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★ For Brisbane's Sewerage

£ 10,000,000 Loan Now

Brisbane has just passed its Centenary Year, yet from the point of view of health, one of the greatest hazards remains—the pan disposal system. We are paying too high a price in deaths and sickness because the lack of sewerage helps spread disease.

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One hundred years ago diarrhoea, dysentery and enteric diseases were a major menace. Today they still claim their victims—primarily because 62 per cent of Brisbane remains unsewered. In 1958, fifteen Queensland children under one year of age died of these diseases.

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As Dr. A. Fryberg, Director-General of Health, has reported to State Parliament, the disposal of nightsoil by the pan method is not entirely safe from the public health point of view. Sewerage, despite its costs, is the safe and desirable way.

Monopoly Favoured

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In the war years and immediate post-war years, "shortage of manpower" was the excuse used by the monopolies and their governments for failure to provide homes and sewerage.

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Today, under this same system, there is "too much manpower." Over 100,000 unemployed Australians—5000 of them in Brisbane—are crying out for work, but the citizens of Brisbane still lack sewerage.

The monopolies and their governments claim there is no money available to sewer Brisbane and other cities or to carry out other essential public works.

Yet the State and Federal Governments found £30 million to build a railway line to Mt. Isa, mainly to serve the interests of the Mt. Isa Mines, and has since allotted further millions to develop Bulwer Island at the mouth of the Brisbane River for the Standard Oil monopoly, to build a modern oil refinery.

To add insult to injury, the Wynnum-Manly people, who live not far across the river from Bulwer Island, are being told by the State Government and City Council that £2 millions are not available to build a local treatment plant to sewer this area.

Millions for War, None for People's Needs

The Federal Government, which annually squanders £200,000,000 on war preparations, and makes huge handouts to monopolies like B.H.P., refuses adequate funds for public works in the States.

Money is available for aid to monopoly development and for dangerous war preparations, but not for the needs of the people.

Only action by the people can change this upside-down state of affairs.

The State Government which is directly responsible for the administration and control of Local Authorities, bears the main blame for the fact that Brisbane and other towns remain largely unsewered. Its attitude towards its responsibility is shown in the recent cut in subsidy on sewerage to local authorities.

Instead of demanding adequate works funds from the Federal Government and organising the people around its demands, it accepts miserable handouts and cuts down on public necessities.

The State Government must be made to live up to its obligations.

Fighting City Policy Needed

Clem Jones, Brisbane's new Labor Lord Mayor, though apparently keen to get on with the job of sewerage Brisbane, has so far failed to put forward a real solution to the finance problem.

A fighting policy from the City Hall, demanding funds from the State and Federal Governments for the basic needs of Brisbane and other Local Authorities and enlisting wide public support, would cause Governments to reconsider their attitude.

The present slow and costly methods of sewerage Brisbane need overhauling. In 1959-60 only 2486 homes were connected with sewerage by the Brisbane City Council. More than 7000 homes were built in that year.

Local treatment plants are needed at Wynnum and Manly, Sandgate and Deagon, Zillmere, Tennyson, Long Pocket, Mt. Gravatt and other centres. Extension of and connection with existing plants at Inala, Grovely and Acacia Ridge, are also necessary. Such essential developments would supplement the central sewerage system.

Communist Proposals

The Brisbane District Committee of the Communist Party proposes that the Queensland State Government immediately grant a loan of £10 million, at low interest rate, to the Brisbane City Council to build essential local treatment plants and other necessary sewerage works.

The State Government, which was able to convince the Federal Government to put in £20 millions to build the Mt. Isa railway, should bring pressure to bear on the Federal Government for a contribution towards this £10 million loan. The Commonwealth Loan to the Mt. Isa railway is for 20 years from the date of completion of the railway.

A £10 million special loan to the Brisbane City Council would go a long way towards sewerage Brisbane, while providing work for many idle hands.

The loan, however, would not solve the chronic situation in local authority finances.

The Communist Party advocates that 10% of National Revenue be allotted direct to Local Authorities. The State Government and City Council should support this proposal.

On a population basis, Brisbane would receive £9,820,000 a year as its share of 10% of National Revenue. Such a grant would help overcome many problems. Meanwhile, an immediate £10,000,000 loan is urgently needed.

If you support this proposition, raise the ideas in your trade union and other organisation and with your State and Federal Members of Parliament and local Aldermen.