, 1958 to 1961.

Orders in Council under the Fisheries Acts, 1957 to 1959.

Order in Council under the Abattoirs Acts, 1930 to 1958.”

#### COMPANIES BILL

##### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

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

Debate resumed from 6 September (see p. 243) on Mr. Munro's motion—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to consolidate and amend the law relating to companies.”

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON** (Carnarvon) (11.40 a.m.): This very important measure has received the attention of many people, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia, during the past two years. I think it will be welcomed by everybody who is interested in the Companies Act and in seeing that trade and commerce between countries and in Queensland is conducted on a very high plane.

Briefly speaking, the Bill may be described as a Bill to prevent stealing, and it is interesting to recall that the Divine injunction against stealing is the shortest command in the decalogue. When we translate this injunction into our social code and laws it involves a vast amount of legislation and many statutes, and it is all-important, of course, that in a well-organised and civilised society we should have laws to protect all sections of the community in trade and commerce.

In speaking on this measure, I feel somewhat like a student who attempts to lecture University professors, because the Bill has received the attention of legal experts and experts in the field of accountancy. The Minister is recognised as an expert in the field of accountancy and also in the field of commerce. I pay him that tribute and express the thanks of my Party, and myself as a unit of the Opposition, for the courtesy and consideration that he has extended to us in relation to the Bill. It has received a great deal of publicity, and people who have invested in and been deceived by fraudulent companies might think that they will now be given complete protection. The major metropolitan newspaper

appeared this morning with a big caption—"This law will protect shareholders." That is true in many respects, and anybody who has studied the measure will agree that, in future, shareholders will be protected in many ways in which they were not protected in the past.

Although, as I said, I feel somewhat like a student endeavouring to lecture University professors, I think it is incumbent upon me, as a member of the Opposition, to make some observations and mention to the Minister certain weaknesses that I see in the Bill from my study of the information he gave the House yesterday and the information that he circulated when the measure was under consideration last year.

The first weakness that I see relates to mining companies. On the information given to the Committee by the Minister, it is possible for people organising fraudulent companies to proceed legally on their merry way despite the provisions in the Bill. They can comply with every requirement of the legislation in their prospectus and still be fraudulent. Because so much publicity has been given to the fact that shareholders will be protected in future, it is important that I should make my point. The question asked by the hon. member for Townsville South today has some bearing on it, and, of course, other happenings in recent years also have a direct bearing on it. People can produce a very attractive prospectus. Alleged experts might give opinions on prospecting mining ventures that might not be worth a snap of the fingers. The Registrar of Companies is not in a position to know what fraudulent reports might be incorporated in a prospectus. A company could be duly registered and subscriptions invited. The vendors would sell to the company and the shareholders would be taken down, as they have been taken down in recent years. I suggest that before the Registrar of Companies registers any company engaged in a mining venture that it should be mandatory for him to submit the prospectus to the Department of Mines, not for the purpose of getting approval from that department, as that would be very unwise and quite improper, but because obviously the department, from the knowledge at its disposal, would know whether the mining area had been worked out and whether there was any real value in mining the lease that may have been taken up with the idea of defrauding people. If the department was satisfied that the representations in an otherwise attractive prospectus were false, the Registrar of Companies could be so informed and, of course, the company need not be registered. I think it is a worthwhile suggestion to bring before the Committee at this stage. As far as I can gather there is nothing in the proposed legislation to authorise or direct any action along those lines. But because so many people in Queensland in recent years have been badly taken down and defrauded of

large sums of money by phony mining companies, I suggest that the Minister should seriously consider the submission of the prospectus of mining companies by the Registrar of Companies to the Department of Mines so that if it was considered by the department that the proposal was a fraudulent one or that the proposal was very weak and unsound, expert opinion could be placed before the Registrar.

**Mr. Burrows:** Would you submit that if a company was going to deal in vending machines that a certificate should be obtained from the Machinery Department in respect of the vending machines?

**Mr. HILTON:** The Machinery Department would be concerned only with the mechanics of the vending machines. That department would not be in a position to give an authoritative opinion on the trading operations that would flow from the machines. All the department could do would be to give a considered opinion about the mechanics of the proposed vending machines, and if that was necessary it could be done.

**Mr. Burrows:** I do not think you can direct public servants to give an opinion on such matters.

**Mr. HILTON:** I am giving my opinion. In view of what has happened in the past would the hon. member be prepared to see people still fleece the public even though they comply with the provisions of the Bill? Should that be allowed to happen if it can be avoided by a confidential submission by the Registrar of Companies to the Department of Mines? A question was asked this morning about a molydenite mine. No doubt had that proposal been submitted to the Department of Mines by the Registrar of Companies, although I am not familiar with all that occurred, at least the Registrar could have been informed that there was no value in the proposal, and the fraud could have been prevented. I know there are difficulties in the way. I am not suggesting that any public servant should be asked to give his approval of a prospectus, but at least departmental officers could inform the Registrar of Companies if it were considered that it was a fraudulent show. The Registrar of Companies could be so advised and there is nothing unwise or foolish about that suggestion.

**Mr. Burrows:** The Registrar of Companies could not say that a company could not be registered, without giving a reason.

**Mr. HILTON:** I will not argue the point any further with the hon. member for Port Curtis. I do not think he appreciates the point I am making. Whilst the principle incorporated so far as application and other moneys paid prior to allotment by any applicant on account of shares or debentures offered to the public to be held in trust is concerned is a very good principle, does it go far enough? On the information circulated by the Minister, and from what he said

last year, it appears that any company promoter can hand that money over to any individual to be held in trust. Do hon. members not see the weakness arising there? Even if it is handed to a bank the bank is not held responsible for the paying out of those moneys to the company and is not obliged to treat it as trust money.

In order to carry this very sound principle to its logical conclusion and protect the public, it should be mandatory that moneys so handed to a trustee should be lodged with a trustee authorised to act as a trustee by law, or to somebody with an account such as a solicitor's trust account; or, the bank should be authorised to hold that money in trust and only release it when all the conditions have been complied with so far as the disposal of that money is concerned.

If certain people wished to develop one of these phony companies they could have a dummy acting the role of trustee. Thousands of pounds could be handed to him. He need not necessarily be a man obliged to have a trust account. He could clear out of the country with that money. He could get his taxation clearance because the Taxation Department would not necessarily know anything about it and, when the bubble burst he could be out of the country, and all the blame could be placed on him, and the fraudulent promoters could get away scot free because the theft would be pinned on the trustee.

I had a look at the latest Model Bill that the Minister has kindly furnished us, and the one introduced last year. There is nothing in that clause to ensure that the trustee will be a man of substance and that he will be governed by the laws that should govern a trustee in this State.

I suggest that the Minister ensure that that weakness is overcome. I think there is a definite weakness in the Bill in that respect. I hope that the very fine principle outlined in the clause will be further considered and that the position will be made watertight in relation to the promotion of fraudulent companies.

Another point I should like to mention in relation to companies is that in these days when we have a very sensitive Stock Exchange, certain unsatisfactory circumstances can very readily develop. I have no substantial knowledge of its having occurred in the past but I take the case of a relatively small company with a minimum number of directors. That company could have been operating for a number of years and may have adopted a policy of paying an interim dividend. It may be quite a sound company but with an economic state such as we are experiencing at present—a credit squeeze and all that goes with it—and a very sensitive Stock Exchange, whilst I am not familiar with all the ramifications of the Stock Exchange I realise that, if a company has been in the habit of paying an interim dividend and the directors then decide for a logical reason that there will

not be any interim dividend paid, the shares of that company are immediately depressed and fall in value. Those directors, if they wished to be unscrupulous, could put forward a logical and plausible reason for not paying an interim dividend in the middle of the year and could later on make excuses that would counter their first reason. In the meantime they and their friends could buy up those depressed shares and make a good deal out of them.

**Mr. Walsh:** The bulls and the bears get busy.

**Mr. HILTON:** Quite so.

I realise there may be difficulty in overcoming such a position. Shareholders at the annual meeting cannot force the declaration of a dividend greater than the directors recommend, but I think shareholders should have some protection against any action by directors that would result in artificial depression of the shares, and the subsequent opportunity they would then have to buy the shares or have their friends buy the shares. In these days shareholding in companies is spread over a large number of people, many of whom have not the foggiest idea how the company is being operated. A company may be sound, but the directors may say, "Because of the credit squeeze we think for prudent reasons we should not pay an interim dividend this year." Their decision may be quite logical and sound. In a few months they may say, "Things are better now and we will resume paying the normal dividend." In the meantime ordinary shareholders, realising that the shares are falling in value, are prone to become panicky and sell them. The directors themselves can buy those share at a depressed price. I think the point I have raised should be considered by the Minister in order to prevent that type of thing.

**Mr. Hart:** The Bill provides that a director shall at all times act honestly and use reasonable diligence in the discharge of the duties of his office, and that an officer of a company shall not make use of any information acquired by virtue of his position to gain directly or indirectly an improper advantage for himself or to cause detriment to the company.

**Mr. HILTON:** That is in the measure and the shareholders expect their directors to act honestly. In most cases they do but I am referring particularly to the relatively small company with a minimum number of directors who wanted to rig the position. They can do it, particularly with a sensitive Stock Exchange. They can get away with it, and nothing can be done about it under the measure.

I think there is some substance in the matters I have raised, and I should like the Minister, if he is able to do so, to refute my contention about weaknesses in the Bill. If they are correct they should be rectified before it becomes law. The loopholes should be closed so that the public will not be misled

into assuming that the provisions as to company promotion are watertight, that they cannot be defrauded as in the past, and that they are protected against unscrupulous people who set out to fleece the public.

**Mr. Walsh:** An examination of the company's books would reveal whether the directors were acting honestly.

**Mr. HILTON:** Yes, but they could give a logical reason for not paying an interim dividend. They could blame the credit squeeze. A few months later they could say, "There is no need to refrain from paying a dividend," and they could declare the ordinary dividend at the end of the year. In the meantime, however, they would have had an opportunity to acquire shares at well below par.

Time does not permit me to develop my argument further. I hope to speak again at the second reading and committee stages. I ask the Minister earnestly to consider my suggestions and I hope that I shall hear argument on them in due course.

Progress reported.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

##### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY

Debate resumed from 5 September (see p. 224) on Mr. Camm's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, on which Mr. Duggan had moved the following amendment:—

"Add to the question the following words:—

"However, it is the opinion of this Legislature that, due in great measure to your present advisers having failed to successfully manage and extend the financial resources of the State, to encourage and foster new industrial enterprises, and to take adequate action to conserve and stabilise the economy, serious unemployment has become an established feature of the economy, over-sea migrants are now loth to come to Queensland, and our own native-born citizens are migrating to southern States in such numbers that our much-needed population shows the lowest percentage growth in the Commonwealth, and, accordingly, we desire to inform you that for these and other reasons this Government does not possess the confidence of the House."

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN** (Barambah) (12 noon): I should like to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply and join with them in expressions of loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. At the same time I should like to express my own personal sincere appreciation to His Excellency the Governor, and Lady May for their very fine services in the interest of the State. We all know that it is greatly appreciated by the people of Queensland.

I also welcome this opportunity of placing on record my views on the very important issue of transport. They are not only my views, but the views of many people I represent, and the views of people in other areas, particularly in the south-western and southern portions of the State. I am taking this unusual step for various reasons and because I am afraid that I may not have an opportunity later to come to grips with this very important issue. I am afraid that on the Transport Committee we may have been momentarily sidetracked by such issues as railway losses, and lack of revenue. We all agree that the Government have done a tremendous amount of work and have spent large sums of money on roads, schools, and construction of public buildings, and there is a great deal still to be carried out. Of course, losses in revenue play a very important part in the considerations of the Government. I could perhaps treat this matter of transport more fairly on an area basis, and I have done that, from time to time in relation to problems that arise in my area. This matter is so vitally important to the economy of the individual and the State that I believe I should express my views here.

**Mr. Walsh:** You have a good audience; the Minister and the Commissioner are here.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes.

Both Government parties are committed to private enterprise to boost industry and production. I believe that in the long run we would gain very considerably if we were to encourage and facilitate every avenue that will help production. It is uneconomic for both the individual, and the community as a whole, for the country to retard some of these avenues, or to damage or restrict such avenues as, for example, road transport, in certain aspects. Even if we as a Government spend millions of pounds on roads, and schools, it is the land and the people that largely play a very important part in our national economy. They play a very important part in our overseas economy and if it were not for the country interests we would not have as much money to spend. We should do all we possibly can to make it easy and more attractive for them, so that they may operate more efficiently in those areas. We should assist the people in the inland areas, and the country areas, whichever walk of life they may be in, to make an easier livelihood. We would more than get it back in the long run, perhaps indirectly, if we were able to take a long-range view of these things. One of these matters concerns road transport. It is a very important aspect because it plays a vital part in our everyday life. Transport is here to stay whether we like it or not. And at this moment I am referring particularly, perhaps, to the more organised forms of road transport. People want it, and if we over-tax them or in other respects through various means attempt to stop them

I say we are doing the country people a very great disservice. This is happening in quite a considerable area of the southern half and south-western portion of the State. People are not getting the services to which I think they are entitled, and which they want, and which it is in their interests as well as the interests of the country as a whole to have. I think many of the actions of the Commissioner and the Minister, however you like to term them, are crushing down, are eliminating bit by bit, these various avenues to which I am referring for the operation of such services. What we are doing today as the Government is not what our leaders and many of us have proclaimed to the people as our policy over the many years, and, in my opinion, that is not particularly in line with Country Party policy.

Here in Queensland we have great distances and areas to be served. For many years the railways have been what might be termed in the main a general form of goods transport, until more recent years—until the last 10 or 15 years. But that is all changing, or has all changed. Today we have in our midst a much more flexible, a much more convenient, a faster, means of transport, a more decentralised form of transport. The fact that the people use such transport and want it, I would say, speaks for itself. No man or Government can halt the march of time or the progress that it brings and it would only be foolish for anyone or any Government to attempt to halt such progress, for progress is like the tide of the sea—you cannot stem it or stop it. We know from history that years ago when trains were introduced in England many people raised a great hue and cry that they would destroy the livelihood or the living of so many people. We know that trains came and the nation prospered. It applied to every other nation.

I recall very well the advent of tractors into the South Burnett district. Before their advent I and farmers generally ploughed with big teams of horses in tandem. When tractors commenced, people everywhere said that as a State and as a country we would go into bankruptcy with so much money going overseas for tractors, fuel and all the rest of it. When I bought my first tractor—a McCormick-Deering—some 30 years ago, my neighbour came over to me and said, "Joe, you have made a terrible mistake. You will go broke." Furthermore, he said, with the advent of tractors generally, "there won't be the horses to eat the corn we are growing." We heard that expression used throughout the district. I was told it myself. Tractors came. People wanted them. Today the song of power of those tractors is heard from one end of the country to the other. I and the other people who obtained them have been able to double production in the process.

I have lived also to see the advent of road transport in my own area and in other parts of the State, too. When I was a young man we grew on our property something in the

vicinity of 1,000 bags of maize each year. I used to man-handle them onto a flat-top table wagon and cart them with horses to the nearest railway station. Then came the trucks, and eventually the trucks took over. They spread further afield. They gave us service in so many other ways and then, as we know, because of the flexibility and service, the previous Government granted a franchise for runs in various parts of the State. My line of thought and interest in the past was that those services should be extended and that more people should have the opportunity of availing themselves of this very efficient type of service. No individual or Government will be able to deny the people these modern means of assisting them to make their livelihood; they want this form of transport. If they were completely satisfied with the railways, road transport would die rapidly. The Minister will no doubt say to me, "What are you talking about? There is more road transport under the present Act than there ever was before." That may be so. But dealing with the day-by-day road service to which people in many parts of the State were accustomed previously, I can say with certainty that they are not getting that service under the present Act.

