

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 1951

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

QUESTIONS.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF PRICES.

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

“1. What is the date of the latest report of The Commissioner of Prices either under the Profiteering Prevention Acts, 1920 to 1938, or other prices legislation?”

“2. What was the period covered by that report?”

“3. Has any provision been made for corresponding reports to be furnished by The Prices Commissioner under the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1948? If not, what is the reason for the omission?”

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

“1 to 3. The date of the last report under the Profiteering Prevention Acts, 1920 to 1938, was 15 September, 1948, and it covered the period 1 July, 1947, to 30 June, 1948. No provision was made in the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1948 for the furnishing of a report by the Commissioner of Prices. The matter will receive consideration when the next Amending Act is under consideration.”

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer—

“1. What was the expenditure for each department in 1950-1951 from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Fund?”

“2. What was the credit balance of the Fund at June 30, 1951?”

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

“1. Department of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, £1,345 3s 8d.; Department of Public Lands, £12,942 14s. 9d.; Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, £849 11s. 11d.; Department of Mines, £17,384 1s. 9d.; Department of Railways, £100,000; total, £132,521 12s. 1d.

“2. £4,141,559 12s. 7d.”

PRICE OF IMPORTED GALVANISED IRON.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

“In reference to the recent published statement that the Housing Commission is importing from Belgium 50 metric tons of 24-gauge galvanised iron at a total estimated expenditure of £9,100 Australian, as this amount works out at £182 per ton,

will he kindly explain the reason for such importation when Brisbane firms are advertising galvanised iron at £165 per ton delivered to the purchaser, which is the equivalent of £157 10s. per ton c.i.f. and e.”

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

“When in London the Agent-General for Queensland brought under my notice that 50 tons of 24-gauge Belgian corrugated tank-making iron at the lowest f.o.b. price, £128 5s. sterling per metric ton, then available, was obtainable for early shipment in August. This price represents a c.i.f. and e. price of £174 15s. 4d. per long ton. The additional cost is for landing, cartage, handling, and delivery to Commission’s depot. Today’s price for Belgian iron c.i.f. and e. is £174 15s. 7d. Japanese iron is now offered at £165 per ton c.i.f. and e., but it is unsuitable (especially in spelter of not more than 1.25 oz. per sq. ft.) for tank making. The Agent-General was arranging shipment of iron for the Railway Department and offered to the Commission 50 tons at the same price. The Agent-General advised that iron was in short supply and that supplies would become more difficult to secure. The price was the best then available.”

LIQUOR LICENCES, RAILWAY
REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

Mr. MORRIS (Mount Coot-tha) asked the Attorney-General—

“1. In regard to liquor licences issued to railway refreshment rooms, do these licences permit—

(a) The selling of liquor at any times other than during the stopping time of a train at that station;

(b) The sale of bottled liquor at any time?

“2. If so, is the licensee permitted to sell any liquor to other than bona fide travellers, and, if not, what precautions are they required to take to ensure that this provision is adhered to?”

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

“1. Section 164 of the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1948, covers the sale of liquor at railway refreshment rooms. Under this section the Commissioner for Railways is authorised to issue a licence to the lessee of the railway refreshment room at any station. The section provides that a person so licensed may sell liquor at a railway refreshment room to which the licence attaches and shall for that purpose have and be entitled to the same rights and privileges as a licensed victualler has under the Liquor Acts. The section further provides that—(a) Such liquor shall be sold only within a reasonable time before and after the arrival or departure of any passenger train at or from such station between the hours of eight in the morning and eight at night; (b) During any time

when the premises of licensed victuallers are required under this Act to be closed, liquor shall only be sold or supplied to passengers who are in possession of and produce to the licensee, or to any inspector or police officer, a ticket or authority authorising them to travel by railway for a journey of at least twenty miles beyond such station. The above conditions apply to the sale of bottled liquor.

“2. See answer to Question 1.”

SORGHUM FOR HOME CONSUMPTION, QUEENSLAND-BRITISH FOOD CORPORATION.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) asked the Premier—

“As the ordinary Queensland grower is compelled to supply the State’s requirements of grain sorghum at less than the export price, will he kindly advise what proportion and what quantity of such grain will be provided for home consumption out of the current season’s crop of the Queensland-British Food Corporation?”

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

“The Queensland-British Food Corporation has provided 12 per cent. or 1,216 tons for home consumption from the current season’s crop.”

REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION ON SUGAR
INDUSTRY.

Mr. WATSON (Mulgrave) asked the Premier—

“When will the report of the Royal Commission on the sugar industry be made available to hon. members?”

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

“The report of the Royal Commission on the Sugar Industry is now in the hands of the Government Printer. The report will be tabled and copies made available for the information of hon. members immediately it is printed.”

PATIENTS AT PEEL ISLAND LAZARET.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“1. What amount of clothing and personal effects are patients allowed to take with them when they are discharged from Peel Island?”

“2. Are relatives and friends allowed to visit patients at Peel Island on Sundays? If not, why not?”

“3. Are patients at Peel Island receiving adequate food? If so, what amount and variety of food is allowed per patient per day?”

Hon. H. H. COLLINS (Tablelands—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock), for **Hon. W. M. MOORE** (Merthyr), replied—

“1. Naturally used clothing is not permitted to be taken from the Lazaret. When a patient is due for release on

parole he is permitted to order a complete outfit of clothing, and this is paid for by the department.

"2. Yes.

"3. Meat, including beef, pork, and lamb, poultry, fish, milk, butter, eggs, fruit, vegetables, and foodstuffs generally are provided on a liberal scale for the 42 patients at Peel Island. The present Medical Officer and Acting Superintendent (Dr. Gabriel) has reported that the food is well prepared and is adequate in all respects. Thirty-six (36) dozen eggs and fifty-four (54) lb. of butter are provided weekly, and the monthly cost of meat is approximately £250. Approximately 300 gallons of fresh milk and 40 pints of cream are forwarded to the Institution monthly. An examination of fruit and vegetables orders shows that, for example, during July, cooking and eating apples, bananas, lemons, mandarins, oranges, pears, pineapples, and tomatoes were purchased, whilst the vegetables supplied were cabbages, carrots, cauliflowers, beans, beet-root, celery, lettuce, onions, peas, potatoes, pumpkin, rhubarb, swede turnip, and sweet potatoes. The cost for the month of fruit and vegetables was £228."

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council (6) under the Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948 (23 August).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO PREMIER.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier) (11.12 a.m.), by leave: It is with regret that I have to inform the House that His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council and by proclamation issued under the provisions of The Officials in Parliament Act, 1896 to 1950, has today granted to the Hon. E. M. Hanlon, Premier and Chief Secretary, leave of absence with pay for a period of six calendar months from and including 30 August, 1951, on account of illness.

