

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 1949**

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

LIQUID FUEL BILL.

Assent reported by Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS.

CEMENT STORED AT "EVENTIDE."

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR** (Hamilton), for **Mr. DECKER** (Sandgate), asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"Is it possible on account of the general shortage of cement to make portion of the shipment stored at 'Eventide,' Sandgate, available for general public use?"

**Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock), for **Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers), replied—

"The cement is required for hospital and institutional works."

TRANSFER OF GOLDEN CASSET AGENCIES.

**Mr. KERR** (Oxley) asked the Attorney-General—

"In view of the frequent advertisements in the daily Press where advertisers offer their businesses for sale with a Golden Casket agency, have restrictions in this regard been lifted or has there been any variation in any way under certain conditions, whereby the department will allow transfers of an agency upon sale? If so, will he set out briefly the position?"

**Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory) replied—

"There has been no variation in the procedure adopted by the Casket management over twelve years ago. Under the Act agencies may not be assigned. On appointment an agent is required to acknowledge the following terms:—

"There is no goodwill in such appointment, such goodwill belonging to the Golden Casket Art Union. The granting of an agency does not give you the right to transfer same to your successor, or any person or persons succeeding you in business. If an agent disposes of his

business the agency is automatically cancelled, and if it is found necessary to appoint a successor, the claims of other applicants in the vicinity will be considered at the same time as the purchaser of the business of the agent who has sold out."

"When a holder of an agency notifies the Casket Office that he has disposed of his business the agency is automatically cancelled, and the purchaser of the business may make application to have the agency granted to him. The application is considered on its merits. The Brisbane newspapers have been advised by the Casket Office that Casket agencies cannot be sold."

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY BY-ELECTION: KURILPA.

**Mr. INGRAM** (Keppel), without notice, asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

"Can he give the House the result of the Kurilpa by-election?"

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona) replied—

"Yes. Having opened the campaign on behalf of Labour's candidate, Mr. Colin Bennett, I naturally was keen to know the result of the by-election, which was conveyed to me at Roma on Saturday night.

"I was exceedingly pleased to hear of the magnificent vote for Labour and its crushing defeat, as it was described by the 'Courier-Mail,' of the C.M.O. candidate.

"The majority for the Labour candidate is at present 1,201 compared with the majority for Alderman Moores of 345 in May last, and it is anticipated by Labour's organisers that when the final figures are released at 1 p.m. today the majority will be further increased."

#### PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulations under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Acts, 1938 to 1940 (3 November).

Orders in Council under—

The Landlord and Tenant Acts, 1948 to 1949 (10 November).

The Aliens Act, 1867 to 1948 (10 November).

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

PREVIEW OF FILM, "SONS OF MATTHEW."

**Hon. V. C. GAIR** (South Brisbane—Acting Premier), by leave: I desire to inform the House that Greater Union Theatres Pty. Ltd. and Universal International Pictures have generously offered to afford members of this Parliament an opportunity of witnessing a special screening of the Australian film "Sons of Matthew." By courtesy of Mr. Speaker, arrangements have been made for this special screening to be held in the Legislative Council Chamber at 7 o'clock on Wednesday, 16 November.

Hon. members are no doubt aware that "Sons of Matthew" was substantially produced in Queensland and consequently this film is of particular interest to this State. It is also interesting to hon. members, I am sure, to know that the producer of the film, Mr. Charles Chauvel, is a Queenslander. With a view to encouraging the production of films in Queensland and recognising that the film, which has been made in some of the best scenic spots in Queensland, would help greatly in advertising Queensland in other parts of Australia and the world, the Government gave both financial and other help in the production of this film. I trust hon. members will avail themselves of this opportunity of witnessing the special screening, and I would add that it is understood that this is the first time a special screening of a film has been arranged in any State Parliament House in Australia. Therefore, the occasion can be regarded as unique.

**Mr. Hiley:** Do you know the length of the programme?

**Mr. GAIR:** I could not say exactly, but I can find out and let the hon. member know.

Owing to the limited accommodation, invitation is limited, of course, to members of Parliament and as many of the staff who can be accommodated.

#### SEWERAGE, WATER SUPPLY, AND GASFITTING BILL.

##### INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide standard by-laws for local authorities in relation to sewerage and water supply and to make provision for the preparation of standard by-laws in relation to gasfitting; to provide for the constitution of a board for the examination and licensing of plumbers and drainers and, upon the preparation of standard by-laws in relation to gasfitting, of gasfitters; and for these objects to amend the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1949, and the Health Acts, 1937 to 1948, each in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

#### COAL MINING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

**Hon. W. M. MOORE** (Merthyr—Secretary for Mines and Immigration) (11.18 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Coal Mining Acts, 1925 to 1948, in certain particulars."

This is a very simple measure containing amendments to the Acts in two particulars only. The first amendment is to increase the number of check inspectors from two to three, to enable them to exercise their powers individually, and the second is to extend the date for the installation of electric safety lamps from 9 December, 1948, to 31 March, 1950. No new principle is involved.

**Mr. Brand:** Is it because you cannot get safety lamps?

**Mr. MOORE:** That is the second amendment. The increase in check inspectors from two to three is required as it has been found impossible for two check inspectors to cover efficiently all the mines in Queensland.

The Mines Regulation Acts, governing metalliferous mining, have for many years contained provision for the appointment of check inspectors. The Government have met the remuneration and travelling expenses of three persons elected by the union. In 1938, section 70 of the Coal Mining Acts Amendment Act extended the principle to coal-mining but only two check inspectors were provided for, to be elected by ballot of the union, and it was set out that persons elected must be qualified as deputies or higher. This section empowers the miners employed at a mine to appoint two persons chosen from their number to inspect jointly that mine and all workings and appliances there.

Recently a legal contention was raised that check inspectors under Section 70A had jurisdiction only when inspecting and acting together, which is the case of miners' inspectors appointed under Section 70. The amendment clarifies the position and enables check inspectors to exercise their powers individually. The Government pay rail fares, salary and travelling expenses of two check inspectors. The third check inspector holds the position of State president of the union and is paid by the union for that office. The Government also pay daily wages lost by the individual miners at various mines whilst accompanying a miners' check inspector.

I come now to the subject of electric safety lamps. Till December, 1947, the use of electric safety lamps underground in coal-mines was not generally compulsory. Only in certain specified conditions were naked lights prohibited and electric safety lights compulsory. In December 1947 the Coal Mining Acts and rules thereunder were extensively revised and modernised and the rule dealing with lighting was amended to provide that after 9 June, 1948, only electric safety lamps should be used underground. However, the Minister was empowered at his discretion to grant extensions up to 9th December, 1949. The Bill now gives the Minister power to grant an extension up to 31 March, 1950, the reason being that at the time of the proposed change only American electric lamps and American charging and maintenance equipment could be obtained. English lamps were virtually unknown and there was only one type that could be considered satisfactory. The dollar situation complicated

matters, and so American lamps became unavailable. It was necessary to look round for English lamps. We got in touch with local agents and arrangements were made for samples to be obtained. Then demonstrations had to be made and contracts entered into with firms in the Old Country. Then arrangements were made with Australian firms to help in supplying necessary equipment. The lamps have been tested and the orders for them lodged but it has not been possible to get sufficient to implement the Act by the given date. The amendment will permit the Minister to use his discretion by extending the period up to and including 31 March, 1950. We are assured by the contractors that a sufficient supply will be available by that date.

**Mr. Brand:** What if there is not a sufficient supply of lamps then?

**Mr. MOORE:** I am assured that a sufficient quantity will be available by that date. On the second reading I will give hon. members the information I have regarding them.

**Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (11.26 a.m.):** When this legislation was being considered in 1947 the Opposition drew attention to the difficulty of getting these electric safety lamps by the given date. The doubts they expressed then were obviously very sound because this Bill seeks to extend the date for their installation.

I cannot for the life of me understand why the Minister cannot go a little further than he proposes. The Bill proposes to extend the time only from 9 December to 31 March next, notwithstanding that the original legislation was passed in 1947 and it has not yet been implemented because of the shortage of equipment. I suggest that the date should be postponed from 31 March to 30 June. When we propose to adopt compulsion in the provision of safety devices we must make the legislation a little more elastic. The wisdom of that course has already been proved but this Bill makes it mandatory that the lamps must be provided by 31 March next. What is going to happen if the shortage still exists on that date? The Government will not have power to extend the date. Safety lamps should be installed in all underground workings to make the conditions for the men as good and safe as possible. That is only fair. I should like to know from the Minister what will happen if the safety lamps are not available on 31 March next.

The proposal to clothe check inspectors with individual power is a very wise one. If a check inspector has the necessary qualifications, it is not necessary for him to have the help of another officer in making a decision. That merely leads to the duplication of work.

I see no great reason why this Bill should not be approved but the Minister should give heed to my suggestion to extend the time for the provision of safety lamps to 30 June, 1950, in order to provide for eventualities. The Opposition have no other objection to

the Bill. It is necessary, as we said on a previous occasion, and the Bill will be helpful to the men whose work takes them underground.

**Mr. BRAND** (Isis) (11.30 a.m.): I am very disappointed with the Bill as outlined by the Minister. One would think, in view of the very acute coal problem, that the Government would bring down a Bill that would have some substance in it and give the people some lead. Instead of that we have a repetition of some of the mistakes the Government made two years ago. Parliament is now engaged in discussing an amendment to legislation because the Government refused to accept amendments from the Opposition when the original legislation was being considered. We have a State that abounds in coal resources; our coal potential is one of the largest in the world; yet we are continually faced with the shortage of coal, and the Government will not bring down legislation that will create confidence in the people who are developing industry by assuring them of all the coal they require. We have this twopenny-half-penny Bill, to which the hon. member for Albert says there can be no objection, because we have already agreed to the principle some time ago.

**Mr. Moore:** You are differing from him.

**Mr. BRAND:** I want the hon. gentleman to bring down something worth while—something that will assure the industry of development and assure the people engaged in industry that they will have a plentiful supply of coal. Labour Governments will not meet the position. It is a great pity that they will not adopt suggestions that may be offered to them, and thus obviate the necessity of bringing down amendments to legislation some time afterwards.

The Bill seeks to extend the time for installing safety lamps. What will happen if they are still not procurable at the expiration of the time laid down in the Bill? It is all very well for the Minister to say that on the second reading he will give the House full information as to the availability of these electric lamps. He could go so far as to amend the Act in such a way that it could be proclaimed by Order in Council, so as to assure the industry that it will have ample time in which to procure the lamps. I sympathise with the people who are endeavouring to produce coal in this country, and the difficulties they encounter time and time again through the actions of the Labour Government in not making it easier for them to produce the coal we require.

**Mr. FARRELL** (Maryborough) (11.34 a.m.): There was a time when the hon. member for Isis had a very good knowledge of the mining industry, but since he changed his electorate he has lost touch with it, otherwise he would know of some of the improvements that have been made in it.

In my district we have seen the progressive stages of improvement to lighting in coal-mines. We have progressed from the days of the tallow-oil and wick lamps to

the carbide-gas lamps and later to the electric head lamp. The Miners' Federation agreed that the electric-light lamp is the best type to be used by coal-miners working on the face. It enables them to protect themselves from the dangerous nature of their work. Some hon. members may not know, but a miner at the face works on a board about 6 yards in width. There is a roadway 5 feet wide and the balance of the coal face is called the gob, into which the brushing and stone from the seam is deposited for road protection.

Since the Act was brought into operation mine-owners have encountered considerable difficulty in getting the prescribed lamps to be used by the miners and the intention of this amending Bill is to extend the prescribed time for doing to the date mentioned by the Minister.

**Mr. Brand:** We agree with that.

**Mr. FARRELL:** I think everybody agrees with that. Under the terms of the Act the necessity to provide electric lamps for the miners means that there will not be the danger that there was formerly met with in running the roads. No matter how good a road may be—there is always the danger that a bad wagon will throw the rake off the road and the rope runner, unless he is supplied with a good head lamp, finds himself in great difficulties, so that a smash may occur. Vast improvements have been brought about in this respect in coalmines, especially in the short period in which the Coal Board has been operating, yet the hon. member for Isis says there has been no improvement in relation to the production of coal.

**Mr. Brand:** I never said anything of the sort.

**Mr. FARRELL:** Of course the hon. member did. The hon. member said that he expected that the Bill would have contained provisions that would bring about an increase in the production of coal. Here I might mention that the production of coal in the Maryborough district is the highest per man that it has ever been. This is the result very largely of the improvements now being installed. I object to the Opposition's always trying to put the blame on the miner for the production of coal and for the troubles that occur in the mining industry, instead of putting the blame onto the owners, where it mostly belongs. In the first place a Bill was passed in this House some time ago having for one of its objects the installation of points, or iron turntables where that was not possible but trouble has been experienced in getting the mine-owners to install them. That is an improvement that is gradually building up production of coal. In the second place for how long has the Miners' Federation asked for the installation of power borers in coal-mines? Some of the mines in my district have had power borers installed in them and the result is the men are producing more coal because they can devote more of their time to working on the coal face. Power borers should be employed universally especially to drill holes on coal faces or in the brushing, instead of relying on the hand borer,

as in the old days. These are some of the improvements that are gradually being effected.

The purpose of the other amendment is to provide for another check inspector on coal-fields. The Miners' Federation has thought for a long time that more inspectors are necessary to ensure that the safety and working conditions of the Act are carried out.

The small amendments introduced today will meet with the approval of not only the general public but also all the men engaged in that most onerous of occupations, the winning of coal. They will tend to create greater confidence amongst the workers in the industry.

**Mr. KERR (Oxley) (11.41 a.m.):** These are both very worthy amendments. We all appreciate the fact that the safety of the miner in any working should be our predominant consideration and every facility that can be utilised or improvised to ensure that safety to the miner will always receive the ardent support of this side of the Committee.

Many types of lamps have been tried and I can understand that the dollar position has had something to do with the difficulty of importing American lamps. I am glad to hear the Minister say that arrangements have been made, which he will disclose on the second reading, for an ample supply of lamps to be imported from England, and I shall await that explanation, because there might still be difficulty in getting sufficient lamps by 31 March. It is essential that every facility be given to check inspectors to see that the law is carried out in its entirety. We approve of the extension of the time within which the lamps must be installed, and under the circumstances the Minister is justified in asking us to consent to the proposed amendments.

**Mr. BRAND (Isis) (11.43 a.m.):** I cannot allow the hon. member for Maryborough to misrepresent what I said. No-one on this side is endeavouring to blame the miners for the fact that electric lights are not procurable. We are blaming the Government for that. The Coal Mining Act of 1947 provided that these lights shall be installed within six months of the passing of the Act. It also allowed extensions to be granted for periods up to a maximum of two years, ending 9 December of this year. The Opposition pointed out at that time that it was the Government's responsibility to see that lights were available for installation by the owners. They have fallen down on their job in that respect and we do not want them to do it again.

**Mr. Moore:** Are you charging the Government with failing to go to England and acquiring these lights?

**Mr. BRAND:** I have told the Minister what I am charging him with, that is, not taking an interest in the matter and seeing that the lights were obtained. It is the Government's job to get them into the country. In his policy speech last night the Prime Minister featured coal and said that

he wants to help the Queensland Government to get coal. Evidently he believes that that Government have fallen down on their job. I have suggested this morning, quite seriously, that it may take a little longer to get these lamps than the Minister expects and the hon. gentleman now has it within his power to extend the period.

**Mr. Moore:** The extension of the period would not bring a lamp to Australia any sooner.

**Mr. BRAND:** And if lamps are unprocurable at 31 March next what will happen? Parliament will not be sitting at the time and the Minister will not have the power to extend the time. It is suggested that he take the power of extension now. If he can get the lamps by the end of December next there will be no need to extend the period any further. We want to make sure that the lamps are got and it is the Government's job to see that they are.

**Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (11.47 a.m.):** It was rather amusing to hear the conflict of opinion between the hon. member for Albert and the hon. member for Isis. The first-named member advocates the extension of time to the end of June to give the offending owners a chance to meet the requirements of the Act. The hon. member for Isis, on the other hand, blames the Government for neglect in not having the lamps—

**Mr. Brand:** Not seeing that they were here.

**Mr. DONALD:** Well, for not seeing that the lamps are in the State so that owners can get them. If anybody is to blame for the fact that the lamps are not here, the burden should not be placed on the shoulders of the Government but on the shoulders of the colliery proprietors.

**Mr. Brand:** No.

**Mr. DONALD:** I say yes. If the hon. member took the trouble to inquire of the wholesale merchants he would find out that what I am saying is correct. He cannot blame the Government and I do not think any blame can be laid at the door of the wholesale merchants. There have been requests from certain colliery proprietors to wholesalers or the people supplying these lamps to give them letters saying that they had placed their orders many months ago and that they have not been able to supply them.

A number of different types of electric safety lamps are available to people who want them. Perhaps the Edison is the most popular, followed closely by the Ceag and then the Nise and the Oldham Wheat. The last-named has a lead acid battery whereas the others have alkaline batteries. The lead acid-battery type is popular in the United Kingdom whereas the alkaline types are more popular in Australia and America. I do not think the hon. member for Isis is correct in laying any blame at the door of the Government because the department has done all that was possible to see that the lamps were brought here. There are circumstances over which we have no control that can often give

rise to the reports concerning the slowness of the lamps in coming to hand. It was pleasing to have the Minister's assurance that the lights will be in sufficient number to go into mines by the end of March next.

An additional check inspector is to be appointed. It is just as well that hon. members should know what a check inspector is. He is not a Government official. The Government have their own mine inspectors. The check inspector is a person chosen by the miners themselves by secret ballot of all the members conducted in a proper way. Their duty is to make an inspection of the pits in company with the local mines inspectors. The payment of check inspectors by the Government has been enjoyed by the metalliferous mining industry for many years in accordance with the Mining Act. Up to 1938 in the coal-mining industry the miners carried the whole of the burden of costs themselves. Previously it was thought that it would be better not to lean on the Government in this respect but in 1938 the majority of the members of the union thought otherwise. There has been no interference at all by the Government or the officials of the Department of Mines in the work of the check inspectors.

The appointment of an additional check inspector will mean that additional checks will be made and there will be greater opportunity for checking the inspections made by Government inspectors. It will be useful in that way. Check inspectors have been responsible for obviating a number of accidents and helping the Government inspectors in making working conditions safer at the face.

Both the amendments will help to increase productivity and will make for safer working conditions. We all want to see greater production and I take it that is what the hon. member for Isis also wants. If we can get the things we are asking for we can increase production still further. The use of power-borers has not been general up to date but there has been a big increase in production in the collieries where they have been introduced. If we could get power borers in addition to some form of mechanical wheeling there would be a further increase in output from the men employed underground.

These are not what might be called very big mechanical improvements but they relieve the miner of the most laborious part of his work and naturally lead to increased production. Both amendments are desirable in that their objective is increased safety for men working underground.

**Mr. HEADING** (Wide Bay) (11.53 a.m.): The hon. member for Albert gave his blessing to the Bill; indeed, every hon. member on this side of the Chamber approves of it. The hon. member for Albert raised no objection to it. Both the hon. member for Maryborough and the hon. member for Bremer appear to think that there was a difference of opinion between the hon. member for Albert and the hon. member for Isis. I did not discern any difference of opinion. I did not hear the hon. member for Isis say anything against the Bill. The complaint of the

hon. member for Isis was that there was no provision in the Bill to enable the coal-mining industry to provide all the coal that was required by other industries. If any hon. member can say that he is satisfied with the output of the coal-mining industry in Queensland to-day, all I can say is that he is very easily satisfied.

**Mr. Donald:** More coal is now being produced than previously.

**Mr. HEADING:** I was astounded, when we were considering legislation affecting the coal industry last year, to hear of certain methods of operation used in it. I am a new member of Parliament but I know that the Government have been in control of the Treasury benches for 30 years, and it is astounding to me that these improvements are required in our coal-mining industry. I hope that the Government will adopt a vigorous policy to see that the people get all the coal required. It is very easy to sit down and be satisfied with what the Government are doing. I am not satisfied, and neither are the people of Queensland.

I want to compliment the Minister on introducing these two small amendments, but I would counsel him, if anything further is required to expedite coal production, that he take steps to introduce it, otherwise next session, when we have a new Government, steps will be taken to place the industry on a sound footing.

**Hon. W. M. MOORE** (Merthyr—Secretary for Mines and Immigration) (11.56 a.m.): The hon. member for Albert gave the Bill his blessing, but the hon. member for Isis attempted to make political capital out of it. The hon. member for Wide Bay attempted to absolve him. Both the hon. members for Maryborough and Bremer made practical contributions to the debate, for which I thank them.

I would point out to the hon. member for Isis that this Bill has for its object the safety and health of workers in coal-mines. He evidently forgets that it was this Government who brought down the Coal Mining Act and its amendments, which have done a great deal to increase coal production. The Government have not only inspired coal-miners to produce more coal but have expended a large sum of money in obtaining the help of Powell Duffryn Technical Services Limited to report on the coal industry in this State. They have done a tremendous job already to bring the industry to a stage at which production will be accelerated very shortly.

I am informed by the agents for the electric safety lamps that a consignment of them is now on the water, and the date fixed in this Bill will afford the owners ample time to install these lamps.

Motion (Mr. Moore) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

## SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—  
FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1949-50.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Debate resumed from 10 November (see p. 1534) on Mr. Power's motion—

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

**Mr. JESSON** (Kennedy) (12.1 p.m.): Last week on this question I spoke of the suggestion I had made to the Government for the designing of schools, and as there were only about three members of the Opposition in the Chamber on that occasion and there appear to be a few more here this morning, I will elaborate on my suggestion for their benefit. I suggested a decentralisation plan to provide for three zones of the State, the tropical area, the Central Division and the Southern Division. I believe too many plans are drawn for schools. The school at Townsville could be of the same design as the school at Ingham or Cairns or any other place in the tropical North, and it would be suitable for Rockhampton also. The same procedure could be adopted in regard to hospitals, ambulance centres, and other public buildings. The uniformity of construction that would result would not be pleasing if the buildings were close together, but when the buildings are in different towns that uniformity would not be apparent.

The new High School for Ingham is going to cost in the vicinity of £41,000 and it is very pleasing to the people up there to know that work on it has already begun.