**Mr. Walsh:** Even if there is more road transport, the cost is much higher.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes, the cost is much higher. That is because of the high tax, because they have to pay on capacity, and because of restrictions.

**Mr. Evans:** That applies only in some areas.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes.

**Mr. Evans:** It would be lower between Brisbane and Toowoomba.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes. I am speaking of the areas farther out. This Act should never have been referred to as an Act for "open road transport." That is far from the truth. I know businessmen in my electorate, in Goomeri, Murgon, Wondai, Kingaroy, and Kumbia, who are unable to get the services they require, the services they need in certain instances. The Minister may say, "Well, it is one thing or the other." But certain services are better supplied by rail transport or by road transport, and, because of the application of the Act, people are unable to get things in the way in which they would like to get them. That is the position in many of the areas to which I have referred.

We are told to wait, that gradually these anomalies will be ironed out. I am sure that the Minister has that in mind, but these matters are so urgent and the Act is operating so unrealistically at present that I am impelled to press for a more speedy realisation of the fact that there are anomalies.

From the point of view of the primary producer, until yesterday we were not permitted, as we had been in the past, to carry grain to Brisbane. I am referring particularly to maize, but the restrictions on soya beans have been lifted, also, and the fee has been increased. In the Kumbia area, we were able to save at least 2s. a bag on the freight that had to be paid during that time. The present concession that has been granted will be of no value for two reasons: firstly, the high fee of 3d. a ton mile, and, secondly, the fact that trucks coming to Brisbane will not have the right to take back the things that they want to take back.

It gets back to this: What is a fair tax? We know that the High Court ruled that one-third of a penny was a just and fair payment for wear and tear of the roads—for their maintenance. The additional charge, therefore, must be tax. It is estimated that under the 25-mile tax-free road system—I am not referring to the one-third of a penny tax, but to the 3d. tax—at least 70 per cent. of the population is getting what might be called tax-free transport. Therefore the other 30 per cent., because they live in the country, are called upon, in effect, to assist in making up the losses on the railways, many of which occur in the metropolitan area, the South Coast area, and other areas close to the city. We think that this is most unjust and unfair. There is some truth in the argument that it is for road construction; on the other hand, the roads are equally important to country and city dwellers. Perhaps they are not quite equally important, but they are a national asset, of national importance, and all should have to pay for them. About 30 per cent. of the people of the State will be called upon to pay well over £1,000,000 in the next financial year. It might be said that it is the road operator who has to pay it and that the tax will not be passed on if reduced. But that is not correct. We know the competition that exists. We know that their service is worth more than that of the railways. All these factors are very important. I think the Minister will agree that the load of tax has been greatly increased. I could give no end of examples. It is also obvious from the increased revenue. If the load were borne by the people of the State as a whole we would not have the present complaints and dissatisfaction. The grievance is so much greater because it is considered that this heavy tax is levied to help make up for the losses on the railways. Such losses must be greatly accentuated by the fact that the Minister grants certain concessions in various areas throughout the State in an effort to eliminate road transport and counteract the borderhopper. When one considers the rail freight concessions that the Minister is offering in various parts of the State it is obvious that tremendous losses must occur in the Railway Department. That is one reason that we say it is not fair that the rest of the State of Queensland does not share the burden. The rail freights in Queensland are the highest in any part of the Commonwealth.

Naturally I would not be able to substantiate this, but on past performance you can be almost sure that the more you cart the more you lose, although not quite in the same proportion. That is why I believe we should not be forced to pay high rail freights. Surely the country people have enough burdens with droughts, the high cost of commodities they have to buy and all their other hardships, without being loaded with high rail freights! It must be difficult for the Treasurer to have such a drain on his resources as the railway losses.

Mr. Walsh: They have always been there.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: They have always been there but in my opinion it is a very retrograde step to try to overcome them by attacking or dealing harshly with transport. If we both had businesses, Mr. Speaker, and we were competing against each other, constantly attacking or undermining me would not be the way to overcome your problem. The proper way would be to improve your system. I think the problem in the railways should be approached from that angle. I suggest the appointment of a board of two or three efficient men who have proved themselves as businessmen of administrative ability. If given a free hand, completely free from political influence, they would achieve surprising results if they were told to do the job within certain limits. The remedy is efficiency, stability and a hand free from political interference. I am not saying that only about this Government, but of all governments. Under such management I consider that the railways would be run more satisfactorily in many respects. I doubt whether anyone here would deny that.

Last week a young lad only a few years out of school who works on a farm near me, asked if he could come to Brisbane with me. I brought him down and left him with some friends in one of the suburbs. When I took him home last Thursday afternoon I asked him, "How did you enjoy yourself?" He said, "I went here and there and bought a few things. One morning I went across and watched some men working on the railway line. There were a whole lot of them. I watched them while they were shifting dirt from near the railway line a distance of about the width of the road. The first man would take a shovelful and instead of taking a few steps and putting it where they wanted it he only shovelled it part of the way and others would then shovel it further. They just shovel from one place to another." And he said, "A lot of them were standing, leaning on their shovels, too." That was a comment from a young, raw country lad, but it shows that these things are applicable in many respects to losses on railways. That is why I say a change in the present method of administration might overcome many of these things. I have many friends in the railways who are good men and doing a good job.

So I said why should one section of the community, the 30 per cent. living in country areas who, we might say, are the hard-working section because of the long hours they work, people who in many instances are not able to enjoy some of the amenities enjoyed in the cities, be called upon to operate under the difficulties we are trying to saddle them with now? Because they are competing with the railways, the road services are being forced out of existence. If these services are eliminated the position mentioned in yesterday's issues of "The Courier-Mail" and "Telegraph" will become more prevalent—a bigger bottle neck at Roma Street railway yards. I should like to read the article to hon. members had I the time, but it is there if hon. members wish to read it for themselves. I am sure the Minister has read it. It dealt with long delays at Roma Street Railway Station. The more road transport is curtailed the greater the problem will become in regard to the despatch of goods by rail. According to that article, whole days are lost in getting goods away now.

**Mr. Bennett:** Are not the delays coupled with a lack of staff at Roma Street?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes, but the more goods that are channelled to one centralised point the greater will the difficulty become. We should have more decentralisation which can be achieved by encouraging road transport.

I have always been opposed to the flat-rate system of tax which operates against the people in the more remote areas. It is a well recognised fact that under this completely wrong system of tax the people in the remote areas are saddled with the greater liability.

**Mr. Walsh:** Many of them are taxed on their capacity and are only carrying half loads.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** And many of them are in that position because they prefer to operate by road transport. As the hon. member interjected, it is not fair to charge them on the capacity of the truck. To me that is one of the most unfair and completely unjust aspects of the matter and, if I may say so, it is completely dishonest to charge people for something they are not carrying. I know the Minister will say that in previous years many of these people did not pay for all they had on their trucks and that this is the only way to get at this problem. I recognise that, but two wrongs do not make a right. I think it is completely unfair and unjust and I trust that it will be promptly rectified.

Certain concessions were announced yesterday in relation to the cartage of cattle and sheep. It is well known that many people have been pressing for the right to cart beyond the 250-mile limit, and the Minister has made some concessions that I do not think amount to a great deal. I should like the Minister to take charge of a mob of cattle, load them on a transport, bring

them to the railhead, load them into trains and journey with them to Brisbane. If he did that, I am sure he would be pressing here for the right to transport them right through by road. These people work hard every day of their lives and are efficient. We must not deny them this right to efficient mode of transport. The tax on carriage of goods throughout the country is far too great on the 3d. a ton-mile basis plus road maintenance charges. If it was say, a maximum of 1½d. for 350 miles, or a maximum of 1d. a ton from beginning to end of journey, or even a maximum of ½d., all rates being on weight carried and not on capacity of truck, we would be getting closer to the mark and would be charging a realistic figure.

**Mr. Walsh:** There was not much to complain about under the old Act.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** There was a great deal, but the full tax was not always applied.

In the time available to me I want to deal with another two or three points that in my opinion are relevant to general policy. I referred these matters to the Minister on a previous occasion. I will give an illustration to prove my point. The operator happens to be on the border of my electorate. Kumbia Transport has a few good, modern, efficient trucks, and for 12 years has been carrying flour from Dalby to Kingaroy, and to Murgon, Nanango, and other places in the South Burnett district. In that period of 12 years the operator has built up a very efficient, well-organised service. Admittedly the charge during that period may not have been very high. For years it was £35 a month, but the Minister has now increased the charge to £200.

**Mr. Walsh:** Shocking!

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** And that is not the end of the story. The railway freight rate on flour has been reduced from approximately £4 to £2 a ton. On the one hand we are hitting the road operator and on the other hand undermining him. That is not true democracy. This was a service that did not interfere to any great extent with the railways. We are now going to take from this man his livelihood and prevent him from getting any reward from the service and the contacts he has built up. In addition, on the carrying capacity basis of tax, he cannot on his return journeys bring back the few empty bags of freight that he brought back in the past from various towns.

**Mr. Walsh:** Did you say there was no railway line between those towns?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Between Bell and Kingaroy, no. I am concerned about some of these undemocratic actions, as I term them, and the fact that at the same time service to the community is being sidetracked momentarily on account of issues of Government finance.

I have been concerned about franchises being taken from operators since the Act came into force. I have gone through all the correspondence that was passed on to me, about interviews and so so, and the way in which these matters have been dealt with is in my opinion a sorry business. I want to record that in my opinion we have not dealt with some of these matters in any fair or just way. I could mention, too, the names of operators in my area who are struggling and having great difficulty in carrying on under the system that operates at the moment.

**Mr. Mann:** What has Chalk to say about all this?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I want to deal now with the Act itself. It gives power to take away a franchise without compensation. In some respects it does not go far enough, and in saying that I mean it does not go far enough towards limiting the powers of the Commissioner and the Minister. The public have no way, except through the grapevine, as it is termed, of finding out what the law is or how it is being applied. It is not clearly defined in the Act. Regulations can be issued. The Minister and the Commissioner are given too great a power by the Act. They can alter freight rates and can kill an operator overnight. The powers, as they are being applied, are not in the true interests of the State as a whole. They are too drastic. There are powers to withhold permits and powers for them to be given today and taken away tomorrow. I believe that they should not be issued on such a basis. When we want them to give proper services, or extend them, the permit should be given on a five-year basis, especially if we know that they are operating a service in the State. Another important factor is that there are no rules for compensation. Surely there should be an appeal board. There is one in Great Britain, but we have completely eliminated all these things. I should now like to refer to the Act in relation to some of these things.

**Mr. Aikens:** What did you do when the Act was going through?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Well, I was overseas when it was discussed, and when was brought down, but I do not seek to escape because of that; I accept my responsibility for it. I have tried to overcome some of the problems since my return. I refer now to the third paragraph of Section 6 which says—

“Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court or judicial tribunal whatsoever shall have jurisdiction to entertain any suit, action, or other proceeding whatsoever for enforcing a right, remedy or claim alleged to be had by any person by virtue of any such ministerial direction.”

In that paragraph, on its own, we are getting away from democracy. If there had been a Bill of Rights in existence, this Act could

not have come into existence. That is obvious to me. I will take another part of the Act to demonstrate my reason for saying that it should be amended.

**Mr. Mann** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I heard the hon. member for Brisbane refer some time ago to “Chalk.” The hon. member should know better. He should know that he must not call an hon. member by his name, in this Chamber.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I refer now to Section 52—“Liability of consignors and consignees.” This is another terrible aspect of the Bill. The Section says—

“Where any goods have been carried by road in contravention of section forty-nine of this Act—

- (a) the consignor of those goods; and
- (b) if he takes delivery thereof, the consignee of those goods, shall be jointly and severally liable . . .”

**An Opposition Member:** They will tell you that it was in the previous Act, and it could have been cut out.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** Yes, I know it could probably have been cut out.

Then, we have Section 53, which is execution against a vehicle, and then there is the repossession clause whereby an innocent man may be dealt with. Those sections, and other sections should be, and must be amended, because I believe it is only fair for the Government to recognise the truth and fairness of some of the things I say. No doubt the Minister will rise and say that there will be so much less money. I doubt that. I believe that the more the railways carry the greater the loss. The Minister may say there will be less work that may be carried out in various parts on roads and schools in the State, but nothing will convince me that to get more money this is the fair or practical way to do it. I ask the Minister not to try to force more co-ordinated services upon us to solve this problem. It is only natural that they will cause more bottlenecks in Roma Street which will destroy fast efficient services. That is what I am concerned about. That would permit these operators, whosoever they may be—perhaps some of the present-day operators, if they secure these co-ordinated services—to run from the point of distribution at the end of the railway line without having to weigh without paying any tax, and there will not be a true check. I mention this because I know a good deal about it and I know the actual weights they carry. We know that co-ordinated services in some cases will perpetuate the aspect that the railways will carry goods for next to nothing, as they are doing at the moment, and show a bigger loss which farmers and others have to help to carry. I am talking from experience, and I have



had a great deal of experience of railways and road transport. I have had probably more than most hon. members and nobody can deny it. I know what I am talking about when I speak of these services. Many business people in country areas, too, know what it means to get fast and efficient service.

**Mr. Chalk:** How are they being stopped?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** The Minister knows what stops them—higher tax and restrictive measures on what they can carry and what they cannot carry and having to pay on capacity. I am going as far as this today in connection with these points—I am so convinced that I am right on this—I am not going to stand idly by and see these services, whatever they might be, whoever they are, whether they are in my area or in other areas, pushed to one side and everyone forced to use the railways with their higher freight charges. That is just what we are doing now, or heading towards. It is one of the reasons why I am not prepared to stand by and see men like Doug Barrie of Kumbia and others at Goomeri fast going broke through the restrictions that operate today. While this position exists I will continue to oppose it. It is no good building up on the one hand and destroying and pulling down on the other.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I know this is an important issue and one that affects very many people in the State. I am not the only hon. member it vitally affects. In moving around from time to time in my own area and in other areas I have learned that this is a very vexed question. It is not good enough for the Minister to defer matters or take delaying action and look at the matter from the point of view of revenue or of losses or some other point of view. Whatever he does, let the country people operate efficiently under a system that has proved itself in the last 10 years or so in so many directions.

**Mr. Chalk:** You want the franchise system back again?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** I am not speaking in connection with wanting a franchise system back again. I want conditions to be such that they can operate so we can have services. They cannot operate now with the high tax imposed on carrying capacity, as the Minister knows. Take a case like Tara. The Minister knows what happens by the time you get to the far-out point. I know quite well what I am driving at. The Act as it is applied now is going to deny many country areas the service they have had for 10, 12 or more years. They are not getting daily service or regular service. They are getting it spasmodically.

**Mr. Aikens:** Isn't it true that what you are complaining about is that the little fellow is being given a chance whereas the bigger fellow is denied it?

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** No. All I say is that the whole issue, I feel sure, is completely clear to everyone. Above all, it is completely clear to the Minister. All the side-issues that may be brought in from different angles are to me only red herrings.

