

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 1934

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. G. Pollock, *Gregory*) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

GOODS TRAFFIC, NETHERDALE RAILWAY STATION.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. How many—(a) tons of agricultural produce; (b) cans of cream; (c) tons of timber—were received for consignment at Netherdale railway station during last year?

“2. What amount of freight would be due or received on—(a) agricultural produce (including cream); (b) timber.”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Dash, *Mundingburra*) replied—

1. “(a) 3,256; (b) 6,501 gallons (number of cans not available); (c) 161.

2. “(a) £524; (b) £233.”

LAND SELECTION, EUNGELLA TABLELAND.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. How many selections have been taken up on the Eungella Tableland?

“2. In what year was the first batch of selections taken up?

“3. What is the total area of land selected on Eungella?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) replied—

1. “Thirty-one.

2. “1914.

3. “10,696 acres.”

LIQUOR SOLD AT MELBOURNE STREET RAILWAY STATION, 1930-1934.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) asked the Minister for Transport—

“What is the value of liquors sold at the Melbourne Street railway station for the twelve monthly periods ended 30th June, 1931, 1932, 1933, and 1934?”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. J. Dash, *Mundingburra*) replied—

“Year ended 30th June, 1931, £2,264 0s. 4d.; year ended 30th June, 1932, £3,232 11s. 8d.; year ended 30th June, 1933, £3,508 3s. 4d.; year ended 30th June, 1934, £3,249 6s. 3d.”

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

ILLNESS OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chairman of Committee is present in Parliament this morning, but he is very indisposed, and I advised him not to attempt to carry out his duties in Committee to-day. Therefore, I

ask the hon. member for Maree, one of the Temporary Chairmen, to take the chair in Committee.

(*Mr. W. T. King, Maree, in the chair.*)

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1934-35.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

Question stated—

“That £7,000 be granted for ‘Miscellaneous Services’.”

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [10.35 a.m.]: I rise particularly to assure the Minister that the Opposition generally are not opposed to the idea of the training school at St. Lucia. I admit that some hon. members on this side are somewhat hypercritical about our budding farmers, and they are doubtful about the success of the venture. Nevertheless, they are not opposed to any scheme that will tend to relieve the present unemployment amongst our boys, which we consider has been accentuated a good deal by the operation of the stupid industrial awards that have had the effect of placing a lot of the boys on the labour market. Any scheme such as the St. Lucia scheme that will offer an avenue for the employment of these boys certainly has our support. I should like to point out that if there is any opposition to the scheme it has arisen in the Minister's own party. A great number of supporters of the present Government declaimed against the farmers, who they allege are misusing some of these boys; whilst a good many who did not oppose it directly damned the scheme with very faint praise. At any rate, we give the scheme our blessing, and hope it will succeed. If it succeeds there is no reason why the idea should not be extended in other directions.

It is difficult to get boys to take up farm life. That is a common complaint. Although so many opportunities are offering for boys they are very reluctant to go on the land, preferring to remain in the city and take their chance of getting positions there. That is the outcome of the policy of the Labour Government in creating huge public works in large centres of population. Such a policy has had the effect of congregating large industrial populations in the towns. The tendency in Great Britain to-day is in the direction of an exodus from the large centres to the country. We should encourage that in Queensland, and, therefore, any scheme such as the St. Lucia farm school should be supported. In Great Britain there is a large measure of support for the Fairbridge scheme in Western Australia. That scheme is supported by the migration of youths from Great Britain. Evidently in Western Australia also there is a great difficulty in getting boys to take up farm life. The result is that large numbers of boys come from Great Britain to Western Australia to be trained at the Fairbridge school. The idea of the St. Lucia school is, of course, to give boys some elementary training in farm life in the belief that at the end of the period of training their services will be more acceptable to the farmers than those of boys who go straight from their homes to the farms. There is something in that. The Minister will meet with many failures, but if he gets 50 per cent. of successes he should be satisfied.

The object is one which should be supported. I merely wish to say that the Opposition are not opposed to the St. Lucia scheme, and I trust that if it is successful the idea will be extended in other directions.

Mr. WILLIAMS (*Port Curtis*) [10.38 a.m.]: After listening to the Minister dealing with this question last evening, and the sound reasons he advanced, in the first place, for the establishment of the St. Lucia training farm, and, secondly, for its continuance, there should not have been any desire to prolong this debate. The hon. member for Hamilton saw fit to continue it, and I should, therefore, like to take the opportunity to say something on the vote before it goes through. It was pleasing to hear the hon. member for Hamilton state that the members of the Opposition are not entirely opposed to the establishment of the St. Lucia training farm or its continuation. Unfortunately, quite a number of speakers on the Opposition benches have given the impression that they are opposed to its continuance. I want to congratulate the Minister on his decision to continue this scheme. It is a valuable scheme and is proving its worth. This appropriation, expended wisely, will react to the benefit of our youth, many of whom to-day have become land-minded and wish to get into occupations for which the St. Lucia farm trains them. I happen to know the value of training for the farm, not altogether because I was brought up on a dairy farm, and therefore am cognisant of the drudgery of the farm, but also because I was once a school teacher. That was very apparent to me from my association with the farm boys' camp scheme of the Royal National Association. The learning that the boys receive during Exhibition week is certainly only a smattering, nevertheless it is most helpful to them. Some of the boys chosen for those camps have no intention of following an occupation on the land, but as a result of the week spent in Brisbane, followed by two or three days at Gatton College, they got a liking for the land. As a result boys preparing for the scholarship or University examinations have afterwards turned their attention to the land. I have instances from Dugandan, two or three centres on the Downs, and two or three centres in the North, where boys who were looking forward to what some hon. members of the Committee term white-collar jobs have now turned their attention to the land, and in one or two instances, according to letters received by the Royal National Association, those boys are making a success of their occupation on the land.

The Government would be failing in their duty, and the Minister would be insensible of his obligations, if something were not done for boys who were desirous of receiving training to equip them for the greatest of all callings—life on the land. The Minister has set out to educate each boy who goes through the St. Lucia establishment, and while Opposition members may decry this scheme, and say that it is not proving its worth, the fact remains that at the present time the number of boys at the farm exceeds that for which accommodation was provided originally, and that the demand for boys being trained there exceeds the supply. The hon. member for Murilla stated that on one or two occasions when he had applied for boys for farm work,

Mr. Williams.]

presumably on his own property in the Marilla electorate, thirty or forty boys had come in response, and from that number he would select the boy most suitable to him. That goes to show that a training school for boys is necessary, for we have the statement of the hon. member—and it is unchallenged—that in response to his application for a boy for farm work thirty or forty applicants have presented themselves. The hon. member also gave instances of the ignorance of some of the boys who went on farms, and stated in some instances the boys did not know for what purpose the leg rope was used. He gave other illustrations, some of which were ridiculous. No boy who goes on a farm likes to look ridiculous in the eyes of the farmer's son or the farmer's daughter because of his lack of knowledge; therefore, the work which boys do on the training farm or other similar institutions at St. Lucia, Gatton, or Riverview does something to equip them for the life ahead of them. We know that when business houses advertise for an assistant, in nine cases out of ten the advertisement reads, "Must have had previous experience." Farmers, too, like to secure boys who have had some previous experience, even if only six months' training at St. Lucia, Gatton, or Riverview. The farmers have not the time to teach the boys, and many of them have not the patience to do so; and in any case no boy likes to look small in the eyes of other people through lack of the knowledge required of him when he goes on the land.

The hon. member for Fortitude Valley instanced the fact that Victoria was following in the footsteps of Queensland in connection with the establishment of farm training schools. The hon. member could have gone further and pointed out that Western Australia intends to carry out a somewhat similar scheme to that in Queensland. New Zealand has also embarked on a campaign of encouraging city boys to go on farm land, and a scheme is in operation there whereby 50-acre holdings are set aside for those boys who are land-minded and who want to get away from the cities and the various forms of evil to which city boys are sometimes subject. The Queensland Government are to be congratulated upon instituting a scheme that is being followed in other parts of the world.

We are not discouraging boys from going on the land; we are encouraging them. If not, why should we persist in keeping open the St. Lucia establishment, calling for boys to go there and doing the best we can to fit them for the life ahead of them? The demand exceeds the supply, as I said before, and therefore the boys and their parents must realise that we are not discouraging employment on the land.

The assistance rendered to the farming community by Labour has been well recognised. Those who have read the articles of the Secretary for Agriculture, published in the Brisbane press recently, will agree with me that under Labour rule something is done for the man on the land that has not been done before. I am glad to hear that all Opposition members have not thrown cold water on the scheme, for actions such as that tend to belittle not only the Minister and the Government but also

[*Mr. Williams.*

the boys who go on farms in an effort to get out of the rut and to do something away from the cities.

The hon. member for Gympie, a man of considerable knowledge, has approved of the scheme. Certainly the hon. member had something to say about an increased expenditure of £1,000, but the hon. member went on to say this, at page 792 of "Hansard" for the current session—

"I am only too pleased to see boys being encouraged to go on to farms. It appears that the majority of parents advise them to endeavour to secure positions in the public service. They do not desire to see the boys on the land or doing manual labour. The fathers say, 'We have had experience ourselves, and we do not want our sons to be manual labourers.' I assume that is one reason why the boys are not anxious to avail themselves of the opportunity offering at the St. Lucia training farm."

The hon. members could not have known that the number offering is well above the facilities for accommodation or training at the present time.

The hon. member for Gympie goes on to say—

"The education they receive there should be useful to them when they go on to the farms; but if they are taught extravagant methods"—

They are not!

"and are not forced to realise that they have to earn their own living, they will not be the success we desire them to be. They should endeavour to secure positions on practical farms, where they will be under the supervision of experienced farmers who will take an interest in them. . . . I trust the St. Lucia training farm will be a success. Even if it does cost £1,000 per year at present to maintain it, perhaps later on it will become self-supporting and the grant will be no longer necessary."

That is an expression of opinion from an hon. member of the Opposition who is experienced in these matters. A recent report on the activities of the St. Lucia institution contains the following significant remarks:—

"The establishment of the farm training school for boys at St. Lucia and the scheme for rural training of youths direct by the farmer, both of which were launched last year, have been responsible for the placing of no less than 876 youths. These schemes cannot achieve their real objective, however, unless the parents themselves assist the Government by encouraging their boys to seize the opportunity so afforded."

Why should it be necessary to ask for boys in the city or elsewhere to go to that training farm? If I were a young lad, St. Lucia would attract me for the period of training that is offered there. Why should it be necessary for the Government to go cap in hand to parents for trainees when such opportunities are offered?

The Secretary for Labour and Industry was also very interested in this scheme, and he asked the people of Queensland to give

the boys a chance. The following statement by the Minister appeared in the press on the 22nd November, 1933:—

"GIVE YOUR BOYS THIS CHANCE.

"Minister Hynes's Advice to Queensland Parents.

"SCHEME FOR CREATING FARMERS.

"To parents," he said, "I would say, 'Give your boys this chance. Let them have the opportunity of living a healthy life in clean surroundings in Australia's own sunshine, with fertile lands as their outlook. It is your duty to see your sons safely placed on the threshold of such a career rather than to let them drift into a tragic condition of mind and body in hopelessly looking for work in the cities which they cannot obtain.'

"Briefly, it was shown," he continued, "that at least 8,000 boys were estimated to be leaving school each year, and the absorption of such a yearly number of boys in secondary industries in view of the repercussions of the depressed times, would appear to be quite impracticable.

"The present Administration in pursuance of its policy to direct boys to rural pursuits, had initiated several schemes for the rural training of youths.

"Generally fairly satisfactory results had been obtained from the department's efforts, and something had been achieved. This might reasonably be claimed in view of the fact that at Riverview Training Farm 218 youths, after receiving twelve weeks' training, had been allocated to positions in various parts of the State, and that under the department's scheme of rural training of youths on private farms (initiated in December last), ninety-eight youths had completed their six months' training, and 193 were still in training.

"STATE-WIDE SCHEME.

"It would by publicity through the press, the churches, and schools, boost the movement and endeavour to create that sense of landmindedness amongst the parents and the boys themselves which would, it was hoped, eventually attract a percentage of the boys leaving school to the land to which their future must, in the present circumstances, rightly belong. It might be treated as the nucleus of a State-wide organisation to carry out any scheme evolved for absorbing young people into rural employment.

"President Roosevelt recently remarked in America that 90 per cent. of the boys of the United States would have to reach land occupations. A statement was also made that battalions of high school boys were roaming the cities of the United States in search of unobtainable employment.

"We do not want this in Queensland," said the Minister, "but so long as there is a yearly inflow in this State of about 8,000 boys into the field of employment the position becomes increasingly more distressing, and the co-operation of the whole of the community to assist in the alleviation of such a problem becomes increasingly more necessary.

"For that and the reasons already stated," said the Minister, "the Government was proceeding on the lines indicated, well knowing that the efficient agriculturist on good land had better conditions of living than the artisan of the city who had no guarantee of security in his employment."

That is a very fine and able statement from the Secretary for Labour and Industry.

Numbers of visitors have been loud in their praises of the St. Lucia Farm Training School, and of the work carried out there. The way in which the boys are standing up to their jobs is proving to the Minister, the Government, the Opposition, and to the people that the scheme is worth while. Hon. members are aware of the splendid work of Canon Garland in connection with placing boys on the land. They are also aware of the work of Mr. Holmes, of the Immigration Department. We know what His Grace Archbishop Duhig thinks on schemes of this sort. In the "Courier-Mail" of 12th March of the current year he is reported as follows:—

"BOYS SHOULD GO ON LAND.

"WILL MAKE MEN OF THEM.

"Appealing in St. Stephen's Cathedral yesterday for support of the work of the committee putting boys on the land, Archbishop Duhig said they would be glad to meet parents and boys. He had many requests from persons who wanted farm boys. Even if a boy did not become a farmer, it was a great opportunity to get into the country, in healthy conditions; it would make a man of him. The committee could vouch for the homes to which the boys would be sent.

"It was good for a boy to learn how to rough it, as the early colonists had had to do, and those who had settled more recently had made good. It was better than knocking about the city in idleness. His Grace hoped mothers would encourage boys to go on the land, where they might look the future in the face, and become worthy men."

The Secretary for Agriculture last evening read quite a sheaf of letters received from satisfied boys and employers. One letter, however, evidently escaped his notice. This was published in the Brisbane press of 3rd September last, and is from a satisfied and grateful parent—John Long, South Brisbane—who writes to the "Courier-Mail" as follows:—

"Sir,—

"This time last year my boy became unemployed. I told him, 'St. Lucia farm training school for you, and then on the land; no 6s. tucker one week and 15s. next week when there is better offering!'

"The boy objected, but he went to St. Lucia—and was sorry to leave when he took train on 7th May last for a sheep station. His weekly letters to me indicate that I was quite right. If parents want any more safeguards for their sons' welfare, and the chance of a sound living, they must be hard to please. My thanks to those responsible in starting St. Lucia school."

Mr. Williams.]

Finally, we need only refer to the report of the Public Service Commissioner for the present year. Mr. Story says that the need for solving the problem of the drift to the city and the necessity for balancing or adjusting conditions as between town and country needs emphasising, and concludes by saying—

“The time seems opportune to investigate the possibilities of linking Gatton College more closely with city schools, and particularly with the industrial and sheep and wool sections of the Central Technical College, and thus to try to develop a country sense in some of the city youth. The St. Lucia-Moggill farm school might also be woven into the scheme.”

That statement comes from a man who knows what he is talking about, and who probably has studied these problems more closely than 90 per cent. of the members in this Committee. In reply to a letter congratulating him on the splendid report that he had issued to Parliament for the present year, he wrote to me in the following terms:—

“I thank you very much for the kindly sentiments concerning my annual report expressed in your letter of 1st instant. It is graceful acknowledgements of the kind which encourage one to keep on persevering in face of very great difficulties.

“The broad question of juvenile employment seems to me one of the most perplexing which we have to face, but it should be faced resolutely—even if some sweeping changes are involved.”

The problem is being or on the way to being solved by the establishment of a training school such as is St. Lucia. While members of the Opposition, and perhaps one or two members on the Government benches, may not see eye to eye with the scheme, still it is a step in the right direction. It is achieving something; and, in any case, we are all familiar with the old maxim, “Something attempted is something done.”

In conclusion, I trust hon. members opposite will accept the invitation extended to them by the Minister to visit the institution at St. Lucia. I was astonished to hear that only one member of the Opposition, so far as the Minister was aware, had seen fit to visit that training farm to see what was going on. That was the hon. member for Toowong, and I understand that he visited St. Lucia only on the day when it was opened and when there would be no opportunity of seeing what was being accomplished. I hope that hon. members opposite will accept the invitation of the Minister in the spirit in which it is given, and that they will visit St. Lucia to see just what is being done there. It is a disgrace and probably a crying shame that hon. members opposite should be prepared to criticise the activities of the St. Lucia training farm when they have not even had the decency to visit the place to ascertain what is being done. Before hon. members opposite seek to criticise this institution they should, at least, visit the place and so be able to speak with first-hand knowledge. I hope that the St. Lucia training farm will be continued by the Government to carry out its excellent work. I believe that excellent work is being carried out, otherwise I should be the first to remind the Minister that time and money were being wasted at this place.

[Mr. Williams.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [11.3 a.m.]: It was not my intention to speak on this vote, but I deem it necessary to correct some of the wrong impressions that have been conveyed by the hon. member for Port Curtis. Judging from his remarks, one would conclude that every member sitting in opposition was opposed to a scheme for the training of boys in farm work, but nothing is further from our minds. I definitely assert that there was no need for the establishment of the St. Lucia training farm. All the boys that were required for farms were being efficiently trained at the Riverview farm school, and the efforts of the organisation responsible for this work received the general approbation of the farmers who took the boys into their service. However, the St. Lucia training farm was established, sufficient boys could not be obtained, and the Riverview school was emptied.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: St. Lucia has always been full.

Mr. KENNY: There were applications after applications for boys from the Riverview school, and on one occasion I was told by the Riverview authorities that they had applications for thirty boys, but they were unable to provide even two in less than six weeks from that date. They asked me if the man in whom I was interested would wait a couple of months until they had had sufficient time to train the boys in an efficient manner. If the Riverview school was capable of training the boys in a competent manner, then there was no need to establish a similar institution under Government control. I gathered from the farmers who have employed the St. Lucia boys that the consensus of opinion amongst them is that the Riverview boys were far more efficiently trained.

Mr. LLEWELYN: Can you give specific instances?

Mr. KENNY: I could do so, but I cannot refer to them just now. On every occasion that private enterprise is able to establish an efficient institution the Government deem it their duty to meddle in similar affairs.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Do you call the Salvation Army private enterprise?

Mr. KENNY: The Salvation Army was carrying out a very excellent service at Riverview in providing an efficient type of boys, who won the approval of the farmers who took them into employment, and in view of that fact there was no need to indulge in further Government expenditure in the establishment of a similar institution at St. Lucia. It is well known that once the Government commence to meddle in affairs like this a new department of State is quickly established. Last year it was not necessary to appropriate even the £1,000 that is deemed to be necessary for the St. Lucia training school this year, and if we are to follow the example of the last Beerburum settlement it may be necessary to provide, perhaps, £3,000 next year, and then not obtain efficiency. This year no vote is required for the Beerburum settlement, because it proved to be a failure; may we not reach a similar stage in connection with the St. Lucia scheme? If the Riverview school had been allowed to continue to supply efficient boys for farm work all the requirements of the State would have been satisfied. My only objection to the St. Lucia school is that, prior to its establishment, an

efficient school was providing this very important service. If the Government can establish the fact that it is able to provide this service better than any other institution, then something is to be said in their favour, but I definitely assert that the Government are not providing this service more efficiently than the Riverview school did in the past.

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [11.5 a.m.]: The problem of training youths for any trade or profession is an all-important one, and it is not to be expected that boys who are trained in an agricultural school will all be excellent farmers. Farming to-day is a scientific undertaking, and it is necessary for boys to have years of training in the various phases of agriculture. Of course I recognise that the objective of the St. Lucia training farm is to give the boys an elementary course in agriculture, so that from that institution they may be drafted to farms to engage in its practical pursuit. It must be remembered that in almost every trade or calling it is necessary that learners should serve an apprenticeship period extending over a number of years. In all rural industries a system of apprenticeship to recognised agriculturists should be devised in order that boys may receive training in agriculture to fit them ultimately to take up farms of their own. In many country districts to-day there are farmers who take an interest in training boys, but in numbers of instances the boys are just put on the farms and told to milk or do other duties without being shown the proper way to do so. Consequently, many boys at the end of their service are not as efficient farm workers or agriculturists as they might be. The Minister may be able to devise a scheme of apprenticeship in farming whereby boys can be placed with selected farmers and thus follow up the training they receive at St. Lucia. This would fit them to become competent agriculturists. The training of youths is a big one, and no one envies any person that job. It is one of the problems facing the civilised world, and means should be devised whereby our industries can assimilate the growing youth. Attempts are being made at St. Lucia to train a limited number of boys. It has not been my privilege to visit that training farm, but I have visited the Yeerongpilly Animal Health Station. From my observations it is possible that boys being trained at St. Lucia can at that station acquire some little scientific knowledge of stock which is a necessary adjunct to their training in agriculture. It is our duty to recognise that it is all important to train youths to enter the field of agriculture just as youths are trained to enter other callings. We should be better employed finding means of apprenticing boys to practical men on the land who have been successful, so that they could obtain that practical knowledge which is an important factor in their ultimate success.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [11.10 a.m.] I should not have risen to continue this debate but for the speeches of the hon. member for Cunningham and other hon. members sitting with him who have endeavoured to prove that the Government committed a blunder in opening the St. Lucia training farm for boys, and their agitation for the closing of the school. The row connected with the expenditure of a thousand or two by the Government on a project of rural education is not worthy of considera-

tion. After all, Australia as a nation is not faced with problems as acute as those of older countries. I have in my hand a copy of the September issue of the "Graphic," which contains an article on emergency education. It deals very effectively with the expenditure of huge sums of money on projects such as the Government have undertaken at St. Lucia. We have not expended the sum we should have expended on the education of our boys after they have left school, and thus we have deprived them of an education necessary to make them an asset in the life of the nation. The article is very edifying. In the United States of America to-day 18,000 teachers and 500,000 young men and women are receiving emergency education. The expenditure on that training is 2,000,000 dollars a month. Yet so-called representatives of the farmers and of the people on the Opposition benches are worrying about the expenditure of an odd £1,000 a year.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We are not; we say that the money could be spent better in other directions.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: To-day we are doing what we should do; in fact, if money were available without an increase in taxation the Government could embark on a few more projects such as are illustrated in the magazine I have in my hand. In addition to rural teachers going to the country and rural colleges, American Governments have classes where such subjects as plant breeding, cultivation of new wheats, and handicraft work are taught. After all, if the American people can put 2,000,000 dollars a month into the education of the young people of that country at a time when they need it most, then, surely, the Government of a State like Queensland can make assets for the Australian nation at a cost of £1,000 or £2,000 a year without having a tirade of opposition raised against them!

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We supply America with that money.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: We do not. I believe that if they had a vision that would enable them to look to the future, the present Federal Government, the prototypes of hon. members who sit opposite, would put a little more of the finances of the nation into the education of the younger generation from fourteen to twenty-one years of age. After all, is it not a tragedy to see young boys and know that they have not a chance when they leave school, and that they are approaching their manhood without that chance?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Why don't you do something? You are the Government.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The Government are doing what they can, and because the issue is successful, hon. members opposite deride it and treat it as a joke.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: All Governments say they are doing the best they can.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Those are facts, and go to show that we are not in any way neglecting the job, and that the Department of Agriculture is carrying out its portion of training our youths, so far as the finance at its disposal will permit. If I had my way, industry itself would provide a little more than it does towards the education of the youths who have to carry on industry in future.

Mr. G. C. Taylor.]

Mr. BEDFORD (*Warrego*) [11.15 a.m.]: The action of the Government in opening this St. Lucia training farm is an excellent attempt to deal with one of the most awful problems with which the world has ever been confronted—that you have thousands of boys all the world over growing up out of school age and with apparently no future. In England it is a fact that children have grown up on the dole, married on the dole, and achieved children and radio sets on the dole. In America, a country where the work of the nation is not so completely done as it is in England, where to a large extent they have dug up their coal and iron and must now largely depend on other countries for those raw materials of manufacture—in America, despite a greater number of openings there than exist in any part of Europe, they still have the problem not only of thousands but of hundreds of thousands of boys and girls without any possible occupation, in many cases swarming the countryside becoming potential criminals and, at any rate, headed for ruin of some sort or other.

In establishing this training farm the Government have done an excellent little thing in seeking to solve a very big problem. But then the position naturally comes back to this: These boys are to be used as they grow up for further production in primary industries. On the other hand, the national customer, the customer to which we should look by reason of our own sacrifice for it and our tremendously great preference for it, is preaching restriction. Supposing you do educate these boys agriculturally, what possibility is there of their being engaged in gainful employment while we still depend on oversea markets for the greatest consumption of primary products? It is utterly ridiculous to say that anything has been done for Australia commensurate with the sacrifices Australia has made for Empire. The suggestion was made here the other day that Britain was looking so well after Australian producers that she cut the exports from Argentina by 10 per cent. The amount of foreign meat introduced into the United Kingdom in 1932 was valued at £78,000,000. How much of that did Australia ever supply? Considering that the live cattle imported from Argentina had a value of £13,000,000, and the dropping from Argentina of 10 per cent., what does that leave to Australia?

Mr. RUSSELL: Thirty-five per cent. on frozen beef.

Mr. BEDFORD: But 10 per cent. on the other stuff, 35 per cent. on frozen beef valued at £78,000,000! Does that bring Australia anywhere within coo-ee of the measure of preference she should get?

Mr. RUSSELL: There is no restriction on Australia.

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. member talked differently the other day when the press was not here. One cannot argue in favour of Australia's primary or secondary industries, one cannot demand that Britain should give this country a fair deal without some fool roaring "Disloyalty"! If there is one thing that appears more plainly than any other it is the fact that these people who are worried about their loyalty to Britain are damned disloyal to Australia. We have now the position that not only are our boys unable to seek an outlet in the

primary industries, which depend so much on exports; we have also the fact during the last two days, in order to keep a few hours' more life in their miserable legislative bodies, there has been a coalition of two great enemies, who have decided to wipe out all differences between the Country Party and the United Australian Party—to wipe them out as long as they can get an opportunity of getting place and payment for portfolios. Australia has no chance in the secondary industries with that kind of Government prepared to throw all tariffs overboard or weaken them so much that manufacturers in Australia will get a serious setback. So now it is not only in the primary industries that the Australian boy has no future; it is also in the secondary industries. The Australian boy will not have any future till a fair deal is insisted on with the people with whom we deal overseas. This loyalty goes to such an extent that the hon. member for Hamilton said the other day—

Mr. RUSSELL: That was confidential.

Mr. BEDFORD: The hon. member for Hamilton is not confidential. He said the other day that Japan bought wool from us only because she wanted it, and Britain buys wool from us because she loves us, and not because she uses the wool! There never was a country that bought anything from anybody unless it wanted it. The main thing is that it does not buy enough in comparison with the tremendous trade preference we give it. Australia can never get a fair deal till it pulls this preference out. She is not getting a fair deal and largely because of it her sons have little future in either her primary or secondary industries.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [11.22 a.m.]: In regard to the question of restriction to which the hon. member has referred, so far as one can see Australia has restricted the importation of manufactured goods from Great Britain and Great Britain has adopted a similar policy as far as our primary products are concerned. Great Britain has adopted a policy of restricting the import of primary products with a view to assisting her primary industries, which have been neglected for generations. For many generations Great Britain preferred to sell manufactured goods to the nations of the world. Those nations are endeavouring to make themselves self-contained, with the result that the British market for manufactured goods throughout the world has shrunk considerably, and Great Britain considers it advisable and justifiable to assist her primary producers. In assisting her primary producers she, up to the present moment, has not restricted the imports of primary produce from Australia.

Mr. BEDFORD: They are proposing to do so.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They are proposing to do so in certain respects, but up to the present moment they have not done so. If we continue to restrict the imports of manufactured goods from Great Britain that country is perfectly justified in restricting the imports of primary products from Australia.

Mr. BEDFORD: Let them take off the preference and give everybody an open go.

[*Mr. Bedford.*]

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat considers that Great Britain should be continually spoonfeeding Australia. She has done this. If it were not for the fact that we had Great Britain and her markets Australia would not be in the position she is to-day. All Australian Governments for generations have borrowed money from her. We need not have borrowed from her, unless we desired. The money lenders were prepared to lend us the money, and in many cases we went cap in hand and obtained loans from Great Britain with a view to developing Australia. We have developed Australia with that money and now, owing to the fact that Great Britain is desirous of receiving interest on those loans and also a return of capital, hon. members opposite seem to think that Great Britain is treating Australia in a harsh manner. We know perfectly well what we owe to the market of Great Britain. I shall not say it is our only market, because we have the Japanese market for wool and wheat. Japan has been a wonderful purchaser of Australian wheat, and she has helped us accordingly. She has also been an extraordinarily good purchaser of Australian wool; if it were not for the Japanese market Australia would be in a much worse position than she was in 1929-30 at the depth of the depression. We have to recognise that Great Britain may retaliate against anything we may do and could retaliate against us to a greater degree than we could against her. As has already been stated, we cannot expect to have only one-way traffic between Australia and Great Britain.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [11.26 a.m.]: I had no intention of speaking again on this matter, but I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without replying to the charge of the hon. member for Warrego that I spoke in one sense on Monday last and in another to-day. I was under the impression that anything said at the meeting on Monday last was confidential, and up to the present I have not referred to it in any shape or form. I am now going to say to-day what I said to hon. members on that occasion. The hon. member for Warrego has exhibited no great love for the British, and all his speeches are tinged with venom. Let us realise the position prevailing elsewhere. The hon. member for Warrego, in supporting this vote—or opposing the vote because he says there is no hope for our boys in either secondary or primary industries—has interwoven into his speech some reference to my statement regarding restriction. I am totally opposed to restriction in any shape or form, and I think that is the current belief in Australia.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not entitled to discuss that matter on this vote unless he can in some way connect his remarks with the subject of the vote.

Mr. RUSSELL: Mr. King, I will connect my remarks with the boys at the St. Lucia training farm in the same way as was done by the hon. member for Warrego. I have been mentioned, and I claim the right to

reply to statements made by the hon. member for Warrego.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is out of order.

Mr. RUSSELL: Of course it is in order. The hon. member referred to a meeting of a confidential nature. Great Britain has not imposed any restriction on the importation of our meat or butter, but she may do so. She has imposed a restriction on the importation of frozen meat from Argentina. The statement I made was this: that we had to face the issue next year after the expiration of the Ottawa Agreement, and we should endeavour to make a fresh agreement with Great Britain in regard to a market for our goods. Our case is a good one, for several reasons. We are of British descent. We have met our commitments so far; we have never defaulted. And knowing that in Great Britain there is a large section of people who have investments in Argentina and other foreign countries, and knowing that they will make every effort to prevent any further restriction being placed on the importations from foreign countries, in order that their interest on these investments will not be jeopardised by interference with trade, we must face the position. Our case is good, and we have in our favour the arguments I have outlined, and, what is more important, we have the sentiment of the British people themselves in our favour. We should exploit that sentiment to the full; I believe we shall be able to make an agreement equal to if not better than the Ottawa Agreement.

We as Australians cannot take into consideration the fact that large sums of British capital have been invested in Argentina and other foreign countries. This money has been invested for gain, and must not be taken into consideration when we seek to boost our own interests.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the vote under discussion.

Mr. RUSSELL: I am replying to the hon. member for Warrego. I really claim the right to reply to his statement, and I do not think that I should be sat down. We cannot allow the hon. member for Warrego to make such statements without some reply. He stated that I made a different statement to-day from that which I made on Monday. I am making the same statement to-day as I made on Monday, despite the fact that the meeting on Monday was of a confidential nature. We cannot take into consideration the fact that so much British money has been invested in the Argentina. The private investor cannot be considered in this fight that we must put up in our own interests. I believe that we can put up a sound case, and provided we play the game and do not expect everything to come our own way, I am satisfied that an agreement can be made that will be satisfactory to all concerned.

Mr. PLUNKETT (*Albert*) [11.33 a.m.]: I have no objection to the expenditure of £1,000 or £2,000 for the purpose of educating boys who are inclined to go upon the land. In these days of scientific production it is imperative that the future farmers of this State should be thoroughly educated in all modern forms of primary production. The Government need fear no criticism from me of their action in spending £1,000 or

Mr. Plunkett.]

£2,000 in providing agricultural education, because I realise that it is necessary to do something in this direction.

I was rather astounded at the impressions conveyed by hon. members opposite, who seemed to infer, like so many other people in Queensland, that all a boy had to do was to go on to the land and his fortune was made. Just consider for a moment the financial and social position of many people engaged on the land to-day! Where are the markets for their produce? It has been stated that the farmers do not pay an adequate wage, but the only reason why they do not pay a better wage is because they cannot afford to do so, and they cannot afford to do so because they are unable to obtain a sufficient price for their products. It is all moonshine for hon. members opposite to suggest that once a lad is placed on the land his fortune is made. In my opinion there are better methods of training boys in the practice of agriculture than sending them to the St. Lucia Training Farm. Bear in mind, I have no objection to the St. Lucia scheme, because I realise that if it does not provide a highly efficient service it will at least indicate to the community that the Government are seized of the importance of training our youths in agricultural pursuits, and that the venture is well worth an expenditure of £1,000 or £2,000.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PLUNKETT: I want to issue the warning that we should not mislead ourselves, and we should not mislead the people into believing that prosperity is assured to the boys once they can find a place on the land.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Who said that?

Mr. EDWARDS: You said it a dozen times.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You should get a dictionary before you commence to misinterpret the statements made from this side of the Chamber.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I do not want to argue the point with these Queen street farmers who know nothing about the subject, but indulge in talk about it merely for publicity purposes and with the hope of deluding the people into believing that they are the friends of the farmers.

Mr. BEDFORD: Do the friends of the farmers live in butter factories?

Mr. PLUNKETT: You need not be afraid that I am going to say anything against Great Britain. You are desperately biased towards that country. You have a tremendous obsession in connection with the so-called injustices meted out to this country by Great Britain.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I should like to obey your ruling, Mr. King, but I am not going to allow these things to be put over me without some protest. The primary producers in this country work harder than any other section of the community. They assume greater responsibilities than any other section, they suffer the greatest rebuffs, and they receive the least rewards for their efforts. I defy anybody to contradict that assertion.