I suggest to the Minister that it might be possible for the Government to have plans prepared for a new police station, sergeant's residence and courthouse at Ingham, because the present buildings are in a very dilapidated condition. Plans were to be drawn in 1938 for these buildings but the war intervened. Sixteen to 18 policemen work under a senior-sergeant at Ingham, where the percentage of crime is the lowest in the Commonwealth. They work under adverse conditions because the building is not more than 24 ft. by 24 ft., consisting of the sergeant's room, the main room, the front office, and the small office at the back. That police station was a legacy from the Rt. Hon. A. W. Fadden, more widely known as “Little Arty”. He was member for Kennedy from 1932 to 1935, when the only work done in the Kennedy electorate was the erection of this little 24 ft. x 24 ft. police station. Unfortunately the war occurred shortly afterwards, and since then, because all available material had to be used for such urgent jobs as hospitals and schools, the police station and other public buildings at Ingham have gone to rack and ruin. I know that plans are now being prepared, and

I suggest that in the interests of economy when the hospital building is completed the Government transfer the plant and labour there to work on these other public buildings.

I congratulate this department on what has been done in the Ingham district during the past two or three years. There is very little criticism that can be levelled against the department in respect of the country schools in that district, despite the shortages of material and labour. All requests by school committees and requests made by me after my own observation—and I travel about the district frequently—for such things as painting, repairs, and extra verandas have been met by the department. The work done by the department has made the surroundings more pleasant for both school children and school teachers generally. I know that the people are grateful to the department for doing these small jobs.

Another matter I would bring before the department is the principal school at Ingham. I cannot very well discuss this subject without bringing into the debate the Department of Public Instruction also. Despite the remarks of various hon. members opposite that in North Queensland population is decreasing and that everybody is leaving the North to come to the cities—which is so much hoovey—the accommodation at the State school at Ingham is quite inadequate for the number of children in attendance. Already the Government have been forced to erect buildings on the playground, which was already too small, with the result that now there is not sufficient area to enable a race of 50 yards to be run. But of course that was the policy of the old Tories, as the late Mr. John Mullan used to call them. The policy of the present Labour Government is to provide adequate land for playgrounds and sporting areas.

Only last Christmas when I visited the Ingham school for the sports, I observed that there was scarcely sufficient area to enable a 50-yards race to be run. In fact, it can be said that there is very little room for the children to play at all. There is a creek at one end of the school ground. I hope that when the department have the erection of the high school off their hands it will give consideration to removing the Ingham State school to a site adjacent to the high school. If the accommodation in the high school is too great for the number of students attending, consideration should be given to allocating part of that building to the State school until a State school can be erected near by. If the population of this district continues to go ahead by leaps and bounds as it has done in the past, which it will do, especially with the expected influx of tobacco-growers, the Government will be forced to provide a new State school building, and I hope they will give very serious consideration to putting it on a site near the high school, where there is sufficient room for adequate playing fields and for future expansion also.

At most of the other schools in my district there is plenty of room for the children.

The Halifax school has acres of playground but at Ingham it is tragic to see the result of the narrow-minded ideas of the old Tory Administration of years ago. They did not have the foresight to provide for the expansion of the district and gave no consideration to the provision of suitable playgrounds for the children. The district is developing by leaps and bounds now and with the establishment of the new tobacco scheme there we shall have many more children in the district and the Government will have to put on their thinking cap and find ways and means of providing adequate playgrounds and school facilities for them.

(Time expired.)

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government) (12.11 p.m.): At the outset I thank our Speaker, Mr. Brassington, for his kindly references to me and my staff, as well as the work of the department. It is encouraging to know that hon. members do appreciate what has been done for them. There has been a great deal of controversy over the erection of the new school in Fortitude Valley, but the job is well under way and again illustrates that the Government honour the promises they make.

The hon. member for Townsville made some kindly references to me, which I appreciate, and he referred to the fact that for some time he has been seeking the erection of a new school at Townsville West. I wish to inform the hon. member that the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works considers other schools more urgent than the one he is advocating. We have had extreme difficulty in obtaining materials and labour, and in order to overtake the lag that occurred during the six years of war we are carrying out only those works that are urgent and approved of by the Co-ordinator-General.

The hon. member for Townsville spoke of the provision of amenities in school grounds. These matters are entirely in the hands of the Secretary for Public Instruction, to whom I shall refer the hon. member's suggestions for consideration.

The hon. member for Kennedy made some kindly references to the work of the department and at this stage I wish to give him some kudos for the excellent suggestion he made for the speeding up of the preparation of plans to meet the many demands being made on our architectural staff. He has suggested standardised types of schools for certain parts of the State and the zoning of the State. We are acting on that suggestion by him. It has been agreed that a committee shall be appointed to deal with not only standard types of school buildings but also standard types of hospitals. That committee will be composed of representatives of the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of

Public Works, and we are endeavouring to obtain the services of an outsider to help in its deliberations.

The hon. member referred also to the provision of heating equipment in certain parts of the State. A number of buildings are equipped with heating appliances now, experiments are being made with what are known as conversion heaters, and in some schools we have installed wood stoves. The hon. member will see, therefore, that what he is suggesting is already under way, and this again illustrates the efficiency of the Department of Public Works.

I can assure the hon. member for Kennedy that there are other electorates besides his, although I should add that he has been very patient with regard to the requests he has submitted. We are constructing a new high school at a cost of £41,057 at Ingham. I had the pleasure of visiting that town some time ago with the hon. member for Kennedy and took the opportunity of looking into building matters of major importance not only to the hon. member but to the people concerned, and when the high school is finished we will transfer the staff to the erection of the new court house at Ingham. The present court house will be converted into a police station, with quarters for single men. The information I have imparted should ease the hon. member's mind in regard to matters in his district, which he so ably represents. I assure the hon. member that favourable consideration will be given to his requests for another new school building for Ingham. It is the policy of the Department of Public Works, where possible, to give each electorate a fair share of our work. If a request is received from the Department of Public Instruction for the erection of a new school speedily consideration is given to it.

We have heard criticism from time to time of the types of school building erected by the Government. This comes from interested parties and does not carry weight with me. If we were to provide all the amenities and requirements suggested, our costs would go up considerably because when private architects are preparing plans and specifications the greater the cost the greater the return to those preparing them. They are interested parties and in their criticism suggest that the Government should, to use a common phrase, let their heads go and accept all the suggestions made by them. That applies not only to school buildings but to hospitals also.

**Mr. Aikens:** Do you pay your departmental architects on a percentage basis?

**Mr. POWER:** No. If we did that we should not know where we should finish. We pay them in accordance with the award rates and we pay outside architects in accordance with their prescribed fees. I would not ask an architect to work for less than the prescribed fee.

I do not propose, nor do my officers propose, to be stamped by the criticism of our buildings. We appreciate the fact that all

the things suggested would be useful but because of shortages of materials we have great difficulty in meeting the demand for buildings. When we decide to erect a building provision is made, as I stated last Thursday night, for the contingency of extensions to it. At the moment I can think of extensions to the Stafford School and the Wynnum School.

To show that all people are not critical of the buildings constructed by the Government or of the plans and specifications prepared by the department, I quote the following letter, dated 5 September, 1949, from the Building Publishing Co. Pty. Ltd., to the Under-Secretary of the department:—

“Dear Sir,

“I have your letter of 31st August together with the photograph and write-up of the Stafford State school building. I thank you for same.

“I would like to personally congratulate your Department on the excellent type of school building you are designing and erecting for the State of Queensland.”

It is gratifying that some people engaged in the publication of works of architecture appreciate what we are doing here but it is discouraging to know that what is appreciated outside our own State is not welcomed by certain people here. Our school buildings will compare more than favourably with those in any other part of Australia, and I have seen quite a number because I have travelled between here and Adelaide and I have always made it a practice to have a look at them. I would refer hon. members to the new school building at Kelvin Grove, which is almost complete. In that building we have paid attention to everything that would give the children the maximum degree of comfort, especially natural lighting. We sought to improve our architectural designs by bringing architects from overseas. Unfortunately some of them were not satisfactory but quite a number gave entire satisfaction to the department.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Is the school building at Kelvin Grove complete?

**Mr. POWER:** Almost; it will be ready for occupation after the school holidays.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** It is only natural to expect the best school in Queensland to be in the Minister's electorate.

**Mr. POWER:** I am glad that the hon. member acknowledges that it is the best school, but let me tell him that I never gave a thought to the fact that it was in my electorate. Let me also remind him that about 14 years ago I and the hon. member for Kelvin Grove made representations to the then Secretary for Public Instruction, the Hon. F. A. Cooper, for a new school at Kelvin Grove. The building of the school was postponed. Later on, when I became a Minister of the Crown, I naturally looked into the matter, but let me tell the hon. member for Hamilton that the State school at Kelvin Grove will serve also the electorate of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove. And that reminds me of a

story of two local aldermen, one who was defeated at the polls and the other who was successful. The successful candidate said to the defeated man, “What did you do when you were in the council?” and he replied, “I did this and that,” but he was defeated. Then the victorious candidate said, “The reason why you were defeated is that you did not have sense enough to repair your own footpath. I am not going to be like that defeated candidate. I am going to see that work in my electorate is carried out.

Much criticism was levelled against the department for its alleged failure to provide adequate supplies for Hughenden after the cyclonic disturbance there. A complaint was made by the clerk of the Hughenden Town Council. It is just as well that hon. members should know the facts. The cyclone struck the town at 3 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon and I received information about it between 4 and 5 o'clock the same day. I immediately got in touch with Mr. East, of the department, and gave him certain instructions and immediately provision was made for the supply of adequate material to repair the homes that had been damaged. Had it not been for the fact that the road from Charters Towers to Hughenden was untrafficable, the goods would have been on the roads that night. Then an article appeared in the paper condemning the action of the department. I had already called for a report from my officer at Hughenden. The complaint was that the people who had suffered damage were not being fairly treated. The mayor of Hughenden had wired to the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs complaining about the unsympathetic and unfair treatment that was being given to the town in cyclone relief, but the fact was that the Housing Commission had already sent a telegram to an officer at Hughenden asking him to give all details and to make all preparations for the supply of all the material that was required by the people who had suffered damage in the storm, in conjunction with Mr. Hunt, our supervisor of works.

The town clerk made quite a song about the situation there and in addition made a statement to the Press. I had taken action to obtain a report from the officers of the Department of Public Works and the Queensland Housing Commission who had been dispatched to Hughenden to deal with application for relief in the same way as in the cases of sufferers in the Cooktown, Gladstone and Rockhampton cyclones. Mr. Hunt was sent from Brisbane. The department, in its anxiety to help those people who had suffered damage, said it was willing to accept second mortgages to secure advances. We sent material from Brisbane and obtained galvanised iron on loan from Messrs. Burns Philp & Co. Ltd. on the understanding that it would be replaced as soon as possible. We thanked this firm for its prompt action. This iron was dispatched to Hughenden and we laid it down, as we did at Cooktown, Rockhampton and Gladstone, that it must be made available to people whose homes had been destroyed, and that the people were not to

get more galvanised iron than was necessary, and the officer of the Department of Public Works had to certify the quantity required.

To my consternation I read and heard the criticism of the town clerk. I asked the officers of my department to interview the mayor and town clerk and ask them to state one case where unfair treatment had been meted out by the Queensland Housing Commission or any officer of the Government. A lot of noise was heard in the northern papers and over the air, but despite all the news that appeared in the "Courier-Mail," or was sent over the air, it has been proved that it was only a political trick that was being practised. The telegram stated—

"Mayor and Town Clerk cannot give any specific case of unsympathetic or unfair treatment in respect to the distribution of materials or unjust treatment by the Housing Commission."

That is a direct contradiction of the statement made by the town clerk, which appeared in the newspapers and was broadcast over the air. This contradiction resulted from an interview by the officers of the Department of Public Works and Queensland Housing Commission. It will be noted that the telegram stated—

"Mayor and Town Clerk cannot give any specific case of unsympathetic or unfair treatment in respect to the distribution of materials or unjust treatment by the Housing Commission."

That telegram was signed by Mr. Hunt, supervisor of the Department of Public Works, and was sent from the police station, Hughenden. Notwithstanding that galvanised iron is in such short supply, it was contended by some that we should give equal priority to a hotel as we gave to a householder. Before this criticism appeared in the Press I got in touch with Mr. Hunt and instructed him to get any material that was available for the relief of the sufferers from the Hughenden cyclone. Mr. Hunt said that every bit of iron he had was for the relief of the people.

That is the only complaint I received. I understand that iron was taken from Hughenden while it was in short supply at Hughenden, but none was taken from Hughenden. That shows the complete ignorance of people who challenge the department with not doing its job and being unfair and discriminating in the treatment of the people. I gave a direction to the Under Secretary, after discussing the matter with the Premier and members of the Cabinet, that if we had any iron that we were not using it was reasonable that we should make it available for use on buildings other than houses. In fairness to the department, these matters should be ventilated so that the public will have some knowledge of what has been done and will not be misled by unfair and untrue statements.

It was pleasing to know that after we put the town clerk and the council on the mat and had asked for particulars so that

suitable action could be taken, they could not give us any particulars at all. Those are the criticisms that were levelled at the Government.

I endeavoured to get this information circulated through the Press, but I think I should take this opportunity to ventilate the full facts, so that they may be read with interest by people in the Hughenden district who peruse "Hansard."

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (12.32 p.m.): The matter I wish to raise is more or less a swan song so far as I am concerned; it is in relation to two schools in my area, and I refer particularly to the Breakfast Creek State school. I again wish to bring before Parliament what I believe was an unfair decision in reference to the purchase of two homes made by the Breakfast Creek School Committee away back in 1935. The school committee, through the Labour member, Mr. Williams, made application for authority to buy or acquire two cottages at the southern end of the Breakfast Creek State school ground, in order to give the children breathing space when playing. I have the correspondence here. Virtually all the members of the committee are A.L.P. members and very active in the Labour movement. The movement started in 1935 and on 26 October, 1937, the following letter was received by Mr. Williams—

"With reference to your interview with me concerning the suggestion that extra land be purchased for the Breakfast Creek State school, I desire to inform you that consideration has been given to this request and it is regretted owing to other urgent building requirements expenditure upon the purchase of additional land cannot be favourably considered at the present time.

(Signed) Frank A. Cooper,

Minister for Public Instruction."

This Breakfast Creek State School Committee had been saving money for years. While racing at Albion Park was booming they gave their services and collected money in order that they might give better amenities to the children in the poorest district of Brisbane. They decided to buy these properties themselves and they bought them. They made application on 24 December, 1942, to the Director-General of Education in regard to taking over these properties from them. In 1942 the department decided to take over these properties and paid the school committee, as part-payment, £280, the money they had paid.

I would point out to the present Minister that the department insists very strongly that the school committee shall pay the rates of £45 11s. and be always responsible for the payment of rates, although it knew the Government would collect the rent and not make the property available to the school. The school committee have sufficient money to build a swimming pool for these poorer children of the community if they can get that sum back from the Department of

Public Instruction. As I say, the department is receiving the rent from these buildings.

**Mr. Aikens:** It receives the rent and the committee pay the rates?

**Mr. PIE:** That is correct. I have with me the receipts for the rates paid. The Minister knows that the buildings of the Breakfast Creek State School are an absolute disgrace.

**Mr. Power:** I know nothing of the kind.

**Mr. PIE:** If the hon. gentleman knows nothing about it, I have here the correspondence with the department. The buildings are a disgrace. I visit that school regularly and know that the poorer children in that area are not receiving the support that the children in the Ascot, Fortitude Valley, and Kelvin Grove districts are receiving. The consequence is that the school attendance is gradually declining. It is imperative that the Secretary for Public Works should visit that school, as Mr. Cooper, a former Minister of the department did, and ascertain for himself the deplorable conditions under which these poorer children in our community are asked to undergo their education. He should act quickly. The school attendance is going down and eventually there will be virtually no children there.

The second matter I bring before the Minister is the hopeless overcrowding of the playing area attached to the Woolloowin State School. The attendance is over 1,200 children and you could not swing a cat in the playing area. Right behind this school is a receiving home for a State department. That land should be acquired for the school. The land would then come straight through from Kedron road to the back street.

Something must be done in relation to these two schools, which are in the Windsor electorate, although the Breakfast Creek State School will be in the Fortitude Valley electorate after the redistribution of electoral boundaries. Already the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is giving donations to the sports fund of this school.

**Mr. Brown:** Do you object to that?

**Mr. PIE:** I give scholarships every year to them and the right of a job in my factory, for the winners of the scholarships. I have a few coming through of whom anybody would be proud.

These two State school buildings, particularly that at Breakfast Creek, are a disgrace to a Labour Government who pride themselves on looking after the interests of the poorer people of the community. This is an example to show they do not do so. If the Minister visits the Breakfast Creek State School he will see for himself the houses that the school committee paid for, recouped by the Government to the extent of £280, but on which the committee pay the rates and from which the Government receive the rent. It is time something was done in the matter. The Breakfast Creek school committee are doing a wonderful job. They

have built a canteen from which children are served meals at morning and luncheon breaks. The women who staff it serve voluntarily. I appeal to the Minister to make an inspection and have the position rectified as quickly as possible.

**Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (12.39 p.m.):** My experience has been that the work of the Department of Public Works has been very favourably done, considering the difficulties of shortages of labour and material that confront it, which of course are not peculiar to this State or any other State of the Commonwealth, but apply throughout the world. This department, under the guidance of the Minister and backed with a very efficient and able staff, has done an excellent job. When one visualises the area of Queensland and the sparsely populated districts we can come to no other conclusion than that the Co-ordinator-General of Works has indeed done a mighty job. We realise that a foundation must be laid for the future.

**Mr. Low:** You are about 20 years behind the times.

**Mr. KEYATTA:** The hon. member must remember that this Government inherited a legacy, which was really a handicap, from the previous Tory administration. Had the Tories in the old days laid a good foundation we should have had a well-planned and orderly system of public works today. No-one can deny that Mr. Kemp and his staff have done an excellent job despite the shortage of materials and man-power.

I thank the Minister for his reply to my representations concerning the Townsville Central State School. We have a modern school building at West End, and a new school at North Ward was provided for in the 1939 Estimates, but the war intervened and although I understand plans are prepared, more urgent works are being carried out. If schools in other areas are more urgently in need of attention, I have no objection to their getting that attention, because I am a reasonable citizen, but I do ask the Minister to keep this school under consideration when the time is opportune.

I should like him to consider also improving the South Townsville State School. Although the building is well constructed of good, old seasoned timber its design is not up to the present standard of architectural designs and I commend the work to the Minister for his future consideration.

The Townsville Supreme Court building could do with some attention. It is one of the oldest buildings in the State. I understand that a survey was carried out with a view to constructing a Supreme Court and Police Court together but I do not think any finality was reached. There was some difference of opinion between the departments concerned. If they wish to keep the Police Court separate, let it be modernised, and I commend the construction of a new Supreme Court building to the Minister's consideration.

At this stage I wish to compliment and express appreciation to the staff of the

Co-ordinator-General's Department. I have made many representations to them and have always received the utmost courtesy. If any request has been refused the reason has always been sound, but wherever it has been possible to give help, that help has always been forthcoming. A person who is not au fait with the working of the department and does not know its officers would get the impression that the men were probably an inefficient staff. It shows how one can unconsciously be a "knocker" of a department. The staff are highly trained and qualified and are doing a mighty good job. Notwithstanding the fact that we differ on occasions, we must pay respect to the ability of the gentleman concerned and be tolerant when adverse replies are received.

I suggest that there should be some co-ordination of activities in the laying of pipes in roadways. We very often find that after a new building is erected the workmen of some public authority come along and dig up a well-laid walk or path to lay some pipes. Later on, perhaps, the P.M.G. comes along and digs up another stretch and so do the people concerned with sewerage. The result is that we have a chequer board road or path. Surely some planning could be arranged so that the one set of digging would cover all requirements. Very often the brickwork or the concrete foundations of a building are cut into so that the pipes can be put in. I seriously suggest that the co-ordination of these activities should be considered. I have discussed the matter with the Minister and he told me that plans were being prepared along this line.

I want to say a word or two about sewerage drains passing through private property and I refer particularly to Bundy Creek, a tributary of the Ross River. To allow of the access of the sewerage to that creek one of its banks was cut into and the hole made was filled with a different type of filling from that of the natural bank. Succeeding tides and flooding of the river have caused erosion at this spot and part of an allotment is being gradually washed into the creek. What redress has the elderly lady who is the owner? She appealed to the council but it would not or could not do anything for her. I took the matter up with the Government and was told that it was a matter for court proceedings but how can an unfortunate individual find the money to fight such a case, because when you fight a local authority or the Government you are fighting yourself? This person has no redress.

My point is that the owner of a property in these circumstances should get some compensation or some assurance that she will not lose by the actions of a council or a Government. Probably the whole of her life's savings have been invested in the home. If the erosion continues much longer, her property will be valueless.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. BROWN (Buranda) (12.51 p.m.):** I should like to congratulate the department on the considerable amount of work it has

done in the past 12 months in the face of very adverse circumstances. The serious shortage of material and labour has been a serious bar to the completion of a number of jobs and I suppose that this state of things will continue for some time yet. However, I congratulate the department on the work it has done and hope that ere long it will be able to do much more and in a quicker time than it is able to do it today.

There is something in the suggestion of the hon. member for Kennedy that there should be standardised plans for public buildings to suit the varying climatic conditions of the State but we must not overlook the fact that we must march with the times, that we must not become stereotyped lest the buildings we erect today may not be out of date in 20 years' time without our realising it. We must march with the times. Many buildings that were considered modern when they were erected are totally out of date now. I concede at once that the suggestion of the hon. member for Kennedy would mean much saving in time and expense in the architectural branch of the department.

Some time back the department subdivided the Junction Park School, the biggest school in the State, in order to provide temporary accommodation for an infants' school. The department recognised at once that there was need for this accommodation and it spent £1,472 on a temporary infants' school. I hope this will be only a temporary arrangement, otherwise the temporary building in relation to the fine brick structure there will give the impression that there is a lack of co-ordination and no real attempt to provide ideal schooling facilities. I express the hope that before very long both the Junction Park School and the Greenslopes School will be demolished to make way for two new, modern brick schools. I know that the pioneers in their day did an excellent work in the schools they built but they had no idea that Brisbane would extend as it did.