**Mr. Chalk:** There is only one thing you want—an organised road transport service.

**Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN:** No. I have not once mentioned organising a road transport service. Take the operators in my own area. They are not an organised transport service and the Minister knows how at Roma one man stood up and accused him of a 75 per cent. increase.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. NEWTON** (Belmont) (12.40 p.m.): I support the amendment to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply that was moved by the Leader of the Opposition and supported by other speakers. It is interesting to note that very few Government members have answered the points made by members of the Opposition during this debate. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat made some attempt to reply; but in spite of what he went through at Dalby, he made a very mild attack on the Government in putting forward the views of the people present at the meeting that night.

Last year we said in the Chamber that the Government would find the going very heavy in their second term of office. At that time we were referring mainly to financial problems, but the events of the past 12 months have proved that the Government are faced with a number of problems that are much stickier than their financial problems. What has happened in the first six months of this year shows quite clearly that they are not worthy of the confidence that the people placed in them, irrespective of whether or not they were elected on a minority vote. The Government's own supporters are now meeting and protesting throughout the State, just as the trade union movement and the working people generally have protested, because of legislation introduced by the Government that has not been in the interests of the people or the State.

His Excellency's Opening Speech shows that the present Government were really scraping the barrel to show the progress they have made in the past 12 months in carrying out the developmental works necessary for the State's progress. In the past six months we have seen half the Ministry involved in shocking incidents relating to legislation and to happenings in institutions under their control.

First let us look at the Department of Labour and Industry, which is under the control of the Deputy Premier and Leader of

the Liberal Party in Queensland. For all the Minister's statements about what the Government have done to bring new industries to the State and establish new factories here, the unemployment figures are higher today than they have been at any time since the end of World War II. In a report on the second part of the Government's policy speech made by the Deputy Premier on behalf of the Government, these words appear under the heading "Irresponsible—'Label' for A.L.P."—

"Queensland's record of industrial growth and individual prosperity would 'wither away' if the A.L.P. were allowed to implement it, he said."

What is the position today? Is not our industrial prosperity and industrial growth withering away under the administration of this Government? Are not unemployment figures higher than they have been for some time? Is not this the very same withering away to which the Minister for Labour and Industry referred? The Minister has not found jobs for these people, nor has he solved the problems that he said he would solve. He spoke then about long-range proposals for increasing beef-fattening on the northern coastal strip to help overcome unemployment in seasonal industries. Other speakers also spoke about these proposals, but after 12 months very little has been done about them. Of course, we cannot forget the shocking piece of legislation introduced by the same Minister. It should have been known as the Industrial Arbitration and Workers' Discipline Bill; but it has been titled the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. Here we see one of the most shocking actions of the Government, the termination of the quarterly cost-of-living adjustments. Under the present Government we have witnessed the lifting of price control on many commodities, also the lifting of rent control. In the past even if prices did increase the Industrial Court was able to declare quarterly cost-of-living adjustments that enabled the working people to have included in their pay envelopes what was necessary to cover the increased costs of the preceding quarter. The provisions of the new Act will be used against the members of the A.F.U.L.E., not because they are asking for a wage rise but because they want to protect certain existing conditions, and they are asking for better accommodation to be provided by their employer—in this instance, the Government. I was amazed at the answer I received to my question yesterday about the recovery of wages from Queensland employers. When I tallied up the fines and the costs of court I realised that each and every one of the employers got out of the offences they committed for somewhere about £5. The case is still proceeding but under the new legislation the position will be very difficult for the A.F.U.L.E. because of the viciousness of the Act.

From this side of the House we cannot bypass the shocking incidents that have taken

place at Westbrook and Hopevale Mission, both under the control of the Minister for Health and Home Affairs. Irrespective of what the findings are, or may be, one would expect a better approach today in a democratic country than the acts of sadism committed at these institutions, which are comparable with what was done to the first white settlers in Queensland. Here again we see the policy of the present Government. They have got back to the position of past Governments of their political colour. They treat the unfortunate and the working people like convicts. As I have said before in the Chamber, the Government are living and relying on past methods to solve their problems. All these things come to mind when we are considering a vote of no confidence in the Government. They are all matters that must be raised from this side when we are talking about the people's objections to the actions of the Government.

On the other hand we have learned of the closure of the Collinsville mine and its sale to private enterprise. Like their counterpart in the Federal sphere the Government have shown the hand in favour of monopolies. It is another sell-out of the people's property, which is the policy of this Government. By such action taken at the height of unemployment, the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity has shown that he did not care whether the miners, their wives and children starved. He preferred that, rather than trying to solve the problem. Here again a very serious situation arises. It is another example of the Government's taking advantage of doing something with which they know the Opposition will not agree, while the House is not in session. Unfortunately, by the time we have the opportunity to say something about it, the position has got well and truly out of control.

**Mr. Hanlon:** They refused to call Parliament together when asked.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That is true. Before the House adjourned at the end of last session we asked that if any important issues arose Parliament should be called together to discuss them. The repercussions that the State Transport Act is producing throughout the State are affecting not only the railways but road transport as well, and that is also administered by the Minister for Transport.

Members of my party were invited to the Dalby meeting and I was present. To clear up any doubts in the mind of the hon. member for Condamine, hon. members on this side attended the meeting but only the Deputy Leader of the Party was asked to speak. He handled the task he was called upon to do on behalf of the Australian Labour Party very creditably indeed. He made the Party's policy on transport quite clear.

**A Government Member:** He sold the railwaymen down the drain, did he not?

**Mr. NEWTON:** That is not true. We on this side would never do that as we realise the important part railwaymen play in the development of this State.

When talking about farming problems we have often been criticised from the other side of the Chamber and told that we do not know what we are talking about. If one works as the right hand to a farmer one understands the problems better than do many members opposite, who have never been farmers. I have worked assisting a farmer and my experience of them is that when they protest about anything affecting their livelihood they will not rest until the problem is rectified.

I went to the Dalby meeting keenly interested in farmers' problems in relation to this Act and, from what I heard there, it is obvious that they were completely disgusted with it. I heard many say that the Act passed by the Australian Labour Party, replaced by this one, was far better than this, introduced by a Country-Liberal Government.

Whilst dealing with matters affecting public interest and complaints in the community I should like to touch on the administration of justice in this State at the present time. From the manner in which it has been administered by irresponsible people, in my opinion some review is long overdue, but what do we find? The Minister for Justice sits silent as he usually does, instead of doing something in the interests of the people.

I was greatly shocked at the recent incident in Toowoomba involving the death of a young married woman. I have received numbers of letters of protest at the punishment dealt out to her. It is interesting to note that a similar position arose in England, and it was considered necessary to amend the law so that people who were dealing out this sort of punishment could be controlled. I have here an article dealing with shoplifting, an offence similar to that involved in the Toowoomba affair. It states—

“Since then the law has been amended so that shoplifting first offenders can be imprisoned only in very special circumstances.”

It is high time something was done in Queensland about some of the decisions given by our magistrates. I hope that the Minister for Justice will consider amending the present law to afford some protection, particularly to mothers with young families who are committed for shoplifting offences as first offenders.

I pass now to a matter of vital importance that comes under the direct control of the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation. It is linked with the motion of no confidence of the Opposition. Government members are continually telling us what the Government could have done but for the effects of the

drought, yet the same hon. members last year had very little to say when the allocation for irrigation and water supply was reduced.

The Government are composed mainly of Country Party members who must know that water conservation is one of the most important ways in which farmers can be assisted. I asked a question this morning on the subject as it affects my electorate. I have among my constituents vegetable, citrus and poultry farmers, and water is of great importance even to them. The Government have discontinued the building of dams and weirs. The provision of water by such means would overcome the difficulties referred to by Government members. The figures reveal that whereas more than 1,000 employees were engaged in the building of dams and weirs throughout the State the number has now fallen to 224.

I have received letters from farmers who live near the metropolitan area, in the Redlands, Kingston and Woodridge districts. They point out the great benefit that would accrue to them and to the State if weirs were built in their areas on certain creeks.

**Mr. Wharton:** Do they all know about the farm-water scheme?

**Mr. NEWTON:** They know of it and probably they are waiting for activity in their localities. They also point out the benefit that would flow from such work for people living in close proximity to their farms. In the forthcoming year I ask the Government to give earnest consideration to further work in this field.

I have said previously that there are many ways in which the Government could in fields under their jurisdiction take action to relieve unemployment. There is no doubt that employment could be provided in the building of weirs and dams. The construction of the Moogerah Dam and others throughout the State has meant work not only for the residents of provincial cities and towns but also farmers and their own families who are feeling the effects of drought. For the purpose of assisting farmers and providing employment in the industry the Government should give urgent consideration to my suggestion.

I shall have quite a deal to say later about other industries in which action could be taken to overcome the problem of unemployment.

The Minister for Labour and Industry made one of his weakest contributions during this session when he said that the Government were concerned about unemployment, but he referred to the unemployment figures when the Labour Government took over after the great depression. The Australian Labour Party Minister was so sincere in referring to the unemployed that he included those in public hospitals and other public institutions. Labour Governments in this State have had to face unemployment since World War II. We had to face it in 1952

because of the drop in export prices and the effects of inflation, but, as usual, the Australian Labour Party was very quick to tackle the task by finding work for the people of the State. Again, in 1956, the Australian Labour Party showed its hand on this problem, and when the present Government took office in 1957 it could be said that unemployment was of little consequence. The Labour Government faced both those crises in its administration. However, unemployment has been really severe since December last, as the figures given by hon. members on this side of the House will show. It is affecting large cities and provincial towns throughout the State.

These figures are taken from the "Telegraph" of 14 May, 1961—

Town	Unemployed
Brisbane	4,775
Toowoomba	546
Cairns	282
Bundaberg	314
Ipswich	286
Townsville	257
Mackay	218
Maryborough	198
Rockhampton	192
Warwick	134
Ayr	119
Innisfail	101

The figures are indeed alarming.

**Mr. Coburn:** There was unemployment in Bowen, Proserpine and Home Hill.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That may be so.

As the hon. member for Bulimba said, those figures do not include displaced married women, and children under 16 years of age.

I now refer to a report by Mr. Laws, former Commonwealth Director of Labour and National Service. He reported that there were still 818 children under 16 years of age out of jobs. That is a very serious state of affairs. The Premier has tried to overcome the problem, according to this statement, of 17 June, 1961—

"May be beggar State

"State Cabinet will decide within the next fortnight whether Queensland should apply to become a mendicant State.

"Because of the drought and unemployment in Queensland, the Government could apply to the Commonwealth Grants Commission for special help.

"However, it will have to make up its mind quickly.

"The Commonwealth Grants Commission would have to investigate the State's claim before the next Federal Budget is brought down."

It may be true that the Cabinet decided to give serious thought to Queensland's becoming a claimant State but their reason for not

going ahead with it was that they realised that such a step would reflect on them, as this further paragraph shows—

"If the Commission approved the application, and Queensland became a claimant State, the Commission would have a right to supervise State expenditure.

"It could, for instance, influence policy on the free hospitalisation."

In other words, if the Government had decided to become a claimant State there is no doubt they would have had to break another election promise. They would have to do away with free hospitalisation in Queensland.

The other day when the Premier and the Treasurer left for the South we hoped that they would return with very good news.

**Mr. Windsor:** A sum of £5,000,000 was not a bad effort for one trip.

**Mr. NEWTON:** It has been explained by other hon. members that not even £1,000,000 will be spent in this 12 months. We will get a portion of the £1,000,000, which in my opinion will not even overcome the disability that we have suffered since the Government were returned to office last year. It will not even catch up on that lag.

What is the Treasurer's position? Since I have been in Parliament he has handled himself very well despite the sticky going. In the debate on the Appropriation Bill he showed signs of stooping to the provocative tactics of his Liberal ministerial colleagues when our points dug deeply into the policy of his Government. He said that hon. members on this side were only wasting the time of the House in asking so many questions, but our reason for asking the questions is based on our experience in the debate on the Estimates last year. When we debated the Vote for certain departments we did not even have the reports of the departments before us. Rather than be caught in the same way again we asked the questions so that we could have the information when the Estimates came before us.

The other day I asked the Treasurer to make further loan money available to assist the building and allied industries in the State. As Minister responsible for housing, it would pay him to study the building industry and the unemployment in the industry.

Gravel is used in house construction and it is taken from the river by people completely outside the building industry. Then there are other materials, such as reinforcing steel, iron roofs, fibro roofs, tile roofs, metal windows, louvre frames, and metal handrails, most of which are made in factories that employ ironworkers, boilermakers, fitters and turners. Then there are stainless-steel sinks and stoves made by sheet-metal workers, bricks made in the brickyards and cement made in the factory at Darra, in the main by members of the Australian Workers' Union. The gravel used in the honeycomb

houses now being erected at Inala is got by people who work on the river barges. I am not sure which union they are covered by. Then we have the timber that is used in building construction. Timber starts off in the forest, and it affects timber cutters, workers replanting the forests, sawmill workers, and truck drivers. The railways also get some benefit from timber, because they transport it to various parts of the State. Electrical fittings are made by electricians, and paint is also made in factories. Every type of lining other than fibrous plaster, such as Masonite, plywood, and hard-board, which is manufactured at Ebbw Vale, fibrolite, Panelyte, and Laminex, is made by workers covered by unions outside the building trades group.

Taking all this into consideration, the question I asked about getting extra loan money affected not only building workers but all the workers employed in allied industries that are most important to the building industry in Queensland. These allied industries have been of great assistance in relieving unemployment in seasonal industries. If the building industry is in full production, all these factories require labour. Most of them employ either semi-skilled or unskilled labour, and this helps to absorb the unemployed workers in seasonal industries.

I represent a number of people working in meat works, and it has already been brought to my notice that dismissals have taken place. Those men are concerned about their future and the future of their families. To be quite honest about it, hon. members on this side of the House cannot say what the position will be. We moved the adjournment of the House in February this year in the hope that the Government might take steps to convince the Federal Government that a special loan was needed to assist in overcoming unemployment in Queensland. If the Government had been successful in getting extra money, it could have been spread over various departments—Main Roads, Irrigation and Water Supply, Public Works, Agriculture and Stock, and the Housing Commission—and this would have made work for unemployed seasonal workers.

I think the Government of Queensland, like other State Governments and the Commonwealth Government, must give consideration to automation. I recently returned from a tour of the North. I found there that where employers in seasonal industries have plenty of time to overhaul their plant and machinery, new machines are being put into those plants, and when production is resumed fewer men will be employed. I know that the subject of automation has been raised in this Parliament and other parliaments, but that is not enough. Automation is having an important effect on unemployment. Some steps will have to be taken to overcome this problem, and I have no doubt that the A.C.T.U. congress now taking place will give it urgent consideration. I think it is the right

of every person in Queensland to have a job. If we are unable to provide employment for the people of Queensland we shall have to look at the 40-hour week. In order to ensure that everybody is gainfully employed and that all children leaving school will be able to find jobs, we may have to consider the introduction of a 35-hour week. We may have to consider the provision of better leave entitlements. After all, automation has some bearing on the present unemployment situation. If factories are able to make greater profits because of automation the workers should share in some of those profits.