I am sure that hon. members on both sides will regret the necessity for the Premier to avail himself of this leave and will join with me in wishing him a speedy return to health.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 28 August (see p. 162) on Mr. Lloyd's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. BROSAN (Fortitude Valley) (11.14 a.m.), who was received with Government "Hear, hears," said: On this the first occasion I have had the privilege of addressing this august Assembly I should like to refer to the loss sustained by the constituents of the Fortitude Valley electorate, this

Parliament, the people of Queensland, and particularly the loss sustained and endured by the widow and children of your immediate predecessor, Mr. Speaker, the late Samuel John Brassington. It is not my intention to reiterate his many sterling qualities or to further extol his virtues, but I should like to say—and I trust I shall not be misunderstood—that I am fully seized and cognisant of the magnitude of the task confronting me in upholding the dignity of this Parliament and representing the constituents of Fortitude Valley on the same level and at the same high standard as was set by the late Mr. Brassington.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROSAN: Many hon. members have expressed their sympathy with our Premier in his illness, and we have just heard of his being granted six months' leave of absence. I desire to be associated personally with those expressions of sympathy, and I believe that it would not be out of place for me to mention here that many of Queensland's Premiers have been national figures. Names that come readily to my mind are T. J. Ryan, E. G. Theodore, and W. Forgan Smith, to mention but a few. Those men, because of their ability, their knowledge and their perspicacity, have been recognised throughout Australia, and with them we must associate our present Premier, Edward Michael Hanlon. He has established himself; his judgment has been accepted and his influence has always been exercised for the common good of the workers. I suggest that it will be some comfort to him during his period of convalescence to know that his deputy, our Acting Premier, has assumed his mantle with such credit to himself, and this State as a whole, as is evidenced by the encomiums that have been heaped on him by public men, friend and foe alike, and by the Press of Australia, a large section of which is notoriously anti-Labour.

On the opening day of this, the second session of the 32nd Parliament, I listened with interest to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, Sir John Lavarack, and to the motion that is now before the House. I subscribe personally to the motion, and at this juncture I should like to commend and congratulate the mover and the seconder for the manner in which they fulfilled their duties and for the contributions that they made to this debate. I should like also to congratulate the hon. member for Kedron on his election to this Assembly, and I suggest that his was a powerful victory for the Labour Party. For those who think there should be more of it, I should like also to congratulate the hon. member for Bulimba on his re-election.

In my opinion, the Governor's Speech was a sane, sound and very well reasoned dissertation. The Governor's Speech is something that should not be made light of or ridiculed; it is synonymous with the King's Speech that is delivered in the House of Lords. In this State His Majesty's representative delivers that Speech, and we should not make light of it. Imagine my disgust and dismay, therefore, when I read the "As I See It"

column of the Brisbane "Telegraph" last Friday evening, in which none other than the Leader of the Opposition made a burlesque of the Governor's Speech in the manner of a fifth-rate vaudevillian. He concluded his lampooning by saying, "What has posterity ever done for us?" The men who rallied to the colours in 1914-18—and he was one of them—fought for posterity. At that time, I suppose I came within the category of those who belonged to posterity, and today I am proud of what was done for me and mine. I do not think that was a very nice reference, coming from the leader of a party whose members say that we must have better men in Parliament and must uphold its dignity. The members of the Labour Party have always upheld the dignity of Parliament and I trust always will.

I want to make a suggestion now, although I realise it cannot be implemented at the moment, on account of the shortage of materials and labour and on account of other factors too. I realise that the Governor's Speech indicated the programme before the Government, which of itself will take time to carry out under present circumstances. I believe that the Governor's Speech, to put it in a few words, was a panoramic portrayal of the planned programme of this Government. With all that Governments must look to the future and with the growth of this city, we could do worse than prepare a sports arena where we could have international contests in swimming, football and other sports. It could be used for the playing of the Davis Cup matches. This year we had the spectacle of the bodies playing various football codes finding it difficult to obtain grounds on which to play their international games. I do not suggest that the more fortunate codes that already have playing fields are not entitled to retain them but I do suggest that we should prepare for the growth of this city and I have in mind the use of an area that is ideally situated and will lend itself to the creation of a sports amphitheatre. The land I refer to belongs to the Brisbane City Council and it may be suggested that this is a matter for the council itself but so is the construction of bridges across the Brisbane River. Governments, however, have always helped the council in financing the construction of bridges in the past and have then handed them over to the council with little debt attaching to them. The area I refer to is bounded by College Road, Bowen Bridge Road and Gilchrist Avenue.

Mr. Power: In the Baroona electorate.

Mr. BROSAN: It is some 10 acres in extent and as I am reminded by the Minister, it is in the Baroona electorate, bordering on the electorate of Fortitude Valley. I can be excused for mentioning that fact and I cannot be accused of handling the parish pump. This area is centrally situated. It has the advantage of sloping ground and the further advantage that Gilchrist Avenue will be retained as an access road and if necessary stands can be built across the road, still leaving the roadway free for traffic. I suggest also that the time is fast coming when

Empire Games and even a Davis Cup round might be played here. Sooner or later, the Queensland people will be asking, "Why can we not have the Games played in our own State?" and we should take such steps in order to satisfy the demand of the people of this State in the future. I make the suggestion although I fully realise the difficulty of implementing it in the immediate future but, as a long range plan, something could be done about it.

And now with some trepidation I mention the Liquor Act. I say "with some trepidation" because I could easily be misunderstood by hon. members who wanted to do so. However, I do not approach the question on the score of its merits or demerits but rather from the angle that prohibition has never been satisfactory wherever it has been established. I do not believe, either, that unlimited indulgence should be allowed, but I do believe that a reasonable and equitable compromise should be arrived at. I suggest that the Liquor Act as brought down by this Labour Government is just that. We know that today an agitation is afoot and going on apace to have the Act altered. All legislation should be based on the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number. The least restriction that is placed on the individual provides for the greatest freedom of the community and in this regard we can look at the Liquor Act and know that that is being typified by it. It provides for a commission of three to determine the suitability of licensees and licences; it gives them the right to determine the standard of accommodation; it gives them the right to approve of additions and alterations and to order additions and alterations, and it gives them the right too to arrange the withdrawal of licences through suspension or forfeiture.

It is interesting to note in passing that with the enactment of the Act in 1935 the statutory maximum number of licences in the State was 1,342. The Act has only been in operation since then, and it really has not had a chance, because war broke out in 1939, and I believe that since that time it has been very very difficult for the commission to administer it in the way its members would like and in the way it was meant to be administered. Nevertheless, there are 103 licences fewer than when the Act was passed. In that time the population has grown by something like 200,000 people. In Brisbane alone the population has grown by 50 per cent., from 300,000 to 450,000. I suggest that these figures offset to a large extent the statements that are being made that the Government have been too free in the administration of this law and in the facilities it makes available.

Whilst it is within the right of any individual in this free democracy of ours to voice his opinion, we need to be careful that in removing one believed-to-be evil we do not set up a worse one. The other day we had a gentleman saying here that he would be glad to get back to South Australia and 6 o'clock closing. He did not tell us that in that State the hotels are open at 5 o'clock in the morning, so that possibly at 6 o'clock

in the evening people there are not so drunk as they might otherwise be, as they have had a chance to drink themselves sober. In this State and in Tasmania the hours of hotels are from 10 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock at night.