At Greenslopes the buildings are so scattered that the playing space is seriously restricted. Some of the buildings having been up for over 60 years. It is impossible to get land adjoining the school property and my suggestion is that the department should build a modern brick school at Greenslopes that would perhaps occupy but a quarter of the space now taken by the existing wooden buildings and thus give the children a greater playing area in this thickly-populated suburb.

**Mr. Decker:** You want a two- or three-storey building?

**Mr. BROWN:** Then the school building would be concentrated and the children would not be deprived of their playing area. The Greenslopes school is one of the largest in the district, and one of the first that visitors from the South get a glimpse of on entering the metropolitan area. It is not a prepossessing building. In fact, it is an eyesore and should be replaced by a building that would appeal not only to parents and children but to visitors also.

I suggest to the department that when constructing schools in the future provision should be made for a child-minding centre and kindergarten. This really comes under the Department of Public Instruction.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** You know it does not favour that idea now.

**Mr. BROWN:** I do not know what it favours. I am suggesting that in all future school buildings in cities or towns of any size provision be made for child-minding centres and kindergartens. They could not be housed in a more suitable building than a public school. Mothers would then be able to leave their children at the child-minding centre when going to the city to transact business or engaging in some recreation. I am associated with a child-minding centre that is very successful. As many as 64 children are left there in one day. Our young teachers should be trained to take control of children in those centres. Today a great deal of money is expended on child-minding centres, but they should come under the administration of the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works. It should be our duty to keep infant children out of the city in order that they may escape any possibility of infection from disease. The Minister should see that something is done about the matter.

Money has been appropriated for the construction of the South Brisbane Auxiliary Hospital of the Brisbane and South Coast District Hospitals Board. The work is held up because of shortage of labour and material, principally steel. This hospital will relieve the Brisbane General Hospital and be of great convenience to the residents on the South side. Excavation work has been carried out on the site, and once material is available construction work will be speeded up.

I was pleased to learn from the departmental report that plans are being prepared for a new leprosarium at Peel Island. This is very necessary because the one that is there is very old. I notice also that a jetty and causeway have been built at considerable cost, but they will be of great benefit to the inmates and their visitors.

I wish to congratulate the department on the efficiency of the Ipswich Road workshops, where a tremendous amount of work is carried out. They are always busy making office furniture and school equipment. They make remarkably good school desks at a cheaper cost than they can be made for anywhere else in the State. Under the decentralisation policy of the Government, if something has to be done in the northern parts of the State the Government use the services of a local joinery firm instead of having it sent up from Brisbane and I congratulate the department on its decentralisation scheme.

Much has been said about local government and I think our local councils are doing a good job but I believe the time has come when we should have greater areas for local authorities. I am sure that the South Coast amalgamation will prove successful, just as the Greater Brisbane scheme has. I was one of the first people who advocated a Greater

Brisbane. That was in 1916, and I was laughed at, but 10 years later it was an accomplished fact. It has been a wonderful success, and if a vote was taken tomorrow as to whether we should go back to the old system, it would be overwhelmingly in the negative.

**Mr. Power:** If there was a vote tomorrow they would defeat the present council.

**Mr. BROWN:** They might. The Greater Brisbane scheme has been a huge success, despite the fact that it has been carried on by anti-Labour councils, with the exception of the Jones administration. Many of the men who were elected to the Greater Brisbane Council accepted the pay attached to the position of alderman but were opposed to the scheme of Greater Brisbane and consequently would not attempt to make a success of it. Had there been a Labour Council in office from the inception much more progress would be in evidence today. That is proved by the great work done by the Jones administration.

**Mr. Luckins:** They had to be pulled out of the mess.

**Mr. BROWN:** That is not so. The present administration is in a big enough mess now. That was proved by the result of the by-election for Kurilpa on Saturday last.

Recently, I tried to arrange for the admission of some people to "Eventide" at Sandgate and I am now satisfied that that home is too small. It is time the Department of Public Works co-operated with the Department of Health and Home Affairs with a view to having more buildings erected at "Eventide." The home has become so popular that people with the means to pay are willing to pay. They are accommodated there and the unfortunate indigent, with no friends in the world, cannot obtain admission. The waiting list for admission is as long as one's arm.

**Mr. Luckins:** Who is in charge of it? Your own Government.

**Mr. BROWN:** People representing the moneyed class are taking the place of those for whom the home was originally provided. The Government are responsible for the good conditions that obtain there. I feel they would be justified in building more accommodation in order that they might admit a greater number of people.

I again congratulate the Minister and the officers of the department on their energy and the expedition with which everything has been done. I believe this will continue and I feel sure that after the elections to be held next year the Labour Government will be in power and as a result further progress will be seen.

**Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (2.23 p.m.):** First of all, I wish to say a few words on the work of the schools in my area and I include in this the Minister and the Department of Public Works generally. I thank the

Minister and the department for the alacrity with which they attended to the complaint I made about the Kangaroo Point school and the interest displayed in providing a domestic science school at East Brisbane.

Over a number of years I have been closely associated with the development of these districts but owing to the redistribution of electorates I have to say goodbye to both the East Brisbane and Kangaroo Point schools. In doing so I take the opportunity of thanking all who were responsible for righting the conditions that existed there. The school committees appreciate this very much and have asked me to express their thanks for what has been done.

This vote gives hon. members the opportunity of speaking of the development of the State's building. Public buildings of Queensland in general are a credit to those who built them, both as to architecture and construction. Buildings in general have a great bearing on the character of the people of a State or nation and they must be in keeping with the dignity of the State. They tend to reflect the people's progress.

In the early days the officers of the Department of Public Works spent a great deal of time, patience and work in designing and erecting most of our public buildings. I think we all agree that a stranger entering the city is influenced in his judgment of that city primarily by the design of its public buildings. Certainly our Treasury Building is a fine piece of architecture. There are, however, many public buildings in various cities and towns throughout the State that do not add to their dignity. In many places the buildings in which the Department of Agriculture and Stock is housed are not in keeping with the importance of the department.

**Mr. Power:** Are you referring to any one place in particular?

**Mr. LUCKINS:** Rockhampton.

**Mr. Power:** You are a little behind the times there. That building is being demolished.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I merely mention that as a citizen who has travelled through a great part of the State.

In Brisbane we have a beautiful University building constructed by the Department of Public Works, but I suggest that it might have been advisable to have called for competitive designs for it. Competitive designs were invited for our City Hall and were submitted from all parts of the world, and it was with surprise that I learnt that the designing of the Queensland University was left entirely to one man. I make no complaint about that because it is an excellent building.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! That matter does not come under the Estimates for the Department of Public Works.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** Many of our public buildings are things of beauty, and we all know that things of beauty are a joy forever, but I am sorry that cannot be said

of all public buildings. For instance, it cannot be applied by any stretch of the imagination to our present Police Court in Brisbane. I know we are suffering from a shortage of materials and skilled labour but I should like the Minister to prepare plans for the erection at some future date of a Police Court more in keeping with the dignity of our city. Nothing could be more annoying or more conducive to nervous tension than the present building. I have never been in it on official or other business, but one never knows when one might be called as a witness, and if that should happen I should feel greatly disturbed at having to climb three or four flights of stairs and then being placed in a room that would not compare with the garage of the average suburban home.

**Mr. Aikens:** And get six months when you got there?

**Mr. LUCKINS:** That would not worry me much, because I am not likely to place myself in such a position—not as likely as some I know.

I should like the Minister to go into the records of Government promises because I know that many of those promises made have never been fulfilled. Whilst I do not want to burden the present Government with this matter, I know that during the time the late Mr. Fihelly was Treasurer, he promised the citizens of this city an extension of Adelaide Street to North Quay. This has been a delicate subject with the Brisbane City Council for many years and I should like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to honour that promise. It was made some 20 years ago and if fulfilled the new thoroughfare would add to the dignity of the city. I have always thought that the city reaches of the Brisbane River were a very pleasant part of it. I do not want to blame the present Minister for not honouring the promise made; all I do at this stage is draw attention to it.

With the hon. member for Townsville I refer to the Supreme Court at Brisbane. Much has been said on many occasions about its small size and cramped rooms. This has been brought about by the number of judges who dispense justice to our citizens there. A Supreme Court should at least be attractive and if the present building cannot be made attractive and enlarged it should be transferred to a site from the noise and turmoil of the city. Now is the time for us to consider these things so that when timber and materials are available we can do them and make this city of Brisbane a city of which we can be proud.

There is also the question of utilising the land in Mary Street forming part of the estate of the late Mr. Randolph Bedford. I think the Government were wise in acquiring that site for public buildings and I wonder what development has taken place in regard to using it.

Much has been said about the need for a conservatorium of music for Brisbane and I think a city of 400,000 people warrants something of that kind so that it can keep its

pride of place with the other Australian cities. We are trying to lead the other Australian cities in the matter of amenities for our people. I could discuss this question from many points of view but I think I should refrain from doing so now, because of the shortage of materials. I understand that the architects of the Department of Public Works are a good type of men. I realise that I cannot debate the question of their salaries and wages at this stage but I think some scheme should be adopted that would attract the best types of men for the designing of buildings in this city and throughout the State.

The Minister is in charge of local government, and I was amazed to hear him have a little tilt at the Brisbane City Council. Let me remind him that no matter what council controls the city of Brisbane it is there because of the express wish of the majority of the electors. Like the Minister, I served as an alderman on the Brisbane City Council for a number of years. I was one who went through the dark days of the Jones administration, and I can tell you that I do not wish to go through them again. The hon. W. Forgan Smith was then Premier of the State and he was so concerned about conditions at the City Hall in the days of the Jones administration there that he appointed the late Mr. George and Mr. McCracken, the present Public Service Commissioner, to investigate them. I have been in Parliament a few years, but I have never yet seen that report. It never saw the light of day but I understand that it was a striking indictment of the administration at the City Hall in the days of the Jones administration. I do not want to say anything more about it than that. But there was some cry about stinking fish, and I am determined that every time any aspersion is cast upon the present administration at the City Hall for political reasons, to get up and defend it to the best of my ability. The less we say about any administration at the City Hall the better for parliamentarians generally. Let us apply ourselves in our own sphere, and thus add to the prestige and dignity of the State. Local Government is a very important section of government and it has played an important part in the development of both the city and the State. For many years prior to the establishment of responsible government as we know it today, it did magnificent work in developing cities and towns and building highways and railways, and generally did much that redounded to its credit. The Government are concerned about amalgamating many of our local authorities.

**Mr. Power:** No, we are not; we are not concerned about that at all.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** I am glad to have the Minister's assurance on the point, but there is the impression outside that the Government are developing the idea.

**Mr. Aikens:** The local authorities themselves are looking for amalgamations.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** That may have a bad effect in some ways upon the development of the community, because the more local

authority representatives you have the greater are the opportunities for the growth of progressive ideas. There is wisdom in numbers, and the greater the number the greater the chance of suggestions for planning and development generally. As I said before, local authorities play a prominent part in the life of the State.

**Mr. Aikens:** If you have too many of them you may not have enough revenue to cover the cost of administration.

**Mr. LUCKINS:** Yes, there is the question of getting enough money to carry on, but that is a matter that will have to concern someone. I know that in years gone by it agitated the minds of public men a great deal. Local authorities cannot carry out developmental work without the necessary funds. You cannot do much today without finance. Governments may borrow and local authorities may borrow too, but if the loan burden is made too heavy the overhead is exceedingly hard for the taxpayers to bear. Therefore it is not wise to carry the policy of borrowing to breaking point.

I am very pleased that the Valuer-General's Department is being developed on sound lines. I was one who advocated this policy many years ago because I believed there should be uniform valuations, or a method of valuing under the control of one State department.

It will dispose of conflicting ideas respecting valuations. Some local authorities adopt a policy of low valuations and a high rate while others believe in high valuations and a low rate. Such conflicting notions are not conducive to good local government. I hope that when the Valuer-General has completed his task there will be uniformity in valuation practices. The Valuer-General was appointed in 1944 and the Minister of the day said that seven years would be required to complete the task of valuing the whole State. Shortage of man-power, particularly expert valuers, has delayed the work but it is now under way and I am looking forward to the day when the task will be completed.

I have my own ideas about values. I have seen values in Brisbane rise to a very high level and then suddenly drop. We had an instance of that in Stanley Street, South Brisbane. That was a very important business centre but the flood of 1893 forced businesses to move to another part of the city and it suddenly changed into an industrial area. I shall follow with interest the trend of values being adopted today. We should encourage the citizen to build his own home, as that is the foundation of family life. If he has not a home he has very little interest, not only in home life but the State too. The Queensland Housing Commission should accelerate as quickly as possible the building of homes for the people, for we must remember that a man's home is his castle. We cannot measure the contentment that follows or the asset in pounds, shillings and pence.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government) (2.43 p.m.): The hon. member for Windsor introduced his hardy annual of the Breakfast Creek State School. I dealt with it very fully two years ago, but for the benefit of hon. members, I will recount the circumstances. In December, 1939, the Breakfast Creek State School Committee bought an area of land on which a house was built for £380. The committee paid £100 off the purchase price. The department took over the liability, conditionally on the transfer of the title of the land to the Crown. In June, 1940, the Minister approved that this department would pay the balance then owing of £280 on the understanding that no refund would be made to the school committee of the £100 already paid for the purchase of the cottage. In January, 1943, the Solicitor-General paid the solicitor for the vendor on behalf of the department £280, and on behalf of the school committee interest on the purchase price due to that date, £45/10/0d. From December, 1939, to 1 January, 1943, the school committee received rent at the rate of 17/6d. a week for the property. The amount thus received by the committee was £111/2/6d., from which it paid £38/7/6d. in rates, insurance and repairs, £45/10/0d. interest on purchase price and £22/7/2d. arrears of rates. The net amount of rent received by the school committee in excess of interest, rates, insurance, etc., was £4/17/10d. Therefore, the school committee was not out of pocket. The hon. member said the committee had to pay the rates. That is not true. The rates are paid by the Department of Public Works.

The hon. member referred also to the need for extra ground for the Woolloowin School. I agree that there is justification for obtaining more playing areas there but the matter has been held up by the proposals that are being considered for the transfer of the Woolloowin receiving depot to another site, and the building of a new depot. There are numbers of buildings to be erected and there is a tremendous shortage of staff, which is agitating not only my mind but the mind of the Under Secretary. First things must come first. As soon as possible the building will be removed and the ground made available. Recently minor repairs were carried out to this school and it was painted. I assure the hon. member that as early as possible, when we have the architects, the material and manpower available, the receiving depot will be removed. A tremendous amount of steel is required for these buildings.

There will no doubt be criticism and comparisons between the cost of building by the Public Works Department compared with that of private enterprise. I remind the Committee that the greater portion of our cement is imported, and local authorities and private enterprise get the benefit of using the local cement in greater quantities than the department; therefore the cost of our buildings must be much higher than theirs. Moreover, we recently received a large amount of

pipng that was required for use in the State. The Government bore the difference between sea freight and the cost of road transport, and private enterprise benefited as a result.

The hon. member for Townsville referred to the need for a new school at Townsville and a new Supreme Court. These are matters that must remain in abeyance at the present time. The Co-ordinator-General of Public Works decides the priority of works; and when he tells us what is to be done my department does not delay in any way.

The hon. member referred to a couple of very important matters, particularly the matter of the need for local authorities to consult public utilities and the Postmaster-General before a road is put down. In the matter of footpath allocations, the Department of Local Government is co-operating with the Postmaster-General's Department and all local authorities have been requested to draft plans for the purpose of the division of footpaths into allotments for the underground reticulation of public services, such as water, gas, electric light, Postmaster-General's Department, &c. This is designed to provide for the economic and symmetrical use of the footpath by various authorities. The suggestion by the hon. member is an excellent one and we have noted it. There should be greater co-operation between the State Government and the local authorities and the various utilities, such as gas and electric-light companies.

The recent amendment to the Local Government Acts that I piloted through this Committee provides that when constructing, reconstructing, remetalling or repaving a road, the local authority is authorised to place under the road conduits to carry gas pipes and water pipes. Before laying the conduits, the local authority must consult the gas authority as to the most suitable form of conduit, the method of laying, and the like. After the conduit is laid all new service pipes must be laid through that conduit. It is being made mandatory. When the gas authority first uses the conduit half the cost of laying the conduit must be paid to the council.

This provision will prevent unnecessary excavation of roads and should meet the complaints of the hon. member for Townsville. It is a valuable reform that should have been introduced long ago.

The hon. member also referred to erosion that has occurred in his electorate as the result of the action of the local authority. I have investigated the matter and I find that at the rear of the premises he referred to there is an open drain. It was constructed by the local authority and erosion has taken place from time to time and it will not be long before the whole or a great part of the property belonging to the owner, a woman, will be swept away. The local authority concerned should take some action to prevent this result. I do not want to interfere with the work of local authorities, but I think the local authority could overcome the difficulty by putting a barrel sewer through the land that adjoins her land. If

it is not prepared to do that it should construct some sort of a wall. Otherwise it will not be very long before the unfortunate resident loses the greater part of her property. I think it is the responsibility of the local authority. It would be only fair and reasonable for it to do something.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** It should not be necessary for the lady to issue a writ.

**Mr. POWER:** I called on the lady and personally inspected the land the last time I was in Townsville. The local authority should do something about it. The unfortunate woman is not in a position to take legal action against the local authority but if she were I think she would be successful.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Have you made representations to the local authority?

**Mr. POWER:** I have not been asked to make representations to the local authority.

**Mr. Wanstall:** It affects only one property?

**Mr. POWER:** Yes.

**Mr. Wanstall:** It is not a public nuisance?

**Mr. POWER:** No, but it is cutting away the whole of the woman's property. Out of common decency the council should do something for this unfortunate woman. She is entitled to have some action taken.

**Mr. Wanstall:** If it is a public nuisance the Attorney-General could take same action.

**Mr. POWER:** The woman has some justification for her complaint. While I was there I saw part of the land fall into the open drain.

**Mr. Luckins:** You were not standing on it?

**Mr. POWER:** I can assure the hon. member that wherever I stand I have my two feet planted on firm ground.

The hon. member for Buranda raised the question of planning for hospitals and school buildings. That is being considered. We are hoping to co-opt the services of private architects, the Under Secretary of the department and representatives of the Department of Health and Home Affairs to see what can be done in the matter of drawing up standard plans to meet climatic conditions in various parts of this State. This should eliminate a good deal of delay and save money in architects' expenses.

The hon. member mentioned also the school at Junction Park and the new school at Greenslopes. The department of Public Works comes into such matters only when so requested by the Department of Public Instruction. I can assure the hon. member that if a request comes to me from that department, early and favourable consideration will be given to it.

I do not propose to touch on the provision of kindergartens. That is a matter for another Minister.

The building of a new leprosarium at Peel Island is in abeyance just now. The Government are considering whether the building should be removed to the mainland. If my memory serves me correctly, our Director-General of Health and Medical Services will be going overseas shortly to investigate this important question.

The hon. member referred to the Ipswich Road workshops. I have pointed out that by making a careful survey and a few necessary alterations and replanning the department, we have been able to save a good deal of money and put through a good deal more work. When our raw material comes along it is assembled in various parts of the workshops by tradesmen and we have been able to train many apprentices there.

At the end of the year we shall be losing our manager, Mr. Helley. He has had an extension of his period of service and in accordance with the policy of the Government he now retires. To him I say, "Thank you for a very fine job and I hope that in your years of retirement you will have a very happy and peaceful life."

We are having difficulty in obtaining the number of apprentices we require, but every effort is being made to get them. Mr. East is doing a very good job and is trying to help us in every possible way.

The hon. member dealt also with matters of local government. I realise the importance of local government and shall reply to both him and the hon. member for Maree later.

For the information of hon. members, let me say that I have just received the final figures for Kurilpa. They disclose a majority of 1,262 for the Labour candidate, Alderman Colin Bennett.

The hon. member for Buranda referred to the need for more buildings at "Eventide." The question of accommodation there is one for the Department of Health and Home Affairs and I agree with the hon. member that it is difficult to have people placed at the moment. We are trying to overcome the difficulty to some extent.

Eventide Homes are not confined to the metropolitan area. One will be completed at Rockhampton in the very near future and there is an excellent one being established at Charters Towers. Plans are being prepared for a similar institution at Charleville. In accordance with our policy of decentralisation we are extending these institutions to various parts of the State.

**Mr. Wanstall:** People are not obliged to go to the one nearest where they live, are they?

**Mr. POWER:** They can go where they like, and I point out that their names remain on the roll in the district in which they lived.

I thank the hon. member for Maree for his kindly references to the Department of Public Works and to me as Minister. Every hon. member who has spoken to-day has complimented the department on what it has done, and it is apparent that there is very little room for criticism. The hon. member did get out of his depth on one occasion when

speaking about a number of buildings in the State. When I asked him if he was referring to any particular building at any particular place he said that he was referring to the Department of Agriculture and Stock at Rockhampton. I thought he would say that, because I know that during a municipal election campaign up there the Rockhampton "Bulletin," one of the greatest Tory rags I have ever known, did not have the common decency to state the true position.

Some time ago I visited Rockhampton and had a conversation with Alderman Jefferies, the mayor of that city, and whilst I do not agree with his political views I want to say that he is entitled to his. I hope the day will never come when we shall not be able to exercise our right to vote, and when we shall have to vote for one person and one person only. I discussed this question with Alderman Jefferies in Rockhampton and he said that he would be very happy if we could do something with this building on the corner of Bolsover and Fitzroy Streets. I examined the place, and whilst it was rather a good building internally it was very dilapidated on the outside. Not being able to go ahead with a new building I discussed the repainting of this one. There is no doubt that it is an unsightly building and not at all a credit to the city of Rockhampton. The Rockhampton "Bulletin" took a photograph of the building and it was placarded all over the place with the caption, "Attention, Mr. Power!"

I want to show hon. members of the Committee just how unscrupulous this paper was. I do not mind what people say of me if it is true, nor do I mind criticism, but I do not like people to get down to the level of the gutter in their desire to injure the Government. In this photograph you could not see the building; all you could see was the scaffolding round it erected for painting purposes. Did the newspaper want me to get up on the scaffolding with a paint brush and paint it and come into conflict with Mr. Hanson, I not being a member of the union? I replied to the rotten rag of a newspaper, but it never published my reply. Why did it not do the honest and decent thing?

The demolition of this building is now almost complete. The Government are spending £175,500 on the erection of new Government buildings at Rockhampton. It will be seen, therefore, that the argument sometimes used that all money is expended in the city of Brisbane is not true.