I turn now to other matters at which the Government should have a look when they are considering a vote of no confidence. At the present time it is quite clear that the situation with the Queensland Police Department is growing worse every day. A series of allegations of police brutality, of bashings—even of sex assault—have been laid against officers throughout the State in recent months without any but surface action being taken. It is not the fault of the individual policeman that the Force's reputation is decaying at an alarming rate. The responsibility lies squarely with the top man, the Minister for Labour and Industry. It is stated quite clearly that the Minister has done very little to overcome this serious position or to allay public fears that some sections of the police are deteriorating into brutal, Gestapo-style, standover men. Within recent months, particularly within the first six months of this year, we have seen a shocking state of affairs existing in the Police Department. It is something else that should be added to the motion of no confidence before the House. The portfolio held by the Minister for Labour and Industry also should be looked at.

Much has been said about the tourist industry and in the short time available to me I shall quote from the "Gold Coast Adviser" of Friday, 14 April, 1961, which states how the people on the South Coast, who are the staunchest supporters of the Government, feel about the situation. The article reads—

"The situation with the Tourist portfolio is as bad in its own way—but it is far more damaging to the State's economy.

"Mr. Morris has made a series of trips overseas to publicise Queensland—and has successfully alienated the tourist bureau of the other States and New Zealand, and brought the wrath of the Australian National Travel Association—Australia's most powerful tourist body—down on his head.

"The officers of Mr. Morris's Tourist Department are dedicated men. They'd have to be on the pittance they are paid.

"His lack of administration has left a trail of disgruntled employees throughout the service.

"In the Tourist Bureau, Mr. Morris's senior Officers are doing what they can with the funds made available to them by their Minister's Cabinet.

"But the entire advertising allocation for Australia is not so very much greater than the £18,000 the Minister has spent in recent months on his overseas jaunts.

"When Mr. Morris arrived back from the Pacific Travel Convention in Hawaii last year he claimed that he had received excellent response and suggested that the American tourist flood was about to start.

"Yet when 12 of America's top travel agents arrived on the Gold Coast, they all said that they had:

Never heard of the Gold Coast until they arrived in Sydney.

Not heard Mr. Morris speak at the convention.

Seen none of the thousands of brochures the Minister was alleged to have distributed."

Little has been said for or against a number of other departments controlled by the Minister. They go on to name them. At the present time they feel that the Deputy Premier of the State is a one-man Cabinet because he is the Minister for Tourism, the Minister for Police, and the Minister for Labour and Industry.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin) (2.35 p.m.): The people of North Queensland were shocked recently by a statement published in "Queensland Country Life" of 10 August, that the Treasurer, Mr. Hiley, had stated that the £10,000,000 Burdekin scheme is a classical example of "another white elephant."

**Mr. Aikens:** The silliest ministerial statement ever made.

**Mr. COBURN:** That is quite true. "The Burdekin will grow enough watermelons for the whole of Australia but melons would not provide a living for a cocksparrow," he is alleged to have said. He continued—

"Until a high value crop in relation to tonnage—such as tobacco—could be grown under irrigation the area would not produce economically.

"Tobacco would have provided the answer if it had not been choked out with nutgrass and if water had not had too much salt."

To ascertain why the Treasurer, a man of extensive knowledge and one who almost invariably bases his statement on fact, should have made such an amazing statement, an unjustifiable one and one that could not possibly be substantiated when the national good is placed paramount, I undertook considerable research into what is known as the first stage of the Burdekin River irrigation hydro-electric and flood mitigation scheme and I ascertained that the expenditure by the

Department of Irrigation and Water Supply to 30 June, 1960, in respect of the Burdekin River authority was £2,007,791, and in respect of the Department of Public Lands, £965,338, a total of £2,973,129.

Why the Treasurer referred to it as the £10,000,000 Burdekin scheme is difficult to understand. The remission under the War Service Land Settlement Act Amendment Act of 1960 to settlers in the Clare and Millaroo areas of arrears of rents owing and unpaid up to 31 December, 1959, amounted to £4,846.

The Government also relieved ex-Service settlers in the Clare-Millaroo irrigation areas of their indebtedness at 31 December, 1959, of £30,699 for water charges and £989 for drainage rates. Operations during 1959-1960 resulted in deficits in the irrigation areas of Clare £34,462, Millaroo £9,829 and Dalbeg £4,161. These results did not take into consideration interest and redemption on loan moneys or depreciation.

Payments by the Commonwealth and State Governments in equal proportions towards losses on advances towards War Service land settlement amounted to approximately £400,000. If the Treasurer assessed the scheme entirely on its direct returns to the Treasury or rather on the drain it has been on the State Treasury funds his restricted outlook, the outlook of the accountant and not of the statesman towards this proposal, then we can understand why he made such a statement.

What applies in relation to this scheme applies with equal force to every other developmental scheme undertaken in any of the Australian States. The States borrow the money to implement the project, pay interest and redemption on the loan, find it difficult to recoup the expenditure on almost every developmental project without exception and the Commonwealth reaps the reward in the form of income tax, sales tax, payroll tax and excise duties. The small amount of extra money received by the States under the taxation reimbursement formula would be infinitesimal. It is, as I have said before in this House, a classic example of the State feeding the cow and the Commonwealth taking the milk.

Just what has this project—so roundly and wrongly condemned by the Treasurer—meant to Australia in general and to the Lower Burdekin in particular? The values of the tobacco leaf grown in the Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg districts since the Government took office are—

Year	£
1957-1958	498,000
1958-1959	690,000
1959-1960	931,000
1960-1961	792,000

That is an average of approximately £728,000 per annum over the years since the Government took office, and the beneficial effect that this has had on the economy, particularly the local economy, is substantial.

A high percentage of the annual income of £728,000 is spent locally and gives a great stimulus to business. I am informed that approximately 1,000 persons have been employed in the local tobacco industry for four months of the year and, if this employment is available in the slack season as it relates to the sugar industry, it is of extreme importance. It is also claimed that up to £400,000 a year is paid out annually in wages to those who find employment in the tobacco industry in the Burdekin Valley area. The scheme is not as the Treasurer described it, a white elephant, but is virtually an iron lung that keeps industry and employment alive for hundreds of people in that area.

If the tobacco- and bean- and pea-producing land of Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg were non-existent, the army of unemployed in Ayr during the slack sugar season would be swelled by at least another 1,000 persons as there are no other avenues for employment.

What we would all like to know is what the Treasurer would provide as an alternative to the Burdekin Dam scheme to absorb the army of unemployed. The answer to his statement that tobacco would have provided the answer if it had not been choked out with nut grass and if water had not had too much salt is contained in statements made in a letter over the signature of A. O. Morris, Secretary of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, Brisbane, dated 27 April, 1961. Extracts from that letter are as follows:—

“As you are probably aware the Commission decided in 1959 to investigate the economics of tobacco-growing on nut-grass infested land by growing several demonstration crops under conditions as close as possible to those applying to all Burdekin settlers. A vacant Clare tobacco farm infested with nut grass was chosen for the demonstration and in the 1959-1960 season 5½ acres of tobacco were grown yielding 9,397 lb. of leaf sold. This represents a production of 1,709 lb. per acre which would be considered most satisfactory under the best conditions. There is no doubt that the favourable growing season contributed significantly towards the high yield per acre which, however, was markedly higher than the district average. The average price for the leaf at the 1960 Brandon tobacco sales was 115.2d. per lb. the gross return per acre being £820. The net realisation after deduction of selling charges, etc., was £4,280.”

What did the senior adviser in agriculture in that year have to say about nut grass? I will read his statement—

“Most tobacco growers try to avoid cropping in nut grass land but some had no alternative, said Mr. N. H. Adams, the Senior Adviser in Agriculture in the Agriculture Department. A number of these

men, he said, had shown that profitable crops could be produced in spite of nut grass competition. The work at the Ayr Regional Experiment Station had shown that nut grass density could be greatly reduced by cultivation under the hot, dry conditions. Most of the tubers were located in the surface sod and, with high temperatures and low moisture these were killed by dehydration. When weather conditions were favourable for nut grass growth 2,4-D would give effective control. Three years of grass lay before tobacco will also suppress nut grass growth. To grow tobacco profitably in competition with the nut grass that remains after any one of these treatments, the first need is for strong healthy seedlings. Crop growth must not be checked at any stage through inadequate moisture or nutrients. For that reason, the land should be fertilised before planting. Backward patches in the newly transplanted crop should be given side dressing of nitrogenous fertilisers as soon as they are noticed. The crop should be cultivated as often as necessary to keep the nut grass under constant control.

“But although close cultivation was necessary, care should be taken to avoid disturbing the roots of the tobacco plants. After the final hilling, nut grass would not trouble a healthy tobacco crop.”

So much for the statement by the Treasurer that we could not grow tobacco because of nut grass infestation and because there was too much salt in the water. We have a statement by the secretary of the Irrigation and Water Supply Department and the statement by Mr. N. H. Adams, senior adviser in agriculture in the area that gives the lie direct to that statement. There is no salt water in the Burdekin tobacco areas, as stated by the Treasurer, but in some instances analysis of tobacco has revealed a chloride content due to soluble mineral chlorides. This, however, is evident in most tobacco-producing districts in the State and is not confined to the Burdekin.

Let us now turn to statements by the Burdekin River Authority furnished to this Parliament in 1951 in a comprehensive report, and find out what is the evaluation of the Burdekin Dam project by the eminent and highly-qualified public servants who constituted that authority. In the 40 minutes allowed me in this debate it is impossible to discuss this comprehensive report in its entirety or in detail. The contents are well known to all interested members of the House, so I have just taken at random from the report 20 unequivocal statements which reveal how highly the members of the authority value the scheme which the Treasurer has found fit to condemn so roundly.

In the report, we find these statements—

“(1) Project will bring into full production large areas of land which offer great possibilities for development.

"(2) As the scheme develops substantial quantities of hydro-power will be developed, irrigation development will be extended and the recent flood damage to the land along the river and in the closely settled delta area will be appreciably reduced.

"(3) When full development is attained it is expected that the rural and local urban population of the area will have been increased by some 50,000 persons apart from substantial consequential increases in the population of the larger cities and towns in the area."

"(4) The reservoir formed by the Burdekin dam will conserve 16 times as much water as is in Sydney Harbour, three times as much as in the Hume Reservoir on the Murray River and more than twice as much as is contained in the Big Eildon Reservoir on the Goulburn River in Victoria. It will hold appreciably more water than the seven major dams either completed or proposed in the Snowy Mountains project.

"(5) The capacity of the completed Burdekin Falls Reservoir will provide for a continuous daily output of not less than 5,400 acre feet, equal to a flow of 17,000 gallons a second, over the worst drought period likely to be experienced.

"(6) Australia cannot afford to continue allowing the waters of the Burdekin River to run to waste and to lose the potential wealth to which the construction of even a 75-foot dam would contribute. Speedy construction of the Burdekin Falls Dam to this level is therefore imperative in the national interest. That is emphatic enough.

"(7) With the establishment of permanent irrigated high-quality pastures and fodder crops in the Burdekin region, large areas will be available for the fattening of store cattle from the hinterland. Not only will the carrying capacity be increased acre for acre but it is anticipated production will be stabilised over the whole year, a necessity strongly stressed by the late Mr. E. F. Sunners, when chairman of the Queensland Meat Industry Board.

"(8) The establishment of irrigated pastures and fodder crops is also vitally needed to give security against drought losses. As pointed out by the Bureau of Investigation of Land and Water Resources, the Burdekin region is extensive enough to act as a holding area for a large number of cattle when drought threatens their very existence outside of irrigation areas.

"(9) Experimental results in the Burdekin area foreshadow that good pastures established from tropical species under irrigation could be expected to carry at least two beasts to the acre for at least part of the year. Even on a much lighter stocking rate of one beast to two acres, the increase in carrying capacity from one

beast to 25 acres under natural conditions to more than 12 under irrigation and the quicker turnoff of cattle from the irrigated pastures would much more than compensate for the water and drainage charges and higher rentals payable on the irrigated lands. Cattle-fattening on irrigated pastures in the Burdekin area can therefore be expected to be far more profitable than under natural conditions. This is quite apart from the additional security against drought losses, the benefits accruing from stabilised production and the numerous other advantages associated with production in an irrigated area with its closer settlement and resultant better services in connection with both the necessities and the amenities of life.

"(10) The irrigated pastures and fodder crops planned for the Burdekin area will not only give security against drought losses for the large numbers of cattle within the area but will provide a valuable fodder reserve available for sale to other areas in times of drought."

**Mr. Aikens:** I'll hold the Treasurer down while you read that to him.

**Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order I cannot always see the hon. member for Townsville South interjecting but I recognise his voice. I should like to assure him that after 11 years' experience in this House we have always found the hon. member for Burdekin quite capable of making excellent speeches. He does not need the help of the hon. member for Townsville South and I ask him please to cease interrupting.

**Mr. COBURN:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sure he is trying to be very helpful, and he has been, too, at times. The statements continue—

"(11) More than sufficient suitable land can be commanded by the project to take all the water available for irrigation and animal and agricultural products for which there is a certain market can readily be produced. As development of the Burdekin project proceeds the present unfulfilled demand in North Queensland for vegetables, dairy products and meat will be met, with a surplus available for supply elsewhere in Australia and overseas.

"(12) Development will be spread over a considerable period, and at all stages will yield substantial benefits commensurate with the expenditure incurred. The final expenditure of some £51,000,000 on irrigated development will make possible production with a gross value estimated to be of the order of £16,000,000 per annum, which is almost as great as irrigated production from the whole of Victoria and is equal to one-third of the capital invested.

"(13) Hydro-electric generation, with its comparatively low running and maintenance costs, operating on water which will be used again in the area for irrigation offers the best means of providing



the adequate supplies of power at stabilised tariffs which will be one of the major factors in encouraging industrial development as well as providing for the increasing demand for power from existing consumers and the expanding rural and urban population associated with the irrigation development.

"(14) The proposed hydro-electric installation will have strategic value, in that it would be less vulnerable in time of war than a thermal station on the coast. It has the further advantage of operating on replenishable water resources, thereby enabling valuable and irreplaceable coal deposits to be conserved for other essential purposes, giving relief to transport systems and the manpower pool, and providing a supply much less subject to possible interruptions, due to industrial disputes, than one based on other means of operation dependent on fuel supplies.

"(15) When the Burdekin Falls Dam is built to a final height of 150 feet, its effect in holding back flood waters will be to suppress what would otherwise have been major floods. It would have reduced the March, 1946, and even larger floods to below the level of serious damage." Serious damage does occur at intervals in the Burdekin area.

"(16) Should it be found necessary or desirable to supplement the underground supplies in the Delta, it would be possible to provide water in the area by gravitation from the main source of supply upstream.

"(17) The effect of the project in increasing the population of North Queensland and in developing its resources is such that Australia cannot afford any delay in its implementation.

"(18) The Burdekin River Authority is convinced that the project is a sound one and that its implementation is essential in both the State and the national interest. It will bring closer settlement and industrial development to an area which is at present sparsely populated and which could not be developed without irrigation."

In spite of that, the Treasurer tells us that these little tinpot irrigation schemes are to be preferred to the larger schemes. No country in the world that has developed to a high standard has ever done so without conserving its water on a large scale. Take the Aswan Dam on the River Nile, the Boulder Dam in the U.S.A., and our great Australian dams—the Burrinjuck, the Hume, and Eildon Weirs. Those are the dams that have brought about development and given a good livelihood and a very high standard of living to many of our people.