Another danger I see in 6 o'clock closing is in the youth of the country. Under our law our young people are not entitled or allowed to be served in a bar. With 6 o'clock closing the youth of the country is given the opportunity, and it is being availed of unfortunately, to take part indiscriminately in parties in private homes, in sheds, and anywhere where people can crowd and get the necessary victuals. I believe in the preservation of decent standards of living always, in accordance with what is equitable and just. It is far better to preserve our existing legislation and listen to the radio slogan to "Buy bottled Bulimba beer" than it would be to hear whispered the surreptitious street-corner slogan "Buy bootleg Barambah Bambo." I suggest that we might leave the liquor question where it is, on an equitable and balanced basis.

I want to enter a protest at the accusations that are hurled across this Chamber and haphazardly throughout the country by the Liberal-Country Party that we of the Labour Party are communistic Socialists. Nothing is further from the truth. Only last week the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, who at that time was the acting leader of the Liberal Party, stated that we were only shadow-sparring, that fundamentally our aims and objects were the same. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to try to show that this is not so and that statements of that kind which are simply bandied about by political opportunists are unworthy of them and are not in keeping with what is right or what should be expected in a community based on Christian democratic principles. The people who class us as being Communists possibly did not know that Communists existed prior to their entry into public life. They did not fight Communism before they entered public life—they were too busy seeking profits—and they would not know, but they employed Communists and paid them wages. I suppose that a labourer is always worthy of his hire and they would not pay them if they did not think they earned it. What I suggest is that these people who indict us should first of all examine themselves. The oath of allegiance that is taken by members of this Assembly means as much to Labour members as it does to those in Opposition.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROSNAN: This Parliament—this bulwark of democracy—is based on an unwritten constitution. Tradition, and the accumulated wisdom of men through the ages have established this democratic institution of Parliament on the very sound basis on which it rests today. The whole of the institution of Parliament is founded on and is in accordance with Christian principles and tenets. When we look at the problems before us and look at the people representing the parties, we should ask ourselves what is right

in accordance with those Christian teachings, rather than who is right. Today we are too apt to say who is right rather than look for the principle of what is right. If hon. members opposite examined the position in that way and from that angle, I suggest that they could not in good conscience and in accordance with Christian teachings, regardless of the religion they profess—and tolerance is one of the virtues of this Christian world—indict members of the Labour Party as being Communists and communistic Socialists. It is a slur that I resent, and my fellow members do too. It is a slur because it is not in accordance with fact. We have prayers each morning when Parliament opens, and if we do not subscribe to the Christian supplication of those prayers we should not be in the Chamber when they are said. I suggest too that for one to be in the Chamber when they are said and to stand up with bowed head and then two minutes afterwards to point the finger across the Chamber and label us Communists—godless men, telling us in effect that we are in line with Judas and consequently traitors and hypocrites is not in accordance with Christian principles. Labour has been in power a great number of years in Queensland—in complete power—and in its legislation it has never departed from the basic Christian principles of democracy. It has never attempted to bring about a totalitarian State, the class of State that is the ultimate aim of the Communist Party. It has always legislated on the basis of what is the right thing to do for the greatest number of people, and the greatest number of people in any State are the workers. It is of course not a very happy thought for the men sitting on the other side of this Chamber that the working people should have such great consideration, but it is the underlying thought in the mind of every man who carries Labour's banner.

The Labour Party has legislated and proceeded by an evolutionary process to realise its aims and objects. Development by evolution is abhorred by the Communists. The phrase is expunged from their records and no reference is allowed to be made to it by Communists, wherever they might be assembled. Development by evolution is something with which they have no truck, but it is a fundamental of our method of proceeding to a better world for the working people.

"What Labour has promised Labour has done" is not an empty slogan. History has shown, and history will continue to show, that the Labour Party has a goal, a destiny, and is slowly progressing towards it in such a way that all people, regardless of their station in life, will receive equitable, fair and just treatment in the process.

Let us have a look at the term "Communism." It is a trite and hackneyed term today and I doubt very much whether people take the trouble to find out exactly what it means. I am going to suggest that to hon. members opposite "Communism" means an interruption to their way of life. It means that they cannot get the things they would like to get. If supplies were coming through

and they could get them as they wanted them, everything would be all right, but the moment there is an interruption to their way of life—provided it is not related to butter or beef—they say it is Communist-inspired, it is a Communist tactic, it is a Communist move. But it is a different story when the workers, when the ordinary people, have their life interrupted by the withholding of butter, beef, and even bricks. For six weeks the brick works have been closed down because they cannot get a price. The law lays down a method whereby a price increase can be obtained. The law provides a method whereby the worker may increase his wages. They tell us that we must accept that law in connection with an increase in wages, yet yesterday a responsible member of the Country Party openly expounded her direct action, Communist tactics for the dairyman, the withholding of butter and the withholding of beef. His advice was, "Withhold your butter, withhold your beef; do not worry whom you trample in the process."

That is the interpretation placed on Communism by hon. members opposite. It means far more to hon. members of the Labour Party on this side of the House. It is the theory of Marx and Lenin. It is the revolutionary theory and tactics of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. How is that compatible with Labour's "development by evolution"? What man on this side of the Chamber, member of the Labour Party, has ever put forward revolutionary theories from here or from any husting throughout Australia? Not one. Yet hon. members opposite label us Communist Socialists and tell us we are hand in glove with the Communists. These Christians, these people who subscribe to the oath of allegiance and the democratic principles that underlie this very building, this very institution where we are assembled today, label us fellow-travellers of the Communists. That is wrong.

Let us look now at the theoretical foundation and basis of this revolutionary theory of Marx and Lenin. It is based on dialectics; dialectical materialism is the basis for this revolutionary theory. Long before our time, a philosopher named Hegel developed the art of disputation which the ancient Greeks termed dialectics, along the lines that progress of thought or ideas by conflict and contradiction led to a supreme spirit. But to lead to a supreme spirit and to pursue that philosopher's logic was not in keeping with the ideas of the Godless Marx, so he created and developed dialectic materialism. He turned Hegel's theory completely round and said that by conflict and contradiction, with unity of the opposites, we could progress to the classless state. Marx took as a basis the inevitable class war. He laid it down that inevitably there must be war between the parties. The theory and belief of the Labour Party, however, is that you can reconcile the parties and the classes within this Christian democracy. We believe that by education and by the process of evolution, it is possible to bring about a reasoned, just and equitable understanding that is diametrically opposed to the ideology expressed by Marx—the revolutionary ideology.

Let me take this a little further. Marx says that the revolutionary theory is not enough, that you must have activation. He says you must study the wars, the revolutions and the riots, and at all times look at the problem from every angle. He says you must seek the link which is most popular and will play the greatest part in registering with the worker and then confuse by contradiction—you must unite the opposites—and then you have progress. Marx, Lenin and others are my authorities for the statements I make. They believe that this inevitable class war, of its own motion, will emancipate the worker and we shall finally arrive at the classless society, which is the ultimate aim. They say, however, that the penultimate aim is a dictatorship of the proletariat, and it is only by that means that they can hope to control and achieve the classless society. So that even before they can get to the ultimate theoretical aim, they have to bring about this dictatorship of the proletariat, whom they pretend they desire to emancipate.