What has been done to assist the people in the country? The bulk of the legisla-

[Mr. Plunkett.

tion that is passed throughout the States of the Commonwealth is passed in the interests of the people in the city, and it had the effect of seriously interfering with successful occupations in the country. To my way of thinking the legislation that has been passed has in the main been wrong. How often are we told that the real wealth of the country is produced from the soil? But immediately further revenue is required for purposes of State the people to be penalised are the very producers of the real wealth of the State! It must be admitted that life in the city is more attractive than life in the country. How can we convince our boys that it is to their advantage to go into the isolation of the country when they urgently desire to mingle in the exciting atmosphere of the city with its races, pictures, and football clubs? In my opinion, you cannot blame them for desiring to get positions in the city. That attitude must be broken down before you can get people, train them as you will, to stop in isolated parts of this State in order to make a living. Suppose we find a boy whose heart and soul are in primary production, and he is trained and made efficient, and ultimately goes out into the country, where he stays because he likes the life on the land. If that boy desires to embark on the land on his own account, then somebody must provide him with at least £2,000 in order that he may secure a piece of land and the necessary equipment to enable him to carry on. What is the use of telling boys that if they are educated they can go out on the land, unless they have someone to finance them? They have no opportunity except as farm labourers, and the farmer, because of low prices and excessive taxation, cannot afford to pay them more than £1 or 30s. a week in a seasonal occupation. Yet we find members of the Government Party making the statement that farmers do not pay decent wages, and that they work their employees too long!

I did not intend to speak on this vote, but I do not want the people to be misled into the belief that all you have to do is to educate boys for a life in the country and that their future is secure. What form of production from the land to-day enables us to say to anyone desirous of going on the land, "You will prosper for one year; you will prosper for two years; or you will prosper for ten years?" How can we say to the boys who are now going out on the land, "Prices are low now, but in ten years they will be better?" What encouragement can we give to anyone to go out on the land? We have only to realise the position of many men engaged in the rural industry in order to answer the question. Many of them are carrying liabilities, and although some of them may not be working as efficiently as they should, the existence of low prices alone means that they can have no hopeful outlook in life for many years to come. Any farmer carrying an overdraft to-day is in a serious financial position.

I desire to emphasise that this thousand or two for the St. Lucia training farm for boys is a mere bagatelle. If the Minister considers that is the proper method of obtaining lads to go on the land, there should be no objection to it. These boys will have to be trained somewhere. From that point of view I have no objection to this vote.

Mr. ANNAND (*East Toowoomba*) [11.41 a.m.]: I feel it incumbent on me to say something, if only to give the people of the city of Brisbane in particular a different idea from that which was conveyed yesterday by members of the Government Party as to the conditions of the boy on the land. The hon. member for Normanby told a harrowing tale of a boy who had to go out early morning after morning and get his feet wet, and through getting his feet wet ruined his boots and his trousers. I have come to the conclusion that if the Minister is anxious to secure the confidence of the mothers in his training farm in order that they will send their boys there, he should restrain his followers, because they are certainly doing their very best to put those mothers in such a frame of mind that he will never get the boys to his school. I would draw the attention of the hon. member for Normanby to the fact that the people who to-day are looking for boys—and this is my own personal experience—are mostly those whose families have grown up and married and acquired properties on their own account. Every one of those sons who were reared on their parents' dairy farms have had to get their feet wet in order to make a success of life.

Mr. FOLEY: I am not complaining about that.

Mr. ANNAND: Yesterday a most harrowing tale was told by the hon. member of a boy who got his boots and trousers wet, and the hon. member asked, "How on earth could that boy keep himself in boots and trousers at £1 a week and keep?"

Mr. FOLEY: Ten shillings a week and keep.

Mr. ANNAND: Very well, I shall take the hon. member's figure of 10s. a week, and would point out that in my own personal experience 10s. a week in the country is equal to 30s. a week in the city. Hon. members opposite are poisoning the minds of the mothers and making them believe that their boys will have no success in the country on account of their wet boots and wet trousers at a wage which is equivalent to 30s. a week and keep in the city. But what are the Government offering single men in the city? Thirteen shillings and sixpence one week and 6s. the next week! Fortunately, the Minister is doing the best he can to make the St. Lucia farm a success, but unfortunately the remarks that emanated from the hon. member for Normanby and from other hon. members on the Government side are such that I wonder that any mother in Brisbane, not knowing the genuine conditions of the people on the land, would like her boy to go into the country after listening to them.

Mr. FOLEY: She should not allow her boy to go out on 10s. a week under those conditions.

Mr. ANNAND: The hon. member interjects that a boy should not be allowed to go out under those conditions at 10s. a week. I want to correct him and say 30s. a week, because that is the equivalent wage. What is our State coming to that men should not be allowed to go out and get their feet wet at 5 o'clock in the morning? I say no more, Mr. King; I leave it to you. The thing is so ridiculous that it is not worth speaking about, and it is unfortunate that the people of Queensland, indeed the people of the

world, who read the remarks of the hon. member, will come to the conclusion that Queenslanders—strong, healthy, virile boys—are too weak and too puny to be allowed out at 5 o'clock in the morning to get their boots wet.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [11.45 a.m.]: I did not intend to speak again, but a few remarks have been made this morning that I desire to discuss.

The first question was raised by the hon. member for Cook, who suggested there was no justification for the establishment of the St. Lucia training farm, because an organisation of a kindred nature existed at Riverview. Surely the hon. member knows that Riverview is totally unable to get the boys that are required!

Mr. KENNY: That is news to me.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: During a long range of experience it has been definitely unable to get these boys. Under these circumstances was it not obviously the duty of the Government to do something in the direction of training the boys?

Mr. KENNY: Could they cope with all those who were offering?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not the real question. The number of boys who were offering was practically nil. Riverview was never full, and was always endeavouring to get boys. Time after time when I inquired into the question I always got the same report—that they could not get boys at Riverview. I admit that the Salvation Army did excellent work at Riverview, but I challenge the statement of the hon. member that Riverview-trained boys compare more than favourably with boys trained at St. Lucia. Is it not remarkable that the hon. member, who cavils in an indirect way at the establishment of a Government agricultural educational facility in the vicinity of Brisbane, is clamouring inside and outside this Chamber for the establishment of an agricultural organisation in North Queensland?

Mr. KENNY: There is no comparison.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There never is! If there is anything in the statement made so frequently by hon. members opposite in this debate that the St. Lucia establishment—which stands for some rudimentary form of agricultural education—should be closed down and that we should not spend £1,000 as a contribution to the solution of this boy problem, then members of the Opposition who hold this view must be logical and say that there is no advantage in agricultural education and agricultural educational establishments not only in Queensland but also in all parts of the world, and that they should all be closed down. No logical line of demarcation can be drawn. Either we have agricultural education or we do not have it. Members have said, "Train the boys on the farm." That argument could be applied to the University. I believe the days have long gone when anybody cavilled at the value of agricultural education. I do not believe this question of agricultural education would have been raised at all in this Chamber had not members been asked to discuss what is frankly an innovation, a new principle of agricultural training, more necessary at least

Hon. F. W. Bulcock.

than the training provided at Gatton. Surely nobody can seriously cavil at any State contributions that may be honestly directed towards the solution of a problem of outstanding importance. I can frankly assure hon. members that it is not the intention of the Government to close down the farm at St. Lucia; the intention of the Government is rather in the opposite direction—to extend the facilities available so that we can train a greater number of boys.

Mr. NIMMO: It would be a good idea to provide for them at Gatton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has been complaining about training boys for six months at St. Lucia, and the period of training at Gatton is five years. From my own experience in regard to agricultural education, I can say you cannot satisfactorily blend a short six months' course, which is more or less a practical one, with the academic curriculum which is part of the training at Gatton. The two, I believe, have to be kept separate. In any instance I know of where that method has been tried it has always failed. You cannot have two types of students undergoing two different types of training and drawn from different sources and produce satisfactory results.

I believe the hon. member for Oxley raised the question that St. Lucia was too close to town. That is not my experience. Does the hon. gentleman know that the St. Lucia training farm is only part of our organisation, and a very large portion of our organisation is maintained at Moggill, some considerable distance from town?

Mr. NIMMO: That is the Salvation Army training home.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not. Apparently the hon. member does not know that there are two distinct phases of training. The first phase of the work is conducted at St. Lucia, which is 3½ miles from town; and the second phase of our work, the pioneering phase, is being conducted at Moggill, a considerable distance from town, where a large camp is permanently maintained.

I regret that this criticism has arisen. I have had some difficulty in keeping up the complement of boys at St. Lucia. I have been confronted with difficulties, which I have overcome by the loyal co-operation of organisations that value and appreciate the work that is being done at St. Lucia; and discussions such as have taken place in this Chamber are likely to add a further handicap to the smooth working of this institution. For that reason I am sorry that certain remarks have been made which do not represent the position at St. Lucia. If I thought that St. Lucia was primarily an instrument for the exploitation of boys, if I thought that boys were being trained at St. Lucia merely to become slaves on farms, merely to be sent out to be paid a meagre wage and to be housed under improper conditions, as has been suggested, I would close up St. Lucia to-morrow, because I would not be a party to that sort of thing. But we do definitely keep a check on all the boys who go out. We know what wages they will receive and the employers to whom they go. Yet there has been in some directions a general condemnation of the work that is being done at St. Lucia.

[Hon. F. W. Bulcock.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Nobody has discussed the actual work that is being done at St. Lucia. No Opposition member has raised what I consider to be the most important question, "What are you teaching the boys at St. Lucia?" I know it was difficult for them to raise this question, because they have not been there. I think the preface to any debate on this matter should have been a request for a statement from me as to the actual nature of the training that was being given to the boys. There was none.

Mr. RUSSELL: That is a compliment to you.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, not to me altogether; perhaps a compliment to my officers who are engaged in this work. Some remarks have been made concerning how the boys have been placed. I instructed the officer in charge of the St. Lucia training farm to prepare for me a brief statement of what St. Lucia had accomplished, and the statement I have received from him is dated 1st November, 1934, and reads—

"ST. LUCIA TRAINING FARM.

"During the twelve months ending 30th June ninety-four trainees were placed on farms, this number being increased to 114 by the end of August. The reports received from employers of the trainees have practically always been satisfactory, and inquiry shows that the majority of the placed trainees have continued in rural occupations.

"The farm has progressed considerably during the past twelve months.

"During the year the range of farm crops grown included maize, white panicum, Japanese millet, lucerne, English potatoes, cattle and Beaudesert pumpkins, sorghum, sweet potatoes, arrow-root, wheat, barley, oats, rye, field peas, vetches, and Italian rye grass. These crops, together with the necessary cultivation of farm land for the crops, provided a wide range of instruction in practical farming. The practical instruction during the year also included milking, separating, butter making, care of calves and pigs, general bush timber work, and fencing. The increases in the poultry have provided a further line of practical instruction, while the lectures on the various agricultural subjects provide the trainees with a range of knowledge which should fit them for almost any type of farm life in Queensland.

"A silage stack, erected by students during February, proved a success, and provided valuable feed for winter months. Hay stacks built by students also proved of value.

"The clearing of the dam and the increase in height of the overflow levels, has provided a substantial storage of water for use by the dairy herd and horses, and also for the irrigation of the vegetable garden.

"The erection of subdividing fences was commenced, paving the way for an economic control of the pastures. During the past few months the new piggeries have been brought into use,

and preparations are being made for the erection of new milking bails and yards.

"Many small improvements" have been made, including the erection of calf-feeding bails. The proposed extension of the boarding facilities, providing an increase in the boarding period, will improve the course given by the training farm considerably. This will be effected both by the increase in hours for instruction and the decrease in outside interest which at present affects the trainees attending daily."

Mr. NIMMO: How many acres are there under cultivation?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are increasing it all the time.

Mr. NIMMO: How many?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot say off hand, but somewhere in the vicinity of 100 acres have been ploughed. The point I make is this: all that work is done by the boys. I do not carry a big staff of officers out there. I do not believe that the scheme would succeed in the way I desire if there was a big staff of officers. There is the principal and a farm foreman. I make it a practice to send one of my juniors from the office to St. Lucia for three months so that he will become more valuable to us in the office by becoming acquainted with farming processes. He cannot, however, be regarded as a permanent official of the staff. At the Moggill camp I have one man who is an experienced bushman. He comprises the staff at Moggill. I insist on the boys doing all the work.

Mr. SPARKES: I wish you had Gatton in your charge.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Sometimes I wish I had myself. When I go to St. Lucia—and I do visit the institution from time to time—if I see the farm foreman ploughing I want to know the reason why he is doing that work, and why a student has not been put on the plough. After they have been a couple of days on horse work, we send them out to develop their own resources and their own initiative. In every phase of the work we place the fullest and greatest responsibility on the boys. We start them at the Moggill camp at training in bush work, such as breaking down posts for fencing. We have trained them in the erection of buildings, certainly not of commodious or palatial types, but pig styes and yards built out of bush timber hauled in from Moggill.

Mr. SPARKES: When a swingle bar happens to break when the boy is ploughing do you make him provide one out of bush timber?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The bars out there are made by the boys.

Mr. SPARKES: Out of bush timber?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have frequently made bars out of bush timber. I impressed on the manager of this farm that when something breaks an endeavour must be made to find a local substitute, as the lads would have to do if they were out on a farm in the bush. It is not a case of going to the telephone and ringing up or sending into town to replace the broken article. They prepare it on

the farm. At St. Lucia the boys are taught a little bit of sapling work, a little bit of carpentering, and generally speaking it can be considered that we have not departed from the pioneering spirit of farm practice.

Last evening I quoted letters to show the viewpoints of many of the boys and their parents after the lads had passed through St. Lucia. This morning I am in receipt from Canon Garland of extracts from letters that he has received. I desire to quote from some of these letters to show that there is no foundation in the statements that have been made that these boys are going out to farms to be exploited.

Mr. EDWARDS: They came from your own side.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: From both sides of the Committee. If the impression gets abroad that we have trained boys who are to be subject to exploitation when they go out to work we may as well close down the institution.

At 12 noon,

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. W. T. King in the chair.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We have pointed out that they are taken into very good homes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And I am about to corroborate some of those sentiments. The first letter is from a boy from Millaa Millaa, who writes on 10th October—

"I am saving as much money as I can. I am getting on splendidly. I have improved a great deal. Milking was my worst point. The Church of England minister came to see me. I like him very much. I would go to church more regularly only it is too far, but I go each time my employers go. I would like to own a mixed farm or one similar to St. Lucia. I am very happy here. I would rather be here than at home. I like my work and my employers also. I get plenty to eat; nobody else could wish for better. I have got all the pleasure I want. Working here is really a pleasure itself."

Canon Garland attaches a note in connection with this boy, in which he says—

"This was a city lad, one of six children in the family. Lost his situation in a shop because of award and age. He increased one stone in weight while at St. Lucia."

The next letter is dated 15th October, and it comes from an entirely different part of the State—from Jandowae. It says—

"I am still in the job, and have just been given a rise from 10s. per week to 15s. At present we are milking fifty-two cows. We use four machines. When my employer goes to cricket and tennis I go too. I think if ever I took up land I would like to take up a piece of scrub land, because it would be fresh soil."

The next letter, which comes from Bell, states—

"I have now been farming for about one year, and I like this outdoor life immensely. I have learnt as much as I possibly could, and have enjoyed perfect health throughout; so I have a great deal to be thankful for. I am saving

Hon. F. W. Bulcock.]

practically all my wages. My ambition is that I shall be able to settle down on a farm of my own as soon as possible."

Here is a letter from The Gums—

"At present I have in hand nearly £20. My wages have only averaged 12s. 6d. since I started. My ambition is to try and get land in this district and start off in the sheep line. Others have started off with practically nothing, and I can do the same. Hard work I am not afraid of."

Here is a letter from Stanthorpe—

"I have a fairly good job, and my wages are 12s. 6d. per week. Eventually I propose to get a farm of my own, possibly aided by the Government. In the meantime I shall try and learn and get on to the best of my ability."

The next letter, which is from Wetheron, says—

"I am progressing favourably, and my employer is very clear in his explanation as to how the work should be done, with the result that I have gained a fair knowledge in general farm work. I have been here seven months, and saved £12 10s., which I have deposited in the savings bank."

Canon Garland attaches a note in connection with this boy, in which he says—

"What lad of seventeen years working in the city has saved £12 10s. in seven months?"

That is a very appropriate note.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Many boys earning £5 in the city cannot save that amount.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The next letter is from Texas. It says—

"I am getting on all right with my work, which I like very much. At present I have been helping Mr. — to make gates and doing fencing. I am learning everything I can for my future life. I have got a bank book, and at present I have saved £7 10s. My ambition is to become a dairy farmer."

The next letter, which comes from Dulacca, reads—

"I am enjoying real good health, and like the farm life real well and enjoy getting up early in the morning. We are milking eighty cows night and morning."

The next one is from Miles—

"I am riding in the saddle every day. We are busy making sheep pens and sheds ready to put the wool in. I have my meals at the same table as the rest of the family, and am getting on all right. My hours are from 6 to 12 in the morning and from 1 to 5 p.m."

The next letter, which is from Yungaburra, is of particular interest because it touches on a case in which the establishment at St. Lucia made a very big contribution to a boy's welfare. He had got into difficulties, not very grave in themselves, but of a kind which, probably, would have developed in an unfavourable environment. He was a bright, brainy boy who would probably have developed in a way that was not in his best interests. He was before the Children's Court. The court handed him over to the custody of Canon Garland.

[Hon. F. W. Bulcock.

Canon Garland came to me and said, "Will you take this boy?" I had a look at the boy. I found him a likable boy, and said, "I will take the boy at St. Lucia." I gave particular instructions to the instructor at St. Lucia to keep a close eye on him. That boy was rescued from an environment in which he might have proved vicious. We had him six months. I met him several times during my visits to St. Lucia, and found him to be a jolly fine little kiddie. He was seen to do several generous acts. That boy might have gone the wrong way, and cost the State a lot of money, but he was finally persuaded that that course of life was not a wise one. Let me read these letters, which are not inspired, but are the outcome of a request for the truth to be told:—

"I have settled down in life. I like my employer very much. I am very pleased to know that my employer likes me, and I am taking lessons to be baptised and confirmed. The other lad with me is a very nice lad, and not like the rough paper boys in Brisbane. I don't have very much work to do up here. All we have to do is help with the milking and help shell corn in the afternoon. We also get an afternoon off every week to do our washing, and also get Sunday off. We never get up until six o'clock in the morning."

Canon Garland's note is—

"This boy was making a very precarious living in Brisbane. Had not got a settled job. He was of high intelligence, and likely to drift the wrong way."

The letters I have quoted are not selected letters, but are representative of the type we obtain from the boys who go out from St. Lucia.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They are quite true, too.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe that these letters fairly reflect the conditions under which these boys are working, and they fill me with a desire to persist with the St. Lucia school. It was in the nature of an experiment, but it has established a reputation not only amongst the boys trained there, but also amongst their employers, who invariably speak favourably of the type of boys it sends out. If a boy is not capable of going on a farm at the conclusion of his six months' training, he is kept for a further period, because it is not desirable that an untrained raw boy should be sent out. He would be unsatisfactory. On the other hand, if a boy comes to St. Lucia, and after remaining a brief period definitely discloses that he has no agricultural avocation, but is endeavouring to use St. Lucia merely as a boarding-house, then we ask him to return home, and he goes away.

The discipline maintained at St. Lucia is fairly rigorous. Generally speaking, we have had no trouble with our boys there. There is a broader question, of course, than the mere question of the St. Lucia farm. That question is the training of boys. Anything the State can do and anything the individual can do, and anything that corporations, public bodies, and semi-public bodies can do to encourage boys to go on the land under satisfactory conditions must be done. It is essential for the safety

of the State, the safety of our social structure, and for the boys themselves that this should be done. I am proud, if I may be permitted to say so, of the fact that many boys whose only vocation was congregating at street corners were by this act of the Government taken from those street corners to be trained at St. Lucia and sent out to reputable farms. That action, at least, put them on their feet, and was a gain to industry, perseverance, and manhood.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is a pity you couldn't get a few hundred more.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I wish I could. I reiterate that some of the discussion this morning is going to prove a handicap to me in my desire to get the right type of boy. To indicate how far the name of St. Lucia is becoming known, I will read the following telegram that I have received from Julia Creek, which is away in the North-West:—

“Is lad, twenty years of age, Methodist, well recommended, with experience of horses, eligible enter St. Lucia?”

The case there, probably, is that of a boy engaged in pastoral pursuits who desires to obtain an agricultural knowledge. I say without hesitation that that boy is desirable, and it would be desirable to get him into St. Lucia and give him some agricultural training, as distinct from a purely pastoral training.

I earnestly appeal to hon. members to regard this step, as I regard it, as aimed at the solution of a gigantic problem. I ask hon. members opposite to regard the action of the Government—and of the Department of Agriculture, as the instrument of the Government—as being directed in a minor and modest way to finding some solution of that problem. I appeal to them, instead of cavilling at those actions and challenging the value of agricultural education, to realise that every boy we put into a useful vocation is a boy who becomes a worthy citizen of the State and that every boy who is allowed to drift, owing to our rotten social order and conditions, is likely to become the reverse. For that reason I ask for the co-operation of public bodies, of Parliament, and all others interested in maintaining the high standards which have been set at St. Lucia. I appeal for the fullest co-operation in obtaining the required number of boys in order that we may have a steady and successive supply for desirable prospective employers.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY (*Wynnum*) [12.14 p.m.]: I found myself entirely in agreement with the Minister when he was dealing with the necessity of getting boys on the land and when he appealed to all sections of the community to make that highly desirable objective possible. One matter upon which hon. members are unanimous is the enthusiasm of the Minister in his work. His whole heart is in it. Personally I wish that he would temper his enthusiasm with a little restraint at times: but, unfortunately, the Government of which he is a member cannot help interfering with other people's business. It is an obsession, and with the Minister it is more than an obsession—it is a mental disease. The hon. gentleman cannot keep his hand out of other people's business. But in the endeavour which he is making to place boys on the land, I am whole-

heartedly in agreement with him. I only wish that the fellow members of his Cabinet were just as anxious to do so. The Minister must find himself in a very awkward position at times. He wants to put boys on the land, but the Cabinet of which he is a member are doing everything possible to keep them off the land.

Mr. WATERS: How do you work that out?

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You cannot prove that statement.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: They are keeping the boys off the land by giving young men of eighteen years and upwards 13s. 6d. a day for one day's work a week and rations the following week.

Mr. WATERS: Do you prefer them to starve?

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: No, but I prefer that the boys should go out into the country to work rather than that they should, as the Minister says, support the lamp posts in the streets, which is all to their undoing. It is a great pity that the Secretary for Agriculture has not more force and more power with the Cabinet to induce them to break down this vicious system which they have adopted.

Mr. FOLEY: What vicious system?

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: The vicious system of encouraging loafers by paying young men 13s. 6d. a day for one day's work a week and in the following week giving them rations, making it impossible for them to go on the land—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is completely out of order. The hon. member is not dealing with the vote, which concerns the St. Lucia training farm for boys.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: I am giving reasons why the boys will not go to St. Lucia.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are more boys there than the college can cope with.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: The position is that more boys are not going on the land because the present Government are encouraging them to remain in the city.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot be allowed to continue in that way, because the question of placing boys in work is covered by another vote, whereas the vote under discussion concerns the training of boys at the St. Lucia training farm.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: I am not discussing the work the boys are doing. I am pointing out that if the Government's policy were different from what it is more boys would go to the training farm at St. Lucia and more boys would be prepared to go on the land. That is the point I make.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do you mean that they ought to be starved?

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: No. The Secretary for Agriculture has read half a dozen or more letters showing that the boys are well satisfied with the conditions which obtain on the land—and what is true of them is true of countless others. One has only to glance at the newspaper in the morning to find the advertisements of various agencies asking for fourteen and even a greater

Mr. Bayley.]

number of boys who are required to go on the land. The boys are not going.

This subject must be studied. Why is it that the primary industries, which are the most important industries in this country, cannot secure sufficient reinforcements from the young men of to-day? Not only are the young men in the city refusing to go on the farm, but the young men who are on the farms are refusing to stay there and are coming into the cities, which is only adding to the seriousness of the position. We all know why. It is because the farmers cannot afford to pay their sons a sufficient amount of money to encourage them to remain on the farms. The Minister knows why. It is because conditions have been created in the city which are entirely artificial. Industries are being called upon to pay more than they can afford to pay. Instead of meeting that situation, the members of this Cabinet are endeavouring to bring about artificial conditions of work in the country. They are talking about creating local prices for the commodities produced in the country so that higher wages may be paid there, so that they may be more in conformity with the wages paid in the city. The thing is impossible. If we are to preserve the primary industries in this country we must bring about an alteration in the industrial conditions that obtain in the cities. We cannot have side by side in this country two scales of wages, one scale to be paid out to a man who is an industrial worker in the city and another, a much lower scale, to be paid out to men employed on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: A distinguished visitor said the other day that the correct thing was to raise the standard of the agricultural worker, as was being done in England.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: That is what we are not endeavouring to do in this country. Under the present system the man on the land is compelled to accept world prices for his commodities, but he is called upon to pay artificial prices for those commodities which are produced by the industrial worker in the city. That is not improving his condition. I say: wipe out the artificial conditions in the city, allow natural conditions to obtain in the country, and all will be well, and our people will be re-employed.

However, I did not get up to discuss the industrial position, nor would you have permitted me, Mr. Gledson. I do want to point out it is useless for the Secretary for Agriculture to make endeavours to obtain boys for the land when his colleagues in the Cabinet cut right across that endeavour by saying to the young man, "There is no need for you to go on the land, here is 13s. 6d. for one day's work, and here are rations for the following week." These are the things that have to be considered; let the Minister fight it out with his colleagues.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enggera*) [12.22 p.m.]: The hon. member for Isis accused Government members of being Queen street farmers and of not knowing what they were talking about, and also of endeavouring to force the issue as far as the increased wage-level was concerned on the primary producers in regard to the employment of boys from the farm school at St. Lucia. That is a deliberate untruth. The fact remains that the boys who come from St. Lucia do not get a rate equivalent to that prevailing for appren-

tices in industry. No member of this Chamber would expect the apprenticeship award wages to operate in the farming and dairying industry. As I said last night, the boy gets 10s. a week to start on a farm and that is 5s. more than I got when I was a lad.

The hon. member for Wynnum has again demonstrated that his desire is to put all boys in the State on the track again, as they were when the Moore Government were in power. During that period they were on the track for 6s. a week, from Brisbane to Beenleigh and to North Pine; that did not force them to go on the land. The hon. member for Wynnum knows that the boys who go to St. Lucia are not eligible to get 13s. 6d. for a day's work in one week and rations the following week from the Outdoor Relief Department. He knows that the age of the boys at St. Lucia range from sixteen to eighteen. There are not many over eighteen. The boy who goes to St. Lucia training farm at sixteen will have no necessity to go on the dole, and, in any case, let us hope that the dole will be wiped out before those boys who are now training at St. Lucia have reached the age of eighteen. Apparently the hon. member for Wynnum is not anxious to see decent conditions operating for boys or anybody else, although he reiterates his desire to do everything that will assist in providing a decent wage and decent conditions.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [12.24 p.m.]: The question of the training of farm lads and the question of the industrial conditions applying to these lads, are inextricably interwoven. The speech delivered by the hon. member for Wynnum, in which he suggested that the policy of the Cabinet of the present Government is militating against the people on the land and is not inducing lads to take up farm work, and offered his solution of the problem, reveals the fact that he really enunciates the Tory policy. Although his remarks do not receive open support from hon. members opposite, there is no doubt of that, for their policy, at all times, is, of course, one of low wages. They desire the farm boy to be exploited to the ninth degree.

The hon. member mentioned asserted that the policy of the Queensland Government of providing sustenance for single unemployed men was discouraging them from going on the land. In the next breath he stated that farmers' sons were not remaining on the farms because their parents could not afford to pay them sufficient wages and that the sons were coming to the cities in order to obtain the scale provided by the Government for the single unemployed worker. After making these remarks he alluded to the difference in the wages operating in the city and those in the country, and declared that the wages in the city and country should be brought into closer relationship. What does the hon. member mean? What does he want? Does he desire the scale for the unemployed single man to be the scale for the grown man doing farm work? Is that the policy of the Nationalist Party? Do they desire the approximate rate of 10s. a week to be the wage for an able-bodied man doing farm work? Is that the scale of wage they desire that he should receive for a seven-day week on a farm?

Mr. SPARKES: That is another figment of your imagination, that seven-day week.

[*Mr. Bayley.*]

Mr. WATERS: I understand that the hon. member for Dalby at one time advocated that the unemployed worker should work for 3s. a day. Another of the hon. member's colleagues has put the amount at 10s. a week. I desire to know whether it is the declared policy of the Nationalist Party that the rate alluded to by the hon. member for Wynnum should prevail as the wages scale.

Mr. KENNY: That question is so silly that it is not worth replying to.

Mr. WATERS: The hon. member for Cook has never been noted for any degree of common sense at any time, and since he has been in this Parliament he seems especially bereft of intelligence; like his Leader, he can always be found following the donkey.

While the Nationalist Party are disparaging, or attempting to disparage the Government for not giving sufficient encouragement to the unemployed single men of this State to go on the land, the fact remains that if they ever got the reins of Government they would conscript the whole of the unemployed single workers and force them to work on farms at an approximate rate of 10s. per week. I trust that that will never happen in this State.

It is refreshing indeed to hear the remarks of a responsible member of the Opposition such as is the hon. member for Wynnum. He was recognised as one of their good leaders. I do not know the order of succession to the leadership. It is suggested that after Mr. McGill displaces the present leader and fails, the hon. member for Wynnum may be given a trial.

Mr. KENNY: You would like to pick our leaders over there. That was "hatched" in your own Cabinet, and given to the press, too, by a Minister.

Mr. WATERS: We have no desire to select the leader of the Tory Party. The policy of hon. members opposite convicts themselves. No matter to what leader they may pretend to owe allegiance or under what aliases they may masquerade as a political party the barrenness and bankruptcy of their policy will for ever keep them in the cool shades of opposition. We know that at the present time powerful Southern interests are at work trying to displace the present leader of the party opposite.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the vote under discussion.

Mr. WATERS: Hon. members opposite do not like a statement of fact; they do not like the truth to be told.

Mr. KENNY interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Cook to cease interjecting. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove is entitled to make his speech without interruption, but he must connect his remarks with the vote under discussion.

Mr. KENNY: That is all right, so long as he behaves himself.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member for Cook would cease interjecting, the hon. member for Kelvin Grove would be able to continue his speech.

Mr. WATERS: I am continually interrupted by the hon. member for Cook. Evidently, he is an hon. member who does

not like the truth to be told. I told him and his ilk yesterday very definitely that I would take no notice of any attempt by them to prevent my stating facts in this Chamber. It takes more than his type to prevent the statement of Labour's case. The case of the Opposition dealing with the payment of wages to farm lads can be summed up in the speech by the hon. member for Wynnum. I have no doubt that the rest of hon. members opposite will endeavour to evade the responsibility for it. Nevertheless, that is the position and the public of Queensland are entitled to know where the Opposition stand.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [12.35 p.m.]: I have no objection to the training of boys in farm work. The only objection that I have to the St. Lucia training farm is based on the belief that the best results cannot be obtained when the institution is situated practically in the heart of the city. We all know that the Riverview school was a success.

Mr. LLEWELYN: The training farm should be in Toowoomba.

Mr. NIMMO: There would be some hope of success if the institution were situated in proximity to Toowoomba. It is well known that boys have been trained at St. Lucia and despatched to farms from whence they have returned to the city disgruntled. The time spent in training them to become successful farmers was absolutely wasted. It is admitted on all sides that the problem of training and employing the boys to-day is a very important one, and I believe that the Minister is most sincere in his efforts to provide them with useful training, but I feel that he is proceeding along the wrong lines. In reply to an interjection by me, he stated that the boys were taught farming practice at Moggill, but I understand that at Moggill the boys are engaged in splitting timber, that they are sent up there for a holiday for a few days and then come down to the main farm again. Moggill is not a suitable spot at all. One can readily understand the reluctance of boys to go on the land when practically every member of the Government Party has at some time or another derided and criticised the men on the land. They have laughed at them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not true.

Mr. NIMMO: Of course it is true. Have not hon. members opposite stated that if boys were to engage on the land they would have to submit to slavery conditions? I know that boys have engaged in farm work for a wage of 10s. to 15s. a week, but they have saved practically the whole amount during their period of employment. They have no opportunities for spending their money, but they lead a healthy life that we should encourage.

Have Labour Governments ever done anything to encourage the farmers to carry on their very essential services? To-day they are in receipt of the lowest prices ever received for their products. Much has been said about the importance of the home market for primary products, but the home market in Queensland is far too small to absorb the primary production of this State. In addition, every piece of legislation that has been introduced by the present Government has had a tendency to crush the spirit of the man on the land. Taxation has been

Mr. Nimmo.]

increased with an utter disregard of the capacity of the farmer to pay. I do not refer to the question of wages, because after all wages do not count a great deal, but I do bitterly complain that many industries have been crushed because of the irksome conditions laid down in the legislation enacted by the present Government. The Government have never attempted to establish an industry of any kind.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. NIMMO: I shall connect my remarks by reminding hon. members opposite that there is not a bigger demand for primary products in Queensland because the people have not been encouraged to establish secondary industries, and primary products cannot be purchased in adequate quantities unless a large industrial population is available with a reasonable volume of purchasing power at its disposal. Only the other day we had a report that the consumption of margarine in Queensland almost equalled the consumption of butter, that is to say, the people are buying margarine because they cannot afford to buy butter. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove repeatedly refers to the Opposition as a party opposed to high wages. That is untrue. Refutation of that statement is to be found in the fact that during the whole period of the Moore Government's regime the highest basic wage in Australia was paid in Queensland.

This Committee should see to it that boys are taught farming by being trained under practical conditions. The hon. member for Toowoomba suggested that the St. Lucia training farm for boys should be transferred to the Darling Downs. I have no objection to that, because I realise that boys trained at the farm in its present location right in the city will have the continuous pull of the city to contend with, whereas, if they were trained on a similar farm situated on the Darling Downs, they would be trained in a country atmosphere and under conditions which they would rapidly assimilate. I strongly urge the Minister to reconsider the whole position.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*) [12.38 p.m.]: I do not agree with the hon. member for East Toowoomba that the training farm at St. Lucia should be closed altogether, and that another training farm should be established on the Darling Downs. I do not blame anyone for believing that the Darling Downs and Toowoomba are the best and end-all of practical farming conditions and climate, because the district is a very good one in both respects, but there are other places equally as good. We have had a fairly full discussion on this question, and I am proud of the fact that I am the representative of the electorate in which the farm is situated. Government members have claimed that boys sent to farms are exploited. I can only rebut the statement made by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, who spoke about boys being exploited by farmers who took them down at every turn by reminding him of a certain man whom I knew. He used to tell a lie so often that eventually he really believed it to be true. Some hon. members opposite do this. We could not have had better evidence to refute those allegations than we obtained from the Minister himself. We did not ask him for the information he gave

[*Mr. Nimmo.*

this Committee. The Minister read a number of letters, and at the time I interjected we should proceed with the Estimates and get to those of the Department of Labour and Industry and the Railway Department, but perhaps, after all, it was just as well that the letters were read. They effectively nailed the ridiculous and wrong statements made by members of his own party.