The statements continue—

"(19) Development of North Queensland and of its resources is essential if Australia is to hold this country, and must be regarded as of major importance as a defence measure. The Burdekin Project when fully

developed will have a value in the future perhaps much greater than can be envisaged today, having brought to the area a greatly-increased population, stable primary industries, protected against drought, producing much-needed animal and vegetable products, accompanying service and processing industries, and secondary industries assured of adequate supplies of water."

Those are not my words. They are the statements of the top-rank public servants of the State, men who were appointed to the Burdekin River authority. Some have passed on but others who were members of that authority which was responsible for the compilation and presentation of that report are still occupying positions as heads of various departments in Queensland. The present Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, Mr. Holt, was a member of the committee; Mr. Petersen, formerly Treasurer of the State, was also a member of the committee. Those statements are there. Either they knew what they were talking about and their report was a factual one or it was a lot of balderdash, or a compilation merely to gain some political kudos for some party. The Government never yet have condemned the report. Never have they told the people of the State, particularly the people of North Queensland who regard the Burdekin Dam scheme as the very basis on which industry in North Queensland must be built, that they are not favourably disposed towards the report presented to Parliament by that Burdekin River authority. If the report is accepted by the Government as factual, a move should be made to induce the Commonwealth Government to make money available for the implementation of that great scheme. We in North Queensland who have been so shocked by the statement of the Treasurer, because we feel that it completely undermines the scheme that has been accepted by all North Queenslanders as the basis for our development, say that the Government should dissociate themselves immediately from it if the personal statement of the Treasurer did not represent the attitude of the Government towards this great scheme.

**Mr. Walsh:** Apparently there is no truth in the rumour that you were going to join the Liberal Party too?

**Mr. COBURN:** Poor old Ted is always gossiping about scandal, but he is generally wrong.

I was very interested in the statement made the other day by the Leader of the Queensland Labour Party about the position in which the State's tobacco producers have been placed. His statement about his own area could have been applied with equal force to the Lower Burdekin area. Prior to the sale an air of optimism prevailed that had never been evident in the area before. There was a record production of leaf and the growers considered that it was the best quality leaf that had ever been presented for sale. On the first morning that the sale was

to be held I spoke to Mr. Noel Adams on the Brandon floor. I asked him what he thought of the leaf to be presented for sale. He said that in his opinion it was the best quality leaf that had ever been presented for sale. After the sale started the prices that were offered were such that they did not even cover the cost of production of most of the growers. We were told that the Tobacco Marketing Board have highly-qualified assessors. They assess the leaf before it is submitted for actual sale. One instance quoted to me was that the assessor valued the leaf at 130d. a lb. and the best offer made for that leaf by the buyers was 30d.

There is something wrong with an offer for leaf when there is a difference of 100d. for leaf that is valued at 130d. Other instances were quoted where no offer at all was made for the leaf but afterwards, they privately negotiated with the buyers to find out from them what they thought the real value of the leaf was. One person told me that the buyer told him his leaf was worth 108d. He said, "I will give it to you for 108d. because you refused to make an offer for it when it was presented to you." There is a general feeling amongst growers in the area that they have not received prices commensurate with the quality of the leaf.

I know it is very difficult to assess the value of tobacco leaf. After all, it is a personal valuation of it. It is not like sugar-cane where the juice is analysed and the sugar content of that juice is known exactly and the sugar-cane is paid for on the c.c.s. of the cane stalks. With tobacco leaf I do not know of any standard that has been established by which an analysis of the leaf is made and a value placed on it.

The year in which the low figure I quoted occurred, the growers were given a formula for an arsenic spray, and some of them told me they used the arsenic to a lesser degree than that recommended. Their leaf was entirely rejected because of the too-high arsenical content in it. Everybody associated with the tobacco industry from the growing side was sure that they had not been given a fair deal.

They did not sit down under it. Their organisation moved to try to correct the position that had arisen.

**Mr. Bromley:** They were a bit slow about it.

**Mr. COBURN:** They could have been a bit slow but I do not know whether you could have done any better. They explored every avenue that could be explored and they are still doing so. The growers themselves have not been idle. They are moving. They know what the position is just as we do, most of them better. They still have sufficient faith in the men that they elected to the Tobacco Marketing Board to feel that ultimately they will get the deal they are entitled to.

**Mr. Bromley:** The whole system needs changing.

**Mr. COBURN:** What system will you substitute for it? The trouble is that the growers are in the hands of a couple of companies. At Ayr, Wills and Rothmans, were the only two that bought on a decent-sized scale and the prices that they offered were the prices that had to be accepted or the leaf taken home again. That is what many of them had to do.

They claim that the Commonwealth Government should establish a quota high enough to enable the whole of the Australian production that is saleable to be sold. The quota was raised to 40 and 43 per cent. for plug and cigarette tobacco. The companies say, "If we use too high a percentage of Australian leaf with the American leaf, it won't suit the taste of the tobacco smokers and there will be a decrease in our sales." That is their argument but I know it is not tenable because neither they nor anyone else can say what the Australian smoker's taste is. They say, "We have sold well with the present blend," but they do not know they would not sell equally well or even better with a different blend.

**Mr. Hilton:** They are virtually saying that good leaf cannot be grown in Australia.

**Mr. COBURN:** They are.

If we are to develop our industry we should have 100 per cent. Australian tobacco leaf in Australian cigarettes and, although I am not an authority on it, never having smoked, I am quite certain that the Australian smoker would buy the cigarettes and smoke them just as he is buying and smoking the American-Australian blend used at present.

The first excuse advanced, was that the buyers would not give a decent price for the leaf because it was flat. That was corrected and the next year they said there was too much chloride in the leaf. They go on making excuses and, as they are the ones who buy the leaf, the other fellow has to sell it or take it back into his barn. He has no alternative, but we cannot build up an industry under those conditions.

I think therefore that the Tobacco Marketing Board composed of men who know the industry thoroughly, backed by the producers of tobacco, should exert the utmost pressure on the Governments until an arrangement is reached under which growers can be guaranteed that they will get for their leaf a price commensurate with its quality.

Before the sales commenced the growers in the Burdekin area did not know what type of leaf was required by the buyers. It was only after the sales that they began to make excuses for the low prices by telling them the leaf was too light, or that it was not the right colour or that its chloride content was too high, and so many of these men who had hoped to be in an excellent financial

position after the sales found themselves so financially embarrassed that they had to ask the Government to send representatives into the area to make a comprehensive survey of the whole position, so that finance could be made available to them for growing the next crop.

In my area alone there are 170 tobacco farmers. Some of the farms are let to share-farmers. At times during the picking and curing season 1,000 people are engaged in the industry, and at a time when there is no work in the sugar industry. It is such a valuable industry to the Lower Burdekin district that every effort should be made by the Government to see that the growers are given sufficient protection to allow them to remain in the industry and to make a profit. That will keep them in it.

**Mr. Aikens:** And help to develop North Queensland.

**Mr. COBURN:** Of course.

If these men and women had not been engaged in the tobacco industry, no other avenue of employment would have been open to them. They would have been on unemployment benefits, and no good comes from that.

Through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make an appeal to the Government to do their utmost to save the tobacco industry. These men were put into the industry under certain guarantees, and in some respects we must admit the Government have treated them very generously, particularly the soldier settlers of the Clare and Millaroo area. The tobacco growers of that area are not unmindful of that matter, but, just as they had reached a stage when they were on the up-and-up, these disastrous sales came on and they were given prices far below those they thought they should have received, and were thus placed in an embarrassing financial position.

**Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (3.15 p.m.):** In rising to support the amendment to the Address in Reply moved by my leader, I state that the electors of Barcoo, through me, express their loyalty to our Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth the Second. I sincerely hope that she will long reign over the British Commonwealth of Nations. We congratulate her worthy representative, His Excellency, Sir Henry Abel Smith, who has endeavoured to interest himself in all the activities of our State. By their personal contact with the people, he and Lady May have strengthened the ties between the State and the Throne.

No doubt, every electorate has its traditions, and has been represented by men who have given distinguished service. The electorate of Barcoo has a place in labour annals which is peculiarly its own. The focusing of attention on the Barcoo by-election reminded people of the original T. J. Ryan, a pioneer labour representative in this House who was later followed by a more

illustrious T. J. Ryan, the first Labour Premier of Queensland. Then there was his successor, Frank Bulcock, who served this State and the Commonwealth so ably.

**A.L.P. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. O'DONNELL:** Finally, we all remember the late Ned Davis who represented the Barcoo electorate from 1943 to 1961. His experience as a pastoral worker and a union official qualified him to serve his constituents faithfully and well. He attained a unique position in political life in that he received the love of all sections of the community. On innumerable occasions I have heard people say, simply, "He was my friend." That impresses me as to the sincerity of his relationship with those who sought his advice, help, or companionship. He was a mate to them all. Should I ever attain half the esteem in which he is held I shall deem myself most fortunate. He was gentle, gentlemanly, and courageous—a man in every sense of the word. He gave his all to his ideals. We are all better off for having known him. In his inimitable way he contributed effectively to the welfare of Queensland. His passing was a personal loss to me. It will be incumbent on me to give a high standard of service, to emulate Ned Davis and his predecessors.

Quite recently in this House there was a reference to Australian advancement. I do not think that reference can pass unexamined. There is no doubt that Australia is beginning this decade badly. Had we full employment and an annual growth equal to the average of 1950-1960, by 1970 our population would be increased by 25 per cent., our work force by 30 per cent., and our manufacturing would have doubled its output, with enormous advances in most sections of industry. There would be a minimum increase of 60 per cent. in productivity alone for the market of the '60's would have provided ample opportunities to extend local production of manufactures—an extension necessary to employ the work force and obtain needed basic materials and equipment with limited overseas earnings. For the consideration of the House I offer these figures that I have compiled. They will be of particular interest because they represent a forecast of what should have been spent by 1970—

"(1) £1,300 million to double output of electrical power.

"(2) £300 million in improving basic steel capacity.

"(3) £2,000 million on roads.

"(4) £600 million on water storage.

"(5) £500 million on post offices and communications."

During the next 10 years public works expenditure would exceed the total of the last 60 years. That is a big thing to say but it is a fact. By 1970 we would be able to build 130,000 homes as against 90,000

at present. Also there should be a development of mineral production—iron ore, coal, copper, uranium, bauxite, and asbestos. Primary industry, or course, would possibly relatively lose some prestige in our economy but wool would still be the principal product, and there would be advances influenced by irrigation, a subject that has been before the House repeatedly over the last few days and of course stressed by people with strong rural interests. It could be extended to the development of cotton, safflower and so on.

Naturally the whole of this development would open an investment field for the growth of industries and would be attractive and beneficial to those people interested in that form of activity.

The whole forecast is important in the sense that Queensland would have benefited so greatly if only it had come to fruition. However, as we know, we have the two matters I mentioned, namely, there is reduced employment and the average of the '50's in progress of work has not been kept up and it does not seem to be likely at present.

Contracting markets, too, have contributed to this unfortunate position that faces us today. Added to this there is a certain complacency existing in Australia over some facets of our position. Particularly there is a section of anti-Labour opinion which believes emphatically that there should be a reservoir of unemployed, apparently to discipline the Australian wage earners and some of the salary earners as well. It is a terrible indictment that the complacency that exists in this country should have that in mind rather than having the progress of Australia at heart.

Let me come closer to home and mention certain activities in the Barcoo electorate. I stress that the problems of Barcoo are not peculiar to that area but apply to nearly every inland electorate in the State. The eastern section of the Barcoo electorate is an extensive area of the Fitzroy basin and in this region there must be at least 500,000 acres capable of being cultivated without touching on land that it would be too costly to develop as yet. In the district there is an extensive belt of brigalow. The rainfall of 25 inches is quite adequate for the production of grain, cattle, sheep and fat lambs. These industries can be correlated, especially when lot feeding of grain is done. The cultivation of this area could increase the carrying capacity threefold with more safety to the primary producer. We hear a great deal lately about Arcturus Downs. It is mentioned whenever the subject of lot feeding is brought up. However, that is not the only property in the area that is working along those progressive lines. Iona, Barton Downs and many other properties throughout the Peak Downs and Springsure district are going in for this wonderful correlation of farming and grazing—to put it simply, breeding and feeding. I think this is the whole basis of the success of the future, east at least of the Drummond Range in Central Queensland. I know, and you know,

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the cultivation of this area will bring about a threefold production of stock. Of course, the work is not as easy as is speaking about it, and the actual application of the whole process of crop feeding has many complications. The production depends on the ability of the grazier, or the farmer-grazier, whatever we may call him, to both breed and feed. When we get down to the smaller living areas, it may not be possible to carry out that activity as well as it could be carried out on the larger properties.

Another factor that is important in this form of combined farming and pastoral activity is lack of finance. I do not think that question has been neglected by any party in the House.

Production of grain sorghum in the area this year was 40,000 tons. I ask hon. members to consider what 40,000 tons of sorghum could mean when used for crop feeding. According to experts, half a ton of sorghum will put 250 lb. on a beast in 120 days, so 40,000 tons of sorghum produced in that area for export could, if applied to cattle in the area, feed 80,000. That figure of 40,000 tons does not take into consideration the grain produced by people who divert it immediately to feeding stock on their properties.

Before 1947 there was virtually no sorghum produced in the Peak Downs region and adjacent districts. When I arrived in the Peak Downs district in 1947, only one farm was producing sorghum, and I had to take my hat off to the man who faced up to a series of droughts and stuck to his guns. He pioneered the growing of grain in the area, and today there is a great expanse of country laid open for closer settlement. I might say that it was laid open for closer settlement by the Australian Labour Party Government then in office. I spent all my earlier years there in close contact with the Queensland British Food Corporation and its activities, and no-one can contradict me when I say that that area is now under closer settlement because of the wise administration of Labour Governments in the early 1950's.

To narrow down the Peak Downs area, it includes people living right down to Springsure and north to Blair Athol. Those people have their problems. In meeting my obligations as their representative in this Parliament, I carried out a personal survey of what these people thought was essential for the development of the district. In the course of conversation, the importance of clearing the brigalow country was brought up. This will not only add to cattle production but will also contribute greatly to grain production, and it will enlarge the general activities that can be carried out in such a productive region.

I should like to digress and refer to wheat. The production of wheat in the Peak Downs area is somewhat in the nature of a fluke. When the seasonal conditions

are right we have wonderful wheat crops. Unfortunately this year there is hardly a farmer there producing that winter grain. However, we are going to have good crops from time to time and with the clearing of the brigalow belt we shall have increased wheat areas. As is well known, the wheat produced in the Peak Downs district is of high protein content. We expect the brigalow country to produce wheat of high-milling and baking quality. Other grains produced there include barley, oats, and maize, and, of course, linseed, safflower, cotton, panicum, peas and beans have been grown successfully. They illustrate what a wonderful area it is and the wonderful possibilities for future development.

I should like to return to what the farmers and graziers refer to as their grouches. I have listed eight points that will be of particular interest to the Government because they all represent points of criticism brought up not only by the Opposition but also by hon. members opposite. The first point is that electricity at a reasonable cost is required. The second point concerns better roads to railways. I next list adequate water conservation for irrigation, stock and domestic purposes. The next point, lower rail freights, is of great interest to the Minister for Transport. The adequate supply of rolling stock and faster delivery of livestock are another two points of interest to that hon. gentleman. My next point is: land valuation on cultivation to be kept at a reasonable and equitable level with uncultivated land. I refer to road transport where railways do not exist and I have listed Clermont to Mackay and Charters Towers, Springsure to Moura and Injune.