The vast difference between the practical policy of the Australian Labour Party, of which most of us on this side of the House are members, and the ideology of the Communist Party, the Marx-Lenin revolutionary theory, I have endeavoured to show, but I should like to go one step further and point out how the Press—not all of the Press, but some sections of it in this country—wittingly or unwittingly (and I am suspicious enough to think that it is not always unwittingly) aid and abet the aims and objects of the Marx-Lenin theorists to a greater degree than is readily realised and understood. Only the other day a scientist named Burhop was refused a visa, and the next morning the "Courier-Mail" published a photograph of him on the lawn, gambolling with his children. He was portrayed as a placid, timid scientist, which might prompt one to ask, "How could such a man have revolutionary theories? How could he be a party to upsetting the Christian democracy?" Interjections have been hurled across this Chamber because the Premier marched down Queen Street with persons who were known Communists. I marched with him, Mr. Speaker! Here we get back to a determination of Christian ethics. What was right? The trade-union movement first established Labour Day. We had the 82nd procession this year. The trade-union movement controlled Labour Day, till a few years ago, always in accordance with Labour's principles and policy. But then it got out of hand and became a propaganda medium for the adherents of Stalin. That immediately called for insurrection amongst those who detested and disliked the ideology of Marx and Lenin. And so a committee was formed of representatives of unions subscribing to the Christian democracy and Australian way of life and a permit was granted for them to hold a procession through the streets of Brisbane on Labour Day. Those at the Trades Hall who said they would flout the law finally sought a conference and as conciliation is a plank of our policy a conference was held, and—here is the kernel of the whole thing—it was agreed that two

representatives of the Australian Labour Day Committee and two representatives from the Trades Hall Committee should march at the head of the procession with the Premier and Deputy Premier. The delegates elected from the Trades Hall were elected as delegates from their unions and the fact that they were Communists does not give the right to anybody to label our Premier a fellow-traveller because he marched with them, nor does it give anyone the right to label me as such. I have fought the Communists where they have to be fought, that is, in the trade union, not in the sphere of increased profit.

Another way in which the Press helped and aided the Communist theory was in connection with the blessing of the plough prior to the opening of the Royal National Show. In a part of the showgrounds known as Petty's Paddock, which was wide open to the public, were many and varied displays, many of them easy of removal. Inspector Clark, of Fortitude Valley, saw that property could be lost. There were no watchmen and the exhibitors had not provided for the protection of their own goods and so he immediately protected them with police. The next day the "Courier-Mail" said, "Police prevent free peep at Show." The paper disregarded the facts, failed to do what was right. It was right for Inspector Clark in the course of his duty to protect this property but the "Courier-Mail" said that he prevented the people from having a free peep at the Show. Good Lord, if I know anything of Inspector Clark, he would give them the couple of shillings they needed to have a look at it.

In conclusion, let me say that the Labour Party has withstood attacks down through the ages, whether they came from the Right or from the Left. The Labour Party has always taken the view that the worker is entitled to receive a just, equitable, reasonable and fair reward for his contribution to industry. It has opposed any objections to that policy, whether they have come from the Right or from the Left, and I suggest that when history is written and this democracy survives prominence of place will be given to the efforts of the Labour Party in preserving the status quo and in preserving the democratic Christian principles and tenets, but if it should fail then the guilt can be laid just as much at the door of those on the Right as at the door of those on the Left.

I thank hon. members for having given me a patient hearing.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (11.52 a.m.): Let me preface my remarks by expressing profound regret that the Acting Premier should have found it necessary to announce that leave of absence for six months has been given to the Premier on account of illness. I know that I express the sentiments of every hon. member when I say that we hope that his health will be restored ere those six months have passed.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DONALD: I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Fortitude Valley on the excellent speech that he has just delivered. I also desire to congratulate the

mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, both of whom made thoughtful and helpful contributions to the debate. Once again that fact demonstrates the important point that the Labour Party always enjoys the distinction of being able to attract capable young men to its ranks, the reason of course being that, unlike other political parties, it is not a sectional party but one that represents the whole community. Consequently it attracts to its membership the right type of people drawn from all walks of life.

The mover of the motion, the youthful member for Kedron, achieved a meritorious victory at the polls, capturing the seat for the Government. It was particularly so when we take into consideration the campaign waged against him and the propaganda used by his opponents during that campaign. Coming from the Public Service, he knows the aspirations and also the problems of the public servant. Although he has just been elected to Parliament he is by no means a stranger to the work of the Government, or to the political atmosphere.

The seconder of the motion, the hon. member for Warrego, has had extensive experience in our great pastoral industry and can speak with authority on every section of that industry, because his long experience with the industry has given him the knowledge of an expert. He will find, as other hon. members who come from the industrial wing of the Labour Party have done, that the experience he gained in that sphere will be of great benefit to him in his new position. His intimate knowledge of the outback and the requirements of the western people, gained by living and working with and for them, makes him an ideal representative from the far-western electorate of Warrego.

Our two new members represent a very wide cross-section of the Queensland public, which once again illustrates the wide support we get from the people as a whole. Both these hon. members will be valuable assets to Parliament and the Government.

The Leader of the Opposition dealt at some length with the part of the Governor's Speech that drew attention to the inflationary tendency of the present time. I agree that the warning given in that paragraph is necessary, but I cannot subscribe to the utterance of the Leader of the Opposition that the inflationary tendency arose, and is still with us, because of the introduction of the 40-hour week, nor can I believe that his memory is so short that he cannot remember the unco-operative spirit of the Opposition at the time when the Chifley Government strove to get the necessary power to deal with this inflationary evil at its roots. The members of the Opposition would have us to believe, and went at some length to convince hon. members, that the reason why our national Government has not been able to get at grips with inflation is the lack of co-operation of the Labour Opposition in that Parliament and the Labour Party generally throughout Australia. The opposite is correct. As I said, when the Chifley Government decided to appeal to the

people of Australia for power to deal with this national problem—because inflation is a national problem and can only be dealt with in a national way by our national Government—that power was refused to him principally because of the pleadings of the present Federal Government and their supporters both in and out of Parliament. These people told the nation that controls were not necessary, and that price-fixing was not necessary, and that they could do nothing about inflation. I noticed yesterday that the hon. member for Toowong has been a little convinced, for he stated that price-fixing in some circumstances was justified and necessary and had a beneficial effect, but his Leader, the hon. member for Coorparoo, as recently as last week still proffered the same argument that controls and price-fixing could not benefit the community.

Labour's opponents then were successful in preventing our national Parliament from getting the very power that was needed to deal with the inflationary spiral. What has been the result? Inflation is still going on. The evil has not been curtailed one little bit. But I feel there is no need at all for panic, or for the hysteria-convened conference to solve our inflation problems. The Commonwealth Labour Government, first under the late John Curtin and then under the leadership of the late Ben Chifley, clearly demonstrated during the difficult war years that the cost-of-living spiral could be restricted to 18 and 20 per cent., provided the people had a Government eager to protect the interests of electors rather than a Government tied to the chariot wheels of middlemen and Big Business. The simple remedy for the high cost of living still remains the simple remedy it was when the late Mr. Chifley appealed to the electors to vote "Yes" just over three years ago.