The Minister himself has made the statement in this Chamber that more jobs were offering on farms in the country than he could supply boys. He made that statement not only in this Chamber but also outside when discussing agricultural matters. I would refer the hon. gentleman to the following statement made by Mr. A. E. Hall, Chairman of the Queensland Apprenticeship Committee, when speaking at the annual meeting of the Queensland Division of the New Settlers' League of Australia, on the 29th September, 1933:—

"We are starving for boys to train and then place them in positions on the land."

The report of the meeting goes on to say—

"Several of the speakers held that the parents were largely to blame for the fact that the general scheme, including that of training, was not as successful as it should be.

"Mr. Hall said that they could not get sufficient boys for the training vacancies at Riverview. Indeed, there also was trouble in filling the vacancies at St. Lucia. At Riverview, where the boys would get an excellent training, fitting them for a future as settlers, there were thirty-five vacancies. He would take lads from fifteen to twenty years of age. Mr. W. A. Jolly, C.M.G., urged that the impression amongst some parents, that once the lads had been trained and served on farms they would be at a dead end and have no future, should be dispelled. He considered there were greater opportunities on the land than in any other calling."

No hon. member, irrespective of his politics, can logically argue that the St. Lucia lands are not farming lands, because, in the early days of Brisbane, some of the finest farms were located on that site and all around that portion of the electorate. I know many professional people who have realised the importance of agricultural training. In one instance in my own electorate the parents put their son on the St. Lucia training farm, and remarked that the training received had been particularly good. The Minister is absolutely sincere in what he is doing, and I think the hon. gentleman wants to do his job; but the hon. member for Wynnum has touched an important point when he says that, although the Secretary for Agriculture may be quite prepared to do certain things, the restrictions placed upon him by his Government, owing to a certain environment in and around the city, puts a different construction upon it altogether.

The hon. member for Hamilton emphasised this morning that the Opposition are earnestly desirous that boys should go on the land. Personally, I have advised many boys to go on the land, and, in doing so, have pointed out what was emphasised by the hon. member for Murilla—that whereas the apprentice to a trade gets 12s. 6d. a week, the farm boy receives 15s. a week and keep. Much of the trouble of boys not

desiring to go on the land arises from the publication—perhaps unwittingly—of pictures in some of the weekly papers caricaturing life on the land, referring to “Dad and Dave on the farm,” and giving an entirely erroneous impression of what the farmer wants a boy to do. People who say that they would not allow their boys to go on a farm forget the sacrifices of the early pioneers.

The Opposition do not stand for starvation wages. We stand for what an industry can pay—for decent wages and decent conditions.

Mr. BRASSINGTON interjected.

Mr. MAXWELL: The proof of that is that I have been in the position that the hon. member has not been in; I have been an employer, and have always believed that, to get the best out of a man, you must give him decent wages and conditions.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: That is what this party advocates.

Mr. MAXWELL: I object to that clap-trap, for that is all it is. I object to the song that is always sung by hon. members opposite—that “The workers are being exploited.” Any exploitation of the workers is not by legitimate decent employers, but by some hon. members on the other side, who go the whole hog to exploit them by misleading them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [12.46 p.m.]: In answer to the hon. member for Toowong, I would say that his information is entirely correct; it is impossible to satisfy the demands of all employers for boys. That has been my constant experience during the term of the St. Lucia establishment, and it is true that for every position for which we are able to supply a boy, two employers are unable to get a boy. That is a position which should be rectified. I congratulate the hon. member for Toowong on his conversion to the St. Lucia scheme. He was my guest at the opening of that institution, and spoke on that occasion.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Why don't you invite us all to go out and see it?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have invited hon. members, I think, twice. I will make the necessary arrangements should hon. members avail themselves of my invitation.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I do not remember it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps the hon. member was not in the Chamber. In case the hon. member did not hear that invitation, I again extend an invitation to all hon. members to go to St. Lucia or come there with me. I have nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of. I am proud of the establishment and the work that is being done there and my officers who are out there.

The hon. member for Oxley showed a very cursory knowledge of the scheme. He said the boys went to Moggill for a holiday for a few days. That is not so. Cultivation is done at Moggill. Our banana-plantation is situated there and entails quite a lot of work. There is agriculture at Moggill. The time will arrive, if the University scheme develops and the present site of the St. Lucia farm is required for a University, when we will transfer all our buildings to

Moggill. That would be the logical thing to do. I agree with the hon. member for Toowong when he says there is some fine agricultural land out there to provide the essential basis for the training that is necessary. I reiterate, even to the point of tedium, that the doors are always open to hon. members or to members of the public. Any time they desire to visit St. Lucia I can assure them they will be courteously received, and not only will they be informed of the work being done at St. Lucia but they will also have an opportunity to meet the students, and partake of a cup of tea. We desire that parents should visit St. Lucia. We have never placed any restriction on visitors, and no parent has ever complained to me of the treatment boys have received at St. Lucia. I think that is a unique record for an institution of this character.

Item (Miscellaneous Services) agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [12.53 p.m.]: I move—

“That £45,129 be granted for ‘Department of Public Lands—Chief Office.’”

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [12.53 p.m.]: I wish to congratulate the Land Administration Board on its report dealing with the operations of the department for the year. I would also like to join with other hon. members in thanking the members of the board for their courteous attention to matters brought before them. The Land Administration Board is comprised of very capable men who possess that knowledge and initiative which are essential in dealing with the many problems with which they are confronted.

The report makes reference to the economic storm of the last few years and its influence on the general conditions prevailing in regard to landholders. During the period of the Moore Government's term the acuteness of that storm was not appreciated by the then Opposition; but they now have to recognise it. It is certainly interesting to see in the report a justification of the measures adopted by the previous Government to alleviate the hardships caused to landowners by world conditions which threatened to destroy their means of livelihood. For that work the Moore Government were at the time condemned by the members of the then Opposition. There was, in the first place, the inauguration of a scheme of rural relief. It is clearly pointed out in the report that that relief scheme did help the industry and was responsible for a reduction in the rate of interest. It was the first instance of Government pressure being used in order to obtain relief for the primary producers, who were then very hard pressed by the ruinous prices prevailing for wool and cattle and other stock. Certainly the relief granted helped the men on the land, who would otherwise have been further behind than they are and not in a position to take advantage of the improved conditions that have since taken place.

The present Administration could have done more than they have done in the direction of furthering the scheme for the development of the land commenced during the

Mr. Deacon.]

regime of the Moore Government. Certainly the work that has been done has been beneficial to the State. It has assisted the improvement of a number of properties and stimulated production, but more could have been done. It is to be regretted that the interest rate on advances under this scheme has been raised since last year. That, certainly, is not a move in the right direction. It would have been far better to lower the interest rate, especially as interest rates in Australia are falling. Governments themselves, as we saw in this morning's press, are seeking to obtain loans at a rate of interest that is lower than ever. Surely when the State is receiving the benefit of development under this rural development scheme the Government could afford to loan the money at a lower rate.

Another direction in which the scheme is hampered is the fact that the landholders or selectors are not able to choose their own labour. So long as the work is well and truly done it should not matter where the workman is obtained. After all, the employment of any man means that one individual is taken off the labour market. The practice is for the names to be placed on a register and the employer must generally take the first man on that register, whether he be capable or incapable. He must take that man in the order of the roster. It would be much better if employers were free to choose their own labour. They should be enabled to select the men from whom they think they will obtain the best results. In the long run it would amount to the same thing so far as the labour market was concerned, and it would work much better for the benefit of the State and the betterment of the people employed. Production creates work, and the more one gets from the money invested in production, the more employment one creates, and this is for the betterment of the State. The Government insist upon the basic wage being paid.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is dealing with the vote relating to Department of Public Lands and I fail to see how he can connect the basic wage with the land.

Mr. DEACON: These are the conditions of employment insisted upon before the selectors can obtain the benefit of the rural development scheme.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not the rural development scheme that is being discussed under this vote.

Mr. DEACON: It is the Chief Office vote of the Department of Public Lands that is under discussion at present, and we are following the precedent already laid down.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is nothing in that report dealing with the basic wage.

Mr. DEACON: There is in this report.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can deal only with the vote before the Committee.

Mr. DEACON: I was following the usual practice of discussing the whole of the Department of Public Lands on this vote.

At 2 p.m.,

Mr. W. T. KING resumed the chair.

Mr. DEACON: Mr. King, your predecessor in the chair ruled that on this vote

[Mr. Deacon.

I could not discuss anything that did not appear therein. On the first allotted day for the discussion of the Estimates in Chief the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hanson, intimated to hon. members that he intended to follow the usual practice of allowing a discussion of the whole of each department on the Chief Office vote, and then strictly confining subsequent debates to the particular sub-department.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Other than Trust Funds.

Mr. DEACON: Yes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The practice is to allow a full discussion of the whole department on the Chief Office vote if the matters debated are financed out of consolidated revenue, but no discussion will be permitted on revenue Estimates of matters dealt with in trust, special, and loan funds.

Mr. DEACON: I propose to discuss the rural development scheme. Now does that come under trust funds or consolidated revenue?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I can inform the hon. member that on page 134 of the Estimates, dealing with the Loan Fund Account, there is an amount set out under the Department of Public Lands for a rural advances fund. The question of rural development in relation to that fund can be discussed when that item is reached, but it cannot be discussed on the revenue Estimates for the Chief Office.

Mr. DEACON: I hope, Mr. Temporary Chairman, that you will bear in mind the fact that my time has been wasted by the Temporary Chairman of Committees, due to no fault of my own. I admit that very good work has been done in this direction, but much more could be done if the Government would only ease the conditions. It would be worth while to ease the conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do you mean by that?

Mr. DEACON: I am debarred from going any further on that until we reach the trust funds.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DEACON: There is another matter which is much more interesting, or is just as interesting, and that is the work carried out by the district improvement boards. I think that the Minister made a great mistake—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not control the district improvement boards.

Mr. DEACON: Some of the work carried out last year was carried out by the district improvement boards.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. DEACON: A portion of the annual report by the department is devoted to its work, and as the matter is mentioned in the report I take it that I am in order in discussing it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not want to interrupt the hon. member unduly, nor do I wish to stifle discussion, but if the work of district improvement boards is not incorporated in the Department of Public Lands I cannot allow him to discuss it.

Mr. DEACON: The matter is dealt with in the annual report by the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not now. There is no provision on these Estimates for district improvement boards.

Mr. DEACON: I am pointing out to the Minister—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! My ruling to the hon. member is that there may be an opportunity to discuss that matter on another vote; it is not included in the Estimates for the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. DEACON: This work was carried out by the Department of Public Lands last year.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has heard my ruling.

Mr. DEACON: Any work carried out by the Department of Public Lands last year should be open for discussion.

Mr. MOORE: They are anxious to burke discussion on everything.

Mr. DEACON: All I can say is that it is not going to help the Minister in any way if discussion is prevented. The report is there. At the present time the work of district improvement boards is being carried out by local authorities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not control local authorities either.

Mr. DEACON: I want to point out to the Minister that the Department of Public Lands should exercise care over the stock routes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not under the charge of my department.

Mr. DEACON: It should be, and I want the Minister to bring them back under his charge. No other department has so much concern for the welfare of stock routes as the Department of Public Lands. The department draws the rents from the landholders. If the department is to be a good landlord should it not help them in every possible way? The department should control the stock routes and reserves. The local authorities can do nothing with the stock reserves; they must apply to the department. They cannot lease or do anything with them without the consent of the Minister. The Minister cannot get away from it that the last word in the control of reserves rests with the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In this instance the Minister happens to be the Home Secretary.

Mr. DEACON: The Secretary for Public Lands must consent to any lease of reserves. Reserves under control of local authorities are administered by the Department of Public Lands. Many of them were created for the purpose of assisting stock owners to travel their stock to market. There is nothing so important to the pastoralists and the people in the Western districts as good stock routes and reserves to assist in getting stock to market. In many cases the charges made by the Railway Department for taking stock to market are unnecessarily high. It is not possible for owners to convey their stock by rail to market and show a profit. They must take the road. It is good business for the State to see that all travelling stock have well-defined stock routes to travel over, and that

there are stock reserves for resting the cattle, and a plentiful water supply.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Parliament decided that local authorities should control them.

Mr. DEACON: I am not saying anything about local authorities. All I say is that the Department of Public Lands should control these reserves and see to it that the people having charge of them do their work. The Minister cannot escape his responsibility by saying it is not his fault if things go wrong. He could try to put them right. It is up to me to show him how they should be put right, and it is his duty to put them right, and if it is not then he should see to it that it is. He is in charge of the department which is the landlord of the State. In no other country does the landlord, the representative of the State, neglect his duty. On many occasions in this Chamber we have heard hon. members opposite talking about how landlords neglect their duties and throw the responsibility on to the tenant. In this case, as well as any other case, the duty of attending to the stock routes and reserves rests on the landlord, namely, the department whose estimates we are dealing with.

Mr. FOLEY: What is wrong with the stock routes now? The system is a fair one.

Mr. DEACON: There is no system at all. There was a system for a short time. Care is not taken of them. They have been taken possession of by stray stock. Stray stock will be found on nearly all stock routes, and mostly they are eaten out. The feed on stock routes will not last for any length of time if stray stock and the stock of neighbouring landholders are allowed to eat them out.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Don't you think that the pastoralists themselves should see to it that they are not eaten out?

Mr. DEACON: They cannot stop it.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: They deliberately put their stock on the stock routes.

Mr. DEACON: It might so happen that there is only one selector in the district through which the stock route passes who does this; such an individual could take possession of it. That is done all over the State. In some districts the old stock are turned out on to the stock routes to fend for themselves. On stock routes all over the country brumbies and old useless horses and stray cattle can be seen eating out the stock routes. That should not be allowed. The duty rests on the State, represented by the Department of Public Lands, to see to it that the stock routes are properly controlled. The report of the Land Administration Board shows that the district improvement boards did good work when charged with the administration of stock routes and reserves.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Parliament altered their control.

Mr. DEACON: The majority on the Government side altered the control. It was universally agreed that the district improvement boards should continue to administer stock routes and reserves. All the evidence was in favour of that.

I do not propose to discuss the respective merits of perpetual leasehold and freehold tenures, but, according to the report of the

Mr. Deacon.]

Land Administration Board, perpetual leasehold land is dearer to the selector than is freehold, for whereas the average annual rental—instalment of purchase price—on agricultural farms is £9 15s. 1d., and terminates within a certain period, the average annual rental on perpetual leases is £7 10s. 10d., and is perpetual. Just consider the difference in actual cash to the owner of the land during his lifetime!

In the last couple of years the Minister has had a good run in that a large area of country was ready for selection, and a large area has been successfully selected on the easy terms initiated by the previous Government. The selectors are likely to be successful, and that success should be a tremendous gain to the State.

In his reply the Minister might give me information concerning two matters. One matter concerns tiger pear. The report does not indicate clearly whether the operations for the control and extermination of this—the most dangerous pest with which Queensland has to contend—are being continued. The pest is not uncontrollable, and I trust the efforts to control and exterminate it are being continued. The other question relates to the soldier settlement at Neumgna, where operations were under way last year to provide a water supply. The successful continuance of that settlement depends very largely on water, and the Minister might give us some information on the matter.

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [2.15 p.m.]: Reading the report of the Land Administration Board, which, by the way, is a splendid document containing a great deal of information, one is struck very forcibly with the fact that the men on the land are getting a great deal of recognition by way of concessions. That is a complete refutation of many assertions that have been made by hon. members opposite in this session of Parliament. From beginning to end of the portion of the report which deals with land settlement, one is apprised of the enormous concessions that are being given to settlers, the twofold object being to help the settler and to increase the productivity of the State. For example, at page 8 of the report, we are told that grazing selections to the number of 2,511, covering a total area of 22,150,711 acres, have had their leases renewed, mostly for twenty-eight years. Some space is given to the benefits that have been granted as a result of the reductions in rents, particularly as they apply to sheep-grazing selections. Under the relief scheme of 1931, 3,341 leases have been extended for a term of seven years, and there has been a 25 per cent. reduction in their rents, the aggregate amount of benefit to those concerned being £327,366. In addition to that, there has been a benefit by way of reduction of mortgage interest rates from 7 to 8 per cent. to 4½ to 5 per cent.; so that, from that point of view alone, considerable relief has been experienced by many settlers.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Don't you think those concessions were necessary?

Mr. FOLEY: Yes, they were necessary. There was, no doubt, that at the time that relief scheme was inaugurated the industry was suffering as the result of the very low prices prevailing for its products, and, in addition to that, many areas were adversely affected by the prevailing climatic conditions. That relief was essential, and, no

doubt, will be extended if conditions warrant it. Many members of the Opposition claim that the Labour Party have no sympathy for the man on the land, and they are anxious to force him off the land. With the advent of the 1927 Land Act there appeared a different outlook in regard to the man on the land. About the time when the Land Administration Board was appointed, the attitude of the department towards its tenants changed considerably. One Minister told me at that time that previously the outlook in that department was to squeeze the last ounce out of the average tenant. That was the average outlook of Land Department officials, who were endeavouring to make a good showing for themselves at the expense of their tenants. The outlook has been considerably changed since that time, and, as pointed out by the chairman of the board, it is necessary to introduce legislation in practically every session of Parliament to meet changing conditions. I may be pardoned for referring to the concessions that have been given to encourage the development of some of our pastoral areas, and to bring the land up to a more productive state than previously. That was done by the granting of developmental leases, with special conditions, in regard to the development of difficult cattle country. That is of advantage to the State. It has created a considerable amount of movement in money in our pastoral districts, as well as made the land more productive and had a tendency to make the position of the settler more stable, because he has a better chance of a greater carrying capacity as a result of the improvement to his land, and will thus be better situated to meet adverse conditions brought about by a fall in prices. Over the last six years 221 pastoral developmental leases were granted, covering an area of 45,534 square miles, or 29,782,000 acres. Then special developmental concessions were granted to 371 existing pastoral holders and grazing selectors covering an area aggregating 47,956,201 acres. The general effect of these concessions will be that much of that land, on which very little in the way of improvements was done in the past—

Mr. SPARKES: The land tax forced the people off the land.

Mr. FOLEY: I am speaking of leasehold land at the present moment, but it just shows that there is a good deal in my argument regarding freehold land and the effect of the land tax. However, I do not desire to be drawn into a discussion on that question. This report shows that we have had to give special concessions to pastoral leases to induce them to improve their land and increase its carrying capacity. I know the outlook of many of these men. They have been content to jog along, dragging as much as they could out of the land, making as much profit as possible during the currency of their lease, and retiring when the greater portion of the land was resumed. The concessions we are giving them induce them to carry out additional improvements.

It is interesting also to note the number of selectors who have been affected by the granting of additional areas—962 persons, the areas aggregating 2,580,352 acres. The granting of an additional area to a settler who requires the extra land in order to have a living area is really one of the finest pieces of legislation passed by this Parliament. Up to the enactment of the Act

[*Mr. Deacon.*]

enabling this to be done there was no power to permit the department to assist any individual struggling along on an area of country insufficient to enable him to make his business a payable proposition. The additional power has been of immeasurable benefit to many men throughout the State.

Mr. SPARKES: You are not taking the credit for that?

Mr. FOLEY: We are taking the credit for that. The Land Administration Board obtained this power as a result of the policy of the Labour Government. Whilst on this question I may be pardoned for giving an illustration, not only of the effect of this policy by way of providing employment in the district concerned, but also by way of giving a number of settlers areas which will enable them to enjoy a decent standard of living and make their position more secure. I refer to the Malvern Downs holding in the Capella district. On the expiration of the lease the department intended to renew, owing to a statement of losses over a period of years that had been submitted by the original holder. Whether that statement was correct or otherwise, I do not know, but that is how the case was presented to the department. Quite a number of settlers joined in an agitation against that course, having ascertained that the department could grant them an additional area if the land were available. The result has been that these men have been placed in a more secure position and there is also the outstanding fact, that the work of fencing, well-sinking, and improvements on the additional areas has been greater and of more benefit to the district than was the whole of the work done under the lease held by the Malvern Downs Pastoral Company. If the same principle is applied to the whole of the State, hon. members can at once grasp the enormous benefit accruing to the State generally. The average bush worker benefits and the settler is in a better position.

The question of new settlements has not been overlooked. The department is proceeding with that work wherever lands are available.

Mr. KENNY: The report does not speak too well on that.

Mr. FOLEY: The report simply sets out the facts—that the land was available, that the leases of certain areas were renewed, other areas being available for selection on condition that the prescribed developmental work was carried out, for additional areas and for new selections. Had a larger area been available, the figures in the report would have been much more illuminating. I have no doubt that the increased development of these lands as a result of generous assistance from a sympathetic Government will be reflected in the not very far distant future.

The report points out that some of the pastoral country was so thickly covered with prickly-pear in the past that it was impossible for a beast to walk through it, yet to-day, as a result of the far-sighted policy of the Department of Public Lands, the pear pest has been completely eradicated by biological and other means. The carrying capacity of the country has been immeasurably improved. There are photographs in the report illustrating the benefits that will be enjoyed by the landholder and

the State generally as a result of pear eradication and ringbarking activities. All these benefits flow from the generous assistance of a sympathetic Government. With the increased carrying capacity following the eradication of vegetable pests and the destruction of tree growth the settler is in a much better position to meet his financial commitments than would otherwise have been the case.

Much has also been done to rid the country of noxious weeds. We can point with pride to what has been done in connection with the eradication of the prickly-pear, but it is admitted that much more can still be done in the destruction of noogoora burr and other vegetable pests. Cases have been brought under my notice where big pastoral lessees have deliberately neglected the growth of noogoora burr and other noxious weeds in anticipation that at the expiration of their leases they would thereby be in a position to make much better terms for themselves with the department.

Mr. SPARKES: That is not correct.

Mr. FOLEY: Cases have actually been brought under my notice where pastoral lessees have deliberately worked along these lines, and they were lessees who could well afford to spend sufficient money to cope with these pests. Whether these tactics will succeed remains to be seen, but much will depend upon the advice that will be tendered to the department by its land commissioners and rangers. Some of these lessees have actually told me that their failure to fulfil pear-clearing conditions was based on the belief that in neglecting their holdings they would be able to make better terms with the department upon the expiration of their leases. They told me that they had been advised to this effect and that they had accepted this advice. In a number of cases, where I was requested by the lessees to intercede on their behalf with the department, the tactics did not bear the fruit they anticipated.

There is no doubt that the future of the cattle and sheepgrowers will depend in the main upon the prices that they can secure for their products. I have in mind an old friend, long since dead, who belonged to the Clermont district. He was visiting Brisbane seeking permission to do something in connection with leases held by himself and wife. I introduced him to Mr. McCormack, then Secretary for Public Lands. At that time Mr. McCormack was about to introduce what is known as the Land Acts (Review of Cattle Holding Rents) Amendment Bill. Mr. McCormack, in discussing the possible benefits from this legislation, asked this grazier whether the benefits would be worth while to the average selector. He replied, "If you give me my land free it will not pull me out of the position I am in at present, but if you can guarantee prices for my stock I will pay you double the rent you are charging and I will pay the Commissioner of Taxes double the tax he is charging me at the present time." Therefore, when all is said and done the position of the landholder depends entirely on the price he receives for his products. World conditions do not seem to be improving. Oversea countries, which at one time were considered to be big industrial countries possessing markets for enormous quantities of our products, are now in a state of decay. There is no purchasing power

Mr. Foley.]

available to their population to absorb or create a greater demand for our products. Consequently, the outlook for some considerable time ahead is not very bright. The only way the landholder can solve his problem is by making his land more productive. That is to say, if his land is now carrying 2,000 head of cattle he must set about to improve it by ringbarking, dam sinking, finding water, and in other directions in order to give it a greater carrying capacity.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murrumbidgee*) [2.40 p.m.]: I congratulate the Land Administration Board on its very informative report. It is without doubt one of the best reports that have been presented to this Parliament. The report appears to have been drawn up by men who have not been interfered with in any way, but have been allowed to place the position before Parliament as it appears to them as administrators of one of the most important departments in this State. The proper settlement of land, combined with careful administration, is a most important function, for it affects the future welfare of the State. Whether landholders will have a more prosperous time in the future than they have had during the past few years depends to a great extent on the administration of the public estate.

I am pleased to note a certain amount of land is still being settled. The report shows definitely that during the reign of the Moore Government a greater amount of land settlement took place than at any other particular period.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are you sure of that?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well, you quote it.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am quoting the following figures from the report of the board which shows the total area of land made available under different tenures for the past six years:—

	Total Acres.
1929	45,570,904
1930	39,813,311
1931	55,344,283
1932	24,903,650
1933	22,594,470
1934	18,393,679

In my own electorate many millions of acres were held under occupation licenses, but when the Moore Government introduced legislation which enabled the land to be taken up under different conditions many people elected to take a certain portion under the new conditions, and the balance was opened for selection. Such land should not be looked upon as new selections by the Minister or myself for the purposes of comparison, but the figures I have given show definitely that under the different tenures mentioned the average area of land made available annually during the term of the Moore Government was 36,687,081 acres, as compared with an annual average of 20,484,074 acres during the two years of the Labour Government. Thus, the figures are in favour of the Moore Government to the extent of over 16,000,000 acres per annum.

[*Mr. Foley.*

So far as the new settlement which has taken place since the present Government took office is concerned, the Moore Government made that possible because it was during the Moore Government's regime that notice of re-umption was given to the landholders concerned. The Moore Government were responsible for introducing a Land Act than which there is no more liberal statute anywhere, for as a result of that legislation vigorous settlement took place on land that was previously covered with prickly-pear. Probably no one is better able to judge the success of that legislation than I am, because in my own electorate, extending from Goondiwindi, near the New South Wales border, to Taroom, in what we might term Central Queensland, more development has taken place in the last three or four years than in the previous twenty odd years. In that connection the excellent work of the insect known as *cactoblastis cactorum* cannot be too greatly emphasised. The cochineal insect did help, but to the other insect is due the credit for having made possible the closer settlement of much land that was previously lost to the State. We might do worse than commemorate that insect when it ceases to exist by erecting a monument to its memory, for through its efforts millions of acres, what we might term a new province, were restored to the State.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: What will happen when they eat the pear out?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: When they eat the pear out they will die.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: They may tackle some other plant.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Up to the present they have not been known to tackle anything else. In certain areas where they have destroyed the pear they are dying in millions.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The succeeding generations may acclimatize themselves.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They might, but, thank God, up to the present they have not. They have done an enormous amount of good work. No Government that has been in power in Queensland since separation has done as much for this State as the *cactoblastis cactorum*. This settlement is a very prosperous one and anyone who visits it can readily see the amount of work that is being done. The settlers have been helped a good deal because different Governments have made money available to them at a low rate of interest. For the purpose of developing this land the Moore Government made available an amount of £190,000 at the low rate of interest of 3 per cent., and when the Labour Government assumed office they made available £100,000 also at the rate of 3 per cent., making a total of £290,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You say your Government lent £190,000?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That was practically the amount made available by the Moore Government at 3 per cent. Provision was made for it. Although certain work may have been done during the period the present Government have been in power, in many cases the necessary provision was made by the Moore Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You made a lot of promises and never carried them out.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: No, provision was made. The Secretary for Public Lands has taken credit to himself for the enormous amount of land that has been opened up during the period he has controlled the department. The hon. gentleman knows very well that provision was made by the Moore Government for the resumption of the land, and applications for that land were received during the period they were in power, but the formalities of declaration in favour of the persons concerned may have been carried out during the period the present Government have been in office. A certain time is stipulated in which people can hold prickly-pear land in their occupation before electing to give notice of surrender to the department. The department, therefore, cannot deal with a certain amount of land immediately. Moreover, although many of those people had notified the department that they were prepared to surrender during the time the Moore Government were in power, that land could not be thrown open for selection until the time for surrender had expired. Some people surrendered the land with a view to taking it up under the new conditions laid down by the Moore Government; but unfortunately the Labour Party have abolished freehold, and in some cases the Minister did not keep his promise to some of the people that they would be allowed to take up the freehold of certain land which they had surrendered on that condition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not true.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I have had occasion to approach the department in regard to several cases where that set of circumstances arose. One was that of my own son. The surrender had not gone through in that case owing to the fact that the Forestry Department wanted to declare a certain amount of the land a State Forest Reserve, and certain details had to be completed. That had nothing to do with my son; he had surrendered it in order to take it up under freehold tenure, but the matter was held in abeyance because the Forestry Department wanted portion of it. The matter had not been completed at the time the Moore Government had to go out of office, and the result was that he had no alternative but to accept the land under a perpetual leasehold tenure. This he has done. I am referring to a piece of land in the Taroom district. He did not want to accept this land on a perpetual leasehold tenure. He wanted freehold. I can name other men on whose behalf I have interviewed the department. Owing to some technicality the Minister decided that the land could not be held as freehold and they had necessarily to accept it as perpetual leasehold. No doubt other hon. members can give many similar instances.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have set down a definite date for finalising freeholds.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: There were certain lands in course of preparation, but unfortunately the Minister ruled that these people, owing to no fault of their own, would have to accept perpetual leasehold. The Moore Government will rectify the matter when they are returned to power at the next election. Just as that Government gave the people the opportunity of converting their perpetual leaseholds into free-

holds, so they will give every one of these people who have been forced to take up land under perpetual leases instead the opportunity of converting to freehold tenure. I will guarantee that 99 per cent. of those people, the same as we found when we gave them the opportunity on a previous occasion—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you say 99 per cent. converted?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Practically 99 per cent. I think when the land was being opened up during the Labour Government's administration—

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Ninety-three per cent.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Is it 93 per cent.? The point I want to make is that when the late Government gave them the option of freehold or perpetual leasehold, only one man selected land under the perpetual leasehold, but that man, a few months afterwards, was put into a lunatic asylum. That shows what the people desire. I can say: That 99 per cent. of those people in my electorate who compulsorily selected land under the perpetual leasehold tenure since this Labour Government have been in power, will vote No. 1 for Godfrey Morgan at the next election.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You may not be a candidate.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I think I will be a candidate. God willing, I will be the candidate for the Murilla electorate, and I will not have to bother my head about these people, because they will come along to the polls and vote for me. I will make the promise that if they desire to hold their land under freehold tenure we will give them that opportunity, but that also if they desire perpetual leasehold tenure they may retain that form of tenure. Our Government will give them the option.

I should like to see a further increase in the amount of money advanced for ring-barking, water conservation, and fencing. Money spent in these directions is well spent. Such works as these are very reproductive, and, in addition, provide an enormous amount of work for our bush workers, who would otherwise be unemployed. It seems to be the aim of the present Government to find work for the unemployed, and in that regard I give them credit. I would ask the Minister to have the rate of interest reduced from 5 per cent. to 3 per cent. People should not be called upon to pay 5 per cent. for money obtained to carry on these undertakings of national importance. In many cases they are improving the land and making better grazing areas. These lands will revert to the Crown, and will be the property of the nation unless at some future date a policy of closer settlement is embarked upon and the land is sold on freehold tenure. For the time being, anyhow, the improvement will be an addition to the national wealth, it will create employment, increase production, and that, in turn, will increase railway traffic, and in that direction, too, create more employment. Under all the circumstances the rate of interest of 5 per cent. is too high, and the Minister would be well advised to make a reduction to 3 per cent. I see by the press that the loan that is to be floated will carry interest at 3 per cent. Although it cost the previous Government $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mr. Morgan.]

to 5 per cent. for loan money, it was made available to the settlers for land development purposes at 3 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; the rate of interest was fixed in accordance with an arrangement made with the Commonwealth Government, who made the money available.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like to remind the hon. member that in discussing this vote he will not be permitted to discuss any loans made available to settlers.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I was referring generally to any finance made available for rural development.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing loan funds.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I was tempted to touch the fringe of the Loan Estimates because of the interjection by the Secretary for Public Lands. I propose now to refer to any money made available to landholders to assist them to develop Crown lands. They should not be charged an interest rate of 5 per cent., they should enjoy the use of this money at 3 per cent. free of any restrictions in regard to labour conditions. They should be allowed to borrow this money and to carry out the work with whatever labour they desire to use. They have just as much right as any other borrower to select their labour from whatever quarter they wish, because, after all, the Government are not performing a very graceful act in lending them money at 3 per cent. The money will be repaid.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member not to continue in that strain.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I shall not continue any further along those lines, but I hope that the Minister will take some notice of what I have said.

It is gratifying to know that the prickly-pear pest has been brought under control. It is to be expected that there will be a little growth of seedlings during the next six or seven years, but the pest has been beaten. I should like to warn the department that there is another vegetable pest equally as threatening, that is, the galvanised burr.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: And the noogoora burr.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I admit that the noogoora burr is a very bad pest, but not nearly so bad as the galvanised burr.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a local authority responsibility now.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Lands in certain respects, and it has got beyond the control of local authorities in the same way as prickly-pear got beyond their control in the years that have gone. A considerable area of Crown land is infested with galvanised burr, and if nothing is done right away it will prove to be just as destructive as prickly-pear was in the past. We should not allow it to spread as prickly-pear was allowed to spread, and I believe that we can cope with it now if prompt measures are taken.

Mr. C. G. TAYLOR: What about the tiger pear?

Mr. Morgan.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The hon. member for Cunningham has already dealt with the menace of the tiger pear and I have no desire to repeat his remarks. I am anxious to strike a note of warning in connection with galvanised burr, which threatens to become one of the greatest vegetable pests in the land. I hope that the Minister will recognise that fact and take immediate steps to assist to bring about its destruction.

I should like also to bring under the notice of the Minister the very important question of providing wire netting for settlers. Much valuable land has been ring-barked recently and eventually most of it will be suitable for the production of wool. Once the brigalow and belah scrub is rung it becomes very valuable sheep country, and I hope that the Minister will assist the settlers to obtain cheap wire netting, so that they may be able to convert this country from cattle to sheep.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Federal Government will not give us any money for the purpose.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am not talking about the Federal Government. This is a State matter. In Victoria, and in some of the other States, the country is not subject to the depredations of the dingo.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. CONROY (*Maranoa*) [3.5 p.m.]: I offer my congratulations to the department on its most instructive report. The hon. member for Cunningham made reference to the care of stock routes, and whilst I realise that I may not be strictly in order in referring to this subject, I should like to point out that when a beast dies or is sick or lame and is allowed to remain on the stock route the responsibility for burning or destroying it generally falls upon the local authority. Why should the local authority be called upon to bear the expense of destroying these animals?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the vote under discussion.