**Mr. Brand:** It will not be spent this year.

**Mr. POWER:** I have already told the hon. member that this is not an electioneering stunt, as the works are under way.

**Mr. Brand:** Not this year.

**Mr. POWER:** Under way now.

**Mr. Brand:** Not £175,000 for this year.

**Mr. POWER:** If the money can be spent it will be.

The hon. member for Maree referred to a promise made some time ago to abolish the

old Police Court building at the top of Adelaide Street and extend Adelaide Street to North Quay. I know that it is important that this should be done and I am anxious to have the work done, but I cannot agree with his remark that the building is worse than a garage. In view of the proposed visit of His Majesty the King these buildings were repainted. We could not demolish them; we made them as presentable as was possible. The interior of that building is quite good; the Police Court offices are good. One of the greatest difficulties facing the Government today is the housing of its employees. We have to rent offices from private enterprise. Complaints are being made continually by house and land agents about the number of offices being occupied by government employees. I am desirous of helping these people by erecting new buildings as soon as possible, so that Crown tenants may be transferred to Government buildings, but while there is a shortage of accommodation in Brisbane and Queensland as a whole I do not propose to demolish this building for the mere purpose of wiping it out. It will be demolished as early as possible but not while there is a shortage of Government accommodation. Again I would remind the hon. member of that oft-repeated statement of mine, "What Labour has promised, Labour has done," it may not be done immediately but it will be done eventually in accordance with our long-range plan.

The hon. member also suggested that we should build a new Supreme Court. I think we should, too, but again it is a question of what is the most important work to be done. Should we build a new Supreme Court first or should we provide other Government accommodation first?

Then the hon. member referred to the old Residential Hotel in Mary Street. I suggest that when he is on his way to Parliament House tomorrow he drive along Mary Street to see what we have done in the conversion of this old, dilapidated building in Mary Street. It is now one of the finest buildings in Queensland. It was to house the members of the Coal Board and when I first took them there they said, "You cannot do anything with this. Can you not give us something better than this?" Today it has been converted and re-equipped and it one of the finest buildings we have. There is no building that cannot be converted. At the present time this converted building is being used by the Department of Mines for the Coal Board and for the administration of the Miners' Pension Scheme. The front part of it is to be used for the purpose of motor-vehicle inspection. It is not possible to get accommodation for motor-vehicle inspection at the moment and the braking of cars is being tested in William Street. That practice will have to stop and in the interests of public safety they will have to be taken off the road. We shall make provision for the inspection of vehicles in Mary Street. We shall alter the present practice of jacking up the car

and testing the brakes by making provision for them to run up on a ramp or over a pit. I agree with the hon. member wholeheartedly that many things should be done but the question is which are the more important. First things must come first.

The hon. member referred also to the local authorities and specifically referred to the Jones administration at the City Hall. I have no desire to discuss the merits or demerits of any Brisbane City Council administration, whether controlled by the late Mr. Alf. Jones or by anyone else. I am very happy about and proud of the Jones administration but let me tell the hon. member that I served for three years under the Greene administration from 1931 to 1934 and I can tell him that during that period the ratepayers contributed their revenue and had nothing done with it. Let us be fair to the Jones administration. Let us be honest about it. Let us bear in mind the financial difficulties deliberately placed in the way of the Jones administration. In accordance with his usual far-sightedness Mr. Jones as head of the administration realised how important electrical equipment would be in the interests of the city and so his council ordered electrical equipment, which was to be financed with loan funds, but the financial institutions of Australia would not make any loan money available to the late Alf. Jones and his council for the purchase of these very important materials. Then the Government of the day passed legislation authorising the council to increase the rates by 3½d., but only for a limited period, in order to meet the cost of this equipment. Let hon. members be fair. I challenge them to check up my statement to see whether I am not correct in saying that financial difficulties were deliberately placed in the way of Mr. Alf. Jones and his council.

I want to point out what actually happened. The hon. member for Maree said the people were not satisfied, the rates were high and the people turned the council of the day out. The present council told the people, "If you elect us there will be no increase in rates; we will reduce rates." What happened? I made this speech when opening the candidature of the endorsed Labour candidate for Kurilpa at West End and to use the "Courier-Mail" phrase it brought about the crushing defeat of the C.M.O. candidate. I then pointed out that today the City's rates are the highest on record and that in addition electric-light charges have been increased by over 46 per cent. We know that the present council has its difficulties and the Government expressed a desire to help it. The Department of Mines offered help in getting supplies of coal.

The Lord Mayor made a statement that was hardly fair. He made an attack on me about certain moneys allegedly due by the Queensland Housing Commission for the supply of electricity. We say that it is unfair for the council to supply us with electricity in bulk at the ordinary, not bulk rates, as charged to private enterprise. If we charged the tenants of the Commission on a pro-rata

basis the unfortunate people could not meet the cost. The Government were prepared to help the council. The increase that has been made in rates was due to the council's striking difficulties as a result of the coal strike and other matters. But let us be fair about the matter. Our critics were not fair to the Jones administration. The Jones administration constructed more miles of sewerage in one year than have been completed by any succeeding administration.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Let the Lord Mayor reply.

**Mr. POWER:** That may be all right, but unfortunately the Press publishes only part of my reply whereas it publishes the whole of the Lord Mayor's statement.

This Government have paid subsidies to local authorities. Let me give a few figures to show how an anti-Labour party helped the poor struggling local authorities. Up to the end of September this year £10,000,000 in subsidies was approved for local authorities. That is a very large sum of money. I am quoting from information the Treasurer gave this Committee. He said that was an absolute gift, no repayment being required. But under anti-Labour Governments not one penny of subsidy was given. Labour not only did this but Labour provided some subsidies that have amounted to 50 per cent. of the work. Labour in addition, expended on permanent main-road works, £13,210,000 in a period of 10 years and charged only £737,422 to local authorities.

Let us see what was done by anti-Labour Governments to help local authorities in the western areas. For the three-year period ended 30 June, 1915, the loans approved to six local authorities in Western Queensland amounted to £12,900. I am not quoting the Moore Government, I am quoting what was done by the previous anti-Labour Administration. Hon. members talk about a new deal for the West. They call upon the Government to do something to help the local authorities and the people in the West. I will show them what the Government have done to help the people in the West. The statement to which I am referring shows the financial aid given to the shires of Barcardine and Charleville, Longreach, Barcoo, Winton and Hughenden under the anti-Labour Government, as follows—

Loans approved . . . . £12,900

That was for the three years of anti-Labour Government up to 1915. The amount of subsidies approved was nil and the amount of loans guaranteed nil. To 30 June, 1932, loans approved amounted to £16,360, subsidies nil, and loans guaranteed, nil. In spite of these figures, hon. members opposite have the colossal hide to get up and say the Government have done nothing for the local authorities. I will let the general public know who provided the subsidies for local authorities. It was a Labour Government, and they were continued by a Labour Government. Between 1932 and 1935 in my own area the Government made available 50 per cent of the cost of covering the sewer in Lang Park—£5,550. We have shown the public

how we have treated the local authorities, despite the whingeing and wailing of members of the Opposition.

The hon. member for Maree referred to the amalgamation of local authorities. I point out to him that it is not the intention of the Government to set out on a policy of the amalgamation of local authorities. We amalgamate local authorities only when requests for amalgamation are received from local authorities. When Mr. Sewell, the Director of Local Government, receives these requests, we have an investigation and if we feel the time is ripe for doing something we do it. It is difficult to deal with these requests today because we need uniform valuations before we can take action. Numerous requests concerning amalgamation are waiting to be dealt with by the Department of Local Government, but we cannot deal with them at the present time because we do not think the time is ripe for doing so.

I want to show the value of the merging of the local authorities on the South Coast. We heard a good deal to the effect that the amalgamation would not be in the interests of the great majority of the people there. We were told the mayor would be picked from Southport. A deputation from Nerang met me and said, "We shall have no chance; there will be domination from Southport." The position is just the opposite. A mayor has been elected from Coolangatta and the choice is an excellent one.

**Mr. Luckins:** A good choice.

**Mr. POWER:** A very good choice. I think Alderman Peak is doing a good job. The deputy mayor, Mr. Low, of Southport, is running about, and you cannot always believe what he says—and I am going to tell him that at a public meeting as soon as I get an opportunity. He made the statements when he addressed a meeting of the progress association that I had refused to visit the South Coast in connection with the building restrictions down there. That was entirely untrue. Mr. Low has made a number of statements but one must be very careful as to whether one believes them or not. Mr. Low is not truthful in many of his statements. I receive requests from members of the Opposition to visit their electorates and I am prepared to go to their electorates if it is at all possible. I am quite happy to meet the wishes of the members of the Opposition in that respect, but although they ask me to go to their electorates so that I may be enabled to decide whether certain work should be done there, they get in a little insidious propaganda by asking a question in this House as to a Minister's expenses. That is rather unfair. Not that I am concerned about it. If a Minister has to travel he is entitled to certain expenses, for which he must present the requisite voucher.

I can tell Mr. Low that in the very near future I shall be meeting him. I shall be asking him to call a meeting of the progress association and I shall be there to meet them. Mr. Low asked me to meet a deputation long before this amalgamation

took place. I asked the hon. member for Albert to go to the meeting but that hon. member was not asked to introduce the deputation. When I arrived at the hall I said to Mr. Low, "Will Mr. Plunkett be introducing this deputation? Otherwise I will not meet it if he does not." A certain amount of courtesy is due to a member of Parliament, whether he is on the Government or Opposition side. Mr. Low replied, "Oh yes, I intended to do that," but I know that he did not ask the hon. member for Albert. If that is the type of gentleman Mr. Low is, he is not going to get under my skin. After the House rises and I have finished doing my bit for the return of the Labour Government to the Federal Parliament, I propose to ask the local progress association down there to permit me to address them. I will then tell Mr. Low a few home truths. Although he has made statements to his town clerk, his mayor, and his aldermen that he has access to Minister's officers and can get information from the files because he was private secretary to Mr. Godfrey Morgan, a one-time Minister of the Crown in Queensland, I can assure him that he has not access to my office, except by appointment. I have instructed the Director of Local Government that he is to get no information from the files unless the request comes officially through the proper channel. He has deceived his council on more occasions than one. I can tell Mr. Low that I shall be quite happy to meet him—I shall be meeting him in the very near future, on the same platform.

To show that value of amalgamation of local authorities I propose to deal briefly with the Albert Shire Council. The chairman is an excellent man. He has a ton of ability and common sense and plenty of initiative. As a result of the amalgamation of shires there, and the creation of the new Albert shire, I had the privilege of attending the first meeting of the council. Before I left I gave the councillors certain advice and they acted on it. That is a matter of policy. Today there is a dispute as to whether the council offices shall be at Southport, Beenleigh or Mudgeeraba. When Parliament rises I shall be happy to go down and investigate the position and after that I will make a decision. It seems to be the desire of the people to have the offices in the local-authority area to meet the convenience of the people who have to use the offices. They must be considered. I propose to visit the South Coast to deal with that matter.

To show the Committee the result of the amalgamation and the work by this new council, I will read these letters of appreciation—

"Slacks Creek,

"16th September, 1949.

"Mr. E. J. Gaven,

"Chairman, Albert Shire Council.

"Dear Sir,

"We, the resident ratepayers of Daisy Hill road, wish to show our appreciation of the workmanlike job completed this week on Daisy Hill road.

"It is the most efficient job done on this road in the last twenty years, and to the men responsible we extend our thanks, and hope the good work is continued in the future.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Sgd.) Joseph Dennis,  
Sam Dennis,  
Frank Dennis,  
A. G. Harrison,  
C. G. Shailer,  
A. W. Shailer,  
Messrs. C. E. and F. Smith,  
R. A. Scriven,  
J. Finck."

Here is another letter, dated 10 October, 1949, to the same chairman—

"Dear Sir,

"It is with great pleasure that I pen these few lines in appreciation of your very prompt consideration of my letter re dust nuisance written a few days ago. My wife and I are indeed grateful for the watering of the road and for the promise of the road being gravelled at a later date. In passing, I would like to mention that I have heard numerous complimentary remarks passed by local residents re the good work that is being done by the Council and also the efficiency of your workmen.

"Thanking you sincerely once again,

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) J. W. Creed."

Then we have a further letter from Brisbane, reading—

"The Shire Clerk,

"Albert Shire Council,

"Dear Sir,

"We note with satisfaction the reconditioning of certain roads in the Kingston district.

"South Queensland Mines Pty. Ltd."

Then there is a letter from one of the most important organisations in South Queensland. Hon. members of the Opposition may not think it is, but I do. It is from the Australian Labour Party, Kingston Branch, and reads—

"Dear Sir,

"I have been directed to convey to you, on behalf of my branch, our appreciation of the road maintenance work recently carried out by your men in the Kingston and Woodridge districts.

"This work has been efficiently and capably performed to the complete satisfaction of the residents of these districts.

"Your faithfully,

"(Signed) H. Rohl,

"Hon. Secretary,

"Australian Labour Party,  
"Kingston Branch."

Here is another from a progress association—

"Dear Sir,

"My association has instructed me to express to your council our appreciation and thanks for their co-operation in

obtaining the construction by the Main Roads Commission of the difficult first two miles of the road through the Springbrook settlement.

"The work has been carried out quickly and efficiently and, we believe, at well under the estimated cost.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) D. V. Ward,

"Hon. Secretary,

"Springbrook Progress Association."

Those letters prove that the value of the amalgamation of local authorities is being appreciated by the people in the areas concerned. Under the previous system, it was impossible to get anything done, because the money was not there to do it. I do not wish to criticise the previous local authorities and I give them full marks for what they have done with the limited funds available to them, but with the amalgamation they have excellent workmen and plant and are able to do jobs much more cheaply.

The hon. member for Maree referred to the work of the Valuer-General's Department. It has not yet been completed, because we have had difficulty, owing to the war, in obtaining staff. In addition, we have made some of our officers available to the Department of Public Lands to help with the settlement of returned soldiers. We have now a number of trainees, many young men being trained, and many who have qualified as valuers, and some progress is being made.

A very good job is being done by the local authorities in the town of South Coast and the Albert shire. The next valuation to be undertaken by the Valuer-General's Department is that very important one, that of the city of Brisbane. It is going to be a tremendous task and I must say that although I disagree at times with the Lord Mayor and his council, he has been co-operative on many matters, and I feel that he will co-operate with the Valuer-General because I know he is anxious to have this valuation carried out.

The hon. member also dealt with the question of homes. That is really covered by another vote, but we are having difficulty today because of the alleged green belt declared by the Brisbane City Council. The Brisbane City Council has thrown a green belt round the City of Brisbane. I endeavour at all times to abide by the ordinances of a local authority, but I find that as a result of this proposed green belt, the Brisbane City Council has refused to allow certain lands to be subdivided and sold for building blocks.

There is a right of appeal against the decision of any local authority that refuses permission for the subdivision of any land or imposes conditions on the subdivision that are considered unreasonable. A number of appeals have been made from time to time. A person who thinks he has cause for complaint and wants to appeal submits the matter to me. I can deal with it myself or

appoint somebody to do so. As I do not consider myself an authority, I appoint a surveyor to hear such an appeal. I think I am right in saying that the Brisbane City Council has lost on every appeal to the Surveyor-General, with one exception, and in that case some modification was made. This is the council that talks about democracy and about too much Government control and interference by the Government and yet some time ago it submitted an ordinance to me for my approval that provided that the aggrieved person should have no right of appeal. It asked me to give it the right to deny a man the right of appeal.

**Mr. Luckins:** With regard to the 2½ acres in rural areas?

**Mr. POWER:** In anything. If you subdivide you have to put a strip of bitumen down, provide water channelling, concrete footpaths, and if you do that you will not recover sufficient money to cover what you have spent. The right of appeal is being freely exercised and on virtually every occasion the appellant has been successful. This is the council that complains about Government interference and too many controls and the very council that submitted an ordinance to me that would stop people from having the right of appeal. I have no intention whatever of granting the request. If there is to be criticism of the Government and of me, let us know the true facts, because today people are being bluffed—and I use that word advisedly—by the Chandler administration. It has been imposing conditions on the subdivision of land for which it has no authority. There is no town plan for the city of Brisbane and despite all the talk no such plan has ever been approved by the Government. No wonder the electors of Kurilpa woke up to what is going on and gave their votes to the Labour Party. This talk about an alleged green belt is only something in the minds of Mr. Chandler and the members of his party. The whole

position has to be cleaned up and I am waiting for the submission of a town plan for the city of Brisbane.

We hear much about zones and the zoning of an area as a residential area. One day you pick up a newspaper and you find that an application has been made for permission to establish a light industry in a certain residential area; the next day there is an application to establish a light-heavy industry and later on you get applications for flats. How can there be town planning if there is no town plan? We elected men to control the affairs of the city of Brisbane and I say that the people of Brisbane are being bluffed by the Lord Mayor in his talk about a town plan that does not exist. The council cannot prevent the survey of any land on the ground that there is a green belt—which does not exist. I want the public to know that and I also want them to know that if the council refuses to approve of a subdivision the landowner has the right of appeal. As a matter of fact, I could determine the matter myself, by virtue of my position of Minister in charge of local government, but rather than have a political argument with the Lord Mayor I allow the matter to be determined by an independent tribunal appointed by me on the recommendation of my Director of Local Government.

I think I have dealt sufficiently with that matter. I come now to the subject of valuations. The Valuer-General has done much important work in this connection. I am sorry that the hon. member for Aubigny is not present today because I wanted to tell him that I gave him some wrong figures the other night and I want to correct them now. Since the Valuer-General has undertaken the valuation of various parts of the State valuations have been completed in the local authorities of Chinchilla, Mount Morgan, Murilla, Toowoomba, Wambo and Taroom. The following table shows percentages of objections to the total number of valuations:—

Local Authority.	Number of Valuations.	Objections Lodged.	Per Cent. of Objections to Number of Valuations.	Previous Shire Valuation.	Valuer-General's Valuation.	Per Cent. Increase in Valuation.
Chinchilla ..	2,063	103	5	£ 436,598	£ 1,130,926	159.03
Mount Morgan ..	1,779	90	5	70,595	65,969	6.55 (decrease)
Murilla ..	1,609	48	3	289,148	749,575	159.24
Toowoomba ..	11,442	532	4.6	1,171,665	2,765,787	136.06
Wambo ..	2,812	75	2.7	842,697	2,379,087	182.33

The hon. member for Aubigny said that I and my friend Shylock, the Treasurer, put our heads together and conspired through the Valuer-General to have higher valuations brought about so that we could, according to the hon. member, get a rake-off in the form of land tax. The hon. member should know that land valuations for land-tax purposes are determined by 1942 values and that there could be no increase in valuations for land-tax purposes, even though the Valuer-General increased the valuations by 400 per cent. It

will be seen that the number of valuations made in the Wambo shire was 2,812 and that the percentage of objections to the valuations was the lowest of the lot, 2.7 per cent. The previous Shire Council's valuation was £842,697 whereas the Valuer-General's valuation was £2,379,087, an increase of 182.33 per cent., the highest percentage increase in all the valuations made.

In the shire of Taroom, 1,075 valuations were made, 42 objections were lodged, the percentage of objections to the number of

valuations was four, the total valuation of the shire previously was £383,839, the valuation of the Valuer-General £1,059,850 and the increase in valuations was 176.12 per cent. It will be seen there has been a large increase in the aggregate valuations. If I had the time I could give the amount of the reduction that has taken place in rates as a result of the increased valuations. As I pointed out, some local authorities believe in a low valuation and a high rate while others believe in the converse. I contend that land should be correctly valued and the levying of the rate is a matter entirely for the local authority.

The officers of the Valuer-General's Department receive no instructions whatsoever in making the valuation. They are guided entirely by the Valuations of Land Act. The implication of the hon. member for Aubigny that a direction on the matter was given by the Treasurer or by me for the purpose of getting more revenue from land tax is absolutely wrong. I do not think that the hon. member implied it wilfully—I give him credit for being an honest man—nevertheless that is the inference to be drawn from his remarks. The Valuer-General is free to make valuations strictly in accordance with the Act, and receives no directions from me whatsoever, except in staff matters and as to the areas where valuations are to be made. I accept the advice of the Valuer-General when he proceeds to make valuations.

**Mr. TURNER (Kelvin Grove) (3.43 p.m.):** When the Labour Government were returned in 1932 they immediately proceeded to put into effect their policy of providing work for the people at award rates of wages. Whenever a building was erected the people were appreciative, but the erection of public buildings has become so frequent that the department has lost a large measure of the appreciation due to it. Wherever one may look one can see a new building going up under the direction of the department. The erection of a public building has become so common that it has been taken as an everyday event and people take no notice of it.

It is interesting to see the amount of public works done throughout the State and I am happy to note that North and North-West Queensland are getting their share of public buildings, notwithstanding that we have been accused of forgetting about and neglecting those parts of the State. In every part of the North and North-West the department is providing buildings of some kind or another in the interests of the people.

On page 15 of the departmental report we find that for the ten-year period 1938-39 to 1948-49 £4,756,000 has been spent on public buildings. During the war years building activities were restricted considerably and only £1,000,000 was spent between 1939 and 1945. In the last three years, from 1946 to 1949, the Government have spent £2,900,000 on public buildings such as schools and hospitals. That is a wonderful effort—just under £3,000,000 in the last three years on public works. They are endeavouring to

overtake the lag that occurred during the war years. This department has been operating in every sphere of public life.

Reference was made by members of the Opposition last week to the architecture of our new buildings, which they condemned. That should be left entirely to the architects who apply science to their work and who are ever looking for improvement. When we realise the reasons for some of these improvements we appreciate their work. Buildings such as Parliament House and the Treasury Building are beautiful to the eye, but the ornamental work is the greatest of dirt collectors and a breeding ground for disease. The architect of today is not neglecting that factor. Wherever he can put a smooth oval surface that will cast off rather than collect dirt, he does so.

**Mr. Aikens:** Can they build a building that will not attract the pigeons?

**Mr. TURNER:** That is a thing they are attempting to do. In the latest school plans they endeavour to do it. In the front of the buildings, where they usually put ornamentations, they put a sloping coping so that the birds could not rest on them and the buildings retain their beauty and are not disfigured by these birds.

I wish to pay tribute to the work that is carried out by the employees of the department, whose work is so thorough and complete that it is virtually everlasting. Tradesmen in 100 years' time will have much to learn from the work that is done by our present journeymen, just as our present journeymen have learned from the work of their predecessors.

