

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1949

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Brassington, Fortitude Valley) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.**RABBITS, BEENLEIGH DISTRICT.**

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“With reference to recent reports regarding the conviction of a person for introducing rabbits into the Beenleigh district and that some of them are probably still at large, what steps are being taken to ensure that these introduced rabbits are totally exterminated?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

“The Inspector of the Moreton Rabbit Board, in whose district Beenleigh is situated, has recently made extensive investigations in the vicinity of Beenleigh and was unable to find any trace of rabbits being at large in that locality.”

SITES OF RAILWAY WHEAT DUMPS.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) asked the Minister for Transport—

“As I have received many complaints regarding wrong and inconvenient location of railway wheat dumps, will he give instructions that the Wheat Board and the local authority concerned be consulted before further dumps are established?”

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

“It has always been the practice for sites for new wheat dumps to be selected after a joint inspection by the manager of the State Wheat Board and representatives of the Railway Department. Sites have been chosen to suit the areas to be served so far as possible. The wheat-growers in areas served have been consulted by the board, and have been in favour of all sites selected to date. So far as the Railway Department is concerned, it has not been the practice to refer matters of this nature to local authorities except in those cases where encroachments on roads have been

necessary to provide the areas of land required for the dumps. However, in the Dalby area the board has always consulted the local authority and no complaints have ever been received from any local authority except the Wambo Shire Council, which body did lodge complaints in one or two instances."

CEMENT STORED AT EVENTIDE.

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"1. For what purpose is 100 tons of cement being stored at 'Eventide,' Sandgate?"

"2. As 5 per cent. of the bags were faulty, representing five tons of cement, why was provision not made for rebagging the loose cement, instead of taking it away for dumping by the motor lorries handling it?"

"3. What is the estimated loss from deterioration occasioned by storage in the moist atmosphere of the sea coast?"

"4. What justifies the expense of the long expensive haulage of this cement for storage at Sandgate?"

"5. Is this cement local or imported?"

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

"1. Between 29 September and 24 October last, five vessels arrived in Brisbane carrying 2,349 tons of overseas cement on behalf of the Queensland Government, and of these, three vessels carrying 1,800 tons were unloading at the same time. With the arrival of such substantial quantities in addition to the normal quota made available by the Queensland Cement and Lime Company, Darra, it was found necessary to store temporarily some of the overseas cement allotted to the Department of Health and Home Affairs for works at hospitals and institutions under its control.

"2. As much cement as it was possible to recover was effectively stored and is being used. The department has no knowledge of any useful cement being taken away and dumped.

"3. The amount of loss would be negligible.

"4. See answer to No. 1. Neither the State Stores Board nor the department was able to obtain other suitable storage elsewhere.

"5. It was portion of the overseas shipment referred to, and is a material factor in the relief of the recent general shortage of cement."

APPOINTMENTS TO VACANCIES, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Minister for Transport—

"1. Is it a fact that certain employees of the Railway Department who apply and

are appointed to vacancies as advertised in the 'Weekly Notice' are compelled to take up such appointment within a stipulated time or forfeit such appointment?"

"2. If so, does this ruling apply to all employees in all sections of the service? If not, why not?"

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

"1. On account of strong complaints from various sources that certain employees were not going forward to their new positions within a reasonable time—thus causing delays in the return of other employees to their home depots—the Commissioner, at the request of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen, agreed to a suggestion that drivers and firemen appointed to advertised vacancies should proceed to their new depots within five weeks of the date of their appointments appearing in the departmental 'Weekly Notice.' Failure to comply with this instruction would result in the cancellation of the classification of the the employee or employees so concerned. In certain instances, and on production of proof of extenuating circumstances, the five-week limit may be extended slightly.

"2. The instruction referred to does not apply to other branches of the service, such not being considered necessary at present, but instructions have been issued that transfers must be effected as expeditiously as possible."

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1948-49.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message transmitting the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1948-49.

Estimates ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT, 1950-51.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message recommending that the following provision be made on account of the services of the year ending 30 June, 1951:—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland (exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account), the sum of Five million five hundred thousand pounds;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of Four million five hundred thousand pounds;

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of One million four hundred thousand pounds.

Message referred to Committee of Supply.

VAGRANTS, GAMING, AND OTHER
OFFENCES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF
DEBATE.

(Mr. Hilton, Carnarvon, in the chair.)

Debate resumed on Mr. Jones's motion—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Acts, 1931 to 1948, in certain particulars.”

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Health and Home Affairs) (11.15 a.m.): I have not very much more to say on this small Bill but I want to make a point in relation to the report in this morning's “*Courier-Mail*” of the debate on this Bill yesterday. The report puts an absolutely wrong construction, and a stupid construction, on the matter. I ask hon. members to listen to this:—

“Opinion differed in Parliament yesterday whether a person could be successfully prosecuted for throwing a bottle in the stadium and hitting another person with it.

“The Health and Home Affairs Minister (Mr. Jones) said he had been advised that it was doubtful whether a prosecution would be successful under existing law.”

That is not true. It would be ridiculous for me to ask this House to believe that it would not be an offence to hit a person with a bottle in any circumstances, even in his own home. I am surprised that a paper would print such a thing.

This is what I did say—

“A similar measure of control is exercised in New South Wales and Victoria. We find, however, that there are weaknesses in our statutes. I am informed that it is doubtful whether it is an offence to throw a bottle in the stadium and whether we could successfully prosecute a person who threw one, if it did not hit anybody.”

I mention this because it seems so silly. A friend of mine, who is a legal man, said to me, “Did you make a statement that you could throw a bottle and hit someone without committing an offence?” I said, “I did not.” He said, “It is in the ‘*Courier-Mail*.’” I had not noticed it till then. Any school child would know that it would be an offence.

There is very little to add at this stage to what I have already said.

Mr. PATERSON (Bowen) (11.17 a.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“Omit the words—

‘in certain particulars.’”

While we are dealing with this question of the danger of bottle-throwing, we may as well deal with the whole question of the dangers that arise from bottles. In Townsville during the war bottles were frequently left on the town beach. Naturally, when bottles are left on a beach, you can expect children to come along and have a pot-shot at them; then the bottles are broken and the broken glass

becomes a serious menace to all people who use the beach, particularly the children who have not the same sense of responsibility as adults. As a result there were many serious accidents to children in Townsville. I was an alderman in Townsville at the time and I brought the matter up on the Townsville City Council. I lived near the beach, and I was naturally more acquainted with the dangers than most of the other aldermen who did not live so close to the beach. However, we were faced with this difficulty: we were advised by our solicitor that we could not be sure of success in a prosecution in every case because of the difficulty of determining which body exercised jurisdiction at certain points on the beach—whether it was the Harbour Board or the local authority. We would have to prove the exact spot where the bottle was left and so on. To be sure of our case we appointed a deputation to interview the Townsville Harbour Board for the purpose of trying to get some agreement between the two local bodies; but unfortunately we were not able to reach agreement and as a result nothing was done. But there can be no dispute about the jurisdiction of the State over beaches, whether the high-water mark or low-water mark is in a particular spot or not. The determination of this question will not affect the jurisdiction of the State, but it may affect the jurisdiction of a particular local body. Therefore, I suggest that this is a matter in which the State should either accept responsibility itself or clearly give responsibility to the local authority or the Harbour Board, because, in my opinion, a broken bottle is as dangerous to a child as a loaded revolver. A child may be running along and from time to time he will take a hop, step, and jump. If there are some jagged pieces of glass concealed in the sand, as they were frequently in Townsville, a child may be seriously injured. Even when the broken bottles are not concealed a young child cannot be expected to exercise that degree of care that enables it to see on every occasion just where broken glass is.

Mr. Decker: It happens on every beach. It happens at Sandgate.

Mr. PATERSON: Yes, it happens on every beach and I suggest our legislation should be amended to make it an offence to leave a bottle on a beach. If necessary, I should be prepared to suggest that it should be an offence to leave a bottle on any playground but local authorities have the power to deal with that. There is no doubt that they have jurisdiction to deal with persons for committing offences against their by-laws anywhere in playgrounds or in parks in their local authority areas; but on account of the difficulties that I have mentioned in connection with beaches, I suggest here and now that this Committee should deal with this particular problem.

Mr. Jesson interjected.

Mr. PATERSON: In that particular case the adults are responsible. Some people blame the younger children, the boys and girls who go along and take pot-shots at

bottles on the beaches. But I think that that attitude is not based on a realistic view of the matter. We have to realise that we were children once and we can remember ourselves that when we used to throw stones and take pot-shots at bottles we did not realise the seriousness of the situation. But adults can be expected to realise it. I suggest something should be done to make it an offence to leave bottles on the beach.

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Health and Home Affairs) (11.22 a.m.): Yesterday when introducing this Bill I intimated that its contents are confined to stadiums. We knew it was possible to extend it to all sorts of things and places, football grounds, cricket grounds, and maybe beaches, as suggested by the hon. member for Bowen. Much consideration has been given to this matter and we decided that we did not want to make the Bill too wide. After all, it could reach the point of absurdity. It is suggested, for instance, that we might apply it to all places of amusement but as I pointed out yesterday, that might inconvenience the public. For instance, if it was applied to taking a bottle into a picture theatre it would apply to children and others attending pictures who took bottles of lemonade or some other soft drinks into the theatre, but I have not heard of any looseness of conduct in the throwing of bottles in picture shows.

Mr. Aikens: Some kiddies go to the pictures more for a feed than to see the picture shows.

Mr. JONES: That is true. We have applied it strictly to stadiums and to other places in which boxing or wrestling contests take place.

Mr. Paterson: If you give consideration to this matter I shall be satisfied.

Mr. JONES: It is a matter that we should give consideration to but I do not feel disposed to accept the amendment.

Mr. PATERSON (Bowen) (11.24 p.m.): In view of the information from the Minister than he will give consideration to the matter I will not press the amendment. The only way it could be raised was by my moving the amendment, otherwise I should have been out of order in debating it. I want the matter considered.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Does the hon. member for Bowen withdraw his amendment?

Mr. PATERSON: I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion (Mr. Jones) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Jones, read a first time.

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier) (11.27 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

I feel that there is little or no necessity for me to repeat the very clear explanation of the provisions of this Bill given by the Premier on its introduction. It contains only three principles, the main one being a provision to empower the Chairman of Committees to act with full authority in the absence of the Speaker because of illness or for any other reason.

The second is that if the Chairman of Committees acts in that capacity for 30 days or more he shall be paid the salary of the Speaker.

The third is that in the absence of the Chairman of Committees acting as Speaker a member of the panel of Temporary Chairmen shall act as Chairman of Committees and shall receive the salary of the Chairman of Committees, if he acts in such capacity for 30 days or more.

Mr. Sparkes: Is that for 30 consecutive days?

Mr. GAIR: Yes.

That is the extent of the Bill and I believe that all hon. members are in agreement with it. It is anomalous that at present the Chairman of Committees has little or no power in the absence of the Speaker. That anomaly should be corrected and it is being corrected by this Bill.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.29 a.m.): The provisions contained in this Bill are desirable because they remove anomalies that I do not think any hon. member realised existed, the anomaly in connection with the authority of the Speaker in particular.

Mr. Gair: They have taken it for granted that it was automatic.

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes. It is imperative that there should be somebody in authority in this House during the temporary absence of the Speaker, who constitutionally is empowered to control the activities of the officers of the House and doings round about the House.

The provision in the Bill makes it definite that if you, Mr. Speaker, are absent from the House, the Chairman of Committees as Acting Speaker will have the authority of your good self in the management of the affairs about the House.

The principle of paying the salary of the office to anybody acting in the office is one that the House has agreed to in regard to acting Ministers, and also where the Deputy Premier acts during the absence of the Premier on the business of the country. When the Chairman of Committees acts for Mr. Speaker, we can appoint an Acting Chairman of Committees to carry out his duties, and

that officer will be entitled to the emoluments connected with the position of Chairman of Committees.

The provisions of the Bill are desirable and necessary, particularly that relating to the authority of the Speaker. We support the measure.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) (11.31 a.m.): There is in fact very little to be added to the endorsement to this measure given by the Leader of the Opposition. I spoke on the initiation of the Bill and I stressed on behalf of my party our complete acquiescence in it. We think it a necessary and fair Bill. It is fair as to the payment of the emolument to the person acting in the office of Mr. Speaker, and necessary so far as the authority of that person is concerned to carry out properly the duties of Mr. Speaker. The measure is necessary also because of possible contingencies that might arise during the illness or absence of Mr. Speaker necessitating the performance of the duties of that office for a continuous period of 30 days or more by some acting Speaker. The expression "30 days or more" obviously, on the face of the measure, refers to ordinary natural days. As this is a measure that deals with the proceedings of Parliament, in which the word "day" has acquired an artificial meaning, we want to make it clear that when the occupant of the office of Mr. Speaker continues in that office for 30 normal days the rate of remuneration operates. We do not intend the word "day" to mean a sitting day of this Assembly. That seems to be clear from the fact that the measure authorises the acting status not only in relation to sittings of the Assembly but to other duties of Mr. Speaker when the Assembly is not sitting. I read the expression "30 days or more" to mean 30 days and not 30 days of the session.

Provision is also made for consequential promotions, as it were—to use a Public Service phrase—where a member of the panel of Temporary Chairmen is nominated to fill the office of Chairman of Committees. That hon. member would get the corresponding recognition of his status.

Speaking of the Bill as a whole, we welcome it and support it.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (11.34 p.m.): It will be remembered that I asked a question along these lines some time ago, and I am pleased indeed to know therefore that this Bill is being introduced. I have heard it said outside this House that certain people in this Parliament were accepting responsibilities for which they were not being paid. I believe that if a man assumes responsibilities he should be paid for doing so. Acting on that principle I asked a question in the House and I am therefore delighted to think—although not because I asked the question—that the Bill has come before the House.

Mr. Aikens: They never give anybody credit for anything.

Mr. PIE: I want to make it clear that if the Speaker is absent and the Chairman of Committees is in charge, pursuant to the terms of the Bill, the Chairman of Committees, acting in the office of Speaker, shall have full responsibility for the conduct of the whole House and the precincts of the House. There should not be any half-measures. If, Mr. Speaker, you should be absent through illness the whole of your duties should devolve upon the Chairman of Committees as Acting Speaker and the whole of the duties of the Chairman of Committees should devolve upon the Temporary Chairman of Committees who is appointed to the position of Chairman of Committees for the time being. After all, they are being paid for accepting those responsibilities. There cannot be two bosses in any place and that is the point I want to make clear. Whoever is appointed to the position should assume the full responsibility of running the House.

There is another suggestion I desire to make for the betterment of Parliament generally and that is that Mr. Speaker should assume the responsibility of running classes for Chairmen of Committees so that we can get uniformity in decisions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now getting away from the principle in the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (11.37 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I have never wished you any physical ill fortune, although there may have been other things I would have wished on you. During your recent illness there was considerable conjecture, some anticipatory conjecture, particularly in regard to one member of the dominant factions of your party who has been promised the Speakership over the head of Mr. Mann in case something should happen to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the principles in the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: This hon. member read the funeral notices first in his "Courier-Mail" every morning and he has developed on his knees hard callous pads like any billy-goat from constantly praying that something would happen to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member does not deal with the principles of the Bill he will have to resume his seat.

Mr. AIKENS: Having said it, I let it go.

The principles in the Bill are sound and they follow the procedure adopted in most industries. For instance, if a senior man is ill or absent from duty for other reasons the next in seniority comes up into his place. The next man follows him into the position of the man who has moved up, and so on. It appears to me that the Bill does not carry this practice to its logical conclusion. It provides that if Mr. Speaker is ill the Chairman of Committees shall move up into his place and that one of the Temporary Chairmen of Committees shall move

up into the position of Chairman of Committees, but it makes no provision for a third possibility, although it is not likely to happen very often. Still, it could happen. It may be that the Speaker and Chairman of Committees are ill and both away at the same time. The Bill makes no provision for the Temporary Chairman of Committees to proceed to the position of Chairman of Committees and eventually to the position of Speaker. The Bill should make provision for such a contingency, although it may not arise. If we are to make provision to deal with a situation that will arise through the illness of the Speaker, we should follow the matter to its logical conclusion and say that if both the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees are ill and absent together, a Temporary Chairman of Committees can go right up to the Speaker's chair, and discharge the duties of Speaker in all its ramifications. It would be preferable to do that now rather than introduce a special measure later for the purpose. The Bill does not do that.

I commend my suggestion to the Deputy Premier, who is in charge of the measure, so that he may have a talk with his legal officers and the Parliamentary Draftsman to see whether it is not possible to amend the Bill to provide for such a contingency.

Mr. JESSON: If an hon. member is sick and he delegates the duties of his electorate to another hon. member, who does his work for three months, would he get his salary too?

Mr. AIKENS: That is purely a matter of mutual arrangement between the hon. members concerned. An ordinary hon. member is not an official or officer of this House, as the Speaker or Chairman of Committees is. The House has no control over what a private hon. member does. If an hon. member makes a mutual arrangement with another hon. member to do his job that is a matter between themselves. I take it from the interjection of the hon. member for Kennedy that he is opposed to this Bill because it provides that when the Speaker is ill for 30 days or more the Chairman of Committees shall relieve the Speaker and be paid at the rate of remuneration applicable to the Speaker. That is only fair. It is the accepted practice in industry.

The Bill does not provide for all contingencies because the Speaker may be ill for 25 days, then resume duty for 10 days, be sick for another 25 days and resume duty for another 10 days and there is no provision for additional remuneration of the Chairman of Committees in that eventuality. Mr. Speaker must be sick for 30 consecutive days before the Chairman of Committees is paid at the rate of remuneration fixed for the Speaker. I merely make these suggestions to the Acting Premier so that they may be cleared up. I should not like to see the Speaker sick in spasms for the whole year and those spasms of sickness amount to four or five months, but because he was not sick for any period for more than 30 days the Chairman of Committees, who would act in his

office, not receive one penny for the months of the year that he was acting as Speaker.

In industry, the moment a man acts in a higher position he is paid at the rate fixed for that position. That is only fair. For instance, in the Railway Department, if a fireman acts as a driver for an hour or a day he is paid as a driver for that hour or day. If an accountant in a local authority acts as town clerk—it was so in Townsville—for an hour, a day, a week or a month, he is paid at the rate of salary received by the town clerk for the period for which he was acting. Yet under this Bill the Speaker must be sick for 30 consecutive days and absent from duty for 30 consecutive days before the Chairman of Committees is paid, even if, as I pointed out, the Speaker is sick in spasms for four months but his spasms of sickness did not extend over 30 days.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (11.43 a.m.): I want to make my position perfectly clear. I am not opposed to the Bill at all. I interjected when the hon. member for Mundingburra was speaking, because he was going from the sublime to the ridiculous. He was saying that there are five Temporary Chairmen of Committees and asking who would be nominated to act as Chairman of Committees should that officer be ill, or as Acting Speaker if both the Chairman of Committees and the Speaker were ill at the same time. I interjected and asked whether if an hon. member was sick for two or three months and another hon. member attended to the duties of his constituency he would be entitled to additional salary. That was my only implication. I am wholeheartedly in favour of it and have been so from its introduction. The same principle would apply to the Acting Premier. The Premier on this occasion will be absent from his duties for about three weeks, yet the Acting Premier will not get any extra remuneration for the period he is Acting Premier. The principles of this Bill are exactly the same as those of a previous amendment to the Constitution Act.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane) Acting Premier (11.44 a.m.), in reply: There is really little or nothing in the debate to reply to. The point raised by the hon. member for Windsor about extending the authority of the Acting Speaker goes without saying. The Bill provides that an Acting Speaker shall be clothed with full authority to discharge the duties of Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Sparkes: He virtually becomes the Speaker.

Mr. GAIR: That is so. I thought that would be patent to every hon. member.

The provision suggested by the hon. member for Mundingburra is perhaps desirable but not necessary. The emergency he visualised was only the result of a long stretch of the imagination. I do not intend to adopt the suggestion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before putting the motion I should like to comment on the Bill and to say that it is undoubtedly a matter

that should have been attended to years ago when the Standing Orders were framed. I understand a similar set of circumstances occurred during the period when Mr. Bell was Speaker, but the position was not rectified then. It is obvious that a similar set of circumstances may occur at any time and it is well that the law should be amended to provide for it.

I want to express regret to hon. members that I was not able to take up my duties when the Session opened. I want to say too that I resent very strongly the suggestion made in this House that I was not ill enough not to do the job that I was elected to carry out. I have had a very long, and I feel, very honourable service in this House; and whatever may be my shortcomings, one of them has not been to shirk any responsibility placed before me. I resent the suggestion that I was, to put it crudely, malingering. It was a matter of very deep and great regret to me that I could not take my place in this House, as I have done over a period of many years, on the day set down for the opening of business.

I wanted to make those remarks to clear up any impression that there might be in the minds of some people who may have read of the very unfair and very vicious and personal attitude adopted towards me in connection with my illness.

Motion (Mr. Gair) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Mann, Brisbane) in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier) (11.48 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The object of this Bill is to empower the Public Accountants' Registration Board to exempt a person who has passed in certain subjects an examination conducted by the approved institutions or the University for associate in accountancy from having to pass the same subjects again in examinations conducted by the board.

The amending Bill has been recommended by the Public Accountants' Registration Board; and it is considered by the Government to be a just and equitable proposal. It is designed to avoid hardship to students, particularly those whose studies were interrupted by the war.

A number of young men who had taken up the study of accountancy with approved institutes of accountancy and who had passed in certain subjects were either called up for service in or enlisted in one or other of the three branches of the armed forces.

Consequent on the passing of the Act, when they resumed their studies, they would be required unless this amendment is made to pass again in the subjects they had already passed in the examination conducted by the institute of accountancy with which they were studying.

I believe a similar anomaly existed in the New South Wales law but the Government of that State made an amendment to achieve what this Bill proposes to do.

Before the passing of the Public Accountants Registration Act, it was not necessary for a person holding himself out or carrying on business as a public accountant to be registered. Persons who had not the prescribed academic qualifications but were in business at the commencement of the Act were given until 31 March this year to register. The usual method of qualifying as an accountant is by passing an examination conducted by a number of institutes of accountancy or those conducted by the University of Queensland for associates in accountancy. As the law stands, examinations of approved institutes of accountancy and those of the University for associates in accountancy are valid for the purpose of registration as a public accountant only if the finals of such examinations are completed before 31 March, 1951. A member of the forces is given four years from the date of his discharge, if later than 31 March, 1951, in which to complete his examinations. Such examinations if they were completed before the relevant date are valid for all time for the purposes of registration. If, however, they were only partially completed the board has no power to recognise any part of the examination that may have been completed before that date. Any candidate, to be eligible for registration, would have to pass the board's examination again in those subjects. I think hon. members will agree that this is not desirable and is unfair to the student, particularly those whose studies, as I pointed out before, were interrupted by war service. The Act provides that after 31 March, 1951, or in the case of a member of the forces such later date as I have mentioned, a person who has not as at that date completed the final examination of approved institutes or the University examination of associate in accountancy must pass an examination conducted by the board if he desires to be registered as a public accountant.

It may happen that at 31 March, 1951, some accountancy students will have passed in every subject but one; as the law stands they would have to start over again and pass the examinations conducted by the board. As I pointed out at the outset, the object of the Bill is to empower the board to exempt a person who has passed in certain subjects of any examination by approved institutes and to eliminate the necessity of that student's having to pass the examination a second time.

Mr. KERR (Oxley) (11.54 a.m.): This amendment to the Public Accountants Registration Act is very necessary. As the Acting Premier has pointed out, it acts very

unfairly in regard to certain students, particularly ex-service men who are going through the course provided by the rehabilitation and reconstruction classes. At the date fixed for the registration of accountants, many students had passed some subjects in the examinations but not all, and consequently, under the old Act, were eligible for registration.

They had to sit all over again. The amendment provides that the subjects in which they have passed will be recognised and that students will not be required to pass in them again.

My experience has been that having once passed a subject in accountancy, you very soon lose touch with it. You might pass it easily in your younger days, but when you become older it is very hard to do it again. On those grounds I think the Bill is justified. It will serve a very useful purpose, it is extremely fair and it will be well received by those who have passed in certain subjects.

Motion (Mr. Gair) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

SUPPLY.

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

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1949-50.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT.

Debate resumed from 9 November (see page 1479) on Mr. Duggan's motion—

“That £41,276 be granted for ‘Department of Transport.’”

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (11.58 a.m.): The Minister for Transport is fortunate in having such a capable officer as Mr. Anderson for his Commissioner. In years gone by there was a great deal of controversy about transport matters. From time to time road operators held protest meetings and people were dissatisfied all round, but I am pleased to be able to say that the Commissioner and his staff have done much to overcome transport difficulties in this State.

Transport can play a very important part in the development of the State. If sympathetic consideration is given to the applications received by the department much good can result, but the Commissioner has been handicapped considerably by the dearth of petrol since he took over this very important department. I am sure that when the road is clear the information he has in his possession will enable him to effect many improvements to the transport system of this State.

His liberal interpretation of the State Transport Facilities Act has done much to win for him the confidence of operators, who are doing a good job for Queensland.

There is one matter, however, on which I do not agree with the Commissioner, and I think it should receive further consideration. I refer to the acceptance of railway classifications as the basis for determining freight charges by road transport. To illustrate the anomaly I give this instance: the road mileage between Brisbane and Warwick via Cunningham's Gap is 100 miles and the rail distance is 159 miles. Road operators are expected to charge according to the rail classification rate, and that means that the road operator has a distinct advantage and is charging for a service he does not actually give. The rail freight for second-class goods for 100 miles is £6 0s. 5d. and for 159 miles £8 15s. 6d. As the road freight is based upon the rail classifications, the increased costs are passed on to the people whereas if they were charged only on the actual mileage travelled there would be a considerable reduction.

I realise that the reason for adopting the railway basis was the cut-throat competition that existed between road operators in the past. Freight was carted more cheaply by road and the saving was not always passed on to the consuming public. As the retail prices of goods were based on railway classifications the public as a whole did not receive any benefit: in many instances the individual trader received the difference between the lower road rate and the rail transport rate. It is a difficult question to overcome. The present system is not as good as it might be.

Mr. Duggan: What do you suggest?

Mr. LOW: As I said, it is a very difficult question and I have considered it from many angles. The system of compelling road operators, as a condition of their licences, to charge not less than rail freight rates has played into the hands of road operators and given them a distinct advantage or rake-off at the expense of the country people to whose centres the road hauliers operate. There is no competition today between road and rail. The basis of the freight charges are exactly the same.

Mr. Farrell: Do not the road operators deliver?

Mr. LOW: Not in all instances. In earlier times that was considered to be an advantage but today many road operators have depots, the same as the railways have, and people are compelled to go to the depots of the road operators whether in Brisbane or in the country at the other end. By making the rail classifications the basis for road charges the element of competition is eliminated, the only advantage of the road transport being speed. Road freight rates now rise and fall according to the rise and fall in rail charges.

The Railway Department has greater overhead costs in every way and its freight charges should not be taken as the basis for the computation of road charges. The road

operators select the first- and second-class goods, high-freighted goods on the railways, but decline to carry the low-freighted goods, which the railways are expected to carry. That is why the railway freights should not be accepted as the basis for determining road freights.

Mr. Roberts: Are you arguing that the road operator should be free to make his own decision?

Mr. LOW: No. The road operators do select their own traffic and by being directed to charge in accordance with railway freight charges they have never been so well off in their lives. No road operator wants to sell his business and would do so only if he wished to get out of it for personal reasons. The road operators giving service to the country are protected to a great extent but I have to admit that up to a point the Commissioner has done a remarkable job. However, some anomalies still exist and some consideration should be given to this matter with a view to overcoming the difficulty.