Mr. CONROY: The hon. member for Normanby referred to certain concessions given to landholders by this Government, particularly mentioning the wool relief scheme. That scheme was originally introduced by the previous Government in 1930. It was not a compulsory scheme. It provided that any mortgagee who consented to a reduction in interest rates from 8 per cent., or whatever rate was charged, to 6 per cent., would have guaranteed to him an extension of the lease. In some cases the mortgagee did agree to a reduction in the interest rate, but, unfortunately, the majority of mortgagees would not do so. Consequently, only the more fortunate landholders received the benefits of that concession. The benefits which this legislation intended to confer were really given by this Government under "The Financial Emergency Relief Extension Act of 1932." If the present Government had not introduced that legislation quite a number of mortgagees would never have received any benefit. We received the thanks of many landholders for that legislation. That Act brought about a reduction of interest rates from 7 per cent. and 3 per cent. to 4 per cent. and 5 per cent.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would remind the hon. member that the question of interest rates is covered by the Trust and Special Funds. I would ask him to return to the vote under discussion.

Mr. CONROY: Very well, Mr. King, I will refer the Committee to that part of the report of the Land Administration Board dealing with priority additional areas. The report states—

“ Priority additional areas, aggregating 2,530,352 acres, have been granted to 962 persons.

“ The Lands Department at present is subdividing an area of 2,015,775 acres of grazing land which has been resumed for closer settlement purposes from pastoral holdings. Of this area it is estimated that 660,944 acres will be granted as additional areas, and 1,354,831 acres will be made available for public competition.”

I have always contended that when land is being opened to selection in large areas the first duty of the Crown is to consider the position of the settlers adjoining that land. Any selector who does not hold a reasonable living area should have the right to a priority additional area in order to bring his area up to a living area. In my experience of land settlement in the Maranoa division consideration has been given in this direction to the small landholder.

It is pleasing to note the report also discloses that concessions have been granted to the settlers on Mount Abundance. We all know that Mount Abundance was a repurchased estate, and that costs of resumption amounted to a considerable sum. The main trouble of the Mount Abundance settlers has been the amount of rent that has been charged them. The result is that the selectors have had a trying time in meeting their commitments. Unfortunately the settlement has not been blessed with one good season, and that misfortune, combined with the fall in prices of primary products, particularly wool, has made the position extremely difficult for selectors whose areas average 3,000 acres. I thank the Land Administration Board for the action taken to meet the unfortunate position of these selectors.

Wonderful work has been done in ring-barking, the value of which, in increasing the carrying capacity and value of the land, cannot be too strongly emphasised when we are considering reproductive works in the interests of the State. The work has meant employment for a large number of men, and a pleasing feature of the whole scheme is that when money is advanced for ring-barking and other improvement work the payments to the men who do the work is made through the various officers of the Department of Public Lands throughout the State.

Mr. KENNY: Your party condemned that scheme when we introduced it.

Mr. CONROY: I do not know what this party condemned; I am not condemning it. In making payments in the manner I have mentioned security is afforded to those who do the work, for I have known instances where contractors have disappeared and the unfortunate employees have not been paid. I do not know whether the hon. member who interjects stands for that, but in my

view the man who does the work is entitled to payment, and under this scheme he is protected.

I desire to congratulate the Secretary for Public Lands and the department generally for the action taken to assist the Leichhardt Rabbit Board. Owing to the large increase of rabbits in its area, the Leichhardt Rabbit Board deemed it necessary to erect a check netting fence. Finance was the difficulty, and a deputation which waited upon the Minister asked for assistance. The Minister granted a loan of £6,000 and a subsidy of £6,000 to enable the board to erect it. Since the work was undertaken fifty-three men were employed in July, sixty-two in August, sixty-one in September, and forty-four in October. The mileage already completed is 189 miles 55 chains of renovations and renewals, and 35 miles 32 chains of new fencing. The mileage yet to be done is 50 miles 15 chains of renovations and renewals and 17 miles 16 chains of new fencing. It is estimated that the duration of further employment will be: six men for one week in November, six men for two weeks in November, 13 men for the whole of November and one week in December, six men from the middle of November to the middle of December, and six men to the middle of January. Thus, it will be seen that employment has been created by this necessary work.

I was always sorry when action was taken by the previous Government to abolish certain rabbit boards. The board I wish to refer to is the Maranoa Rabbit Board. That board was functioning at St. George—and there are thousands of rabbits in that district—and I am of the opinion that its abolition resulted in an influx of rabbits to the Maranoa district as far as Roma. If the Maranoa Rabbit Board or any other rabbit board was not carrying out its duties, there was no necessity to abolish the boards. The members of the boards could have been replaced by men who would carry out the duties allotted to them. I will admit that, according to the report of the royal commission, they were not functioning properly. The Maranoa Rabbit Board was not the only one abolished; there were four or five others. The Maranoa district extends to the border of New South Wales, where rabbits are plentiful, and it is necessary that action should be taken to prevent the inroads of the pest. I have seen thousands of rabbits at Dirranbandi and St. George, and I feel sure, if an efficient rabbit board were functioning, those pests would be kept in check.

Mr. KENNY (*Cool*) [3.21 p.m.]: There is one matter I wish to refer to particularly—the Atherton soldier settlement. I picked up a northern newspaper a few days ago, and in that paper I noticed the following article relating to certain action to be taken by the Minister. The report reads—

“ The Returned Soldiers' State Office has advised that as a result of their representations the Minister has definitely undertaken to have a measure passed through Parliament appointing a land board to examine the case of each and every individual soldier settler and rectify the values in accordance with proved facts.”

I think that it is absolutely necessary that some action should be taken to overcome the difficulties the soldier settlers are labouring

Mr. Kenny.]

under to-day. That press report is the first information I received on any action that the Minister intended to take in regard to the settlement. I cannot see why it is considered necessary that action should be taken through Parliament to rectify the position when we have a Land Court, a Land Administration Board, and departmental officials who are capable of rectifying this position. The Minister has ample power without introducing any new measure. I should like the Minister to advise me, during his reply, what new legislation he considers necessary to deal with this matter. The unfortunate position in regard to that settlement is that a number of the farms are over-capitalised. The settlement is the baby of a Labour Administration, and is a phase of land settlement that has never been satisfactorily conducted over a number of years. The question has never been tackled, although several bites have been made at the job.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What did your Government do during their three years?

Mr. KENNY: Our Government took a number of settlers away from that property and extended the area of those who remained. We had to clean up the mess made by the previous Labour Administration when they cut up this area into areas which were too small and from which the settlers could never make a living wage. In many cases these men incurred commitments they should never have been allowed to incur. With over-capitalisation they could not finance themselves, and we transferred some of them to the Burnett settlement and increased the areas of those who remained. The fact remains that that land was purchased under a Closer Settlement Act at prices up to £14 an acre, and no farmer could afford to pay the prices paid for that land by the Government. The question is one that can be satisfactorily handled at the present time. Although this year that settlement has a crop of about 5,000 tons of maize, as against a crop of 20,000 tons that it should have, the settlers are still required to meet their commitments. When they cannot, the Department of Public Lands, under the control of the Minister, charges them a 10 per cent. penalty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your Government did that, too.

Mr. KENNY: I grant that our Government did that, but I defy the Minister to tell me of any hon. member on this side of the Committee who will get up and declare that he would not pay any interest at all on borrowed money. When an hon. member, such as the Minister, tells us he would pay no interest on borrowed money, how can he justify a 10 per cent. penalty for non-payment of rental?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No man who cannot pay is asked to pay. Any man who cannot pay does not pay.

Mr. KENNY: The Minister will be able to make a speech when I conclude. The Minister is inflicting a 10 per cent. penalty on those people who cannot pay.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not charge it.

Mr. KENNY: If the Minister says he did not charge it, the Minister has the power to reduce the penalty to nil—to the same rate of interest he was going to pay

if he got into power and was made Treasurer of this State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In a case to-day I reduced it to nil.

Mr. KENNY: It may be that the Minister can distribute political patronage in that way, but I am not seeking political patronage from anyone, I am seeking an alteration of the policy whereby the settlers who are in difficulties to-day can obtain a benefit. I think it is time the 10 per cent. penalty was at least reduced to 5 per cent. No doubt that action is merited and would receive the approval of every person in the State, but neither the Minister nor any Government will overcome this difficulty until the valuation is reduced to the point where these people can acquire the freehold of their blocks. When we have arrived at that stage, others will buy them out and we shall thus have reached a satisfactory settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why didn't you make it freehold when you had the power?

Mr. KENNY: Because we did not reduce their valuations low enough—I grant the Minister that. I took this question up with my own Government, and I am not going to shuffle on it to-day. I do not desire that the Minister shall introduce further legislation and make another mess of it. I desire to see the problem satisfactorily settled for all time. If the Government of whom I was a supporter did not see eye to eye with me, that is not my fault. I am fulfilling my obligations to my people when I bring this proposal before the Minister and inform him what can be done. I do not know what he has in mind. As member for the district, I am entitled to know, and I should like the Minister to inform us. I would suggest that he take action to have the valuations of all these blocks reduced, and remove them from the Closer Settlement Acts, and put them under the 1910 Land Act. By giving the holders the opportunity to acquire the land on freehold tenure he would be satisfactorily settling the matter and overcoming the difficulty that the settlers are suffering from to-day. The hon. member for Murilla said that 93 per cent. of the people who had agricultural farm tenures did convert.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you repeat those figures?

Mr. KENNY: I go further, and say that more than 99 per cent. of the people with agricultural farm tenure believe in that form of tenure.

At 3.30 p.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. W. T. King in the chair.

Mr. KENNY: If the Minister will turn to the report by his department he will find that it bears out my statement. It states very definitely that out of 777 holders of agricultural farms only six applied last year for conversion to the perpetual leasehold tenure. That is over 99 per cent. and not 93 per cent. I suggest that the Minister should read the report of his own department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Murilla stated that 99 per

[Mr. Kenny.]

cent. of the landholders converted to freehold when the Moore Government gave them that opportunity.

Mr. KENNY: I am pointing out that the report by the department actually bears out the statement by the hon. member for Murilla. I admit that a number of these landholders asked for an extension of time to ten years to enable them to convert to the freehold tenure, but the important fact is that over 99 per cent. confirmed their approval of the agricultural farm tenure. The Minister cannot get away from that fact.

There is another important matter that I desire to raise, because this will be the last time I shall have an opportunity to deal with the matter while the Labour Government are in power. I shall deal with the Cooktown lands while I am on the subject, and in that connection I shall not omit to mention the policy speech delivered by the Premier and the promises made by the Deputy Premier. They told the people of Queensland that if they were returned to power the Government would develop the Cooktown lands, and that the matter would not be left to a chartered company. When the Secretary for Agriculture was speaking on his Estimates yesterday I inquired from him as to the intentions of the Government in connection with the Cooktown lands, but he rather jokingly asked me to point these lands out to him. He added that he could not find them when he was in Cooktown. The Secretary for Agriculture infers that the lands are not there, but the Premier promised in his policy speech that if his party was returned to power these lands would be developed. The Secretary for Public Lands has now been two and a-half years in office, but he has not given effect to the declared policy of the Government in this respect. Nothing has been done. I want the Secretary for Public Lands to state definitely whether these lands are suitable for settlement, when they are going to be opened, and if their development and settlement are going to be financed through the Agricultural Bank. I want him also to tell me whether the Government are sincere or whether they made a deliberate mis-statement to the people during the last election campaign. If he is prepared to carry out the declared policy of the Government then he will have my unstinted thanks.

Another matter that I should like to bring under the notice of the hon. gentleman is the fact that when he was fighting the last election campaign against me in the Mount Molloy district—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You were only small fry.

Mr. KENNY: I was very worrying to the Minister. In the Mount Molloy district the Minister pointed out that there was a considerable area of land that should have been developed and he expressed the view that if the hon. member for Cook had been carrying out his work the land would have been opened long ago and a road constructed to Mossman. I had made an arrangement with the Secretary for Public Lands in the Moore Government to open that land and build a road connecting the coast road with access roads to each block. The present Minister claims that this work was not carried out because of the neglect of the hon. member for the district, but

the Minister has had two and a-half years in which to carry out the work and nothing has materialised. This is the last time that I shall have an opportunity of making a request to the hon. gentleman as Secretary for Public Lands, because after the next elections he will be in occupation of the Opposition benches. I should like to know what action is being taken to open up these lands? Is the work to be undertaken or is this scheme to be used again as political propaganda to mislead the people during the forthcoming election campaign?

I am also very interested in the prospects of the cattle industry in the Gulf country. When the Moore Government decided to repair the Etheridge Railway line with the assistance of relief labour the present Secretary for Public Lands, who then sat in Opposition, said in his usual irresponsible way that his party was opposed to such a scheme. The Moore Government were not returned to power and therefore we had no opportunity to carry out this work, but the rents on the cattle holdings in this district have not been reduced. The cattle men in this part of the State are unable to get their cattle to market in a fat condition and must be content to sell them as stores, but they are still called upon to pay land rentals practically as high as those fixed in any other part of the State. I now ask the Minister if he is prepared to hold an inquiry into the question of rents paid for the use of cattle country in the Cape York Peninsula?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We gave them a meatworks in the Gulf country.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. gentleman does not even know the location of these lands in the Peninsula. If he knew anything about the meatworks and the lands in question he would know that the meatworks referred to is of no benefit to the cattle industry in the Peninsula. If he can indicate to me how the cattle men in the Peninsula can get their stock to the meatworks in a fat condition then I will offer him my apologies. As the Leader of the Opposition reminds me, the meatworks in question is capable of treating only 8,000 head per annum, whereas I am given to understand that there are 88,000 head of fat bullocks in the territory to which I have referred. Those people in the Peninsula, in order to get their cattle to market, will have to travel them anything up to 500 miles.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What did you do for them when you were in power?

Mr. KENNY: That is not the question. We did arrange to repair the Etheridge line to enable their cattle to be brought down to the abattoirs in a fat condition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, you did not.

Mr. KENNY: We established the abattoirs for the treatment of their cattle, and for that received the condemnation of the present Government Party. Now that the abattoirs have proved to be the success we said they would be, the Government are endeavouring to take the kudos for it. I ask the Government, after "missing the bus," to do the next best thing, and in view of the difficulties these people are suffering under, to reduce rents all along the line. When they do so, these people will probably

Mr. Kenny.]

be able to meet their rents and save the 10 per cent. penalty. In the meantime, a number of these landholders who cannot find the high rents asked of them forfeit their holdings and then again use them, on the strength of the improvements they have effected. When the land is submitted and there is competition for it, they pay a higher price for it. They then forfeit that land again and continue to hold it on the improvements effected. That being the case, there is an absolute necessity for action, so that these people can pay their rents and make a living.

The hon. member for Murilla told the Committee of the benefits the Moore Government had given to the people, and how they had embarked on a policy of land settlement that was beneficial to this State.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: They assisted vested interests by extending pastoral leases.

Mr. KENNY: I intend dealing with mixed farming tenures, which are not "vested interests," but are held by the small man. It takes the department one or two years to get mixed farming propositions into operation. The land must be inspected, surveys made, and plans drawn. The whole process takes about two years. On page 11 of the report I find that land under agricultural or mixed farming tenures made available in 1929 totalled 455,561 acres, while in 1931 the area fell to 294,984 acres. The Moore Government came into power in 1929, and commenced to prepare a land settlement policy, not for vested interests, but for the smaller farmer. We find that in 1932, the last year of their office, they made available for selection agricultural or mixed farming tenures totalling 1,577,756 acres. In the following year, 1933, the present Government, proceeding with the arrangements made by the Moore Government, made available under the same tenure 1,303,945 acres. They then had to rely upon their own administration, and in the next year the area made available under the same heading dropped to 607,599 acres.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [3.40 p.m.]: I congratulate the Minister and the Government on the excellent work done by the department during the past twelve months, in continuation of the policy adopted when the Labour Party became the Government of the State in 1932. It is very evident that land settlement in this State is of paramount importance. It is so in every State in this Commonwealth, especially when we realise that it is occupied by only 6,250,000 people.

During my trip North with the Minister I was able to see country that was quite a revelation. I saw land beyond the ordinary conception of the northern part of this State. The Cooktown, Atherton Tableland, and Mackay districts contain land well worthy of the attention of the department when considering closer settlement propositions. The closer settlement of the land in these districts would provide the far North with a milk supply; to-day it is very inadequate. It is evident that in a climate like that of North Queensland a good market could be secured for dairy products. To-day, places like Mount Isa, in the far west, are dependent on milk pasteurised in Ingham, and if the Tableland can be developed and the Palmerston area settled, a good market could be secured in the North for its pro-

[*Mr. Kenny.*

ducts. The Daintree River country is also good land, and undoubtedly, apart from the low-lying area of the coastal belt itself, which can only be used for sugar cultivation, the dairying lands now being made available by the department for selection will be availed of by settlers from the South. I have had letters from people in Victoria who, from time to time, have made inquiries from me as to the possibilities of selecting land in North Queensland.

The department can also be congratulated on the very effective work that has resulted from the expenditure of money on ringbarking. That phase of the operations of the department has not only assisted the rural population but has also given employment to a number of unemployed industrialists, and the work can be commended for that reason alone.

Reference must also be made to the effective work of the Public Estate Improvement Branch in the matter of road construction and general assistance in opening up land which the department has to offer to settlers. The policy of this Government, unlike that of Governments of twenty or thirty years ago, has been to assist land settlement by providing a proper transport system. Years ago it was a case of taking up the land first and waiting for a sufficient number of selectors to bring political influence to bear for the establishment of a transport system, but the provision of transport facilities contemporaneously with land settlement must be of considerable assistance.

It is well known that in the Chinchilla, Dalby, and other districts the eradication of prickly-pear has led to increased land settlement. I have travelled over portions of that country, some of which is not merely good sheep country, but good dairying country, and, under the Government's conditions of settlement, a living area for settlers will be provided on land that hitherto has been in the grip of the parasite prickly-pear. The Minister is to be congratulated upon the efforts of his department in that direction.

The work of reforestation conducted by the Sub-Department of Forestry, under the aegis of the Minister, is one of the bright spots of the administration. After all, it is of major importance that when a tree, fully matured and of commercial value, is cut down, another tree should be planted to replace it, and I am glad that policy has been laid down by the Minister. Queensland has been the most favoured State in the Commonwealth so far as timber is concerned, and in the past many millions of pounds worth have been wasted. By its policy of conserving the commercial timber that now remains, the department will be conserving the interests not only of the present, but also of future generations. I do not think the world has produced a finer timber than the Australian hardwood; but there is an apparent dearth of softwood in this country. Our supplies of pine are rapidly diminishing, and unless a system of reforestation is adopted a serious shortage will result.

A wonderful example of reforestation is to be found in the country I was reared near the Glenelg River, in Victoria. In that district there are thousands of acres of land of no commercial value. The country was covered with bracken and small scrub,

but as a result of the operation of the Victorian Forestry Department millions of pine trees are now flourishing there. There was an acute shortage of good quality pine in Victoria, and during the war period it was found so costly to import it from the other States that attention was directed to devising a method whereby that State could grow its own soft woods. Queensland is fortunate in having a fair amount of softwood in the Northern portions of the State, and some of the finest furniture timbers in the world. The future of the forestry section of the department is a bright one and it will be a most valuable asset to the State.

In regard to land settlement in the North, that area in the El Arish district is good land and the climatic conditions are admirable. The settlers there have been fortunate in being able to select land in an area which has a good rainfall and where they are able to enjoy conditions which people in the Western parts of our State pay a considerable amount to be able to enjoy during a holiday period, because the beach adjacent to that area is one of the best that can be found. I congratulate the Minister on his action in seeing that a decent road was provided to that settlement.

Prior to the settlement of the Eungella range, it was more or less a tourist resort. The land in that area is fairly good from the dairying point of view, and the Minister is to be commended upon instituting a system of transportation in the way of roads to that settlement. They alone are utilities that are of great value to the State. The time has arrived when it is essential that an efficient transport system should be provided for all the people on the land. No consideration should be given to the extension of the railway system to an area where a good road exists. The methods of transportation are becoming swifter, and markets 150 miles away are brought closer to-day than markets 20 miles distant were twenty years ago.

I trust the operations of the department will continue on the same lines they have followed for the past two and a-half years, and I have no doubt that much good will result.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [3.54 p.m.]: I wish to congratulate the Land Administration Board on its report. Queensland is very fortunate in having such a board, and even more fortunate in having such a man as Mr. Payne at the head of it. This gentleman has introduced practical knowledge into the conferences and decisions of that board and we appear to have at last lost a great deal of that political interference that was so noticeable at one time. A great deal of the success of our land settlement is due to the knowledge of Mr. Payne, who realises that people should be placed on the land, not merely to eke out a bare existence but to become taxpayers and be a benefit to the State instead of a drag upon it.

I should like again to bring before the Minister controlling this department the necessity of simplifying the procedure in connection with land ballots. I am sure he agrees with me, even though he has not yet been able to do anything in this direction. It requires only the application of a little common sense to the matter. A young fellow to-day requiring land has to obtain

the services of an agent to be present on his behalf at the ballot or be present in person, although he may be two or three hundred miles away from the scene. No doubt the Minister will tell me that the agent system encourages the lodging of more applicants. I do not doubt that for a moment, but I do doubt the genuineness of these applicants. I believe that agents encourage many applicants to come in who otherwise would never have applied. This means that the genuine selector has his chances of securing land reduced. I trust the Minister will also take some action in the way of preventing the boy or young man from having to encroach on his already small capital. He sees his capital of £100 or less diminishing with each ballot, yet he has no land. It is bad enough to have to suffer disappointment at the ballot without having to pay for the privilege. The holder of a ticket in the £25,000 "Golden Casket" is not required to be present at the drawing, then why should the applicant in a land ballot? Surely the land commissioner, or whoever may be the person appointed to conduct the ballot, is unbiased and fair enough to see that there is no misconduct! If an applicant desires to be present, he should be at liberty to attend, but why compel him to be there?

I cannot understand why we still see men holding large areas of country applicants at land ballots. The Minister knows very well to whom I refer. I have them in my own electorate and I suppose they are my supporters, but that does not deter me from saying that the man holding a large area of land should not be an applicant for further land. The Minister may make notes of what I say and use them in the local papers. He can do as he likes, but it does not worry me one damn bit—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to follow the procedure of Parliament. There is certain language that should be used in this Chamber, and I would ask the hon. member to restrain himself.

Mr. SPARKES: I have learned a lot since I have been here, not only as regards language, but other things, too. I know of an instance where a man is holding large areas of freehold land and is being allowed to obtain still more. The landless man should be given first opportunity of securing a block on every new area thrown open in Queensland. I know of men with 100,000 acres or 200,000 acres who are competing in the ballots to-day against young men without an acre to their names and who have perhaps only £400 or £500 each. I ask the Labour Party, which is everlastingly claiming that it is the friend of the downtrodden and oppressed—and my friend opposite is one of those who are everlastingly complaining of the oppression of the worker—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He must have cash before he can ballot.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: You stand for all forms of oppression.

Mr. SPARKES: I cannot hear the hon. member, but it would not be much use if I could. He is a member of a party that advocates these things and has allowed them to continue. The Secretary for Public Lands knows of it, because the matter has been placed before him.

Mr. Sparkes.]

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [4 p.m.]: There is no doubt that this department is one of the most important departments in the State, as it deals with practically the whole of the lands of Queensland. I notice that the appropriation from consolidated revenue for this department for the ensuing year is only £5,647 in excess of that for last year, but in glancing through the trust and special funds and the Loan Fund Account one notices that there are considerable appropriations in connection with certain items. This year the appropriation for the Chief Office is £2,223 less than the appropriation last year, the appropriation for District Offices is £721 more, and the appropriation for Forestry is £1,088 less. But, on turning to the Trust and Special and Loan Fund Estimates, I find that the amount to be appropriated from Trust and Special Funds for forestry is £150,050, or an increase of £39,950, compared with the appropriation last year, and it is proposed to appropriate an amount of £36,000 from the Loan Fund Account for forestry this year, which is £16,000 in excess of the appropriation for last year. In that way we arrive at the actual amount to be appropriated to the Forestry Department from the various funds.

There is no doubt that the annual report issued by the Land Administration Board is a very instructive one, and no one can claim for a moment that this department is not providing an excellent service. Of course, its activities are influenced by the policy of the Government in power for the time being, but it is really doing excellent work. In Queensland we have an area of 429,120,000 acres of land. Much has been said from time to time concerning the respective merits of the freehold and leasehold titles, and if one failed to consult statistics on the question or if one omitted to give the matter serious thought, one might conclude that a grave injustice had been inflicted upon this State in allowing the land to be alienated, but on looking into the matter it is found that of the 429,120,000 acres in Queensland only 19,279,592 acres, or 4.49 per cent. has been alienated and that 3,688,588 acres, or 2.02 per cent., are in the process of alienation. The area of land alienated or in the process of alienation is, therefore, 6.51 per cent. of the total area of the State, which, after all, is a very small percentage indeed. A considerable area is still retained in the hands of the people as a whole, and in referring to this matter the board congratulates the people of Queensland upon having available such a large area of Crown land. With such a large area available it naturally follows that most of the administrative business of the department is in connection with leasehold lands, but if one were to inquire at the department if there was any land available for selection for wool production he would be answered in the negative. There is a considerable area of land that could be made available for the grazing of sheep, and it is to the interest of the Government to make as much land available as possible. I understand that it is the policy of the Government and the department to encourage land settlement, but if that worthy aim is to be achieved then the conditions of settlement will have to be made as attractive as possible. No action should be taken which would in any way tend to handicap, much less cripple the new selector on the threshold of his enterprise.

[*Mr. Tozer.*]

He should be assisted in every way to make a success of his venture, because upon his success depends the ability of the State to secure additional revenue and in other ways provide increased benefits for the people. I submit that it should be the policy and the ardent duty of all the officials of the department to take an active interest in land settlement with a view to assisting not only new settlers but also people who have actually settled on the land and hold their properties under the different land tenures. They should do their utmost to assist new and established settlers to stock their holdings and to increase the number of their flocks.

Very often some person conceives it to be his duty not altogether to persecute the man on the land but to place every obstacle in his way, and that makes things very unpleasant. The Government have certainly made certain concessions, but they were necessary to enable the landholders to carry on their work, and in this matter have simply followed the policy initiated by the Moore Government. During the period the Moore Government held office hon. members opposite condemned them for following this policy, but in many respects they have continued it. There is no doubt that the same land settlement policy is being continued, with one or two alterations such as taking away the right to a freehold title. This adoption of the Moore Government's practice is a very satisfactory feature of land administration. I trust that the policy will be continued of assisting people to settle on our lands.

Many things must be taken into consideration in land settlement, and one of the most important is the eradication of noxious weeds. Some people contend that it is a duty of the local authorities, but in many respects this pest has got beyond their capacity because the Government possess so many reserves and vacant Crown lands in the infested area. The Government have 6,000,000 acres of land reserved as timber and forestry reserves. That is in addition to all Crown land. There are many instances of Crown land and reserves being infested with noogoora burr, Bathurst burr, lantana, and all kinds of noxious weeds. It is very hard for people who have selected land adjacent to watercourses, because their land is continually infested by flood and storm waters carrying seeds of noxious weeds and depositing them on their land. The local authorities immediately call upon such landholders to eradicate the weeds that grow, but in order to eradicate any pest one must tackle it at the source, and in many cases the source is higher up the stream on Crown lands or reserves. It is the duty of the Government, therefore, to deal with these pests.

I understood from hon. members opposite that land settlement generally has greatly increased since their Government assumed office, but when we examine this report we find such is not the case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You want a little bit of intelligence when you read the report.

Mr. TOZER: I am open to listen to the wisdom of the Minister when he replies, and to hear his explanation why the total area made available under different tenures

for land settlement was 55,344,283 acres in 1931, and fell to 18,393,679 acres in 1934.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not really all new land that has been settled,

Mr. TOZER: The report states—

“During the last six years lands have been made available under different tenures, and have been applied for, as follows:—”

I have only the report to go on.

The report of the Sub-Department of Forestry discloses that the peak year of timber supply was last year. In that period the total Crown log sales were nearly 81,000,000 superficial feet.

We are given the following information concerning forestry for the year 1933-34:—

	Super. feet.		Acres.
Crown sales of pine logs ...	59,000,000		
Crown sales of hardwood logs	11,000,000		
Crown sales of kauri pine, Cyprus pine, cabinet woods, and scrub woods ...	11,000,000		
Total Crown log sales ...	81,000,000		
	£		
Timber revenue	165,878		
Expenditure	70,000		
Acreage planted		2,060	
Total acreage planted at 30th June, 1934		11,518	

Some time ago a Forestry Conference stated that Queensland required 6,000,000 acres for forestry purposes. We are told that at the end of the year the total acreage of State forests, timber reserves, and national parks exceeded 6,000,000 acres for the first time on record. A question that exercises in my mind is this: If, during the existence of the Forestry Department only 11,518 acres have been planted, and the best planting in any one year is approximately 2,000 acres, what is the use of having anything like 6,000,000 acres of land tied up? After all, if the whole of that area is carrying marketable timber, it is questionable whether the taxpayer is not simply being taxed to maintain an amount of timber that would eventually be in excess of actual requirements and would, therefore, be unsalable. Most certainly the whole of that area is not carrying marketable timber. Some places may have only six to eight trees to the acre, whereas very good stands may exist in other places; but throughout the whole of Queensland I should say that the number of marketable trees to the acre was very small. It is questionable whether reforestation will be the success that people think it will. The argument is adduced that other countries of the world have undertaken reforestation and have proved it a success, and that no reason exists why Queensland should not also prove it a success. I was rather surprised to hear the hon. member for Enoggera state that in Victoria waste lands not used for dairying or other agricultural purposes were used for reforestation with remarkable success. Presumably the timber planted there was *pinus insignis*. Ever since I came into Parliament the argument has been put forward that we should utilise not the best lands of the State, but waste, for reforestation pur-

poses. I know there are certain poor lands on which it would not be advisable to grow timber, but on the other hand the fact that in many parts of Queensland we utilise the best land for reforestation convinces me of the necessity for a reclassification, so that lands not suitable for reforestation will be made available for other purposes. I understand that 16,000 acres of the Eungella State Forest are being thrown open with that object in view, and I trust that similar action will be taken in other parts of the State.

My argument is this: Assuming one log per tree is obtained, 30 feet in length and with a 60-inch girth, that would mill 562 superficial feet. It has been stated that the actual planting of trees has been in the vicinity of 1,000,000 a year, and allowing for losses, let us assume that the planting resulted in 500,000 trees. They would produce something like 280,000,000 superficial feet of timber in fifty years—it is stated that such trees will mature in something like fifty years if not less. If that is so, at the end of fifty years that marketable timber will have been removed and the land on which it grew will be again available for planting. An area of 1,000,000 acres, it appears to me, will produce an excess of marketable timber, because it must be remembered that this State is not the only one that has adopted the system of reforestation. We cannot use all the timber we produce in this State and we have to rely on our exports to the other States. We do not export our timber overseas because we cannot successfully compete with other timber-exporting nations. In view of the fact that the Southern States are our only other market, and seeing that the other States have adopted a policy of reforestation, we should consider whether the amount of money that is now being spent on reforestation will be a profitable expenditure. Of that I am doubtful.

Let us consider the land agent's district of Gympie. This matter affects me closely, because I am repeatedly receiving applications from people who desire to select land and are not able to do so. The country which is not already settled, is either State forest timber reserve or national park. There are twenty-two State forests, comprising an area of 203,701 acres, eighteen timber reserves the aggregate area of which is 111,742 acres, and four national parks with an area of 262 acres. In that comparatively small portion of Queensland 315,705 acres are tied up. The people who have selections adjoining those reserves are desirous of obtaining further areas of land, and these reserves are infested with marsupials. The settlers on adjacent blocks are compelled to fence off their cultivation with wire netting in order to prevent the inroads of marsupials at night-time. I think it is taken for granted that a man is able to live more cheaply on the land than in the city, and when he is making a living on the land he is not likely to abandon it; whilst in the course of time it will be improved and thus be an asset to the State. The people cannot understand why they are not able to select any of these areas of land I have mentioned. I understand there is to be a reclassification, and if any portion of that land is made available for selection it will be appreciated by those people who are land-hungry, and

at the same time the Government will receive some return. At the present time that land is not producing anything and the shire councils are receiving no rates in respect of it—with the exception of a contribution by the Forestry Department for the cost of roads which lead into these reserves. If the land were thrown open for selection and taken up the Crown would be receiving a rental, the local authorities would be collecting rates, and a certain amount of production would be going on. I ask the Minister to make some land available in the Gympie district as soon as possible.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [4.26 p.m.]: Before I have too much to reply to, I take this opportunity to comment on some of the remarks already made by hon. members of the Committee. The ex-Secretary for Public Lands, the hon. member for Cunningham, is usually very fair-minded, but always introduces the political issue into any discussion. It does not matter what benefit has accrued by reason of the present Labour Administration, he says, "Oh, you are just continuing the policy of the Moore Government in that respect." When is he going to stop? It was all right for him to adopt that attitude during the first year that the present Labour Administration acquired office, but surely the present Government should receive some credit for any progress made after that first year! As far as the Department of Public Lands is concerned, we have speeded up the land settlement of Queensland by over 50 per cent. since our assumption of office.

The hon. member for Cunningham cannot get away with his assertion that his Government was the only one that gave relief to the man on the land. He should go back to 1921, when a previous Secretary for Public Lands in a Labour Government initiated relief to the cattlemen of Queensland. That policy has been continued and the Act re-enacted every five years. No Government have done more for the man on the land generally and for the individual settler on the land than the Labour Governments of the past; and we have continued their policy.

The Temporary Chairman, following the usual procedure, has somewhat cramped the style of the ex-Secretary for Public Lands. Certain discussions can only take place when the appropriate votes are before the Committee; but had the Opposition, when they were in power, done the sensible thing of allotting certain days to each department, they would have had the right to discuss every vote.

Mr. KENNY: You stonewall every vote.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We do not stonewall. Personally, I have no objection to any discussion whatsoever, but, naturally, the Temporary Chairman has to confine the discussion to the vote before the Committee. He cannot allow a discussion on revenue votes when loan votes are before the Committee, and vice versa. So far as relief to cattlemen and assistance to the other sections on the land are concerned, this Government have certainly done everything in their power. We have seen to it that cheap money has been made available to the man on the land and irksome conditions have been removed.

Under the provisions of a Bill passed by this Parliament last session, local authorities

[*Mr. Tozer.*

became the district improvement boards under the Act passed by hon. members opposite. That is an edict of Parliament, and, in my opinion, should go towards providing better conditions on stock routes. A local authority is a body elected by the people of a particular district. It is right on the spot and knows the local conditions. It is conveniently able to supervise and do the work.