The Minister, in reply to the recommendations of the Opposition, referred to the Supreme Court in George Street. I do hope that when the road goes through there some consideration will be given to the construction of a bridge from the Southside. I feel sure that with the lowering of Coronation Drive from Ann Street to Victoria Bridge there will be ample height for a bridge from the South side and entering George Street without turning sharply. Some doubt has been expressed about the lasting qualities of Victoria Bridge. A few years ago experts from the University recommended the lifting of some of the strain from that bridge and the heavy concrete road was removed, and even the foot-walks were reduced to remove some of the strain and allow the bridge to be used with complete safety. In a very few years' time something must be done to provide a new bridge to ease the strain on Victoria Bridge. I feel that my suggested bridge to the northern bank of the river at a level to connect with Adelaide Street will be useful in that it will not interfere with the flow of traffic along Coronation Drive below.

I expressed my appreciation to the Minister and his officers for what has been done to the only school in my electorate. It is strange that although my electorate is 3½ square miles in area, unfortunately for me—and I say that deliberately—I have only one

school in that electorate. Having the interests of the education of our children at heart, I very much regret that fact, but as an offset I have the satisfaction of knowing that two schools are situated on the boundary line and the majority of the children attending these two schools live in the Kelvin Grove electorate. I look forward to the opening of the new school at Kelvin Grove, which really is in the Minister's own electorate. I was very pleased to hear the interjection of the hon. member for Hamilton to the Minister that this was the best school in the State. But that is only in conformity with departmental practice. Architects and officers of the department are continually seeking to further improve school buildings and I agree with the hon. member for Hamilton that up to date the new Kelvin Grove school is the finest school building in this State. I hope that the Minister and his officers will now turn their attention to the erection of a new infants' school, which is very necessary. If this work is proceeded with immediately, the workmen and plant on the Kelvin Grove school could be transferred at once to the new infants' school.

All over the State one sees new hospitals being erected, additions being made to existing hospital buildings, and hospital buildings being repaired. I again congratulate the department on the work it is doing in this respect. I also congratulate them on their efforts in providing homes for the people. I am happy to be able to say that the Queensland department has done a bigger job than any other State in the Commonwealth, and in fact in any other part of the world. An extract from the Brisbane "Courier-Mail" proves that statement. I commend the Minister and his officers for placing the Queensland Government in such a happy position. The "Courier-Mail" of 31 May, 1949, stated that the mayor of Richmond made the statement that as many as five families were living together in sub-standard death-trap homes in Melbourne industrial suburbs, but Victoria and South Australia are continually being held up to this Government as examples of what can be done in providing additional homes for the people.

I would suggest to the Minister and his departmental officers that in future building projects they give some consideration to the worker who wishes to build his own home. Today any worker wishing to build a home for himself through the State Advances Corporation has to seek land in the outer suburbs of Brisbane and pay for it through the neck. In fact, I go so far as to say he is being exploited by the owners of the land. As the department is able to buy large areas for its building projects. I suggest that at least 10 per cent. of the area bought be set aside for workers who want to build their own homes. This would enable them to buy it at a price that is suitable to the department but one that I know would be considerably less than the price these people are asked to pay for land today because of black-marketing and exploitation. If that was done it would give tremendous satisfaction to the workers and many people who own

small areas who sell one allotment at a time and in this way stabilise the price of the rest of their land.

Again I express appreciation of the department's activities and hope it will continue its programme of works on public buildings, schools in particular.

I feel that it is now appropriate for me to ask that something be done about providing the post-primary school that was promised for my electorate six years ago, at which the children of not only Kelvin Grove but parts of Enoggera and the Ithaca electorates could obtain secondary education. The Minister and his officers have fulfilled a promise made three years ago to provide facilities for domestic science and manual training at the Ithaca Creek school. These additions are almost completed and the training will be available at the beginning of next year. It will be a boon not only to the pupils of Ithaca Creek school but to children from the Oakleigh, Ashgrove and Newmarket schools, all of whom will be saved the long journey to Milton.

**Mr. INGRAM (Keppel) (3.59 p.m.):** At the outset I sincerely congratulate the Minister, his Under Secretary, his staff and the workers of the department for the magnificent job they have done and are doing throughout the State. In congratulating those people I am sincere. Unlike hon. members opposite, I do not congratulate the Minister, and then immediately use the word "but" and start cringing and whingeing. I have often thought of bringing not a packet but a whole box of whingeing powders for hon. members opposite who complain no matter what the Government do for the benefit of the State.

It has been said by many hon. members opposite that our schools throughout the State have been neglected. I am indeed sorry that certain hon. members opposite are not in their places this afternoon. It is a sorry spectacle to see only three hon. members of the Country Party and two hon. members of the Liberal-Queensland People's Party in the Chamber listening to this very important debate today. I am surprised. What are they getting paid for? Is it to go about electioneering and not caring for the people in this State?

The hon. member for East Toowoomba stated in this Chamber only the other day that the schools in the State were sadly neglected. I say that is a deliberate falsehood and that the schools in the country are as well if not better looked after than city schools. I propose to quote figures to prove that statement. My electorate is one of the many in Queensland and I should like hon. members to know what has been done in my electorate since I have been its member. Prior to my advent to this Parliament absolutely nothing was done in the electorate because it was represented by a Tory who did not care a tinker's cuss about the people of the State. If members of the Opposition care to get about and see what requires being done they can approach the Secretary for Public Instruction and the Secretary for

Public Works, Housing and Local Government and place requests before those gentlemen and things will be done for them. No, all they are concerned about is looking after their private interests.

I propose to quote the figures in relation to 50 schools in my electorate. Three have been removed and one has been closed. These figures show the money expended on each school since I have been hon. member for Keppel—

	£
Alton Downs .. .. .	512
Bajool .. .. .	724
Barwoya Central .. .. .	131
Barwoya East .. .. .	101
Boondoola .. .. .	20
(This school has been closed for some time because of no children.)	
Bracewell .. .. .	756
Bunceba .. .. .	228
Bungandarra .. .. .	33
Calmorin .. .. .	443
Cawarral .. .. .	31
Cedar Vale .. .. .	79
Cowoonga .. .. .	67
Dalma Scrub .. .. .	168
Don River .. .. .	275
Dululu .. .. .	173
Wilmot .. .. .	82
Emu Park .. .. .	892
Etna Creek .. .. .	120
Faraday .. .. .	63
Farnborough .. .. .	321
Frenchville .. .. .	1,415
Garnant .. .. .	154
Glenmore .. .. .	329
Joskeleigh .. .. .	120
Kalapa .. .. .	2,314
Keppel Sands .. .. .	124
Lake's Creek .. .. .	598
Langmorn .. .. .	84
Machine Creek .. .. .	175
Marlborough .. .. .	723
Marmor .. .. .	328
Milman .. .. .	154
Mt. Chalmers .. .. .	48
(This school has been removed.)	
Nankin Junction .. .. .	8
(School closed.)	
Nerimbera .. .. .	173
Parkhurst .. .. .	1,860
Pink Lily .. .. .	47
Port Curtis Road .. .. .	524
Pheasant Creek .. .. .	595
Raglan .. .. .	115
Ridglands .. .. .	370
Rossmoya .. .. .	69
Stanwell .. .. .	260
Targinnie .. .. .	135
The Caves .. .. .	481
Upper Ulan .. .. .	88
Wattle Bank .. .. .	103
Westwood .. .. .	439
Wowan .. .. .	598
Yeppoon .. .. .	2,319

Those figures illustrate what the Department of Public Works has spent on the schools in my electorate during the time I have been its member. I visited each school and noted its condition and by approaching both departments I have had these improvements carried

out. The figures show the falsehoods told by Opposition members in this Parliament. What the Government have done for my electorate they have done for other electorates.

A home for old people is being built at Rockhampton at a cost of £131,000 and will be the equal of any home of its kind in Queensland. The Government care for the sick and suffering, as well as the aged. This home has been built in Rockhampton so that the old people coming from Central Queensland will not have to come all the way to Brisbane. They will spend their last days at Rockhampton, where they will be near their relatives. In the Tory days the Governments did nothing. They let the old people die under the trees. We are a humane Government and we shall continue to be so.

The other day an hon. member complained that in his electorate the children in eating their lunches under the school had to sit in the dust. He may be right up to a point but when I first came into Parliament there was dust under schools in my electorate too but I immediately took the matter up with the Department of Public Instruction and the Secretary for Public Works and the ground under the schools was concreted right away. Tory members could do the same thing if they only took an interest in their electorates. It is all very well for them to criticise the Minister and the Government but they are not doing their job, they are only looking after their own private interests. They were returned to Parliament to see that justice was done and that is what they should do.

Much has been said about local government. It has been said by hon. members opposite that local authorities have done a magnificent job. Some have, but others have done a damned bad job so far in my electorate. Would they be able to do even what they are doing today were it not for help given by the Government? Could they carry on without the grants, loans and subsidies given by the Government? No other Government throughout the world give the subsidies and consideration to local authorities that the State Labour Government give. Hon. members opposite never thought about the local authorities during their term in office; it was only the Labour Government who thought of the interests of the people in this respect. No main roads would have been built but for the Labour Government. In certain parts of my electorate controlled by local authorities some of the roads are an absolute disgrace—there is not even means of transport so that children may get to school. These local authorities are not looking after the interests of the people; they are simply looking after themselves. The trouble is that some of them concentrate on building up an office staff rather than on spending the ratepayers' money on giving the people decent roads.

**Mr. Muller:** You take all their money.

**Mr. INGRAM:** The hon. member takes the money from the share farmers. The

local authorities could not do what they are doing today if it were not for the help given to them by the Government.

We should have more amalgamation of local authorities. Take the seaside resorts of Yeppoon, Keppel Sands and Emu Park. While they continue under the control of the Livingstone Shire Council they will be an absolute disgrace. I look forward to the time when there is a Greater Rockhampton City Council to take over the control of these seaside resorts.

I appeal to hon. members opposite not to cringe, cry, and squeal in the Chamber and not to complain that the Government have not done this and have not done that but to approach the business of the Committee properly. If they do, I am satisfied justice will be done, and that is all that is required. Let them approach the Minister in a proper way but not with an air of demanding things. The idea of demanding things is bred in the Communist school—"I demand this" and "I demand that." You will never get anything done by doing that. Approach the Minister properly and you will get justice.

**Mr. MORRIS (Enoggera) (4.9 p.m.):** It is very interesting to know that the hon. member for Keppel has found the secret of having his electorate looked after by appealing to the Minister. This Committee will pay a great deal of respect to his statement because many of us do want to get work done in our electorates. We are deeply grateful to the hon. member for Keppel. He told us that if we make an appeal in the proper way to the Minister we shall have the needs of our schools and other public buildings attended to. I will put his advice into effect. I will now make an appeal to the Minister and, in all faith and hope, look forward to the immediate rectification of the position I will outline. The Minister will agree that I have never appealed to him for extraneous work on school buildings and grounds unless the need was really urgent. I have a great deal of sympathy with the requirements of the department. Housing must have first consideration, but there are certain circumstances and additions that make work on schools a vital necessity. I will tell the hon. gentleman of one school in my electorate where work is urgently needed. I have on a previous occasion appealed to the Minister for work on this particular school but evidently I did not follow the instructions of the hon. member for Keppel. I hope I shall be a little more successful on this occasion.

The school I wish to interest the Minister in is the Mitchelton State School. I previously asked for help and a certain amount of work has been done but not to the extent that is needed. I will concede that the Minister has made arrangements for the erection of two additional rooms. Up to a point they will cater for the present needs of the school but we must consider not only the present requirements. Let us examine the position. At present classes are being conducted in

temporary buildings under the main building. I do not think the temporary classrooms will pass the City Council by-laws as there is not sufficient clearance between one floor and the other. Nevertheless they are serving their purpose. Most of the time the children work under artificial light. That is not fair or right. The two new rooms that the Minister has arranged to be built will cover the school's needs up to Christmas time, but in January the position will be entirely different. Over the last two or three years the school population at Mitchelton has increased enormously. Today 505 pupils are enrolled. There is no district where more rapid improvement and growth have taken place. In the last two years 450 building permits have been issued. Every new home will add to the school population. The school committee has made a survey of the area in the immediate vicinity of the school. It revealed that an additional 90 to 100 scholars can be expected in January next. Immediately there is extra population the school will be inadequate. There will be a further addition in that in the area 61 new homes are being built, excluding the State Housing Commission's homes. If you take the figure of 500 at the present time, and add 100 who will be enrolled from the residents moving there, that gives a school population of 600. If you add the 61 new homes that are being built by private enterprise and let us assume from each of those homes there will be an average of one new pupil from every home, that will make the school population 661 in January. In addition to that there is also the Grovely housing area. I think 650 new homes are being built in the Grovely area; of those about 14 are already erected.

**Mr. Power:** Every week tenants are going in.

**Mr. MORRIS:** Exactly. At the present time there are 14, and I think it would be safe to assume that by January when the school year starts there will be another 30. That will be 44 in addition to the 660, which gives us approximately 700 school children in January next year. Actually there will be 600 by the end of the coming year. In each of these houses there will be one new pupil for the school. It is the policy of the Government to see that large families go into these houses, so we can assume that one new child will be added for each house occupied. So our figure of 660 comes to 700, and there are another 600, making 1,300 school pupils by the end of next year. The Housing Commission has taken over two new blocks near the Grovely housing estate, and I think the Minister will agree that it is fair to assume that another 200 houses will be built on the two new blocks; and if one child per house is added, we get another 200, which brings the school population to 1,500 by the end of next year.

Having established that, I now make this point: the school that is there and to which extra rooms have been added is built on two acres of ground and these additional rooms take away considerably from the playing area.

If the two acres were a good playground area, I should say it was not too bad an allowance for that purpose, but these two acres are not good playing fields or good school grounds at all. The department has a very suitable piece of ground not very far away from the present Mitchelton school and I make this appeal to the Minister: in view of the fact that the school population is likely by the end of 1950 to be from 1,000 to 1,200, to be conservative, the time to build a new school at Mitchelton is not in one or two years, or in the far distant future, but now. If no action is taken by the Government to erect a building and do the work quickly, by the time they get on with the job the school population will have grown out of all recognition and it will be utterly impossible to house the pupils.

Possibly it will be said by the Minister that I have already had a new school erected in my electorate in the last couple of years. That is true and I am very pleased that Stafford has had a new up-to-date school building. It is a good school and everybody who has anything to do with it is very pleased with it in every way. Notwithstanding the urgency of the Stafford school—and it was urgent—the Mitchelton school is the most urgently required of all schools in the metropolitan area. The abnormally rapid growth of the population in that area absolutely justifies a new school, and quickly. The committee of the school meets regularly. The members of the committee have not been altogether worried about the present position because they know housing must come first but when they realise how the area is growing they are very worried and have asked me to bring this matter to the attention of the Minister so that he will be aware of the facts—that although there are only 500 children there today the likelihood is that there will be over 1,000 in 12 months' time. Unless action is taken almost immediately to erect a school it will be too late to satisfactorily cover the wants as they will arise.

I should like the Minister not only to consider the erection of this new school building but to tell the people of the district that it is to take place in the very near future. If he does that it will give them hope and they will know that something is to be done.

There is no school in the metropolitan area with a better school committee than the Wilston State school. Over the years this committee has contributed many amenities to the school. It has provided a swimming pool and all the amenities that go with it, such as dressing sheds. The parents are very pleased that the Wilston school has these facilities but these dressing sheds and all the other extras to a swimming pool are in a very bad state of repair. They urgently need painting.

**Mr. Jesson:** That is a matter for the Department of Public Instruction.

**Mr. MORRIS:** The Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Instruction have adopted a policy that a building erected by a school committee,

although it becomes the property of the Government, will not be kept in repair by the Government. That is all wrong. This policy is entirely wrong and unfair. A committee works hard to provide amenities beyond those at other schools but it must accept the responsibility of the upkeep of these buildings year after year. Surely a building, having become the property of the Government, should be kept in repair by the Government.

I mention these two schools in particular although there are matters connected with other schools in my electorate that I should like to refer to. Those two are perhaps the most urgent and most necessary works at the moment. I will not ask for anything at the expense of the housing programme because that must receive first priority unless the matter is as urgent as are those I have mentioned this afternoon.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government) (4.25 p.m.): One matter to which I should have referred this morning was the painting of the Obi Obi State School referred to by the hon. member for Cooroora last week. He said that lead paint had been used and the painter was required to take the paint off and repaint the school. That is correct. We called tenders for the painting of that school. It is our policy to call tenders where we cannot carry out work by day-labour, and we lay down certain specifications, which provide amongst other things that lead paint must not be used where it is accessible to children. We accepted one tender, the work was completed, and the man was paid. We did not analyse the paint because we thought we were dealing with a man who would honour his obligations.

**Mr. Low:** He did not know it had lead in it.

**Mr. POWER:** Did he buy it ready mixed, or did he mix it himself?

**Mr. Low:** He bought it from a firm.

**Mr. POWER:** In any case, the responsibility was his, not the department's. He did a job, for which he was paid. We then learnt that the paint contained lead and he has been directed that he must remove that paint and repaint the school at his own expense. We told him to carry out certain works and he signed a contract and specifications which provided that lead paint would not be used where it was accessible to children. He used lead paint and he must now remove it. The department cannot be criticised or blamed for the actions of a man who did not play the game.

**Mr. Low:** He told me your inspector said he was after the chap who supplied the paint.

**Mr. POWER:** We are not concerned about the man who supplied the paint. That is entirely a matter for the Health Department. This man did not carry out the conditions of the contract and he has to repaint the school at his own expense. The hon. member criticised the department. There is

an explanation of the whole thing and I am giving the true facts. I think the hon. member told me the man was a farmer.

**Mr. Low:** He is a very decent fellow and I think you will find he bought the paint and the chap who sold it to him put it over him.

**Mr. POWER:** But the hon. member criticised the department. He said that we passed the work, paid for it and now had to do the work all over again. We accepted the man as being bona fide and when we found that he was not we directed them to correct the position. Could any department do more than that?

I thank the hon. member for Keppel for his kindly remarks. According to the list he read out today, the officers of the department have treated him very well. Let me repeat here that I do not decide what works have to be carried out. It would be unfair for me to decide that one job should receive preference over another or whether work should be carried out in the Oxley electorate or in my electorate. We have inspectors making continual inspections and ascertaining which are the most urgent and most important works. Acting on the recommendations of my officers I approve of certain expenditure. When the expenditure exceeds a certain sum, the matter must go to the Executive Council.

**Mr. Kerr:** What is the amount?

**Mr. POWER:** £1,000. I am glad to know that we have at least one satisfied customer and one hon. member who is satisfied with his deal from the department.

The amalgamation of local authority areas also was mentioned by the hon. member for Keppel, who suggested that certain action should be taken in regard to certain shires in his electorate. I point out to him that we do not propose to interfere with the work of any local authority, but if a request comes for a variation of boundaries it will receive due consideration. I believe that there is still room—and this is my own opinion and is not Government policy—for the amalgamation of a number of small local authorities in the State. I know that people are becoming more conscious of the fact that amalgamation is desirable. Representatives of quite a number of local authorities have discussed the matter with me and are watching very closely what takes place on the South Coast and at Toowoomba. As the result of the merging of local authorities in the Toowoomba area, there has been a reduction in rates. The hon. member for Cooroora said that the amalgamation of local authorities on the South Coast resulted in increased costs. That is not so. Mr. Lou Barnes, an ex-Independent member of this Parliament, rightly pointed out to Mr. Low, of the South Coast Town Council, that it was the extra work that was being done that brought about the increase in costs. There are fewer employees in the town of South Coast than before. Mr. Low met me on a deputation and he was quite annoyed about the allocation of plant from the Nerang Shire Council, part of which area went into the South Coast. He contended that the Town of South Coast Council was entitled to certain

plant. I was not in a position to adjudicate and the matter was referred to the Director of Local Government, who said that the council was entitled to a certain amount of money. Mr. Low wanted certain machinery; if he wants a motor-car from here and a wheel off this tractor, there would be two local authorities, a shire and a town, each having not sufficient plant to do its work. The old Southport Town Council hired part of the Nerang shire's plant for many years. Because Mr. Low could not get his own way he said that he was totally dissatisfied with my allocation of materials. I did not make the allocation. I approved of the allocation made by skilled technical officers, more skilled than Mr. Low, of South Coast fame, who on one occasion plagiarised a report on transport and furnished it to the House.

The hon. member for Enoggera stated that the hon. member for Keppel must have found a way of appealing to the Minister to get what he wanted. If the hon. member for Enoggera had listened intently he would have heard the hon. member for Keppel say that if any hon. member appealed to the Minister he was sure he would get justice. Every hon. member in this Chamber has got justice and has been fairly well treated. Virtually every member who has spoken today has commended the department and myself on the way the work is being carried out.

The hon. member for Enoggera said he was prepared to state a case on behalf of his district. I have no objection to that. I am willing to help him and I have already done so. We have already made provision for the purpose of overcoming the shortage of class-rooms at the Mitchelton State school. Provision has been made for two temporary classrooms and a site has been selected for a new school too. The land was bought by my department at the request of the Department of Public Instruction. The proposal was submitted to the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, but he did not approve of the building of a new school at the time. However, I assure the hon. member that the matter will be resubmitted to the Co-ordinator-General and every endeavour will be made to help the hon. member in the matter of providing sufficient schooling accommodation.

The hon. member referred to the increased population in the area—a very good thing for this country that I hope will continue. While we appreciate the efforts of school committees in collecting data relating to the increase in the number of school children, and the schooling accommodation required in the future, I want to intimate to hon. members that the department also has the matter in hand and that these items are not overlooked by it. I can assure the hon. member for Enoggera that no child in Queensland has been denied education through any shortage in schooling accommodation, despite six years of war and the shortage of teachers.

The matter will be closely watched and the proposal for a new school at Mitchelton

will be submitted to the Co-ordinator-General again on the return of the Labour Government after the next elections with perhaps a greater majority than they have now and also pre-supposing that the hon. member himself is able to defeat Mrs. Groom in the plebiscite for a political candidate to contest the Mt. Cootha seat.