Mr. Farrell: Has the Commissioner not given the people a better service?

Mr. LOW: The Commissioner has improved things all round but my point is that the road operators should not be allowed to make a freight charge for a service they actually do not give. There should be some reduction in the basis because the road operator has not to carry the heavy overhead costs that are involved in the railways.

Mr. Jesson: If they were not restricted to a specified charge they might charge a great deal more.

Mr. LOW: Competition would be the deciding factor.

Mr. Jesson: There may not be any competition.

Mr. LOW: If the Commissioner would allow additional services there would be competition and that is in his own hands.

We know that in many instances the railways are unable to provide a satisfactory service for the conveyance of perishable products, such as fruit and vegetables. The Brisbane markets play a very important part in the development of the State and road transport provides a very quick service for the marketing of these perishable products but the Brisbane markets are closed on Saturdays and Sundays. The railways cannot provide a service that will enable fruit and vegetables to be placed on the market as quickly as they could be brought by road transport. I understand that the system at Roma Street railway station is for first preference in goods for the market to be given to Stanthorpe and the Granite Belt, second preference to the South Coast and Cleveland, and third place to the North Coast. In many instances fruit and vegetables from the near North Coast arrive too late by train to be placed on the market in time to bring reasonable prices. I have in mind at the moment the bean industry, which has become a very important industry in this State.

Beans railed to Brisbane on Friday are not sold until the following Monday and I suggest that favourable consideration be given to a road transport service from Gympie, through Pomona, Cooroy and other places, at week-ends, particularly on Sundays, because if the growers are not able to market their crop on Saturday or Sunday they have to hold them over till Monday.

Mr. Duggan: Do you know of any case where they have been sending beans to the market on Fridays?

Mr. LOW: I do. It was brought under my notice late last year or early this year.

Mr. Farrell: Is there not a road service from Gympie to Brisbane?

Mr. LOW: There is from Nambour, but not from Gympie.

Mr. Farrell: If beans were transported to Brisbane on Sunday, where would they be left?

Mr. LOW: The transport service would leave Gympie late on Sunday night. I made application to the Minister on behalf of a man named Bonnell to transport fruit and vegetables to Brisbane but after investigation it was turned down. The bean industry is becoming a very important one in the south-eastern districts. If the rail service is not able to deliver beans on the Brisbane market within a reasonable time and in fresh condition a service of this kind should receive favourable consideration. There should be a reorganisation of the markets in Brisbane. They are now closed on Saturdays and Sundays and do not open for business until 7 o'clock in the morning on week days. That does not give producers the best opportunity to market their fruit and vegetables in a condition to get the best possible price.

Mr. Brown: Do you think they should be open all the time?

Mr. LOW: They should be open from 4 o'clock in the morning. Primary producers work all hours and if they can get their fruit and vegetables into the market early in the morning and in a fresh condition they get better prices. The producers in my district are very concerned because at the moment they are running third in the markets and are losing the very best prices. The Minister can look into the matter to see whether railway trucks cannot be got in position much earlier than at present, and at the week-end, when it is not possible to provide a suitable rail service from the near North Coast, agree to a road service to enable producers to get their produce into the markets at an early hour on Monday mornings. Some bean-growers today are so keen to get their beans onto the early market on Monday morning that they are paying passenger rates on their consignments on the Sunday afternoon train. That shows that the growers are trying to do something for themselves to get the best market on Mondays.

I visited a little centre named Jimna in my electorate and discovered that the residents

there were compelled to travel from Jimna to Kilecoy on timber trucks. There are some 500 adults and 100 children in Jimna and this out-of-date method of travel should not be tolerated. I drew the Commissioner's attention to the matter and suggested that a passenger service was urgently required to allow these people to receive attention from the doctor and dentist and do their business in Kilecoy, in addition to giving the children an opportunity to receive secondary education, and I am pleased to report that through my representations, notwithstanding petrol rationing, he readily agreed to the inauguration of the service. A contract has been let to Mr. Young from 1 November this year. I thank the Commissioner for his ready response to my representations. The service will be of great benefit to the people in the area.

Now they will have proper transport, whereas in the past they travelled 25 miles down a steep range in an out-of-date timber truck.

Another matter for which I think we should thank the Commissioner is the lifting of the payment of licence fees for the transport of children to and from the nearest primary and secondary school. That is a step in the right direction. Any impost on children who travel to school by road transport would be a retrograde step. The improvement was decided in November, 1948. Last year I mentioned the transport of children and I am pleased that the matter has now been attended to and it is included in the Commissioner's report.

The Commissioner has made a very important suggestion for the painting of the carrier's name and place of business on the side of the truck, for the purposes of identification. That suggestion should be carried into effect. Many of these road hauliers want all the road; once you see them coming you have to make your own arrangements to give them three parts of the road, otherwise they would "do you up." It is very difficult to take their number but if they had the name printed on the side you would more easily detect whose truck gave you all the trouble and you would soon know who were the good carriers and who were not. Some of them are very decent fellows, but you have to make provision for the fellow who will not respect the rule of the road. I hope the Commissioner will put that suggestion into operation.

The fact that we have a well-organised transport system throughout the State serves a good purpose. During times of industrial trouble in the railways we are able to develop road transport to keep essential services going. The way in which the Commissioner for Transport and staff mobilised the services of the State during the 1948 strike and other hold-ups was praiseworthy and a great advantage to the primary producers and country people. Instead of suffering huge losses they were able to get their commodities to the main centres, from where they were dispatched to Brisbane.

I am in favour of the proposal made by other hon. members on this side, that the tax collected from road operators should be given

to the Main Roads Commission and the local authorities instead of being paid into consolidated revenue. This is essential because the Main Roads Commission and the local authorities are starving for funds for further construction, and another source of revenue should be made available to them.

Another matter the Commissioner should keep an eye on is the overloading of trucks. There should be closer co-operation between the Department of Transport and the Main Roads Commission. There is nothing worse than to have overloaded trucks travelling over roads and bridges. It is the cause of great deterioration and damage to both. The Commissioner should co-operate with the Commissioner of Main Roads in determining the fair load to be carried on a road to avoid unnecessary damage by the use of overloaded trucks.

I have drawn attention to the necessity for an investigation into charges with a view to equalising charges, and if road transport can provide a better and cheaper service than the railways the people should get the benefit of it.

Mr. Anderson, Commissioner for Transport, is doing a remarkably good job. He is also attached to the Liquid Fuel Control Board, but I hope the Government will not do the same with Mr. Anderson as they did with Mr. Kemp, the Commissioner of Main Roads. Mr. Kemp was a brilliant officer but he was loaded with all the jobs in the world, so that eventually he had too much work to do. He could not devote much of his attention to the job to which he was originally appointed. The Commissioner for Transport has carried out remarkable work, but now he has been tied up with the Liquid Fuel Control Board. Of course, this can be said to go hand in hand with transport, but now I understand the Government have appointed him to the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board. I know Mr. Anderson can do the work, but I hope he will be left to concentrate his main efforts on his most important job, the co-ordination of road, sea and air transport in Queensland, because this is important to the future development of the State. We cannot underestimate its value.

I again congratulate the Commissioner on the excellent job he has done and is doing, and when petrol rationing is lifted—and I hope it will be after 10 December next—he will be able to develop the State to a greater extent.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (12.23 p.m.): The Government did a really good job when they introduced the Transport Facilities Act in 1926. It has been proved conclusively that the implementation of this Act has placed transportation in Queensland, apart from railways, on a very sound footing. I commend the Commissioner, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Riding and other officers of this department for having done a real good job. The good work that the Commissioner has done was amply demonstrated during the railway strike, when the people in North Queensland and other distant parts of the

State had difficulty in getting foodstuffs. During that long period of inactivity by the Railway Department foodstuffs and other essential goods were got to these places by road. The Commission has also done a remarkably good job in getting a great many goods by road from New South Wales. Had it not been for the expedition with which the department handled the transport problems the growers of tomatoes and other vegetables in the Far North, who depend on the Sydney market, would have gone broke and virtually have had to walk off their farms. That says a very great deal for the Commissioner and his officers.

A matter exercising my mind is the growth of this department. It was once a small department, from what we might term a nominal Commissioner. Originally it was a very small part of governmental activity and a very small organisation.

With the fast-moving transport today, with the motor-cars, aeroplanes and even the trains used in the West for moving stock, I suggest that when the Government are returned next year—

Mr. Sparkes: That is wishful thinking.

Mr. JESSON: Not at all, because there is not the slightest risk. The people of Queensland will not take the Opposition on again. They had them once and they will never have them again. When the Government are returned next year I hope the new Cabinet will give consideration to the appointment of a separate Minister to deal with all forms of transport other than the railways. The present Minister has a full-time job administering the railways and carrying out development there.

It would be interesting if the Government constructed a number of floats to take part in the Australia Day celebrations on 30 January to show the people the great advance made in transport over the past 70 years in Queensland, to show them how it has developed from the old pack horse and Cobb and Co. coach to the modern means of today. It could explain to them that where once mails took days to reach their destination by pack trains, mules and even donkeys, they are delivered in a matter of hours today by road and sometimes in a matter of minutes by air. The hustle and bustle of modern transport warrants the appointment of a special Minister to deal with the many questions that will come before the Government as roads improve and road and air transport develops. It is astonishing to think that with modern transport it is possible for a horse to leave Melbourne in the morning, race in Brisbane in the afternoon and be back in Melbourne by night. Only 20 years ago a person would be ridiculed if he suggested that that would be possible. Again, within the last few days we have seen that it was possible for people in Brisbane to travel by car to the aerodrome, go to Melbourne by air, visit Flemington racecourse, return to the aerodrome by car, fly home and be back in Brisbane at 10 o'clock at night.

I hope the Government will give consideration to my suggestion, but I should be lacking in my duty if I did not commend the Commissioner and his staff for the good job they have done. Most people come away from his office satisfied. I represent a large area and my experience has been that of all the Government departments with which people do business I have had the least complaints about the State Transport Commission. Those bellyachers who usually come bellyaching to a politician after having approached a Government department seem to have very little or nothing to complain about so far as the Transport Commission is concerned. The Commission has the knack of sending people away happy and contented, even though their requests may have been refused.

Mr. Low: Control by a single commissioner is better than having a commission of three.

Mr. JESSON: The Government were wise enough to appoint a single commissioner and the system has been a success here, as in other fields. I say sincerely that this is a department from which the least number of kicks come. I know that all hon. members have had people approach them about the granting of licences and so on and even if their requests are refused, they have never complained or bellyached, simply because the point of view of the Department of Transport has been put before them. The Government have very little to fear about this department from a political angle. Its officers are doing their job diplomatically. With the appointment of a separate Minister we could develop our transport system fully and I say it is only right that alternative forms of transport should pay something towards the cost of the Railway Department. The railways are a big instrumentality employing great numbers of men and have provided the people in the outback with a service which, although it pays the people, does not pay the department. It is only right that modern forms of transport, as they develop, should contribute something to the railways.

As the hon. member for Cooroora said this morning, one of the weaknesses of the road-transport system is that the road operators pick the eyes out of the business. They refuse to take non-paying loads; the railways, on the other hand, do not refuse any class of goods. For instance, it is difficult to get road-transport operators to take drums of molasses because of the danger that the drums will leak and be covered with molasses outside, nor will they cart obnoxious cargoes. Explosives are always carried on the railways because they are dangerous goods. Road transport certainly picks the eyes out of the traffic.

A separate Minister for Transport and his Commissioner could look into the question of organising co-ordinated services for the delivery of parcels from the consignee to the consignor. In the years that lie ahead we should be able to develop this form of traffic. The Railway Department delivers quite a number of parcels at present and there would

need to be co-operation between the railways and the alternative forms of transport because once goods leave the department's control they become the responsibility of the Commissioner for Transport.

We have only started to realise what transport outside the railways system really means. During the war our traffic was mostly military equipment and troops. Provisions and ammunition had to be taken expeditiously from place to place and were given No. 1 priority. That is why we in the North got such a bad spin during the war years. The Department of Transport was really created in 1946 and is in fact a sub-department of the railways. The Government's wisdom in creating it has been proved by subsequent events. I think that if my suggestions and others advanced this morning were considered and adopted they would benefit the people generally.

Mr. MORRIS (Enoggera) (12.35 p.m.): I do not think any hon. member will disagree with me when I say that in the Commissioner of Transport we have an officer in charge of a Government department who carries out his administration with the greatest sympathy and the greatest good sense, and with a proper regard for the value of the development of Queensland. Of course, no matter how sympathetic he may be towards the needs of development he must inevitably keep in line with Government policy and there are many ways in which Government policy hamstrings the department, particularly in the outback.

The hon. member for Kennedy made some good suggestions today but with one of them I do not agree—that is, that the department should come under an independent Minister of Transport. I do not see eye to eye with him on that point because in my opinion the problem of transport is very much wrapped up with the problems of the railways. However, we are fortunate that probably the most capable Minister in the Labour Party has been selected for this dual job.

Mr. Power: It is not much of an endorsement when it comes from you.

Mr. MORRIS: When I look over to the Government side of the Chamber I can say that he is the most capable Minister in the Chamber at the present time. I give the Minister for Transport credit for being able to make a good case when it is required but I was disappointed to hear him base his arguments on fallacious grounds yesterday. His arguments actually contained a misleading implication, if not a misleading statement. When I point it out I am sure that he will agree that what I say is correct. For instance, yesterday he said—

“I am pointing out that if the road-transport operators were obligated to provide the total cost of roads throughout the State they could not operate on their existing tariffs.”

Up to a point the statement is correct but the implication is that because of the actions of a munificent Government in carrying the cost of the upkeep of roads road-transport

operators are able to work on lower tariffs than they otherwise would. The whole of that argument is fallacious, because the road operators cannot use all the roads in the State, so why on earth make the suggestion that they do use all the roads in the State and that if they had to provide the cost they could not operate on their existing tariffs? They use only a part of the roads of the State, and they are not the only users of those roads that they can use. So why on earth should they be expected to provide anything like the cost, not of all the roads of the State, but even of the roads that they do use? The Minister went on to say—

“I want to point out very emphatically that from the beginning of the Main Roads Commission up to 30 June last we received in motor vehicle registration fees £15,660,928 and in the same period we spent on permanent works in Queensland the sum of £23,823,731 and on maintenance work £8,740,991. Over and above the total collections from the registration of motor vehicle and transport fees, the Government spent some millions of pounds in road construction and maintenance.”

I concede that all that is true. If the Minister quotes those figures I accept them, but the point is that all the money is not paid by the users of the roads.

Mr. Duggan: Some of it was paid by the State Government.

Mr. MORRIS: Some of it represents grants received from the Federal Government from the petrol tax.

Mr. Duggan: That is spent by the Main Roads Commission.

Mr. MORRIS: If we add the petrol-tax grant to the £15,660,928 and compare the total with the actual cost we shall find that the registration fees amount to a little more than one-half of the amount received from the petrol tax. We shall find also that the Government receive in Federal road grants, registration fees, and transport taxation more money than they are spending on the roads.

Mr. Power: Money spent on roads comes from the Main Roads Commission.

Mr. MORRIS: I am mentioning only the the transport taxation, which comes under this department. I know that the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government would like to sidetrack the matter I am mentioning because it shows that his Government are getting more money from road-users than is being spent on the roads. The Government, therefore, are not such a beneficent Government after all. They should be spending more money on our roads.

A good case can be made out for the imposition of a transport tax under certain conditions. Where we have a railway service which, as the hon. member for Kennedy rightly pointed out, accepts all goods traffic, and where we have a road service that selects its traffic, running counter to the railway service, it is only right and fair that a tax should be charged to the operators of that

road service. We must not overlook the fact that many road hauliers are using roads that do not compete at all with the railways. In fact, they are helping the railways to get more goods to transport and helping in the development of the country. The hon. member for Cooroora mentioned a case in point, in the service that has been established between Imbil and Kilcoy. It is not operating in competition with the railways. But it is doing a great service to the country, as the hon. member pointed out, for it is helping the residents in the Imbil area to get reasonable transport to the centre where shopping and other services are available. I am prepared to say that that operator is paying a road-transport tax.

Mr. Evans: The operator of the road service from Mossman to Cairns is not competing with the railways.

Mr. MORRIS: That is another example. We agree that a road-transport tax is just where the operators compete with the railways but why tax operators who are providing a service to the people in the outback and who are feeding the railways? That is all wrong. There we have an instance in which the Government through their policy of imposing an overall transport tax are making the cost of living very much higher for the people engaged in developing the country.

It is quite unnecessary and unfair that this road-transport tax should be charged where there is no competition with the railways, and where the service is doing everything towards developing the area that needs developing and is helping people who are developing the country. For the same reason I question the wisdom, fairness or justice, of the transport tax on the conveyance of Callide coal. I do not want to be taken as quoting exact figures, but I understand that on every ton of coal transported from Callide there is a tax of approximately 3s. That coal is coming to various places in Queensland where it is being used by public utilities that are providing services for this country and that charge of 3s. on every ton of coal is automatically adding to the cost of living of the people of this State. It is doing nothing to help the railways. It is not being charged in an effort to prevent competition between road transport and the railways; it is merely a means of enlarging the financial intake of the State, at the expense of the people who can ill-afford it.

Mr. Duggan: You have unfortunately chosen a very bad example.

Mr. MORRIS: I am quite prepared to have the Minister knock out my argument when he gets up but I will say this: I will guarantee he cannot knock my arguments as well as I have knocked his in the instances where I have shown his arguments to be at fault previously.

Let me come back to the point I made earlier. I said that we have not got a beneficent Government spending as much as or more than they receive from road-users and transport operators. They are spending

less. The Minister has conveniently forgotten that every gallon of petrol used by road hauliers attracts a tax of 10½d.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Keyatta): Order!

Mr. MORRIS: I have to answer the Minister. I have to show him that the Government are taking more from the people who use petrol than they are providing for the roads.

Mr. KERR (Oxley) (12.48 p.m.): On a previous occasion I have argued that all revenue derived from transport should go into the Railway Department. I believe that transport fees and revenue of that kind should do so. I notice from the report that last year the revenue from the operations of the State Transport Facilities Act amounted to £398,516 and in the Treasurer's Estimates the amount received from the State Transport Facilities Act amounted to £504,877. I am at a loss to account for the discrepancy between those two figures. No doubt the Minister will give us an explanation.

The point I rose to make was this: in view of the fact that road transport to a large extent takes away revenue from the Railway Department, the revenue derived under the State Transport Facilities Act should go into the Railway Department's revenue account. If it had done so last year, after taking into consideration the interest on railway capital expenditure, the railways would have shown a small profit on the overall picture. On those grounds there is justification for my suggestion that this revenue should go into railway revenue and not come under the heading of taxation, although strictly speaking it is a form of taxation. The very fact that this transport is in existence has the effect of taking away revenue from the railways in many ways. Of course, on the other hand, road transport has also the effect of bringing more revenue to the Railway Department. However, that is by the way. The point is this: road transport takes away much revenue that would naturally gravitate to the Railway Department. On these grounds alone the Government would be justified in taking all the credits from the State Transport Facilities Act.

There has been a big increase in revenue since the passing of the State Transport Facilities Act and I notice that the amount actually collected was £88,516 13s. in excess of the estimate. As transport facilities develop to a much greater extent in the years that lie ahead—and no doubt they will, both in the air and on the road—we can look forward next year to an increase of another £100,000. These figures alone will probably help to keep railway charges stable and there will be no reason to give consideration at any time to an increase in railway fares and freights.

Another matter is mentioned in the report on which I should like some information from the Minister. Under section 29 of the Act the Commissioner may invite applications

by public advertisement for licences for motor-transport services; but under section 29 (2) licences can be granted without inviting them by public advertisement. I am not saying for one moment that what has been done has not been justified, but in fairness to the public it should be the general procedure that when licences for new services are to be granted everybody should have the opportunity of tendering for them. Of course, there are cases where this is not at all necessary but I can quote many instances in which licences have been granted for highly remunerative services. I am not saying that they have been granted without the calling of public tenders, but the fact remains that some are very lucrative businesses and the public should be given the opportunity to tender, and if people want to avail themselves of the opportunity, it is up to them. If only one tender is received and the equipment of this tenderer is serviceable for the work, he should get the licence. Some procedure should be laid down and followed. In most cases the licence should be granted after public tender.

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (12.53 p.m.): Transport plays a very important part in the development of Queensland, and is capable of expansion. I have always found the Commissioner a very capable officer. Perhaps the best way I can express my high opinion of him is to say that I know of no Government official who can say "No" with more tact than the Commissioner for Transport. To do that without giving offence is proof of efficiency.

The Auditor-General's report states—

"Revenue for the year 1948-49 amounted to £504,877 and exceeded the estimate by £104,877."

That gives us an indication as to the increase of transport under this Act. The report gives the composition of the revenue as follows—

	£
Authority to operate	94,103
Fines and fees	12,257
Fees paid by licensed operators—	
Air	68,990
Land	288,402
Permit fees	39,875
Fines, Fees &c.	1,250
	<hr/>
	504,877

This department is growing very quickly and earning a great deal of revenue for the Government and it is my opinion that most of that money should be paid to the railways. I say that because many of the fees that are charged are designed to protect the railways against what some people call unfair competition. I should not like to see the railways eliminated; I should like to see them extended because they are essential to the development of the State, and therefore moneys collected by way of State transport tax should be credited to railway funds. If it is right to continue imposing this tax for the protection of the railways, it is equally right that the greater part of it should be credited to railway funds. We all admit that both

rail and road services are necessary and to my way of thinking the revenue derived from this tax should be credited to the Railway Department and a common pool created for the encouragement and development of both forms of transport. Under the present system the owner of a road vehicle is taxed by the local authorities for the purpose of building roads; then, after having contributed towards the cost of the roads, he is taxed again as soon as he starts to use them. Until we devise some system of pooling the revenue derived from both forms of transport and arriving at a fair allocation for railways and for road transport we can never hope to strike the balance that will give the people the service they are entitled to expect from both.

We now have a system of road transport under which we give a monopoly of public transport services between our cities and various parts of the State. The taxation imposed upon the road-user today is generally recognised to be for the protection of the railways but the imposition of transport fees prevents many essential services from being brought into being. It has been found necessary in some cases not to grant permits but, generally speaking, we have arrived at the stage in this State where we have become convinced of the need for decentralisation in order to keep people on the land who are already there. To keep people on the land you must give them the transport facilities they require and it is therefore essential that permits should be granted to enable country people to travel by road to the cities and other large centres of population if they want to, particularly if they cannot get in otherwise. We must be realists and recognise that there is a tremendous shortage of labour. The people on the land are tied to it to such an extent that they are becoming tired, and if they are without the convenience of a railway system they cannot leave their holdings. Motor transport could give them the service they need. If we are going to retain our people on the land and keep them in production we must see that they have motor transport, especially when rail services are not available. Transport has played an important part in the welfare of our community, particularly for those people interested in primary production, and to those people the work of the Commissioner for Transport can mean all the difference between success and failure.

If the railways were to get the bulk of the money collected from transport fees, they could provide cheaper facilities and in turn road transport could be cheaper. Bananas today are looked upon more as a food than as a fruit, and banana-growing is a big business. The banana grown in this country cannot be bettered in any part of the world but to get the banana to market there must be quick and efficient transport. Under existing conditions the carriage of bananas is exempt up to a certain mileage but people outside, I think, the 25-mile range have to pay a road transport tax. The person who lives just one mile beyond the 25 miles must pay the road tax on the whole 26 miles. The position should be reviewed. The banana industry is a valuable means of settlement

and development but in most places the banana has to be grown in the rougher parts of the country, on the hillsides for protection against frosts. When the fruit has grown it has to be transported from these rugged areas over the gorges to loading points by flying-foxes and that is a big and costly undertaking. Then it has to be packed, the cases secured, and the packed fruit taken over the main road to the railway. If the distance is over 25 miles there is road tax to pay. Then it cannot be taken to the market by road; it must go by rail. Then the fruit has to be ripened, and it must be pulled and packed and delivered in a certain condition to enable the ripening process to be a success. If there is a delay in transport and the fruit should become chilled or heated in any way it may not ripen to perfection.

This is a very important industry and one that has been extended with some success. Much more can still be done. Therefore, why not take the broad view and encourage settlement of every kind by giving efficient transport at the cheapest cost? In that way we should develop the industries and the State. The people who have to pay most of the road tax are usually those who have to be content with fewer amenities than their fellows nearer the centres of civilisation and so they are at a disadvantage compared with them and certainly at a disadvantage compared with those within the 25-mile exemption limit. I appeal to the Minister to review this rule and so help not only the primary producers but the people as a whole as well.

Transport plays a very important part in the welfare of the community and it is important that we should have the most efficient and economical system. A charge is made for the carriage of goods and another charge is made for the carriage of passengers. All these items of cost are passed on to the consumer. If the railways could get the bulk of the revenue they would be able to extend and expand and give a cheaper service than they give today. That would enable an efficient system of co-ordination between rail and road to be established—the cheaper the rail system the cheaper the road system—which would be for the benefit of the community as a whole.

My object is to point out how difficult banana-growing is and how difficult it is for those engaged in it to make a living. It is hard work and they should be allowed to transport their fruit to market in a way that will keep it in good condition and enable them to get the best possible market rate.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Minister for Transport) (2.25 p.m.): No serious criticism has been offered of the administration of the department, nor has the policy of the Government in regard to road transport been seriously challenged, although some observations have been made by hon. members opposite in which they have said we could with advantage amend our policy in some directions to afford relief to people in the country.

The hon. member for Cooroora challenged the wisdom of the policy being pursued by the department in insisting that the railway classification rate shall be the minimum rate which road operators should charge. In fairness to the Government and the Commissioner for Transport, I want to say that this policy originated largely from a request submitted by road operators themselves. The hon. member for Cooroora was good enough to acknowledge this point and said he felt that it had some advantage to road operators. The great majority of road hauliers approve of the policy, but a minimum number are trying to discourage the policy of the Commissioner on the ground that we are preventing them from giving a better service by not permitting them to carry goods at a lesser rate than that prescribed in the permits. It has been the custom, in areas served by more than one road operator, for a system of secret discounts to be given. I will refer to those concerned as A, B, and C. Firm A, which may be described as a wholesale distributing firm, would go along to a road operator and say, "You were after my business for, say, carting sugar from Brisbane to Toowoomba, and if you are prepared to carry sugar at 10s. a ton less than the existing rate I will give you the major part of my business." The operator would thus be induced to enter into a secret arrangement to transport sugar at so many shillings a ton less than his competitor. That same firm A would then go along to another transport operator on the same route and say, "You have been around to see me about getting my business, if you are prepared to quote me so many shillings a ton less than the prescribed transport fee on my jam, I will consider giving you all my business." Ultimately it was found, particularly in the Toowoomba district, where there are a number of them in business, that the road-transport operators were carrying a quantity of commodities at uneconomic rates. They came along to me and asked me what they could do to prevent this system, so that when they solicited business from a business house they would be able to say that the Commissioner for Transport would consider revoking a man's licence if he carried commodities at less than the prescribed rate. He could then say, "Much as I like to carry goods at less than the prescribed rate, I have so much capital invested in my business that I do not like to jeopardise it by coming into conflict with the Department of Transport by carrying goods at less than the prescribed rate."