During the course of the debate the old controversy arose as to the merits of perpetual leasehold tenure and freehold tenure. I consider that the most convincing argument for perpetual leasehold as against freehold is exemplified by the report of the Federal Wool Committee. The Commonwealth Government appointed a committee to make investigations in all the States of Australia, not only in Queensland, regarding wool production. Mr. Payne, the chairman of the Land Administration Board, was seconded to the Commonwealth Government service and appointed the chairman of that committee. The amusing part of it is that, after appointing a costly committee and instructing it to go into all the details of the question, the Federal Government, as do most Governments other than Labour, pigeon-holed its report. There was one matter in connection with that report to which I would draw the attention of this Committee. It was proved that Queensland produced wool at 2d. a lb. cheaper than did any other State, owing to the nature of Queensland's land tenure for pastoral pursuits. Hon. members will thus see that under the leasehold system in Queensland we can produce wool at 2d. per lb. cheaper than those States in which the land is held under freehold tenure.

The Department of Public Lands realises that tiger-pear is a very serious menace and must be kept in check. During the two and a-half years that I have had the honour of controlling the department I have paid a great deal of attention to this question. As a matter of fact, more has been done during the time this Government have been in office than during any other period. The trouble is that there are certain seed-beds of this pear, and the hon. member for Cunningham knows that a certain sum was spent by the late Government in an endeavour to eradicate one of them, although his statement was not quite correct, because it is on freehold land. We have continued the policy of trying to eradicate such seed-beds.

In addition, the Prickly-pear Land Commission is making available poison to land settlers for the eradication of the tiger pear at £5 a ton. This poison has cost the commission £33 a ton, so that we are actually subsidising the efforts of the settlers to the extent of £28 a ton. It is hoped that with the assistance of a new variety of cochineal insect we shall be able to eradicate the tiger pear. Our efforts in this direction have cost a great deal of money and a considerable amount of research, but we anticipate that these insects eventually will become acclimatised and that they will be able to equal the wonderful work carried out by other biological agents in the destruction of ordinary pear. If they can do this then the problem will be solved. I want to assure hon. members that no stone has been left unturned by the Government, through the

Prickly-pear Land Commission, of employing an efficient means of eradicating this menace.

It may be of interest to hon. members to reflect for a moment upon the excellent work that has been carried out by the Prickly-pear Land Commission. The Labour Government were responsible for establishing the Prickly-pear Land Commission, and if hon. members, particularly the hon. member for Murilla and the Leader of the Opposition, will turn to the pages of "Hansard," they will find that they ridiculed the then Secretary for Public Lands for introducing the appropriate legislation.

Mr. MOORE: Who did?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman said that the then Minister might just as well get a steamroller and roll it over the pear. I ask the hon. gentleman to read "Hansard" and to read the remarks of the then Minister, Mr. McCormack.

Mr. MOORE: You read it and tell the truth.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Both the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Murilla ridiculed the Bill, and said that it was another example of waste of money by a Labour Government. Since that Act was passed in 1923 no less an area than 13,752,769 acres of land has been cleared of prickly-pear in Queensland, at a nominal cost. On no occasion has the appropriation for this particular work been exceeded in any one year. The report by the department draws attention to these matters, but hon. members opposite are very careful not to mention them to the Committee and not to express their appreciation of the action of the Labour Government in passing legislation whereby 13,752,769 acres of land was cleared of prickly-pear and no less than 12,648,037 acres of that land was settled up to the end of last year.

At 4.34 p.m.,

Mr. W. T. KING resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Normanby outlined the many valuable concessions that had been granted to the people on the land. It was necessary for the hon. member to do so in order that hon. members would realise what Labour Governments have done to assist the people on the land. It was the motto of the Labour Government of the day, and always is the motto of Labour Governments, to "Keep the settler on the land." We do not encourage the land speculator and that is why we will have nothing to do with the freehold system. Our policy is not framed with the intention of encouraging men to take up land purely for the purpose of making a profit on its sale. We want the settlers to take up the land, to live on the land, and to produce from the land for the benefit of themselves and their family and the State. That is our aim and we shall do everything we possibly can to induce the settler to remain on the land. The hon. member for Normanby has clearly set out the useful concessions that have been granted by Labour Governments from time to time, and he also outlined the very valuable concessions that had been granted by this Government during the short space of time

that they have been in office. He very rightly pointed out that changing conditions in the industry made it necessary to initiate appropriate legislation. During this session two Bills will be introduced granting concessions to the people on the land. It certainly will mean a charge on consolidated revenue, but we are not so much concerned about that as we are to discharge our duty to keep the men on the land. They must have every opportunity to earn a reasonable living. We do not deny the man on the land an opportunity to make a reasonable living. We demand that he be given that right. I represent more particularly the sugar industry, and in that connection I would remind hon. members opposite that legislation initiated by a Labour Government has made the sugar industry one of the best industries not only in Queensland but also in the world. If any industry has withstood the stress of the depression and given to the people in this State something worth while, it is the sugar industry. That is the policy of the Labour Government, and we will extend that policy to every other industry. We demand for the worker a living wage and we include the man on the land in the category of a worker. We are not like hon. members opposite who were content to do nothing during their three years in power. Our motto is "Deeds, not words." Every Bill dealing with land matters that will be introduced this session will contain concessions for the people engaged on the land. If anybody is sufficiently interested to look at the amount of land revenue received by the present Government he will realise that the industry has been maintained in a state of efficiency despite the depression. The beneficial effects of Labour's policy has been reflected in the revenue of the State.

That refutes the claims of the Opposition. After all, all that counts is the actual cash that goes into the till. This Labour Government have had the privilege of putting more money into the till from the land, and granting more concessions to the landholders than any other Government since 1929. They have put more money into revenue from the land and spent it for the benefit of the whole of the people, and on the other hand have given more concessions than ever before in the history of Queensland to the people on the land. For the benefit of the Committee, and in support of my statement that the amount of money collected in land revenues last year was a record since 1929, which was the peak year of Queensland, I have only to state that the amount of money that went into the till from this source was £1,141,000. I claim for my Government and my administration the credit for that achievement.

The hon. member for Normanby raised another question which deserves a great deal of consideration, because he has had many interviews on the subject with me in addition to previous Ministers. No man in this Committee has made greater efforts in the interests of land settlement than the hon. member. One of his submissions to the department has been the neglect of the big landholder to eradicate prickly-pear growing on his land. We have made inquiries and have given instructions that careful regular inspections and reports should be made by our inspectors to head office. We find, as

Hon. P. Pease.]

he points out, lack of attention in the proper eradication of prickly-pear on the part of the big wealthy landholder. The struggling farmer always does his bit, but the wealthy landholder who goes away to Melbourne, Sydney, and other places, is usually the last man to do what he should in this connection. It has been found necessary for me to see to it that a Bill I am bringing in provides that the big landholder shall do his duty in regard to the eradication of noogoora burr.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Normanby also pointed out that the real problem confronting the settlers in Queensland and all other parts of the world was that of price levels. I was pleased when our British visitor was here the other day that he pointed out that Britain's problems were our problems also. The problem that Britain has to face and that we and every State in Australia has to face, is the necessity for increasing price levels, not only for the manufacturer but also for our producer. No Government in Australia have done more to increase price levels than this Government, because we believe that hand in hand with increased price levels goes the purchasing powers of the people. We have given every concession to the producer and have done our best to increase his price levels. We have done it in a tangible way by giving to the industrial workers in the big centres money with which to buy primary produce. That is absolutely in accord with the views of the distinguished visitor from the British Government, who recently visited Brisbane. No doubt the British Government are copying Queensland's administration in exactly the same way as they are copying our legislation. Labour Governments, especially the Queensland Labour Government, have initiated legislation from which the best results have been achieved. We have had the privilege of seeing our legislation copied by the "Mother" Parliament because it sees that our legislation is the best.

Mr. KENNY: You flatter yourself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We get there! That is the trouble, and that is why the Opposition squeal so much. We have not fallen down on the job. The hon. member for Murilla was good enough to quote from a table in the report of the Land Administration Board. Apparently he said to himself, "Ha, ha, I have got them now. This Government are claiming what wonderful results they are achieving in land settlement and I have them on this table in the report." As I interjected at the time, it requires a good deal of intelligence to dissect that table.

Mr. KENNY: Have you got it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, a jolly sight more than the hon. member and the hon. member for Murilla. I ask the hon. members for Murilla and Cook to state exactly what they claim. What really counts is the amount of new land settlement. There is always a kind of reshuffling in land settlement, which in effect is like the action of the hon. member for Murilla, who wiped out millions of the debt on the railways by a piece of legislation which transferred it to another account.

[Hon. P. Pease.

Exactly the same position arises in land settlement as in the Railway Department. As the hon. member for Warrego once said, part of the debt is taken from your trouser pocket and put into your boot. All that counts, as I said, is new land settlement, and I will give the Committee from this report the area of new land settlement. If any hon. member wishes to see it for himself, then he can read the report and see that what I say is true.

The figures for new land settlement are—

	Acres.
1929, Labour Government ...	5,418,624
1930, Moore Government ...	3,362,711
1931, Moore Government ...	2,750,363
1932, Moore Government ...	3,442,330
1933, Labour Government ...	5,136,430
1934, Labour Government ...	5,075,319

In 1932 the people of Queensland woke up, emptied out this Government of promises and put in a Labour Government of performances. Then we got busy; we did not talk, we did things. Let me tell the hon. member for Murilla where he slipped: the majority of the pastoral holdings shown in the Land Administration Board's report were holdings newly acquired on better terms after the surrender of the former leases. Instead of giving to the people of Queensland the land that is their birthright, hon. members opposite handed back the land to the wealthy companies. In their criticism to-day hon. members opposite are but disclosing how shockingly they neglected their duty, for millions of acres which really should have gone into new settlement were returned to the wealthy people. What the hon. member for Murilla claims was new settlement was simply a reshuffle of all those lands which should have been opened up—the birthright of the boys of Queensland who were waiting for them but who could not get them because they had been handed back to the wealthy companies. Hon. members opposite can consult "Hansard" to see the objections that were raised by Labour members. I thank the hon. member for Murilla for giving me the opportunity of showing how recreant to their trust were hon. members opposite.

The hon. member also talked about prickly-pear eradication, but it is well to point out that the hon. member ridiculed a Labour Secretary for Public Lands for instituting the Prickly-pear Land Commission. I have quoted "Hansard" previously in that connection.

Mr. BRAND: You cannot find that statement in "Hansard."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hon. members opposite ridiculed the establishment of the Prickly-pear Land Commission, which was the creation of Labour.

Speaking of the wonderful amount of money that had been advanced to settlers, the hon. member quoted a figure of £190,000. Why, they did not give 190,000 pence, and I shall prove that by the report of the Land Administration Board. This is what the Land Administration Board report says—every hon. member opposite takes the Land Administration Board's report as his Bible. I do not. I have had serious differences with the Land Administration Board

and I am going to have some more—this is what was said—

“However, it was not until the Employment Council was constituted in May, 1932, that a forward step was made. The Land Administration Board took the opportunity of again bringing the scheme under notice.”

Under the notice of whom? This Government when it came into power had to find the money.

Mr. KENNY: You were not in power then.

Mr. MOORE: The statement is just as reliable as the other statements you have made.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member does not like the statements I make.

Mr. KENNY: Tell us what the Moore Government did.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They did nothing. They talked, but did nothing. The money was spent only when we came into office. We were the first people who really spent money in connection with that scheme. Again, it was a Commonwealth and State scheme. The present Leader of the Opposition went to the Loan Council and as occurred at the Loan Council the other day the Prime Minister discussed some methods of relieving the man on the land. The methods this time are nebulous, but on the previous occasion they were not. They allocated a certain sum to be contributed on a fifty-fifty basis. The State took certain responsibility for that money and the Commonwealth the same, and the Commonwealth insisted on its part being loaned at 3 per cent. The States naturally acquiesced, and that is where the Moore Government got the money at 3 per cent. But ours was the Government that spent it and not the Moore Government. I remember one of my chief tasks when I took charge of the department was to expedite the spending of that money.

Mr. KENNY: Be honest for a moment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Land Administration Board will tell you that I did do that job. We made large sums of money available, and we are now continuing that policy.

The hon. member for Murilla had something to say about the respective merits of freehold and leasehold tenures. He said that when the Moore Government gave the right to settlers to convert to freehold 99 per cent. converted. An examination of the actual position reveals that his figures are unreliable because the average conversion throughout the State of all sorts of holdings under the Moore Government scheme was 44 per cent. and not 99 per cent. In one instance, in the Upper Burnett and Callide settlement, which was initiated by the Labour Government, of 1,007 people who were eligible to convert to the wonderful freehold tenure, only 279 converted. We are all concerned about the Burnett settlers. Unfortunately, they are not in a very good position. Many of the 279 who converted are sorry they did so, and are anxious to revert to the system we have in operation. In Queensland, the State that did not adopt the freehold system, the cost of wool production was 2d. a lb. cheaper than in any other State in Australia. The hon. member

for Maranoa explained the position in regard to wool relief, and he pointed out to this Committee, quite correctly, that the corollary of the interest reduction was the Financial Emergency Relief Extension Act. The wool scheme of hon. members opposite was not worth anything. It was typical of the hare-brained schemes fathered by the Moore Government. I have perused many files in connection with the wool relief scheme. The first difficulty experienced by the Moore Government was in getting the pastoral companies to reduce their rates of interest. In many instances no reduction was made at all. The Government of the day had no power to force them to do it. The Premier of the day took the matter up with the various big firms and others concerned, and put the position to them. “If you do your part, we will do ours,” but he could not compel them. Many did not do it. The hon. member for Maranoa pointed out that it required the application of the Financial Emergency Relief Extension Act to meet the position.

Mr. MOORE: Can you tell me how many did not do it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A good many did not.

Mr. MOORE: I want to know how many.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A good many. You know as well as I do.

Mr. MOORE: I don't.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The position is that the Moore Government had to plead with the people who controlled the pastoralists to do something in order that they could give them Government relief. That reduction has been brought about by the Financial Emergency Act.

Mr. MOORE: Which the Labour Party opposed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We had no objection to that portion of it. What we objected to was the portion dealing with wages and pensions.

The hon. member for Maranoa also advocated careful consideration in regard to living areas before opening up new blocks of land. It is of no use opening up new areas adjoining existing settlers who are not able to make a living. As the hon. member for Maranoa pointed out, in his district careful consideration should be given when new areas are opened to relieving the position of those people who are at present occupying what are regarded as less than living areas. The hon. member for Maranoa was good enough to thank the Government for what has been done in that regard. I did not expect the present hon. member for Dalby to thank us for what we did in regard to Cecil Plains, because he was not the hon. member for the district at the time; but the hon. member for Carnarvon and other hon. members are aware of what took place. The Government have at all times gone out of their way to investigate immediately any complaints in regard to any settlements.

The position is that we have satisfied the people there. The most pleasing feature to me has been that in those areas where these concessions have been given we have had very little trouble during the times of stress. The settlers have kept up their new rents and they have never attempted to ask for further concessions. The Burnett is the

Hon. P. Pease.]

only settlement that is really worrying the Government. The conditions existing there were examined and relief was given, but owing to a drought of two years' duration in that area, the condition of the settlers is probably worse now than ever. The Government are having a great amount of worry in endeavouring to find a remedy, and before the conclusion of this session we hope to have a Bill dealing with the matter before the House.

The hon. member for Maranoa was good enough to give this Government credit for something we have done in trying to cope with the rabbit. The Leichhardt Rabbit Board had a very strong case. As a matter of fact we shall have to eliminate one of the buffer areas in that district, because the rabbits have overrun it. In the Bill I am bringing forward I am dealing with the question of excepting areas that are overrun from the provisions of the Act. We have given considerable help in preventing the further invasion of the rabbit, particularly in the district of the hon. member for Maranoa. Ever since I have been Secretary for Public Lands the hon. member has never hesitated to press the claims of the Leichhardt Rabbit Board week in and week out. The result was, as has been pointed out, that the Treasurer was good enough to do something that had never been done before—to give a subsidised loan, which, as the hon. member points out, will have a good effect in preventing further invasion of the rabbit not only in that district but also throughout Queensland.

The hon. member also spoke of the abolition of the Maranoa Rabbit Board. That is outside my province. My own opinion is that we should do as we have done with the district improvement boards. We have merged them into a number of local authorities. I think possibly we should have done better if we had allowed rabbit boards to function too, but had more than the number of boards that at present exists.

The hon. member for Cook commenced by touching upon the soldier settlement at Atherton. I had a great deal to do with that settlement when the late Mr. Gillies was member for the district. I frequently accompanied him to that area. I am sure everyone who was in this Chamber at the time will admit that the soldier settlement at Atherton caused him a considerable amount of worry. He initiated several actions which had a good effect. I want to ask the hon. member for Cook: "What was he doing as member for the district when he had his own Government in power?" What is the use of the hon. member now propounding schemes to me when his own Government were in power at a time when conditions, although not exactly good, were such that the Government had money to spend? The Government of which he was a supporter had money to spend because they lent it to the other Governments of Australia and did not look after their own State. He then had the chance to do anything that he desired in the interests of the soldier settlement at Atherton. That Government had the chance of doing something. They had plenty of money, but instead of expending it in developing their own State and looking after their own people they lent it to the other States of the Commonwealth. They must have spent it eventually somehow or other, because when we assumed power, instead of finding

£5,000,000, we only found about £750,000 or £1,000,000 in the Treasury.

I desire to emphasise the fact that no settler in Queensland is required to pay interest on arrears of rent if he is not in a position to do so. I say most emphatically that no person in Queensland is being called upon to pay such interest who can prove he is unable to pay. That is the policy adopted by the Government.

Mr. SPARKES interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: As a matter of fact, some are not paying anything. The majority of settlers to-day who are charged interest are hopelessly in arrears and paying neither interest nor principal. They are still on the land, however. The idea of this Government is to keep the people already on the land on the land. In many instances people have not paid interest for years, but they are still on the land. They have paid neither interest nor principal. I emphatically desire to impress on this Committee that no settler in Queensland who has a just cause pays interest on overdue rent. Only the other day, when a case was brought before me, the person concerned was informed that if he would pay the principal, as he said he could, we would be prepared to wipe off the accumulated interest charge. Everybody realises, especially if he has been in business, that if you continue to send out accounts year after year to people who can pay, but will not pay, there should be some method of bringing them up to the scratch. The idea of providing for a penalty interest rate is to compel people to pay when they can pay, but will not pay. Many cases that have been investigated disclosed that the persons who would not pay had credit balances in the bank up to thousands of pounds. In those cases we insist upon payment being made; but if a poor, unfortunate individual has no assets and cannot pay, we are prepared to accept a reasonable compromise and the accumulated interest charge is waived.

Mr. KENNY: I will quote you a case later on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member can quote any case that he likes. Any person who really cannot pay is not compelled to pay; and so long as I am Secretary for Public Lands and this Government are in power, that will be the policy adopted.

I propose now to say a few words in connection with the Cooktown area, one of the bright spots in the hon. member's electorate. Some of my friends accompanied me on a tour to Cooktown and other places, and we have the most pleasant recollections of the hospitable way in which the Cooktown people treated us. As a matter of fact, we found it extremely difficult to get away. The people were loud in their praise of the actions of the Labour Government, and they expressed the view that the Labour Government were the only Government that had ever done anything to assist them. It was the first time for many years that Cooktown was able to get a roadmaking machine, and the people there are now busily engaged in road construction. I should blush if I had to read the many grateful letters that I have received from the Mayor of Cooktown and its people, and I am sure that my colleagues who accompanied me on the tour

[Hon. P. Pease.

would make me blush if they were to repeat the grateful remarks of the Cooktown people. There is no doubt that we placed Cooktown on the map. When I first became Secretary for Public Lands I requested my officers to open up certain land in the Cooktown district for settlement. This was when the tobacco industry was in its boom; but, unfortunately, the hon. member for Cook neglected his duty in that he did not urge his people to go on to these lands. When the Federal Labour Government were in power and had assisted the tobacco industry in Queensland to the peak of its prosperity prior to the national blight that swept over it following the return of the Federal Nationalist Government, land was made available in the Cooktown district for tobacco cultivation. I have had a considerable amount of business association with the Cooktown people during the time that I represented a Cooktown firm as their agent for a line of steamers. We did a considerable amount of business with Cooktown, and I was able to see some of the finest tobacco that I had seen for many years grown in that district. However, the hon. member for Cook neglected the opportunity when he failed to urge his people to take up these lands. They are lying idle to-day. One report by the Land Administration Board points out that the Royal Commission on the Development of North Queensland was appointed by the Moore Government; but after it made its report and advised that Government what should be done the report was pigeon-holed, and it remained for this Government to resurrect it and carry out the recommendations. The hon. member for Enoggera, who had some knowledge of North Queensland but who had never been to Cooktown, was invited to accompany me on my tour. We had a most enjoyable trip from Cairns to Cooktown by boat, and wherever we went in the North the people were loud in their praise of the wonderful work of the present Government. At Mossman the people gave us one of the most enjoyable and most entertaining functions that I have ever attended.

The Forestry Sub-Department continues to carry out its very excellent service, and the work of the Public Estate Improvement Branch is being pushed ahead with all speed. This year an amount of £100,000 is to be made available to the Public Estate Improvement Branch, which is the largest amount ever made available to this branch in the history of Queensland. The good work of the Prickly-pear Land Commission is being continued, and we are sanguine of being able to deal with the deadly tiger-pear. The amount appropriated for the Forestry Department last year was £70,000—the largest amount ever appropriated to that department up to that date, and this year the amount has been increased to £86,000.

I will explain the Eungella land settlement proposal when the Bill is brought before the Chamber.

The hon. member for Dalby is always very interesting. He praised the work of the Land Administration Board, but I waited in vain for a little praise to be bestowed on the Government who control the policy of the board. Surely the Government of the day should get a little bit of praise for their policy? The Land Administration Board are simply the servants of the

Government, who do what the Government tells them to do, and will do so while they are under me. He spoke about the adoption of a simpler procedure in connection with land settlement. I referred his suggestion to the members of the Land Administration Board. That is their job, and they told me that they cannot devise any better scheme than the existing one. If the hon. member, or, in fact any hon. member, has any other scheme than the present to suggest, I invite him to discuss it with me. He can then attempt to convince the board, and, if they consider it a better scheme than the prevailing one, I am prepared to examine it, and, if acceptable, put it into operation.

The hon. member for Dalby made a very interesting suggestion, which I appreciate and am considering, that is, that freeholders should be debarred from taking part in ballots in land settlement in Queensland. All the lands in the northern part of the State, including the Clump Point land, which we are opening up to settlement, is absolutely reserved for landless men. Here we are debarring the freeholder!

MR. SPARKES: You should debar anyone who already has a living area.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We will go into the question of whether the freeholder should be debarred altogether from participating in land ballots. I agree with the hon. member that everything possible should be done to enable landless men to settle on the land. There is one aspect in connection with land settlement that must be considered, and that is the position of the man who has selected an area of land which to-day is not a living area. The Government are giving practical consideration to that problem.

The hon. member for Gympie is always very interesting. During my first term of office he brought the Black Swamp under my notice. I made a note of his suggestion and forwarded it to the Land Administration Board, and his advice is now being accepted. That area to-day is under settlement. That shows that if hon. members opposite followed the example of the hon. member for Gympie, instead of keeping in view the political significance of their suggestions, we could do something for the State. The suggestion of the hon. member for Gympie achieved something for the State. We are all concerned with doing something for the State. The hon. member for Gympie has, therefore, been instrumental in settling a part of Queensland that previously was idle land. What the hon. member for Gympie said was quite true, and the revenue vote has suffered because the Trust and Loan Funds are carrying an increased expenditure. When we get to those votes I will explain that extra expenditure.

As the hon. member for Gympie also pointed out, 90 per cent. of the lands of the State have not been freeholded. Therefore, freehold is not necessary. Under what tenure are our great wool and pastoral lands held? Certainly not freehold. Millions and millions of money have been invested in Queensland as a result of the wonderfully cheap land that we have given to the sheep and pastoral industries, cheaper land than any to be had in any other State in Australia. That provides a reason why our wool growers are able to produce wool twopenne

Hon. P. Pease.]

a pound cheaper than the woolgrowers of any other State. They are only paying the State a nominal rent for the land instead of tens of thousands of pounds to speculators. If they carried on their business on freehold land it would depreciate the net price of wool, as it has done in New South Wales and Victoria.

The hon. member for Gympie referred at length to forestry matters. I have a good deal to say on forestry. I have a very fine Forestry Board. I have probably the best officers that the department has ever had, despite all the opposition I got from hon. members opposite when I tried to put into effect my system of co-ordination. When I have co-ordinated the Department of Public Lands, and the Forestry, and Irrigation Sub-departments, Opposition members have told me that I am simply following out their policy! All they have to do is to turn up the pages of "Hansard" and see that they opposed the proposals. We did the business-like thing in co-ordinating these departments. It was unbusinesslike for one officer to be writing a letter to an officer of another department and waiting six or eight weeks for a reply. Co-ordination has provided a remedy for that anomaly.

Mr. KENNY: You are a great "I am."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Whether I am or not I have had the pleasure of handing to my Treasurer more money in a time of stress than any other Secretary for Public Lands has ever done. That gives me satisfaction. Naturally I do not beat about the bush.

The position has developed in Queensland where it is advisable that the Government's policy in regard to land settlement should be known. Very recently I received a protest from the Atherton Local Producers' Association and from various other local producers' associations throughout Queensland, telling this Government that further settlement on land should not be proceeded with, especially in the coastal areas. They are against any further openings of land, and I have dozens of letters that the Land Administration Board has had under consideration from various centres throughout Queensland, stating that under to-day's conditions the Government would be well advised not to open up any more land, because, they say, "What is the good of opening up land for dairying, mixed farming, fruit and vegetable growing when the persons who are engaged in those industries—

Mr. SPARKES: You do not believe in restriction!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will tell the hon. member the Government's policy. This is the policy which has been adopted by the Government generally: first of all, in any projected land settlement, a careful survey is made of the position not only by the Land Administration Board, but also by everyone else concerned. Now, we are only opening land which is suitable for settlement and we want to know a good deal about it. In the Bill that I introduced the other day dealing with the Eungella State forest land, I pointed out how far we were going to ensure that the land is well situated regarding water supply, that an analysis is made of the soil, that road access is provided, and that there is a

reasonable chance of a living for the person who goes there. Compare the position of the man on the land with that of, say, a clerk in Brisbane who loses his job. The man on the land can carry on and if he cannot sell his product at least he can live on the land, providing for himself, his wife, and his family. He is not in the distressful condition of the clerical worker who, when he loses his job, has nothing. As I say, the matter of roads is an important one and we have developed the Public Estate Improvement Branch to the extent of giving it the greatest appropriation ever known in Queensland. I have in charge of the work Mr. Ainscow, a gentleman who built many of the Northern railways and who is carrying out his present duties in a satisfactory manner. Last financial year we spent the following sums in the Public Estate Improvement Branch:—

	£
Eungella	11,732
Crediton	12,529
Clump Point	8,422
Palmerston	7,634
Millmerran	153
Monogorilby	34
Mackay	8
Surveys	1,951
Administration	2,448
Total	£44,961

This year, apart altogether from main roads, we are providing £100,000 for access roads, and our officers are working in conjunction with the Main Roads Commission in the linking up of access roads with main roads. When the Bill dealing with the Eungella State forests land is next being discussed I shall have an interesting chart to show hon. members, illustrating the arrangement that has been made to bring about cohesion between the Public Estate Improvement Branch and the Main Roads Commission.

The future policy of the Government in connection with opening up new lands requires some analysis. If I were a man on the land I should say, "Why put other men on the land to take my markets away from me?" The position is that the North is now coming into its own, thanks to a Labour Government which do not differentiate between North, South, East, and West. The land in North Queensland we are opening up will produce milk and dairy products, vegetables, fruit, etc., and that produce will not destroy the market for the present settlers in the South. The trouble to-day is that while vegetables can be produced in sufficient quantities in the South, a difficulty exists in distributing the products to the far distant portions of the State.

When I was in Townsville during my last Northern trip I saw a crate of cabbages opened by a fruiterer there, and only half-a-dozen were fit to sell. They were bought in Brisbane for 1d. each. How much would he have to sell that half-dozen for in order to recoup his outlay? The climate is not conducive to the transportation of vegetables. The same remark applies to milk. Anybody who is familiar with the conditions in North Queensland knows that it holds the record for Australia for the consumption of tinned milk and also tinned butter. More tinned butter is sold in North Queensland

during certain times of the year than is sold in any other portion of Queensland. That being so, why deny the right to these people of enjoying fresh vegetables and fruit? In Ingham, North Queensland, there is a progressive man, Frank Fraser, who has spent £30,000 to £40,000 in establishing a pasteurising plant for the treatment of milk. He commenced supplying Mount Isa, and here I have an opportunity to give credit to Gatton College by telling hon. members that the two men working his plant are Gatton College students, and they are carrying out that work very well. This man developed the trade in pasteurised milk with Mount Isa, and he has gone to the East to get orders. He is a large purchaser of milk, and is paying a greater price per gallon than is being paid by the butter factories, and the only thing that is preventing him from developing the business is the want of capital. He has been over to the East, and he has obtained orders for pasteurised milk that he could not fill. If hon. members compare the conditions existing to-day with those a few years ago they will notice what a change has taken place. Before I became a member of Parliament I was in business. I was employed in a big firm, and we bought condensed milk from Switzerland. I indented fruit and thousands of tins of desiccated potatoes from London to Townsville and Cairns, and Cooktown and elsewhere, because we could not grow potatoes in the district.

Mr. KENNY: That is a silly argument.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It may be silly to the hon. member, because he has not the brains to understand it. It is not silly to the people concerned. When I lived in North Queensland my children had to have condensed milk. First of all, it came from Switzerland, then a little from Queensland and a little from Victoria, and to-day it is all from Victoria. Townsville, which is the second or third largest city in Queensland, is starving for milk. Recently, when I was in that town, I saw a great number of children standing outside a shop that was an agency for Mr. Fraser, and I found they were waiting to obtain milk that came down in time to give them a bottle at eleven o'clock. Mr. Fraser has been unable to cope with the orders he has received because his milk supply is not big enough. He is able to supply Mount Isa, but he had to relinquish the Townsville trade and limit the trade he had with New Guinea. Why should the people of the North have to eat tinned vegetables? I have seen tinned cabbages, carrots, and parsnips being sold in Cairns and Townsville. To-day there is a local market for the fresh products. Conditions have changed. When I became a member for Herbert, in 1920, there was a great market for sugar. During my time in Parliament the Tully mill was built. Who in those days would have anticipated that we would not be able to get a sufficient market in Australia or overseas for the amount of sugar we produced? I was told a few years ago the markets of the world were open to our sugar-grower; to-day there are only two nations in the world that are not producing all the sugar they require, that is, some little State in South America, and New Zealand. India, Japan, and similar nations have gone into sugar production as they have taken up other branches of primary

production. The result is that our markets are considerably reduced. That being so, if this Government turned round and said that there should be no more land settlement, where should we get? There is a way out, and that is greater consumption. What I have stated regarding milk applies also to sugar. In the addresses I have made to different bodies regarding milk production I have informed them they must search for new markets for their milk. The opening of the milk bars in the city has increased consumption. One can now obtain a glass of milk at half the price that was charged previously, and the increase in consumption, according to those engaged in the milk supply industry, is astounding. During my visits to Sydney and Melbourne I made it my business to make inquiries, and I discovered that so many milk bars had been opened and the price had been so cheapened that the consumption of milk had increased by thousands of gallons. There is your market, it is right here, but the people should wake up and seize the opportunity. During the winter months it is surprising to note the number of men who ask for a rum and milk in the hotels. That is all new business; an increase in consumption means new business. In the sugar industry we have initiated a system of advertising. The milk industry and every other industry is in the same case. They should be like Mr. Fraser, who seized the opportunity offering in the milk industry to such an extent that he cannot keep abreast of his orders. There is no such thing as over-production. The whole thing hinges on getting consumption. These instances show that I am arguing on the right lines, and should not be the subject of the cheap sneers of the hon. member for Cook. I have here the report of the General Assembly of Agriculture now being held in Rome, at which Earl Dewar said that during the past four years of depression Britain had consumed—

40 per cent. more butter,
31 per cent. more eggs,
35 per cent. more poultry,
25 per cent. more fruit

than in the previous four years. That reflects what our distinguished visitor told us the other day: that they were giving purchasing power to the people and were endeavouring to do something. There are many ways of increasing production, but it cannot be done by sitting down with folded arms. The figures quoted show that Britain is on the verge of a great recovery. They show that the British Government have certainly done something for which they should be given credit. But we can do the same. Instead of decrying their country and making such speeches as we have been forced to listen to during the last few days, the members of the Opposition should point out the way to do things. What has been done by Mr. Fraser in the case of milk could be done by a thousand Frasers in this and other spheres. If I were a primary producer I should get busy and promote a campaign that would have for its object the increase of the consumption of one or the other of the primary products. Instead of thousands of cases of powdered and condensed milk being forwarded to the north of Queensland from the Southern States, I would see to it that Queensland got Queensland's trade.

Hon. P. Pease.]

Members of the Committee should take careful note of how the land of Queensland was held at 31st December, 1935. This is the position—

QUEENSLAND LAND AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1935.

	Per cent. of the whole State.
Alienated by deed of grant ...	4.49
In process of alienation ...	2.02
Pastoral leases	52.55
Prickly-pear leases	0.71
Occupation licenses	2.55
Grazing selections and settlement farm leases	18.43
Perpetual lease selections, perpetual lease prickly-pear selections and irrigation leases	1.12
Auction perpetual leases, special leases, mining leases	0.29
<hr/>	
Total land in occupancy ...	82.16
Reserves, surveyed roads, and surveyed stock routes	4.90
Unoccupied land	12.94
<hr/>	
	100.00

The total amount of land in occupancy in Queensland to-day is 82.16 per cent. of the whole, and as the hon. member for Gympie pointed out, an inconsiderable fraction of it is freehold.