Lack of finance is the retarding factor in development and therefore liberal financial consideration over a long period would help significantly to bring into production undeveloped fertile areas. The conservation of water that is allowed to run off every year after the monsoonal rains is essential to counter any drought losses. It is of vital importance that there must be markets. It is no good producing cattle threefold or doubling the production of sorghum, etc., if you have no markets. Had there not been a drought in Queensland this year there would have been a surplus of sorghum that could have been embarrassing to the producers of that crop.

Inadequate rainfall and lack of water storage prevent the expansion of agriculture to the West. Apparently the soil is very fertile because you can see the citrus growing at Barcaldine; you can see the activity of the railway workers at Alpha in growing their vegetables; outside Barcaldine you can see where water from the Charles Lloyd weir is being used for the irrigation of small crops. Admittedly it is a small experiment but you can see these things going on even in the Blackall area where some men have endeavoured to grow grain. Unfortunately the rainfall is inadequate but these people

are endeavouring to do something. The clearing of the gidyea country and the planting of buffel grass has been well publicised. It has contributed to a revival of interest in that area. We know that if we could increase the carrying capacity of the land we would move along to resub-division and, of course, closer settlement, which is something that is greatly desirable particularly away from the coast. When we get subdivision and closer settlement we will give more opportunities to the young people to go onto that land, the land that they want to till and the land on which they want to rear animals because that is their upbringing, their life and their ambition.

To facilitate that work I suggest a research station in this area. I think it would be appreciated and would do incalculable good to the country. Before concluding on this point I should like to refer to Great Britain's capacity to take our wool. I know that Great Britain has her difficulties but I believe that if she could halt the inflationary trend she would be able to buy a great deal more of our Australian wool. We, consequently, would be able to expand our exports.

Again it comes back to what I said before. It is not much good increasing production if you have not the market. I have here Commonwealth statistics for the last financial year and in brief, in approximate figures, Japan stepped up its purchases of wool by £11,000,000 whilst the United Kingdom's dropped by £20,000,000, France's by £5,000,000, Italy's by £11,000,000, Belgium and Luxembourg's by £2,000,000 and West Germany's by £5,000,000. The total drop was approximately £51,000,000.

The countries that are reducing their purchases happen to come from the Common Market area which, of course, to me, represents something for concern. If the inflationary trend is altered, there may be a reversal of that trend and we may once more see our wool being bought in larger quantities by the European markets. That will, no doubt, contribute greatly to a revival in the 60's and perhaps some partial attainment of my previously mentioned programme might be achieved. Of course, as always, markets are our problem.

The Barcoo electorate is well served by a railway system and it is well served by its railway workers, who have demonstrated in the years that I have lived there, and in my frequent trips through the electorate, that they are loyal to their department, always seeking to improve a public utility. They are conscientious servants and it must not be forgotten that they suffer some disabilities there. They are subject to a transfer system but still they do their work and do it willingly, even though the localities are often unfavourable, living costs high and climatic conditions extremely uncomfortable at times. Some of them have not the educational amenities that are desirable.

During my campaign I travelled from Jericho to Barcaldine and called in at

every fettler's camp on the way. I can assure hon. members that no member of this House would care to live under the conditions that these maintenance workers put up with in order to earn their living. I think they are entitled to a mede of praise but I do not mean to take away credit from the services rendered by the Police Force, the teaching staff and other public servants. They, too, render wonderful service to the people of Barcoo and the State. Perhaps they live on a slightly more congenial plane because probably they are sounder financially and have less trouble in making ends meet than many of the railway employees. Nevertheless they are doing an excellent job.

I must not forget the permanent residents, because they form the backbone of the land and contribute to the wealth, prosperity and development of town and country. Irrespective of the area that may be visited, evidence of that fact can be found.

More often than not these people have to sacrifice the joys of family life and frequently have to send their children away for education, particularly secondary education. There has been an advance, of course, in secondary education in the country. I know we have four high school tops, but they are totally inadequate in 43,000 square miles. We have the further disadvantage that, when children have attained the school-leaving age, they have to be sent from the area to obtain positions commensurate with the educational standard they have reached. The people are looking forward to decentralisation. It cannot come too soon for them. They will welcome such government advances as the establishment of a central Queensland university, a teachers' training college and a Central Queensland agricultural college.

We also want some consideration under the Transport Act. We have anomalous fares and freights and they must be abolished and, by their abolition, encouragement given to the permanent or the migratory inland resident. Irrespective of the industry in which he is engaged, and whether he is a wage plug or a wealthy grazier, he still has the conviction that he is being penalised, that he has to pay a penalty for living away from the main coastal centres. That feeling prevails throughout the west.

Road transport is important and it must become more so. This service must make a reasonable contribution to a balanced transport economy. That is quite clear; it is accepted. But we cannot have road transport subject to bungling and indecision, and there should be no transport fees for persons using conveyances for hire when their journeys do not compete with rail service. Under those circumstances a fee is an imposition.

We know that Queensland has tremendous coal deposits. There are ten thousand million tons alone in the Fitzroy Basin, spread

over 1,700 square miles of country. Coal varies in type, from bitumen to anthracite coal, and of course, includes hard and soft coking coals. We have it everywhere in the Fitzroy Basin, but let us take Blair Athol. Look at the five square miles of country there, with coal 90 to 100 feet deep. It is a wonderful sight for any tourist. People come along, open their mouths and wonder. What is happening about it? Nothing at all. I think last year 140,000 tons of coal was taken out of Blair Athol. The Railway Department bought approximately 96,000 tons and paid about £140,000 for it. The rest went to private enterprise. What is the reason for lack of exploitation of this high-quality coal? Only one reason is offered—high transport costs. There will never be achievement until some strong Government action is taken to develop this field. It is a pity because the natural resources of this wonderful site have only been scratched on the surface. There is only one solution, and the Leader of the Opposition in his policy speech last year mentioned this point rather strongly, but, of course, nothing was done about it. He said that this coal should be used to produce byproducts on the field. We will develop it if we get the opportunity. There is the chance to set up an iron and steel works. I was disappointed when I examined the statements concerning iron deposits to find that their location was in the Dawson Valley. It would have been a great advantage if they had been found in the Blair Athol area. However, investigations are not complete, but my information to date is that there is no great optimism about the quality of the iron, and then, to make matters worse for Blair Athol, if this iron ore is of any use, the Premier has forecast that it will go to Gladstone. That is disappointing to me, but is probably good news for the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Blair Athol has fewer amenities than any of the other towns in the Barcoo electorate. In the last 10 years it has declined. I remember when five coal trains left Blair Athol daily. Each coal train takes out 400 tons, and that represents 2,000 tons a day, or 10,000 tons a week. That is roughly three to four times the present production. However, Blair Athol is a valuable centre. This year 27,000 head of cattle passed through the railway yards. That indicates, quite clearly, that there are other activities in the district, but it is a declining centre.

The electorate of Barcoo has played its part in the development of the State and the Commonwealth, and I have every confidence that it will continue to contribute effectively, providing the Queensland Government keep in mind the points I have mentioned. The electorate needs each Government department to take an intensified interest in its development. There are 43,000 square miles in the electorate. Should that interest be displayed and the finance be made available for irrigation projects we will see the Barcoo electorate continue to progress.

**Mr. MULLER** (Fassifern) (3.49 p.m.): I take advantage of this great privilege of speaking to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I associate myself with that important part of the resolution to express my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and the British Empire. I join, too, with the other speakers in expressing my sincere thanks to His Excellency the Governor for the excellent service he has rendered to Queensland. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I am one of his great admirers for the way in which he makes his best endeavours to see Queensland. Probably there is no greater authority today on Queensland's requirements than Sir Henry. I doubt if anyone has seen so much of the State in the time.

I should like to take the opportunity of offering my sincere congratulations to the hon. member for Whitsunday, who moved the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, and the hon. member for Aspley, who seconded it. Their practical background enabled them to speak in such a way that we could not fail to appreciate their points. As a matter of fact, I am sure their practical approach impressed the whole House.

My experience in this Assembly dates back a number of years. Going back to 1935, there are only about five of us left—the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Bundaberg, Mr. Walsh, the hon. member for Carnarvon, Mr. Hilton, the Premier and myself. I have seen some changes in that time, and I have seen the strange peculiarities and the problems that arise from time to time. It is important to deal with those problems as they present themselves in the light of existing circumstances.

I came here in the time of the depression. In 1935 there were signs that it was lifting, but conditions were still very bad. I saw the war years and I saw the change to uniform taxation. I mention those points because I think it was the change to uniform taxation and its effects over the years that brought us to where we are. I remember when the matter was under consideration. The late Hon. William Forgan Smith, sitting over here on the Government benches, criticised the idea. Later, of course, he was obliged to capitulate, as we all were, but he used these words—

“If you forfeit the right to tax, you forfeit the right to govern.”

That is, perhaps, exactly where we have drifted. Because of the Commonwealth's taking that power and of what followed, we are today practically governed from Canberra and the State has found itself to be something in the nature of a glorified local authority. Perhaps, too, I have never seen a time when the relationship between the States and the Commonwealth was so strained and stretched, almost to breaking point. We had the example last week of the

Premier rushing off to Canberra in an endeavour to adjust our financial arrangements.

Last week the Leader of the Opposition referred to our loan allocations and grants for development purposes as being somewhat niggardly. The Premier agreed that they were niggardly. This was followed by an approach by the Premier and the Treasurer to the Prime Minister. I expected that after that conference the Commonwealth would have been more generous. I was somewhat pleased when I read the joint Press statement by the Prime Minister and the Premier that we were going to receive very much better treatment but I am satisfied, notwithstanding that fact, that conditions are still niggardly. I am not going to ask you to accept my word for it but I feel sure this afternoon every hon. member will appreciate the writings of Harold Cox. He is reliable. He writes without bias. This is what he had to say as appeared in last week's "Sunday Mail"—

“At a time in the life of the Parliament when hand-outs have become the order of the day, Queensland is to get another £4.35 million of Federal money paid over a five-year term for the development of the beef roads scheme.

“By contrast, when superficial accounts are closed, Western Australia will have paid £26.8 million, or 65 per cent. of the cost of the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle rail standardisation, and the Commonwealth will have paid £14.4 million, or 35 per cent. of the cost.

“As most of the West Australian Government's share will come from the State's consolidated revenue, it is inevitable that the Grants Commission will jack up the State's special grant to meet this commitment, and the real result almost certainly will be that the Commonwealth will pay the lion's share of the money.

“Had the same nominal division of the cost of the West Australian railway been applied to the Mt. Isa railway the Commonwealth would have paid about £10 million as a straight-out contribution, whereas it is to provide nothing but to give an extra £4.35 million for Queensland roads.

“Thus the Commonwealth comes off more than £5 million better and Queensland £5 million worse than would have been the case had the allocation basis for the West Australian railway project been applied to the Mt. Isa project.”

**Mr. Hanlon:** If that is the best they can do in an election year, what will happen to us if they get back again?

**Mr. MULLER:** I know that the Premier did his utmost and was sincere; but if he is pleased with that arrangement, I still believe that it is niggardly and I am not at all pleased. Most of us thought that, with a project such as the Mt. Isa railway project, the Commonwealth Government would have

borne at least one-third of the cost. I understand that they originally intended contributing very substantially to it. If I read the financial arrangement correctly, it now appears that the Commonwealth Government are going to give the Queensland Government nothing. They will provide the loan money and the Government will pay interest on it. The £4,500,000 for beef roads is to be spread over five years, and if we examine that arrangement closely we find something like this: that about 15 per cent. of the money will be found in the lifetime of the present Government, about 60 per cent. in the lifetime of the next Government, and about 25 per cent. in the lifetime of the Government following that. One can easily make a promise to do something with someone else's money. In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is like me offering you a cheque for £500 and you going to my uncle to get the money. That is really the position.

In view of these complications, this session should be very interesting. The problems are tremendous, and I say without fear of contradiction that there was never a time when the affairs of Government in Queensland were more difficult than they are today. I believe that the position is so serious that my approach will be to do my own thinking, to speak as I think, and to vote as my conscience dictates. Summed up, that means that one does not agree with everything that is going on. I believe that every hon. member, particularly on a motion of this kind, should speak as he thinks. I never wished to adopt the role of a destructive critic, but I think the crying need for Governments in Queensland and Australia is for people to say what they think.

I represent an agricultural district, and I think I represent the producers of Queensland. As a result of my past experience, I believe I have reason for saying that because of my work in days gone by, I know something of the needs of our agricultural districts. Because of that I say that I have a duty to my district and the State.

One of the great problems at the moment is the spread of unemployment. It will be remembered that in 1935 we had a real problem of unemployment on our hands. In those years it was not created by inflation but it was because of a period of deflation. Prices were very low. People were carrying their swags. Under the Unemployment Relief Act unemployed people were given 10s. a day for three days a week, or 30s. a week. Those of us who were here at that time, or shortly afterwards, will remember that we said that if we were ever likely to be confronted with a similar set of circumstances we would mortgage our socks in order to get people back into employment. I do not wish to exaggerate the position but I have no doubt at all in my mind that within the next six months there will be the greatest wave of unemployment that the State has seen since the days of the depression. Unless

early action is taken I shudder to think of what is going to happen. I have already mentioned the position we have drifted into, largely as a result of uniform taxation, the powers of the Commonwealth and the little power of the State. I want to show how serious the position really is. We also have the further matter of Great Britain's joining the European Common Market. It raises the subject of the changed relationship between the United Kingdom and marketing organisations in Queensland. I shall have more to say about this subject a little later. Many people have never fully appreciated the worth of the United Kingdom market. In the past we have sent them all our surplus—anything we did not want. If we had no surplus, we sent them nothing.

I hope my speech today will not sound unduly pessimistic because I think that all these problems are surmountable if approached in the right way. To strike a note of optimism, I should like to refer briefly to what has been done about one great problem that has been before Parliament for the last seven or eight years. I refer to land valuation. I believe that we have achieved something as a result of a happening in the last few weeks. I am not speaking now from any political angle. Land valuations have been soaring and taxes have been following them, but I can now see a ray of hope as a result of the recent valuations in the Boonah Shire. Under the old order the Valuer-General's Department valued the land in the various shires, and any person who felt he had a grievance had the right to go before a police magistrate for a review of his valuation. Of course, it was little short of a joke because the decision reached was beyond the powers of a stipendiary magistrate. Largely as a result of my initiative in the matter it was decided that appeals should lie to the Land Court. We had a ridiculous happening in the Gatton Shire, and we all know what happened on the Gold Coast. Complaints were made and finally the decision was reached to take the appeals before the Land Court. The Gatton valuations were the first cases to be heard by the new President of the Land Court, Mr. Wright. As a result of his investigations and findings in the test cases that came before him he reduced the valuations by an average of about 33 per cent. That made the Valuer-General's Department look plain silly. In one case it was up to 40 per cent.

On the Gold Coast, as hon. members know from figures released the other day, the total valuation is about £28,000,000. The Gatton people appealed and have been given some concessions, but even now, after the reduction, on the basis struck by the Land Court the values are still at a ridiculously high and crippling level.

The Boonah shire was valued, too. Anyone who knows that country knows that it contains some of the richest agricultural areas in Queensland, in the Lockyer, Fassifern and Logan districts. A new approach has been



made to this shire by the Valuer-General's Department as a result of the judgment by the Land Court some time ago. The Boonah values have just been released and they are quite fair and reasonable. They have gone up about 2 per cent. and this adjustment places those good lands at about half the value of those in the Gatton shire.