The road operators made that submission to me. The great majority of them appreciate the action of the Government and the Department of Transport in not permitting this vicious system of secret discounts. It was the equivalent of the dog-eat-dog principle of the small dogs being eaten by the big dog at the beginning of the fight until ultimately the big dogs would eat each other and only one or two of the original operators would be left.

We felt that unless we stabilise the conditions we should have a reversion to the system of competition that existed prior to

the passing of the State Transport Facilities Act, when there was no incentive for the operator to maintain his vehicle in first-class condition. He was obliged, because of competition, to work his operators beyond award hours, and it was not an uncommon occurrence four or five years ago for transport operators to be driving very long periods and to fall asleep while driving, so that collisions occurred. They had to economise, too, in the maintenance of their vehicles, with the result there was a greater tendency to mechanical breakdown and consequently a greater risk to the road-users. Since we have been able to stabilise the position these people have been on a much better basis.

If we lay down the rail classification as the minimum rate I do not think we shall be seriously criticised. After all, it has been demonstrated, generally speaking, that no other form of transport can compete with the railways for the bulk transport of goods. A cursory examination of the manifests of the road operators discloses that about 60 per cent. of the total tonnages carried comprise second-class goods, which are high-freight goods. The rate from Brisbane to Toowoomba is about £5 10s. a ton for second-class goods and it is as low as 25s. to 30s. for a M-class goods. On that line not less than 90 per cent. in volume of second-class road traffic has been taken from the Railway Department by the road hauliers. That is one of the reasons that influenced me in recommending to Cabinet as a result of conferences with officers of my department that we levy a tax on a per centum basis rather than on a flat rate. In New South Wales they impose 3d. a ton on the load of the vehicle and 3d. a ton on the tare of the vehicle. With a 5-ton tare it would be 1s. 3d. and with a 7-ton load it would be 1s. 9d. which would be 3s. a ton-mile. In Queensland a tax of 20 per cent. is imposed and this is less than the maximum under the Act of 3d. a ton. Our road tax is lower than New South Wales.

Because we fix our rate on a 20-per-cent. basis it acts as an incentive for the road operator to become a common carrier for his district. For instance, if there were a tax of 3d. a ton per mile on cement to Toowoomba, eighty-four times 3d. amounts to 21s., and there is a margin of only 9s. upon the whole of the ton of cement to Toowoomba. If he is charged 20 per cent. on it he pays something like 6s. in State transport tax. There is also an inducement to solicit a certain amount of the low-freight goods, because some merchants insist that all goods shall go by road transport and unless the road haulier takes a certain amount of low-freight goods with others he will lose the high freight. The road hauliers want this policy. I interjected yesterday to the hon. member for Aubigny, and asked if he were acting as a spokesman for the road hauliers to submit written representations to me asking for an amendment of the present policy of insisting on a freight equal to the minimum rail freight charged by the Railway Department. I would consider amending that policy. The hon. member adroitly side-stepped the

question. The people at Coolangatta, Tweed Heads and Southport are receiving goods at present at a much lower cost than those in any other section of the State. Because of the competition between road and rail a freight war began some years ago between the Railway Department and road operators and the result is that the goods are transported to the South Coast in many instances at a lesser rate for comparable distances in other directions from Brisbane. Road operators are complaining privately to the Transport Commissioner about this state of affairs.

Mr. Sparkes: I was wondering how it got to that part of the State.

Mr. DUGGAN: Because of the degree of competition, in exactly the same way as the competition between rail and shipping to Rockhampton and Townsville brought about lower freights. These people go to the various business houses on the South Coast and say, "It is only because this rapacious Department of Transport compels us to charge this rate from Brisbane to the South Coast." I told the secretary of the Grocers' Federation to go back to the business people in Coolangatta and Southport and ask them to make written representations to me that they did not want this policy to operate. I have not heard from them since. Certain road hauliers are using the Commission as a stalking-horse to press their criticism, but they know they are in a more advantageous position because of the policy I have outlined.

It is all very well for the hon. member for Cooroora to say the problem is bristling with difficulties and we should look into it. By way of interjection I asked him whether he had any suggestion to make and he said he had not. I do not know of any suggestion that could be made unless we revert to the flat ton rate or let competition develop in a very unscientific way, with the result that there would ultimately be a less efficient service. There may be at first an attempt to benefit the people of a given district in exactly the same way as some transport operators have done already. As soon as they have a monopoly service, in the sense that they are the only operators between two given points beyond a distance of 15 miles, they may charge a fare of 2s. 6d. a passenger. Then they get a little ambitious and wish to acquire another licensed service operating in their locality over comparable distances to their own and submit a tender of 2s. or 2s. 3d. a passenger for that service. This action results in the operator charging 2s. 6d. losing the right to operate the service. Our experience has been that if we accept the lower tender it is only a question of a few months when the licensee says he cannot operate on the basis of the 2s. 3d. and wants to go back to the 2s. 6d. charged previously or a higher rate.

We have had the difficulty in a more pronounced form on the North Coast. The operator tenders for a service in competition with somebody else at a figure much below

what he was charging for a comparable distance on his own service. I mentioned the South Coast because the last hon. member who spoke referred to it specifically. This is the sort of thing that sometimes develops: a private operator comes and states that the railway facilities for the movement of cattle are not as good on the South Coast as he would like them to be and asks whether the department will permit him to operate a service between Canungra—if I remember correctly, that is the place—and the Brisbane abattoir. He then came along and said he was going back with an empty truck and would he be permitted to cart goods back to Canungra. This was agreed to. We made inquiries and found he had discontinued operating the cattle traffic and was using the permit for the operation of a licensed service. We found exactly the same thing in the establishment of an aerial service in the South-west of the State.

I have been trying to put such services on a basis where the element of competition has not been eliminated but where the services could operate with prospects of financial success. For instance, there are two aircraft companies operating between Longreach and Brisbane. It is immaterial to the Transport Commission whether 100 passengers a week are carried by aircraft belonging to one or two airline operators because we get the prescribed percentage of tax on the 100 passengers, but it means a lot to the operating companies if the passenger load of each is cut down by the competition of the rival company. They have certain fixed commitments to meet and consequently the difference between the fixed commitments and the revenue they receive by conveying a full load of passengers represents the difference between operating at a profit or a loss.

If we permit too many companies to operate in direct competition with one another we shall get an improved service for a short time but ultimately, because no profit is being earned, they cannot effect replacement of obsolescent aircraft and we shall find the service withdrawn completely.

Reverting to the South-west position, some young returned men, who had an Anson aeroplane, took advantage of the Government's offer to subsidise the transport of fish from Brisbane to Roma by 6½d. a lb. These young men said, "We have had very meritorious Air Force records, we have the plane and we are prepared to operate the service if you will let us cart fish from Brisbane to Roma." We agreed. After a while, they said, "We have a certain amount of space in our aircraft for goods; what about letting us cart goods?" They did not want the service to be advertised because it would allow people like A.N.A. or perhaps T.A.A. to tender for it. Having started with a fish service, they wanted to transfer by a gradual process to partly a fish-carrying and partly a goods-carrying service. Later on, when we agreed to do that, they said, "We find we can put two or three passengers in our aircraft without any detriment to their welfare." Then they

wanted to become a fish, goods, and passenger-carrying agency and ultimately wanted us to forget about the fish altogether and give them a permit to operate a passenger aircraft service between Brisbane and Roma.

I am not taking advantage of my position as Minister in saying this, but I think the Committee is entitled to be taken into my confidence as to the type of problems we meet. The other day, when the hon. member for Aubigny was talking about the rate of tax for motor transport between Brisbane and Toowoomba, I interjected—I do not want to reveal the operator's personal affairs at all and will not do so—and I pointed out that at one time on that service three cars which had done in the aggregate 200,000 miles each and been rebored at intervals were offered for sale for £14,000 on that run. The cars themselves would not be worth, I suppose, £100 each. They had been continually repaired and maintained, and ultimately the person who became the operator came to me and said, "We are paying for three drivers now and we have three cars that are unsafe for the run,"—and I should say that they were unsafe. Anyone who has travelled to Toowoomba can recall these seven-passenger vehicles and the smoke that issued from their exhausts when going over the range. They said, "If you give us equivalent passenger capacity with a new bus we shall be very happy indeed because we shall save the wages of two drivers and the petrol consumption will not be very much more than even one of the present passenger vehicles." We agreed to do that. Then we found on transfer that what was acceptable and pleasing to the previous owner was displeasing and unacceptable to the new proprietor, who came along and said, "I am only operating my driver for about 20 hours a week and I have to pay him for 40. I want increased capacity or an extension of my service so that I can use my driver gainfully and economically," and so on. We are getting continual applications of that kind.

Again, on the South Coast we had a passenger service from Murwillumbah to Brisbane. The person who bought it expressed himself as being completely satisfied to operate a seven-passenger service. Then he came along and agitated for a 14-passenger and we ultimately agreed to give a 14-passenger service because the incidence of rising costs was such that the increased costs could not be absorbed on a seven-passenger revenue-earning basis. Immediately we increased it to 14, they wanted to increase it to 21, 28, 32, or something of the kind, and so this process of peaceful infiltration continues and we have to be careful that we do not develop a monopoly or confer on people advantages they are not entitled to have.

I think it is fair to say that road transport does play an important part in the economic development of the country, but it is also fair to say that it does search for the more remunerative types of traffic. I do not blame it for that. I should do the same if I were a road operator. We have evolved a policy of levying road tax on what I believe to be a

just, equitable and scientific basis. We encourage road operators to haul all types of goods rather than confine their attention to special types.

I will deal at this stage with the comment made by the hon. member for Oxley on section 29 of the Act, which enables the Commissioner, with the consent of the Governor in Council, to grant licences without advertisements. I mention it because it is relevant to what I have been saying. We exercise that provision of the Act only in circumstances that do not confer an undue advantage on the applicant—that is to say, in the case of the mail contractor from Longreach to Boulia or in other outback parts of the State we have done it where mail contractors have been operating for some time. It is fair that we should give an operator the right of continuing a service he has established. There were also operators carrying on business from Brisbane to Toowoomba or from Brisbane to Murwillumbah before the enactment of the State Transport Facilities Act, whom we have permitted to carry on without calling for applications. We do that in the case of cream carriers and perhaps extensions of bus services by half a mile or so to new suburbs. It is done also in connection with horse floats and pantechinons and people engaged in hawking—within a radius of 150 or 200 miles of Brisbane and other centres. But the great bulk of applications under section 29 are for business houses to carry their own products. For instance, Chartres Ltd., the typewriter people, might want to service machines in various parts of the State, and we give such people the right, provided they pay the prescribed fee, to carry exclusively the product of the particular firm.

Mr. Hiley: Travelling mechanics.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes. There are others, such as the Oriental Tea Company Ltd. and Nut Foods Pty. Ltd., whose trucks one might see running about. Again we have to watch the position because ultimately, if we are to continue this principle, we shall be building a multitude of operators carrying their own products and there would be no need for the general carrier. If we permitted firms such as R. M. Gow and Co. to carry its grocery lines and the sugar people their sugar and so on, ultimately there would be no need for the common carrier.

Mr. Hiley: That would not operate.

Mr. DUGGAN: If the hon. member were to look through the general run of applications for licences he would see increasing numbers of people wishing to carry their own commodities, such as the Helidon Spa Water Co. Pty. Ltd. and Tristrams Ltd. A very heavy number of applications are being received from business people who want to carry their own goods.

Mr. Kerr: You issue the licences sparingly?

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes.

We have approved of a service between Innisfail and Milla Milla. We threw it open and called for applications. In all there were

16 applications and we accepted the most successful tenderer, a returned soldier by the name of Condon. In all cases where there is a recognised licensed service between two areas we do not grant licences unless we call for tenders. There are a number of areas in the State wherein we propose to grant approved licences once the petrol position is such that we can do so without detriment to the overall fuel supply. In those cases public tenders will be called.

The hon. member for Enoggera was quite fair in his criticism but by way of interjection I said he had unhappily chosen a very bad example to bolster up his case about the tax to be paid by the road-transport operator. He stated that probably we were entitled to tax him where there were rail facilities giving an adequate service to the people but he said where there was no rail service we were not entitled to tax at all.

I pointed out the other day that where the railway service was adequate and suitable, a maximum rate was fixed under the Act. The rate is on a graduated basis, in the case of passengers being anything from $\frac{1}{4}$ d. passenger per mile to a maximum of 1d. per passenger per mile. In the case of goods, the maximum is 20 per cent. and in the case of omnibus services 10 per cent. There are many services in the State. I have here some more or less confidential information, or perhaps I should say it is not confidential, but information not usually included in the reports of Government departments. I asked Mr. Anderson to prepare a map showing the incidence of the tax and the various licensed services throughout the State. I am sure hon. members will agree that it is very useful information. It illustrates my point that in areas where we think the rail facilities are inadequate a lesser rate is fixed.

I went to Quilpie a few months ago and I agreed that the people there should not pay any tax at all, despite the fact that the Government were spending large sums of money in maintaining roads there. They were not bitumen or macadamised roads, but they were certainly up to the standard of roads built by the Main Roads Commission in that part of the State. In Longreach I agreed that the tax should be $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and for two good reasons. Many services were not obliged to pay any tax at all, while some were liable for 5 per cent., others $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., others 10 per cent., and up as high as 20 per cent. To simplify the accountancy arrangements of the operators and to prevent confusion I agreed that there should be an overall rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and the operators expressed much pleasure at that. A meeting convened at Longreach was attended by 300 to 400 people. I do not know whether the Attorney-General was present or not. If hon. members will throw their minds back a couple of years they will probably remember big headlines in the "Courier-Mail" and the Central Queensland newspapers about the iniquitous effect of the State transport tax and the papers went on to say that the policy that was being implemented would bring ruin to Central Queensland. I flew to Longreach,

accompanied by the Attorney-General, and at the meeting a motion was passed after hearing my explanation, expressing satisfaction with the policy that I announced of a tax of 2½ per cent. for that area. Since then we have had no complaints from that part of the State.

The hon. member for Enoggera said that there should be no tax in places where there were no services by the railway. I think I have replied to that objection by showing that in some parts of the State they pay no tax at all. There was a time in the western parts of Queensland when the Postmaster-General's Department paid up to £1,500 a year to a mail contractor to operate a mail service, but in recent times that service has been carried out for as little as £5 and £10 and the cost has been reduced to that low level because the carriers giving the service are now carrying goods and passengers. I think hon. members will agree that it is an unfair burden to place on the people in those parts of the State to ask them to bear the cost of the goods and passenger service and enable the Postmaster-General to have his service carried out at such a low figure. In some instances, the cost of carrying a single tin of tobacco is 1s. 6d.

Mr. Morris: That is very exceptional.

Mr. DUGGAN: Not exceptional at all. I held the view that there should be a fairer degree of co-ordination between the Postmaster-General's Department and the State and that all the charges levied on the mail contractor should not be carried by the people who travel as passengers in those parts of the State, that they should not be called upon to pay a disproportionate amount for their goods and passenger services. I make bold to say that it is cheaper for the Postmaster-General's Department to deliver mail in the Boulia area than in the Kelvin Grove area—much cheaper. I think hon. members will agree that there should not be a system that allows a letter or a package to be taken some hundreds of miles into an outback area at a cheaper rate than in the metropolitan area.

Let me go a little further on the point made by the hon. member for Enoggera, which, also I think, was unhappily chosen. He referred to the road operators engaged on the moving of coal from Callide to Gladstone. It is very difficult to work out exactly the cost of conveying goods over our railway system. All we can do is to work out the average cost per ton-mile for goods, which is 2.28d. It is very difficult to estimate the cost of the road service used by the licensed road-transport operator for the reason that many other vehicles, such as ordinary cars, utilities, push bikes and pedestrians, go over it. It would be difficult to say what road repairs, for instance, were occasioned by the road-transport operator. But the volume of traffic on the Callide-Gladstone road is predominantly coal traffic so we can determine closely the cost of operating a road-transport service over that road. It would be impossible to make any attempt to do so on the road, say, from Brisbane to Toowoomba. but on the Gladstone-Callide road there are only a

few farmers' properties. That road, to August, 1949, actually cost £411,835, of which the State Government paid £335,089, the Commonwealth Government £67,891, and the local authorities £9,855.

Mr. Pie: It was a military road. It did not cost this Government anything.

Mr. DUGGAN: It cost the State Government £335,089. That road would not be justified solely for the convenience of settlers in that area. Ordinarily they would have had to wait for some years for a road of that standard. It is true that it was primarily a military consideration that caused the road to be built. My point is if it was necessary to build a road to transport coal from Callide to Gladstone the cost would be £411,835.

Mr. Morris: It was a defence road.

Mr. DUGGAN: Nevertheless my case is strengthened considerably, inasmuch I was not aware at the beginning of my speech of the precise allocation of its cost. I knew it was built by the Allied Works Council and the Main Roads Commission. You can see that the cost was borne to an overwhelming degree by the State Government—£335,089 of a total of £411,835.

We have assessed the rate of tax for coal over the road at 5s. a ton, three-farthings a ton-mile. Mr. Kemp and the Main Roads Commission engineers have stated that the maintenance costs on the road alone will amount to 1d. a ton-mile. For every ton of coal we lost a farthing a ton-mile on the maintenance cost alone, without any provision for interest and redemption on the road.

An Opposition Member: Who pays the whole of the maintenance costs?

Mr. DUGGAN: The State, but there is a small percentage that may be borne by the local authorities. I quoted yesterday the schedule for the whole of Queensland. (Opposition interjections.) Of a total expenditure of £411,835 the local authorities met £9,855. I am prepared to say that the maintenance costs would not be 10 per cent.

Mr. Sparkes: I doubt it.

Mr. DUGGAN: I quoted the Treasurer's Tables yesterday.

Mr. Sparkes: What is the road between Callide and Gladstone?

Mr. DUGGAN: A highway. I mentioned yesterday, and I repeat, that for the permanent roadworks over the last 10 years the Main Roads Commission contributed 94.4 per cent. of the cost and the local authorities 5.6 per cent., and of the maintenance 76.1 per cent. was borne by the Main Roads Commission, leaving 23.9 per cent. to be borne by the local authorities.

Some of the operators on the road from Callide to Gladstone found 10 miles of the road very difficult and their maintenance costs were increasing as a result. The State Government, in addition to the £411,000, had authorised the expenditure of an additional £120,000 for a deviation, which

will avoid this very rough section. The road hauliers have indicated that if this road is completed it would pay them to pay increased cost in the form of a transport fee because they would be saved so much in repairs.

Mr. Evans: They will pass it on.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am talking of whether the people should be obliged to pay a share of cost of these things. For general roads we accept the responsibility of making up the difference between what is returned to us by way of vehicle registration and so on and the amount required as part of the responsibility the State should be obliged to accept. I am not quarrelling with that—it is part of the State's responsibility. I say that in this case, where the road traffic is predominantly coal, it is uneconomic for us to operate that road unless we show that the overall coal requirements are such that we are justified in losing the amount of money in building the road for the requirements of the people using the coal. The hon. member for Port Curtis mentioned that the Minister for Transport in Victoria stated to him that he thought it was a fair rate of tax. He told me the same. Because of the urgent need of coal we applied a tax of three-farthings a ton.

To carry the thing a little further. The other day I quoted from the magazine "Fortune" of June, 1949, an article "The Coming Crisis in Transportation," and the following are extracts from this article:—

" . . . Highway transportation is tagged in all cases at far less than costs, because no ad valorem tax is levied on highway plant as it is on railway plant.

"Most impartial studies of highway costs made before the war failed to validate this point of view. But what with heavier trucks and increased costs of highway construction and maintenance, responsible authorities have recently tended to agree that trucks should pay more taxes. Illinois engineers estimate that trucks, during and since the war, have done \$2 billion worth of damage to the state's highways.

"Other states are making similar studies and doubtless will arrive at similar conclusions; some already propose to reduce weight limits. Certainly there is basic justice in raising license fees, which, unlike almost everything else, have not gone up much since the war.

"It is highly possible, moreover, that trucks could raise havoc with railroads even if they paid much higher fees. More and better highways are bound to be built. What will this mean? One truck-fleet owner supplies the answer: 'We can afford to pay tolls on really modern highways like the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Easy grades, no stops, long curves, shorter mileage, even when we pay plenty for them, would save, not cost, us money. Nothing I'd like to see more than modern toll highways all over the country.' Taking everything together, truck competition is

not likely to be 'put in its place' simply by making trucks pay more to use highways."

We have there an admission by an important transport operator that certain highways developed to certain standards result in lower operating costs. That is perfectly right. The transport operators in the main will operate only in areas that are densely populated and roads in good condition. In my area there are transport operators who run services from Brisbane to Toowoomba and Goondiwindi. They pay very heavy fees. They asked that a section of the road between Brisbane and Goondiwindi, which is not bitumenised at the present time, should be treated. In heavy weather their trucks get bogged and they have to pay so much in wages for the transport operators while the trucks are demobilised and expense of getting the trucks hauled out of the bog. There is a slower turn round. The state of the road has a great bearing on operating costs. That is obvious. If an all-weather road is constructed to Goondiwindi and other towns, transport operators will be more inclined to apply for a license for that service. They do not want to operate in areas where the road is rough and maintenance costs are unduly high. I think I have said sufficient on this point to indicate we are entitled to lay down a policy that reasonable contributions can be expected from road hauliers in Queensland. I think the hon. member for Stanley interjected yesterday—I may be wrong, but I think it was he who said we were not doing anything extraordinary in providing roads for people using ordinary motor vehicles. That is perfectly true. If we were obliged to maintain our roads to the standard to carry only ordinary motor vehicles and cars we would save many hundreds of thousands of pounds yearly. We would not be obliged to construct bridges to carry loads of 24 tons. If we were concerned only about the ordinary motor car traffic the cost of constructing roads would be lower. I am sure the hon. member for Aubigny will admit that in Wambo Shire Council area one of the problems confronting the council is heavy trucks travelling on their side roads in wet weather and doing tremendous damage.

Mr. Sparkes: General Grant tanks came along then the other day.

Mr. DUGGAN: I have had shire councils coming to me asking us to prohibit the trucks beyond a certain capacity operating on other than main highways because of the tremendous damage they do in wet weather. If we were concerned only with the building of roads for the convenience of motor car owners we could save hundreds of thousands of pounds in a year. The difference between the standard of road necessary for the ordinary motor car and the standard required when the road is to be used by heavy semi-trailers of 9, 12 and 15 tons represents a tremendous amount. Additional cost is incurred not only in the formation and the foundation of the road but the width of the road. When vehicles 8 feet and 8 feet

6 inches wide operate on a road the road must be wide enough to provide a safety margin for passing traffic.

The hon. member for Albert said he felt we were a little bit severe on the air-transport people in extracting £68,000 from them. I understand he implies that we did not have to build highways, that the air was perfectly free, and that we should not levy a tax to that extent. I have pointed out that we have under consideration now the building of seven complete sets of trains for long-distance use in Queensland. They will represent a capital cost of £1,500,000. If we air-condition them it will cost another £600,000, so that there we have £2,100,000 that will be required to provide the passengers to distant parts of the State with the comfortable service to which they are entitled according to modern standards. If we are going to provide £2,100,000 for a service to Mt. Isa, Cunnamulla, Cloncurry, Longreach, Townsville and Cairns, and much of that traffic to those areas is lost by the railways to air transport, what is the use of spending the £2,100,000 on that service?

Mr. Luckins: Which do you think they will prefer, the train or the air?

Mr. DUGGAN: It depends on the point of view. The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock here invariably prefers to travel to Atherton by train because he does not like air travel.

Mr. Macdonald: The train costs him nothing.

Mr. DUGGAN: It does not cost him anything to travel by air when he is on official business.

Mr. Sparkes: Both air and train services operate in other parts of the world.

Mr. DUGGAN: And I am not quarrelling with that policy at all. We encourage it. All I am saying is that in Queensland we are entitled to impose a tax on air services because it is necessary for us to maintain the railways as an important State instrumentality. On the one hand you get the Opposition saying, "Spend millions of pounds on your railways, modernise your railways, develop the State; we do not care if they are incurring losses," and when other forms of transport come along they say, "Don't tax them, let them eat into the revenue of this important State instrumentality." I make the challenge that irrespective of the competition of the Government of the day, no Government can afford to ignore the impact on their financial structure of the finances of the Railway Department.

I have not had confirmation of what I am about to say, but I do not think there is one objection recorded in the Transport Commission's office to the rate of tax applied to goods services in this State. There was an objection to the flat rate of 3d. a ton-mile, but I do not think we have one letter of objection in the Commission's office. Capt. Holyman, who is a vigorous exponent of private enterprise and a very efficient business

man, Mr. Butler of Butler Airways, and Mr. Adair all said they had no quarrel with the policy of the tax applying to aircraft.

Mr. Sparkes: The public pays.

Mr. DUGGAN: Of course it does. When a thing is competing with a State instrumentality and they have to pay a tax of 7½ per cent. or 10 per cent. on a £6 fare it means that if the tax did not operate they could compete more advantageously with the railways. They usually base their fares on the first-class rail fare plus the sleeper, plus meals required en route. They do that in most parts of Australia.

Mr. Sparkes: The other day you asked me a question. Now I am asking you one. If these trains were owned by a private company would you still tax aircraft?

Mr. DUGGAN: No, for the reason that I will wager my bottom dollar that there is no private operator who would manage the railways and be prepared to transport cattle and primary products at the rates at which they are transported by the Queensland Government railways. If we insisted that the private operators should carry goods at rates that were uneconomic and resulted in losses to them, we should be entitled to say that competing forms of transport should be taxed.

The Premier is not here, but I am certain he will not repudiate the statement I am about to make. If the hon. member can form a syndicate that will accept the liabilities of the Queensland railways and continue to operate them at the rates of fares and freights applying now, we are prepared to hand them over to it. (Opposition interjections.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dunstan): Order!

Mr. DUGGAN: Every hon. member of the Opposition, with one or two exceptions, has got up in his place and admitted that the railways have done a good job and that they are an important and an essential agency in the development of this State. Let us not get away from that point. I have mentioned, if not in this Chamber, in some other place, that there is not one country in the world that is able to maintain a superiority over all other nations in regard to its armed forces, its land forces, its air forces, and its sea power. Every country throughout the world has been obliged to compromise in some way. Great Britain depended tremendously on her sea-power; she depended on the control of the sea. She could not afford to maintain a large army. She could not afford to maintain an air force comparable with the German Air Force. Germany, on the other hand, concentrated principally on a large standing army and had no navy comparable to that of Great Britain. Russia maintained a large army and a fairly strong air force and U.S.A. had a reasonably strong army, navy and air force. Japan had a strong navy and a comparatively strong army. but, as I said, no nation in the world has been able to maintain absolute superiority in air force, land force, and sea force, because of the tremendous costs

involved. And that analogy applies with equal force to transport, because the size and population of Queensland does not enable us to have an absolutely first-class rail service and does not enable us to have an absolutely first-class road service or air service. We have to compromise in some direction. In the U.S.A., where they have undoubtedly some of the most efficient railways in the world, and the best network of roads and the cheapest trucks and the cheapest petrol in the world, 97 per cent. of their troop movements in the war were made by rail. No country in the world can afford—and Queensland cannot afford—to have an absolute superiority of transport in any particular way. I have said that our road transport service is not up to the standard I should like to see it; nor is our rail service or our air service, and we have had to compromise. Within the capacity of the people to finance a transport policy we have made it as equitable as we can so that it will fall fairly on the shoulders of the greatest number of people. We cannot afford to ignore the financial impact of very heavy deficits on the railways, and if we encourage alternative forms of transport it is only reasonable to ask that those alternative forms should make some contribution towards a balanced system of transport.