In conclusion, I should like to deal with the unoccupied lands of this State and to point out how difficult it is for my Government and for the Land Administration Board to make much more new land available for settlement. It will be some solace to those people who continually write to the Government asking that land be not made available for settlement or pass resolutions embodying these ideas, to be informed that out of a total acreage in Queensland of 429,125,000 acres the area of unoccupied land at the end of last year was only 55,500,000 acres. Hon. members will realise the difficulty confronting the Government in making more land available in view of the fact that only the comparatively small area of 55,500,000 acres is unoccupied, and probably half of it not worth twopence. The Government has the endorsement of the people. ment at the rate of 5,000,000 acres a year. As fast as pastoral leases fall in they are sought again by thousands of people. I suppose that we have probably only 20,000,000 acres of unoccupied land that could be made available for new settlement. To those people who say to the Government, "Do not go on with more settlement," my reply is that they have nothing to fear. Whilst there is a demand for land the Government should make it available. It is not being opened indiscriminately in excessive areas, but wherever it can be made available for profitable purposes that is done. Last year some thirty odd portions were made available for selection in the O'Connell River district, near Mackay, and ten persons applied for every portion. Those settlers are now on the land and are real assets to the State. We must go ahead with our land development policy. We must carry out a sound, sane policy of land settlement, and above all we must look after the interests of the settlers. I am convinced that time will prove that the action of this Government have opened up land for new settle-

[Hon. P. Pease.

When our record is handed to the people for their approval they will proclaim with one voice that we have done excellent work in settling this State and that we have done more than any other Government to place people on the land.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [5.33 p.m.]: We naturally expected that when the Minister rose in his place he would reply to the matters that had been raised by hon. members. We did not expect abuse from him nor did we expect him to indulge in political propaganda. I raised the question of the Tolga soldier settlement, but I got no reply. All that the Minister said in reference to that matter was, "What did your Government do when they were in power?" He stated that our Government had plenty of money with which to carry out any land settlement scheme, but in reply to that I can inform him that whilst the Moore Government had £7,500,000 available his Government had no less a sum than £15,000,000 available. That is my reply to his statement and to his statement in the press to the effect that he was taking action.

I referred also to the Cooktown land, but I got no reply to that. He did say that his Government opened up land for settlement in the Cooktown district, but that was a deliberate untruth, because in point of fact the land was opened up by the Moore Government: it was withdrawn from selection by the Labour Government when they were returned to power. The perpetual leasehold tenure was substituted for the agricultural farm tenure, with the result that no land was taken up.

I also referred to the Mount Molloy land, but the Minister ignored that altogether. I made reference also to the Gulf country and to the rent charged to the cattlegrowers in that locality, but again the Minister ignored the matter, no doubt, because he had no effective reply.

I also referred to the penalty rate of 10 per cent. on overdue rent imposed by his department, and in reply the Minister said that no man in Queensland to-day was asked to pay interest if he could not pay it. At the present time the Minister has two letters from me dealing with selections that have been forfeited because the former holders could not pay their interest and rent to the Crown. I shall see the Minister later on with a view to inducing him to allow these people to continue to carry on on their blocks. The Minister has also before him at the present time applications from many people who have been put off their blocks by the Agricultural Bank because they could not meet their commitments to the bank. That is a complete reply to the deliberate untruth of the Minister in regard to interest payments.

The hon. gentleman also made reference to the good purpose of emancipating the people by placing them on the land, but if the proposed scheme for their emancipation is similar to his suggestion that the single unemployed worker should emancipate himself by getting married so as to be able to draw a married man's relief rate of pay of £1 0s. 3d. a week, then I advise the people concerned to be very careful indeed.

He also made reference to the importation of preserved vegetables, including preserved

potatoes and condensed milk, into North Queensland towns. He should know that in many of the mining belts and the pastoral belts in various parts of the State preserved vegetables, including preserved potatoes and condensed milk, will continue to be used, despite any action that may be taken by the Government, because these localities are far removed from places where fresh vegetables or milk may be secured. Many miners get their supplies only once in every three to six months. The same applies to many pastoral properties in the far back country. These people can only live on preserved potatoes, vegetables, and peas. Why, one can buy tinned peas in Brisbane, where they are sold in cases by the thousands! These invitations to the people to go on the land, grow vegetables, and take advantage of the market that is offering are misleading. If 100 acres of land in the Townsville district were put under intense cultivation, the whole of the demand mentioned by the Minister would be overtaken. I admit that there is something in what the Minister said in reference to milk for the inland trade; but a great quantity of condensed milk is now sold on the Atherton Tableland, where large quantities of fresh milk and butter are produced. Hundreds of cases of condensed milk are sold there each month. I myself have sold fifty cases of milk a month right in the heart of the Atherton Tableland. That market for condensed milk will always be there, no matter what action is taken to open up further lands for settlement. There is such a thing as misleading people to go on the land in the expectation of a market for their produce that will not be there.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [5.38 p.m.]: The Minister made the statement that I would be pleased to learn that in future land opened to selection would be only available to landless men, and that freeholders would have no opportunity of selecting it. I do not want him to misunderstand me. What I said was, that no man with a living area should be allowed to go to a ballot. I went on to describe what was happening in my district—that a man with 20,000 acres of freehold had been allowed to select land in competition with landless men. In doing so that man had excluded from the land a good type of young men who desired to go on the land. What I want to see is that not only the freeholder but also any person who possesses a living area at the present time, whether it be freehold or leasehold land, should not be allowed to go to the ballot with landless men.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [5.39 p.m.]: I was astounded at the remarks of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You always are.

Mr. MOORE: No wonder, because the Minister gives me such occasion for it! The statements of the Minister were absolutely crammed full of inaccuracies. He did not produce the evidence he said he would to support his statements. I take for the time being one statement he made. He said that when his Government came into office they discovered only £750,000 of cash balances were available, whereas the Auditor-General said £1,023,000 was available.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You had not paid your debts.

Mr. MOORE: It is quite near enough for the hon. gentleman; but that statement of his is just on a par with all the other statements he made throughout the length and breadth of his speech. It was crammed full of inaccurate statements and assertions—of which he produced no evidence in support. He said, too, that when the Prickly-pear Land Bill was brought down by a previous Labour Government, both the hon. member for Murilla and I ridiculed it. The hon. gentleman, first of all, said that I not only ridiculed the Bill, but advocated that the prickly-pear should be rolled down with a steamroller. Mr. McCormack, who was Secretary for Public Lands at the time, introduced the Bill. I spoke on that Bill, and my remarks are to be found at page 2,002 of "Hansard," volume cxlii. At the bottom of page 2,002 I am reported as stating—

"Very big issues will crop up, and the economic issue will be most important of all. It is most difficult to estimate the cost of clearing pear, and it is quite possible that the board may make an estimate of the cost of clearing pear, but when it comes to be done, it will be found that the cost is three times as much, and it will become uneconomical.

"The Secretary for Public Lands: On present methods there is not much hope of clearing pear by hand.

"Mr. MOORE: There is not much hope in that regard. The most efficient and the most economical way of clearing that I have seen has been by rolling it down by tractor in scrub country."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is what I said.

Mr. MOORE: Quite so—

"The Secretary for Public Lands: That system of clearing would be impossible in some places.

"Mr. MOORE: It is only where the land is good that that system can be carried out. In other instances it is only a question of keeping the pear in check."

That is exactly what Mr. McCormack himself was saying. I did not ridicule the Bill at all. When the second reading stage of the Bill came on we welcomed it all the way through. The hon. member for Murilla, at the opening of his speech, said—

"I am very glad that the Minister has introduced this Bill. For over ten years I have advocated the principles contained in this Bill—the taking of the administration of the pear land in Queensland out of the control of the Lands Department and establishing a new authority to deal with it and concentrate its efforts upon the ultimate destruction of prickly-pear."

The speech of the hon. member for Murilla only occupies about half a page of "Hansard." At the close of it he said—

"I do not propose to prolong the debate, because I recognise that we have been asking for this Bill on this side of the House—particularly the Country Party—for some time. There is only one defect in it—that it does not provide for a freehold tenure for pear lands. The

Mr. Moore.]

Commission did not make a recommendation on the point, and I can quite understand the reason—that it would interfere with the policy of the Government.”

Yet the hon. gentleman comes into this Chamber and makes a definitely false statement because he thinks we shall not have time to look into it. The whole of his speech was crammed with statements of that sort in an endeavour to mislead people outside as to the facts of the position.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You did speak about rolling down prickly-pear with a steam roller.

Mr. MOORE: I did, but its meaning depends on the context. The hon. gentleman has a habit of making statements which he tries to wriggle out of. The report of the Land Administration Board is remarkable because it is such a definite finding that all the actions we took as regards land settlement in Queensland were beneficial, although they received the utmost opposition at the time they were initiated. Time after time throughout his speech the Minister said, “The late Government was one of talk and did nothing.” The extraordinary thing is that while we were the Government hon. members opposite complained that we did too much, that we were a most reactionary Government. All the points mentioned in the report under the heading of “Weathering the Economic Storm” have been borne out by facts; yet these were the points to which hon. members opposite objected. This is the statement of the hon. member for Gregory on the occasion of the introduction of the Bill providing for the wool relief scheme of 1931, as recorded at page 2199 of “Hansard” for that year:—

“The main principles contained in this Bill are so thoroughly and utterly bad that the Opposition cannot lend its countenance to any of them.”

Yet the whole of the Land Administration Board’s report dealing with “Weathering the Economic Storm” points to the benefits to the woolgrower and to the State of Queensland generally from the action taken by the Moore Government. At page 2200 of the same “Hansard” the hon. member continues:—

“The proposal to give the Land Administration Board complete control over all Lands Department affairs for the next few years is one that does not find favour with me. At one time I thought that the Board was capable of doing the job properly; but recent events have convinced me that the Land Administration Board is not capable and not worthy of doing that job properly.”

Yet, because the Land Administration Board took action in a time of unparalleled difficulty that was in the best interests of the State, the present Secretary for Public Lands and his colleagues tried to abuse the board, and said that it was not capable.

The present Secretary for Agriculture had this to say in 1931:—

“The question arises: Does this Bill really improve the position of the Crown tenants? The Minister professes to believe that it does. I make no secret of the fact that I do not think it is going to improve the position of the Crown tenant to any very great extent.”

[Mr. Moore.

Yet all the way through the report of the Land Administration Board shows that the action taken to reduce rentals, to extend leases, and to do the many other things that were done assisted the wool producers very materially to weather the economic storm.

As one paragraph of the report states—

“When industries are in grave economic difficulties governmental concessions, in themselves, do not give much financial aid. Measured in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence, a concession may not seem important; but as an encouraging gesture to the industry, and as a help in sustaining its morale, concessions are of assistance far transcending their monetary value.”

It is remarkable that the present Minister has recognised that the concessions were justified, because when they expired at the end of last year he continued them until 1935, thus recognising that it was absolutely necessary to do so in the interests of the wool industry of Queensland. At the same time he states in this Chamber that the Moore Government did nothing but talk, and that his was the Government which acted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is true. The people of Queensland said that.

Mr. MOORE: The people of Queensland have a little more intelligence than the hon. gentleman apparently thinks they have.

Mr. WATERS: When will Bayley be your leader?

Mr. MOORE: You will never be the leader of any party.

Mr. WATERS: Did McGill prepare that for you?

Mr. MOORE: McGill has intelligence and brains, which you have not.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: I am not one of those who blow my own trumpet. I leave it to other people to judge me. I am not like hon. members opposite who get up and say what wonderful men they are. Actions speak louder than words. Hon. members on this side do not adopt the attitude of the Secretary for Public Lands, who says, “I have done more for Queensland than anybody else. I have given the Treasurer more than any other Minister for Lands has done.” The hon. gentleman has taken more out of the pockets of the settlers in order to give it to the Treasurer during the most difficult times the State has experienced, when the prices for wool and wheat and dairy produce have been so low! Is it a fit thing for a Minister to come into this Chamber and say, “I have taken more money out of the pockets of the people than any of my predecessors”? I cannot see what the hon. gentleman has to be proud of in that.

All the Government have done has been in the way of annoying and restricting, yet they suggest they are helping the people in every way. One has only to refer to the State’s accounts to show how the unfortunate people have been harassed in their efforts to make ends meet. At page 94 of the Auditor-General’s report he says—

“Even after realisation, the bank does not write off the loss until an endeavour (sometimes extending into years) has

been made to enforce its rights under the personal covenant clause of the mortgages."

An effort is made to extort still more from the unfortunate individual to give to the Treasurer. When it is impossible for the individual to make a living on his land he goes to the Agricultural Bank and borrows money, and even after it has foreclosed on his place the Government use their endeavours for years afterwards to extort money from him under the personal covenant in his mortgage.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: Posing as the friend of the farmer!

Mr. MOORE: That is exactly what the Minister is doing and I am glad the hon. member recognises it.

We have heard much of this wonderful assistance that is being given to various settlement schemes. At page 68 of the Auditor-General's report he says—

"The year closed with a working loss of £2,568 16s. 1d., exclusive of interest on the loan indebtedness to Treasury, as compared with £1,478 2s. 8d. for the previous financial period, the accumulated losses at 30th June last being £17,139 15s. 2d."

That is the actual position, and in the face of that the Minister has been going round the country saying the Government have made things infinitely better for the people. We find the loss is infinitely greater.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because we have given it to the settler.

Mr. MOORE: Can the hon. gentleman have it both ways? He boasted in this Chamber a little while ago, "I have taken more money out of the pockets of the settlers to give to the Treasurer of this State than any other Secretary for Public Lands since the inception of the office of Secretary for Public Lands."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not say that at all.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman makes all sorts of promises.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Which he carries out.

Mr. MOORE: No. I have a letter here from the Local Producers' Association at Rawbelle.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: Where is that?

Mr. MOORE: Look at the map. The hon. member should not come to this Chamber unless he has an intelligent knowledge of the situation of these places. The letter reads—

"When the Minister for Public Lands travelled through the district with his supporters, Messrs. Williams and Foley, the country had benefited by the previous few months rains and recovered as far as pastures and growing crops were concerned. The committee also saw the area in a very favourable state. Had they been in the district six or nine months earlier at the termination of a three years' drought, a different impression would have been created. Very little more grass than one can see on the middle of Queen street was available for the few remaining stock. Many settlers lost their all. Others managed to save up to 50 per cent. by sending their cattle

away on agistment. A sporadic storm or so saved or partially saved others.

"Meanwhile the Lands Department wanted and expected the full amount of rents and charges on water facilities to be paid. The unjust late penalty of 10 per cent. being added to the arrears (5 per cent. is the highest charge imposed on overdue rates and rents in other States). As the settler's earnings had vanished and stock losses were heavy, the least that could be done was to waive rents for the bad years. The State Public Service enjoys salaries which are not subject to interruption. The primary producer is subject to charges by the service whether his earnings are nil or a reasonable recompense for his toil. We do not forget the action of the present Government in increasing freights and fares in country districts as well as restoring the cuts to the sheltered service. As there are about 1,200 settlers (landholders) in these areas and as a court sits in each area, many months will go by before the cases are heard. We say that we have lost time enough in presenting our cases to the Committee who have had the cases finalised."

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: They have not claimed anything.

Mr. MOORE: Fulfilling his promise, the Minister appointed a commission to take evidence from everyone. That commission went through the district. The letter is signed "C. Weatherhead."

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: If you knew the man you would not have read it.

Mr. MOORE: I do know him, but I only met him once, and it did not interest me whether he was a Labour supporter or not. (Government interruption.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: The only thing that interests me is that he is a settler.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You know definitely what his politics are.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know what his politics are.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You know definitely.

Mr. MOORE: I never met the man more than once. He wrote to me as a representative of the Rawbelle Local Producers' Association.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Has he paid his rent?

Mr. MOORE: I have not the faintest idea. He writes as secretary of the Rawbelle Local Producers' Association. (Renewed interruption.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: He writes also—

"This was resolved at a meeting of Rawbelle L.P.A. to ask you to do this for the settlement."

Mr. MOORE: This is the beginning of the letter—

"About two years ago the settlers in the Upper Burnett area, which was opened for selection in 1923 and subsequent years up to 1930, asked the Minister for Lands, through the L.P.A., for an inquiry into the conditions of their settlement. They considered the capital values of the land were too high and that other charges which they were

Mr. Moore.]

asked to pay by the Land Administration Board for water facilities, etc., were excessive. That these charges were based on the supposed earning power of the land when produce values were considerably higher than those existing when the request for the inquiry was made. Altered earnings should be accompanied by altered taxation, capital values should be reduced and water facilities should be revalued. The first reply from the Minister was that no good reason existed for an inquiry. The lowered prices for primary products were world-wide and that the drought was affecting nearly the whole of the State of Queensland. Renewed requests to the Council of Agriculture brought some response. Two delegates were appointed from that body to travel through the Upper Burnett and Callide Valley area."

Mr. FOLEY: Did not your Government solve all their troubles by the Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Act?

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: You had the opportunity to do it.

Mr. MOORE: We brought in a Bill and did it, but this is since.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then, why is he in this position to-day? Evidently you did not do enough.

Mr. MOORE: If the hon. gentleman will have a little patience instead of interrupting, perhaps I will tell him. Instead of doing something he is content to go round talking, talking, and talking. He goes round the electorates with two or three members and makes promises on all sorts of things, but when it comes to fulfilling these promises it is a very different matter. The letter proceeds—

"They considered the conditions which many settlers had to contend with are appalling and reported to the C or A accordingly. The C and A in turn reported to the Minister who arranged to visit the areas in question. This he did last January and at various meetings told the settlers that a committee would be appointed by him when he reached Brisbane. An impartial committee to give every settler who wished to state his case confidentially was the promise. What happened is now a matter of history. The committee, three officials from various departments, took lengthy evidence last March and retired into oblivion or somewhere else. Meanwhile we have been awaiting the result of the committee's inquiry. Now we are informed that the report is not to be made public. Every settler who wishes to have his capital value reviewed can do so by applying to the Land Court which is an independent tribunal which will judge his case without any regard to the expression of opinion by the committee whether in his favour or against him. Now, Sir, we contend that sufficient evidence has been tendered to the committee to enable the committee to arrive at a decision of those settlers' cases who met the committee and furnished the information desired. Why is the report of the committee suppressed?"

Mr. WATERS: It is suppressed? You are introducing party politics in a departmental vote.

[Mr. Moore.

Mr. MOORE: Probably the hon. member will not be in Parliament after the next election. (Interjections.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MOORE: It is rather difficult for me to reply to all the statements made by the Secretary for Public Lands during his marathon speech, but there is one statement to which I take particular exception, and that is his contention that the late Government lent money to the other States of the Commonwealth when it should have been used for the development of the land in this State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What did you do with it?

Mr. MOORE: We lent it in exactly the same way as the present Treasurer has lent £6,825,000 worth of Treasury bills back to the Commonwealth Bank. Money was re-lent by the present Government in May, July, August, October, and November, 1933, and in January, February, April, May, and July, 1934. Even as late as July last the present Government redeemed Treasury bills amounting to £2,461,000. Why? To save interest, and in order that the State would not be paying interest on money that was not required at the moment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know why we had that money?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, of course, because the Government had a deficit and used Treasury bills to meet it. We had funds available for which there was no use at that particular time, and we did what the present Government have done—we lent it to the other States on condition that it was to be repaid by a certain time.

The Secretary for Public Lands claims to have done something. He has done something! This is what the report of the department has to say about it:—

"During the short life of the original District Improvement Boards much valuable work was done by them. In particular the improvement of stock routes in a number of the districts was most marked, as water was provided on long, dry stages which formerly existed. Campaigns against noxious weeds and animals were also waged with discretion and vigour, and plans were laid for co-operative action with neighbouring authorities."

The hon. gentleman did something—he wiped out the district improvement boards, and now he says, "I wash my hands of the whole thing. The stock routes have nothing to do with me. I do not mind how many noxious weeds grow on them, I do not worry whether they are provided with water or not. It has nothing to do with me. It is a matter for the local authorities." When it comes to the question of exterminating dingoes, he says, "That has nothing to do with me, either." Here are the contentions of the hon. gentleman who is supposed to be in charge of land development in this State—a most important function. He says, in effect, "I wash my hands of all these things," and he does that because the problems are too difficult for him to tackle. If any complaint is made on this score he merely says, "It is not my fault; I have done all that I can do."

Mr. BEDFORD: Why do you not connect your remarks up with the vote?

Mr. MOORE: Is the hon. member for Warrego the Chairman of Committees? I shall connect up my remarks by referring to the illuminating utterances of the Secretary for Public Lands at Warwick. He was referring to "My old friend Bill Deacon," and this is what he had to say:—

"Although I now occupy his place, I know Mr. Deacon has just the same feeling of sincerity and friendship towards me as I have for him. I am only doing the work that he initiated. I am trying to do what I can to settle people on the land. Mr. Deacon initiated that policy, and I am trying to carry it out."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: His policy could not continue for all time.

Mr. MOORE: It has almost come to an end now.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [7.4 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition stated that the present Government had lent money to the Commonwealth Bank, but we were forced to do that because of the insane policy of the present Commonwealth Bank Board. The board insisted that we take the money allocated by the Loan Council up to 30th June this year or forfeit it. We were not going to forfeit £3,000,000 odd. We did not need the money at the time, because we had sufficient to enable us to carry on. We were not "broke," like the Moore Government. We did not need the money at the time, but the Commonwealth Bank Board insisted upon our taking £3,000,000 or losing it, and on behalf of Queensland we decided that we would not lose it. This is of special interest to the hon. member for Kennedy, because out of that sum there will be appropriated a very large amount about which he is concerned. The amusing part is that we are in a position to lend money. The Opposition have complained that the Government are spending too much money. What a wonderful financial recovery in this State since the present Government have been in power! I do not believe in puffing either the Government or myself. The people of Queensland know what we have done, but in view of what has happened I think it is just as well to remind the Committee that the Land Administration Board issued a report last year, too.

Mr. MOORE: It did.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a vast difference between the tenor of that report and this year's, because I dared to tell them that we were the masters and they were the servants.

Mr. WATERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Just listen to what the report states—

"Shortly after assuming office in June, 1932, the present Minister for Lands, Hon. P. Pease, M.L.A."—

That is me. (Opposition laughter.)

"conceived the idea of establishing team work between all the sections of public administration having any relation to Crown lands, and placing all such activities under the one controlling body, which, in turn, would be subject to the general policy and direction of the Government."

Hon. members who were in this Chamber when I introduced that Bill will remember that I had to stand here for about two days while every Tory newspaper took me to task for daring to do my duty to the people. Now I have the very board who did not stand for that policy telling me just what I did. Listen to this, which is observation 5 of the board as contained on page 6 of the report—

"Less than a year has passed since the system of amalgamated control was effected, but that period constitutes a record of administrative activity in a number of directions for the Lands Department and each of the sub-departments concerned.

"Amongst the important results achieved during the year ended 30th June, 1933, are the following:—

This is the Land Administration Board, under Mr. Payne, who is so beloved by hon. members opposite—

"(i.) A larger area of land was opened for settlement than during any year since 1924. The area opened was 5,166,495 acres; the area selected was 5,136,430 acres."

The ex-Secretary for Public Lands, the hon. member for Cunningham, had then gone out of office, and, as the board points out, this achievement is due to the policy of the Government. The board continues—

"A larger area was resumed from pastoral holdings for closer grazing settlement than was resumed during any year since 1925. The area resumed was 1,169,230 acres. This land is now being designed for opening for selection."

Hon. members opposite said that this land had already been designed. The board states—

"This land is now being designed . . ."

Mr. KENNY: All the work of preparation was done by us.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course! The report continues—

"More priority additional areas have been approved to be granted to existing settlers than during any other year in the history of the State. Additional areas granted or approved to be granted during the year total 886,058 acres.

"A commencement has been made in opening for settlement extensive scrub areas in North Queensland after activities in this direction had been quiescent since 1914. An area of 95,475 acres in districts from Mackay northwards was opened for mixed farming settlement during the year. For tobacco-growing an area of 8,032 acres was opened in the Mareeba-Dimbulah districts, and 3,411 acres in the Townsville district.

"More road work to give access to selections was undertaken than had been done in any one year since 1919. The roads constructed totalled 310½ miles. These works included the following localities:—Upper Burnett and Callide, Millmerran, Monogorilby (Gayndah), and Rise and Shine (Mackay). Road works to give access to the Eungella lands (Mackay), Clump Point lands (Tully), and East Palmerston lands (Innisfail) are now proceeding.

Hon. P. Pease.]

" Much attention was given to special employment creating activities on reproductive works. In the result part time employment was given to 11,016 men."

Yet hon. members opposite allege that we are dealing with the man on the land in a very drastic way. Just listen to this—

" The forfeitures or abandonment of land, notwithstanding the general depression and poorness of markets, was comparatively small, and was confined solely to inferior holdings. Year by year, under the board's administration, the number of forfeitures has been declining. Whereas in 1927, 797 selections, comprising 2,134,728 acres, were forfeited, the number forfeited during last year was only 273, comprising 360,283 acres."

That shows the position. Then the report goes on to say exactly what I say—

" The Lands Department's revenue, notwithstanding the granting of extensive concessions, was well maintained, and amounted to £1,193,013."

Then the report goes on to give what we are entitled to, a certain amount of credit to the department which I have the honour to administer and which my Government co-ordinated, in respect of the work I am carrying out on their behalf.

Just to show what a wonderful, fairminded man the Leader of the Opposition is, let me remind hon. members that he gets up and complains about the unfair tactics of us on this side of the Committee and endeavours by quoting from page 94 of the report of the Auditor-General to lead the Committee to believe that my department has been doing something very, very shocking in regard to properties of which possession has been taken by the Agricultural Bank. I have nothing to do with the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. MOORE: I was only pointing out the treatment meted out to the settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. gentleman stated that the settler was being treated worse by my Government than he was treated by his Government, yet the number of forfeitures last year, despite the bad times, was the lowest on record in the history of this State.

Now we come especially to the attack launched by hon. members opposite in connection with the Upper Burnett and Callide lands. That settlement has given me more worry than possibly any other settlement in Queensland. From 1926 onwards the settlement was the cause of considerable worry to the Government, and the Secretary for Public Lands of the day initiated an inquiry, which was opened on the 28th February, 1929, by the Land Administration Board, comprising Messrs. Payne, Melville, and Power. In the course of the inquiry 339 witnesses were examined and the board travelled 1,143 miles by motor car. The board subsequently submitted a report. In the interval the people of Queensland had gone mad. " Two million pounds for 10,000 jobs" and other things had contributed to that condition. At any rate the responsibility of taking action on that report became entirely the responsibility of the Moore Government. What did the Moore Government do? They had a lot to say and did nothing. Is it not apparent to everyone that if the Moore Government had done their

duty in 1929 the settlement would not be in the situation it is to-day? Imagine any business concern initiating an inquiry in 1929 by a body charged with full powers to inquire and report, and subsequently finding that in less than three years the position is infinitely worse. The fact is that the Moore Government shirked their duty. The report was handed to the ex-Secretary for Public Lands and his Government said, " We will do a little bit." As usual, they talked a lot. They arranged for additional areas, a review of capital values and rents, and a review of water facility costs, but when I took office I found a most shocking state of affairs existing in regard to that settlement. Hon. members opposite were so wonderfully generous to these settlers, on whose behalf to-day they speak with their tongues in their cheeks, that they wrote a miserable £3,396 off water facilities. The irony of the whole matter is that the instruction of the then Secretary for Public Lands to his department was that when these adjustments were made—these totally inadequate adjustments—payment of interest and redemption had to be strictly enforced. (Opposition dissent.) Had we been in power at the time we should have done the job properly and the settlement would not be suffering as it is to-day. For the benefit of the hon. member for Cook and other hon. members opposite who hypocritically would lead the people to believe that they would not impose certain penalty charges, I repeat that the instruction of their Government was—

" When adjusted, payment of interest and redemption to be strictly enforced."

The position last year was bad, but this year it is worse. I have sworn to do my duty to the people of the State. The taxpayers of this State, through the inadequacy of the action taken by the Moore Government in connection with this settlement, are faced with the position that the outstanding dues at the 30th June last amount to £44,172. That is the situation created by a tinpot Government who, when they had the opportunity to deal with a report, did not face the situation. It is that position that I have to face and naturally I shall do my duty to the people who sent me here.

Mr. MOORE: If you had put things right in the first instance the situation would not exist.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A costly commission inquired into this matter very exhaustively, heard witnesses, and prepared a report, but the Moore Government did not rise to the occasion. As usual, we have to clean up the mess. Yet hon. members opposite pose as the friends of the farmer! This is what we have done for the farmers: in the 1932 season, on the application of the hon. member for Port Curtis and the hon. member for Normanby, we advanced £22,885 to necessitous farmers for planting cotton. Subsequent payments can be compared thus—

Year.	Amount. £
1932-33	28,885
1933-34	16,605
1934-35 (Appropriation asked for)	20,000

[Hon. P. Pease.

That indicates what we are doing for those farmers. Although my duty is to endeavour to keep the revenue up because I am spending a lot of money wisely and well, in spite of the fact that that amount of money is owing, not one of those settlers has been told to get off his land. That is the way we are treating the farmer. Not one of those farmers is compelled to go off the land in spite of what he owes unless he wants to; and while we are the Government that is the way we will treat them. I wonder how private enterprise would treat those farmers if they had bought the land on the freehold basis? Where would the people be? I know people to-day to whom land has been sold by go-getters and who have been prosecuted for payment. I know many families in North Queensland who happened to buy land and who have surrendered their title to it after paying pounds and pounds, and now they are being sued for their last penny. That is your freehold! Supposing this land had been developed by people selling land for speculation, would they give the same treatment when £50,000 was outstanding? I say now on behalf of the Government that not one of the settlers have been asked to leave his selection. When we recognised the situation we sent accounts out to see what could be done. We received certain cream cheque payments; but no settler has been treated otherwise than as any decent Government would treat a settler in a time of stress. Those settlers owe nearly £50,000, but not one of them has been asked to get off. When I found that these amounts were outstanding I discussed the matter generally and the Government thought the best thing to do was to send a committee of inquiry in order to ascertain what the position was. We did so. We sent one of our own officers, the head of the Agricultural Bank which was concerned, and one of our irrigation officers, a man who would know all about the water facilities. They made a very exhaustive inquiry and travelled wherever they thought necessary. We did not prevent them from going to any little settlement if they thought it necessary to do so. Every settler who wanted to give evidence could do so individually or through the Council of Agriculture. That committee of inquiry made a report. We have discussed that report. The Land Administration Board discussed it. Certain phases of it were not too clear, and it was sent back to the committee of inquiry for further investigation and report, which has been received. The Land Administration Board then reported on it to the Government. The matter was considered by Cabinet and we have decided on a line of action.

Mr. MOORE: It was only talk.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no talk there. The Leader of the Opposition quoted a letter from some irresponsible political follower; but I will quote a letter from a responsible body—the Council of Agriculture, who took up the case of these people. When we caused this investigation we decided that the settler could go to the committee of inquiry himself or he could depute somebody to go for him. That action was decided on in order that solicitors would not be brought into it. We decided that the Local Producers' Association could be heard, and the Council of Agriculture sent a man round to see that the case of each

settler was properly prepared. The letter from the Council of Agriculture reads as follows:—

“RE UPPER BURNETT AND CALLIDE VALLEY
LAND SETTLEMENT INQUIRY.

“In your letter of 31st August you stated that the report of the committee of inquiry had been referred back to that committee for further inquiry on certain points, and that, when completed, the Government would deal with the matter in an amending Land Bill during this session.

“Publicity was more recently given, in the press, to a statement said to have been made by Mr. T. L. Williams, M.L.A., to the effect that the settlers were to be permitted to approach the Land Court with the object of obtaining a review of their purchasing prices and capital values, including water facility costs, also that the report of the committee of inquiry would not be made public.

“This is a matter in which, as you know, the council is deeply interested, and I should be glad to be advised if you have any further information to add to the brief statement attributed to Mr. Williams, which I could submit to the executive committee of the council at its meeting on Thursday next.

“The press statement referred to has been productive of a number of letters of protest, and we would be glad to be advised of the Government's exact intention in this regard to enable authoritative replies to be sent.”

Letters of protest have been received by hon. members on this side, from the Premier down. These people did not think it fair that they should be sent to the Land Court. The recommendation of the Committee of Inquiry was that they should be sent to the Land Court and there state their case, the court to give a finding. The Cabinet have considered the matter, and in view of the situation we have decided to put into effect some scheme that is aiming at giving quick relief. The Bill was drafted last week, and had the Premier not had to leave the State, no doubt the measure would have been discussed again this week. We are going to do something. (Opposition interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Members of the Opposition appear to be concerned about the settlers, but they are not. They are not concerned about them or their interests or future. The Opposition have been trying to unload on this Committee something which I have proved is not true. I can assure the Committee that we will afford relief to the settler. We do not blame the settlers for the poor Opposition in this Committee. They do not represent the settlers. As a matter of fact, the two representatives of the Burnett settlers are on this side of the Chamber. They are the people who represent the farmers. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to be more careful in future. (Opposition dissent.) I would ask him not to quote letters from irresponsible people. Of course, I quite realise that the Opposition will never again have the opportunity of messing up the affairs of this State. If there is one

Hon. P. Pease.]

case where the Moore Government miserably failed, it was in the way in which they dealt with the report of 1929. That is only five years ago. The Moore Government certainly brought in legislation, but the settlement now is in a worse mess than it ever was. It was left to this Government to clean up that mess. I can assure members of this Chamber that we will do our task properly and well, and not one settler on that estate—there may be some 1,200—will be dispossessed because he has not paid either rent or interest if he has not been in a position so to do.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [7.25 p.m.]: Mr. King—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Cunningham has exhausted the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. DEACON: I do not think I have.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has, according to the records.

Mr. WILLIAMS (*Port Curtis*) [7.26 p.m.]: There is nothing much left to be said in connection with this vote. The hon. member for Dalby brought up the question of allowing the landless to obtain land. Some time ago I brought up the question of land being made available for the sons of men already on the land, and I pointed out that such should be given the opportunity of selecting areas adjacent to their parents' land. They would thus be able to invoke the aid of their parents and obtain the loan of machinery and other farming implements until such time as they became independent.

Another matter referred to by the same hon. member was the opening up of new areas. He pointed out—I think rightly—that these areas should be made available to men who were not already possessed of land, provided the area taken up was sufficient to give him a living.

A good deal has been said this evening regarding the Burnett settlers. I am glad to hear from the Minister that something very tangible will be done in the very near future. The delay in taking action as a result of the committee's report has caused a good deal of discontent and heartburning. When the matter is explained to them the settlers generally realise that various causes have been operating which have resulted in delay. The Minister has assured the Committee—and we who are on the land committee of the party discussed the Bill with him some time ago—that something will be done for these settlers in the way of granting some special form of relief. The Leader of the Opposition asserted that in the end nothing would be done. That is one of the most ridiculous statements he has made in this Chamber. When reading the letter from Mr. Weatherhead, secretary of the Rawbelle Local Producers' Association, he forgot to note the date.

Mr. MOORE: It was about ten days old, from what I remember.

Mr. WILLIAMS: The hon. gentleman had ten days in which to bring this matter forward. The Leader of the Opposition said he was asked to bring this matter up before Parliament. Neither he nor a member of his party has brought it up until the present. The hon. member for Fitzroy also definitely promised the people of the Upper Burnett that so soon as Parliament resumed he would

go to Brisbane and bring up on the floor of the House certain questions regarding the holding of land. He was here for a week or ten days and remained dumb.