The Prime Minister knows that the national Parliament must have overall powers to regulate the cost of living in all States, and that it would be wiser and more realistic to have a prices referendum than the referendum we are having next month. But because of the shameless manner in which he and his supporters, both in and out of Parliament, advocated a "No" vote three years ago, he refuses to accept the obvious solution, and attempts to save face by sheltering behind a conference of non-producers. What came out of that conference? Perhaps we can be generous and admit that the conference laboured, but nevertheless it did not bring forth even a mouse. It did not bring forth one idea or formula that would help to mitigate let alone correct the inflationary evil.

In spite of the fact that the Australian worker is producing more today than he ever did, and this is reflected in the record tonnage of coal raised, both individually and in the aggregate, for the first time in history the 2,000,000-ton mark was exceeded by our mine workers, last year's production being 2,320,798 tons against 1,970,388 tons the previous year.

The hon. member for Murrumba interjected when the Hon. the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock was telling the House that the

Queensland mine workers had increased their production by over 30 per cent. since 1939 and asking the primary producer to take a leaf out of the mine workers' book and increase production likewise, and said that the record tonnage was due to open-cut mining and when he was informed that there was open-cut mining in 1939 he changed his ground and said the increase was due to the wholesale mechanisation of the collieries in Queensland. I point out that there is not one colliery in Queensland that is 100 per cent. mechanised. The nearest approach is the Parkhead colliery in the Ipswich district. Credit must be given to the proprietors of this colliery for the efforts they are making and the money they are spending to equip their colliery with labour-saving coal-mining machinery in an endeavour to increase production of the commodity of which the State is in such great need.

In the main the mechanisation of Queensland coal-mines has been confined to the installation of power borers and pneumatic picks, after years of agitation by the Coal Miners' Federation, and it is a pity that our agitation for the elimination of hand wheeling has not met with a greater measure of success.

Then we have the wharfies, another section of the community who are blamed for going slow and throwing a spanner in the wheel of the national works. Last year they handled more cargo than in any past year. The following, which was accompanied by a photo, appeared in the "Courier-Mail":—

"These Cars Gave Wharfies Record.

"Part of the biggest shipment of cars yet to reach Queensland, these Austins assembled and in cases, were rushed from the wharves to a Rocklea depot yesterday. They reached Sydney in a specially-chartered ship, and were brought to Brisbane in the River Norman. Brisbane watersiders set a new Australian speed record by unloading the River Norman at up to 60 tons an hour."

The Australian worker generally is producing more today in most industries than he did before the war, not only in absolute figures but per head of a substantially increased population. Yet our political opponents say that the cause of inflation is that the workers will not work hard enough or long enough, and our 40-hour week should be extended to 56 or 60 hours and that the 16 or 20 hours extra should be worked at a greater tempo than the 40 hours today. If the reduced working week is the cause of inflation, of course, it is as reasonable to suggest that it would be a cure of inflation. But how is it that during the biggest depression that the country experienced our Australian workers were not working a 40-hour week—in fact, one fifth of the Australian workers were not working at all because they had no jobs to go to? That argument is illogical and absurd.

By far the biggest source of inflationary pressure during the post-war years has been the great increase in the export incomes of Australian primary producers. There has

been a phenomenal rise in the export prices of wool, wheat, metals and some other exports, and sales have been at a high level.

Some of the extra income gained by our primary producers was removed by taxes on high earnings, some was saved and used to repay mortgages and other debts, but more positive methods of stabilising exporters' disposable incomes and demands were needed. One such method was the wheat stabilisation scheme, which was essentially an arrangement for withholding some of the extra export income when prices were high for distribution later when prices would be poor. It thus served to counteract both boom and slump. It is a pity for Australia and her people in general that more money was not withheld in this way and that the scheme was not extended to wool. However, it was vigorously opposed by the members of the Country Party and by the growers' organisations. They were clearly out to make hay while the sun shone, hoping no doubt to claim assistance from the rest of the community when hard times returned.

Long-term contracts for a number of other products were concluded with our main buyer, Britain, at good but not extreme prices. Prices which are below world levels today, will probably be above them in the latter years of the contract. In the meantime the Australian producers have an assured market at an assured price for a given period of some years. This type of national marketing has contributed very notably to the stability of the primary-producing section of the Australian economy.

But these measures were not sufficient to prevent the inflationary effect of high export incomes on the rest of the economy. Not only did they increase demand directly, but the prosperity of the export industry enabled the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration to raise wages more than would otherwise have been the case, thus raising demand again and pushing up the whole cost and price level.

By far the most effective method of limiting consumers' demand for goods and services is taxation. In all countries, therefore, a high level of taxation has been relied upon as the most important means of controlling inflation in the post-war period. This function of taxation is not generally understood by the members of the public, who believe that taxation merely serves to raise money for Government expenditure and who think it is improper for Governments to raise more money by taxation than they spend. Once it is seen, however, that the problem of inflation demands control of the overall income level of people's spending to protect the real value of their money income, it will be obvious that the proper Budget policy in times of excess demand is to keep taxes on high incomes and earnings as high and Government expenditure as low as circumstances will permit.

The Commonwealth Labour Government did keep taxation as high as they dared, but not as high as it should have done for an ideal anti-inflationary policy. The present Commonwealth Government did seek and did

obtain support and votes from the Australian electors by promising a substantial reduction in taxation but economic determinism has compelled that Government to increase taxation, which may be higher than ever.

To substantiate that statement I quote the following advertisement by the Liberal Party during the 1949 election campaign—

“This is Our Policy.

“Reduced Taxation: Steady reduction in rates of taxation. Review of indirect taxation and increased tax allowances for medical, dental and educational expenses.
“Reduced Living Costs and Increased Living Standards.

“Put the shillings back in the £'s.”

They have been just as successful in carrying out this promise as they have been in arresting the inflationary trend.

The following extract from the Sydney “Telegraph” of 13 September, 1949, containing comments on the Chifley Government's Budget policy by Professor Copland, is very interesting—

“The Commonwealth budgetary policy of maintaining revenue at a higher level than the strict needs of any year demanded, and financing from revenue expenditure that might have been appropriately charged to capital in other circumstances has had some stabilising effect.

“But even this limited exercise of prudence has met with strong political opposition and the Treasurer has had to defend his position against those who argued, somewhat speciously, that taxation should be lower.

“It should be accepted as a maxim that in very prosperous times there is no case for a reduction of taxation. But however stern the standard of a Treasurer may be in this regard, he would be taking an undue political risk in the present ill-informed state of opinion on this vital matter.”

That, Mr. Speaker, is a complete vindication of the Chifley Government's taxation policy and of the way in which they were handling the economic affairs of this country and a complete condemnation of the present Federal Government's policy. It is also an indication that the promise of the present Federal Government to reduce taxation was dishonest.

The only reputable argument advanced in favour of tax reductions in times of inflation is that high taxes discourage enterprise and work by reducing incentive. The argument is advanced that if taxation had been reduced, people would have had more money to spend and demands would have gone up, but so would supplies, because increased incentives would have stimulated production. This argument is, of course, quite fallacious. In conditions of full employment, there are obstacles to rapid expansion of production that no incentives could overcome. Reduction of taxation in such circumstances would yield uncertain and very small increases in supply, which would immediately be swamped by the certain and substantial additions to

demand, resulting from the increase in spendable income. Only wishful thinking or special pleading can controvert the unanimous opinion of competent economists that the net effect of tax reductions in very prosperous times is to add to inflationary pressure.