Without throwing eulogies on the Government, I can say that we have carried out our policy well. The hon. member for Cooroora said that a few years ago protest meetings were often organised protesting against the Government's transport policy. I can recall seeing Mr. Paul Goldenstedt, who was briefed by the transport operators, going round organising protest meetings against our road-transport policy. I do not know of any such meetings being held today. On the contrary, road-transport annual meetings are held today, at which I receive an invitation to be present. The invitation covers both the Minister for Transport and the Commissioner for Transport, and I want to say that the relationship between the road-transport operator, the air operators and the Department of Transport is harmonious. Mr. Butler has invited me to be a guest at a luncheon on the 17th of this month of the Institute of Transport in Queensland. Mr. Adair, Captain Holyman, Mr. Butler, the T.A.A. man, Mr. Sweyn, and Mr. Brain are often in my office.

I have never experienced any hostility from them, nor any serious criticism. They have argued about the allocation of the licensed routes and things like that but no general criticism to the effect that we were burdening the services by our rate of tax. Even hon. members opposite who have spoken have not criticised the department to any extent, with perhaps the notable exception of the hon. member for Aubigny. If hon. members will read "Hansard" and note the speeches of the hon. member for Albert, the hon. member for Mirani, the hon. member for Cooroora, the hon. member for Oxley, the hon. member for Enoggera, the hon. member for Hamilton, and the Leader of the Opposition, they will see that the general tenor of their comments was not unfavourable towards the policy we have pursued. It is true that they

offered suggestions and asked us to consider certain proposals but I do not construe their comments in any way to be a criticism of the policy we are pursuing. I feel that some of the voices raised today have been raised in a spirit of levity rather than as a serious criticism of the department.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (3.21 p.m.): As a youngster I was told by my dad that sooner or later they would be taxing the air and after listening to the Minister I am satisfied that we have arrived at that stage—we are now taxing the air. The Minister always puts forward the excuse that the people who used the roads should pay something for the facility and perhaps there is something in what he says. What about the people who use the air? What does the Minister say to that? He does not build the aerodromes.

As Mr. Fitzpatrick would say at the conclusion of his Travel Talks, "Farewell to the Minister and his Estimates." However, before I leave them I want to wish him well in the job that he has ahead of him. I trust that if he should come back into his present position after the next elections—I have very grave doubts about it—he will not find it necessary to bring volumes of speeches into the Chamber, that he will be able to point to something done in giving the people of Queensland the transport system that they need, and that he will be able to point to an improvement in the railway services.

Before closing I want also to pay a tribute to the men in his department, some of whom I know very well. I refer particularly to Mr. Anderson and Mr. McMahon, two excellent officers but men bound to some extent by the red tape always to be found in Government departments. It is remarkable how these men can cut their way through the red tape and give service to the people. I congratulate the Minister on having two such excellent officers. On many occasions they have demonstrated to me how promptly they can act, how they can tear away the red tape and give the people of Queensland the service they ask. If the Minister should come back here after the next elections and take up his present position, or if he should find himself over on this side of the Chamber—we do not want to see him go out of Parliament altogether—I trust he will give the people the service I ask. The hon. member for Albert had very kindly intentions indeed when he said that if the hon. gentleman had to serve part of his political time in Opposition that might be for the benefit of the community, and for the benefit of the Minister, too.

Mr. MORRIS (Enoggera) (3.24 p.m.): I should like to add something to the remarks I made about the transport system in the Callide area. The Minister also has referred to it. The example that I gave in that connection was an ideal one for the Minister to use in his argument against me. It was about the worst example that I could have selected for the purposes of my argument. That is why I deliberately chose to make the point I was making. It made my case overall very much stronger.

The Minister told us that the cost of the upkeep of this road is a shade over 1d. a road-mile, and that the transport tax being charged by the Government is three-farthings a road-mile. On the face of it it looks as if the Government were losing on that route. Let us consider whether that is so or not.

The Government are charging a transport tax of three-farthings a ton-mile. Then the owners of the vehicles must pay their registration fees and have to travel only about 10 miles to the gallon to pay an additional 1d. a ton-mile in petrol tax. Therefore, they are actually being charged at the rate of about 2d. a ton-mile. The road is costing the Government one penny a ton-mile. Therefore, the Government are not being so beneficent after all. They are overcharging on a commodity that is urgently needed by the people and a commodity the production of which will help the country considerably.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (3.26 p.m.): I just want to pay my tribute to the courtesy and efficiency of the Commissioner for Transport. I never had much to do with him until some time ago, when I was an alderman of the Townsville City Council. I then had some interviews with him on behalf of that council which desired to take over the private bus services in that city. The Commissioner gave us all the help he could. I do not know what his private opinion is about municipal control of transport, particularly within that area, and I take it he was merely implementing the policy of his Government. I do want to pay a tribute to the help he rendered to the Council and to me on that occasion. Unfortunately, at the last ditch, notwithstanding that we received all the help possible from Mr. Anderson and the Treasurer, who went out of his way to do so, at the last moment five A.L.P. aldermen somersaulted on their pledge. I understand they had 2,000 very good reasons for doing so and the proposal fell through. Nevertheless, I want to pay my tribute to the Commissioner and the Treasurer for the help they gave to me. Since then the A.L.P. aldermen and the genuine Labour aldermen have been thrown off that Council and now the city is in the hands of the C.M.O., which is just another name for the Liberals. Naturally, the municipalisation of the city transport system has gone by the board.

I want to make some reference to the statement that some firms do their transport by rail and some by road. It is remarkable that when some of these big firms which own shipping lines themselves, have to transport commodities that are likely to be pillaged or lost in transport, such as tobacco, they always use the Railway Department. They will not take the risk on their own ships and their own transport lines; they always send their tobacco and other goods that are likely to be stolen by rail, so that if any goods go astray they can lodge a claim with the Railway Department. I suppose you would call that business acumen on the part of the big firms.

There is one matter I should like the Minister to clear up. It was mentioned to

me by men who travel by air both intrastate and interstate. When they fly from Townsville to Brisbane they pay the fixed amount of the fare plus the transport tax. If they fly from Townsville to Sydney or Townsville to Melbourne they pay no transport tax whatsoever despite the fact that they fly over 800 or 900 miles of this State in the process. If that is true—and it is a statement made to me by reputable people—I should like to know why State transport tax is not charged on the interstate route while the plane is flying over this State.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (3.30 p.m.): I recently had an opportunity of travelling over the Blair Athol and Emerald-Springsure road, two of the main arterial roads used for defence purposes. I bring before the notice of the Minister the rapid deterioration in those roads. While the foundations are perfect the corrugations are very real, and unless something is done quickly there will be serious deterioration that will cost a considerable amount to rectify.

The hon. member for Carpentaria will bear me out when I mention the splendid road from Mt. Isa into the Gulf country, which also is rapidly deteriorating.

Mr. Power: We are not discussing main roads.

Mr. PIE: If the Minister for Public Works kept his nose out of this it would be better.

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in discussing main roads on this vote?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dunstan): We are not dealing with main-roads construction on this vote; it applies to transport administration.

Mr. PIE: Goods are transported over these roads and they are full of corrugations.

Referring to the charge for coal coming out of the Callide field, it is 5s. a ton to the coast. The Minister knows an offer has been made by a private firm to do the same job and maintain the road at considerably less than the operators are now being charged. The hon. member for Port Curtis can bear me out. If the Government find that 5s. a ton or ½d. a ton-mile does not enable them to meet costs, the best thing is to hand it over to private enterprise, which is willing to do it at a considerably lower figure than is being charged at the present time. The road, particularly the 11 miles that the Minister referred to, should be attended to very quickly. The men are putting up with conditions there that make it virtually impossible to operate on an economic basis. After all, we are very dependent on the coal that is coming out of the Callide field. I hope the Minister will do something in that regard.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Minister for Transport) (3.33 p.m.): As the matter mentioned by the hon. member concerns the Main Roads Commission I will have the hon. member's request submitted to my colleague, the Treasurer.

The point raised by the hon. member for Mundingburra about the incidence of tax on interstate journeys by air is quite sound. We have experienced difficulty in connection with the tax on airline operators in the interstate traffic. Under section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution we are prevented, perhaps, from doing some things. Our own Act provides that we can tax traffic between any two points in Queensland. There is a conflict of opinion on the point and we have not overlooked the possibility that our constitutional powers might be strengthened. The hon. member probably knows that when the State law conflicts with the Federal law the Federal law prevails.

Mr. Aikens: Did you take a legal opinion?

Mr. DUGGAN: Quite a few legal opinions; and so have the airline companies. We have not lost sight of the matter; it will be followed up. The point is not a new one; it is known to us. We have been giving the matter a good deal of attention and we will continue to give it attention in the hope that we may be able to repair what may be a constitutional weakness.

Vote (Department of Transport) agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.
CHIEF OFFICE.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government) (3.35 p.m.): I move—

“That £63,865 be granted for ‘Department of Public Works—Chief Office.’”

It will be noted that the total amount proposed to be appropriated for Chief Office for the financial year 1949-50 is £4,327 in excess of the corresponding appropriation for the financial year 1948-49, £59,538. The increased appropriation is necessary to meet the increased administrative costs.

I desire to point out that although the difference between the amount appropriated for 1948-49 and that required for 1949-50 is £4,327, a further sum of £2,750 was subsequently provided for 1948-49 in the Supplementary Estimates. The net increase in the appropriation now requested is £1,577.

At this stage I might say that I propose to adopt the procedure of replying to the various comments by hon. members from time to time and not make a very long speech at the introduction of the Estimates. On taking over the position of Minister in charge of the administration of the Department of Public Works I intimated to Parliament that I had been dissatisfied with the condition of the department, and after investigation I proposed to have a reorganisation. From time to time members of the Opposition have made charges about the administration of this department and my proposed reorganisation. I assure the Committee that the department has been reorganised as a result of an investigation made by an officer of the Public Service Commissioner's Department. The decision on the recommendation was made as the result of conferences between me and

the Under Secretary of the department, Mr. Lyons, who I believe to be one of the best officers employed by the Public Service today.

Discussions took place on the method to improve particularly the construction side of the department. As a result, Mr. Lyons made a recommendation that we appoint a manager of the construction branch. I sought from Mr. Lyons a recommendation as to whom he considered to be the most suitable officer, and Mr. Jack East was appointed acting manager for 12 months, and I must say that at the end of that period we were very pleased to appoint him permanently. He did an excellent job. He has completely modernised the construction side of the Department of Public Works. This department exists for the purpose of providing the buildings required not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the State. Mr. East has been appointed construction manager for the whole State, subject, of course, to the Under Secretary and myself, as Minister. That part of the work has been placed under his control.

We also have what is known as a technical administration officer. In addition, in the metropolitan area there are three senior supervisors, seven assistant supervisors, and a number of foremen in charge of the various jobs.

We have to a great extent decentralised the work of the Department of Public Works. There has been unfair criticism that there has been delay in dealing with matters that have been referred to it by both members of the Opposition and of the Government. They complain of delay in regard to work they seek to have carried out in their electorates. There are district supervisors of works at Rockhampton, Townsville, Charters Towers, Toowoomba, and other centres. Previously district supervisors were only empowered to spend an amount not exceeding £5, without authority from head office, but today they are empowered to spend up to £25 without seeking that authority. That is a reasonable amount to be expended by such supervisors.

There is also a close collaboration with the regional directors of the Department of Public Instruction. For some time now regional directors had been authorised to expend up to £25 and were carrying out certain works under that authority. I pointed out to Cabinet that we had discovered instances of duplication. We had found employees of the Department of Public Works and private contractors engaged by the regional directors working on the same building. I pointed out to Cabinet that it would be wiser to leave the whole of the work in the hands of the officers of the Department of Public Works. All that is required now is for the regional director to bring the matter under the notice of the district supervisor of the Department of Public Works, who can take immediate action to spend up to £25.

In addition to the district supervisor, we have four supervisors, one working in the Gympie district between Gympie and Kingaroy, another working between Nambour and Redcliffe, another engaged on the South Coast, where we are building a maternity hospital, and another in the Northern Division. We

have also a plans and labour supervisor. Hon. members will see that the work of the department has been thoroughly reorganised and complaints about delays in carrying out work have not been received so frequently lately.

The Department has been criticised at times for delay in carrying out certain works. Let me point out that before the Department can undertake any work for any other department, it is necessary that we receive the authority of the Executive Council for the expenditure involved. All accounts of the department are subject to very close scrutiny by the Auditor-General, and I have no objection to that. Before we can seek the authority of the Executive Council for the expenditure of any money, it is necessary to prepare plans, carry out quantity surveys of materials required, and prepare an estimate of the approximate cost. All these things take time. We have not the technical staff we should like to have for this work, and in an endeavour to improve the position we brought architects out from England. We paid their wages from the day they got on the boat, but after they arrived here they stayed with us for only a short time and then transferred to private enterprise. We have exhausted every possible means of improving the position. Because of the inability of the department to obtain the required technical staff, Cabinet recently agreed to our sending work out to private architects and quantity surveyors.

In addition to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient skilled staff and having to send the preparation of plans out to private architects, we are having great difficulty about materials. But that difficulty is not peculiar to Queensland or even Australia. In a recent report of the Minister for Works in New Zealand I read they are suffering from the same disabilities there, and the position is the same even in other parts of the world. There has been difficulty in obtaining steel, particularly S.J.R., and reinforcing steel. As we want to proceed with a number of jobs, and in an endeavour to overcome the difficulty, the Government have imported from overseas and other places large quantities of steel and galvanised iron for buildings not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the State.

It is difficult to find suitable office accommodation for public servants, not only in Brisbane but elsewhere. In many places we are renting office space from private enterprise for the purpose of housing public servants. We experienced great difficulty in the metropolitan area in providing sufficient accommodation. I mention all these things so that hon. members will realise the magnitude of the job before us.

The workshops at Ipswich Road have recently been modernised. The whole place has been reorganised in such a way so that a piece of rough timber may go in at this end and come out the finished product at the other. In this way we have been able to reduce many costs considerably.

The work of the Department of Public Works is very important and I have received requests from hon. members on both sides of

the Chamber to have works carried out in their electorates. I can honestly and conscientiously say that every request submitted to me has received favourable consideration. I adopt the attitude that when a matter comes forward to me it is B/C'd. to the Under Secretary, who calls for a report from the district officer. As that officer's recommendation comes forward and the work is approved of, it is carried out. Notification is given to hon. members as soon as the work is approved that it is proposed to carry out such-and-such a job. There are impetuous members, however, who, not being satisfied with their notification to the effect that approval has been given for the doing of the work, continually write in demanding to know when it will be carried out.

I would point out that in all cases the material required is railed to the job. The men travel from one point to another as one job is completed. They camp on the job and receive a camp allowance. All work is carried out in accordance with the priority allotted to it. It is rather annoying, when you inform an hon. member that you propose to do certain work, to receive a letter demanding to know when the work will be carried out. When an hon. member is notified that it is our intention to carry out a certain project letters should not be sent to us demanding to know when it will be carried out. I have received such letters demanding that information and I might say that I do not intend to reply to them in future. After all, when we tell an hon. member that we propose to do certain work he should wait at least a reasonable time before writing about it. If a reasonable period has elapsed then I have no objection to having the matter brought to my notice again but I do object to letters demanding to know when the work will be carried out.

I reserve further comment until I hear the remarks of hon. members.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) (3.49 p.m.): I have listened intently to the Minister's remarks on the Estimates of the Department of Public Works. He told us that he had, to the best of his ability, reorganised the department and I really do think that the Minister has worked hard and done the best he could to get efficiency there. We must realise that the Department of Public Works is Queensland-wide and Queensland is a big State and all the officers cannot be efficient. There must be some weak links. If the policy is right and supervision adequate you will eventually catch up on the inefficient officers and eventually give the people the service they have a right to expect.

I was interested in the Minister's concluding remark about the impatience and discourtesy of hon. members. I hope that I was not an offender.

Mr. Power: You were not.

Mr. EVANS: I know that the Minister has done his best in connection with the schools and other buildings in my electorate and I have always been prepared to accept any statement that he made to me about them. Ever since I have been in the Chamber

every promise he ever made to me he carried out. I go further and say that all the reconditioning work in my electorate has been satisfactory. All the work in connection with light and ventilation has been up to standard and thorough workmanship is to be found in all new buildings. At the moment I am giving the Minister quite a deal of kudos, but I may find it necessary to criticise him a little later on.

I want to refer to three amending Bills that he introduced to give effect to recommendations by the local authorities. I approved of those Bills. I was a member of a local authority for quite a long time and I know that when representatives of local authorities meet in Brisbane to consider the resolutions on their agenda they have in mind the fact that a considerable amount of thought was given to them by various local authorities and practical men before they were sent forward. That is so in the main and I say it advisedly because I am not unmindful of the fact that some resolutions relate to the party political angle.

As I said, the Minister introduced three amending Bills to embody these recommendations and clearly demonstrated that he was of the same opinion that I was in respect to them and was guided by recommendations of the local authority representatives of Queensland. I know there are times when a body of men will carry a number of resolutions in the mistaken belief that by that means alone they can revolutionise a whole system, but I know the Minister is restricted in the amount of work he can do by the shortage of finance, materials and labour. I admit, too, that quite a number of people in local government affairs take up the wrong view of certain subjects and I have no doubt that the Minister does so, too. The Minister has made mistakes but let me say this to his credit, that at a later stage when other factors were presented to him he has not hesitated to change his view in the interests of the people of the State.

The problem facing local authorities today is finance and in that I am sure the Minister will agree.

The Minister has no control over the next matter that I am about to mention but his Government can make recommendations concerning it. I think I am in order in referring to it. There has been much discussion about the railways, transport and taxation. I want to refer now to the petrol tax.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hilton): Order!

Mr. EVANS: I ask you to listen to me, Mr. Hilton. I think that I am in order in referring to the matter. I was going to suggest to the Minister that when representatives of the Queensland Government and the Federal Government confer on this matter, which has to do with local government and comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister, the representatives of the State Government should ask the Federal Government for a greater allocation of the revenue from the petrol tax.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that matter.

Mr. EVANS: If you are going to take up that attitude, Mr. Hilton, I must accept your ruling. This is a matter that is linked with local-government administration and local government comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister. If you are going to prevent hon. members from discussing a matter that links Treasury items with local government and financial matters with local-government affairs, all I can say is that the vote will not be debated for very long. I accept your ruling, Mr. Hilton, I have to, because I do not want to be sat down or named.

The councillors and aldermen running our local government are doing a great job. Their operations are limited by the revenue derived from rates levied on the ratepayers in accordance with their capacity to pay. It is a duty of the Government to help local governing bodies in financial matters.

I have received many letters from local authorities in my electorate asking for help to procure road graders, bulldozers and spare parts for road-making plant now lying idle in their yards. I have tried to do so. Their requests have been submitted to the Co-ordinator-General for Public Works, but he cannot help them because their requests must go to another authority. You prevented me, Mr. Hilton, from discussing the people who have the power to do those things. I suggest that the Government should approach the Commonwealth Government, who have the control of dollars, and ask them to consider granting import licences for the importation of these machines. The Minister should also help local authorities to obtain spare parts for their idle plant. Not being able to buy new plant and the lack of spare parts makes another important problem for local authorities. I can point to road graders, bulldozers and many machines belonging to the Commissioner for Main Roads lying idle in yards in my district. The Minister should get in touch with local authorities to discover their needs and then take the matter up with the Federal Government with a view to inducing that Government to make dollars available to import the necessary spare parts to enable machines now lying idle to be employed on road work. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of good plant is now idle because spare parts are not available. They may be available on the black-market. I have been asked to get spare parts and I have been informed of avenues where they might be procured at an advance of 20 per cent. on the retail price, but I would not touch them. If I recommended the purchase of such goods, someone would be bound to say that the hon. member for Mirani got a cut out of the increased price. As one who has had considerable experience in local government I would urge the Minister to help local authorities and if he cannot get them new plant he should at least obtain spare parts for the plant now lying idle.

We read recently that Thiess Brothers had bought a lot of plant. That is an avenue

that could have been explored for the benefit of the Main Roads Commission and local authorities. Although the whole of that plant may not have been suitable, some of it was certainly suitable. Thiess Brothers bought some of that plant for the development of open-cut coal-mines, a very worthy object. I understand much of that plant could have been brought from the Islands and that some of it, when reconditioned, would have been of great value both to the Main Roads Commission and the local authorities.

The Minister and I have had some very severe conflicts about town-planning. I think I could say that the Minister believes in town-planning.

Mr. Power: Of course I do.

Mr. EVANS: Driving round Brisbane and in almost every other city in Queensland one can see evidence of how necessary it is to have town-planning.

Mr. Power: Brisbane has no town-planning.

Mr. EVANS: When you see some of the dead-ends and some of the boomerang streets you realise that town-planning was absent. I believe that you cannot bring in town planning too early. It is absolutely essential, and the sooner you start town-planning the cheaper it is going to be. The longer you leave it the more problems you create and the more costly the faults are to rectify.

I understand the Minister has even agreed to some amendment in the town plan of Mackay.

Mr. Power: They discussed the matter with me.

Mr. EVANS: They are pretty satisfied today with what the Minister has done.

Mr. Power: I was quite reasonable with them. If they had done that in the first place there would have been no argument.

Mr. EVANS: There is another matter, that of subdivisions, on which I wish to speak. It is questionable whether I am in order because I am not sure whether the Valuer-General creates the values on Crown subdivisions or the Department of Public Lands. If it is the Valuer-General I want to say that he is responsible for lifting land values to a greater extent than any of the black-marketeers in Queensland. In my own district I had an area of land that I subdivided and I conformed to the provisions of the Act, and I sold those properties at the fixed price of £65, and I was quite satisfied. It was freehold land; I graded the allotments, and good roads were put in. Only a few months afterwards there was a big subdivision in front of my home.

Mr. Power: Where was that?

Mr. EVANS: North Mackay. There was a subdivision in front of my home and no roads were put in—I am not blaming the Minister for that—and the land was in its natural state, not graded. The ceiling for some of those allotments, not the frontage

allotments, went up to £180; and they were sold at that. Possibly it will be said they were perpetual leaseholds. Even if they are, the owners have to pay the interest on the values. I say it is wrong for the Government to allow land values to go to that ridiculous price.

Mr. Power: That would come under the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. EVANS: I know it does, but the local authority comes in on the rates.

I will tell you why the purchasers paid those prices: they want homes, they are land-hungry, and this land is in a good locality. They paid these absolutely ridiculous prices. Even if the Valuer-General did not do it, it will create the position that when the Valuer-General does come along he will be guided to a great extent by the price they paid, and the whole of that area will suffer in land tax. It is a fictitious value.

Various shires have been valued by the Valuer-General. I read in the Press—I do not think the Minister said it—that the Minister said that he was going to appeal against the decision of the President of the Land Court.

Mr. Power: No, what I said was that the position was being investigated.

Mr. EVANS: I am very pleased that the Minister did not lodge an appeal. There was a Minister who appealed against the valuation of the President of the Land Court on land in the Atherton Tableland, but he is no longer a Minister. He is no longer a member of Parliament. The President of the Land Court is a very capable gentleman. He gave very valid reasons for the various reductions he made in the Gatton appeal cases. Evidently the Minister, like myself, was guided by the logic of the judgment of the President of the Land Court and decided to take no further action. I hope the Minister will continue in the same way as he has done since I have been a member of Parliament. So far as I am concerned he has given every satisfaction. He is a good fighter in this Chamber. An hon. member can have a real ding-dong "go" with him, but on leaving the Chamber the hon. gentleman will come up and talk to him. I appreciate that attitude. That is the way I feel about these clashes in the Chamber. In anything I have to say in this Chamber I am forthright and frank, but when I finish and walk out of the Chamber I am not vindictive and I do not expect any other person to be vindictive towards me.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government) (4.7 p.m.): The hon. member for Mirani is quite wrong in regard to one matter, and as I am correcting him on that point I may as well deal with the other matters to which he refers. I appreciate the fact that he has very few or no complaints with regard to the work of the Department of Works.

The hon. member raised a very important matter and one that is of great importance to local authorities, that of obtaining spare

parts for plant. It applies not only to his part of the State, but to all the State. It is a matter that has given the Director of Local Government and myself some concern. On numerous occasions it has been brought to the notice of the Premier, who in turn has put it before the Commonwealth Government. One instance was the inability of a local authority to obtain tyres and tubes for a number of tractors that were out of commission.

Mr. Sparkes: Our difficulty in the Wambo shire was tyres.

Mr. POWER: As the result of representation by the Director of Local Government and myself to the Premier, I am glad to say that the Commonwealth Government granted an import licence for tyres and tubes.

Mr. Evans: I am pleased to hear that.

Mr. POWER: A number of local authorities certainly have been short of plant. It is not the duty of the Department of Local Government to buy plant for local authorities; that is the responsibility of the local authorities. If they seek a loan from the Treasurer for the purpose of buying plant the matter is referred to the Department of Public Works to ascertain the capacity of the local authority to meet the loan commitments that are involved.

Mr. Evans: That is not available.

Mr. POWER: No. The hon. member referred to certain plant bought by Thiess Bros. Local authorities frequently make applications for licences to buy plant. At times I have criticised the administration of the Brisbane City Council but at all times I have been fair. The Brisbane City Council showed some initiative in the sending of a man to New Guinea, where certain plant was lying idle, to inspect it, buy it, and bring it back to Queensland, to be reconditioned there and put into operation. A similar thing could have been done by other local authorities; in fact, other local authorities could have got in touch with the Brisbane City Council and have their representative look about and see whether he could find a plant to suit their requirements. It is not the responsibility of the Department of Local Government to do this.

I agree that the hon. member for Mirani and I have crossed swords about Mackay town-planning, but there should never have been any difficulty with regard to it. I asked the Mackay Town Council to do certain things. The Department of Housing bought land in Mackay and application was made to build on that land. We found that according to the McInnes Plan the department could not build. That plan set out that it was not residential land and, therefore, houses could not be built on it. It was then handed back to the person from whom it was proposed to resume it, together with a small amount of compensation which he accepted. I insisted that where a plan existed it had to be observed. We asked the local authority to pass a resolution declaring certain agricultural land to be residential land.

A number of allotments had been sold, buildings had been erected, and material was already lying there waiting to be used on other land. Some permits had even been granted. Those permits were withdrawn because a member of the local authority drew attention to the fact that it was not in accordance with the plan.

We asked the council to alter the plan but as it refused to do so we had to make the alteration by legislation. Later I was interviewed by several members of the council, who asked whether this would mean that they were tied hand and foot. I said it did not, that they were at liberty to submit any proposal they wished for an alteration of the plan so long as they gave three months' notice of their intention to vary. I believe a number of variations are necessary and we should not allow political bias to influence us in questions of development in any local-authority area. Although I am a strong party man, I believe that if there is an opportunity to improve the area of any local authority we should set party politics aside and do the right thing in the interests of the great majority of the people.

For some time now I have been drawing the attention of the Brisbane City Council to the fact that it has no town plan.

An Opposition Member: It has spent a lot of money on one.

Mr. POWER: But no plan has been prepared and there is nothing to prevent a person from establishing a foundry in Queen Street tomorrow, if he wanted to. I have suggested that some action be taken to prepare a town plan and I am glad to have the assurance of the Town Clerk of Brisbane that in the very near future a town plan will be submitted to my department for approval. If it is found necessary to alter the plan from time to time the council will be at liberty to make application to do so. I become disgusted when I find that a local authority decides that a certain area shall be a residential area and later on somebody wants to establish a light industry there. A notice is then advertised in the Press and the application is granted. Then still later somebody else wanted to establish a light-heavy industry in the area; that has actually happened. Once the council had declared an area to be a residential area, it is possible that a number of aged people will buy land there in order to get peace and quiet. Their expectations are all upset if somebody gets permission to establish a light industry there.