Mr. MAXWELL: You know that the hon. member for Fitzroy is a very sick man.

Mr. WILLIAMS: I know that. I had prepared a question which I intended to ask in this Chamber concerning the report relating to the condition of the settlers in the Upper Burnett area, but I knew that the hon. member for Fitzroy had been requested by the Abercorn Local Producers' Association to ask questions concerning this matter in this Parliament. I waited for about ten days for the hon. member for Fitzroy to ask his questions, but about the tenth or eleventh day after Parliament had resumed I met the hon. member in a passage-way in this building and he told me that he was perfectly satisfied that I was doing the best that I could, that the Minister had the matter in hand, and that he was not going to ask any questions, although he had promised the people in the district he would do so. That is one reason advanced by the hon. member for Fitzroy for not asking those questions in this Chamber. He had an opportunity to ask those questions, and the Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to ask those questions during any question time. There was no need for him to wait until the Committee was considering the Estimates for the Department of Public Lands. It is ridiculous for him to say that nothing would have been done had he not asked these questions during this debate.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think anything would have been done.

Mr. WILLIAMS: The hon. gentleman's statement is too stupid to be taken seriously. I know what he is aiming at. We have a relief measure that has been discussed for some weeks past.

Mr. MOORE: That is all that your Government do—talk, talk, talk, and do nothing.

Mr. WILLIAMS: Something will be done. Hon. members opposite were in power in this State for three years, and they had every opportunity to do something in the interests of the settlers of the Upper Burnett. The hon. member for the district at that time was also a member of the Government, but as the Secretary for Public Lands has pointed out, little or nothing was done for that settlement. The Leader of the Opposition knows that he could have done something, and Councillor Weatherhead also knows that the Moore Government could have done something. That is one of his biggest grudges. Councillor Weatherhead knows that for three years the Moore Government did practically nothing, the very party that he supported.

Naturally, the Council of Agriculture has been interested in the report by the committee appointed to inquire into the Upper Burnett lands. The Council of Agriculture allowed one of its leading men in Central Queensland to accompany the Minister, the hon. member for Normanby, and myself on a tour through the Upper Burnett and Callide districts. He was present at all deputations, at all public meetings and at all individual requests to the Minister, and that is why the Council of Agriculture is interested in the Upper Burnett settlement inquiry. Just a few days ago Mr. Brabner, the secretary of the Council of Agriculture,

[*Hon. P. Pease.*]

visited Parliament and discussed with the hon. member for Normanby and myself the legislation that it was proposed to introduce, and he went away expressing satisfaction with the Minister and his conviction that the Government had the interests of the settlers of the Upper Burnett and Callide Valley at heart and that as soon as possible a relief measure would be introduced.

The Minister has made reference to scrub areas in this State. There are quite a number of scrub areas in my electorate and in other parts of the State that are being retained for reforestation purposes, and, whilst I recognise that reforestation is an important function of the Government, I do think that some of these areas could be denuded of their standing timber and made available for settlement.

The Minister also made reference to the construction of access roads to new settlements, and he promised that these roads would be constructed before the new settlers were placed on their blocks. That is a step in the right direction, and the Minister is to be congratulated upon his efforts in this direction.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister and his officers on the very fine work that they have carried out during the year. I congratulate the Minister on the very fine report by the department and upon the way in which the various sub-departments have administered their respective affairs. I hope to see the Secretary for Public Lands in his present office for many years to come.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [7.35 p.m.]: Mr. King—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. DEACON: This is another vote

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [7.36 p.m.]: I listened very carefully to the remarks of the Minister, but I must confess that I had some difficulty in following some of them. He claimed that his department was responsible for any good that had been carried out in the interests of the State, not the Land Administration Board. Therefore, he must be responsible for some of the misdeeds of the department. I now want to ask him why he allowed at least one individual in the Carnarvon electorate to collect one guinea each from 1,100 applicants who desired to ballot for land. Why should such a thing be possible? In reply to my query as to why a person should not be able to enter a land office, sign and lodge his application form, establish his bona fides, and have the application sent to the proper quarter I was told that the department could not conceive of a simpler method than that which operates to-day. If the Minister controls his department, why does he not tell us why this method cannot be altered? He must have a reason. He is perfectly silent on my question, and all the information this Committee has is that there is no other way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I cannot talk while you are talking.

The SPARKES: The hon. gentleman has spoken for about one and a-half hours, and has told us nothing.

The Minister claimed that the benefits accrued from the perpetual leasehold tenure.

He went so far as to give figures to show how cheaply wool is produced on land held under that tenure. No one has ever claimed that we should have freehold tenure in the far western areas of this State.

Mr. LEWELYN interjected.

Mr. SPARKES: You would not know the damn difference between east, west, and south.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Dalby to be more temperate in the use of language.

Mr. SPARKES: If the hon. member who interjected took a trip out West he would know that there is a considerable difference between the lands in more closely settled areas and the lands in the western portion of our State. If it were possible for him to absorb any brains or a little information he would know that.

Mr. LEWELYN: You are only making yourself a laughing stock.

Mr. GAIR: Absorb brains!

Mr. SPARKES: You have not absorbed any.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. SPARKES: If one takes a trip to Victoria he will discover that the land there is more highly developed than in any other part of Australia. The Minister must know that the more highly developed the land, the greater amount of employment it affords. One of the reasons why our vast areas are not being developed to a greater extent than they are is because of the perpetual leasehold tenure. If a selector has a lease with five or six years to run, is it likely that he will develop it to anything like the extent he would if he had it for all times? It is the small man who desires a freehold tenure, not the big man. The Minister himself knows that the lessee of the big area prefers the leasehold tenure for the reason that he must have the larger areas for his industry, and that it is the man working a small area who desires the freehold tenure.

Mr. GAIR: Who is preventing him?

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. member and his party. They took away his right to secure a freehold tenure. Surely the man himself is the best judge of what tenure he desires.

Mr. FOLEY: He would not be able to grow more corn on freehold land?

Mr. SPARKES: I guess that if the hon. member has a house he has built it on land having a freehold tenure, and I dare say that many other hon. members of his party doubtless prefer the same tenure.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Item (Department of Public Lands—Chief Office) agreed to.

DISTRICT OFFICES.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

“That £53,531 be granted for ‘District Offices.’”

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [7.40 p.m.]: This vote includes the provision for a land commissioner at Monto. The Minister has not told us all he knows about the history

Mr. Deacon.]

of the Upper Burnett and Callide settlement. The Burnett settlement is one of the extravagances of a previous Labour Government. The money that has been lost on that settlement is a legacy from the past Labour Governments. The officials of the Department of Public Lands were not consulted about all the details of the settlement. It was purely a Ministerial scheme, and the advice of officials of the department was ignored. An expensive railway was built to the settlement, and when the proposal was before this Chamber the members of the Opposition warned the Government that the areas of the settlement were too small, and they were not living areas. When I took charge of the department I found that the officials had warned the Minister of the day of the same thing, but in order to provide for so many settlers under the scheme—they must have a certain number of settlers to justify the expenditure—the number of settlers which the officials said the scheme would carry was doubled. Settlers were placed on areas that were too small to make a living on, and the Government of the day did not care a hang whether they lived or not. They said, in effect, "Let them do the best they can." When the scandal became too great the then Labour Government sent the Land Administration Board to examine the position. That board furnished a report which was approved by the Moore Government, and the Land Administration Board, which made the report, was instructed to carry out its own report. A land commissioner was appointed at Monto specially to deal with it.

Mr. MOORE: He was a picked man.

Mr. DEACON: He was considered to be the best commissioner for the job in the State, and I say for him that he was a pretty good man, with whom I have no fault to find. At any rate, the settlers were given additional areas, and those who had to be moved were compensated by being put on new areas.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why are they in such a mess to-day?

Mr. DEACON: The adjustments were made on the then existing prices. Nobody foresaw a slump. The recommendations of the commissioner were put into effect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You made a mess of it.

Mr. DEACON: We did not make a mess of it. We did the best with a bad job left to us by a Labour Government, a Government which the hon. gentleman supported. He must take more than our share of the responsibility. If the adjustment was not quite right, then he must take his share of the responsibility. We certainly left the settlement better than we found it, and if prices had kept up it would and should have been all right. Two things ruined that settlement in the first place. When the first land agent was appointed there, he selected settlers for their politics instead of for their knowledge of the land. It was common talk in the district that a man with the right brand of politics could get a selection before another man. Some of these selectors failed because they had no knowledge of land. Even when conditions were bad I found some selectors who were doing well and had no complaint, and I

dare say you would find settlers to-day who had no complaint. The good Labour brand of settlers failed, and then the others got a chance. The position is that every improvement was carried out on a most extravagant scale and the settler charged with the cost. At all events, the Land Administration Board was instructed to write down values to a reasonable figure. If it failed to do that, no complaint was made by the settlers at the time. Each man got his adjustment and all settlers were satisfied. They did not make any complaints then. If they make them now it is because other things have altered, but at the time the adjustment was made everything was quite satisfactory. The Minister wants to put all the blame on the Moore Government. Let him start at the beginning and put the blame on to the people who started the settlement—himself and all the members who were then supporting the Labour Government, for they were to blame. They took action against the advice of members on this side and of responsible officers that the areas were too small. They are responsible for all the money wasted there. It is difficult enough to establish a settlement in the first place; it is infinitely more difficult to put it in order afterwards.

The first survey is the main thing, because if mistakes are made then it is very difficult to right them afterwards. In many cases settlers cannot be given additional areas unless the settlers on adjoining blocks leave. The Minister should be well aware of the difficulty experienced in adjusting these matters after a big blunder has been made at the start. I am sorry to hear there is still trouble at that settlement. The blame lies on those who designed the settlement and it is up to them to straighten things out. The recommendations of the board were carried out and the settlers were of the opinion that they had received just treatment. Everyone that I met there considered they had received a fair deal except as to minor matters that were later adjusted. The recommendation of the board appointed by the previous Government was carried out and the conditions that then existed were the basis of its report. It did the best it could at the time. Things are vastly different now. The farmers' income has been cut in halves. That we cannot help. I blame the Minister, because he will not acknowledge that the condition of the settlement is due to the blunders of his Labour predecessors. The Minister endeavoured to lay the blame on the Moore Government. I have pointed out to him that the settlers concerned were satisfied with the job we did at the time.

The Minister at the present time does not appear to be on the best of terms with the Land Administration Board.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did not exactly say that. I said the Land Administration Board would do what we told them.

Mr. DEACON: The Minister said more than that; at any rate he has given the Chamber the impression which I suggested. The Land Administration Board is comprised of practical men, and the advice they give the Minister will be the best he can obtain and is worthy of consideration by him. They are experienced men who have nothing to gain by making reports which they do

[Mr. Deacon.]

not conscientiously believe fit the conditions.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I say somebody is responsible for the conditions that were found to be operating.

MR. DEACON: They were not responsible for the mess.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who was?

MR. DEACON: Your predecessors were—the first Labour Government, which went ahead with the scheme against the advice of experienced people. Try as the Minister may he will find it impossible to straighten out all the difficulties in regard to that settlement. The difficulties will never be satisfactorily adjusted until some of the settlers leave. The Minister has stated that none of them will be turned off. I hope not. The Minister also stated that no settler anywhere would be turned off.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is so.

MR. DEACON: Only the other day a settler in my electorate was turned off.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: By whom?

MR. DEACON: The Agricultural Bank. I am not blaming the bank, because it is acting on banking lines. If the Government is going to carry the settlers who do not come under the bank, why cannot they carry this man? The bank must carry on its business on banking lines. If the Government are going to give concessions to these men on the Burnett, they should extend the same concessions to other settlers who are just as deserving of sympathetic treatment. Why make fish of one and flesh of the other?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The law will not allow me.

MR. DEACON: If the present Acts will not allow the hon. gentleman, then why not make them wider? The case I am bringing under his notice is on all fours with the case of the Burnett settlement. This man has seven young children.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have nothing to do with the Agricultural Bank.

MR. DEACON: The Minister is a responsible member of the Government, and this is a land matter.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Each Minister runs his own department.

MR. DEACON: The hon. gentleman is a member of the Government. He, as Secretary for Public Lands, is in charge of the soldier settlements. The hon. gentleman and his colleagues are responsible for the soldier settlements.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. DEACON: The hon. gentleman cannot get out of everything. He had better be careful. If he goes too far he will get himself out of the Department of Public Lands. Why is the Minister picking out some favoured few? Why is he going to carry their liability in spite of all? No matter what they have done, they will not be turned off!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I say definitely that none of these settlers will be turned off.

MR. DEACON: Conditions similar to those suffered by the settlers in the Burnett

are suffered by a number of other settlers in Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not.

MR. DEACON: They are. I am endeavouring to place before the Minister a similar case. If the Government are going to do this thing for one set of settlers, why not do it for the others? There are hon. members on the Government side of the Committee who have similar cases which they will bring before the Minister. That is quite all right. If the Government are going to do this thing, then why should anybody pay the Government? (Government interjections.)

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. DEACON: I only wish now that I was a settler under the Government. I would incur a big liability, and I would fight my way out by paying nobody.

MR. WILLIAMS: The hon. member is misrepresenting what was said by the Minister.

MR. DEACON: The Minister said that as regards the Burnett settler not one of them would be turned off, although he could not pay his interest liability or other liabilities. I am not blaming the Minister for that. If he is kind hearted, well, good luck to the settler! If I were a settler I should go no further.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you want me to put them off?

MR. DEACON: No.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then you quite agree with me?

MR. DEACON: I quite agree with the Minister that it is a very kind-hearted action for him to take. There is nothing wrong with that. Where I disagree with him is that what he does for one he does not do for others as well.

MR. WILLIAMS: How do you know he does not?

MR. DEACON: Some of the Burnett settlers may not vote for his party, but he will have to treat them all alike. In the case of the man I mentioned I think he, too, would vote for the party of the Minister if he were treated in like manner to the Burnett settlers. If the Minister will treat him in the same way as he intends treating the settlers on the Burnett, I would advise this man to vote for the other side. Now, will the Minister do his duty as he has himself outlined it? That is all I am asking.

MR. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [7.59 p.m.]: It is amusing to hear the ex-Secretary for Lands and other hon. members opposite indulging in carping criticism. It is paltry, isolated charges which have been levelled at the Minister, the Land Administration Board, and the Government.

MR. MOORE: The hon. member was not here, how does he know?

MR. LARCOMBE: I have been a citizen of Queensland, and I remained a student of Parliamentary proceedings and land administration, although I was outside of Parliament for three years. I would remind the hon. gentleman that I was one of the members of the Cabinet who handled that scheme. I was the Secretary for Railways who was responsible for the construction of the railway that led to the establishment of the scheme. The

Mr. Larcombe.]

Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues have been talking about the talk that has been going on on this side of the Committee and complaining that no action has been taken. The history of Queensland politics shows that hon. members opposite have done nothing but talk. They talk about land settlement and agricultural development, but in the history of Queensland they have done nothing that shows that they can materialise that talk.

At 8 p.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. W. T. King in the chair.

Mr. MOORE: You said that we did nothing.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The Moore Government did nothing in the interests of progressive land settlement, but they did far too much in the way of reducing wages and salaries, in deflation, and lending money to the other States when it should have been retained in Queensland for land settlement. The policy of hon. members opposite in regard to agriculture and land settlement was severely criticised by the "Morning Bulletin," the "Courier," the "Queensland Producer," and by most anti-Labour papers in this State. I hope that their paltry isolated criticisms will not deflect attention from the splendid work carried out by the Department of Public Lands and the Land Administration Board in connection with the Upper Burnett and Callide scheme. Hon. members opposite have criticised what the Labour Government have done, but not one word have they said about the accomplishment of things of a constructive nature. The Labour Government have converted a wilderness into a prosperous settlement with hundreds of settlers, fine townships, splendid roads, and an air of prosperity, progress, and development.

Mr. MOORE: Where is this heaven?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am speaking of actualities.

Mr. MOORE: Where are they?

Mr. LARCOMBE: Recently I had the pleasure of going through the Upper Burnett district with the Minister for Transport, and I was able to see the progress and development that had taken place since the railway was constructed and the first settlement commenced. Settlers from all over Australia were attracted to this part of Queensland as a result of the splendid work of the Labour Government. Capital was invested, the land was cultivated, roads were constructed, and townships laid out. There is all this progress and development, despite the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition. Now, after hundreds of settlers have been established and wonderful progress has been made, because there are a few cases of complaint hon. members opposite criticise the Minister, the department, and the Government, and try to deflect attention from the wonderful work that has been accomplished. The sun has its spots; even Homer sometimes nods, and whilst human nature is what it is, there will always be some cases of complaints. But let us look at the matter in its true perspective, and let us take a relative view—where one settler is complaining, hundreds are satisfied with their lot. Settlers were attracted from all parts of Australia, and they were able to do wonderful

[*Mr. Larcombe.*

things under the guiding hand of the department and the Government. Therefore, I submit that the objection taken by hon. members opposite to the policy and the administration of the department and the Land Administration Board is paltry in the extreme; it is not fair, and it should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. Right through the parliamentary history of Queensland hon. members opposite have been merely talkers; yet they have the audacity to stand up and complain that the Labour Governments have done nothing but talk. Labour can make the claim, "Something attempted, something done." Here is a scheme that has materialised.

Mr. MOORE: You have contracted a big debt.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Debt! Debt! What about assets? Of course, there is a debt; but there are also assets that will more than cover the liability. Instead of being an unfortunate liability, it is a splendid profitable investment. Hon. members opposite talk about debt! In a young country like Queensland it is impossible to develop the State without spending money. Ruskin pointed out many years ago that true economy does not necessarily consist of saving money. It depends upon how money is expended and upon the return. The Labour Government have carried out a wonderful work in the interests of the State. We have induced hundreds of settlers to convert what was formerly a wilderness into an attractive place. Almost a miraculous change came over the district as a result of the policy of Labour and Government expenditure. We are getting back a rich return for the money that has been expended in that district.

Mr. MOORE: You have written off £200,000 already that you cannot get back.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The Moore Government wrote £28,000,000 off the railway debt of this State, and now the Leader of the Opposition talks about a writing off of £200,000! Does he imagine that by financial hocus pocus the people of Queensland will believe that the obligation to pay interest on that £28,000,000 has now disappeared? The interest on that money must still be paid by the taxpayers of this State. So far as writing off is concerned, we have a good deal yet to learn from hon. members opposite. They have written off millions of pounds from various schemes. We know, also, that the history of anti-Labour, not only in this State, but also in other parts of Australia, is a history of failure in regard to land settlement, and largely because in olden days the Tory Party sold the best parts of Queensland and Australia for a mere song and enslaved the working farmer to the speculator and the exploiter. In the Burnett scheme the Labour Government have been responsible for laying down a sound land policy—one that will enable the growers and the producers to put their money into improvements instead of its being locked up in the purchase of land under a freehold tenure.

I have had the opportunity of meeting many of these settlers personally and they have told me that they are very pleased with their land tenure, and the land policy generally and the administration of the Government. I congratulate the Minister on the capable and sympathetic manner in which he has treated the settlers in the Upper

Burnett district, and I am certain as a result of his promise here to-night that the existing grievances, which are only of an isolated nature, will be quickly remedied.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [8.7 p.m.]: The Minister made quite a big mouthful about no settlers being put off the land by him or his department, and he said that no settler would be put off the land by him or his department. I will quote him a case of a farm which has been gazetted as forfeited under his hand. The selection is occupied by Alf. Chenery.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is an agricultural bank case.

Mr. KENNY: This notice in the "Government Gazette," published by the Department of Public Lands, is in respect of portion 3805, Atherton, occupied by Alf. Chenery. This man has been gazetted off his land because he is behind in his dues.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What dues?

Mr. KENNY: Dues to the Crown.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What for?

Mr. KENNY: For rent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh, no!

Mr. KENNY: I put this case definitely before the Minister. I have interviewed the Land Administration Board on behalf of this man. The board is handling the matter. They told me that while the gazettal notice would go through, if this man could make some proposal to pay up his dues to the Crown before the 10th December, when the block is to be opened for selection again, they would see what they could do to reinstate him on his block. The fact remains that this man has been gazetted off his block—although he is still living on it—and it is open for selection on the 10th December. I challenge the Minister to stand up to his own remarks and recall this gazettal notice, and give this man an opportunity to carry on. This is a definite case. There is more than one case that I can quote. I went through my correspondence hurriedly in the last few minutes to get this case.

During this debate I have risen twice to ask the Minister what action he is taking in respect to the Atherton settlement. I quoted him a statement appearing in the press which states that he definitely promised to introduce legislation into this Chamber to deal with the matter. I made the statement that the matter can be handled without any legislative action. What does the Minister intend to do? Is this statement appearing in the press correct? The Minister has seen fit to give me a little abuse, but he has not replied to my question. I ask him now: is he going to take action, and what action is he going to take? If he is not going to take action, was the statement made to the chairman of the Returned Soldiers' Association made only to pull his leg?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are on the vote for "District Offices."

Mr. KENNY: The Minister is not going to get away with that. The Atherton District Office controls the Atherton settlement, and any administration of that settlement goes through the Atherton district office.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The district officer does what he is told.

Mr. KENNY: I want to know what instructions the district officer is going to get and what is going to happen in that regard. The same applies to my query in regard to the Mount Molloy and Cooktown lands. What action is being taken and what instruction is being issued to the District Offices there in these matters? The Minister has had two and a-half years after his Leader's policy speech to give effect to the promises then made. He has not replied to the queries which I have put to him.

I have asked him a definite question and I want definite information. He has tried to shuffle. I want him to reply that he is going to keep his word and give this man the right to stop on his own selection, and thus afford him the same consideration as he is giving to the Burnett settlers. After the Minister has replied I will have some further time to deal with the subject if it still requires to be debated. The Minister has now an opportunity of getting up and saying, "You have put a case before me, and I will see that this man carries on on his own block."

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [8.12 p.m.]: I desire to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on getting a definite statement from the Minister in regard to this settlement. The settlers will be pleased to know that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have written probably 100 letters months and months ago.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Minister writes and writes, but gives no relief to the settlers, who are getting poorer and poorer. At any rate the settlers will thank the Leader of the Opposition for having obtained a definite statement from the Minister that he intends to do something.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We paid back to the railwaymen their superannuation contributions.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Yes, but the Government should not have had to pay back those contributions, for the Government should have continued the superannuation scheme and given the railwaymen that to which they were entitled. Instead of that they robbed the poor unfortunate railwayman who retires of £110 a year, and now compel him to apply for the old-age pension.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that matter on Estimates concerning the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I realise that, Mr. Gledson, but the Government of which the hon. gentleman is a member robbed the poor old railwayman of something to which he is justly entitled.

So far as this particular settlement is concerned, it is no use blaming the present Government or the Moore Government; the Government to blame is the previous Labour Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Parliament passed the Bill.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Because the hon. gentleman introduces some silly measure into Parliament, and with the aid of a brutal majority gets it passed through this Chamber, he says that Parliament passed it!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You never voted against it.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Leader of the Opposition proved that the Minister in charge of these Estimates made absolutely false statements both in regard to the Leader of the Opposition and myself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He said that he would roll the pear over with a steamroller.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The hon. gentleman made an absolutely false statement in regard to that and it is no use his coming forward with a statement unless he can prove it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I did prove it.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: At that time rolling the pear was the most economical way of dealing with the matter, but that does not prove that we opposed the particular Bill. We talked in favour of it. I said then that if water could be supplied in sufficient quantities it would kill the pear.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I realise that we are now dealing with a different matter, but the point I want to make is that we expect the Minister to be truthful.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are the man who told the railwaymen—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If the railwaymen had an opportunity to-day of voting on the question of superannuation, they would vote in favour of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What did you tell the railwaymen—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister not to interject on irrelevant matters. We are dealing with the Department of Public Lands, but may have an opportunity of dealing later with the railways.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I have no desire to be drawn off the track, but on another point I think the Minister should explain his statement regarding new land settlement. I think I can challenge the hon. gentleman with regard to new land settlement—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I cannot accept your challenge. You are not playing the game.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He rings in.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If I ever lose I always pay.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: With the railwaymen you never paid.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I do not often lose, but I always pay. I want to challenge the Minister in regard to what he terms new land settlement. All land suitable for occupation has been put into use. In many cases land was held under occupation licenses or leases and was eventually resumed by the Government and opened up for closer settlement. There might be a block of land comprising 25,000 acres held under an occupation license or lease, and when the time expired the holder of that license or lease would be allowed to take up 5,000 acres and the other 20,000 acres would be taken up by four new settlers. Does the Minister term that new land settlement, or does he not? If the Minister terms that new land

[Mr. Morgan.]

settlement then every bit of land that has been settled during the past ten or twelve years comes within that category.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I accept the Land Administration Board's definition.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: This is the report drawn up by the Land Administration Board. The heading is "New Land Settlement," and it gives the figures relating to the amount of land settled under different tenures. I quoted these figures because they were prepared by the Land Administration Board and I take them to be correct. The Minister comes along with another set of figures.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Also prepared by the Land Administration Board.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: These are the Land Administration Board figures under the heading "New Land Settlement." What more does the Minister want?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Read the qualifying paragraph.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN:

"Most of the grazing and mixed farming settlement was new land settlement brought about by the process of subdivision and development."

That is what I said all along; most of the new land settlement was made up of land which was at one time held under different tenures. All the land settled within recent years comprises land that was at one time held under different tenures, and when the leases expired it was thrown open for closer settlement, and that land is termed by the board "New Land Settlement." It does not comprise land that was unoccupied previously. There is only a small amount of land in Queensland—as the Minister stated—land not worth "tuppence"—that at present is not being used in some form or other. Perhaps selection of mountainous land which was not previously settled would come under the term "New Land Settlement." If that land which is being opened up for settlement had never been previously leased the Minister would be justified in including it under the heading of "New Land Settlement." I claim that every bit of this land comes within the category of "New Land Settlement" in accordance with the report of the Land Administration Board.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What conclusion do you come to?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The conclusion that I come to is that the Minister desired to mislead this Chamber when he brought figures which were not in accordance with this report. During the Moore Government's term certain leases expired, and in other cases the Government made terms with those people whose leases had not expired with a view to utilising that land for closer settlement in the way of grazing farms or homesteads. Large pastoral holdings were resumed. We made very good terms with the original lessees of these properties. We agreed as to the amount of land the lessees would take and the amount to be resumed by the Government. These lands were not actually opened for settlement until after the Moore Government went out of power. The Secretary for Public Lands claims credit for all the land opened during that period. He gives

no credit to the Government that made it possible for those lands to be resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the vote under discussion.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The vote pertains to land of any description. This vote is no different from the Chief Office vote, under which we could talk on land settlement generally. This is the District Offices vote, and deals with all matters of land settlement.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Following precedent the general policy of the Department of Public Lands was discussed on the Chief Office vote. The District Offices vote is confined to land commissioners and land agents. Those are the matters that must be dealt with under this vote, unless the hon. member can show he is connecting up his remarks with land settlement.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I have been dealing with land settlement all along. I have been pointing out how the present Government have claimed the credit that was due to the Moore Government. Credit should be given where credit is due. I do not mind the Minister having all the credit he is entitled to, but I do object to his taking credit for the land resumed by the Moore Government, but which did not happen to become settled until he occupied the Ministerial office.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [8.25 p.m.]: There is one point raised by the hon. member for Murilla to which I wish to reply immediately. I desire to give the land revenue for the three years of the term of the Moore Government and the two years of the present Administration. The figures are as follows:—

	£
1929-30	1,099,136
1930-31	1,098,633
1931-32	1,049,871

The present Government then came into power and the revenues are as follows:—

	£
1932-33	1,048,803
1933-34	1,141,020

It should be noted that when we came into power we granted not only the same concessions to settlers but also made further extensions. Surely these figures prove that there has been additional land settlement.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [8.29 p.m.]: I desire to reply in regard to the statement made by the Secretary for Public Lands. The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that in my own electorate several million acres of land were held under occupation license at a rental of 10s. a square mile. That land was suitable for closer settlement and the Moore Government decided to resume it and open it for selection. That land has been opened for selection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We had to carry on with your concessions.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Government include in the revenue the survey fees from that land, some of which have been

paid twice and three times over. When dealing with the thousands of blocks of land opened in my electorate, the Government received the whole of the survey fees on that land, which, in some cases, amounted to £40 a block. Whereas this land was returning 10s. or 15s. a square mile, under the new settlement conditions the Government received at the rate of anything up to £4 a square mile. That accounts for the extra revenue received. The Moore Government were responsible for the resumption and opening up of that land.

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [8.30 p.m.]: It is quite evident from the attitude adopted by hon. members opposite that they are determined to give no credit whatever to the Labour Administration for anything that they may have done. They are prepared to split hairs in connection with practically every fact submitted by the Minister during this debate. They are not even prepared to admit the true position in connection with the Upper Burnett and Callide settlement scheme. Even the ex-Secretary for Public Lands, who held office in the Moore Government, has endeavoured to "get from under" in connection with the report of the Land Administration Board on this area by stating that during the time that he was in Ministerial control he did everything he possibly could to assist the settlers in this area. It has been suggested as a reason why nothing could be done that the areas were designed in blocks that were too small, and consequently the error could not be rectified. As the representative of this district for the past two and a-half years, I have come in contact with many of the settlers in the district, and whilst I admit that from conversations with the settlers I am convinced that some of the blocks, particularly in the forest country, were too small, still it is the firm opinion of the settlers, based on practical experience, that given good seasons with fair prices the land is capable of providing them with a very fine return. During the embryonic stage of the settlement the settlers did exceptionally well. They enjoyed good seasons, and a stabilised price was fixed for cotton, which was their main product. Following the wise policy adopted by the Federal Labour Government in prohibiting the unfair intrusion of foreign yarns into Australia a stabilised price of 5d. a lb. was guaranteed to the growers. There was then a ready market in Australia for all the cotton produced in the Commonwealth, including the crop from this State. These men are satisfied that given good seasons and similar stabilised conditions they can earn a very fine return, but, unfortunately, someone commenced to tinker with the price with very serious results to the industry. This interference, together with three consecutive bad seasons, had the result of bringing about a crisis in the industry. The men had been settled on the land during a couple of good years, they had reinvested their returns from the sale of cotton during that period in further improvements, but immediately they were struck with three consecutive bad years. In the face of all these adverse circumstances it appeared to the settlers that the capital value of their undertakings was far too high, in view of the risk that had to be undertaken, and it became necessary to reduce the capital value of their properties. It also became apparent that the cost of providing water facilities

Mr. Foley.]

on the settlement was far too high. Representations were made in the proper quarter, and a request was made for a thorough investigation into the settlement with a view of determining definitely whether their views on the question were correct. The Labour Government requested the Land Administration Board to make a thorough investigation into the whole of the points raised by the settlers, but, unfortunately, the Labour Government were defeated at the polls, and the Moore Government were returned to power. The report by the Land Administration Board, which then consisted of Messrs. Payne, Melville, and Power, was handed to the new Minister, now the hon. member for Cunningham, who was in charge of the department. If the contentions of hon. members opposite now are correct, that the settlement was wrongly designed in the first place, they were given an opportunity to rectify the errors in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report submitted to them. What was done? The present Minister has pointed out that a paltry £3,000 was written-off the capital value of the undertaking and for other purposes, which would amount to a few shillings per settler, or very little more. That is all the relief they received from the Moore Administration. Had the matter been properly handled in accordance with the recommendations of the board when the Moore Government were in power we should not now be faced with the job of cleaning up the mess, as it is described by the Minister.

Mr. SPARKES: They should never have been settled there in the first place.

Mr. FOLEY: That is a matter of opinion. One has only to visit Monto, Biloela, Thangool, and the Dawson Valley to refute the suggestion contained in the interjection. The fact remains that originally all this land was held by landholders of the squatter type, who ran a few head of stock upon it. What do we find there to-day?

Mr. SPARKES: You will find a lot of starving settlers.

Mr. FOLEY: We find that a railway system has opened up the whole district, and that where previously there were a paltry 350 people, there are now two or three prosperous towns in the Biloela district alone. Let the hon. member go to Monto, Thangool, and Biloela and tell the people that the land is not suited for the purpose for which they are using it. Further, if the hon. member cares to look up the "Central Telegraph," Biloela, he will discover that 2,000 tons of cotton were railed from Biloela to the Brisbane ginnery. If he inquires of Thangool, Callide, Jambin, and other little settlements along the Callide Valley railway he will find that additional large consignments of cotton were railed to Brisbane. Then let him go over the range to Monto, in the Upper Burnett district, and he will find a thriving population at work in the cotton and dairying industries, and general prosperity prevailing when comparatively good seasons are experienced. A good season cannot be guaranteed every year, but the settlers consider that with a reasonable rainfall, and an average number of good seasons over a period of years, they will eventually win from that land a good living. Unfortunately, the settlement had a severe knock back with three successive bad seasons, but

{Mr. Foley.

a succession of bad seasons like that may never happen again.

The settlers have not had a chance to develop mixed farming as they originally intended. As time proceeds they will not depend on the growing of cotton alone. It takes time to clear and improve the land and thus create assets to enable advances to be obtained to engage in mixed farming. When the settlement reaches that stage of development it will be just the opposite of what the hon. member for Dalby suggests. He will then find that the population in the district will thrive, and that thousands will make a very good living, whereas originally this land carried only a few people. The Government intend to clean up the mess in this settlement. The Leader of the Opposition likes his little joke occasionally. He has endeavoured to make some of us believe that his attack to-night has been responsible for forcing the hands of the Minister. As the representative of the district, in conjunction with my colleague from over the range, the hon. member for Port Curtis, I have been attending to this subject for some time. We have known that this legislation was being prepared and that it will be presented to Parliament before the session closes. It could not have been presented to Parliament earlier, as the committee of inquiry had to make its investigations and report. After that report was presented the Land Administration Board sought a further report on other phases of the question. It was then decided to take certain action. When that course was announced the settlers, through their local producers' associations in the district, protested against having to appeal to the Land Court in order to get their difficulties removed. It was decided to drop that method of adjusting difficulties and to use a more direct method, that is, to handle the matter so that the Government will have full responsibility, and will be able to give some material relief to those settlers who are in need of it. Those are the facts. The Leader of the Opposition may say that we are fond of promising, but here is a striking instance where action has been taken as requested by the settlers. I hope that when the appropriate legislation is introduced the Opposition will stand four-square behind the Minister in conferring the powers by which relief can be given.

Mr. NIMMO (*Orley*) [8.45 p.m.]: I recognise that this is a very important department, and that a very grave responsibility rests upon the Minister, especially as only 4 per cent. of the lands of Queensland have been alienated.