It should be understood that neither control of business expenditure, nor economy in Government expenditure, can keep inflation in check if private consumers are allowed to spend as much of their greatly-increased money income and their war-time savings as they please. Of the three components of total domestic expenditure, private-consumption expenditure is much the largest, and it would have been far larger during the immediate post-war years if it had not been controlled in various ways. However, the excess would not have benefited the spenders. On the other hand, it would have meant the spending of more money on the same things or, what is more likely, an even smaller volume of goods and services.

The most obvious way of controlling civilian demand is by rationing. This we saw in operation during the war and for some time afterwards, when quite a number of commodities, including meat, butter, tea, sugar, clothing and petrol, &c., were rationed to the consuming public. Rationing, however, limits the people's freedom of choice in spending their income. So, when the most critical shortage of basic necessities has disappeared, it is more desirable to restrain consumer-spending by limiting the amount of purchasing power available for spending, leaving the people free to spend that amount according to their individual needs and tastes.

The Commonwealth Government's decision to dispense with the services of 10,000 public servants is in keeping with their usual form, and is the beginning of the creation of the unemployment pool for which they have so long been waiting. Some prominent member of the party has always been coming to the top and pleading for this unemployment pool. In spite of all the Federal Government's denials, the dismissal of these 10,000 public servants is the beginning of the creation of that pool. Once again these people want to cure inflation by bringing about deflation. I should like, therefore, to comment briefly on this proposal and to say something in defence of the public servants and reply to those critics who complain of the excessive Government expenditure that is necessary to meet the ever-increasing wage bill of this section of our community.

It is true that the number of public servants increased by many thousands between 1939 and 1949. It is true also, however, that there was a further large increase after the defeat of the Federal Labour Government. According to the monthly "Bulletin of Employment Statistics" of June, 1949, and the "Economic News," the number of public servants in Australia in 1949 was 622,000. According to the "Courier-Mail" of 10 August, there are now 677,400. The Press likes to use these figures to substantiate its contention that this vast horde of unproductive officials is draining the lifeblood out of the Australian

economy. This is not in accordance with facts and such a contention will not stand examination, as quite a large proportion of the number of Government employees, reaching as high as 8 in every 10 employed by the Federal, State, and local Governments, are employed in such enterprises as the railways, transport generally, post office, workshops, building and construction, banking and insurance, and other work just as productive as any carried out by private enterprise. The number engaged in administrative work, public servants in the usual sense of the word, rose considerably from 1939 onward. The substantial increase is accounted for by the increase in the scale and number of Government functions and also by the growth of our nation and the more important part we are playing in international affairs. We point with pride to the fact that Australia has thrown off her swaddling clothes, has passed through the stage of adolescence and has reached the adult stage in the affairs of the world. She can now take her place on an equal footing with other nations of the world at all the important conferences and express her views, through her sincere and intelligent representatives, as emphasised by Dr. Evatt.

Returning to the number of public servants, it will be seen that the 1939 figure was abnormally low compared with most other countries. In 1949, public servants represented only 2.87 per cent. of the Australian working population, compared with 5.67 per cent. in Great Britain, 3.9 per cent. in U.S.A. and 3.47 per cent. in Canada. I have not been able to obtain later figures, but any further increase in the number of public servants in Australia has occurred since the defeat of the Chifley Government. Amidst the clamour for the dismissal of thousands of public servants, the following extract from the "Courier-Mail's" leading article of 9 August, 1951, is very interesting. It is taken from an editorial in which the writer is doing his utmost to justify the dismissal of 10,000 public servants, putting the case for the Commonwealth Government, but his conscience could not allow this to pass—

"It must be recognised, however, that both State Governments and local authorities have much less scope than the Commonwealth for retrenching civil services. In fact, as Australia's population grows they must go on expanding many of their services. They must have more teachers, more police. Railways and other public transport must have more men to handle more traffic. Care of public health must employ more State and municipal officers."

Here we have the writer of a leading article setting out to justify the sacking of 10,000 public servants openly admitting that for the efficient progress of the nation more public servants will have to be appointed.

I agree that a number of public servants could and should be dismissed for the country's good. However, the sacking of 10,000 is too high; 20 would be sufficient to enable Australia to recover from her economic ills. If public servants are to be dismissed let those who are inefficient be the first to receive the order of the sack. Let us

commence with the Prime Minister and his 19 colleagues in the Federal Cabinet and replace them with an Administration who demonstrated during the difficult war years that the cost of living could be restricted to a reasonable limit. That would be taking the first step necessary to correct our economic position and stop the inflationary trend. Until that is done, we shall be going along as we have been since the defeat of the Federal Labour Government, getting worse and worse, with the inflationary trend developing from a trot to a gallop until it will reach an atomic speed.

Mr. Sparkes: Why confine it to the Federal Government? Why not do it here too?

Mr. DONALD: Inflation is a national problem and can only be dealt with in a national way. The only Parliament that can deal with it effectively is the national Parliament, our Federal Parliament.

In view of the attempt made by our Labour opponents to try to impress on the general public that Labour's policy and Labour's objective are sinister and wicked and should be avoided, and particularly as the hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha contended that Socialism, meaning the Labour Party, was the greatest danger that confronted the Australian nation, I feel that I should take this opportunity to re-state our objective in terms to make it clear what it is and what it envisages. The last triennial Federal conference of the A.L.P., held in Canberra as recently as March of this year, declared Labour's objective. The A.L.P. proposes socialisation, or the social control of industry and the means of production, distribution and exchange, to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and such other anti-social features of industry and the anti-social features of the processes of production, distribution and exchange, such socialisation and social control to be achieved in accordance with the principles of action, methods and progressive reforms as set out in the platform of the party.

In spite of all the opposition of its political opponents Labour makes no apology for its objective, which is based on the principle that the interests of the people as a whole must have precedence over the interests of any pressure group or privileged minority. It is simply a belief in common humanity, the power of the people to control their own destinies. Labour believes that inequality of opportunity and gross inequality of wealth are both morally unjust and economically crippling. Therefore, Labour sets out to abolish the inequality of wealth as well as the inequalities of poverty. Labour believes that the economic destinies of the people should not be dictated by a privileged minority of self-interested monopolists. Labour accordingly sets out to place economic power in the hands of the nation.

Labour believes that monopoly capitalism, especially when uncontrolled, has through inefficiency and unemployment wasted the

capacity to produce to the extent that the advent of the machine age has made possible. Labour therefore sets out to enlarge the productive power of the nation, to banish mass unemployment permanently, and thus to progressively raise the living standard of the people. Labour believes that only by creating a flourishing and enlightened democracy, as virile in industry as in this parliamentary Chamber, can human dignity and individual liberty be enhanced.