I feel that the Gatton people and the Lockyer people have suffered the greatest injustice I have known landholders to suffer during the period I have been in this Parliament.

When the trouble started, these people appealed to me and asked for my advice. I told them what they ought to do and they have worked very largely on that advice ever since. I think that these two shires in particular—and there may be others—are entitled to justice and that something should be done to give the Gatton Shire and the Town of South Coast new valuations immediately in order that these people might enjoy some of the privileges enjoyed in other shires.

In all our industries the basis of success is in the foundations on which they are built, but if the land values are not right, nothing is right. I know that many of these values at that time were based on sales in the district, but the time has arrived when we should ignore such exceptional sales, and they are exceptional sales. After all, the value of land is what it will produce and not what some individual will occasionally pay for it. It may be said that it cannot be done, but I mention the Boonah case to show that it can be done, and it has been done. There is no reason why it could not be done throughout the State.

I suppose I have been as critical of the Valuer-General's Department as anybody. When I see this adjustment and the men he put into the area to make the valuation, and the job they made of it, I must congratulate him on his effort.

**An Opposition Member:** He knew his job.

**Mr. MULLER:** Well, the men he had engaged on it did; in some of the other cases they did not. There must be some relationship between similar classes of land. That does not mean that there is not going to be a margin of, say, £25 an acre for some and £2 an acre for others. In some cases the £25 an acre would be justified, as would the £2 in others, but there would not be a margin of £50 in one and £5 in another.

In some of the seaside and suburban lands another picture opens. Many of these things could be done with the realisation that with existing conditions, land values cannot be expected to fall and, if we are to provide relief for our landowners we should be prepared to lift the exemption. The existing exemption is approximately £3,000 but it should be at least £5,000 on suburban land and £10,000 on rural land.

I do not advocate the wiping out of land tax entirely because I say that no-one has a right to hold more country land than is reasonable.

In this matter, as in every other form of business, it is a question of business approach. I know that these values have been raised in the main because a few farmers in the Lockyer district at that time had made some money out of potatoes, onions and pumpkins, but if the position over the whole district were considered it would be found that it was not so much the land, as the business approach of the people on that land, that was responsible. That applies whether it be the land, secondary industry or anything else. We have only to watch the stock market to prove it. The success or failure of different companies depends very largely on the directors and the ability of people running those companies.

I turn now to the subject of unemployment. The Government say they have solved the subject of land valuation; I believe it is possible to solve the problem of unemployment. In my view every day a man is idle is a national loss. Further, it leads to a moral break-up. People out of work lose heart. Something must be done about it. I am not a supporter of the Douglas Social Credit System, but money should be borrowed. It is the duty of someone. Money should be found in times of stress and turmoil for the purpose of relieving suffering. It is found in times of war. We must do something to provide work for those who want it. I am not at all happy about the Commonwealth Government's approach to this matter. Most of the men who are out of work today are unemployed because of the inflationary system for which we can largely blame the present Commonwealth Government. I cannot see it in any other way. No-one has convinced me, or even attempted to convince me, that it did not start as a result of the Richardson Report some years ago. Although I agree that a member of Parliament, a Minister of the Crown, and anyone else is entitled to fair and reasonable remuneration, I could never see the wisdom of paying the Prime Minister £14,000 a year and his Ministers £10,000 a year. He may be worth it, and if the increases could be confined to those people alone the effect would not be as bad, but what actually happened? You, Mr. Speaker, know this to be a fact—everything else went haywire. The increases were then applied to higher officials. The salaries of judges and high-salary men were increased, but the ordinary worker's share of it was the sack or short work. I have been through the mill. I was not reared with a silver spoon in my mouth; I was reared among working people and I am still a working man. If anyone doubts that, he can come out and spend a day with me and I will demonstrate it. The point is that we are living out of each other's pockets and, if the working class or the ordinary worker is in trouble, it is not very long before everyone else is in trouble.

I repeat that the economy of the country has gone haywire. The credit squeeze perhaps has given some relief. Perhaps the lifting of import restrictions has given some relief, but those measures are only palliatives and we still cannot see daylight.

Let us consider some of our industries. We were discussing Mt. Isa a short time ago and what it means to the Commonwealth Treasury. The Commonwealth Government have decided to give us nothing. The contribution of that tremendous industry at Mt. Isa to the economy of Queensland would be very hard to estimate.

**Mr. Mann:** You can blame the Treasurer for that.

**Mr. Aikens:** The hon. member for Brisbane is always knocking it.

**Mr. MULLER:** We should be able to establish other industries, perhaps not on the lines of Mt. Isa. The hon. member for Burdekin today spoke about the little interest taken by the Treasurer in water conservation. I could not agree more with him. We have got to do something about it. The Commonwealth Government over the years have been talking about water conservation, but what have they done? Hon. members can go back over the years for as long a period as they care to take. I remember Sir Earle Page's visit to Queensland. He came to see me when I held ministerial office, and he asked me what might be done in water conservation, telling me that he would go back and talk to his Government. His was a voice in the wilderness and no-one took any notice of him. In times such as this when we have an army of unemployed, what would be wrong with borrowing sufficient money to engage in water conservation and so put many people to work? In Queensland we have done practically nothing to develop our water resources. It is true that we have some schemes going but they are only small when compared with what is being done in other States.

**Mr. Aikens:** You have a dam in your own area. We want one in ours.

**Mr. MULLER:** I am so pleased with what has been done in our district that I believe it should be done everywhere else. If we do not do it we will look very foolish in the days ahead.

When I was inspecting the Snowy River project there was a consultant there called Mr. Rees, an engineer. I inquired from him what they did in the United States of America. I said to him, "Do they pay interest and redemption on any of your schemes which the Treasurer expects us to pay?" He said, "There is not a plan in the world where these schemes will pay interest and redemption on the capital." I said, "What do you do in the States?" He said, "We water 16 States." I said to him, "What about the others?" He replied, "Well,

we do not think they need it." I said to him, "How much do you spend on those 16 States?" and in reply he said, "We spend 160,000,000 dollars a year, or 10,000,000 dollars in each of the States." I said, "That sounds very nice, but where do you get the money?" He said, "Our Federal Government finds the whole of it and the States pay it back at the rate of 2½ per cent. over 40 years." In other words, they really do not pay it back at all. If hon. members examine for themselves what is being paid back to the Commonwealth Treasury funds from the Mount Isa and Mareeba-Dimbulah schemes they will be amazed. The States are expected to find the money for this development out of a "niggardly" allocation, as the Leader of the Opposition described it. That statement is very true. Then, the proceeds of that investment have to go to the Commonwealth. In the name of God, how are we to get on with these things? We are entrusted with an important duty: we have to develop the State of Queensland. These things cut me to the quick every time I think of them especially as the present Government are doing so little about them.

The Commonwealth Government are endeavouring to correct an anomaly, but in my opinion, they are going about it in the wrong way. Hon. members must realise that it is not a question of how much money we have in circulation, or what we can get from the International Bank, that will straighten out the economics of the country. The only wealth we have comes from the goods we produce for sale. If we can get back into production and keep men in employment the problem will largely solve itself. I did not agree politically with the late Hon. W. Forgan Smith, but I had to admire him for his principles and for his very able way of expressing himself. He told us that there was only one way of getting out of the depression and that was by getting people back into employment. When Sir Otto Neimeyer came here, I was simple enough to believe him, that the depression was world-wide and we had to go through it, but the problem was accentuated because people were unemployed. I was in Sydney when the bank closed, and I will never forget the loss and the misery of human life. I had a brother living in Newcastle whom I went to see and I saw 1,400 to 1,500 men lying about the parks like animals. Surely to God we will not let that happen again. If it does we are not worthy of the positions we hold in this Parliament. Our great need is employment, and efficiency in these matters.

I am pleased that the Minister for Transport is here this afternoon. I asked him a question yesterday, quite a courteous question, and his reply this morning was most discourteous. What I said was not an attack on the Minister. I wished to draw his attention to the inefficiency in his department. I am not condemning every railway employee. It applies to any business. A

business must be properly managed. Every-one from the directors down must do his job. Most men are prepared to do a fair day's work but they look to wise direction.

My attention was drawn to the stupid business of selling railway trucking yards in the circumstances when others would have paid much more for them had they known. I know the Minister could not be expected to know and the Commissioner could not be expected to know, but I was told they were sold for a mere song. I just would not believe it. I asked the Commissioner last week and he told me that, to his knowledge, they were not sold at all and, if they were, someone at the Department of Public Lands had sold them, because the land had been handed over to the Land Administration Commission to sell. I went to the Department of Public Lands and they showed me a letter from the Commissioner telling them not to sell the yards and the buildings. At any rate, I received a letter from the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation telling me it was all right; that it was not sold; that no officer in his department knew anything about it. I went back like Jacky on Saturday last and said to the boys who were complaining, "Here is a letter from the Minister. It is not sold." They said, "Don't be silly. The yards are pulled up and carted away." Anyway, I found out what actually happened. This is what happened, Mr. Speaker, and I think the House should know the whole story. I can give you several other instances if I want to be nasty. I do not want to do it. In this case the men there are lifting the rails and the sleepers. That is all right. They must have offered the yards to somebody. One was sold for £2 and the other for £2 10s. and if the two were not worth £200 they would be fairly close to it. The fact remains that they were sold privately. No-one else had a chance to buy. That is surely bad business.

I simply asked the Minister if it was true and asked that he take the necessary action to see that there will not be a recurrence of it. We know that things can happen in a big business like this. The administration of the Railway Department is very difficult and no-one knows it better than hon. members. We are passing through a transition period from railways to roads. I am not going to say for a moment the State can do without the railways entirely. I do not think we have reached that stage. But these changes come, like some of the the others I have mentioned.

Therefore we have the problem of transport, too. It is hard to justify taxing road hauliers and taxing farmers excessively to carry their stuff to market when no effort is being made by the railways to carry on their business efficiently. I have had numerous complaints about the regulations under the new Transport Act and, though it is perhaps a little early to be outright in condemnation of what is being done, the complaints that have been made are justified and the people

who are being hit hard are the farmers. The further they are from the city the more tax they pay. To me it is very hard to understand why a Country Party should set itself out to tax first of all the people who have been supporting it over the years.

The regulations are full of anomalies. To begin with, the charge is excessive, and the other regulation I am very much concerned about is that dealing with the taxing of the capacity of the vehicle. I want to point out to hon. members how it operates. Take carriers in my district who are carrying farm produce and putting it over the scales. Take one with an 8-ton truck or a 10-ton truck. One man told me the other day that he was 28 lb. over weight and he was told, "Don't let that happen again." I ask the Minister to note that. Anyone who is prepared to give the matter a little common-sense thought will realise that with a load of potatoes or pumpkins or onions or anything you like you cannot know for certain what is in it. You can be a few hundred pounds out, or even more. What is wrong with allowing a bit of latitude? I understand that in New South Wales an allowance of 10 per cent. is made, and if a person is any more than 10 per cent. over, he is in trouble. Let us not jump on them in this way.

Then there is the return journey. People in farming districts usually try to get some loading for the return journey. If one has a 10-ton truck, one will have some loading but probably nothing like 10 tons. The carrier cannot now carry 2 or 3 tons. If he does, he has to pay this excessive charge and then pass it on to his customers. That shows a lack of practical common sense.

Just to show that it is almost impossible to comply with all the conditions laid down, I refer to the subject of axle loading. I do not know whether the Minister has heard much about that, but I am sure he has. A 16-ton semi-trailer probably carries 4 tons on the front section of it. That means it has 6 tons on the centre axle and 6 tons on the back. Owners of these vehicles tell me that is impossible if they load the vehicles as they should be loaded, because they should have much more on the back axle than they have on the others. In effect, this means that they commit a breach of the Act. I heard of one case only a day or two ago. I have no hesitation in mentioning the name of the firm. It was Tancred Bros., people who have made a great contribution to the economy of the country. They told me that there is no way in the world they can overload the axle weight on one axle—

**Mr. Chalk:** You know that the whole complaint you are making is in connection with the Main Roads Act and has nothing to do with the State Transport Act.

**Mr. MULLER:** The Minister is imposing the tax.

**Mr. Chalk:** I am not imposing the tax.

**Mr. MULLER:** The Minister can pass the baby to the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads, and Electricity, but it is all the one thing. It never happened before, and all this is done under the State Transport Act. The charge is bad enough, but it is just impossible to comply with some of the regulations under the Act. I believe that the unrest that has occurred throughout the State since the introduction of the legislation could have been avoided.

I should like to deal briefly with the threat hanging over our heads in regard to the entry of the United Kingdom into the European Common Market. The United Kingdom is obliged to join the the European Common Market for political, social and economic reasons, I believe. France, Italy, Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands held a conference in Rome and laid down a constitution, and, as I see it, the United Kingdom has no alternative. She has to go into it or go down. Unless she does, manufacturers will be unable to sell their manufactured articles. Markets may be difficult to find—I am not going to say impossible—and this, in addition to the other things I have mentioned, is a further problem in the Government of this State.

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (4.29 p.m.): I wonder whether, instead of speaking, I might be doing a greater service to the State if I moved an extension of time for the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. I hope he has further opportunities to make contributions to the debates in this House.

As one of the older members of the House, I offer my greetings to the new Member who has moved the motion that is the subject of this debate, and to which an amendment has now been moved. I sincerely hope that, as time goes on, he will reflect on the concluding part of the text of this important motion.

If he should do so he will find it impossible to reconcile the plea that our labours may tend to the advancement of the State with the general policy of the Government he supports.

This Government, like the previous anti-Labour Government of 1929-1932 have already demonstrated their incapacity, and proved that the labours of their members are directed towards the advancement of vested interests at the expense of, and to the detriment of, the State.

The Premier, who leads the major section of the two groups that form the Government, is obviously paying dearly for the honour of bearing the standard. No doubt he must often think of that quotation from King Henry IV, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," and how easily it could be adapted to include Premiers.

It is pitiable to see the humility he has suffered in order to retain office. It was tragic to hear his joining with the Liberal group to damn the political soul of one of his staunchest and oldest friends, an

ex-Minister for Public Lands, the hon. member for Fassifern. The only crime he committed was to rebel against the wicked influence of vested interests, which, as I said previously, were dominating the policy of the Government.

Time after time over the past four years of his premiership we have witnessed many occasions when he has been similarly forced to surrender his personal views for the sake of political expediency.

Almost every legislative act of his Government has been levelled against the very people his section of the Government professes to support—the useful people living in the country areas of the State. Only a few weeks ago he was forced to journey some 300 miles to Roma to try to excuse that most iniquitous piece of legislation known as the State Transport Act introduced by the minority group or city interests of the Government. His inglorious retreat from Roma was comparable with the retreat from Moscow of a dictator with his tail between his legs about 150 years ago. No-one knew better than the Premier that he was faced with a hopeless task. According to newspaper reports, he left the meeting and the town of Roma a very dejected man.

The State Transport Act and Regulations are bad, if for no other reason than they discriminate against people living in the country. The city dweller who sells his products in the country sells them on a free-on-rail Brisbane basis, but when the country dweller sells his products in the city the freight must be borne by the producer. In effect, this means that the city dweller is not very much concerned about the anomalies or the injustices of this piece of class legislation.