Let me also tell the hon. member that I have in the heart of my electorate the Petrie Terrace Girls and Infants' School, a building over 80 years old. It is one of the oldest in Queensland and it was recently painted. There is the suggestion that land should be resumed and a new school should be erected, but I am not prepared to authorise the resumption of the homes of the people at the present time for the building of a new school there.

The hon. member referred also to repairs to the dressing sheds at the Wilston State School. That matter does not come within the ambit of my department. It comes under the control of the Secretary for Public Instruction and I suppose that when his Estimates come forward later in the day the hon. member will be quite capable of presenting the case to my colleague.

**Mr. Morris:** I should like to feel that I shall have that opportunity.

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (4.40 p.m.): I want to congratulate the department on its activities. It is more severely handicapped by present shortages than any other department but notwithstanding that great handicap it has, to its credit, come out very satisfactorily over the last 12 months. In fact, its results have been remarkable. This is the first occasion on which the Minister has piloted the Estimates of this department through the Committee and I could not help noticing the change that has taken place in the tone in the debate since he introduced his first Vote. Immediately after his appointment the Opposition, particularly the Q.P.P., appeared to set upon him after the style of a rival football team setting upon one player on the opposing side. He suffered from a tirade of abuse and dirty inferences. It is pleasing to see that he has survived them all and has acquitted himself very well. In fact, the changed attitude reminds me of the words of Oliver Goldsmith—

“And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.”

The Opposition had the decency to admit that the Minister has acquitted himself very well. His job has been made much easier by the fact that he has a good staff. Generally speaking, Queensland is fortunate in having such an efficient staff in an important department.

Mention has been made of the architectural section of the department. If this particular section was credited with the prescribed architect's fees how would it show up? The figures would be interesting. I am confident that if it was credited with the usual archi-

tect's fees of 6 per cent. for the preparation of the plans and supervision of work the return it would get would more than offset the costs of this sub-department and leave a substantial credit in its favour.

I was secretary of a hospitals board for a number of years. Like the majority of such boards, we stuck to the Department of Works and obtained a large amount of valuable supervision and advice. That is not actually recorded in the department. We found that by consulting the department on many points in regard to hospitals alone we received immense assistance. The inspectorial branch of the department was equally co-operative.

When we consider the work of the department we immediately think of the traditional “Government specifications.” That is a thing I hope we shall never lose sight of in Queensland. It is a common saying in the country—“It is built to Government specifications.” I saw an advertisement offering a house for sale, and a few of the words in that advertisement spoke volumes. In giving a description of the home it said, “Built to Workers' Dwelling standards.” Those words suggest a great deal. The standards and specifications of the Department of Public Works are a good lead to private builders, and if we did not have them I shudder to think to what a low ebb our building specifications and standards might sink.

In common with the practice adopted by other members—and I am not quarrelling with that; they have pushed their own little barrows—I wish to point out that Gladstone in my electorate can claim to have the biggest increase in population of any country town in Queensland. It is difficult for the department and Government bodies to keep in step with the general progress of the town, in respect of schools, police stations, etc. In Gladstone the position is acute. The last census revealed a 58-per cent. increase in population. I was speaking to the mayor yesterday and he told me that in one camp at Barney's Point the council had to make arrangements for hygienic facilities for the benefit of the campers. Most of the men at this camp were engaged in carting coal, and there were 250 people there altogether. That is not many in the city, but in a town with a population of about 6,000 it is a big increase.

Our schools are very much over-crowded. A cyclone completely wrecked the convent school and the overcrowding became more acute because the State school was already overcrowded.

The convent school which accommodated approximately 150 pupils was completely wrecked. A bulldozer could not have pushed it over more completely and made a better job. The question arose where to send these school children. I took part in the consultations of leading men in town and subsequently the council agreed that if the convent school continued its work the council would make the town hall available for the purpose. The town hall in Gladstone is not a good hall. It is not very popular. For a dance hall, the design is wrong. The town council,

at a full meeting, very generously offered the use of this hall to the Sisters of Mercy to enable them to carry on the convent school.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor: Free of charge?**

**Mr. BURROWS:** Yes, free of charge. This action was applauded by 99.9 per cent. of the people of Gladstone and I think that if a vote of the people of Queensland was taken the percentage in favour would be about the same. If I was given an hour to collect adjectives to describe a rotten publication that calls itself "The Clarion" I should not be able to get enough suitable words to describe how low this paper got down into the gutter. If ever I needed an argument in favour of a controlled Press this particular journal is it. This was not "The Clarion's" business at all but although the action of the town council was supported by 99.9 per cent. of the people of Gladstone the article in this journal attacked this action.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Keyatta):** Order!

**Mr. Aikens:** You might tell us about the Lodge story.

**Mr. BURROWS:** Every time I mention "The Worker" the hon. member for Mundingburra perspires. I will certainly keep off "The Clarion" and I hope every decent person in Queensland does the same. By an accident of birth I do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church but I have never been more ashamed of being a Protestant than when I read that article attacking this action. I feel it my duty to mention it here.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that he is a long way off the subject matter of the debate.

**Mr. BURROWS:** Local government is being discussed today and in the past three years, during the course of the debates here and the questions asked in this Chamber, I could not help noticing that there are always two lines from which to attack the Government in regard to their attitudes towards local authorities. One day the Opposition take the Government to task and want them to give local authorities financial relief and some relief from responsibilities in which financial consideration is required but the next day the Opposition cry that the Government are interfering too much with the work of local authorities. I have frequently thought how inconsistent they are in their preachings. In other words, the ideal, as enunciated by the Opposition, is that local authorities should be able to choose what they want to do and they should be able to push back onto the Government anything they do not wish to do or it does not suit them to do.

We hear many suggestions that the Government interfere too much with local authorities—the Government want to know too much about what they are doing. One would not need much imagination to realise that the total investments of local authorities run into many millions of pounds and all that

loan money is guaranteed by the Treasury, backed by the Government. The guarantor of an account is entitled to know a little about the business of the person he is guaranteeing, how much money is being spent, and whether an asset is being created by its expenditure.

I remember reading about local government in America some years ago. There, when a local authority went out of office, the incoming authority sacked the police, the sheriff and everybody else, and some went so far as to repudiate all loans borrowed by the previous local authority. The result was that the local authorities had to pay exorbitant rates of interest because the lenders realised that they had to get back their money during the life of the local authority borrowing it, plus interest and plus a little for risk of dissolution before time. Hon. members would appreciate the handicap that would be to local authorities there. I am sure they can also appreciate the chaotic condition into which local-authority finance would get if the Government did not guarantee local-authority loans. It could happen that the bankers might favour a Labour council in one area and lend it money at 1 per cent. less interest than they would charge a Tory council in another area, or vice versa.

The majority of members of local governing bodies, those with experience in particular, realise that the co-operation of the Government is necessary if they are to operate satisfactorily. All the local authorities with which I have been associated have spoken very highly of the officers of the Department of Public Works and there is certainly no antagonism between the officers of the local authorities and the officers of the Department of Public Works.

**Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (4.59 p.m.):** Mr. Mann, or Mr. Keyatta, whoever it is—

**Mr. Luckins:** The Keyatta man.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member for Maree not to be facetious towards the Chair.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I was just remarking how stiff I was that you should have returned to the chair just as it was my turn to speak. They have had a wonderful go all day. They have touched on every subject under the sun from the Attorney-General's Department to the United Nations Charter, and now you have come back to the chair I suppose I shall have to keep within the ambit of this vote. Nevertheless, I shall endeavour to do so.

I just want to say about the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government, who is piloting his Estimates through the Committee at present and who is in charge of the Chamber, that, strangely enough—and this might surprise many hon. members—I find in dealing with him as a member of Parliament to a Minister that he is very courteous, very considerate, and very informative. In that respect he differs from some of his ministerial colleagues.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to the matter before the Committee. We are not discussing the members of the Cabinet; we are discussing the Chief Office Vote of the Department of Public Works.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Am I not in order, Mr. Mann, in comparing the courtesy and consideration I as a member of Parliament receive from the Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government with the lack of consideration I receive from most of the other Ministers? I want to say that that hon. gentleman does not adopt the dirty, cheap little tactics adopted by most other Ministers inasmuch as when I am informed of work to be done—and I take it that this applies to all non-Labour members of this Committee—the Minister sees that my letter is promptly dispatched to me after it is typed and signed, whereas other Ministers sign all letters on the same day, but in particular regard to the Ayr A.L.P. see to it that the secretary gets his letter 11 days to a fortnight before I get mine despite the fact that the letters are dated the same date.

Until the present Attorney-General stopped the practice, not so long ago, the A.L.P. officials at Ayr nominated men for appointment as justices of the peace—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. AIKENS:** I want to say to the Secretary for Public Works, Housing, and Local Government, whilst I do not want to pay him any compliments in respect of other matters, in which there is considerable room for improvement in many respects, but as a member of Parliament dealing with the hon. gentleman regarding matters concerning my electorate that come under his department I have no complaint whatever.

In one of his outbursts of frankness this morning, which are characteristic of him, the Minister made a statement about the conditions that exist today in North Queensland. He said—and you will notice, Mr. Mann, how I am skirting within the Standing Orders in saying this—that subsequent to the recent cyclone or typhoon at Hughenden he gave orders immediately that materials were to be transported from Charters Towers to Hughenden to relieve the position there, but he said that this material could not be taken from Charters Towers to Hughenden by road because the road was not trafficable. What a condemnation and what an indictment on his Government to know that a road to a point only 200 miles from the coast in North Queensland was untrafficable to urgently needed materials! Those materials could not be carted from Charters Towers to Hughenden by road. We are fortunate that there was no serious loss of life or injuries in the recent Hughenden cyclone, because if there had been the forces of mercy, the doctors and the ambulance, would not have got through by road. They would have had to travel by air or train. Such is the condition of affairs in North Queensland, about which I am continually complaining. And after I complain members of the

Labour Party stand up one after the other in dreary procession and say that I have no right to complain of conditions in North Queensland, that I have no right to compare them with what exists here. I take it that if that cyclone or typhoon or outside willy-willy had struck Dalby or Roma or some other place 200 miles from Brisbane there would have been no difficulty in getting the materials through by road from Brisbane, but in North Queensland any point 200 miles from the coast is almost inaccessible by road.

I want the Minister to clear up one point in connection with his remarks. I made an interjection with regard to architects. Sometimes the Minister is a little difficult to understand, as he has a somewhat staccato style of pronunciation. I took him to say—and I do not want him to think I am deliberately misinterpreting his remarks—that certain architects were more or less supplying information or more or less urging members here to press for different types and standards of buildings so that they could reap the benefit of the extra costs that the buildings would involve. I think the Minister said later that the architects were not paid on a percentage basis. This is the only interpretation that I could place on his remarks. If the architects are not paid on a percentage basis and merely get the wages or fees by virtue of their position as public servants, then the design does not matter very much—whether the buildings are expensively constructed or cheaply constructed.

**Mr. Power:** I referred to private architects.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Then that clears the matter right up. If private architects are employed by the Department of Public Works naturally they must be paid a percentage of the cost of the building in accordance with the architects' scale of charges. I did not know that private architects were employed by the department.

**Mr. Jesson:** Mostly on hospitals.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I did not know where they were, but I wanted to know.

I should also like him to tell me whether the Department of Public Works is purely and simply the constructing authority for all other government departments in the State, with the exception of the Railway Department. If the Department of Public Instruction wants a building erected by the Department of Public Works, does it send along a drawing or a suggestion of the type of building to be erected, or is the Department of Public Works alone responsible for it. Let us suppose that the Department of Public Instruction says to the Department of Public Works, "We want a new school at Pimlico to cost about £20,000." Does the Department of Public Instruction submit plans of the proposed building, or does it leave it entirely to the Department of Public Works to erect the type of building that it, the Department of Public Works, thinks suitable for that locality? Is the Department of Public Works not only the constructing authority but also the designing authority

for all public works in Queensland? I really thought that the department concerned gave the Department of Public Works a tentative design of the building it wanted constructed by the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Works constructed a building for it accordingly. I do not know just what is the position, but I hope that the Secretary for Public Works will clear the matter up.

I want to pay a tribute to the Department of Public Works in connection with urgent jobs carried out in the interests of bush schools throughout North Queensland. One of the most irritating difficulties under which scholars have to study at bush schools in North Queensland in the summer is the fly and mosquito menace. For two or three years the wet season may not be very heavy, and on that account the mosquito menace and the fly menace may not be so heavy either, but then there may come a particularly wet season with a flush of grass. Then the little scholars have to go to the little bush school and study in a cloud of flies and mosquitoes in the day-time.

I should not like any hon. member here to think that in the tropical North mosquitoes infest buildings and pester people only at night-time. At times they are just as bad in the day-time as in the night-time. On one occasion I made urgent representations to the Department of Public Works to have some of the bush schools fly-proofed against mosquitoes and flies and it was not a question of waiting long months before the job was done. It was passed on to the local man in Townsville and the job was done almost immediately. I want to commend the Minister for that and I hope he will continue to follow that policy of proceeding with urgent jobs without going through the ramifications of red tape before doing so.

We have in Townsville an entirely new suburb in the Pimlico-Armstrong Estate area. The Minister has been responsible for the erection of many new homes under the Queensland Housing Commission on the Armstrong Estate and the Garbutt Estate, and many private homes have been erected on the Garbutt Estate. There we have an entirely new suburb, without any school within a reasonable distance. The children from the Armstrong Estate and Garbutt Estate have to go long distances to school at Aikenvale, or a similarly long distance to the Mundingburra State school or a longer distance still to the Hermit Park State school. I appeal not only to the Secretary for Public Works but the Secretary for Public Instruction for plans to be drawn up as quickly as possible for the establishment of a primary school to serve the Pimlico area. That is a big suburb and is becoming better established every day. The Armstrong-Garbutt Estate suburbs are growing like mushrooms. It is unfortunate that the children in those areas have to travel long distances to school. I hope that both Ministers mentioned will get on with the erection of a much-needed school.

The matter I am about to mention is one which the Minister should give attention to and should be a matter of Government policy. I understand that when a department decides to proceed with the erection of a building it merely tells the Department of Public Works to go ahead with its erection. Consequently we see many fine schools erected in what are described as barren wilderness. When the department prepares plans and specifications for the erection of a building it should also prepare plans for the lay-out of the grounds. Provision should also be made for recreational areas, facilities for garden plots and organised orderly tree-planting, so that the building will not be surrounded by a treeless waste. Even if it is necessary for the Minister to appoint a landscape gardener he would be well advised to attach such a man to his department so that fine public buildings, such as schools, can be surrounded by an avenue of trees, well-laid-out grounds, recreational facilities and the ordinary amenities and facilities associated with such a building.

If I am permitted to digress a little I should like to deal with the Licensing Commission. Following legislation introduced by this Government some time ago a Licensing Commission was established. Now, when one wants to transfer a liquor license—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. AIKENS:** Or when anyone wants—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The Licensing Commission comes under the vote of the Department of Justice and has nothing whatever to do with this department.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I know that but I found everyone else had an open go—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. AIKENS:** I am very unfortunate, Mr. Mann, that you came back into the chair but in view of the fact that you are here I am not going to "go" you or run counter to your ruling or wishes. I am particularly unfortunate that I am not able to deal with the Licensing Commission and one or two other matters, but having said that and having had my say on this vote I will resume my seat.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR (Maranoa)** (5.15 p.m.): I cannot let the occasion pass without making my contribution to this debate. I regard this department as being a very important one. I wish to say that on every occasion that I have visited the various sub-departments I have had good service and received a very courteous hearing. The Minister and each and every one of his officers have been very courteous to me.

I do not know whether I am fortunate, but I made a suggestion that this department should consider building homes for the workers in Roma. I put the proposal to the Minister and I showed him the land that we suggested could be used for the purpose and within a very short space of time the project

was under way. Perhaps the contractor may be a little slow in beginning, but that is not the fault of the department, which met him in every way and with whose treatment he was satisfied. Up to date the contractor has not been able to begin work but he told me recently that he would be able to make a start in the very near future. Much the same position obtains in other areas in my electorate. Something similar has happened at Mitchell and I understand the Queensland Housing Commission is going to make inquiries about the building of workers' homes in Injune. I have always found the Minister ready and willing to give every help.

One of the most important sub-departments is that of Local Government. Only last week I had the pleasure of going to St. George with the Minister, who opened the water scheme that was sanctioned by his department. This scheme was discussed two years ago, plans were drawn and submitted to the department, and on Friday the water was turned on and one could hear on all sides praises from the people of the Government for the work done by the department. It will be of great benefit to the people there. Dirranbandi also has a water supply for the town area that was sanctioned by the department. The improvement effected at St. George by the water supply is amazing. Although the people there had a good bore system previously, the water from it was not suitable for the gardens from which they obtained their vegetable supply. Bore water that containing so much soda as the St. George bore is not suitable for gardening, but now the people will derive great benefit from the new supply.

A similar position obtains at Surat. The Minister on this trip as late as last Saturday inspected a water scheme for Surat sanctioned by his department. This work is not done by the Government but by the councils concerned under the day-labour system, which has proved very satisfactory.

This department is doing a wonderful job. Everybody knows—it has been discussed on numerous occasions in this Chamber—that there are shortages of material and labour, but despite these shortages the Government are able to get things done. For instance, a splendid job has been made of the installation of the septic system at the Roma High School. It was pointed out to the officers of the section of the department who control these things that such a system was necessary and realising this to be so they got quickly to work and had the septic installation made.

On numerous occasions I have had conferences with the various sub-departments and recently it was agreed that alterations should be made to the court houses in Mitchell and Surat and numerous other buildings in my electorate. We hope that the shortage of materials and labour will not always exist, but even under present conditions this department is making an excellent showing.

I rose particularly to congratulate the Minister and every officer in his department on courtesy with which they treat interviewers. I know that they are interviewed

by many people about homes and accommodation and on each and every occasion on which I have made a submission to them, although they may not have been able to do anything at the moment they have shown me every consideration and given every possible help. The amount of work that the Housing Commission is doing in building homes for the workers alone deserves some special mention. The housing position in Queensland, as in every other State in the Commonwealth and probably every other country in the world, is not good but knowing the amount of work that this department has done in the past we feel that it will not be very long before there will be some indication that all who want homes will be able to get them. The conditions under which people can either buy or rent homes from this department are very encouraging. I understand even better conditions are about to be provided for the workers and when they become law they will be of great benefit to them. I again congratulate the department on the work that is being done.

**Mr. KERR (Oxley) (5.26 p.m.):** I did not intend to speak on this vote, but I felt that I should be rather churlish if I allowed this opportunity to go by without recording my appreciation of the expedition with which the Minister has attended to representations made by me for improvements to schools in my electorate.

I remember one famous occasion when an hon. member of this Assembly was pointing out that credit should be given where it was due. He spoke about the busy bull and the indefatigable ram. I am not going to compare the qualities of the artisans of the Department of Public Works with the physical attributes of the busy bull or the indefatigable ram, although the Minister got very close to that this afternoon when he said there was a great increase in population in the Enoggera electorate since the present hon. member was elected to represent it. I do not know how far he was going to go, but he stopped there.

The officers of this department have shown a marked improvement in the execution of their work over the last two or three years, and I commend them for it. The department had got into rather slack ways. When the Minister took it over he said he would stir things up. He has done that, and I give him credit for it.

All the schools in my area have been concreted underneath. The hon. member for Keppel quoted a long list of works done in his electorate since he has been the hon. member for Keppel and we took a rather frivolous attitude to what he was saying but appreciated the lead he was giving us to get extra work done.

The Government have promised a post-primary school in my electorate. Land has been acquired in the Oxley electorate—now the Sherwood electorate—for the establishment of a post-primary school, but I do not

think even the wildest optimist would believe that we shall have a post-primary school for many years yet. It certainly would help to solve the accommodation problem of our present institutions. I hope the Government do not lose sight of that fact, because in every metropolitan area the intake of pupils is growing each year, not by dozens but by hundreds, and far exceeds the numbers going out. The increase is so great that extra accommodation will have to be provided in every metropolitan area in the next two or three years.

The same thing applies to school grounds. In some of our metropolitan and suburban schools we have not got enough playing area and special consideration should be given to increasing it. If we do not do them now these things will cost considerably more in the future.

With regard to some public works undertaken in Queensland, a great loss of money is taking place throughout the State because workmen have to while away their time waiting for materials to come onto the job. This is more marked in the country than in the metropolitan area but it is also noticeable here. I appreciate the fact that the department must hold its men to carry out its works, but at the same time there should be closer supervision to save our money by seeing that every essential material to carry out a job is on it before the men are taken there. An effort should be made to avoid this delay. I say again that a tremendous amount is being lost. I noticed such a loss at the Balonne weir. With my own eyes I saw dozens of men sitting waiting for materials to arrive; they were being paid and there was not a skerrick of work for them to do. There was no cement or steel and the men had to sit idly by. Such things must involve heavy expenditure on these works.

**Mr. Power:** How long ago was this?

**Mr. KERR:** It was some time ago. That was the position I saw with my own eyes; the men had nothing to do because there was no material with which to work. I refer to the Balonne River at St. George.

**Mr. Power:** What job?

**Mr. KERR:** The weir at St. George, the water-supply scheme that the Minister opened the other day. It would be interesting if that hon. gentleman would give us the original tender for the job and the reason why it was not accepted and the cost of the job in its finished state. I am pointing these things out, because that state of affairs is of general application in a major or minor degree. It is something to be watched, and I repeat in fairness to the department that I know it has to retain its men. It does cost money if you retain men and they have nothing to do. Close supervision would see that men are not put onto a job when there is no real work or when there is no continuity of work to keep them gainfully employed.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government) (5.34 p.m.): There are only

one or two matters to which I want to reply. I thank the hon. member for Port Curtis for his kindly reference to the work of my department. I visited Gladstone recently because many matters were brought under my notice by the hon. member that required attention. As a result of my visit, quite a number of jobs agitating the minds of the Gladstone people and the hon. member himself were attended to. When the cyclone struck Gladstone, thanks to the organisation of the officials of the department, everything was straightened out to the satisfaction of the hon. member. That is the way a Government should act and how a department should be controlled.

The hon. member for Mundingburra was very complimentary of me—quite unusual of him—but in the course of his remarks he said that, "strangely enough," I had done those things. That is part of my make-up—kindness. I always believe in being kind and charitable to my opponents. No-one can accuse me of being unkind or ungenerous; it is the way in which I have been trained. I feel sympathetic towards a number of people, and I often feel very sympathetic towards the hon. member for Mundingburra because of the tragic position in which he is placed himself.