These four principles mark a better way. They deal with the fundamental rights of the community. They, nevertheless, imply the acceptance of obligations in return for rights. Great changes in society, both politically and economically, can only be achieved when they coincide with changes in individual behaviour and social ethics. Labour maintains that where exploitation exists and a privileged minority is able to wield immense power over the economy of the country, a clear-cut case has been presented for socialisation or social control. This is the assertion of social responsibility in matters that are properly of social concern.

Socialism, or social control, involves certain definite basic policies, including—

(a) Common ownership, in the most suitable form, of natural or almost inevitable local or national monopolies, such as postal and communication services, electricity, water supplies, insurance and central banking; coal, transport, iron and steel would come under the separate headings of basic and vital industries which are essential to the well-being of other industries and society as a whole. If we are to prevent Australia from becoming a slum country, planning of resources, towns, location of industry and development are necessary, as is the maintenance and extension of social services, including endowment, pensions, medical benefits and education, economic planning, and the wise exercise of controls for social ends and the maintenance of full employment.

(b) Assistance and stimulation of private enterprise, to be enterprising and expansive. Against monopolistic and restrictive practices, Labour, nevertheless, can, and will, assist private enterprise, especially where a positive social service is being performed. This is the case with many sections that make up the nation's economy, and is particularly manifest in those industries in which there are a great number of firms and little evidence, if any, of monopolistic tendencies.

(c) The assertion and safeguarding of consumers' rights and interests, whether private or public industry.

(d) The strengthening of the co-operative movement which has a real and useful function to serve in the community.

(e) Co-operation between farmers, farm workers and the community for the healthy and vigorous development of primary industry with fairness to all.

(f) The ensuring that Australia plays its full part, economically and socially, for the purpose of evolving a peaceful, prosperous and happy world. These are the tenets of Labour's fundamental plank.

That must appeal to the minds and hearts of all people with a social conscience and a profound belief in the future of our Australian nation.

I want now to make some comment about the amendment of the Coal Mining Acts last session. Since the beginning of this year every coal-mine in Queensland has been equipped with electric head lamps. It is a pity more thought was not given to this question when the amending Bill was under discussion, and some standard of illumination agreed upon. In this respect I must accept my responsibility, for I am just as guilty as any hon. member of this Chamber. The Act provides for the use of lamps which would meet the requirements of safety in the presence of C.H.4, thereby eliminating the explosive hazards associated with the use of naked lights.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that every hon. member, like myself, expected the electric head-lamps to give the mine workers good illumination, consequently no consideration was given to illumination, what standard the lamps should conform to with regard to lumen output, or the maintenance required to provide such standard. These matters were left to the discretion of the Colliery employers themselves, and as a result various types of lamps were introduced, giving a variation in lumen output from 2.5 M.S.C.P. to 1.2 M.S.C.P.—mean spherical candle power. Experience has shown in some cases lamps of 1.2 M.S.C.P. to be inadequate, and on occasions it has been found that even that low candle power has not been maintained, because of bad servicing. This has naturally caused considerable dissatisfaction among the miners, and in some instances stoppages have resulted.

For some unknown reason pit lighting, quite apart from the miner's individual head lamp, has not received the consideration it deserves. Hon. members will agree that there is no place where good artificial lighting is more essential than in a coal-mine, from the standards of both health and safety. Yet there is no place where illumination receives so little consideration.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) (12.33 p.m.): At the outset I wish to associate myself with the remarks made by His Excellency in the Speech he delivered in this Chamber when he referred to the visit of His Majesty and the Queen. We are all hoping that the King and Queen and members of the Royal family will have the opportunity of enjoying such a visit in the coming year.

I should also like to associate myself with the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and other speakers in regard to the illness of our Premier. This morning the Acting Premier informed the House that because of illness the Premier had been granted six months' leave of absence. I am

sure every member on this side of the House fully appreciates exactly what that means. Although we may differ from the Premier in our political views, when it comes to a case of illness we suppress our political views and wish members on the Government side who may be ill a speedy return to health. It is only by a return to good health that any elected representative of the people, whether he be Labour, Country Party or Liberal, can give to his electors the service that he should, so I join with the Deputy Premier this morning in the hope that the Premier has a speedy recovery and will be permitted soon to return to this Chamber.

I should also like to make brief reference to the three new hon. members who have delivered maiden speeches in this Assembly. This morning we listened to the new hon. member for Fortitude Valley. There was a great deal of meat in what he had to say and I hope hon. members on the Government side also paid heed to his remarks, because it must be agreed that if there was a more rigid adherence in this Chamber to Christian principles and views we should be able to go much further in helping the development of this State.

I listened attentively to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor and I have read it at least half a dozen times and each time I read it I came to the same conclusion. Perhaps hon. members on the Government side will say I am swayed by political bias, but I take the view that the Speech prepared and delivered to us has not provided very much food for thought. Of course, we know that only the trimmings are prepared by His Excellency and that the internal parts really represent a report prepared by his advisers, who after all are the Government of the day. The thoughts that Sir John added to the Speech are clearly distinguishable because they do indicate the ability and thoughtfulness of the Governor of this State. To my mind the balance of the Speech merely represent the trumpeting by the Government of those things that they desire the people of this State to know. It certainly carefully conceals the points which are of vital importance to the people as a whole and the points that the Government of the day want to keep from the knowledge of the people.

The times ahead unquestionably will be difficult. That being so, one might be pardoned for expecting that on this occasion the Governor's Speech would give some indication of what the Government proposed to do to meet the many problems confronting us. But this was not so. It simply told us of what the various Government departments had achieved and gave little or no indication of what we might expect in the future from the men who occupy the Treasury benches. The consequence is that once again it falls to the lot of the Opposition to draw the attention of the people of Queensland to many of the matters that are so vital to them and with which they must be confronted in the years ahead.

Various speakers on this side of the House will deal with matters concerning their own electorates particularly, and I propose for a

short time at least to make reference to a few matters concerning my own area. I make the charge against the Government that because of the way they have handled some of the matters that I propose to mention they are causing the people of Brisbane and the people of various parts of Queensland to pay a very high and exorbitant price for many of the necessaries they require. I particularly refer to the cost of vegetables and various other commodities, and I charge the Government with being responsible for many of the high prices ruling in the city today. In making that charge I must proceed along a certain line of thought.

Twelve months ago in this House I drew the wrath of the Minister for Transport when I made reference to the condition existing at the Laidley Railway Station. It is not my intention on this occasion to again enter into a heated argument with the hon. gentleman, and I content myself by saying that the Laidley railway station still stands as the greatest public eyesore on the railway line between Brisbane and Charleville, and the only difference between the existing condition of that station and what it was 12 months ago is that it is a darned sight more dilapidated today than before. Still, I suppose that must be put down to fate and whilst the Government are prepared to spend millions of pounds on electrification for the benefit of city dwellers, it is perhaps expecting a bit too much from them to spend a paltry few pounds in repairing the Laidley railway station, one that has served the primary producers round Laidley for over 50 years. It is a typical example of the Government's policy as regards the people in the country. Anything at all is good enough for an area where there is not a very big vote for the Government—and that is the position at Laidley. I say advisedly that I believe that whilst we on this side of the Assembly are faced with many difficulties—many brought about by the Government—in ever getting occupancy of the Treasury benches, the day will come when the Government will actually defeat themselves. Sooner or later the tide will turn, despite anything that may have occurred whilst the Government have been in power, and when it does turn the people of Laidley will have an opportunity of seeing just what can be done by a Government prepared to serve all sections of the people and not one in particular.