No local authority can be successful and no city can develop without proper planning. You cannot even build a home unless you draw up a proper plan. Town-planning is very important, but once having decided on the plan at least do not let us vary it by resolution from time to time merely to suit the convenience of some individual.

The Government made provision to enable local authorities to go ahead with town-planning. I believe that Mackay was the first place to decide on a definite plan and

many other local authorities have now decided on town-planning schemes. Both Maryborough and Toowoomba have them and the recently-established town of South Coast has somebody engaged on the preparation of a plan.

The hon. member for Mirani dealt with the subdivision of land and referred to the price of certain land in his area. I assure him that this was not done by the Valuer-General, who has not yet visited the Mackay area for the purpose of making a valuation. I do not agree with him, however, that wherever the Valuer-General has been there have been increases in valuations. In some cases the valuations have been reduced, and I mention Thursday Island and Mount Morgan as examples.

In regard to what took place at Gatton, I am afraid the hon. member has his facts wrong. I said that consideration would be given to the question whether we should lodge appeals against those valuations. We have the right to do so, as any owner of property has the right of appeal against a valuation made by the Valuer-General. Thirteen cases were dealt with and we have lodged 12 appeals against the decisions of Mr. Payne. The hon. member referred to the fact that the last Minister who appealed against Mr. Payne's decisions is no longer a member of this Parliament but if it means my defeat I shall take that defeat, if I think I am acting in the interests of the people. But I can assure the hon. member I have no fears in that regard. In passing, let me say that the hon. member for Windsor came to my electorate to form a committee in an endeavour to unseat me. I might tell him that he has no chance; I look forward to remaining in this position for many years to come.

Mr. CHALK (East Toowoomba) (4.17 p.m.): I do not intend to make lengthy remarks on the Chief Office vote, as perhaps I shall have more to say under a sectional vote. I echo the sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Mirani because we are aware that when the Minister took over the portfolio of Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government there was a feeling in the community and also, I am certain, amongst many in the administrative section of the department, that the department was not being administered in its best interests or in the best interests of the State. At that time the present Minister said he intended to carry out considerable reorganisation and to see that the department was put in a satisfactory condition. I believe that many of the recommendations the Minister has made and many of the alterations he has carried out have considerably improved the department. I was particularly interested to hear the hon. gentleman mention this afternoon the very good work done by Mr. Jack East. I had an opportunity of learning of several of the matters brought before Mr. East's notice and the recommendations he has made to the Minister have received the approval of that hon. gentleman. I believe that Mr. East has been able to introduce into the department quite a number of ideas of advantage to the department and the State.

There was one point I intended to raise this afternoon but the Minister forestalled me. I intended to refer to the position that arose when regional directors of the Department of Public Instruction apparently clashed with district supervisors of the Department of Public Works. The Minister mentioned that that matter has been tidied up and I should say that there should be only one person in one particular area authorising work. As I understood the position, regional directors believed they had authority to authorise work to the value of approximately £25.

Mr. Power: They had that authority.

Mr. CHALK: And they were doing that, believing they were acting in the best interests of the department. The district supervisors believed they had the same authority and it was reported to me on one occasion that instructions had been duplicated. I agree that it is in the best interests of everyone to give this authority to one person but it has always been my opinion that the department should hand over the control of school work to the Department of Public Instruction. There is much loss of time under the present system, whereby a school proposal is referred by the Department of Public Works to the Department of Public Instruction for consideration and that department has to comment thereon and refer it back to the Department of Public Works, which will issue instructions to the district supervisor to proceed with the job. We should endeavour to cut down this loss of time. I agree with the Minister that jobs should be carried out in rotation and that in my own electorate, for instance, it would be unwise to shift men, say, from the bottom of the range where there are a number of jobs to be done to the western side of my electorate to have a small job done there while jobs were unfinished below the range. Consequently I agree that the work must be carried out in rotation.

When this vote was under consideration last year I referred to one or two unsatisfactory aspects of the administration of the department in Toowoomba but I want to tell the Minister now, after the lapse of 12 months, that the work is being carried out in Toowoomba in a first-class manner and that on every occasion on which I have inquired about certain work to be done there I got a satisfactory reply to say that the officer in charge was attending to all the work.

It was the practice of the department to allow district supervisors to spend up to £5 on public works without first getting the authority of the department. That amount was subsequently increased to £20, but I see no reason why it should not be increased still further. Costs have considerably increased and whereas a job that cost £5 ten years ago would perhaps cost £20 today, the cost of material and labour has increased to such an extent in the last 12 months or two years that the department might safely allow departmental supervisors in the various districts to carry out urgent work up to £50 without first getting the authority of the department. A district supervisor is a

trusted officer, a man selected for the position because of his ability and trustworthiness and he can be relied upon to carry out the wishes of the department in the best interests of the community and the department itself.

We have heard of the delays that sometimes occur in getting approval of the Executive Council. If the authority of the district supervisor was increased that delay would be short-circuited to some extent. The matter would eventually find its way to the Executive Council but work on schools and their facilities would be attended to promptly. For instance, a district supervisor might visit a public building such as a school or a police station and be able to get both material and workmen locally to carry out the necessary repairs immediately. If he had authority to embark on repairs up to £50 that work could be carried out.

Mr. Power: He has authority to approve of an expenditure of £50 or more if necessary.

Mr. CHALK: I am glad to hear that.

Mr. Power: He has authority to start work costing more than £50 and report the matter immediately.

Mr. CHALK: That policy would considerably reduce complaints with respect to school buildings and amenities. School buildings in many country areas badly need repair. I do not hold that against the Government because I appreciate the fact that labour and material were short during the war years. Much of that work could not be undertaken then, but it should be speeded up now.

The other point I want to make relates to schools, police residences and other buildings of that kind. During the past few years quite a number of improvements to schools have been carried out, but the time is ripe for expediting repair work. I have received quite a number of complaints about school buildings in my electorate. I want to be perfectly fair and say that on every occasion when I have referred a complaint to the Minister or his department a satisfactory reply has been received and in some cases the work has been done within a reasonable time. Repairs to school buildings and lavatory conveniences should be expedited.

Mr. Power: What do you suggest?

Mr. CHALK: There are contractors in many areas. The Minister will say that the district supervisor has the right to employ private contractors. Private contractors could be encouraged to carry out such repair work. Again, departmental officers in various areas have on occasions endeavoured to get private contractors to carry out this work but there is undoubtedly a certain amount of what was referred to earlier as red tape and this prevents many private contractors from undertaking work for the Government today. It has been said that some private contractors are a little unscrupulous but the district supervisor is competent to judge the private contractor he is dealing with. If such work was placed with private contractors it would help to speed it up.

Mr. Jesson: There are not enough contractors.

Mr. CHALK: Perhaps the hon. member is right. The contractors are also governed by the availability of materials, and if there are not sufficient to keep the contractors going full time they take some other employment. If we set out on a programme to improve our schools I believe we can employ quite a number of men permanently for some time to come.

As to local authorities, I want to make one brief comment. Some time ago in my city there was some concern about the amalgamation of certain shires. Finally, as an outcome of the policy of the Government, we saw the disappearance of the Drayton and Highfield shires. Both shire councils asked me to arrange for the introduction of a deputation to the Minister so that they could have an opportunity to place their case before the proper authority and the Minister was only too pleased to meet them. I will say he gave them quite a satisfactory hearing, although it may not have been satisfactory from their own point of view, because they came there with the idea of convincing him that the shires should not be abolished. The Minister was prepared to meet the deputation and discuss the points they raised; and I believe that as a result of those deputations the Minister learned quite a number of things about local authorities, and even though those two areas were finally abolished there now seems to be quite a settling down, and even the people who were utterly opposed to the amalgamation have accepted the decision. As far as the city of Toowoomba is concerned, I believe that by bringing in the new areas we have benefited in some respects. The areas that went over to the Crow's Nest, Jondaryan and Tarampa shires felt they had been placed on the outer end of the shires in which they were absorbed but I was pleased to know that the Minister agreed to an extension of the representation of one of those shires.

The division of shires is a subject on which the Minister has very strong views. As far as I can gather, the views of the majority of the people in the outer areas are that although the division of shires is not altogether desirable, in some cases, in the matter of rating for example, division would help in representation. I feel, on the evidence placed before me, that perhaps there are some good features in the division of areas for the purposes of representation. It does at least ensure that there will be fair representation of the areas in which the councillors are elected. That is a factor that raised some concern even in the city of Toowoomba at the last election, because the people in the outlying areas felt they could not be certain of having at least one representative returned. They felt that the city would dominate the election. Actually that did take place on the voting figures but since then other factors have arisen. The area formerly in Drayton that was amalgamated with the other shire now has an alderman representing that area, the chairman of the former Drayton Shire Council.

There are one or two matters that I will raise on the votes for the various sub-departments. The Department of Public Works, under the present ministerial guidance, has improved and I feel sure that the Minister will continue his endeavours to improve it. After all, the department is vital to the development of the State and everything possible must be done to stimulate this development.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government) (4.36 p.m.): The hon. member raised a number of matters that probably will be referred to by other hon. members and it may perhaps shorten the discussion on such matters if I take the opportunity of giving the Committee information on what has been done. I am very pleased to know that the hon. member for East Toowoomba is appreciative of the department and also that he appreciates the value of the work done by the works construction manager, Mr. East. I agree with him in that respect but I cannot agree with some of his suggestions.

Mr. Sparkes: You were against him when he got the slate.

Mr. POWER: We will leave the slate out of this debate; we will endeavour to make the discussion on this vote harmonious. The railway vote was given a very sad farewell; in fact, the Opposition endeavoured to destroy the railways. My department is a constructional authority, therefore, let us try to construct rather than destroy.

I cannot agree with the suggestion of the hon. member that there should be a sub-department within the Department of Public Works under the control of the Department of Public Instruction. This idea emanated from a conference of school committees some time ago and it was referred to my colleague, the Secretary for Public Instruction. He decided that he would not even make a recommendation to me that I agree to it. If we were to agree to that proposal it would mean additional cost to the Government. Works supervisors would have to be appointed within the Department of Public Instruction. Architects would have to be appointed to the same department and a considerable amount of planning would have to be done by that department. At present we have the one competent staff to attend to the erection of buildings required for State purposes in Queensland. We could not give to the Department of Public Instruction authority to have another department within that department.

The hon. member also referred to the fact that authority should be given to district supervisors to authorise the expenditure of amounts exceeding £50. He was of the opinion that this would speed up the work. He also asked that the erection of school buildings be given to private contractors. This has been the practice for a number of years. The department has district supervisors of work and under some circumstances it is much cheaper to have a job done by local residents. For instance, it may perhaps obviate the cost of transporting men to the place to do the work. A local contractor

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is asked for an estimate to do the job and after the estimate is studied and found satisfactory the work is carried out by the private contractor. The work has to be passed by the district supervisor of work.

Mr. Chalk: There is no attempt to get other quotations in the area for the same work?

Mr. POWER: There may be two or three contractors in the area and we ask these contractors to give estimates for the work and if they are satisfactory a private contractor gets a contract. We have regard, of course, to the fact that at all times the policy of the Government is day labour.

The hon. member also asks that the authority to expend be increased from £25 to £50. Let me make it quite clear: the amount that a district supervisor can expend on an urgent job is never limited. By way of example, if a school building is destroyed the district supervisor has authority to have the reconstruction work carried out immediately. While the work is being carried out he submits an estimate of the cost to the department. The Under Secretary has authority to allow an expenditure up to a certain figure, and I, as Minister, have authority to expend up to a certain figure and if the work necessitates the expenditure of a sum above that figure the matter is referred to the Governor in Council. In the meantime the work proceeds and so no urgent works are delayed.

It is true that I met several deputations from local authorities in connection with mergers, and I believed it was in the best interests of the State that the amalgamations should take place.

Mr. Aikens: And there is a lot more work to be done in that direction.

Mr. POWER: If local authorities make a request to me for amalgamation I am only too happy to give consideration to the matter. I appreciate the work the local authorities have done and I do not want to be accused of having run a steamroller over any local authority.

Mr. Sparkes: Who said that?

Mr. POWER: It has been suggested that I have acted of my own volition to bring about the merging of local authorities. I have pointed out that I have acted only when I have received a request, although I do agree with the hon. member for Mundingburra that there is room for further improvement. One local authority met me in a deputation and when I asked how many men it employed I was told that its only employee was the clerk. When I asked how they got work carried out they said they got a local farmer to do it and if he was not prepared to do the work they got somebody from another part of the area. No local authority has the right simply to collect rates from the people and give them no service in return. A number of amalgamations have taken place and we have a tremendous number of applications from local authorities for alterations to their boundaries. We had one from Maryborough

recently, but we cannot go into those matters until the Valuer-General has arrived at a valuation of the areas likely to be affected.

In the case of the Toowoomba merger, I gave a good deal of consideration to the deletion of the name Drayton. It is a very old name and I thought it might be desirable to retain it, but apparently they have decided that Toowoomba is a more suitable name. The merging of local authorities in that area has resulted in a considerable reduction in the rates. For instance, in 1948-49 the urban rate was 1s. 6d. in the £1 while that for 1949-50, under amalgamation, is only 7½d. The rural rate in 1948-49 was 9d. It is now 3½d.

Mr. Chalk: But the valuations of the land have increased.

Mr. POWER: That is so. It is the Valuer-General's duty to arrive at the true unimproved value. I have the opinion that many of those who complain that the Valuer-General's valuation is too high would refuse to sell at the valuation he has set. We had an instance of that at Redcliffe, where there were many appeals from the valuation made by the Redcliffe Shire Council. When the council offered to buy land from one of the persons concerned at the valuation set by the council, which he said was too high, he refused the offer. There was no possible chance of buying the land at that price. I am not complaining about it but the owner of the property wanted considerably more, despite the fact that he said the valuation was too high. When the council wanted it he said, "You cannot have it at that price."

Mr. Sparkes: They would be buying under different conditions—the improved and the unimproved values.

Mr. Nicklin interjected.

Mr. POWER: I do not propose to debate that point as it is a matter for the court to determine. My personal opinion is that there can be only one value, and you cannot have a value for taxation purposes and another for sale purposes. I am dealing with the question of value. It is a debatable point, and I prefer to leave it to learned members of the bar and the judiciary. I do not think I should deal with that angle at present because I might be committed for contempt of court. The matter is before the court and I think we had better leave it alone.

On the question of division of shires, as suggested by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, I think there is a grave danger. He suggested that we should have wards declared for election purposes, but I have always urged local authorities to take the view that local government is local government, and that it is the duty of a local authority not to develop one section to the detriment of others. A local authority should set out to develop the whole of its area, and where there are representatives of separate divisions or wards you will find the parochial view coming into the picture.

Mr. Sparkes: You would take out divisions in shires?

Mr. POWER: I am not going to do anything. I am not amending the Local Government Act but simply replying to a suggestion made by the hon. member for East Toowoomba. I suggest that the hon. member for Aubigny should not be so impetuous but should listen to what I have to say. It is my own view that representatives should be elected for the whole of the area. I repeat, that is my personal view. It is so in towns and cities.

Mr. Chalk: It would be so in any new amalgamation.

Mr. POWER: I want to assure the hon. member that I have no intention of disclosing what might happen in the future. I cannot bind any other Minister. I do not know whether I am going to remain as Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government or what position I shall occupy after the Government are returned at the next election. The Premier might decide to transfer me to another department, and I am not going to tie the hand of any other Minister. I am not expressing the Government's view but my own considered opinion. I have considered the question of local government over many years. I was a member of the Brisbane City Council, chairman of committees, and a member of others. I believe that for the sake of future development the ward system should be abolished.

Mr. Sparkes: Is that your opinion in connection with shires?

Mr. POWER: It is my opinion right through.

Mr. Sparkes: You don't know anything about it.

Mr. POWER: I can assure the hon. member I shall not learn anything from him. I have always endeavoured to meet the wishes of local authorities. In local authority areas there are what are known as benefited areas. If the cost of an amenity is not spread over the whole area and a water scheme or sewerage scheme is to be carried out in Ward A, it means that only the people in Ward A will be called upon to bear the cost and the people in Ward B and Ward C will be under no obligation to contribute even a penny. I have spoken to a number of representatives of local authorities on the matter and they agree with my view that the cost should be spread over the whole area.

I was invited to be present at the opening of the new Albert Shire Council and I expressed these views there, and before I left a resolution was carried abolishing the benefited areas.

Moreover, if the cost of a water or sewerage scheme is spread over the whole area, the subsidy by the Government to the local authority is increased. I have heard a great deal about this subject of amenities in the country and my view is that amenities should be provided for people in the country just as they are provided in the metropolitan area. I advocate that. Some people argue that the Government should provide certain things that are really the responsibility of

local authorities. For instance, it is the responsibility of a local authority to provide a water supply, a sewerage scheme, water channelling, bridges, ferries, and transport. The Government realise that the cost of some of these amenities is very heavy and that is why they give a subsidy to local authorities to help them meet the cost. If a local authority is desirous of developing an area properly, it will spread the whole cost of an amenity over the entire area. In saying that I am expressing my own personal opinion, not the opinion of the Government, not Government policy. I want to make that perfectly clear.

Let us suppose that a water scheme is provided in a town in a local-authority area. At the present time the people outside the town are not called upon to contribute one penny towards the cost, whereas if the cost was spread over the whole area the burden on the ratepayers in the ward or division in which the work was carried out would not be as heavy as if the burden of cost were confined to the ward or division in which the work was actually done. I know that the hon. member for Aubigny feels like a kangaroo at the moment and would like to spring off his tail to combat my opinion but let me tell him that quite a number of local authorities agree that my view is a sound one.

Mr. Sparkes: They are entitled to their opinions.

Mr. POWER: I have no intention of forcing them to do anything. I have no intention of interfering in the domestic affairs of a local authority unless I am obliged to do so in the proper performance of my duty. I have always held the view that local government means local government, not sectional local government, nor does it mean a local authority may develop a part of its area and allow the rest to go undeveloped. I repeat that I do not think it is fair to ask the people in one division to bear the whole cost of an amenity—it should be spread over the whole area.

Quite a number have done so. On one occasion I met a representative of a local authority that was divided into three wards. The rates struck in those wards were, say, 5d., 6d., and 9d. This man told me—it is not very far from Brisbane—“In my area I want a low valuation and a low rate.” He is the whole council in that area. That is what is happening today in many places.

Mr. Sparkes: Is his name Power, too?

Mr. POWER: It is not. There is only one Power, and that is myself. I am very modest. My slogan is, “Power for the people” and the people have appreciated that fact for 15 years.

When I was so rudely interrupted by the hon. member for Aubigny, who is noted for his interruptions, I was showing that local government is a very important form of government. Take the City of Brisbane. There is not one minute or one hour of the day when a citizen does not come into contact

with some benefit as a result of local government. The first thing he does in the morning is to switch on his electric light, or turn on the water tap to have a bath. Those amenities are the benefits of local government. Then when he opens his gate and steps onto the footpath he has further evidence of local government. If he travels by tram, which is controlled by the Brisbane City Council, again he has evidence of local government. As a result of the Lord Mayor's socialism, the Brisbane City Council quite recently socialised the city's bus services. There again one comes into contact with another function of local government. The Lord Mayor frequently airs his views on socialism, but there we had an instance of socialism in the bus services. That is a fact that is quite forgotten by the Opposition. The people of Brisbane and Queensland should be intensely interested in the system and work of local government.

Mr. Chalk: I thought you were getting back to the Lord Mayor.

Mr. POWER: I want to assure the hon. member that a great many people are very interested just now in the Lord Mayor. They are very interested in the fact that the city's electricity charges have been increased by 46 per cent. in a comparatively short period. I do not mention that fact in order to influence the electors of Kurilpa in their decision on Saturday, but that is a fact. The rates levied by the Brisbane City Council are higher now than ever before in the history of the city. I am not complaining about that fact, because if the people want amenities they must pay for them. When the Lord Mayor complains of having an insufficient amount of money to carry on the services of the city, he must not forget that it was his council that lent a lot of money to Hunter Bros. to permit them to take over the sanitary contract for the city. That was quite a legitimate business, but it must not be forgotten that this firm is making a handsome profit. The point is that had the council carried out the work, instead of the contractor's making a profit the council might have been able to reduce its charges.

I want to show the hon. member for East Toowoomba the expenditure that has been incurred on school buildings. He complained that delays had taken place. The following is a list of new buildings and additions completed in the 1948-49 Financial Year—

Camp Hill State School—Provision of temporary classroom accommodation.

Coopers Plains State School—Purchase of army hut, removal and re-erection and conversion for temporary accommodation.

Enoggera State School—Purchase of army building and conversion of temporary accommodation.

Holland Park Provisional School—Purchase of Building and conversion for school purposes.

Ironside State School—Erection of additional classroom, teachers' room, &c.

Junction Park State School—Provision of temporary classroom accommodation.

Moorooka State School—Provision of earth closet accommodation.

South Brisbane School for the Blind—Enclosing verandas of administration building.

South Brisbane School for the Deaf and Blind—Purchase of army buildings and conversion for additional classrooms, dormitory, dining room.

Stafford State School—Erection of new brick building.

I think the latter cost about £40,000.

Then we come to the country areas. We have been told that we are a Queen Street Government, but if the hon. member for East Toowoomba will take out his pencil and jot down these places in the country where we carried out work he will see that we have done more work in the country in providing accommodation and repairing buildings than we have in the metropolitan area. The list is as follows:—

Ayr State School—Erection of new school for infants.

Ballandean State School—Erection of additions, and concreting under.

Burleigh Heads State School—Erection of additions.

An Opposition Member: It is pure propaganda.

Mr. POWER: Nobody can justly accuse me of engaging in political propaganda. The hon. member for East Toowoomba raised the matter. It hurts me to have to spend so much time giving this information, but in order that the people may know what we have done I propose to read the list. It continues—

Caloundra State School—Conversion of army building to provide additional classroom.

Carole Park State School—Purchase of army building and conversion for use as a school.

Cracow State School—Removal and re-erection of school.

Dows Creek State School—Erection of new sectional type school.

Emerald State School—New teachers' room and re-flooring classroom, &c.

Helidon State School—Erection of additions and concrete under.

Humpybong State School—Erection of additional classrooms.

Kingaroy State School—Temporary science room.

Longreach State School—Additional veranda and improvements to lighting.

Lower Tully State School—Construction of additional classroom and veranda.

Mackay North State School—Erection of additional classroom.

Mackay West State School—Erection of additional classrooms.

Millaa Millaa State School—New girls' earth closet building.

Nambour Rural School—Re-erection of two huts, new veranda, &c.

Oakey State School—Construction of additional classroom, with alterations, &c., £1,050 0s. 0d.

Ormiston State School—Erection of additional classroom, &c.

Ravenshoe State School—Provision of temporary classroom.

Rockhampton Central State School—Erection of additional classroom.

Silkstone State School—Purchase of R.A.A.F. building, removal and re-erection.

Southport State School—Provision of additional classroom accommodation.

Tara State School—Construction of additional classrooms, &c.

Tewantin—Provision of temporary accommodation by conversion of army building.

Toowoomba Girls' and Infants' State School—Enclosing area under main portion of school.

Toowoomba South Girls and Infants' State School—Erection of additional wing, £4,379.

Urangan Point—Erection of additions. Those are the places where repairs were carried out.

I will now tell the Committee what we propose to do. The following is a list of the new plans and those under construction for 1948-49:—

Brisbane, Fortitude Valley—Erection of new State school and furniture, £37,832; amount expended, £17,645.

The hon. member for Windsor asked questions about the foundation stone at the Fortitude Valley State School and made the comment that the erection of this building had not been proceeded with. I draw his attention to the fact that up to date over £17,000 has been expended on that work. The list of works begun continues—

Holland Park—Erection of new temporary buildings.

Kelvin Grove—Erection of new school, furniture &c., £53,444, of which £29,309 has been expended.

The State school at Kelvin Grove is in my electorate but it caters also for children from the electorate of Kelvin Grove.

The list continues—

South Brisbane School for the Blind—Provision of temporary classroom accommodation.

Weilers Hills—Provision of temporary accommodation.

Aitkenvale—Additions.

Beenleigh—Conversion of old residence into domestic science school.

Bundaberg—Provision of new temporary classrooms.

Crawford—Enclosing veranda and addition to girls' earth closet building.

Currumbin Upper—Raising school on high stumps and new back veranda.

Dalby—Enclosure for High School typing class.

Edge Hill—Erection of additional classroom.

Glasshouse Mountains—Erection of additional classroom, turning and raising existing classroom.

Garbutt—Provision of additional accommodation and furniture.

Gladstone, South—Erection of additional classroom accommodation and new earth closet.

Goodyer—Enlarging class room.

Gympie—Removing existing infants' school to new position; levelling &c., account new primary school.

Gympie Central—Erection of a new primary school for boys and girls.

This is very important. The amount authorised is £43,000 and up to date only a small amount has been spent. I might point out that if at all possible local manufacturers of joinery and so forth will be asked to quote for all materials. We will endeavour wherever possible to obtain materials for that building in that part of the State.

The list goes on—

Hermit Park—Erection of new wing.

Ipswich Central—Enclosing veranda.

Jimna—Erection of additions.

Kalapa—Erection of additional veranda.

Marlborough—Erection of additional classroom, supply of furniture and additions to boys' earth closet building.

Maleny—Conversion of army hut for vocational training classes.

Ma Ma Creek—Improvements to vocational training facilities.

Maroochy—Erection of additional classroom, new teachers' room, furniture and additions to earth closet buildings.

Millmerran—Erection of additional classroom, new teachers' room, furniture and additions to earth closet buildings.

Mooloolabah—Erection of additional classroom and additions to earth closet buildings.

Mundubbera—Erection of additional classroom.

Palmwoods—Additions to residence.

Rockhampton Central Boys'—Conversion of opportunity classroom into manual training room, provision of earth closets.

Rockhampton Central Girls—New staff and hat rooms.

Rosewood—Remodelling wing to improve lighting and provision of furniture.

Rosewood—Additions.

Texas, New schools—Earth closets, furniture, &c.

Toowoomba North—Additions.

Torquay—Erection of additional classroom.

Yelarbon—Erection of additional classroom, teachers' room and addition to boys' earth closet building.

Yungaburra—Additional classroom, new teachers' room, folding partitions and alterations, concreting, &c.

Dalby—Provision of temporary classroom accommodation.

These works have been begun.

Mr. Chalk: What is the provision for the Toowoomba North school?

Mr. POWER: £3,269, and £2,701 has been expended.

The following are the works authorised but which the department has not been able to begin:—

Capella—Erection of new school buildings.

Clontarf—Erection of new schools.

Mr. Sparkes: What is the amount authorised for Clontarf?

Mr. POWER: £4,766.

Garbutt—Purchase of army building for additional classroom accommodation.

Parramatta—Erection of three additional classrooms and teachers' room.

I come now to the residences. It is as well to have these details in "Hansard" so that the people of Queensland will know what this Government have done. It is going to cost us about £4,000,000 this year for education.

The residences completed in 1948-49 were—

Harlin State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Kadanga Creek State School—Conversion of school building into teacher's residence.

Imbil State School—Purchase of residence for use of head teacher.