Other examples of this cold war on primary producers can be found in the Stamp Duty Act, the Stock Acts, the closure of branch railway lines, and the curtailment of subsidies to local authorities, all of which are contrary to the professed policy of the party to which the Premier owes allegiance.

There is no need to remind him that life is "bitter" with the Liberals—bitter aloes has nothing on it. But it is poor comfort to the people of Queensland to see country towns being depopulated, industries languishing and development halted because a few ambitious, power-crazy, city smarties are able to exploit the weakness of Country-Party members of this House.

No country can afford to discount the value and the necessity of primary production, and if the Liberal Party continues to exercise the same evil influence over the Government as it has done over the past four years the future of this rich State cannot be viewed with optimism.

The attitude and utterances of the Treasurer towards primary production, already referred to by previous speakers, are typical of a man who has never grown a sweet

potato, but who has certainly cultivated a very plausible style of persuading his less sophisticated Country Party colleagues in the Government that they only represent the wood-and-water joey members of the community.

Let us read some of his utterances, published in "The Courier-Mail" of 9 August, 1961. Referring to irrigation planners he said, "They have been carried away with the dream of making a Sahara blossom like the rose." In the next column of the same paper he goes on to say in defence of the Common Market—

"Australia would have to produce better, . . .  
a real city outlook—

" . . . sell vigorously and pack more attractively and efficiently. We have not yet reached the ultimate in any one of those.

"Australia's exports could be expanded because there were steady signs that country after country was having difficulty in producing enough food and raw materials."

Those two inconsistent remarks came from a man who more than any other person has manoeuvred the Premier into the unhappy position he finds himself in today. If the Treasurer and the minority section he and his Liberal Party colleagues truly represent, maintain their wicked influence over this Government they will succeed in making a Sahara out of all our rich fertile land outside a small radius of Brisbane, and a Cairo of Brisbane itself.

To them water is a foreign matter only useful for running under bridges or to float boats on.

Only a day or two ago "The Courier-Mail" had an article on the largest citrus orchard in Australia. I commend that article to hon. members. The hon. member for Burnett will be familiar with it. At the same time I remind hon. members that without the weir at Mundubbera, this and many other orchards in the area, would not be producing half as much fruit as they are at present.

**Mr. Wharton:** I agree.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I am glad that the hon. member for Burnett who is familiar with that country, once in my electorate, agrees with me in that statement. I remind the hon. member that, directly or indirectly, he is condemning that land by supporting the Treasurer and his Liberal Party friends in their destruction of Queensland.

**Mr. Wharton:** If you had listened to my speech the other day, you would know that I said almost the same thing.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I am reminded by the hon. member that he did criticise them. I remember his giving me some of the names of what he called Liberal Members at a Country Party meeting. I said, "What did they say?" He said, "Oh, I did not let them hear me." I think that is typical.

The Treasurer, like most of his kind, criticises the farmers for what he alleges is lack of efficiency, but as Treasurer he starves the Department of Agriculture and Stock of funds for research and experimentation. His likening of our rich agricultural lands to the Sahara Desert is due to a bad form of ignorance and contempt for the people who are doing a most useful job in cultivating areas such as the Lockyer, Burnett and Dawson Valleys.

A few weeks ago I visited the Callide Valley where the rainfall, as in the rest of Queensland, has been a great deal below average for four successive years, and it was delightful to see the green fields of lucerne and other green crops.

In a previous speech I referred to one farmer who had grown over 100,000 bales of lucerne the previous year. Only a few weeks ago I visited another farm in the district. The farmer had 80 acres of lucerne. He explained to me that his electric light account for the previous two months was £251. The irrigation pump was driven by electricity. The farm was a very pleasing sight. I am not exaggerating when I say that it was difficult to find a weed on the farm. He told me he was sending every bale of lucerne he could produce to the dry Townsville area. Despite these things we find that a man who has never been out of Queen Street, and has never taken an intelligent interest in the affairs of farmers, and in the way food is produced, is condemning the men who planned this work, and saying nasty things about them. It is shocking and startling particularly for a member of the Cabinet and Treasurer of the State. The productivity of this great State is limited by two factors only, the failure of our politicians to recognise the importance and value of irrigation, and electricity in country areas.

The Treasurer referred to the many countries that were finding it impossible to feed their people. If he would only take the opportunity to visit one irrigated farm on the Dawson he would come away convinced of his crime against civilisation and Christian principles in condemning irrigation.

He admits that the Burdekin area could supply enough melons and root crops from its irrigated farms to supply Australia, but says that it is not economically possible to transport these products to the market. Those are his words. Assume it is not economically possible to take those products to the market. If we cannot take the melons to the people, let us take the people to where the melons and root crops are grown. He cannot see a mile past the Brisbane Post Office. He does not understand or appreciate the problems of the State. If he stopped to think about the matter he would realise that the Government have done more to depopulate country area than any other Government have done to populate them.

**Mr. Nicklin:** That is unkind.

**Mr. BURROWS:** It is not a bit unkind. I remind the Premier that with me he is in the evening of his political life. Would it not be pleasing to be able to say later in life, having regard to towns such as Monto, Biloela and others in the Dawson and Upper Burnett areas, as well as the sugar areas of the North, "I led the Government that were responsible for the creation and establishment of those towns." When Government members condemn the Labour Party they should remember they are condemning the people who created these towns. The Premier today is leading a Government that is doing its damnedest—and I say that advisedly—to depopulate the towns and destroy the work of the statesmen who preceded them.

The Treasurer is not so unintelligent that he cannot understand that proposition, but he must serve the vested interests which have set him and his party the task of building up the cities at the expense of the country areas. The more we examine our problems the more convinced we will be that most of them are unnatural, as no country has been better endowed by nature than this State. It has bigger reserves of coal and bauxite than any other country in the world, huge deposits of all essential minerals, millions of acres of undeveloped rich fertile land with billions of gallons of unused water flowing into the sea every day. Its climate encourages the commercial production of almost every fruit, vegetable or cereal known to man. It can produce two crops of potatoes a year compared with one in European countries, such as the United Kingdom, and Germany, where this vegetable is one of the main items of food for the people.

What are we doing to obtain something like full value from nature's generosity in giving us these vast resources? The answer is nothing. Our coal and bauxite are exported to less fortunate countries for use in the manufacture of finished articles that we are forced to buy from them to provide profits for agents and middlemen who neither toil nor spin. More men are employed exploiting our farmers and primary producers, or policing Government regulations designed to handicap and annoy, than are employed in actual production. If we build an electric power-house it is situated as far as possible from the coalfields that provide its fuel which represents 70 per cent. of its generating costs, and when it is completed, it is found that its capacity is incapable of supplying the demand although the cost of electricity to the consumer is about twice as much as it should be if common sense, the rarest of all our products, had played its part in its design and location.

I asked a question in the House, and only a few days ago the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity was forced to admit that the coal-mine owners had indicated that they could supply coal to the Brisbane powerhouse at 45s. a

ton at the pithead and he had to admit too, that the Coal Board was allowing them 61s. a ton. Sooner than insist on the cheaper price being enforced, the higher one is allowed to prevail for no other reason than to try to save the face of a few incompetent public servants.

We read reports of graziers' meetings drawing attention to the exorbitant profits of the smart Alecs who corner the supplies of meat and the benefit that would accrue if the grading of meat were enforced, but no action is taken by an unsympathetic Minister, whose real master is the exploiter. This is the same Minister who told the hire-purchase firms—and I am referring to the Minister for Justice—that they were too modest in their charges to those unfortunate members of the community who are forced to use this form of finance as a means of obtaining articles necessary to reasonable living standards.

**Mr. Windsor:** When did he say that?

**Mr. BURROWS:** He told a conference of the hire-purchase people before he introduced the Hire-purchase Act, and he allowed them to charge 20 per cent. interest.

**Mr. Chalk:** They reckon you are getting 10 per cent. on your money.

**Mr. BURROWS:** It would not matter if I charged 1,000 per cent., I would not get 2s. a year.

All these and many other economic and social crimes, which are showing an alarming increase, over the past four years can be fairly charged against the present Government led in name if not in deed by the hon. member for Landsborough. I refuse to believe he has the ingenuity or intent to be personally responsible for the degeneration and degradation this once-proud State has suffered at the hands of a Government not worthy of the responsibility of governing, but he is guilty of that weakness of political character which has enabled these unscrupulous forces—including the hon. member for Windsor, who wants to butt in—behind the Liberal Party to bring about this tragic position.

This State and its people deserve much more consideration than they have had from both our State and Federal Governments and neither can justify their own lack of responsibility by putting the blame on the other. Over the last few months it has been just a case of passing the buck backwards and forwards and people in the State are allowed to languish, unemployment to grow, and all the evils allowed to flourish.

The Premier and his colleagues have shown themselves to be no match for the smart boys at Canberra and it has taken them nearly 12 months to wake up to the fact that Queensland was sold a pup on the financing of the Mt. Isa railway project.

The Treasurer's fantastic scheme for impoverishing the State by dissipating its reserves in the hope that it would qualify

for special Federal grants has proved a very sorry venture. He was going to reduce Queensland to a condition so low that it would qualify for application for a special grant as one of the poorer States. At the time, we warned him he would be like the man who dissipated his estate in order to qualify for the age pension only to find after he had spent all his money that he was still refused the pension. That is exactly what happened to Queensland. Every reserve built up by previous Labour Governments was dissipated. And what happened? We had no money in reserve and Mr. Menzies simply gave him the cold shoulder and told him the story about the ant and the cricket.

The only concession that this State has received from the Federal Government has been for beef-cattle roads. We read in the "Telegraph" an article only today pointing out that Mr. Menzies has had the proposal on ice waiting for a big enough squeal from the Premier of Queensland. The article was not written by a political writer, or by a writer attached to a political party, and I commend it to the Premier. It points out that Mr. Menzies had the beef-cattle-roads proposal in cold storage waiting for the Premier to squeal so he could dish it out as a sop to keep him quiet about the financial treatment on the Mt. Isa railway proposal and other matters to which he had turned a deaf ear. I tell the Premier now that it was not as a result of any representations made by the Government that concessions were made in regard to the beef cattle roads. If anyone deserves any thanks, Queensland will have to thank Vesteys. Vesteys' contribution to the Liberal Party's funds for the next Federal election was the thing that influenced the decision.

**Mr. Chalk** interjected.

**Mr. BURROWS:** The Minister knows as well as I do that Sir Thomas Playford is the man who handles their money. He is their "Mr. Fixit", and that is why South Australia gets such favourable treatment from the Liberal Party.

**Mr. Chalk:** Sir Thomas is Mr. Fixit?

**Mr. BURROWS:** He is Mr. Fixit as far as Vesteys' funds are concerned.

**Mr. Aikens:** You are nearly as big a cattle man as Vesteys. How much do you sling them?

**Mr. BURROWS:** I give them the interest on my overdraft. The hon. member for Townsville South seems to take a sadistic delight in trying to build me up as a capitalist. If I have not achieved very great distinction, I want to tell him that I have not been far off achieving it over the last three years. It gives the hon. member much pleasure to compare this little bit of dirt, this small farm, with a big cattle ranch, and even the Treasurer chaffs me a little about it. I am very proud that I have this selection. Although the two previous selectors forfeited

it and walked off it, it gives me a lot of fun. I am serious when I say that I was taking 20 tablets a day when I acquired it and that over the last three years I have not taken an Aspro. As I say, it gives me a bit of fun, and if the hon. member gets as much fun out of it as I do, I do not begrudge him that. I think I might achieve some distinction on the financial side if I hang on to it. I have had three successive deficits, so I am running a good second to the Treasurer.

**A Government Member:** When are you going to walk off it?

**Mr. BURROWS:** If I do have to walk off it, I hope I do not have to ask a member of the Liberal Party for a lift.

Much publicity has been given over the past two years to the possibility of developing coal exports from coalfields in the Dawson Valley through the Port of Gladstone. There is no doubt that the contributions such exports would make to the economy of Queensland would be very acceptable, and could play an important part in restoring the economic balance that we all desire to see, and which some of us think might be possible in spite of the Government's policies.

The export of this coal would be impossible if it were not for the enterprise and efficiency of the Port of Gladstone, and no credit or thanks are due to either the Federal Government or the State Government for that. The port authority in Gladstone has staked its whole financial future on the success of this venture, and hardly a week passes without a request being made to it to spend huge sums to improve the port's capacity.

This authority up to date has shown no profit on the million tons or more of coal already exported as competition is so keen that no coal would be exported if the port charges were fixed on an economic basis.

These charges will have to be increased if the port authority wishes to remain solvent, and if increased, competition will favour southern ports where the facilities and improvements are heavily subsidised by the Federal Government. Some idea of how viciously opposed the Menzies Government have been to the coal trade of Central Queensland will be held by the older hon. members who should remember how they subsidised the importation of African coal to Victoria 10 years ago to the extent of £7 per ton, to the detriment of Callide coal exports to that State. History is repeating itself. At the present time the Federal Government are heavily subsidising the installation of plant in New South Wales coal districts, but they have not made any contribution for similar development in Queensland. At the present time the Gladstone Harbour Board, only a very small body in comparison with the State and Federal Governments, is subsidising the export of coal to

Japan by reason of the fact that they are charging only 2s 8d. per ton to pick up coal off the stockpile and load it into the ships, and paying for all the labour necessary in that process, together with supplying plant. Any additional improvement that the Japanese authorities require costs money. The Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity, and the Treasurer, invited the Gladstone Harbour Board to provide this service, and as a result the Gladstone Harbour Board finds itself bankrupt, just like the Rockhampton Harbour Board. In the meantime, because of the subsidies made available to the southern States they will capture our trade and we shall be left lamenting.

Only a fool or a knave could believe that we have nothing to fear from the suggested entry of Great Britain into the European Common Market. If it eventuates, Australia as a whole, but Queensland in particular, could never be in a worse position to face the emergency, thanks to the incompetence of both the Federal and State Governments.

Our economic defence is just as important as our military defence. It would not be idle to claim that the present value of the thousands of millions of pounds expended on military defence since the last war would be less than one or two million pounds. On the other hand, money spent on roads would have permanent value, both from an economic and defence point of view. Equally as important would be a substantial growth of population in country areas, but sad to relate, and to the everlasting disgrace of the anti-Labour forces in charge of the Federal and State Governments, our rural population is either stationary or declining.

In my opinion no single factor could stimulate a growth of population, apart from arresting the trend of the past three years in Central Queensland, more than the establishment of a major power house in this area. But notwithstanding the importance and outstanding merit of such a proposal the Government are fighting a delaying battle in the matter.

Mr. Speaker, I must confess that my vocabulary is totally inadequate to describe the misfortune Queensland has suffered by the election of this weak-kneed, anti-social, meddlesome, narrow-minded, tax-hungry, power-drunk, hotch-pot Government. Is it any wonder that any intelligent or sensible person would be disgusted and even despair at the future of this great State, when one sees what is going on? When one sees men like the hon. member for Fassifern, who spoke just prior to me, standing up, one must congratulate them. They have at least shown signs that if they did not have any conscience at one time in their political lives they have at least developed one since.

I sincerely hope that the murmurings and rumblings in the ranks of the Government parties will not prove to be as we have often experienced them to be, a dry storm. I

sincerely hope that the rumblings and murmurings are an indication that there are still some hon. members of the Government parties who do honestly believe that this State deserves a much better Government than it has suffered over the last four years.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Jones, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5.7 p.m.

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