However, after complimenting me the hon. member seized upon some small thing out of which he thought he could make some political capital. He raised the banner of the people of the North and of the districts of the North. But did he some time ago ask the Minister for Transport a question about the building of a new railway station at Hughenden when he, the alleged champion of the people of the North, did not know that the new railway station had already been built?

**Mr. Aikens:** I knew it.

**Mr. POWER:** If the hon. member knew it, why did he make an ass of himself by asking a question about it?

**Mr. Aikens:** I wanted the Minister to confirm the fact.

**Mr. POWER:** He went on to say that the road from Charters Towers to Hughenden at a certain time was in an untrafficable state. Let me tell him that about 4 o'clock on the Sunday afternoon I was told by the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, the representative of the district, that there had been a cyclone at Hughenden. He, as Minister in charge of the police, got in touch with the police authorities. We moved quickly. We had everything marshalled that night. It is true that the road was bad, but only because of the weeks of rain that had fallen there. Many other roads in Queensland, and particularly in the West, get into an untrafficable state because of rain, but the hon. member for Mundingburra wanted to make some political kudos out of the situation. He wanted to say that the road was untrafficable under any condition. We immediately marshalled a special train, to be dispatched the next day. We got word about the cyclone at 4 o'clock on the Sunday afternoon. The men were called up that night,

there was a stand-by until next morning. At daylight next morning the special train moved out from Charters Towers to Hughenden and at 4 o'clock that afternoon they were unloading the material and going ahead with the job. What more could the hon. member for Mundingburra want? Could he expect anything better than that? Everybody was satisfied with the exception of one man, who tried to score off the department, but when the acid test was applied to him, to point out even one case where there had been unfair treatment, he was unable to do so. I now accept his apology for his inability to substantiate even one of his charges.

Only yesterday the hon. member for Stanley approached me and the Acting Premier with the object of getting help sent to Toogoolawah after a storm at that town. Here again we moved quickly. The material has been assembled and will be sent to Toogoolawah as promptly as possible. We are proud of our organisation in this respect. We move quickly. The Labour Party's policy is—initiative and referendum—not too much referendum but plenty of initiative.

The hon. member for Mundingburra referred to my remark about the payment of architects. I do not want to be misunderstood. I pointed out that certain architects were critical about the design of public buildings, but my attitude is that the greater the cost in the preparation of plans the greater amount to be paid to private architects. I quite agree that it would be an advantage to have many things done, but we must husband our resources. There is the shortage of material, and we are not in the position at the moment to do many of the things we should like to do. It is all right for an outside man to be critical and advocate the expenditure of a lot of money, but when it comes to the expenditure of his own money he very often prefers to husband it. Whilst I am Minister in charge of this department I will endeavour to see that the construction of public buildings and amenities attached to them are built at the one and the same time. Our architects are paid salaries fixed either by agreement or the Industrial Court.

The hon. member also wanted to know whether the department is responsible for the preparation of plans and designs. The procedure is that when a request is made for the erection of a building the department's technical officers confer with the officers of the department desirous of having the building constructed. They fix the space required and my department is responsible for the external designs. A sketch plan is prepared and further conferences are held between the technical officers of my department and the officers of the department concerned. When the sketch plan is approved plans and specifications are prepared. In some cases where we have not the men or material available we call for tenders for the work. A departmental inspector frequently travels throughout the district he is assigned to inspecting buildings where repairs or additions are desired and he makes recommendations accordingly.

The hon. member for Mundingburra referred to the mosquito menace that exists in many parts of the State. The work of eradication is one of the duties of a local authority. The hon. member is really condemning himself, for he exposed the inability of the Townsville City Council of which he was a member and from which he has recently been removed by defeat at the elections, to deal with the mosquito menace.

**Mr. AIKENS:** I rise to a point of order. I did not refer to the control of the mosquito menace in the Townsville City Council area. I referred to the bush areas. It is impossible for a shire council to eradicate mosquitoes or their breeding grounds in bush areas.

**Mr. POWER:** The fact remains that the responsibility for the eradication of mosquitoes—and there are quite a number of them in Queensland—is one for the local authority concerned. When I have been on a tour of inspection of buildings under my control I have had the mosquito menace forcibly brought home to me. I noticed it in Townsville and the hon. member, although defeated at the last elections in Townsville, must accept his share of the responsibility of the existence of mosquitoes and their breeding grounds in Townsville. The Government, in order to help local authorities in the work of eradication, subsidise their efforts by 50 per cent. I will ask the Director of Local Government to take the matter up with the local authorities in whose areas these schools exist and ask him to have inspections made, particularly of the alleged breeding grounds, to see what can be done.

**Mr. Aikens:** If he comes to me I will give him a long list.

**Mr. POWER:** Probably one of the areas is in the Garbutt district, which is part of the Townsville City Council area. The Townsville electors had the good sense to reject the hon. member for neglecting his responsibilities in that direction.

The hon. member also referred to the need for the erection of a primary school in the Pimlico—Armstrong Estate and Garbutt area. The preparation of plans for a school there has not yet been referred to my department but I understand that the Department of Public Instruction is considering the purchase of land in that locality for the purpose. I can assure the hon. member that he will receive the same fair treatment as every other member.

The hon. member for Maranoa referred to the work of the department and was very complimentary; which shows that we have another satisfied customer. He also referred to the work of the local authorities. On Friday last, in company with the hon. member, I visited St. George and performed the very pleasant and important duty of opening the town water supply, one of the functions of local government, authorised by the Balonne Shire Council. I think great credit should be given to any local authority that

sets out to provide one of the most important amenities that any section of the community could have—a pure water supply.

**Mr. Kerr:** It is a great service to the people.

**Mr. POWER:** As the hon. member for Oxley remarks, it is a great service to the people. Pure water and a sewerage system are important in the building up of any town. Owing to the fly menace sewerage systems are particularly important. I commend the Balonne Shire Council for its work. It is comprised of an excellent body of men. The chairman, Dr. McDonnell, is a man of vision who is eager to do something for the development of the town. I took the opportunity of accompanying Mr. Mulholland, the engineer, on a visit to Surat to have a look at another water-supply scheme that is well under way. The Warroo Shire Council is a very progressive one. I have pointed out that there has been a good deal of criticism of city amenities and comparison of city conditions with western and northern conditions. In every town I have visited I have pointed out to the local authorities that many of the amenities they are complaining about should be supplied by the local authority. We realise that the cost of providing them is rather heavy and the Government have endeavoured to meet the local authorities in this respect and we have made provision for subsidies for various schemes. While we may have concrete water-channeling and water and sewerage and a transport system in Brisbane, our valuations are much higher and our rates are much higher than theirs. The amenities are being provided for the people by the people, as a result of the charges levied by the local authority; and rightly so. If you want an amenity, you have to pay for it. The people in the country areas must appreciate that fact, and understand that their valuations will have to be increased if they want the same amenities as the people in the metropolitan area. The income of some of these districts is tremendous, and it is well for Queensland that that is so, and there is no reason why they should not be prepared to pay the cost of these amenities.

I have found the position to be this: when it is decided to put in a certain work, they want to have what is known as a benefited area, and the squatter outside the town does not want to pay anything towards the water scheme for the development of the town, but at the same time he is prepared to come into town and use those amenities and still have low valuation in his own area and a low rate. That does not apply in all cases of course. Local government means local government; it does not mean the development of a ward; it does not mean government within the local governing area. The sooner we get away from benefited areas and develop along true local-government lines the sooner we shall provide amenities for the people in the country. I had an excellent trip with the hon. member for Maranoa and I learned a good deal. I was happy to know that we have such progressive shires as the Warroo Shire Council and the Balonne Shire Council.

I thank the hon. member for Oxley for his kind remarks. The hon. member showed a knowledge of the work of the department. The state of affairs he mentioned, in which he said men were not able to work because of shortages, may have existed some time ago—in fact it did operate—but it does not exist today. That difficulty has been overcome, as I promised this Parliament it would be overcome when I took over the portfolio of Secretary for Public Works. I was differently situated from my predecessors. When I took over the war had ended and we were getting man-power and materials, so that of course something could be done. But for years previously nothing could be done. Every individual who was worthwhile and who had any love for his country was giving his all in the war effort. As a result no works could be undertaken. The workshops at Ipswich Road, for example, were starved for materials and men. We could not undertake various works. Today there are district supervisors in the country areas. Assistant supervisors travel from place to place investigating and reporting. They are empowered to expend up to £25 on necessary work. If the cost will exceed this amount, while the work is proceeding the officer estimates the amount that will be required and on his report approval is given. There is no delay: the work is gone on with while departmental approval is sought.

To avoid delay stores have been established in various districts in Queensland. All materials are not supplied from Brisbane. In districts in which there are local manufacturers, the district supervisor is instructed to get quotations and if the quotations are reasonable the materials are bought in the district.

I would also draw attention to the fact that today jobs are not begun until we know that we have the materials available on the job or that there will be a regular and continuous supply of materials to complete it once it is started. As I pointed out, Mr. East is on the job in every project in the metropolitan area. At times Mr. East goes to the country. As the result of a complaint I received that certain men were getting something to which they were not entitled, I referred the matter to my Under-Secretary and Mr. East was flown to a town in Queensland. He went immediately to the man concerned. He went to the hospital and investigated the matter. Those men were kicked out holus-bolus for not doing their work. They were not on the job.

Mr. Hanson, the Communist secretary of the Painters' and Decorators' Union, took us to task because he said we employed a man on a job at Ingham who, he said, was not a skilled painter. He called a strike of painters working on Government House—a thousand miles away from Ingham—in an attempt to intimidate the Government and have this man dismissed. This man made application to join the union on two occasions but was refused admission. He was a member of the A.W.U. Immediately these men went on strike the matter was reported to the Industrial Court. The following day the court

heard the case and the men were ordered back to work and went back to work. It was decided that a test be made to ascertain whether this man was a qualified painter. He obtained an excellent pass. The magistrate said the man was a qualified painter and entitled to become a member of the union. The other day I learned, many months afterwards, that the men in the union were very happy to accept the man whom the Communist secretary of the Painters' Union said they would not accept.

Mr. East goes from place to place. He has full authority. The Under-Secretary, Mr. Lyons, and I have the fullest confidence in him. He is not restricted in any way. If Mr. East says he wants to go north, north he goes. I am satisfied that our production today is equal to that of any other State in Australia.

I asked the hon. member for Oxley to name the place where he said delay was taking place on account of shortage of materials. It was said that it was on the weir project on the Balonne River. That job does not come under the control of the Department of Public Works, therefore I am not accepting any responsibility for anything that takes place there. However, I believe that the Queensland workman is conscious of his responsibilities. A number of irresponsible people were employed by the Department of Public Works—we had to accept them because we were not able to get others—but today those who were not pulling their weight are no longer with us.

We have not asked anybody to do more than a fair day's work, and I am proud of the men we have working for the Housing Commission, the Department of Public Works, and the Local Government Department. We have a band of men second to none. We have had some who have tried to stand over us, who have tried to tell the Minister what he should do, and who have tried to stand over the officers of the department, but they have been weeded out, because we will not tolerate that. All we ask is a fair deal from them and we give them a fair deal in return. I can assure the hon. member that I cannot accept any responsibility for the men working on the job to which he refers at the Balonne weir.

**Mr. MARRIOTT (Bulimba) (5.56 p.m.):** I wish to add my score to the laudatory remarks made about the Minister and possibly do my bit in helping towards causing him to buy a new hat.

I have noticed in one district in which it is possible, because in the old days mounted police were usually stationed there, that ample land was available at each police station, and I suggest that this land be utilised for the provision of cottages for married officers. I know of one instance in which two cottages have been built for married officers attached to the police station and I commend the Minister for it. I hope that he will find it in his heart to continue that policy because there must be other stations where possibly two or

three cottages could be built for married officers and so the housing problem could be eased.

During the debate many hon. members skirted round the mulberry tree and got in a good deal of matter with relation to another department. Unfortunately we shall not be able to reach the Estimates for that department. I refer to the Department of Public Instruction. Some speakers got it in by linking the two together, and there should be a close liaison between them. It was suggested that the Secretary for Public Works and his department were responsible for the purchase of land either for enlarging existing school grounds or building new schools. The Minister made it clear a few moments ago that this was not so, that it is a matter for the Department of Public Instruction, and I am glad he made that clear because there are many things I could have introduced if I desired to work the old parish pump, but I do not propose to do that.

I congratulate the Minister on the job he and his officers have done, especially in increasing accommodation for married officers attached to police stations by building extra cottages on grounds already attached to them.

**Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (7.15 p.m.):** I have listened to many eulogistic references to the activities of the Minister and I wish to add my meed of praise to him for his activities in my electorate, as he has done much in connection with public buildings. I do not want to be so carried away with what he has done as to say that he has done all that could be done. He has created an incentive within the department and now one can get some action taken quickly, more quickly than in the past. My experience has not always been to my liking because when I was elected member for Albert some 20 years ago, one of the first places I was taken to was the State school and I was rather shocked at what I saw there. If there was one thing more than another that I set my heart on, it was to see a new school erected at Southport, where there were over 700 pupils. When he was Secretary for Public Instruction Mr. F. A. Cooper promised us a new brick school. Nothing happened. When the Hon. H. A. Bruce held that portfolio he also made a visit to Southport and came to the same conclusion, namely, that there was only one thing to do and that was to build a brick school to accommodate the rising number of pupils attending it. Again nothing happened. Later on Mr. T. L. Williams paid us a visit and he agreed with the previous Minister that the school was in a shocking condition; he also agreed that the cramping of children in the school and the conditions of the teaching staff should be rectified. At that time war broke out and the agitation for a new school was not continued. Immediately after the war period the present Minister made a visit to Southport and he also was very much concerned about the condition of the school.

The school is not a single building but consists of four or five buildings and I must say of the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government that he did not

take long in getting the building painted, and he had further accommodation provided to take care of certain classes. I, myself, together with my constituents, appreciate this action very much. The present Minister has brightened the place up and the school is now presentable. I accordingly extend my thanks to the Minister for his action, but I must say that the public buildings in Southport are not keeping pace with the development taking place generally down there. We all know these seaside places and the Minister does too, because recently a Bill was put through the House dealing with building down there. That area is still going ahead and will continue to go ahead.

I give the Minister full credit for what he has done and for his ability to get work done. He has shown a special interest in his department and he has good officers to help him. While he is entitled to the thanks that we bestow upon him I want to remind him that there is much more still to be done. The education of the children is of prime importance. Children are not very long at school and it is important that we should give them the best educational facilities while they are there. Although the Minister has achieved quite a deal in the face of considerable difficulties I appeal to him now to consider the construction of a new school at Southport, which was promised as far back as 15 to 16 years ago.

I think it was the hon. member for Buranda that complained that there was not sufficient playground space at some of the schools and in such circumstances we shall have to accept his suggestion and give teaching in buildings that go up in the air, but we must have school grounds. There are between 700 and 800 children at the Southport school and there are a number of private schools there as well, buildings of an attractive architectural design and all doing wonderful work. It is sad to think that the worst school building of the lot is the State School. Why should that be? The matter is above party politics, it is something that calls for immediate attention in the interests of the rising generation. I think every Minister of the Crown will agree that we should give the children the best opportunities of education and the Southport State School calls for attention at once. Some of the other public buildings are only in line with the State School, too—they need attention as well.

I do not think the people generally realise the growing importance of Southport. Whether buildings are required for education or for any other public purpose it is the duty of the Government to provide them so that the work of the State may be properly carried out. The obligation is on the Government to provide them and again I appeal to the Minister to give consideration to my suggestion. He always lends a willing ear to what I have to say and so I ask him now to do something to make the position better than it has been in the past. One is very heartened in approaching the Minister. He is always courteous and his officers, too, are courteous. I hope that the Treasurer will

be able to find enough money to enable him to provide all the educational facilities that are needed for the children of the State.

The Minister takes an interest in many places, including Southport. I recognise the ramifications of public buildings throughout the length and breadth of the State and I know that to give them proper attention needs much thought, but I am confident that if the Minister pursues his activities within the next few years he will be able to overcome existing difficulties. Very often Governments—I am not referring particularly to the present Government—wait for public agitation before they give the public a service they need. It is very satisfactory what the public think but the Government have means of determining what facilities are required and where. We are getting to a position where one does not get very much unless one is always tailing after a Minister to interest him in a given project. That is quite wrong.

Education is a subject that is above party politics. Everyone is entitled to it. No matter what Government are in power, there should be some officer possessing authority to investigate and recommend necessary school buildings. I wish to express my gratitude to the Minister, not only for the work he has done in my electorate but for the work he has done all over Queensland. It is very pleasant to hear hon. members pay tribute to him and give him full credit for the way in which he has discharged his duties. I give him full credit, although I believe that his work has just started.

**Mr. MOORES (Kurilpa) (7.28 p.m.):** It was my intention to vary the monotony of the debate by refraining from eulogising the Minister. Hon. members will appreciate that after ten years of opposition in the Brisbane City Council my forte is criticism rather than eulogism. But after listening to hon. members on both sides of the Chamber I felt I could not resist the temptation to say that the Minister has done a splendid job during the period he has been in charge of works, housing and local government. I can speak with some degree of authority, as I served my apprenticeship in the department and continued thereafter as a tradesman in it for six years. I am in a position to make a comparison between that period and the present time. I have kept close contact with those young fellows with whom I served my apprenticeship. I know that the Minister has exercised a tremendous influence with the heads of the department and that that influence has permeated its tradesmen. The ramifications, scope and authority of the department have been very well handled by the Minister. After all, the vote we are discussing amounts to well over half a million pounds. It is £157,000 more than the estimate for the previous year, the £414,000 voted last year was exceeded by approximately £70,000, and an additional amount of £88,000 is being budgeted for in the current financial year.

I feel that during this debate every member in the Chamber must have worked the parish pump for some purpose. The criticism has been so mild that you would imagine that the only way in which hon. members—especially hon. members of the Opposition—could get something from the Minister by way of maintenance or additions to a school, a police station, or a court house, was to appeal to him during a debate of this kind. That, I think, is ridiculous. The brief experience I have had of the Minister while I have been a member of the House has convinced me that you have only to approach him with something of urgency and present a case and, allowing for the shortage of materials and staff, the job is put into operation. I referred to him such a request for work in my area. It was the only job I wanted done and the Minister promptly saw the necessity and urgency of the matter, and the work is now going ahead. I do not think I should have to come here and in a debate of this importance, push my barrow for that job in my electorate, as members of the Opposition have done during the debate.

Of the more severe criticism levelled at the department I should say the one that requires some reply is that levelled at the chief administrative officer and his near-at-hand officers because he happens to be a non-technical man. This is a controversial question in various spheres of activity. I should say that only in rare instances do you find a person combining the qualification of a tradesman, a technician, or a professional man, with those of an experienced administrator. I know from my personal contact with people in the department who have risen from the position of apprentices to the ranks of foremen and supervisors that the gentleman who holds the position of Under Secretary of the department at the present time, despite the sarcastic reference to his qualifications as an accountant and the contention that he should be a technician or a professional man, is a very capable person. I think it is very doubtful whether you could obtain a tradesman, a technician, or a professional man who had his qualities as an administrator. Previous experience has shown that two architects have been in that position and under each the administration of that department was not considered a success. It may be that the Under Secretary at the present time is fortunate in having with him right-hand men with some degree of qualifications and that those who held the position previously did not.

It may also be possible that one of the factors contributing to the success of the department at the present time is the close liaison and the conscientious application with his officers that the Minister gives to the job. That is not said without some grounds for it. One of the most pleasing features of the department at the present time is the happy relationship that exists between the department's men, from the departmental heads right down to the men of the various sections—the plumbing, painting, and carpentering sections—and the Minister himself. He does

not restrict his contact with his department to consulting his Under Secretary, and presumably his Under Secretary does not feel that the Minister is infringing any ethics of the administration of his department by consulting with other men.

Before I leave the technical side of the question, may I suggest to the Minister that one of the difficulties that will develop in the years to come when materials are available for the extension of the department, is that of obtaining trained staff in the higher spheres of your technical administration? Recently we made the experiment of importing technical men, but for a variety of reasons they did not retain their employment in the department. I would suggest, as the result of my experience in the Department of Public Works as a tradesman and in the Department of Public Instruction as a manual training instructor in State schools, that some consideration be given, if not in the immediate future then in a long-range plan, to the training of higher technicians by the Queensland Government themselves. I would remind hon. members that the Commonwealth Government at the present time, mindful of the existence of a shortage of local tradesmen, technicians and professional men, have instituted a scheme for obtaining priority in employment of these men by requesting first-year students at the universities to sign a contract giving the Commonwealth Government a lien on their services for the first five years after graduation, conditionally on the Commonwealth Government's using their services during vacations, the Commonwealth paying the wage that these men would be receiving if they were continuously employed by the Commonwealth Government in that year of their training, that is that they receive the second-year pay while doing their second year at the university, and so on. I do not see why the Commonwealth should be allowed an open go, to use a colloquialism in this respect, because on the basis of the Treasurer's Budget one of the greatest programmes of development for the future of this State is in train or is envisaged and the success of that scheme is based on the quantity and quality of the technical men available for basic work.

The Department of Public Works has proved its capacity over the years to train a very sound and efficient type of tradesman. For the moment I would digress to point out that although most of the Department of Public Works apprentices, when they go into private employment, might be considered slightly slower than the privately-trained tradesmen they are recognised generally as being sounder and more efficiently trained. By reason of my experience as a tradesman I contend that to learn to be thorough and efficient is more important than to be speedy. One can easily gather speed in later years. In conjunction or in collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction the Minister might consider the possibility of implementing a scheme on these lines: that we train our tradesmen for the future by getting a contract over their services. It might prove fairly expensive, but in the long run it would pay.

In another sphere of technical training I presume the reason why the Government have not put into effect their system of aptitude tests and selecting and training lads for technical trades in the primary schools is the shortage of materials for the expansion of the building trade. If there is a shortage of teachers and if there is a shortage of material for expansion in the immediate future, at least we should consider the immediate extension or expansion of manual training and domestic science.