Nelly Bay State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

We are carrying out a tremendous programme for the Department of Public Instruction and these figures give some idea of the lengths to which we are prepared to go to provide satisfactory accommodation for both pupils and teachers. The following works are being carried out—

Camooweal State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Elphinstone State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Jericho State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Kalapa State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Redlynch State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Talwood State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Yarraman Upper State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Yarwood State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

Wandoan State School—Erection of new teacher's residence.

I could go on giving details of work on other buildings, apart from schools, but as the hon. member for East Toowoomba referred only to schools and teacher's residences, I propose stopping there. I am sure the hon. member must now feel satisfied that the Department of Public Works has done a tremendous job in repairing and erecting

schools and teachers' residences. If hon. members desire it, I will give further information about what we propose to do in connection with buildings other than schools.

Mr. FARRELL (Maryborough) (5.13 p.m.): I suppose that if we peruse the records we shall find expressions of appreciation of the architecture adopted by the Department of Public Works in the construction of this delightful Parliament House. The design of our public buildings has been criticised from time to time, but to combat it we need only refer to the vast experience of our architects and designers, extending over many years. School buildings have been criticised but I was privileged recently to invite the Minister to visit Maryborough and lay the foundation of a new school to be erected at Maryborough West School. The new building will replace the old school, which is something like 60 years of age. When we compare the design of the old building with that of the new one we can appreciate the benefit that will be derived by both pupils and teachers in the new building because it is designed to provide all the light and air one could wish for. It was very refreshing indeed to have the privilege of inviting the Minister to Maryborough, not only to lay the foundation stone but to initiate a work that will be a monument to the workmen of the department who designed such a magnificent building for the education of our children.

From my own point of view it has been a distinct pleasure to see the fulfilment of a promise made by a former Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr. Williams, during a visit to Maryborough. Amongst other things he promised that he would recommend that the school should be constructed as soon as practicable. It must be remembered that from the time he made that promise the architects and designers of the Department of Public Works have been engaged on many other projects and with other members I realise that I have to wait my turn. Before the Minister got approval for the erection of this building he sent his architects to Maryborough and they, with the school inspector and the head master, discussed the possible expansion that would take place in the area and the number of children who would be attending the school. As a result of those discussions we have a school designed to meet not only present requirements but expansion that will come as the result of the development that must take place in this locality.

A further desirable feature of the building is that it will be in brick—bricks produced in our own town—and probably in the woodwork of the building there will be some of the finest timbers of the Maryborough district. On its completion the school will be of a very fine architectural design, well constructed and in keeping with the best traditions of the department.

I mentioned future expansion as I want to make a comparison between that school and the infants' school at Maryborough. In my opinion additions should not have been made to the infants' school. For the benefit of the children a new school should have been designed and constructed. The building was

an old one, and as a result of representations the Department of Public Works added a wing to the school. That wing was hardly completed before it was found necessary to put an addition to it. That was bad planning on the part of the Department of Public Instruction; I am not blaming the Department of Public Works. From time to time every school is visited by inspectors of the Department of Public Instruction, who must gather a knowledge of the probable future attendances at that school. Such an inspector should have a complete knowledge of the future attendance at the school, but hardly was this wing completed when the Department of Public Instruction had to approach the Department of Public Works again for additional accommodation. That additional accommodation was provided and even now it is not sufficient to house the children who attend the school. It is very desirable that the authorities should have a proper idea of future attendances before they decide upon any additions or alterations to school buildings.

I should now like to refer to the high school for boys at Maryborough. I had the pleasure of taking the Minister there on his visit. It is part of the old Grammar School, a building of pleasing architectural design, which was transferred to the Department of Public Instruction. On the day of the Minister's visit the committee made certain proposals to him for the reconditioning of the building. The Minister readily acknowledged that it was worthy of preservation and he would ask his works superintendent to make recommendations for alterations for the consideration of the Under Secretary and later himself, but he had sufficient foresight to point out to the committee that any additions that were carried out were to form part of a permanent structure, and they were not to be regarded as a temporary arrangement. That is the right approach to these matters, and it is an attitude that the Minister has always adopted in his administration.

The next building to which I wish to refer is one that was built by the Commonwealth and State Governments in conjunction for the purpose of training people under the post-war reconstruction plan. The building was designed by the State department in accordance with plans and specifications prepared by the Commonwealth department, and the arrangements for construction provided that each Government should contribute towards its cost. There are no trainees there now, and the building is ready to be handed back to the State but there is the provision that the Commonwealth Government may use it later on. I ask the Minister to give consideration to the suggestion that Commonwealth departments be not admitted to the building and that the State buy out the Commonwealth by paying its share of the cost and thus make the building the property of the State. The building could be then used for the purpose of providing technical education, which is an important matter to the city of Maryborough, a big industrial centre, with the engineering firm of Walkers Ltd. and other firms that give employment to people

who need technical education. The Minister should consider a proposal not to accept Commonwealth help in financing the construction of the building, but should bear the whole cost and make the building a State building. Then we should be able to provide educational facilities and that may not be possible in other circumstances.

Some hon. members have complained that the Department of Public Works does not carry out all its work as quickly as it should, but that is because it is unable to get enough suitable men for the purpose. I had a case in point involving the removal of a school from one country centre to another. It was not in my electorate, but it was associated with an undertaking of the firm of Wilson Hart & Co. I approached the Minister on the matter and he said, "We will have a look at it and see what we can do." Subsequently he said, "The only way we can help you is for you to get a firm to give a tender which, if acceptable to the department, will be agreed to, and it can carry out the work." We asked the firm of Wilson Hart & Co. to submit a firm quote for moving and renovating the building. The Minister accepted the tender and the firm carried out the contract to the satisfaction of everyone concerned. If hon. members approached the Minister on similar proposals on similar lines there would not be so many delays as there are in moving buildings from one site to another.

There is another matter to which I want to call the Minister's attention. It has reference to legislation that passed through this Chamber in relation to local-authority affairs. The Maryborough City Council desired to consolidate its loan funds. The law was amended and as a result those loan funds are now consolidated, but only to the extent of a book transaction. It does not enable the consolidation of loans, which is what the Maryborough City Council desires. I am sure that many other local authorities are similarly situated. It is necessary to have separate loan accounts in our programme for the development of the city but there is provision in the City of Brisbane Acts enabling all the loans floated by the council to be consolidated. That means a tremendous saving.

I will quote a particular instance to give some idea of what takes place. The Maryborough City Council floated a loan for £30,000 for the purchase of omnibuses. Incidental expenses, such as stamp duty, amounted to £102. A loan of £5,000 for a parking area, was also floated. The incidental expenses involved in that loan represented £28. This loan of £5,000 represented one-sixth of the original loan of £30,000. If the incidental expenses of £28 were multiplied six times they would amount to £168. Had the two loans been consolidated the council's incidental expenses would have been £102, as against £168 for the two separate loans. That is what is occurring from year to year and it is a burden on the Maryborough City Council. Some consideration might be given to this suggestion when loans are approved by the Loan Council.

I will give another example. The Maryborough City Council wanted a loan from the National Mutual Insurance Co. amounting to £110,000. When the council approached the company it was informed that if all the loans were consolidated the money could be made available at £3 2s. 6d. per cent., but because the council could not consolidate the whole of its loans it would require to take out loan debentures, which would cost £3 12s. 6d. per cent.

So it will be seen that in seeking to solve the problem of local government there is much to be said for the consolidation of loans. Not only is it easier for bookkeeping but it is helpful by saving charges from time to time. Everyone knows that the cost of running a local authority has leapt ahead. We have relieved the local authorities of their hospital precepts, which at Maryborough amounted to more than £4,000 a year. We also help by giving subsidies for works, ranging from 17½ per cent. to 50 per cent. The Government realise that local authorities are required to carry out certain public works that are of material advantage to the locality and therefore have come to their aid.

It must be remembered that we have to submit our plans and specifications for approval to the Department of Local Government before Treasury approval is given for a loan. The same architects who are dealing with the building programme of the State's requirements often have to deal with the building programme required by the local authorities. If a local authority submits a proposal our departmental officers are available to check it so that the State can be protected.

I believe that if the creation of a city is justified it should carry with it certain responsibilities, and one of them is town-planning. I believe that if it is possible to incorporate in the Act a provision making it compulsory it should be favourably considered by the Minister. There is a good deal of honour in having a town declared a city but this carries with it certain obligations and I believe that if we impress on the local authorities that one of these is the employment of a competent town-planner, it will be of advantage. The Minister pointed out that the city of Brisbane has no town plan. A city of the size of Maryborough should have town-planning so that irrespective of the composition of the local authority, the plan will be carried on without alteration.

Mr. Plunkett: I do not agree with compulsion.

Mr. FARRELL: From the point of view of the local authority, the creation of a higher status should carry with it certain obligations. I am a great believer in the principle of compulsion of local authorities in the observance of by-laws. For instance, my local authority has a by-law in relation to the subdivision of property, under which the council requires the owner of a property to fulfill certain conditions before he subdivides. I have had the opportunity of studying the way in which the law has been carried out in the subdivision of properties

in Brisbane, where the council insists on the formation of streets and channelling for the benefit of the people who will live there.

Mr. Plunkett: They pay for it.

Mr. FARRELL: Yes, they pay for it. I can see the disadvantages of not having this work carried out in other places. Maryborough does not insist on the construction of channelling and kerbing. The result is that within a short time the people are disgusted with the council for not having made proper provision in this respect. They have no proper roads because there is no by-law to compel the owners of the land to provide them and the other amenities that go with them. There is much to be said for the system adopted in New Zealand and later by the Brisbane City Council, and to a lesser degree by the city of Maryborough. In New Zealand they go further than we do in insisting on provision for proper roads and channelling and kerbing so that residents will have reasonable access to their properties. In Maryborough today there is a subdivision in which the owner is being compelled under the by-laws of the Maryborough City Council to make certain provision for roads. At present the people are paying up to £170 and £180 for their allotments but they haven't proper access to them. If they had the opportunity of getting a subsidy from the local authority to make provision for decent roads, channelling and kerbing they would be only too pleased.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DUNSTAN (Gympie) (5.38 p.m.): I express great gratification for the work that the Secretary for Public Works has given to the city of Gympie—I might say here, on the very good case I put up to him—and for the help given by the Government in all good causes in the matter of public works and public buildings. I do not want that gratification to be taken in the sense of the old saying that gratitude is a lively sense of favours to come. My gratitude and that of the people of Gympie are for favours already given. I pay my tribute to the Secretary for Public Works, not only for the readiness with which he gives attention to such requests and decisions on the sound logic of any proposal put to him, but also for the energy and expedition with which he gets jobs done. I can tell hon. members that that spirit of the Minister permeates all the public works being executed in Gympie, at any rate. It is transmitted through his technical staff, through his Under Secretary and his experts, down through the foreman of works in our neighbourhood, and to the workmen on the job. They have done a splendid job. In the erection of the new and very fine hospital buildings over the years, the new police station, and the additions to the Central School, the same magnificent spirit has been manifest.

Mr. Sparkes: We have gone up to Maryborough now. Never mind about Gympie.

Mr. DUNSTAN: I could say some good things about Maryborough, too. The hon. member for Maryborough and I get on very well together and there is no need for the

hon. member for Aubigny to be disturbed about our relationship. I am speaking of public works and I say honestly and sincerely that the people of Gympie are grateful to the Minister and the Government for the way these jobs are being expedited and for the financial assistance given by the Government. Gympie, that historic place, deserves recognition, but it would not get it unless a good case was put up to the Minister.

Mr. Roberts: Presented by the local member.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Never mind about the presentation by the local member. The cases are put up to me by the people conducting the local authority and other social activities and institutions in the community, and when I put them up to the Minister they are well considered.

The Department of Public Instruction is a co-operative department, too, but it cannot be translated into the true results of education without the co-operation of the Department of Public Works in the provision of buildings and such amenities as teachers' residences and other improvements. I am extremely grateful to the two Ministers engaged in the promotion in a practical way of education in the Gympie community.

I have made it a rule to give due respect to all engaged in local-authority work and to help them wherever I can. I know they are doing a great job, and I can also say that almost every request made to the Government by the Gympie Town Council and the Widgee Shire Council—part of Widgee is in my electorate and a great part is in the electorate of the hon. member for Cooroola—has received practical attention from the Minister and the Government.

It is rather anomalous that the municipality of Gympie is a circumscribed area and that the office of the Widgee Shire Council, which administers a very large area outside it, is situated in the city of Gympie. I give credit to the Widgee Shire Council for what it has done for the city of Gympie. As a matter of fact, virtually all the feeder roads to the city of Gympie have been constructed by the Widgee Shire Council, under the terms of and the funds so liberally provided by the Main Roads Commission. I have advocated a Greater Gympie, but apparently the suggestion has not yet taken hold. Eventually, it will come about. We shall see a Greater Gympie carrying out the work of the greater part of the Widgee Shire Council and the Gympie Town Council. The Gympie Town Council is carrying out some very fine reclamation work, subsidised on a 50-50 basis by the Government. It is undertaking a new town-planning scheme involving many improvements. When that is actually completed, it is hoped that it will get a good deal of financial help from the Government.

I rose to express my gratification at the assistance being given by the Department of Public Works, the Department of Public Instruction and other departments of State to the constituency I represent, and I hope

I am here to speak to hon. members again and express gratification for more favours to come in the ensuing three years.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (5.47 p.m.): I should like to say that the work of local authorities is very important, and that my association with the Director of Local Government has been most cordial. He has been helpful in all branches of local-authority work. The time is fast approaching when there should be an adjustment of shire boundaries, and when that comes about I feel that each shire should if possible—and I hope it will be possible—have a sufficiently large ratable area to employ a full-time engineer. That is essential, because local authorities are being called upon to provide roads to carry fast-moving traffic, and heavy traffic too. In days gone by, when local authorities first received their charter, all they were expected to build were roads for horse-drawn vehicles. With the progress that has taken place, they are now expected to carry the added obligation and, what is more, they are expected, as the Minister said, to look after water supply, sewerage and other undertakings most essential to the welfare of the people. The time has arrived when a very thorough investigation should be made into the financial position of local authorities, so that they will have funds to carry out these works.

Mr. Power: Are you advocating the merging of local authorities?

Mr. LOW: There should be an adjustment of boundaries, not a wholesale merging. The local authorities should have enough ratable land to enable them to pay for the amenities for the people and reduce their overhead.

The Minister suggested the abolition of divisional boundaries and while there may be some merit in the idea I want to remind him that in some shire areas, along the North Coast in particular, there is a diversity of interests—towns, seaside resorts and rural land. It is difficult to get to the point where a common policy can be agreed upon. For instance, if a town wishes to carry out a water scheme the people in the outside areas vote it out. Similarly, if a seaside resort wants to carry out improvements on the waterfront the rural area votes it out, and so on. We do not get to the point of carrying out the amenities or even considering them. This is a matter that will have to be considered with the object of bringing about the common outlook and a common policy.

Local authorities are expected to balance their budgets, which in theory means that at the end of the financial year there should be no money in the Treasury. Some time elapses before the time rate notices are issued and the rates are paid and in the meantime the local authority must go to the bank and ask for an overdraft, pending the payment of rates to give it an income for the next financial year. The local authorities should be able to make provision to carry on for two or three months after the close of the financial year instead of having to incur an overdraft and pay interest on it.

Reference has been made to the fact that considerable delay occurs in obtaining spare parts for graders and tractors. There is the greatest difficulty in getting them and in getting tyres as well. This also is a matter that should be considered.

Since I discussed this vote last session considerable improvement has taken place in my electorate in repairing and painting public buildings, particularly schools, but there is still room for much more work to be done. The overcrowding of schools is still a matter for grave concern and if some action can be taken to mitigate it, the children and country-dwellers generally will benefit. I appeal to the Minister to provide better dining accommodation for the children at the various schools. Almost every school is without proper facilities for the purpose and it is not an uncommon sight to see the little tots eating their lunches under the school in the dust. Seats are provided but on a windy day dust is blowing all over the place. In school grounds where no playsheds are provided the ground floor under the school should be cemented or asphalted and seating accommodation provided so that the children can eat their lunches in comfort. This applies to many schools and money spent in this direction would benefit the health of the children.

Mr. Power: We are adopting that policy.

Mr. LOW: Money spent for the comfort and health of school children is money well spent. I often reflect that if our school children had some of the amenities that we by legislation provide for their fathers, it would not only make them more contented but improve their health, and I also venture to say that if the same conditions applied to workers in factories and shops there would be a State-wide strike. The light in many class rooms also needs attention. It would lead to improvement in their education, which in turn would enhance their prospects in life.

The Minister spoke of the improvements that have been effected to school buildings and the hon. member for Gympie said he had no complaint on that score. Unfortunately, a school residence at Calico Creek in my electorate was approved 12 months ago and has not yet been erected. I hope, too, that the school residence at Amamoor will not remain in the approval stage.

I have one or two matters concerning school facilities to bring before the Minister. Since I have represented Cooroora I have endeavoured to obtain the re-opening of the State school at Obi Obi. On 16 February last the Secretary for Public Instruction approved to open the school after information had been received that the necessary desks, forms, &c., had been transferred from a closed school at Boreen Junction. Delays occurred. In the meantime some of the children were transported by their parents to an adjoining school while others received tuition through the correspondence system. On 30 March the residents asked me to take the matter up with the Minister concerned. I communicated with the Secretary for Public Instruction and he promptly told

me what was being done. He told me that once again he had requested the Department of Public Works to make immediate investigations and have the forms and desks sent to Obi Obi school without delay, and that as soon as they were placed in position a teacher would be appointed. In July I was again approached by the parents concerned. Children will not remain in a locality indefinitely, waiting for a school to open. They become impatient. Fully six months had elapsed and that was sufficient time to get a few forms and desks transferred to the school. I again drew the attention of the Secretary for Public Instruction and the Secretary for Public Works as well to this fact and the Secretary for Public Instruction informed me that it was proposed to remove the desks and forms from the Wootha school, as they were not available from the Boreen Junction school. I found afterwards that the Department of Public Works officials had visited the Boreen Junction school in July and discovered that the school was empty; there were no forms there. That meant that the Minister had to find forms and desks at some other place. When I received information that they were to come from the Wootha school I advised the secretary of the Obi Obi school committee to see whether there were desks and forms at Wootha, which is near Maleny, as it was not advisable to be caught a second time. It was found that the desks and forms from the Boreen Junction school had been put into school disposals section of the Department of Public Instruction in 1947.

The Obi Obi school was finally opened on 22 August, 1949, and now about 20 children are receiving education there. There must have been some serious neglect on somebody's part because in the end there was a hurry and scurry about the whole thing. At Obi Obi they now have three of everything—three bells, three clocks and three presses, etc. The teacher drew attention to this fact—that he had three of everything on hand. It would appear that when the delay was brought to their notice everybody got to work and sent these things along and thus there was triplication.

In order to put the school in order, it had to be painted, and not being able to get a painter at short notice the secretary of the school committee painted the school. Shortly after this—and after he had been paid—an inspector from the department came up and proceeded to make inquiries about the painting of the school. He observed that there was lead in the paint on the school, and wanted to know of the school committee who had painted it. He said that this had nothing to do with the committee but he would like to know the firm responsible for the paint so that he could take the necessary action to ensure it was not used on State buildings in future. Only last week the secretary received a letter that the paint would have to be scraped from the school building and the building repainted and that he would not be paid until that work was carried out. The secretary had already been paid for the job but he now receives this instruction from the Department

of Public Works. It would appear that there is something wrong somewhere, some duplication and some muddling in the department.

At the Amamoor school the attendance was 70 and the accommodation provided was only sufficient to accommodate 36 children in a classroom 26 feet by 14 feet. There was a consultation with the committee and the only solution of the problem was to use the area underneath the school for teaching purposes. Part of it was enclosed with boards and hessian and that is the position there today—the assistant teacher is still conducting primary classes underneath the school.

On 10 March, 1949, the Minister informed me that it had been decided to acquire 14½ acres in the township of Amamoor as a site for the new State school. On 14 April, the residents, being very perturbed about the conditions at the school, drew up a petition, which was signed by 112 of them, asking that a reputable contractor, Mr. C. English, should move the school. This petition was sent to the Secretary for Public Instruction but I am sorry to say that up to date no further information has been received from the Minister as to his offer to move it. He was then working on another building but was prepared to leave the work he had in hand.

The Widgee Shire Council took up the matter with me and I made representations to the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs. The Widgee Shire Council has a report issued by its health inspector to the effect that the school is in a shocking condition. On 7 July the Department of Public Instruction approved of the removal of the school from its present site to the new site, together with the unused school building at Bollier. I took up with the Minister the question of the date on which this work was to begin and immediately I got the attention of the Minister things began to happen. I hope that by the end of the year the Amamoor school and the unused Bollier school will be moved to the new site at Amamoor and be sufficient to accommodate the number of children in attendance, but I should like to know why the Secretary for Public Works did not give some consideration to the offer by Mr. English to leave the work he was doing and move the building to the satisfaction of the Department of Public Works as action along these lines would have expedited the removal considerably. That offer was sent on to the Secretary for Public Instruction on 14 April, 1949.

The Minister said he did not like hon. members writing letters to him about the delays in carrying out work. I know he has a big job ahead of him, and I also know that he is enthusiastic about his job, just as I am about mine, but if I related to him some of the things I have seen going on, he would realise that he has not always got in his department teams of men who all play the game. He has some very Tired Tims on some of those public-works jobs of his, just as there are some very decent men. I could quote four examples that would make his

hair stand on end, but I am not going to "pool" the men individually, that is a job for his Inspectors. I suggest to the Minister, however, that it would not be wise for him to feel that he has in his employ at all times men who always pull their weight. He and his administrative officers may be doing it but not all the men employed in gangs out in the country centres are.

I am sorry that the request of the secretary of the Yandina school committee to the Secretary for Public Instruction to have the building painted by next Saturday was not granted, although the work was approved in May last. Next Saturday is the day when the people there celebrate the jubilee of the school. All the oldtimers will be coming back and they will find a school building in a deplorable condition for want of paint. If the Minister replied on matters such as this it would do an enormous amount of good. I am sorry that he said he does not intend to reply to such communications because if he did reply I think it would encourage committees and others to do everything possible to improve conditions in our schools throughout the State. If he is desirous of improving school and other public buildings he can rely on co-operation from hon. members on this side.

Mr. ROBERTS (Nundah) (7.28 p.m.): Without speaking in any way disparagingly of previous Secretaries for Public Works, I feel that we in Queensland are particularly fortunate in having as Minister in charge of this very important department a man of such energy, initiative, foresight, and ability as the present Minister who will carry through the very onerous job he has to do.

In addition to the Minister we have a team of administrative officers second to none. To Mr. Lyons, the Under Secretary, and the whole of his staff, I desire to express appreciation for the work they have done, not only for Queensland but in my electorate in particular during the past two and a half years.

Then we have the specialists, the architects, surveyors, foremen and so on, but it has to be remembered at all times that we should not be able to build any schools, hospitals, police stations, or other public buildings were it not for the men actually working on the job. In addition to placing on record our appreciation of the services rendered by the Minister and administrative officers, we should not be unmindful of the very valuable part the ordinary workmen have played in carrying out the directions of their superior officers.

I have one or two suggestions to make but before doing so let me say how grateful I am for some of the work done in my electorate or near to it. In particular we have, of course, the new Stafford State School, which actually lies within the area of the hon. member for Enoggera but serves a great number of children living in the Nundah electorate. That school, like all other schools built by Labour Governments over recent years, is modern and one of which we can really be proud. Those of us who remember

the old-time type of school built by anti-Labour Governments prior to 1915, with which we have had to put up, remember its bad lighting, bad ventilation and poor furnishings, and we should be gratified indeed by the new Stafford school or any other school that is now being erected. The ventilation is second to none, the lighting is as near to perfect as you could get it, and the furnishings, particularly of the pupil and baby classes, are all that can be desired.

Mr. Sparkes: Allowing that you are right, you would expect a little advance in 30 years.

Mr. ROBERTS: Labour Governments have been able to seize upon the advantages available and turn them to account. It is pleasing indeed to look at one of these new schools and see the development that is taking place and the type of building that is being provided for our children today.

In addition to that school, the Department of Public Works is at present working on an extension to the Nundah State School. I am open to correction in the statement I am about to make but I understand that the Nundah school has the largest enrolment in Queensland. For quite a long time the children at that school have had to put up with accommodation in an old wooden building erected many years ago. The department is now going ahead with an extension to that building and when completed it will considerably relieve congestion and will materially help the children, who have had to put up with rather primitive accommodation. I might mention also certain extensions and improvements made to the Hamilton State School, although the alterations and additions there have not been as great as at the Stafford and Nundah State Schools.

Having placed on record my appreciation of the activities of the Department of Public Works there are some matters I desire to place before the notice of the Minister in the hope that consideration might be given to them. First of all, there is the rapidly growing suburban and industrial district to the east of the Northgate railway station. Hon. members familiar with that district realise that the industrial centre of Brisbane is today shifting to and developing in the area bounded by Nundah and Northgate on the west and the river along Ascot way to Pinkenba on the east and south-east. At Northgate we have a number of new factories and new industrial undertakings, thanks to the encouragement given by the present Labour Government. Incidental to this development we have a rapidly developing suburban area. The children in the district have the choice of four schools but for the metropolitan area they are some distance away. When I say "for the metropolitan area" I realise, having been brought up in the country, that in country districts parents think nothing of sending their children four miles and more to school, whereas in the metropolitan area it is thought that a mile and a half or two miles is a long way for children to go. We have to face up to the fact that that is the

attitude of people living in the metropolitan area. The children in the Northgate area can go either to the Nudgee State School, the Hendra State School, the Virginia State School, or the Nundah State School. The district is more or less in the centre of these four. Each and every one, with perhaps the exception of Hendra, the farthest away, is already congested and there is great difficulty in accommodating the children already attending them. Taking into consideration the further development of the district, some consideration might be given to the request already made by the residents of the district to establish a school in their vicinity. The children of that area, in going to either the Virginia or Nundah schools, have to cross some busy roads and the railway line. While it may be all right for the older children to cross the roads and railway line it is always a great worry to the parents to see the younger ones just beginning school toddling off to school each morning. I hope that the Minister, in co-operation with the Department of Public Instruction, will give some consideration to the erection of a school in the vicinity as soon as labour and material are available. No-one appreciates more than I do the fact that the shortage of either one or both plays a very important part in the prompt construction of a school or any other public building.

I propose now to refer to the State School at Nudgee Beach. This is a very small place but these children are deserving of the best possible educational facilities in the best possible surroundings. A few years ago the Government were good enough to bring a school to Nudgee Beach from an outside district where it was no longer required but unfortunately it was placed on low-lying ground and after heavy rain I have seen the school encircled by a lake of water. The parents and the members of the school committee have approached the Department of Public Instruction to have the school removed to higher ground during the forthcoming school vacation. I understand that this is a matter that will come before the Department of Public Works for consideration and I sincerely hope that the request will be favourably received.