I consider that the land commissioners should be given greater control in regard to stock routes, as was done under the late Government. The stock routes are the most neglected pieces of land in the State, and it should be the duty of the land commissioners to attend to that work. Galvanised burr is spreading at an alarming rate in Queensland. Prickly-pear has been eradicated, but we have this department sitting down and allowing that burr to grow in the western districts of Queensland without any attempt being made to stem its advance.

Mr. WILLIAMS: When were you last on the stock routes?

Mr. NIMMO: Last March. I have been on stock routes quite a number of times, and

I have been astonished to find that the Minister in charge of this department is making no effort to deal with the matter. The district improvement boards, of which the land commissioners were chairmen, were abolished by the present Government, and that action has intensified the trouble throughout Queensland. An immediate problem faces us of eradicating the pest to which I have referred. In many cases stock routes are eaten out by straying stock, and in their neglected condition become fertile breeding grounds for noxious weeds. The Minister is lacking in the discharge of his duty in not taking action to remedy the position. We know the wonderful work that was done by the district improvement boards under the chairmanship of the various land commissioners; yet these boards were abolished by the present Government.

No encouragement is given by land commissioners for people to keep their country clean, and we have the spectacle of a man with clean country paying 50 per cent. more rent than his neighbours who have neglected properties. No reward is given in Queensland to those people who keep their country clean and do not overstock.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a condition of selection.

Mr. NIMMO: But that condition of selection is not enforced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a reflection on the Land Administration Board.

Mr. NIMMO: I particularly saw one property in the Charleville area where the rent was 4½d. an acre; yet exactly similar land adjoining on both sides had a rental of only 3d. an acre. The carrying capacity of the one was greater than the other two, because it had been kept clean.

The Minister stated that the Moore Government did nothing for the settlers on Cecil Plains and Jimbour; but I would remind the hon. gentleman that the Moore Government gave the land commissioners power to report on these matters, as a result of which the settlers on Cecil Plains and Jimbour were given relief. If the Minister is honest, he will admit that he acted on the report of the Land Administration Board sent out by the Moore Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There have been no complaints about what we have done.

Mr. NIMMO: Because the hon. gentleman adopted the recommendation of the board commissioned by the Moore Government to make an inquiry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We did the job properly.

Mr. NIMMO: The Minister knows very well he acted on the report of the board. We will give the Minister credit for what he has done, but let him give credit to the Moore Government for its action in that regard.

I consider that land commissioners should have more power in regard to advancing money for rural development.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in speaking on rural development.

Mr. NIMMO: Very well, Mr. Chairman, I will not proceed further along those

lines. Two of the greatest tragedies that have ever taken place in Queensland occurred in regard to the Upper Burnett and Callide Valley settlement and the Theodore irrigation settlement. There is no doubt the settlers in those areas were "sold a pup." They were induced to take up lands by the glowing promises held out to them. There was to be an irrigation scheme at Theodore that was to be second to none in Australia. The settlers were to be provided with water, and receive every encouragement; they were given to understand that they would be coming to almost a paradise. People from the southern State; spent large sums of money on blocks of land and the promises made to them were never carried out. The size of their areas of land have been increased from time to time. The present Minister has given additional concessions to those given by the past Government; yet it is doubtful whether those settlers will be able to make good. The Labour Government who were responsible for those people settling on that land deserve the condemnation of this Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Parliament passed the Bill.

Mr. NIMMO: The Bill was passed with a brutal majority which the Government had. The Opposition had no say in the matter. The Government never listened to any arguments put forward by hon. members on this side of the Chamber. The Minister was advised at the time that the irrigation scheme was impracticable. That scheme has cost Queensland £1,900,000, and if the interest were capitalised the loss shown would be greater.

The Minister claimed that a greater amount had been received last year by way of revenue by his department than ever before. He is hardly stating the facts because the big increases in revenue to which he referred were due to the payment of arrears by settlers owing to the increased prices they received for their wool; yet the Minister says that increased revenue was due to increased selection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I quoted figures covering six years.

Mr. NIMMO: I know the hon. gentleman did, but last year was the year he took the credit for, and increased revenue in that year was due to increase in wool prices.

I consider that the method of land selection in Queensland is very unsatisfactory and tends to cause gambling in land.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You tried to draw a block of land.

Mr. NIMMO: I tried to draw a block of land for a young man whom I wanted to give a start on the land. Under the present system in operation any individual who already holds a big area of land is eligible to participate in the ballot. The land should be made available to landless men, but in the majority of cases the people who draw the blocks are already landholders.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have not altered the system that was in operation when your Government were in power.

Mr. NIMMO: I do not know what has been done, but I say the system in operation is not a proper one. At the present time one ballot a month takes place. During the past twelve months, in respect of which the

Mr. Nimmo.]

Minister takes great credit for making available large areas for selection, we find that only twenty-three blocks of grazing land have been made available, and there were over 5,000 applicants for that land. Is that settling people on the land? Only twenty-three settlers were put on sheep land in Queensland during the past financial year, and of those twenty-three the majority were already big holders of sheep land. I do not consider the Minister can take any credit for land settlement in that case.

I should like to refer to the matter of agents throughout Queensland being allowed to collect large fees from people desirous of participating in land ballots. I know that the Labour Government desire to create a big advertisement and make out that there are great numbers of people applying for land. As a matter of fact, these agents are proceeding round the country and getting people to become applicants with the object of collecting the fee of £1 ls. that has to be lodged with the application. I would suggest that applicants be allowed to lodge their applications at a head office or any district office, together with the necessary deposit. Such application would be received by the district office and forwarded to the centre concerned, the officer receiving the application to notify the commissioner of the district where the land is opened. If the applicant's forms are in order, he should be included in the ballot for portions applied for. Applications should be in the hands of the land agent at the opening time, a fee of 6d. or 1s. to be paid by applicants to defray postage or, where necessary on account of limited time, for telegram. In this latter condition the department would probably show a small profit or revenue, because sometimes it would be possible to include a number of applications in one communication, such as happens in cases of exchange on cheques. On account of odds there are against applicants this suggestion would save them over a period an amount that could be better utilised in developing and stocking than in paying agents' fees. Some applicants have balloted for years. There are many, comparatively poor people, with great experience of the land, who have been balloting for years, and who have spent from £50 to £100 in fees to commission agents in an endeavour to get a piece of land. This has happened since the Labour Government have been in power. These men require that money in order to help in the development of the land, if they get it, yet the Minister makes no effort to allow such people to lodge their application at the nearest lands office to where they reside. He obtains a profit from their efforts to secure land. I hope that the Secretary for Public Lands will really do something towards the developing of land in Queensland. He has the power to do great work for this State.

I contend that the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply is not—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! That sub-department is the subject of another vote.

Mr. NIMMO: I contend that the land commissioner should be given power to make land available for men who are landless. Many of our unemployed men could be absorbed in this direction if the Minister were sympathetic in his endeavours to

[Mr. Nimmo.

help these unfortunate people who are anxious to settle on the land and thus provide for their families some means of sustenance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [8.58 p.m.]: I listened very carefully to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat regarding the question of land ballots. It is rather interesting to note his endeavours to overhaul the condition regarding the land ballot. I have here a report in connection with the Malvern Hills land, in the Blackall district.

At 8.59 p.m.,

Mr. W. T. KING resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The report reads:—

“On the 6th ultimo, portion 3, parish of Granby, in area 17,745 acres, was opened for grazing farm selection at an annual rent of 23d. per acre, or a total annual rent of £203 6s. 7d.

“On the same date, portion 1, parish of Maindample, in area 22,220 acres, was opened for grazing homestead selection at an annual rent of 4d. per acre, or a total annual rent of £370 6s. 8d.

“It will be seen that the combined area of the portions is 39,965 acres, and the combined annual rent £573 13s. 3d.

“Section 52 of the Land Acts provides that no person shall apply for or hold a grazing selection or selections exceeding a total area of 30,000 acres, the rent of which, as fixed by the Minister for the first period of the lease or leases, exceeds in the aggregate £400 per annum.

“No person was legally eligible, therefore, to apply for both portions 1 and 3 abovementioned.

“The following applications, apart from applications by other persons, were lodged for the portions:—

Number of Application.	Name of Applicant.
For portion 1, Parish of Maindample.	
J920 ..	Richard Davies Graham and Thomas Nimmo, as tenants in common, equal interests.
J921 ..	Richard Davies Graham and Thyra Margaret Nimmo (spinster), as tenants in common, equal interests.
J922 ..	Thomas Nimmo and Thyra Margaret Nimmo (spinster), as tenants in common, equal interests.
For Portion 3, Parish of Granby.	
J1791 ..	Richard Davies Graham and Thomas Nimmo, as tenants in common, equal interests.
J1792 ..	Richard Davies Graham and Thyra Margaret Nimmo (spinster), as tenants in common, equal interests.
J1798 ..	Thomas Nimmo and Thyra Margaret Nimmo (spinster) as tenants in common, equal interests.
J1868 ..	Margaret Nimmo, wife of Thomas Nimmo.

“It will be seen from the list just given that Mr. Nimmo had a half-interest in each of two applications for portion 1, and a half-interest in each of two applications for portion 3. His interest in the applications was, there-

fore, the same as if he had lodged an application in his own right for portion 1, and, in addition, an application in his own right for portion 3.

"The respective interests of Miss Nimmo and Mr. Graham were similar to those of Mr. Nimmo.

"The land commissioner's decisions with respect to the applications were as follows:—

"Applications Nos. J920, J921, and J922 were admitted to the ballot, but as the applicants were not successful in drawing the block, their applications had to be refused, and were refused accordingly.

"Applications Nos. J1791, J1792, and J1793 were not admitted to the ballot on the ground that the applicants, in each case, had also applied for portion 1. parish of Mairdample. Applications Nos. J1791, J1792, and J1793 were accordingly refused.

"Application No. J1863 was admitted to the ballot, but the applicant was not successful and the application was thereupon refused.

"In view of the restriction imposed by section 52 above referred to, preventing any one person not only from holding but also from applying for grazing selections exceeding a total area of 30,000 acres and having a total annual rent of more than £400, the commissioner would have acted legally if he had refused the whole six applications in which Mr. Nimmo, Miss Nimmo, and Mr. Graham were interested and not allowed any of such applications to go to the ballot."

Mr. MOORE: There is nothing in that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is only this: an hon. member complains about the method of balloting and the self-same individual attempts to go to ballot by trying to do something which was not legal.

Mr. MOORE: It was legal enough.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was not legal.

Mr. R. M. KING: Who said it was not legal?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The land commissioner points out the section of the Act that prevents it.

Mr. R. M. KING: Who said it was not legal?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We say it was not legal.

Mr. R. M. KING: But who are you?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are the people who decide. If the learned gentleman of the law was engaged by the gentleman concerned then he could show where he stands. It amuses me to know that an hon. member will get up in this Chamber and complain about the present method of balloting and at the same time do a wrong thing himself. There we have hon. members doing something about which they complain to the Government the law allows. The position is that if there is any shortage of land in Queensland the responsibility is on the Moore Government, because they granted an extension of leases over 13,000,000 acres and thereby deprived the boys of Queensland of their

undoubted birthright. I do not care what is said about the conditions that existed at that time; it cannot justify what was done. On the hustings every member of this party protested, as we still protest, against the action of the Moore Government in granting an extension of leases over 13,000,000 acres. It was a wrong thing for any Government to do. Members of the hon. gentleman's own party complain about the present method of land ballots. The worst feature about it—there is no doubt that anybody can infer what was in it—the graziers got the grant just on the eve of an election when the late Government were really going out of power.

Mr. MOORE: It was not; it was in 1931.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Opposition are very prone to throw insinuations across this Chamber about various matters, but here the grazing people of Queensland had 13,000,000 acres of the best land of Queensland given to them on a shovel on the eve of an election. The inference is there.

Mr. MOORE: I would expect that sort of thing from a mind like yours.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What wonderful people, how honourable and everything else! Just on the eve of an election the people who are interested probably in putting them there are given 13,000,000 acres of the best land in Queensland. They had no right whatever to do that.

Mr. MOORE: Of course we had.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They should not have done it. Now we have a hon. member of the same party, a man who did something that was certainly illegal, and knew that it was illegal, because it was ruled out, getting up and blaming the Government because there is not enough land for settlement. That is why there is not enough land—because the Moore Government gave the big squatters of Queensland, just on the eve of an election, that immense quantity of land which would have been sufficient to settle the young people in the West about whom the hon. member professes to be concerned.

With regard to the lodging of applications for land ballots, as everybody knows, the Public Curator handles those applications for a fee of 10s. 6d. There is no need for anyone to pay any more. The hon. member was concerned in connection with something which was wrong, because he had no right to make this application, as the law did not permit it. As a member of Parliament he deliberately did something which was wrong, and then, in addition to doing something wrong, charged this Government with not having enough land available for settlement and with not doing their job properly.

It is just as well that the people should know that on the eve of an election the Moore Government gave an extension of leases to their pastoral friends.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [9.7 p.m.]: I have heard many reports concerning the Secretary for Public Lands. I have heard people say that he is the lowest of the low—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the subject, otherwise I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. Nimmo.]

Mr. WATERS: I rise to a point of order, Mr. King. The remarks of the hon. member for Oxley in relation to the Secretary for Public Lands are offensive to me personally, and I ask that he be made to withdraw them and apologise.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Oxley to withdraw the remarks he made.

Mr. NIMMO: I withdraw. The Minister deliberately brought that report into this Committee and had it in his possession in this Chamber before I even spoke. The action of the Minister shows that he intended to bring that matter forward. We will see if there is anything in the whole matter. These two blocks of land were available for settlement in the Blackall district. I called at the department and inquired how they could be applied for. I was told that I could apply for a half interest in each block. Only two blocks were opened. It is a moot point whether I have not a cause of action against the department. I do not know whether I was of the wrong political colour or not, but the application in which I had a half interest was thrown out. That left me only applying for one block. I applied for this block for a young man who was born in this State and is endeavouring to get settled on the land. I was out to help him. So far as I am concerned I did not participate in anything that was not straight and aboveboard. I could not have drawn from this ballot more than one block, but I am entitled as a citizen of this State to hold one block, although I did not want it for my own personal profit at all. The Minister quoted a report and held it up as if he had made some wonderful discovery. Did the Committee ever hear of a man doing a more scurrilous trick than that? The mentality of a man who would do a thing like that is beyond my comprehension. I would not do it to a blackfellow, let alone another hon. member. I have my own opinion of the hon. gentleman, and, in future, will know just in what category to place him.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [9.10 p.m.]: The suggestion of the Minister that I take great exception to is that we had no right to bring in a Land Act Amendment Act to give the woolgrowers the benefit of the wool relief scheme. The people elected us to office and we were entitled to introduce whatever legislation we thought fit in the best interests of the people as a whole. It is the greatest impertinence of any individual, whether he be a Minister or not, to say that we had no right to introduce that legislation. Then the Minister made the innuendo that we were paid by the united graziers to bring in this legislation. The hon. member knows perfectly well that the Land Advisory Board was appointed by a previous Government. That Government charged the board with authority to go into the whole question of the wool industry because it was getting into a disastrous position. That board brought in its report.

Mr. WATERS interjected.

Mr. MOORE: Will you hold your tongue? You never make a remark worth listening to, and you are only stupid.

Mr. WATERS: You were paid by the graziers to extend their leases.

!Mr. Nimmo.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Kelvin Grove to cease interjecting.

Mr. MOORE: The Land Settlement Advisory Board was appointed to travel the western areas and take evidence. It took evidence from hundreds of people and submitted a report. One of the recommendations contained in that report was that leases in certain areas should be extended to assist the wool industry. The Government of the day were not game to put that recommendation into operation.

Mr. FOLEY: They did not recommend what you actually did.

Mr. MOORE: Not at that time, but later. If it pleases the Minister to make suggestions and innuendoes that, in the case of a national industry, the wool industry, where is was absolutely essential that something should be done to relieve the position, we were paid by the unfortunate people whom we were trying to put in a better position, then the Minister is welcome to what satisfaction he gets out of it. I do not say the hon. member for Normanby would say that, but the Minister said it and suggested that it was introduced on the eve of an election. As a matter of fact, it was done in 1931, and the election in June was 1932. If any satisfaction can be got by the Minister from making assertions of that kind we have got to a pretty low ebb in this Parliament. If a Government elected by the people and given a majority to do what it thinks is in the best interests of this State, after conference with the Land Administration Board, makes certain recommendations and action is taken to give effect thereto, and the suggestion is now made that improper motives have actuated the Government, and insinuations are made—

The HOME SECRETARY interjected.

Mr. MOORE: Never mind the hon. gentleman's suggestions. I know exactly the mentality of the hon. gentleman, which is on a par with that of the Secretary for Public Lands. Unfortunately, in this Chamber one has to get down to that state of mentality where any suggestion can be made and hurled across the Chamber. We have to get to the stage where no member is supposed to have any honour or decency. (Government dissent.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the vote.

Mr. MOORE: This matter is under discussion, and I take strong exception to the insinuation made by the Secretary for Public Lands. That the action we took was justified is known to the hon. gentleman, so much so that he has boasted in his own report that he has continued the concessions, so that he considered they were justifiable. If the hon. gentleman did not, was there not an opportunity to go into the whole question to see if they were not justified? If these insinuations have anything in them, why not have an inquiry? The hon. gentleman knows the actions we took were justified and that the previous Government did the right thing; but in an endeavour to get political kudos out of it he makes an unpleasant and unwarranted suggestion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No! We voted against your Bill.

Mr. MOORE: I know that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And you people talk about the Burnett!

Mr. MOORE: I have never made any suggestion that the hon. gentleman was swayed by any other than honest motives in the matter. The Minister has made a suggestion concerning the action which the previous Government took—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And we still make it and we still believe it.

Mr. MOORE: Then nothing more is to be said. If the hon. gentleman, as a Minister of the Crown, makes that insinuation and innuendo and says he still believes it, then I say it is unjustifiable, if they believe it, that they do not have an inquiry into it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We did it when you brought your Bill in.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman will use his shuffling tactics to get out of his statement! If the hon. gentleman believes that insinuation he is not justified in sitting down under it, and the people of Queensland are justified in getting an inquiry into the whole matter. If the hon. gentleman had any sense of honour and really believed that, he would insist on an inquiry being made. But the hon. gentleman does not believe it. For political purposes he tries to cast a slur on the previous Government. His own administration has been hopelessly inefficient. We have had to force him to bring in a Bill for these settlers, and in order to escape the ignomy of that he tries to cast a slur on the previous Administration. If, as a Minister of the Crown, the hon. gentleman thinks that is worthy of him and that it is good for the Department of Public Lands and for the dignity of this Parliament, he is welcome to those ideas.

Item (District Offices) agreed to.

FORESTRY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

“That £31,829 be granted for ‘Forestry.’”

Item agreed to.

LAND COURT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

“That £3,605 be granted for ‘Land Court.’”

Item agreed to.

SURVEY OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

“That £71,121 be granted for ‘Survey Office.’”

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [9.19 p.m.]: I should like to say a few words in regard to this vote. I appeal to the Minister to reduce the survey fees payable in regard to land selection. They are very heavy and are a source of hardship to settlers. There has been a general reduction in wages and costs throughout Australia during the past three years, yet the same scale of survey fees operates. On some areas the Government have collected a survey fee three times. When the block was originally surveyed the fee was paid by the first settler; eventually that land was forfeited

or surrendered and thrown open for selection, and when it was selected again another fee was charged, despite the fact that no new survey was made. In some cases a survey fee has been charged a third time on the same block of land, notwithstanding the fact that the department only paid for a survey on one occasion. I consider that is wrong. The Minister mentioned the amount of revenue coming into his department. Some of that revenue is being obtained at the expense of the men who go and bury themselves in the bush. At the present time there are very few people on the land who are making what may be termed a living, and a number of them are not making a living at all. The sugar industry is the only agricultural industry where the people are making more than a living. I ask the Minister, in all fairness, to bring about a reduction in all survey fees. It must not cost the department as much to-day to have a survey made as it did, because they should not be paying the same wage to the surveyors; if they are, then they are not doing justice to the people who go on the land. The present scale of fees was increased in the boom period when wages went up, and I appeal to the Minister to have those fees reduced. When I first came to Queensland a survey fee was considerably less than it is to-day. I think it has been increased by at least 50 per cent. The charge to the settler was justifiably increased, because the department had to pay more to have a survey made. I remember the time when surveyors engaged in surveying prickly-pear country would have to penetrate miles of prickly-pear from 5 to 6 feet high in order to put their pegs in. These conditions do not exist to-day. Whatever the cost may have been for surveying prickly-pear lands years ago, the surveyors to-day are not subject to the risk from the pear. In past years the surveyors were compelled to don leather clothing and cut their way through the dense mass of prickly-pear. Surveying work must therefore be less costly than was the case under the old conditions, and I would ask the Minister to give consideration to some reduction in the fees. This is a matter that affects the new settlers, and any reduction would be welcome.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [9.24 p.m.]: This is a hardy annual ever since I have been in charge of the department.

Mr. MAHER: Nevertheless, it is a just request.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. member will listen I will tell him just what the position is as regards survey fees. The policy of the department has never been changed since the time that the hon. member occupied a seat on the Treasury bench. It has always been the policy to keep survey fees as low as possible. There has been no desire to make any profit from these fees, and, in spite of what has been said by the hon. member for *Murilla*, I can assure him that no profit has been made. The survey fees collected do not recoup the department for its outlay. Every year there has been a considerable loss which has to be met out of revenue or, in other words, by the general taxpayer. There has been a loss every year since I have been in charge of the department and I presume the same thing occurred during the time the hon. member for Cunningham was

Hon. P. Pease.]

Secretary for Public Lands. As a matter of fact, selectors can employ their own surveyor, and that has been done. Quite recently the department was asked to allow people to employ their own surveyors and the permission was granted. The remarks of the hon. member for Murilla show that he knows nothing about the department. Quite recently there was an application for an award which came before the court in connection with the cost of surveying. The same charges are made as were made years ago, and they have not been increased. The department would be very glad if it were able to collect the actual cost, but we have not been able to do even that. That shows the sympathetic attitude of the Labour Government towards the selectors.

Item (Survey Office) agreed to.

IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*): I move—

“That £18,511 be granted for ‘Irrigation and Water Supply.’”

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*) [9.25 p.m.]: I wish to raise a small question here, more on a matter of principle than anything else. A sum of £1,000 is deducted from this vote and debited to Loan Fund. It appears to me that there is a golden rule which all Governments, irrespective of party, follow in their financing at the present time, and that is, “Never by any chance expend from revenue what you can possibly spend from borrowed money.” It appears to me that the Government are spending loan money for the manager and clerk at Theodore, for irrigation investigations, and even for surveys of resumed areas at Theodore. The Government are certainly cutting it pretty fine when they are expending loan money in that way, and, to me, it appears to be so. Apparently £1,000 which should be taken from revenue is to be taken from loan. It is everlastingly out of loan funds that money is expended. Perhaps the Minister will clarify the position.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [9.30 p.m.]: The position is the other way about. The increase of £3,486 in the vote for “Irrigation and Water Supply” is due to a net increase of £921 in salaries for three more officers. An addition of £1,000 for salaries is charged to revenue instead of the Loan Fund Account. There is also an increase of £1,565 in the vote for contingencies. We are really charging an extra £1,000 to consolidated revenue this year.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [9.51 p.m.]: I have a letter that I have received from the Wycanna water supply area. The people feel that they have been very unjustly treated because the Government have practically taken over control of this trust. I should like to read the letter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is it a bore trust?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will tell you why we did that.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I should like to read this letter. The trustees say in their letter that they have met all their liabilities and that in no way are they indebted to the

(*Hon. P. Pease.*)

Government. This letter was sent on to me, and I should like the members of the Committee to know its contents. It says—

“Dear Sir,—As ratepayers and trustees of the Wycanna water supply area, we, the undersigned, beg to express our complete dissatisfaction at the action of your department in taking over control of our bore and works.

“This particular bore was put down during the war years at a very big expense, but the trustees controlling the board and all the ratepayers within the area have, from its inception, done all that was possible to curtail expenses for maintenance compatible with the efficient upkeep of the works and to meet their respective assessments promptly. Consequently, we were in a position to meet our Treasury payments regularly, and at the time your department took the management of the bore out of our hands there were no payments to the Treasury outstanding.”

It is important to remember that point. No payment was due to the Government in any shape or form. The letter continues—

“As well as regarding the action as an extremely high-handed one, we fail to see how the works of the trust and the management of our affairs can be carried out from Brisbane as well as or as economically as has been done when under local control. Although a local agent has been appointed for each area, we feel sure that a large amount of time will be lost when water troubles commence, as always happens during the summer months, and instead of local matters being dealt with by the trustees, as was done in the past, all disputes, requests, or appeals must now go to Brisbane for judgment. This will, we feel sure, be very unsatisfactory, and is still one more reason for the composing of this letter of protest.

“A further point which has made us regard the Government’s action with disfavour is this—whilst our board has always met its liabilities to the Treasury and, as stated before, was free of debt, adjacent bores (or one in particular) whose payments were in arrear have been left untouched.”

They point out that in the case of one particular bore in respect of which all payments have not been made to the Government, no action was taken by the Government to obtain control. The letter continues—

“Surely, whatever action your department saw fit to take and for whatever reason, the movement should have been universal throughout the State!

“We feel very strongly with regard to this matter, and intend to use all the power at our disposal to have vested in us some control over our own money and not be bound to do what is dictated from the Minister in charge of this ‘confiscation.’

“Trusting you will give this matter your full and careful attention and thanking you in anticipation.

“Yours faithfully,

“A. H. WARNER,

“FRED. M. BELL, Trustees.”

That letter is signed by the trustees. They point out that the bore was constructed during a period when costs were very high, but they have met all their commitments to the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do they say that there are no arrears in connection with this bore?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Yes; the letter very definitely states that at the time it was taken over they had met all their responsibilities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not correct.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I was asked to read this letter in this Chamber to give the Minister an opportunity to reply to it. I have no doubt that the Minister has a copy of the letter, but I am quite prepared to hand over this one which I have received from the trustees. If what they say is correct, then I feel that the Minister or the department has not done the proper thing in taking over the control of this bore. I do not think the Government would be justified in taking over the bore even if there was a small amount owing to the Government, provided that the amount had not been owing for more than one year. If the money had been owing for a considerable time, and the Government were not satisfied with the management of affairs by the trustees or the water rates had not been paid for a considerable time, then I should be the first to admit that the Government were justified in taking over the control of the bore.

They have justly met all charges relating to interest and redemption on the capital cost of the construction of the bore. I should be one of the last persons to approach the Minister with this request if the trust was not working in a proper way, and if the dues to the Government were in arrears and accumulating. This letter states that the trustees had met all their responsibilities and had given no trouble in any shape or form. They further state that there is a bore in the district which has not met its dues to the Government, and that control of that bore was not taken by the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What bore was that?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The name is not mentioned in this letter. I ask the Minister to give full and careful consideration to the submission in this letter. If this trust has carried out its duties to the Government and is not in arrears to any great extent the bore should be restored to the trust. The Minister may say that certain moneys were owing to the Government on the 30th June last. That may be so, but I understand that a few weeks afterwards the money was paid to the Government. That would only represent the payments for the half-year or the whole year, as the case may be. There were not what may be termed arrears due. As a matter of fact, the trust states that no money was due to the Government at the time the Government decided to take the bore over. If that is so I ask the Minister to leave that trust in the hands of the local people. Local control is more satisfactory than control from Brisbane. I do not understand why the

Government should desire to take over that bore, because I understand no complaint has been received from the ratepayers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [9.40 p.m.]: If the hon. member will turn to page 27 of the report of the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply he will observe—

“Pursuant to the provisions of ‘The Water Acts, 1926 to 1931,’ power is given to elect or appoint boards to administer the affairs of artesian trust bores put down by the Government under the trust provisions of the Act.”

The capital amount involved is somewhere about £250,000—

“These elected or appointed boards have functioned for several years (one member being the Government representative), and a number of the trusts have functioned quite efficiently, whilst the administration of the majority has not proved satisfactory, particularly during the last three years. Many of the boards have fallen seriously into arrears with their annual Treasury commitments, and this necessitated departmental action.

“Consequently, the question of dissolving certain boards whose financial position was unsatisfactory received the consideration of the Land Administration Board, with the result that during the year the following boards were dissolved, and the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply appointed to manage the affairs of the water areas.”

The result was that forty-one trust water areas were placed directly under the administration of the commissioner. Wycanna, the bore which the hon. member for Murilla spoke about, was included in that number. The report goes on—

“It has been established conclusively that in many instances board members (who are also ratepayers and may themselves be in arrears) are not disposed to take the action necessary to recover rates, and the Government representative is, in consequence, unable to secure a resolution by the board to deal with defaulters. The effect of placing these areas under the control of the commissioner has had a most beneficial effect financially, and the action taken is appreciated by woolbrokers and other financial institutions who are now in the position to obtain at Brisbane information regarding their clients’ arrears to the department or other matters relating to the administration of a trust.”

The position of Wycanna as at 30th June, 1934, is that the capital amount owing was £6,154 15s. 10d., and the arrears of interest and redemption were £226 5s. 9d. The position of these trust bores was so serious that the total amount owing of interest and redemption due, apart from the capital expenditure, on the 1st January, 1934, when the department took over the administration of twenty-eight bores, was £20,333. The board has placed the control of these bores in the hands of Mr. Dickson, whose activities between January and December resulted in £16,512 10s. 6d. being paid into the Treasury. That money went into the Treasury and helped to carry on the affairs of State. The balance of the arrears amounts to £3,821 1s. 6d., and this has been fixed for payment

[Hon. P. Pease.]

under a plan. Obviously the department could not allow the unsatisfactory position to continue; hence the placing of this matter under the control of a very efficient officer, with the result that I have indicated.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [9.44 p.m.]: I have no objection to the Minister taking over those bore trusts which have failed to meet their liabilities, but my point is that the trust I mentioned only owed £226 at the 30th June last, and I understand the money was paid to the department shortly after that date. As a matter of fact, that it was not paid on the due date may have been due to some slight neglect on the part of this trust; but I honestly believe that a mistake has been made and I should like an assurance from the Minister that he will go into the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When did you get the letter?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I got the letter to-day. I telephoned the board and got some information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will look into the matter.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassfern*) [9.46 p.m.]: Without unduly labouring the question, I am afraid I did not make my meaning very clear to the Minister. I quite understand that only £1,000 has been charged to Loan Fund Account as against £2,000 last year, and it is obvious that to that extent we are £1,000 better off; but my objection is to any money being charged to Loan Fund account when it is obviously revenue expenditure. When I see that the area manager and the clerk at Theodore are being paid out of Loan Fund Account, then I am constrained to say that I believe it is unsound finance. It is not a big sum, but in principle it is wrong to allow any sum to be charged to Loan Fund Account that is obviously genuine revenue expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [9.47 p.m.]: The officials of the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply are now supervising local authority works, and at the present time are controlling thirteen town and city councils and twenty shire councils who are working on subsidised loans throughout Queensland. Throughout Queensland forty-three projects for water supply have been undertaken, affording striking proof that the Labour Government have regard to the interests of country people. As a matter of fact, loans to the extent of £316,082 and subsidies to an amount of £195,984, or a total of £512,066, have been granted, and the amount expended to 30th June last was £316,911. The supervision of all those projects is done by the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. It is only fair that we should recoup ourselves, and the sum of £1,000 of loan money is charged as a portion to the salaries of officers concerned. That amount is very little, considering supervision is exercised over the expenditure of over £500,000 of loan money.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*) [9.48 p.m.]: I should like to remind the Minister that some time has elapsed since he made a promise regarding an inspection of the Condamine and other streams on the Downs in connection with water conservation. I notice that the year has been a busy one for his depart-

ment, and some time ago the Minister advised me that the works they had in hand demanded a great deal of attention and time, but later on when the staff was available an investigation would be made. Time is going on, and so far as I am aware nothing has been done. Seeing that we are spending large sums of money in many directions, I know of no direction in which money could be more profitably expended—particularly under the relief scheme—to greater advantage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Which local authority controls this area?

Mr. BARNES: The Glengallan Shire Council. The Warwick Town Council would have a good deal to do with the matter also. I notice by the report and the figures quoted by the Minister that a very large sum of money is being expended—£500,000 altogether—so it is apparent that it has been a busy time for the department. Many of the works are of considerable importance. The work I refer to is one that would absorb an enormous sum of money, and I would not agitate for it if it were a work of magnitude. The construction of weirs on many of our water courses—and the Condamine is an exceedingly large stream—would provide a wonderful service. We never know when we shall be faced with a period of drought. It is a matter of paramount importance to be considered in a time when funds are available to carry out such works. I trust the Minister has not forgotten the promise he made to me a couple of years ago in connection with this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*) [9.51 p.m.]: If the hon. member for Warwick will cause a definite proposal to be submitted by the Glengallan Shire Council in conjunction with the Warwick Town Council, or if an application is made in connection with a project that they may have in mind, or if an investigation is asked for, as soon as the Chief Irrigation Engineer is available, I will instruct him to look into the matter.

We have just reorganised the Sub-Department of Irrigation and Water Supply and we have been very fortunate in finding in Queensland a suitable man to take charge of the engineering portion of that department. I refer to Mr. C. E. Parkinson. Applications were called and we were able to give the job to a Queenslander. Mr. Parkinson was already in the Government service and had done very fine work. At present, at the request of the Home Secretary, he is investigating for the Brisbane City Council the sewerage system. He has already shown his ability in a case in which the Government had approved of a scheme involving £19,000. Investigation by Mr. Parkinson proved that it was unsound. If the hon. member for Warwick will make application personally or get the Glengallan and Warwick councils to make the same suggestion to the department, as has been done in connection with the scheme in Brisbane, so soon as Mr. Parkinson is available, he will make investigations. I am satisfied that he is going to do good work in the department. The Government of Queensland have been seized of the possibility of doing something in the way of irrigation and water supply, and that is the reason for this appointment.

We had a very fine officer in Mr. Deshon. Unfortunately he had to be retired on

[*Hon. P. Pease.*]

account of the age limit provision. This gentleman had done very fine work, in fact some wonderful work, for Queensland, and I am very pleased indeed to pay this tribute to him. One of his last jobs was to investigate on behalf of the Brisbane City Council, the filtration process, and those people who were concerned in the examination told me they had had their process examined in all parts of the world but the best and most conclusive examination was that carried out in Brisbane by Mr. Deshon. My officers and myself sincerely regretted that Mr. Deshon had to retire. On his retirement the Cabinet decided, instead of filling the vacancy, to appoint an officer who would be capable of doing anything in connection with irrigation, water supply, and sewerage. Applications were called for that position and there was a large number of applicants. We were able to appoint a Queenslander from the Government service in Mr. Parkinson.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of the Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 29th August and 3rd October, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked leave to sit again.

Resumption of Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.