I regret to say that I have to accept the position at Laidley as fate, but I am not prepared to accept as fate the conditions that apply in the Railway Department in relation to other matters affecting my electorate. I charge this Government with being responsible for keeping up the high prices of vegetables and other commodities that are so urgently needed in the city, and that are rotting in my electorate.

May I be permitted to make one observation to the Minister for Transport? I am sorry he is not in the Chamber at the moment, but I will be perfectly fair and say that I believe his ministerial duties have probably

taken him away. I want to point out to him that the people in my electorate—and I believe that this is so in many other country electorates—are almost bilious as the result of the frequent appearance in the daily Press of photographs of the Minister, either viewing a mock-up-carriage—not a reality, but something in the dim, distant future—or an ice-cream cake with a chocolate engine on it. If we do not get enough of it in the Press, we switch on the wireless and hear that £75,000 has been saved as the result of a trip overseas. I do not deny that—it may have been saved—but the point is that it is not an absolute reality today. As if that were not enough, we hear also about nine luxury trains with their green carpets, their venetian blinds and their engines painted Commo. red, which I understand is now known as Duggan red.

Those are the things that the people in the country have to digest almost every day in the week. I do not care two hoots how much advertising the Minister for Transport desires to engage in—that is his own business; he can do as much window-dressing as he likes—but while all this is going on, primary producers in my electorate cannot get even a semi-broken-down railway wagon to take their produce to market. That is what is concerning the country people. For weeks now there has been an accumulation at such centres within my electorate as Gatton, Forest Hill, and Laidley of hundreds of tons of pumpkins and potatoes, and some onions and chaff. Things that the city people cannot get today have been accumulating in those places. Only last Wednesday I received a telephone call from a number of farmers within my area asking whether something could not be done about railway wagons, 28 of which were on order for Thursday. I must say that I received the greatest courtesy when I communicated with Mr. Lingard's office, but only 12 wagons were made available. Consequently, those people who brought their produce into Gatton last Thursday to have it railed away had either to stack it in the railway yards, where over 100 tons is still stacked, or take it back to their farms and feed it to the pigs. That position obtains all along that line. Pumpkins are being carted from Forest Hill to Coominya and put on railway trucks there, because it appears that there is a better opportunity of getting trucks on the Brisbane Valley line than there is on the main line between Ipswich and Toowoomba.

Mr. Sparkes: They are lucky that they have not been prosecuted.

Mr. CHALK: They probably will be prosecuted. My point is that they are trying to get the essential produce to the people of Brisbane. Some will say that if they put it all on the market at once it will depress the price and that is what the city folk want, while the primary producer takes care to avoid it. But the truth is that if the primary producer cannot market his stuff, he gets nothing at all. He is prepared to take the ruling price and not to rely on an artificially high price caused by a shortage of essential commodities in the market. The people are crying out for this produce and I hope that

they will have an opportunity of summing up the position properly after they have heard what I have said.

Railway wagons are badly needed and the Minister would be doing a splendid service to the people if he spent a greater part of his time on realities instead of talking of something involving mythical millions in the future.

Mr. Aikens: And having his photo. taken.

Mr. CHALK: I do not deny him the right to have his photo. taken; he can please himself about that.

The department seems to be unable to run a goods train on time. The train that brought the trucks to Gatton for the carriage of produce last week was due to arrive at 8 o'clock. These trains are due to arrive at 8 o'clock each day, but on not one occasion did they reach Gatton before noon. The people who had booked the wagons brought in their produce at 9 o'clock in the morning, hoping to load it, and they had to wait until 2 p.m. that day to find out whether they could get any wagons. Most of them did not get them and they took their produce home. They brought it back next day, only to find that a similar set of circumstances obtained. In some cases the produce was 4 to 5 days on the road before it was loaded. There should be someone along the line able to administer certain departments of the railway in order to avoid this delay.

It will be necessary today, because of the adjournment of the House at 1 o'clock, to break off my speech and continue it tomorrow, but I shall take it to a point where I can conveniently resume in the morning. The points I have raised are of vital interest to the people and the Government must face up to them without delay.

I now desire to refer to an article by the Minister for Transport that was published in the "Courier-Mail," in which he said that the only effective way in which increasing transport costs could be controlled was by increased mechanism and the employment of engines of greater tractive effort. That is a very wide statement, and I cannot agree that his remarks are entirely correct. His proposal would help, but here is the classic example of a considerable loss and squandering of money in the department that could be avoided if proper action was taken. I have, for example, the case of a butcher at Grantham who bought fat stock in Toowoomba on 19 July. He loaded the stock on the railway and it was connected to a train leaving Toowoomba at 1.52 a.m. consigned to Grantham. To the astonishment of the butcher he found out his stock was not only hauled to Grantham but was taken on to Laidley, and then hauled back again to Grantham. I took this matter up with the department and the reason given to me was that there was nobody at Grantham

to shunt the train as it went through. Why start a truckload of stock at all for its destination if there is not someone there at the proper time to shunt it? These stock were hauled an additional 50 miles and that costs money, but what about the bumping and the bruising of the stock that were entailed? Would it not have been better to leave the stock in Toowoomba until there was a suitable train and inform the consignee to that effect? On making inquiries I found that this happens every cattle-sale day. Normally the truck only goes as far as Gatton but on this occasion someone forgot to take it off and it went as far as Laidley. Is that the sort of administration that will save the people money? It is a classical example of what is going on.

I mentioned some 12 months ago the position of the haulage of carriages from Helidon to Toowoomba and vice versa. I do not want to continue with that point this morning, as I have not the time, but it is a further instance of waste of public money.

Finally I say to the Minister for Transport that I believe many of the problems of his department can be overcome, and very quickly, and I offer five or six points for his serious consideration. First, I believe that he should make certain that the officers placed at the head of the various divisions—they are Cabinet appointments and are not subject to appeal—are possessed of the greatest possible organising ability, backed up by practical experience. He must try to get away from the old seniority clause. Executive posts should not be political plums; they should be handed out to those who have proved their ability. Secondly, we should do away with the principle that seniority governs appointments within the higher ranks of the general staff. Only ability should count in the making of such appointments. I also suggest that the Minister should forget the electrification scheme for the present time and devote what money is available, machinery and manpower, to improving the existing tracks and providing as much locally-built rolling stock as possible. Further, the Minister should hasten to complete the overhaul of railway workshops. He should endeavour to start a crusade in all divisions for better service to the public. The average railway man is a hard-working man and he will appreciate these things. Finally, keep telling the people of Queensland what is being done here and encourage them to think more kindly of their present facilities, and for goodness sake do away with the weekly bulletin that emphasises the spending of mythical millions of money. Contracts have to be let, but the thing that counts is the completion of existing contracts, thereby providing improved facilities now.

(Leave to continue speech tomorrow granted.)

The House adjourned at 1 p.m.