Like other hon. members I have taken this opportunity to speak on one or two matters that directly affect my electorate, but there are one or two things of general application that I should like to say about our school buildings. The first is the provision of baths. In the metropolitan area there are very few schools that have baths for the convenience of children attending them. Hon. members are familiar with the Ascot and Windsor State schools, just to mention a couple of them, and admire the swimming baths attached to them. It is my firm conviction that one of the most desirable things for young people is that they shall be able to swim. There are no swimming baths at some of our biggest schools, such as Nundah, which is one of the biggest schools in the State from an attendance point of view, and it is necessary for those children who desire to learn to swim to go to another school or, as they do at Nundah, to travel by

train to the baths at Sandgate. I want to place on record the appreciation of parents of the fact that the Government give the children attending the Nundah school free railway passes to those baths in order that they may have that tuition, but this causes great inconvenience. The matter is of such importance that some definite policy for the establishment of swimming baths at schools should be laid down. Our seaside resorts, particularly the surfing beaches, are a considerable distance away from the city and are available only to the people who are fortunate enough to have motor cars, and to most of us are available for only two or three weeks in the year during our annual vacation. Not only should we have swimming baths at schools for the benefit of our children but we should have them throughout our suburban areas. We have municipal baths at Ithaca, Toowong, Davies Park and the Valley, to cater for the requirements of the people. Some arrangements might be made between the Government and the Brisbane City Council whereby the cost of establishing swimming baths in our suburban districts for the benefit not only of school children but of adults also might be born on a fifty-fifty basis. I bring this matter up on these Estimates because I take it that the construction of swimming baths in school grounds is a matter for the Department of Public Works or the school committee in co-operation with the Departments of Public Instruction and Public Works.

Another matter that calls for attention is the provision of accommodation for manual training for boys and for domestic science classes for our girl pupils in our State schools. We know that at our State schools and secondary schools, and even at our universities, or in any walk of life, there are some who shine at academic subjects while on the other hand there are quite a number of boys and girls who prefer to do something with their hands. It is not that they are not as intelligent, generally speaking, as the boy or girl who becomes dux of the school by passing examinations; it is simply that their aptitude lies in a different direction.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: This is a speech on education.

Mr. ROBERTS: If accommodation is to be provided for the manual training of boys and domestic-science students, it will be an obligation on the Department of Public Works to carry it out. I am surprised at the opposition shown by members of the Liberal Party to my suggestion that something should be done along the lines I am suggesting whereby our boys might be taught manual training and the girls receive domestic-science tuition. We have at Sandgate an excellent school, where manual training and domestic science are taught, not only to the children of that school but of the surrounding schools. That applies to other schools in the metropolitan area. I suggest to the Minister that his department should give consideration as soon as it is possible to do so to the provision of more accommodation in our larger schools at least, in the metropolitan area and the outside districts, in order that our boys whose

aptitude lies in that direction may be taught manual training and our girls who are desirous of tuition in domestic science may receive it.

In country districts it is very desirable that our schools shall be fenced in order to keep out cattle and livestock generally but in the metropolitan area fencing is for a different purpose. There is not the same danger from wandering animals as there is in the country. In the metropolitan area it is difficult for the head teacher to keep the pupils, especially the younger children, within school bounds unless the grounds are actually fenced. We have quite a number of schools in the metropolitan area that are not fenced. The only reason for that is that in recent years the necessary wire has not been available. I should be the last one to suggest for one minute that the fencing of a State school, however important it may be, should take precedence over the supply of fencing materials required by farmers and pastoralists for their essential occupations, but I do think that as materials become available, or as some substitute for K-wire fencing, or whatever type is used, is made available, consideration should be given to the fencing of everyone of our schools in the metropolitan area. In that way the younger children could be kept within the school grounds and there would not be the same danger of their running onto the roadway and meeting with serious accident as there is at present. I have this matter in mind because only a few months ago a youngster from the Nundah school, who was playing with other lads, chased a ball out onto the roadway—there was no fence between the roadway and the school ground—and he was knocked down by a motor-car and killed. We must obviate such happenings if we possibly can.

Another matter I wish to mention concerns the establishment of a post-primary school in the metropolitan area. We have in Brisbane, thanks to the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works, some excellent secondary schools. All these schools, however, are situated on the south side of the city, with consequent great inconvenience to children living in the northern suburbs. I hope to see at no great lapse of time post-primary schools established in different parts of the metropolitan area to provide this essential facility for children in their own district. I have in mind the fact that some time ago certain inspectors from the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works were looking over certain lands in the Banyo and Northgate districts at about the same time as investigations were being made into the proposed resumption of land for railway purposes, and I hope that on that visit some of these gentlemen may have seen some suitable ground in that locality where a post-primary school might be erected for the convenience not only of the youths of my electorate, but those from Sandgate and other stations on the Sandgate line and on the North Coast line, probably as far north as Caboolture, and also on the city side. If the department can

establish post-primary schools in centres similar to that it will meet a want long felt by the parents of children in the locality.

I conclude by saying that we who have benefited as a result of the work done by the Department of Public Works appreciate all the efforts it has made, in view of the shortages of labour and materials, to do the best that could possibly be done under the circumstances.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government) (7.53 p.m.): The hon. member for Marborough suggested that when new schools are being erected provision should be made for the extension of the school building. That is the policy of the department. It was the policy when building the school at Stafford, and today additions are being made to that building. The same applies to the school at Wynnum. Extension work at that school is now being undertaken.

On the invitation of the hon. member for Maryborough, I paid a visit to his electorate recently and laid the foundation stone of a school building. On his request I took the opportunity to look at a number of buildings in that district.

Mr. Nicklin: This is the open season for foundation stones.

Mr. POWER: I assure the hon. gentleman sincerely that if any foundation stone of a building is laid by me between now and the next election, work will be undertaken on the building before the next election. I would make that quite clear to the hon. gentleman. That should chop a lot of ground from beneath the political propaganda of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. Foley: What Labour promised Labour has done.

Mr. POWER: Yes, what Labour has promised Labour has done. In the Maryborough district I inspected a building erected by the Commonwealth Department of Public Works that was used for training soldiers. I agreed that an effort should be made to have this building taken over and full control of it vested in the State Government. It is a building that will be very useful for the Government's work in the interests of the people of the district.

I wish to assure the hon. member for Maryborough also that his suggestion concerning the consolidation of local-authority loans will receive consideration.

The hon. member referred to the desirability of town-planning in all local-authority areas. If a local authority attains the status of a city it should at least have a town plan. That should be mandatory.

As I pointed out previously, the council of the town of South Coast is considering a town-planning scheme now. The old Southport Town Council had one under consideration prior to its amalgamation with parts of Nerang and Coolangatta, and to show how the work of the Department of Local Government is appreciated by local authorities, I

quote the following letter from the then Southport Town Clerk, Mr. Serisier, dated 4 May:—

“The Director of Local Government,
“Brisbane.

“Dear Sir,

“Town Plan—Southport.

“With reference to your letter of the 7th April I acknowledge the receipt of the dye line prints of plans referred to therein and have to request that the remainder of the plans to be prepared in lithos on glazed cartridge paper.”

This is the point to which I wish to refer—

“I have also to express the council's appreciation of the excellent ability and craftsmanship displayed by officers of your department in the surveys and preparation of the plans.”

It will be seen from that quotation that there is close co-operation between the Department of Local Government and local authorities on this question.

I wish to thank you, Mr. Dunstan, for your kindly references to the work of the department and the capable way in which the employees carry out their duties. You will have some new buildings erected in Gympie as a result of your very strong representations. There will be a new police station and work on the new school, the foundation stone of which was laid prior to my becoming Minister, is now well under way. I am sure that will be interesting information to hon. members opposite.

I am inclined to believe that many members of this Parliament are beginning to see the merit of my suggestion and my views—and here I state again that they are not the views of the Government and should not be taken as Government policy—on the amalgamation of shires. I understand from the remarks of the hon. member for Gympie that many years ago he advocated the merging of the Widgee and Gympie shires. If a request is received by me from either of the local authorities concerned it will be referred to the Director of Local Government to see whether the wishes of these people can be met.

The hon. member for Cooroora is inclined to believe that a local authority should be able to provide for the payment of a full-time engineer. That again shows the trend of thought of elected representatives of the people on the matter of local government. I agree that it is not much good having a local authority if it does not do any work. It is not much good having a local authority that cannot at least employ an engineer. A local authority should be able to employ a clerk, an engineer or competent overseer, a health inspector and at least some men to carry out maintenance work. I have evidence that one local authority bought a grader and had it lying idle in a shed, the property of the council, for nine months out of the year because it had not enough money to operate the machine and therefore could not carry out any work. At the same time many other local authorities throughout the State were complaining bitterly that they were unable to obtain machinery. One local authority had

invested a large amount of money in a grader and could use it only for a short time. That shows the importance of considering the amalgamation of a number of small local authorities.

Mr. McIntyre: It would be an extreme case.

Mr. POWER: No.

Mr. Jesson: It is not in the North?

Mr. POWER: It is not in the North. The hon. member for Cooroora suggested an adjustment of boundaries of local authorities to bring about the result he desired and to him I say that any such request from a local authority will be referred to the Director of Local Government. The position will be investigated. The hon. member referred also to the fact that the budgeting of some local authorities makes it imperative that they get money from a bank and pay interest on the overdraft because they have not sufficient funds to carry them over between the end of the financial year and the time when the new rates come in. That state of affairs operates in many areas and a number of local authorities have from time to time made application to me asking for an extension of time in which to prepare their budgets. Any action that compels them to pay interest on an overdraft is brought about by their own fault. Local authorities have the right to levy a rate that will give them the money they need for the carrying out of works. That is their responsibility.

The hon. member then referred to the fact that quite a number of local authorities have had difficulty in getting grader tyres. I pointed this out and I know it to be true and I want to say that I conferred with the Premier with a view to having an import licence made available for grader tyres and tubes. As a result of his representations, the Commonwealth Government have given an import licence and this difficulty should be overcome in the near future.

Mr. Low: Have any tyres arrived yet?

Mr. POWER: I cannot tell the hon. member.

The hon. member for Cooroora dealt with the number of jobs that were not completed in his area. That is true not only of the electorate of Cooroora but many other parts of the State. Queensland has a large area and generally speaking there is little room for complaint. For the information of hon. members I would point out that in my electorate—and I am the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—I have a school that is nearly 80 years old.

Mr. Sparkes: It could not have been a jerry-built one.

Mr. POWER: I never said that, nor did I make reference to jerry-building. To show how fair I have been, I say that this school serves my electorate and that of the Premier and I have given it no preference. We built a new school at Kelvin Grove that will serve

part of my electorate and part of that of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove but that school was built in fulfilment of a promise made 15 years ago. It was not built at the time because of the shortage of money.

The hon. member for Cooroora referred to the need for better dining facilities for school children. Any amenity we can provide that will improve conditions in schools is a good investment in the interests of education. It is the policy of the Government to concrete the ground underneath schools; this has been done in many places but the hon. member for Cooroora must be aware that there has been a considerable shortage of cement, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia, and that quite a number of important developmental works have been held up as a result. Even the Brisbane City Council was unable to complete certain tramway extensions because of the shortage of cement, and in order to overcome some of these difficulties the Government imported cement from overseas at a very high cost. Today we are going ahead with the concreting underneath the various schools so as to abate the dust nuisance and give these conveniences.

The hon. member referred to the removal of school desks from the Boreen Junction school to the Obi Obi school. I recollect this matter very well. I think the hon. member wrote to me about it and I brought the matter under the notice of the Department of Public Instruction. At the request of that department my officers went to Boreen Junction school to remove the desks to Obi Obi. It was found that there were no desks at Boreen Junction, they having been previously returned to the School Supplies Section of the Department of Public Instruction. The Department of Public Instruction was informed of the position, and subsequently asked my department to remove the desks and forms from the closed school at Wootha to Obi Obi. The district officer of my department reported that this was done in September last.

The hon. member also asked that a school residence be erected at Calico Creek and requested that a site be selected. I want to tell him that we do not build a school residence until we are requested to do so and a site has been selected. I can tell him that the Department of Public Instruction has not yet chosen the site for the building of that residence.

He also said that one school had been supplied with three bells, three clocks, and three presses. I should like to know whether they are still there.

Mr. Low: Yes.

Mr. POWER: I should like to know whether any report on the matter has been submitted to the Department of Public Instruction.

Mr. Low: Yes.

Mr. POWER: I should also like to know whether the Department of Public Instruction has informed my department and I

should like to know also whether any action has been taken to have these surplus articles returned. Every officer of my department is expected to carry out his work properly. If any officer of my department has neglected to take suitable action in connection with the matter I shall have something to say.

The hon. member for Cooroora referred to the painting of a school in his district. I think he said it had been carried out by a member of the school committee.

Mr. Low: The secretary of the school committee.

Mr. POWER: He was paid for the work. Is he a qualified painter?

Mr. Low: No, he is a farmer.

Mr. POWER: I understand that the man who painted the school is a farmer. I want to say that any man who paints a school with lead in the paint does not know much about painting. In future I shall see, before any person does any work in connection with the painting of schools, that he is a qualified painter and knows the health regulations. If lead has been put on this school it will have to be removed as early as possible in the interests of the health of the children. That matter is now receiving attention.

The hon. member for Cooroora also referred to the delay in removing the Amamoor State School to a new site. He said that Mr. C. English, a local contractor, had offered to do the job. The department receives many offers to undertake public works but it is bound by regulation to call tenders. If I or any officer of my department accepted an offer by a contractor to do public works, the suggestion could be made that no competitive prices were obtained.

Mr. Low: Why don't you?

Mr. POWER: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. The hon. member assured us that Mr. English, a local contractor, had offered to do the job. I do not know anything about Mr. English. I am not suggesting that he is not a capable and honest man, but I do not want it to be thought that any officer of my department is empowered to go to a contractor and say, "Are you prepared to do a certain job?" Competitive prices must be obtained before any work undertaken by the department is begun. That removes any suggestion that might be made of collusion or connivance between any officer of the department and the contractor. An advertisement first appeared in the Press calling for tenders for the removal of the school and a quotation was received from a man named Griffiths and his tender was accepted. Mr. Griffiths is a contractor and he has already arranged to proceed with the work immediately. There has not been any delay. Any delay has been due to the carrying out of Government policy in obtaining competitive prices. I am sure that the hon. member will agree with me that is the correct and proper procedure.

Mr. Low: When you get a tender like that you usually send it in on a tender form.

Mr. POWER: I can assure the hon. member that we got competitive prices. Wherever possible we carry out such work by day labour. If we are unable to do so we call tenders. I have explained to the hon. member the reason why we did not accept the offer of the local contractor.

The hon. member for Cooroora said that the people of Yandina wanted a State school painted for their jubilee celebrations. The request may be a very worthy one—to paint the school for its jubilee—but my department has a planned programme of works. Those requiring attention most urgently receive first consideration, but in an endeavour to have the Yandina school painted for the occasion tenders were called and the tender of Messrs. Cowell Brothers, of Manly, for £274, was accepted on 19 May, 1949. The district officer has taken the matter up with the contractors and he has promised to make an early start with the work. In pre-war days you could go along to a contractor when a tender was let and tell him that if the work was not started within a given time the contract would be cancelled, but today the contractor is the person who says when he will start the job. Those are the conditions existing today and the reason why this work has not been started.

Mr. Low: Do you think that he will now go ahead and not back out of the work?

Mr. POWER: The contractors assure us that they will carry out the work.

The hon. member said that we had a number of "Tired Tims" employed by the Housing Commission.

Mr. Low: In the Department of Public Works.

Mr. POWER: We have a few "Tired Tims" in Parliament, too. I notice members of the Opposition coming in and doing two hours' work and strolling off to their private business and then coming back for another half an hour. I realise there are a number of "Tired Tims" in politics and they are usually to be found on the other side. Last Friday night, if we had taken a division, six members of the Opposition would have been there against the full number of members on the Government side.

In an endeavour to improve the position and to dismiss men from the department who were not prepared to pull their weight, we reorganised the whole of the department. Some time ago I received information that certain people were not on the job. I got in touch with Mr. East and he went by plane to a certain town. One man had been paid while he was in hospital, although he had no right to be paid. I sent Mr. East immediately to Townsville, after I had conferred with the Under Secretary—I do not do anything without consulting him. I have the greatest confidence in Mr. East, who is one of the best employees the Department of Public Works ever had. Mr. East went to the place, and instead of going to the job, he went to the hospital first and found the man concerned was in hospital and had drawn money from the

department to which he was not entitled. Mr. East then visited the job and found that certain employees who should have been there, including a leading hand, were not there, and they were dismissed immediately. It is all right for members to say that they are "Tired Tims." I say that the member for Cooroora has an obligation to the people who sent him here to tell my department where these men are who are not doing their job. He is a paid representative of the people. If you do not do your job you can be popular, but if you do your job you must become unpopular. Nobody can accuse me of shirking my responsibility of getting a fair day's work from the employees of the department. We did have a number of drones—quite a number—but they have been weeded out; they are no longer with us. The employees of the Department of Public Works today stand second to none in any part of Australia. I make that statement after careful consideration, and I base it on the production per man that we are getting today. That has been brought about by giving to those people a sense of responsibility. I have gone amongst them when attempts were made by the Communist Party to stir up strife and get them to go to stop-work meetings. There are 685 employees of the department in the metropolitan area, and after I had spoken to numbers of them 13 of the 685 went to the stop-work meeting organised by the Communist Party; which goes to show that the men employed by the department had a sense of their responsibility.

Numbers of men have been dismissed. I have told the men that if they think they have a case I am willing to meet them and listen to what they have to say. I have met some of them after they have been dismissed, and I have told them that as they had waited till they were dismissed for not doing their job and being drunk on the job and then made a complaint about something that they alleged happened before dismissal, that as they had not the guts to tell me these things before they were dismissed, there was no room for them in the department. And there should be no room in this Parliament for any men who are not prepared to accept their responsibility and tell the department who are the men who are not playing the game. The hon. member is pledged to do his job in the interests of the people and not in the interests of the people who are not prepared to work. It ill becomes the hon. member for Cooroora not to give the names of the men and where they are so that we can deal with them.

The same hon. member complained about delay in meeting a request for enclosing the area underneath a school. No request has come to this department for that work and until such a request is received nothing will be done about it, in fact nothing can be done about it. My department cannot act on these matters until requested by the Department of Public Instruction so to do.

Earlier the hon. member for Mirani spoke of the valuation of certain properties. I referred to the revaluation of lands in the Redcliffe area. At the time I did not have the figures. As the result of valuations of

Redcliffe property made by a valuer, Mr. J. Hendry Grice, there was a hue and cry that they were far too high. Appeals were taken to the Valuation Court and a number of the valuations reduced. I am not a valuer of land and will not go into the merits or demerits of the case, but despite the fact that the valuations of these lands were reduced I have received the following information from the Valuer-General. Here I might mention that the Valuer-General is in no way responsible for the valuation of the land at Redcliffe. On appeal one valuation was reduced from £20 an acre—Mr. Grice's valuation—to £10 an acre by the court but one acre is now reported to have been sold for £120. The council wanted the balance of five or six acres for a reserve and the price asked was in the vicinity of £120 an acre. This was the price asked for, despite the fact that objection was lodged to the valuation of £20 placed on it by Mr. Joseph Hendry Grice, who had been appointed valuer by the council, and on appeal the court reduced the valuation to £10 an acre. When the elected representative of the people at Redcliffe—and they are not of the same political colour as I am—wanted that land as a recreation reserve for the people the price asked for it was in the vicinity of £120 an acre. It is difficult to know what to do in regard to the valuation of land. The valuation of land for taxation purposes cannot be taken as the real value; the real value is its saleable value—there is no other way of fixing the value.

I thank the hon. member for Nundah for his complimentary remarks about the department and my departmental officers and myself. I do not mind criticism but it is encouraging not only to me but to my staff, to know that there is appreciation of what has been done. The hon. member referred to the increasing population in the vicinity of Northgate and submitted that another school should be built. The hon. member has conferred with me on many matters respecting the welfare of his district and I can assure him that if this matter is referred to me by the Department of Public Instruction my department gives a very high priority to school building and favourable consideration will be given to the matter.

He referred also to the conditions at Nudgee Beach where the school building is at times surrounded by water. The suggestion is that it be removed to a higher site in the Christmas vacation. If that request is submitted to the department by the Department of Public Instruction, as the Department of Public Works has not the machinery available for the removal of school buildings, tenders will be called immediately and if we can get a contractor to do the removal during the school vacation we shall be very happy to meet the request.

The hon. member referred to the provision of such amenities as swimming pools at schools. The provision of these comes under the Department of Public Instruction. In passing I might mention that on improvements carried out by school committees the Government pay a subsidy of pound for pound

and in the construction of baths give a subsidy of 25 per cent. in the coast areas and 33 per cent. in the western areas.

The hon. member referred also to the need for making provision for manual training. When such a request is received from the Department of Public Instruction, we endeavour to carry out the work.

As to the fencing of schools, I have given preference to country districts because there many children ride ponies to school and if we have not been able to find enough material to fence the whole of the school ground we have at least provided horse paddocks to prevent the children from having to walk home because the horses have strayed. That policy will be continued.

The hon. member knows there is a shortage of material and skilled tradesmen and that these are the two main reasons why very little has been done in the fencing of schools in the metropolitan area. In addition to that, the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works will not allow chain-wire to be used for this purpose and my department endeavours at all times to respect the wishes of the Co-ordinator-General. We have no desire to be accused of taking material that could be used more profitably in another way, but we are overcoming the difficulty as quickly as we can.

On the question of post-primary school buildings I assure the hon. member that even if requests do come from the Department of Public Instruction for their erection in the metropolitan area they must wait until we overtake the lag, not only in Brisbane but in other parts of the State, in buildings to give sufficient accommodation to avoid overcrowding in primary schools. We are receiving requests from many places and those considered to be most urgent are dealt with first.

In an endeavour to meet the wishes of all hon. members on these matters, I have travelled extensively throughout the State to observe local conditions operating and I will continue to do that for I shall then be in a position to judge which are the most urgent, and they of course will receive first consideration.

As to the building of post-primary schools, the department has pursued a policy of selecting suitable sites, not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the State. My department, of course, must provide the money, and as I pointed out previously, when we overtake the present lag in other school buildings favourable consideration will be given to the matters raised by the hon. member for Nundah.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (8.28 p.m.): It is not my intention to speak at any length tonight because I realise that you, Mr. Mann, and other hon. members are anxious to hear the Right Honourable R. G. Menzies, but I must reply to the hon. member for Nundah. It would seem that there is always some hon. member on the Government side who will stick his neck out, so to speak, and say something

ridiculous. The hon. member for Nundah seems to have adopted that role in the present Parliament. He said the structures erected by the Labour Government since 1915 are much sounder and more solid than those erected prior to 1915. That is ridiculous. If any fair-minded man in this Assembly cares to compare Parliament House, the Executive Building or the Treasury Building with those jerry-built places in William Street he must admit that the buildings erected prior to 1915 are much more solid than the ones being put up today.

Mr. Foley: You would not say that the building in which the Department of Health and Home Affairs is housed in William Street was jerry-built, would you?

Mr. SPARKES: I congratulate the Minister on his remark that school fences in the country will be completed first. He gave a very sound reason—it was because of the number of children that ride to school. City children would not realise that many children in the country ride five, six and seven miles to school. I appreciate the Minister's sound reasoning and I am only sorry that he is not so sound in his remarks about the division of shires. Whilst the one-ward system may be all right in certain circumstances, I feel that it is lack of knowledge of country conditions on the part of the Minister that makes him speak as he did. In the country you will perhaps have a little town of, say, 500 people and would you expect somebody living 30 or 40 miles out to pay for the water channelling in that town? The Wambo Shire Council is the most progressive in the whole of Queensland; it has the most modern machinery of any shire and has the most up-to-date workshops. We were able to pay £3,000 to build a residence for our shire clerk. We have a travelling engineer to care for all our machinery. Those facts are openly admitted with regard to the Wambo Shire Council; Mr. Kemp will tell hon. members that. We have divisions for election purposes only; the whole of the shire has one rate. I feel sure that the Minister will appreciate that that is the best method to adopt in the country. A person in a little country town might want to do something to beautify his town and a farmer 30 or 40 miles out is not concerned with it.

Mr. Foley: Why have divisions at all?

Mr. SPARKES: For election purposes only. I know the Minister will appreciate the point. At Emerald, for argument's sake, if the whole of the shire was one division for voting purposes the people of the town could outvote the country people and you would have all the members of the council in the town. The hon. gentleman is too fair-minded for that. He wants equal representation. I know him too well. I feel sure he would not favour unfair representation. I am chairman of my shire and I should hate to have all the members elected from Dalby or Jandowae, I like them spread here, there and everywhere, so that there is proper representation. With a shire of 3,000 square miles you want to know all about this area and that area. I am surprised at the parochial view of the Secretary for Public Lands.

Much has been said of the schools. I want to say that in the progressive little town of Crow's Nest the State school is not only a disgrace but is dangerous and not at all in keeping with the town. I am fair with the Minister and he cannot accuse me of writing letters to him. I understand that this school has been condemned; in fact, I know it. It is an awful-looking turnout and is likely to blow over at any time. Seeing that the Minister wants to lay foundation stones, as my leader points out before the next elections, he can come to Crow's Nest and I shall be happy to accompany him at the laying of the foundation stone of a new school there. In fact, I will hold his hand for half an hour while he is laying the stone. The hon. gentleman told me he would not speak whilst I was speaking.

The financial position of the Shires is becoming more precarious each year. Soon after the Minister assumed control of local-government affairs he realised the financial difficulties of the various shires and so he and the Treasurer put their heads together on the matter. They conceived the plan of a fresh valuation. They were of the opinion that the time was most opportune for it—there was a boom period and there was a keen demand for land. So they said, "We will have a fresh valuation." Then the Secretary for Public Works said to his Shylock friend, the Treasurer, "Before we do that we must give some reason for it to the people and to Parliament." And so they put their heads together again and I can now see my little friend the Treasurer holding out his hands and imagining just what money he can get in. He said, "We will tell the people what a great advantage it is to have a uniform valuation and that will go down with the Parliament too." It was a great idea and that was the idea that they put over. However, the real purpose was to filch more money from the unfortunate primary producer. Therefore, valuations were to be increased by the Valuer-General's Department. They have increased the valuations by up to 400 per cent., 200 per cent. being quite common. And here I can hear the chuckle from the Treasurer. He could see an increase in revenue from land tax, that capital tax. He could not bear to see the Minister for Transport getting in all the revenue through the road-transport tax; he must get in some of the revenue too. They increased the value of the shires and they thought to themselves, "This will enable the local authorities to get along for a little while."

Mr. Jesson: The Government do not fix the rate.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. member shows his ignorance. Of course the Government do not fix the rates. Every little boy knows that and the hon. member knows it himself. My shire knew what had taken place in the matter of valuations in other shires and we anticipated our valuations by reducing the rate by over 50 per cent. in order to cushion the effect of the increased valuations on the man on the land. They my Shylock friend the Treasurer said to himself, "The shires may help themselves but they cannot stop

me from getting my pound of flesh through the land tax." Those were the reasons that prompted the Government to get the Valuer-General's Department to do this work.

Mr. Hilton: How many appeals were there in your shire?

Mr. SPARKES: Quite a number.

The hon. member should not poke his head out. There are a large number of very small landholders in my shire. It is a very closely settled area. Some of the landowners who had their rates reduced said, "Oh well, the rates are just the same as before," and they did not bother about appealing. A large part of the area is frozen for the settlement of returned soldiers. Nevertheless, quite a number of appeals have been received against the new valuations. As is usual, the man who improved his property got the axe right in the neck. As the hon. gentleman knows, I and my people have quite a lot of leasehold land. Every block held by us in the South Burnett had the rent increased a few years after it was selected. Its rental value on selection was 1d. an acre. We spent thousands of pounds on poisoning the waste timber. Then the departmental valuer came along and said, "This country is not like the other," and up went the rent to 3d. an acre. It seems remarkable that all the land I own seems to be the best land.

Let me return to the freehold land that has been valued. The land I just referred to was not valued by the Valuer-General's officer. I know a case where two adjoining properties, similar in area, were on the market for sale. One was bought about seven or eight months before the other. The purchaser had the option of buying the adjoining property. He was a canny Scot and he decided to buy the land owned, we will say, by Jones, at £2 an acre. About nine months later another man came along and bought Smith's place for 35s. an acre. It does not matter when those purchases were made, whether it was in 1930 or 1940; one would think that they would establish the relative values of the two properties. The man who paid 35s. an acre for his land spent thousands on developing it. I know him well. Then along came the Valuer-General. One would think that his valuation would be a few shillings in favour of the man who bought his property at 35s. an acre, because he had bought the best property and spent very little on it. The other man, who had spent thousands of pounds on developing his property, had his values increased in most cases by 17s. an acre above the man who paid £2. Is that not persecution of the man who developed his property? That is the sort of thing that goes on year after year.

Mr. Foley: You do not know the land.

Mr. SPARKES: I could tell you a great deal more about this land if the matter was not sub judice, but the hon. gentleman will read more about it later on. I mention that case because I can prove my statement.

Mr. Foley: No, you cannot.

Mr. SPARKES: I challenge the hon. gentleman or any other Minister to say what I have stated is not correct.

As soon as you improve your property a fellow comes along and up goes the rent, while Jones, who does not do anything, does not suffer an increase—the same thing as happened in the hon. gentleman's department when they took the land from the poor unfortunate woman who slaved to clear her land.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SPARKES: Eventually they saw they were not right and they left her alone.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SPARKES: There is one other matter I wish to deal with. I am advised by the clerk of our shire council as follows:—

"The present system of valuing lands held in one block and issuing a total valuation, instead of giving a valuation for each individual portion of allotment, is causing considerable inconvenience in the shire office, and to individuals who sell part of their property. This could be overcome if a value was given for each portion of allotment.

"We have cases where numbers of allotments in the name of one owner are just valued at a lump sum of, say, £500. In one case the owner advises that he has signed transfers for 11 allotments, but transfers have not as yet been registered here, and he does not want to pay the rates on these. When transfers are registered the Valuator-General will have to give us fresh values, and we will have to make a fresh levy.

"Another case, an estate not as yet finalised, a farming property. Part of this was left separately to two brothers, and the balance in an estate for deceased's widow. The brothers took over and are farming their portions, and the estate portion is being worked for the widow separately. They wish to pay the rates on each section separately, but we cannot tell them what rates they each should pay as the whole estate is valued in one lump sum. If the valuation of each portion or allotment was advised to shire separately, at so much per acre, or allotment, the shire could immediately deal with 90 per cent. of the transfers, &c., and not have to await a new valuation. Admittedly in cases of subdivision we would have to wait for the Valuator-General to revalue, but these cases would represent only 10 per cent. of transfers. The total valuation of the property owned by a single owner could be given in total. All we need would be the value per acre of each portion, or a valuation for each allotment in towns. We are supposed to balance our levy against total valuations for audit purposes each financial year, but between resumptions for Crown purposes and delays in being advised of new values, I

would hate to be the auditor who tries to check levies against values as they will finish at the end of this year.’’

The letter also makes mention of closer settlement, but seeing that we had a very sympathetic reply from the Valuer-General I will not deal with that.

You might have a block of 10,000 to 15,000 acres in six or eight portions. They fix a value for the whole 15,000 acres and if you sell one portion you have to have a revaluation to find out the value of that portion. You might get a small block valued and get full details. When the whole area is valued it is irksome for the shire and difficult for the people who want to sell. I feel sure that the Valuer-General will appreciate the remarks made by my shire clerk and I look forward to his giving them sympathetic consideration. In the past it was the rule to value, say, Portion 44 and Portion 46, perhaps eight or nine miles away, so that if one was sold the seller and buyer knew exactly where they were. The buyer knew exactly the rate that would be charged on the portion he was buying. I do not think that putting that suggestion into effect would cause a great deal more trouble. Most of the larger properties are in big portions and the smaller ones have only one or two portions. Not a great deal more work would be entailed. In any case, the extra work would more than pay for itself and the result would be useful in the event of an appeal. In fairness to the man who made the valuation he could pin himself down to each block and each block would be dealt with, as it is when the Land Court deals with leasehold property. The Land Appeal Court does not deal with, say, Portion 10 and then jump to Portion 8 five or six miles away. It fixes an entirely separate rental for each portion.

I make these few observations, hoping that the Minister will not treat them lightly. I do not propose the say anything further because I can see the anxious look in the hon. gentleman's eye in his anxiety to hear the very eloquent speech being made by the Right Honourable R. G. Menzies, which will be so valuable to this Parliament and the people of Queensland.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government) (8.52 p.m.): I assure the hon. member for Aubigny right now that I will not give favourable consideration to the request made by him in regard to values. I will not interfere with the work of the Valuer-General. That has nothing to do with the Minister.

Mr. Sparkes: I do not want you to interfere with his work.

Mr. POWER: Let me make it quite clear to the hon. member that the Valuer-General is not under any political control in the fixing of values.

Mr. Sparkes: It is not the fixing of values: he has to make them for the whole lot.

Mr. POWER: I will not interfere with him. I will not be accused of being a party

to tampering with valuations or directing the Valuer-General, who is fully qualified to carry out his job. It would be highly improper for me as a Minister to dictate to the Valuer-General on the lines mentioned by the hon. member. I will deal later with that matter, but I inform the hon. member now that I do not propose under any circumstances to interfere with the valuations of land, of which I know nothing. I do not propose to interfere with the Valuer-General.

The hon. member referred to the number of jerry-built buildings in William Street. I would draw his attention to the fact that any buildings erected in William Street were put up under contract many years ago and because they have stood the test of time it would indicate that the builders of those days were not jerry-builders.

The hon. member reverted to a matter I had dealt with previously in connection with the merging of shires. He pointed out that if we agreed to this proposal we should have all representatives coming from the one place. It again proves that the hon. member does not realise the position. We heard this same old story on the merging of shires to form the town of South Coast. The shires of Coolangatta, Southport and part of the Nerang shire were merged and it was said that because Southport had the preponderance of voters it would result in Southport's getting control. I would point out that Alderman Len Peak obtained an absolute majority over all his opponents and this gentleman comes from Coolangatta where the smaller number of people are. That goes to show again that the hon. member's statements are not in accord with what takes place. From my knowledge of local government, I am satisfied that irrespective of where the candidate lives the people will say, 'We will elect the man we think the best man for the position.' There were no wards down there, and the preponderance of voters lived at Southport, yet Alderman Len Peak from Coolangatta was elected by a substantial majority.

The hon. member also referred to the Crow's Nest school. Perhaps he will be very happy when I tell him that the plans for that school are not yet completed. We have an architect working on them now and when they are completed I will ask Cabinet for the money to build the school.

We have heard much about people walking in with their chins stuck out. If ever we had an example of that we have it in the hon. member for Aubigny and by the time I am finished with him he will be sorry he ever referred to the question of land tax. He is chairman of a local authority and one of the front-benchers of the Opposition. It is no wonder they are in opposition, where they will continue to be so long as they have men like the hon. member for Aubigny speaking for them, and I do not say that in any personal way. He made a wild statement tonight about my colleague the Treasurer. He referred to him as Shylock wanting his pound of flesh. As a matter of fact, we knew him as Butcher in the old days on the football

field. The hon. member said that, assisted by the Secretary for Local Government, the Treasurer got the Valuer-General to make these valuations for the purpose of getting more land tax.

Mr. Sparkes: That is right.

Mr. POWER: Does the hon. member mean that?

Mr. Sparkes: I mean it.

Mr. POWER: Now the hon. member is poking out not only his chin but his whole head. Let me tell him that land-tax values have been pegged at 1942 levels and those pegging regulations are still in operation. That only goes to show what a babe in the woods the hon. member is. When I look at him he reminds me of the song, "I Need Sympathy." He certainly does look as though he needed sympathy. It is no wonder he and his party are in opposition when he, the chairman of the railways committee of the Opposition, does not know anything about land-tax matters, does not even know that if the Valuer-General increased valuations by 400 per cent. or 500 per cent. it could not affect land-tax because land-tax values have been pegged at 1942 levels.

Mr. Sparkes: I will read that to you out of "Hansard" one of these days.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member can read what he likes to me. I am giving facts.

Mr. Jones: Tell him what Arthur Moore did.

Mr. POWER: That is just what I am coming to. The hon. member also said the Valuer-General had increased valuations by 400 per cent.

Mr. Sparkes: In some cases.

Mr. POWER: I admit that he has increased them considerably, but I remind the hon. member that the price of wool has gone up 300 per cent. on occasions.

Mr. Sparkes: Does it stay at that figure for long?

Mr. POWER: The hon. member has also increased the price of his bulls considerably. Let us be fair about the matter.

Land values, I repeat, were pegged at the 1942 values. Let the hon. member remember that. Let him take the price of beef today. The hon. member, who is one of the leading breeders in the State, knows that the price of beef is higher today than ever before in the history of the country. He has been getting his revenue from the land and he wants the value of that land to remain the same as it was when he took it up many years ago. He weeps about a penny an acre increase by the Land Court. There is doubt that he complained about land tax.

I want now to tell him what the Moore Government did, and this is the daddy of the lot. Mr. Arthur Moore was hon. member for Aubigny prior to the present hon. member's coming to this Chamber. What did he say prior to the 1929 elections? Amongst the various things he said—I do not propose

to go into them all and the hon. member cannot get away from this—when he was stumping the country was that if elected to Parliament he would repeal the Land Tax Act. That statement is contained in his policy speech.

Mr. Sparkes: He got back.

Mr. POWER: He said, "If elected to Parliament we will repeal the Land Act." How did he repeal it? In three years he collected £1,500,000 in land tax from the landowners of the State. That was the hon. member who was going to repeal the Land Act. He is supported today by the hon. member for Aubigny. He is a member of a party that has changed its name as many times as its members have changed their shirts. I am satisfied that the people of Queensland, who know them, will not allow them to have control of the Treasury benches again. Once again I remind the hon. member that the Moore Government, of the same political colour as the present Opposition, promised the people of Queensland that they would repeal the Land Tax Act. They honoured their promise by taking £1,500,000 out of the pockets of the landowners in this State.

The hon. member said that knowing there was going to be an increase in valuations his Council reduced the rate—"We reduced the rates."

Mr. Sparkes: We didn't reduce rates until after we got the valuations.

Mr. POWER: They anticipated the valuations. After the valuations were received they reduced their rates. In 1948 the Wambo Shire Council had a general rate of 10½d., with separate rates for Jandowae, Bell, and Warra. In 1949 the town rate was down to 9d. and the rural rate 5d. The hon. member said, "We have reduced the rate by 50 per cent."

Mr. Sparkes: Rural rates, a little more.

Mr. POWER: Valuations were increased considerably as the result of the visit of the Valuer-General. The hon. member comes into this Chamber complaining that local authorities cannot get the money to finance their works, but despite that fact, after the correct valuation is placed on the land and despite the fact that they have no money and cannot carry out their works, they reduced their rate by 50 per cent. And then they say to the Government, "We want money to carry on." They come cap in hand to the Government—the men who are getting 82s. a 100 lb. for their beef, a record price.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Aubigny to behave himself.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member is getting the highest price ever paid for beef in the history of Queensland and he comes along to the Government and says, "We have not got any money; we want some money." I am sure the hon. member goes to bed every night singing that old song, "I want some money." The hon. member has complained about the

increase in rents, but if you tried to buy his property tomorrow he would want a fortune for it, and he has already made a fortune from it. I am not condemning him for that. He is a very good citizen, a capable business man, but we on this side of the Chamber know some of the tricks too.

Mr. Sparkes: I think I had better take you up there.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member took the hon. member for Maryborough up there for one week-end and the hon. member for Maryborough has not got over it yet.

The Valuer-General is not interested in land tax, nor is he interested in local-authority rates. His duties are defined. It is his duty to have a correct valuation made of the land.

Mr. Sparkes: I did not blame the Valuer-General himself.

Mr. POWER: I want to tell the hon. member that the valuations are based on the unimproved value of the land.

Mr. Sparkes: We know that.

Mr. POWER: Despite all this talk about valuations being too high, I venture to say that if the Government decided to resume his property tomorrow for soldier settlement, they could not buy it at the valuation put on it by the Valuer-General.

Mr. Sparkes interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Aubigny had an opportunity to make his speech, and I warn him that if he continues to interrupt I shall deal with him.

Mr. POWER: I think it is time that we applied the acid test in these matters.

"Shire.	Objections lodged.	Allowed in full.	Allowed in part.	Dis-allowed.	With-drawn.	Appeal lodged against Decision.
Crow's Nest	41	2	11	25	3	3
Jondaryan	69	Nil	21	47	1	2
Gatton	326	6	119	198	3	30
Rosalie	85	2	24	57	2	4
Millmerran	118	7	54	56	1	45
Dalby	52	..	5	42	5	2
Total	691	17	234	425	15	86"

Mr. Sparkes: Why don't you give the Wambo shire figures?

Mr. POWER: I have not got them.

Mr. Sparkes: Mr. Minister!

Mr. POWER: I can assure the hon. member that I have not got the figures but I will give them to him before the debate is concluded.

Mr. Sparkes: I am not saying that you have.

Mr. POWER: I accept the statement of the hon. member. We know that there has been an organised attempt, not only to lodge appeals against valuations made in other

Mr. Sparkes: Go ahead and apply it.

Mr. POWER: Let us refer to the practice adopted in dealing with objections to valuations. I propose to mention some of the valuations that the Valuer-General has carried out and to point out how satisfied the people concerned are. The provisions in the law for the right of objection by land-owners against appraisements, prior to making an appeal to the Land or Valuation Court as the case requires, has proved highly successful, inasmuch as by meeting aggrieved parties in friendly conference in their home town, the Valuer-General has been able to correct wrong impressions of the law and adjust irregularities, thereby avoiding the expense and time involved in litigation. I think that is a very sound principle.

Mr. Sparkes: Nobody condemns that.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member met the Valuer-General in connection with certain matters and he was satisfied with the way in which the Valuer-General treated him.

Negotiations have been conducted in an atmosphere entirely free from legal formalities and, although in a few cases differences have not been composed, deliberations have been conducted without exception in the friendliest spirit. It will be noted from the table below that 691 objections were considered, and of these 87.6 per cent. were finally resolved without recourse to appeal to the Land and Valuation Courts.

"It will be noted from the table below."

This is interesting—

"That 691 objections were considered, and of these 87.6 per cent. were finally resolved without recourse to appeal to the Land and Valuation Courts."

parts of Queensland but in Brisbane people have been whipping up appeals made by the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. Sparkes: I can assure you that nothing like that has occurred in the Wambo shire.

Mr. POWER: I am quite prepared to accept the statement of the hon. member. I want to assure him that we have no objection to appeals.

I have been furnished with the particulars for the Wambo shire. The number of valuations made in that area was 2,812 and only 75 objections were lodged. The total amount of the valuations was £2,379,087, an increase of 182.33 per cent. I thought we were going

to have an immense number of appeals, but there were 2,812 valuations and more than 2,700 people were satisfied and lodged no objection. That goes to show that the great majority of the people are satisfied with the valuations made by the Valuer-General. I have received from many parts of Queensland requests from local authorities asking that valuations be made in their areas.

Mr. Sparkes: Were those 2,000-odd individual owners?

Mr. POWER: Two thousand eight hundred and twelve valuations were made and only 75 objections were lodged.

Mr. Sparkes: What about the decisions?

Mr. POWER: I have not got them yet; the appeals have not been heard.

As I said, a number of local authorities in Queensland have made application to me and to the Valuer-General for their areas to be valued and we are unable to accede to their request. They are totally dissatisfied with the valuations made by private valuers, and they have not been able to obtain qualified valuers. In addition many requests have been received from private persons for the valuation of their properties by the Valuer-General. I do not think the hon. member has much to complain about in regard to the matters he raised here tonight.

The following table of figures shows the valuations by the Valuer-General on the properties in the various areas, the value claimed by the landowner, and the reduction sought:—

Area.	Valuer-General's Valuation.	Value claimed by landowner.	Reduction sought by landowner.	Reduction allowed on objection.	Percentage.
	£	£	£	£	%
Crow's Nest	11,755	9,112	2,643	379	3.22
Jondaryan	105,521	64,115	41,406	2,931	2.78
Gatton	160,706	92,240	68,466	7,533	4.69
Rosalie	78,073	44,547	33,528	2,476	3.17
Millmerran	140,696	62,676	78,020	17,975	12.78
Dalby	27,575	18,162	9,413	184	0.67
	524,326	290,852	233,474	31,478	6.00

In regard to the information sought by the hon. member for Aubigny in connection with the Wambo objections, notices will be issued from the Toowoomba district office either today or tomorrow, and if I am any judge of what is taking place, in view of the ready acceptance of the Valuer-General's valuations by the intelligent people of Queensland, they will show the efficient and capable way in which that gentleman has carried out his duty.

Hon. S. J. BRASSINGTON (Fortitude Valley—Speaker) (9.22 p.m.): My remarks this evening will be brief. I first take this opportunity of complimenting my old colleague, the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government, on the outstanding way in which he has administered his department. That is only typical of the man I know him to be. For many years he worked very hard here as a private member and now he is applying the same principles in the administration of one of the most important of Government departments. I compliment the Minister and place on record my appreciation of his courtesy and the many courtesies extended to me by the very able officers who serve under him.

As I have said, my remarks will be brief. I do not propose to join issue with the hon. member for Aubigny. After many years in Parliament I have come to the conclusion that the advice tendered to me on entering this Parliament was right. I was reminded of a very good axiom, that is, that a member of Parliament will not remain in Parliament on speeches he makes in Parliament; he will remain in Parliament on the speeches he does not make in Parliament.

Mr. Sparkes: Are you getting a little bit worried about it?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I hope to see the hon. member for Aubigny sitting smiling in the same place after the next election and I hope again to hear his characteristic oratory.

The reason for my rising was to express my thanks to the Minister for giving my district of Fortitude Valley a magnificent school building. This school is in an industrial area and industrial areas should be as well if not better served than more prosperous districts. I am happy to say that today there is erected in Fortitude Valley a magnificent modern school building and I express my appreciation and the appreciation of the people of that locality for this building. I have reason to feel pleased because, owing to the war and other setbacks, this work is a little overdue, but at last we have the school and despite the smile on the hon. member for Toowong and the remarks of the hon. member for Windsor from time to time, the school is still there and the foundation stone is in the right place. Let me say, too, that my name is on that foundation stone and I am proud to know that it will always be associated with the policy of progressive development in the area.

The hon. member for Windsor has been very interested in that foundation stone. He has irritated me to a certain extent over it because many of his questions and remarks have been bordering on the childish, to say the least. That foundation stone was laid in all good faith. The Government promised to build a school and they carried out that promise. The hon. member for Windsor would do better if he looked after matters in his own electorate instead of making a joke of this foundation stone.

Again I thank the Government and the Minister for this magnificent building, which

will be a boon to the district and give valuable service to the people. The Department of Public Works is doing an excellent job in overcoming many obstacles and showing results for the money it expends. Again I compliment the Minister and the department. I am very happy to have had the opportunity and privilege of saying a few words in appreciation of their work.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (9.28 p.m.): At the outset I compliment the Minister on the virility with which he administers this department, supported by an efficient staff. They have done an excellent job under great hardship during a period of acute shortages.

I thank him and the Government for the new unit added to the technical college at Townsville. This is a brick structure and is now almost completed and it will cost £36,097. It is an extremely valuable addition to an already highly-efficient organisation.

Another matter in which I am keenly interested is the preparation of plans for the new jetty and causeway, as well as a new hospital for the lepers of Palm Island. The old building is out of date and I am pleased that the department has seen fit to erect an entirely new institution. This will give greater help to the unfortunate people who are stricken with this dreaded disease. The amenities and conditions to be provided will be a great help, both to patients and staff. There will be new quarters for the staff. The present jetty is in a state of disrepair and the causeway is badly disturbed. I am pleased to know that a new structure will be built.

I have noted with interest that no provision is made for the building of the proposed new Central State School at Townsville. A sum for the purpose was placed on the Estimates in 1939 but in view of the war all public-works and building programmes were suspended. I am at a loss to know why this work has not been gone on with. Townsville has a population of 36,000 and can boast of only one new primary school, the West End school. The other schools are old in design and their architecture not in keeping with modern practice, nor are they built in conformity with present requirements of hygiene. I appeal to the Secretary for Public Works to co-operate with the Secretary for Public Instruction to see that this matter is again considered. The Townsville Central State School is one of the oldest in Queensland. In 1939 it was condemned, and I am at a loss to know why the provision made in the Estimates of 1939 has been shelved. Probably it will be possible to go on with the work.

The South Townsville State school also is in a suburb that requires a new school. The environment and teaching facilities there are detrimental to the teachers, and the children in their studies. I am pleased to know that our children will be provided for in their playtimes. Notwithstanding the fact that modern schools are being built, the children have to spend their leisure hours running

about under the school or out in the yard. The Minister in this wisdom has had plans prepared for housing so that they can enjoy their leisure time in comfort, and eat their lunches in hygienic surroundings. School committees are doing a remarkable job, and it would be an incentive to them if an Oslo-lunch organisation was set up. It is important that we should not overlook the provision of proper accommodation for children during their lunch time and in other leisure hours.

The Townsville Hospital, which is being built at a cost of £350,000 and is now nearing completion, is the biggest single-unit hospital in the State. Its architectural design is in keeping with modern hospitalisation and is a credit to the department.

Too much responsibility is thrown upon school committees and similar voluntary bodies for providing amenities at schools, doing repair work and cleaning school grounds. This imposes a very heavy burden on voluntary bodies in the tropical North, especially in the rainy season, when weeds and grasses grow in profusion. It is almost impossible to keep them in check. They harbour vermin and reptiles and so I appeal to the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works to co-operate with the object of helping in this work. A school may be blessed with an energetic and live committee whose members are keen and enthusiastic, who will get their school into a clean, spotless and tidy condition, whereas another school not so fortunately placed may resemble a wilderness. This is a hindrance to the school children and, as I said before, the heavy growth harbours snakes and other reptiles. Some casualties have occurred on this account.

However, I compliment the Minister on his excellent administration and on the way in which he has tackled his task, which must have been a heavy one in the conditions brought about by the war. I congratulate him on picking up the lag in the work to be done. He has achieved a great deal under severe difficulties. Much progress has been made and I am satisfied that before the lapse of many months still more will be recorded. After the cessation of hostilities there were 30,000 houses in arrears but much of that lag has been made up, too.

In conclusion, I again compliment the Minister and I particularly ask him to keep the position of the Townsville Central School clearly in mind.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (9.40 p.m.): I wish to join with other hon. members in congratulating the Minister and his department on accomplishing a very fine job over the last few years. They reorganised the department after it had been thrown into confusion by the outbreak of war. Tradesmen were taken into the Allied Works Council. Consequently, after the war the department had to be reorganised and the men got back into their proper grooves. The training of apprentices also was upset by the war.

I was absolutely horrified when I heard the hon. member for Coorooora attack the department's employees and class them as a lot of

loafers. That is a terrible indictment. The department's employees have been carrying on under very adverse conditions, particularly through lack of materials. They have had a difficult task for that reason. It is wrong that any hon. member should make such wild charges without foundation. As the Minister pointed out, it was the duty of the hon. member to report to him or some other responsible authority. I am sure he would have done so if it had been a private enterprise—he would have seen to it that some of them lost their jobs. But I take the statement of the hon. member with a grain of salt. It is only a bit of propaganda to belittle the department and its officers.

Quite a lot has been said about the lag in the department. We must take into consideration the bad state of repair that all public buildings fell into in the 1929-32 period. The Labour Government had only seven years to make up the lag of building and repair work before the war broke out in 1939 and upset their building programme. In the few short post-war years the Government have made a mighty effort to overtake the lag, in spite of the shortage of materials and man-power. We have splendid examples of the department's work in the new State schools at Stafford and Bulimba. Why, the first thing you see on coming up the river or into Brisbane by air is that fine big brick school at Bulimba. There is no gainsaying the fact that the department has faced up to the many difficulties in the building industry and done a mighty job. As a matter of fact, no matter where you go throughout the length and breadth of Queensland you see fine new public buildings and schools.

One thing that has been worrying the department is the lack of architects. Some months ago I suggested to the Minister for Public Works that standard brick buildings could be built in various centres. It would not look well to have buildings of similar design side by side, but these schools would be in different places and the same set of plans would be sufficient. They could build a school to house 200 pupils at Ingham, Charters Tower, Hughenden, Mt. Isa, Esk, or at Somerset Dam where the trout are. (Laughter.) It would be only a matter of the surveyors' getting the ground levels; the rest would be the same.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: What about climatic conditions?

Mr. JESSON: They would have a design for the tropical area and one for the southern area. You would not have provision for internal heating in the North whereas it may be required in the South, in places like Stanthorpe and Toowoomba. I understand the department is doing as I suggested; if it is, I am pleased to hear it.

I thank the Minister for starting the work at the Ingham High School. Several weeks ago some of the materials went onto the job and now men are working there. Although it was held up for some years it was not the fault of the Government or the department. Twelve months ago I pointed out that the main reason for the hold-up was the fact

the local people could not decide on the site and at last the Government decided on the most suitable site, without respect to persons.

There is every chance that this building will be erected expeditiously. The materials necessary, other than cement and probably iron and steel, can be obtained in the district. The brickworks at Ingham make the best bricks in Queensland. As a matter of fact, when I first entered Parliament in 1935 I accompanied the then Home Secretary, now the Premier, and the hon. member for Carnarvon to the laying of the foundation stone of the Stanthorpe General Hospital. The architect, Mr. Donohue, told me that the face bricks used had come all the way from Ingham. The timber for the school can be obtained locally and if the Department of Public Works sees fit, the large joinery works recently established at Ingham can supply the joinery. The labour can be obtained in the district. The erection of this school results in greater business activity, inasmuch as the money paid in wages for both materials and labour percolates through the district. This is very desirable and it is to be regretted that the same does not apply to other districts. Unfortunately, they are not so favourably situated as Ingham.

I was very pleased to hear the Minister say today that my suggestion made some months ago had been put into effect. Probably that is one of the reasons why the difficulty has been overcome in the planning of schools.

Mr. Sparkes: Did you persuade them to bring the bricks from Ingham to Stanthorpe?

Mr. JESSON: No. The antediluvian member for Aubigny—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. JESSON: That means he was born before the flood.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must address hon. members by their correct titles.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member for Aubigny has antediluvian ideas. When he was complaining about land-tax valuations I suggested that they could reduce the rates and the Minister pointed out that in some local-authority areas the big men on the councils kept the rates low and did nothing in the rest of the district. I know of a number of shires in which that has happened. I also know of shires in which they have doubled the valuations and doubled the rates. On the South Coast they have doubled the valuations and the rates.

Mr. Sparkes: Who doubled the valuations?

Mr. JESSON: The valuations have been properly adjusted.

Mr. Sparkes: You said they doubled the valuations.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member is not only thick in the head but he is now thick in the ears. After doubling the rates, we find that at Southport, for instance, once you go

off the Pacific Highway and 150 yards off the main street they have no channelling, kerbing, or anything else. It is the most backward area one could find anywhere. What they have done with their rates, God only knows. Yet they are blaming the Government and everybody else. If you go 150 yards off the main Pacific Highway or Scarborough Street you will find that there are no streets, footpaths or kerbing.

At 9.55 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Orders, progress was reported.

The House adjourned at 9.57 p.m.