One of the most satisfactory features of my work in the State School at West End as a manual training instructor was the high degree of exhilaration a teacher experiences when he notices that a boy who had lost his enthusiasm in the main school, because of his lack of progress in academic subjects, regains a new interest in his school life when he is later taught the use of his hands and shows aptitude for it. No more satisfactory thing happened to me in my trade or teaching capacity than to see a boy backward in academic subjects and losing interest become enthusiastic again because he could do something with his hands. Within six months such lads, who had made tin pannikins, for example, could take them home to show that they were so much better at that than the boys who had been better than they in academic subjects. I give that experience to illustrate the fact that the Minister's department is not entirely responsible, presumably, for the shortages of tradesmen. If the Government or his department, in collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction, cannot at the moment implement the splendid scheme they submitted a couple of years ago for aptitude tests and technical training of boys prior to the higher secondary education, I suggest that at least they might in the meantime try to extend manual training and domestic science, even if such classes are conducted underneath schools.

I do not know whether hon. members opposite know it, but as a result of its war-time experience, the Department of Public Works appears to have developed into an organisation that compares more than favourably with any private organisation of similar type, whether large or small. It is not generally known that the Department of Public Works, despite the fact that it is the subject of sarcastic criticism by hon. members opposite because of its alleged chaotic condition, changed from a peace-time to a war-time organisation overnight, and, because of the allocation of work from the Allied Works Council, it has been responsible for the expenditure of approximately £3,000,000. Under the guidance of, and influence exerted by the Minister, his Under Secretary and departmental heads, the standard of efficiency was so high that the heads of the American Army and those of the Allied Works Council went out of their way to compliment the officers of the department on the work they did. If, instead of raising these petty parish pump items such as complete maintenance jobs within a week or extensions to a school within six weeks or a couple of months, hon. members opposite took a State-wide view of

the organisation that spreads its activities from Coolangatta to Thursday Island, we might get something constructive from them.

The officers engaged in the Department of Public Works are just as jealous of their reputation for doing a good job as are persons engaged in private capacities outside, and some of these employees must have been in the department long enough to know the chaotic conditions and lack of control and supervision that existed under the old contract system, in the days when profit, not the sound efficient building of a job, was the main consideration.

On local-authority matters, I would suggest to the Minister that he investigate the question whether it is not a waste of money to continually spoonfeed local authorities by way of subsidies. I say that after giving the matter some thought. In my speech on the Financial Statement I referred to the fact that councils should be assisted, but I was careful not to say that they should be assisted by way of subsidy, because I feel loan charges are the big problem. We have a statement of the Brisbane Lord Mayor, Alderman Chandler, that "the burden of interest payment hangs like a pall over this city." Those were his actual words in the first year of his administration approximately 10 years ago, and in the very near future, at the present rate of borrowing, £2,000,000 of the city's revenue of approximately £7,000,000 will be paid in interest and loan charges on loans that are nearly equivalent to the valuation of this city.

**Mr. Muller:** That is a very serious matter.

**Mr. MOORES:** It is, and that is why I say that although the Minister might feel proud of the fact that the local authorities have been spoon-fed to the extent of many hundreds of thousands of pounds by way of subsidy over the years, it is only a very small amount when compared with the excessive and crippling interest charges.

The hon. member for Maree just could not resist being petty early in the evening when referring to the vote for local authorities. I was surprised at his making the reference he did to the Jones administration and I feel that the Minister has dealt very effectively with that phase of the hon. member's criticism. I, however, should like to make reference to his criticism of the Jones administration purely because the Government decided that two investigators would go to the Brisbane City Council to look through the affairs of that council at that time. Does the hon. member know that the Brisbane City Council is in a worse financial position now than it was in the last year of the Jones regime in 1939-40? Only because Lord Mayor Chandler is in charge is the Brisbane City Council not being accused of being broke. If a Labour mayor was in control of the council we should have had the fact blazoned in the newspapers and in every possible way that the Brisbane City Council was bankrupt. That is the exact position of the Brisbane City Council. Why did the council appeal to the Government to delay on two occasions the presentation of

its Budget for the balancing of the £123,000 reimbursement from the Federal Government for the effects of devaluation? There was no more reason why two investigators went to the Brisbane City Council at the Government's request in 1939 than there would be today in sending two investigators to look at the council's activities.

I emphasise my point by stating that in recent years I have strenuously and vigorously criticised the present administration for its preferential treatment to contractors, particularly one small contractor to whom was given £1,600 of public money to help him out of a hole. And then there is the lading out of money to the present sanitary contractor. These things should have public investigation and there is no reason why the Government should not at the behest of the Minister send two investigators along to the council. It may be that the Minister, with his inherent sporting qualities, does not think it the right thing to do to a political opponent; because the present Lord Mayor has the reputation of being a successful business man it does not follow that he can successfully distribute his time between his business affairs and the colossal undertaking of an approximate £11,000,000 expenditure concern like the Brisbane City Council.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government) (7.48 p.m.): There are only one or two things to which I want to reply. The hon. member for Bulimba, who is not now present, referred to the eulogies I have received and said that I might require a new hat. The size of my hat is 6½ and if I were to take any notice of the hon. member and the party with which he is associated and measured their heads by their own opinions, mine would still be 6½ and theirs 9, 10 or 11. The Department of Public Works has built a number of police residences in many parts of Queensland. I will point out briefly what we have done. We have built a residence at East Brisbane, one at Red Hill, and one at Bulimba, and we have made additions to the police building at Petrie Terrace. We have made provision for, although we have not started—and this is for the information of the hon. member for Albert—a new residence at Burleigh. The hon. member for Fassifern will be glad to know that provision has been made for the building of a new married-constable's residence at Beenleigh. Provision has been made for the building of a new residence at Maroochydore. At Gatton it is proposed to build a new residence. All these things are under way and will be completed in the near future. In the Wide Bay electorate we have recently completed a new police building costing £21,250; and the erection of a senior-sergeant's residence at a value of £1,750 has been approved.

The hon. member for Nanango will be pleased to know that a house and land has been bought in the Nanango district at a cost of £1,000 on which to erect a police residence. You will be pleased, Mr. Hilton, to know that in the Inglewood district a new

police station has been started at Yelarbon. In the western district at Murilla we propose to convert single constable's quarters into quarters for a married constable. In the Balonne area it is proposed to erect a new police residence for a married constable at Dirranbandi. We are accused of being a Queen Street Government but not all Government funds are spent in the city. We have an enormous building programme in hand and I am happy to be able to say that because of our excellent organisation much of it will be carried out in the next 12 months. We propose to erect a new police residence at Bendemere, single men's quarters at Roma, and a new police station at Nocundra. It is proposed to construct new quarters for a married constable and quarters for single police at Cunnamulla. There are to be a new police building at Marlborough, two police residences at Aramac, a new residence at Eton. In the Burdekin district, at Townsville there is to be the conversion of the R.A.A.F. building for police accommodation. There was some objection by the Townsville Council to the conversion of these buildings for the purpose. We had no desire to convert the buildings but something had to be done in the meantime. There are additions to police barracks at Townsville for quarters for single men with a new station at Townsville North. There are to be three new police residences in the Cloncurry district, at Mount Isa. There is to be additional accommodation in the Douglas district at Mossman, a new residence for officer in charge at Einasleigh. There are to be new residences in Brisbane, at Albion, Ashgrove, Mitchelton, Nundah, Newmarket, Morningside and East Brisbane.

These are our proposals in connection with the Police Force throughout the State and I can assure the hon. member for Bulimba that there is a very close liaison between the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Instruction. There seems to be the harebrained idea that we should establish a sort of Department of Public Works within the Department of Public Instruction but it would be impossible to give effect to it. First of all, it would not be a wise procedure and secondly it would not be possible to get the technical staff to carry out the work. From time to time the Department of Public Instruction selects suitable land for school-building purposes, makes a recommendation, and refers the matter to the Department of Public Works. An inspector from the Department of Public Instruction goes out, surveys the position, collects all the information required and decides upon a suitable site for a school but from my observations of what occurred in years gone by I should say that the persons responsible for this work should never have been inspectors, they should have been dismissed on the spot. Judging by their selections of land they were thoroughly incompetent because some of their selections have cost the Government thousands of pounds in levelling land, filling in swamps and erecting the existing buildings. That state of affairs does not exist now—there is a close collaboration on this matter between the two departments today.

The hon. member for Albert, in his usual courteous manner, referred in complimentary terms to the work of the department and myself. The South Coast is one of the favourite seaside resorts in this State and I feel confident that its progress will be more rapid as a result of the amalgamation of the local authorities in that area. When I visit the South Coast on holidays I make an inspection of the public buildings in that area, particularly at Southport. The State school there was a disgrace to the department. I was amazed at its condition, which was due to the fact that it had not been painted for a number of years prior to the war and its deterioration had accelerated during the war years when little or no work was done on public buildings. After my inspection I gave directions that renovation work should be carried out immediately. The children are entitled to decent conditions in which to pursue their studies. I made an inspection of the building together with the hon. member for Albert and the head teacher and was convinced of the necessity for the renovation of the building.

The department is now building a maternity hospital at Southport by day labour. The people of the district are entitled to that institution. Before any such buildings are erected, the department analyses the buildings for which there is a demand, selects the most urgent, and acts accordingly. The hon. member for Albert is not doing too badly. A number of buildings in his electorate have been repaired and painted, including the Southport Police Station. I visited the Southport Police Station, with Inspector Mullally. I met the wife of the senior-sergeant and she cautioned me to be careful where I walked. I discovered that the condition of the floor was concealed by linoleum, and articles of furniture were placed over holes in the flooring boards. Immediately the linoleum was removed the bad condition of the floor was revealed. Inspector Mullally, who was a heavy man, was warned not to walk past the entrance to the room for fear some part of the floor might collapse under his weight. I gave instructions to Mr. East, who moved very quickly and had the building repaired and painted.

I agree with the hon. member for Albert that much work has been done on public buildings and there still remains much to be done. We are not satisfied that everything in the garden is lovely and that we can afford to rest from our labours. We must still be up and doing and we must still work at high pressure while so much work remains to be done. The hon. member for Albert wants a new brick State school erected at Southport. That is something worth while, but he must admit that he cannot have two big brick buildings being erected at Southport at the same time. We have to be fair and spread public works over the whole of Queensland, and not confine them to one area and do them in one

year. When the preliminary work on the maternity hospital is completed plans will be prepared for the new building. The maternity hospital will cost approximately £43,000 and that work is now under way. When the hospital is completed due consideration will be given to the hon. member's representations for the erection of a new brick school.

I mention for the information of the hon. member for Brisbane that we hope to make a start on the long-overdue new school in his electorate. It should have been built a considerable time ago. The new building will be erected on the site of the old school.

The South Coast is a very important part of the State. Restrictions on the building of holiday homes there still exist but the Acting Premier has assured the people in that area that the necessary permit will be issued to any person who wants to build a home to reside in. I heartily agree with the policy of the Government. I cannot admit that permits should be given for holiday homes when so many of our people are in temporary accommodation.

I point out to the hon. member for Albert that we visualise in a building programme for South Coast the erection of a new police station. The one to which I have referred is out of date, and we hope as early as possible when men and materials are available to erect a new one. The land is available. I made an inspection with the hon. member for Albert, and as soon as possible we will build a new set of offices. We are cramped for room, particularly office space. I had to approve of the enclosure of a certain part of the veranda of the court house for the purpose. At South Coast during Christmas-time there is a great influx of population and it is necessary to send further police there for the protection of the public. These additional men sleep in the court house. That state of affairs must be remedied as early as possible, because members of the Police Force or any other group of workers are entitled to decent sleeping and living conditions. As early as possible we will provide a suitable building on the South Coast, making provision for extra men who are required to be sent there from time to time in the interests of the public. It is not a question of money to-day, but of skilled technical men and of obtaining suitable material. We recently did some work at Burleigh and at Surfer's Paradise. I can assure the hon. member, like other hon. members that the policy of the department is to do the most urgent work first; political considerations do not enter into the matter.

I was rather interested in the speech of the hon. member for Kurilpa, because I took a very keen and active part in helping the hon. member into this Parliament. I look upon him as a very able young man who will go a long way in the Labour movement. From his remarks to-night it is apparent that he has given very close study to the workings of the Department of Public Works. The hon. member assured us that he served his time in it, and I am proud of the

fact that while we turn out good buildings and good tradesmen we also have turned out an excellent member of Parliament in the person of the hon. member for Kurilpa.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member referred to the increase in the vote. That is brought about partly as the result of the extra work that will be carried out this year as materials and man-power become available, and we are adding to the staff because we want to overcome the lag that has occurred over a number of years as a result of the war.

The hon. member referred to certain work at the West End State School. The late Mr. P. K. Copley was a keen advocate for the completion of the works at that school, but it was only recently that they were commenced because previously we were not able to obtain sufficient steel. The hon. member was fortunate, because just after he was elected, steel arrived from overseas, and we were able to commence the work in the school grounds, which had been an eyesore.

I was glad to hear the hon. member's remarks about the question whether technical men make good administrators. There is an idea in the minds of many people that technical men should be put in charge of this department. That view is held by one senior public servant who rang me up and suggested that I should fill a certain position with a technical man. I said to him, "Thank you very much for your suggestion, but I will act on my own ideas in the matter." I agree with the hon. member for Kurilpa that technical men do not on occasions make very good administrators. For very many years the Department of Public Works was controlled by technicians. I do not want to take anything away from the technical man who has put in years of study and hard work to obtain a degree, but I do think the technical men are much better employed at their technical work than in administration.

As a matter of fact, in view of the shortage of technical men today, the services of a technician would be wasted as an administrator. I have no knowledge of what was done during the time the department was controlled or administered by technical men, but during the years I have been a member of this Parliament, approximately 15 years—and prior to that, too, I was an alderman of the city of Brisbane—I know that no other officer could have done a better job than Mr. Lyons has done as Under Secretary. A boy entering the Public Service starts off in a very small job. His hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and when he leaves the office his worries virtually end. But when a man gets to the top of the tree in the Public Service and should be relaxing as a sort of reward for his hard work, his devotion to duty and loyalty to the service we find him working long hours after many other officers have gone home. Mr. Lyons, who has reached the top of the tree, does just that. Go into the Department of Public Works three or four nights a week and you will find Mr. Lyons in his office working. I take this

opportunity this evening of publicly thanking Mr. Lyons for the work he has done on behalf of the Department of Public Works. He has given it years of service and attained to the highest position but instead of relaxing he is working much harder than ever. I publicly thank him for his devotion to duty and the able and efficient way in which he has carried out his work. Certainly he has a very excellent lieutenant in Mr. East, who is doing the bullocking work outside and getting a great deal done.

The hon. member for Kurilpa referred to the trained staff. I am very keen to obtain suitable staff to carry out the vast amount of work that has to be done. We imported architects from overseas. Some have been quite successful but some have left us. I hope that in the future engagement of men from overseas a much closer investigation will be made. One fellow came out but left his wife overseas. He put a woman on the ship, dropped her off somewhere else and out here picked up another woman. That is not the type of men we want in the Department of Public Works. The Government realise the importance of having skilled technicians. We give free scholarships to the University and, wherever possible, we endeavour to tie up these men to give their services to us for a period of years. However, we are still unable to obtain all the technicians we require. We have trained a number of skilled artisans for the various jobs to be done by the Department of Public Works, such as plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers, electricians, cabinetmakers, and joiners.

I am proud of the department's record in the rehabilitation of a number of ex-servicemen. There are some with us today who were prisoners of war. They are doing a very good job. As the result of co-operation between the Commonwealth and State Governments these young men, who went and fought for this country, enduring the hardships of such places as the Kokoda trail, are rehabilitated in life. We are grateful to them. We should appreciate what they have done for the country. This department is quite happy to employ such men.

The hon. member for Kurilpa referred also to the development of the Department of Public Works during the war years. That is a record of which the department is very proud and is attributable to the work of my predecessor, the Secretary for Public Instruction, who was Minister in charge of the Department of Public Works at that time.

I would point out that when Labour took office in 1932 the very important section of the department at Ipswich road known as the Ipswich road workshops was closed down. The machinery had been sold. It was a desolate building, because of the policy of the previous Government. Today that workshop is a hive of industry. It is part and parcel of the Government's policy of day labour. But for the day-labour policy and the programme of the Government, many of the requests received from country members could not be granted. The work that should have been done could not have been done. We

have endeavoured to get contractors to go to Thursday Island and to Coen to build new schools and police stations, but without success. The only way in which that work has been made possible has been by our policy of day-labour under which we have flown men to various places and so completed jobs. While people are prone to criticise the day-labour policy of the Government they must realise that some contractors will work only in the large centres of population and will not go outside.

In addition to that, we have men engaged on day-labour travelling throughout the State working on schools and putting up with such conditions as sleeping either underneath the schools or in tents provided by the department. These conditions are rather hard but they are doing excellent work, which we appreciate, and I thank them for their co-operation.

The hon. member for Kurilpa spoke also of subsidies to local authorities and pointed out that £2,000,000 is being paid each year in interest by the Brisbane City Council. The hon. member for Fassifern said by way of interjection that that was a serious matter. If you borrow money you must pay interest. I am one of those who believe that the city of Brisbane is so important that it should be developed, and I cannot see any logical argument against obtaining long-term loans to carry out that development. Would it be reasonable to suggest that the debt on the City Hall, which cost £1,000,000, and probably more with recent additions, should be liquidated by the present generation? That building will stand for many years and posterity should bear some of the cost of our civic development. I can see nothing whatever wrong with obtaining long-term loans to develop the city. It would be unfair to ask the present generation to pay for the development of the whole of this city.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** What is the Government's policy on the rate of depreciation on a building such as that?

**Mr. POWER:** I could not answer that question at the moment.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Would it be 1 per cent?

**Mr. POWER:** I think it would be 1 per cent. on a brick building but I do not know.

The hon. member also said that the financial position of the Brisbane City Council is much worse now than it has ever been. I am not au fait with that matter at all.

He also said that certain moneys had been paid to small contractors. If any money has been wrongfully paid it will be easily discovered when the auditor makes his report, and I do not want to be accused of political bias in having somebody investigate the affairs of the Brisbane City Council, or any other local authority for that matter.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** You know there is no reason for it.

**Mr. POWER:** I do not know anything about it, but the hon. member for Kurilpa

referred to the payment of £1,600 to small contractors and large amounts paid to Messrs. Hunter Bros.

**Mr. Decker:** But all the accounts are passed by the Auditor-General's Department, are they not?

**Mr. POWER:** I have already said that if there was anything wrong in connection with these matters, the Auditor-General would discover it. Of course, despite the fact that audits are carried out, there have been times when investigations have been necessary but I do not want to be accused of taking any political advantage of the present Brisbane City Council. Everybody knows my views of that administration. I have no personal quarrel with the Lord Mayor. I have always looked upon him as a good citizen, except that I think he spends a good deal of time in his own office, although I must be fair and say that he does not take any pay for the work he does as Lord Mayor. However, if I thought there was anything wrong with any local authority, or if the matter was brought under my notice I should take action immediately. At present I cannot see any reason for having an investigation into the affairs of the Brisbane City Council.

**Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (8.15 p.m.):** Whilst the Department of Public Works may not be the most important of the departments, I think it will be readily agreed that it plays a very important part in most departments, particularly the Departments of Public Instruction and Health and Home Affairs in the development of the State. The building and maintenance of schools and hospitals and other public buildings is a gigantic task, involving the expenditure of many hundreds of thousands of pounds and the employment of hundreds of employees. During the year under review approximately £950,000 was spent and 1,111 people were employed. It is pleasing to notice the paragraph in the report of Mr. Lyons, the Under Secretary, eulogising the work done by employees on day-labour projects and I am pleased that the Minister has again drawn attention to the value of these employees to the State. Had it not been for the loyal co-operation given to the department by day-labour employees and their readiness to journey into the country and stay away from their homes for weeks on end, many of the urgent works requiring attention would not have been put into operation and brought to a successful conclusion. We must thank those employees not only for their loyal co-operation and desire to help the State but for displaying unselfishness in enduring discomfort without undue complaint.

Whilst no major work has been undertaken by the department during the last 12 months in the Bremer electorate, much renovation and maintenance work has been executed, running into tens of thousands of pounds, and the result is that very few of the schools or school residences have not received attention. The same goes for police stations, barracks and many other buildings. I hope the time is not far distant when the department can begin operations on the two post-primary schools

promised for the Ipswich district, one at Brassall and the other at Silkstone. I am prepared to admit that preference must be given to the building of homes for our people, desirable as the schools are. The erection of post-primary schools will fill a long-felt want in our educational system.

An honest attempt to overtake the arrears of maintenance work left as a carry-over from the war period has been made but it has been handicapped by the shortage of materials and man-power. The attempt being made by the department to overtake the arrears has won the admiration and appreciation of the public generally.

The new residence for the school master at Raceview has given great satisfaction to residents who for years agitated for it. Now that a beginning has been made on this very necessary work the residents of that locality desire me to express on their behalf their gratitude to both the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works.

The Goodna Mental Hospital has been the scene of building and other activities by the Department of Public Works and its work in converting a war-time building into a canteen is a glowing tribute to the men in the architectural section of the department, as well as the artisans. At that institution there is now a really good canteen used not only by employees but by visitors who go to see unfortunate relatives in that institution.

The Ipswich Technical College seems to have missed out and I wish the Minister would use his influence to see that this building gets a place in the department's priorities. The building is badly in need of painting, both inside and out. For some years it has had no attention at all. If this could be done the committee would be very grateful indeed.

Because of the shortage of material and man-power, particularly material, the department is greatly handicapped. I think we all recognise the fact that shortages lead to high cost of building, both public buildings and private homes. They interfere with successful planning, the continuous flow of work that is necessary to enable a job to be done efficiently and within the estimated cost. Serious as the shortages are, they are not nearly as serious nor will they have the same effect on the State as the shortage of youths offering themselves as apprentices in the department. The hon. member for Kurilpa, a former employee and apprentice in the department, told us just how thoroughly the boys are trained by the department in the building trades. It is a pity the department cannot get sufficient apprentices to learn the art of building. The position will arise that when building materials—iron, plumbing requisites, and so on—are here in reasonable quantities, we shall be short of the technicians needed to do the work. If we continue as we are today, unable to train the full complement of apprentices in the building trades attached to the department, we may find in five, six or seven years that we have not the qualified

tradesmen to do the building work required to be done. It is to be hoped that in the very near future and without any delay, the department will be able to attract to its services young men who will be the future builders of our homes and of public buildings. I thoroughly agree with the seriousness of the lack of training of technical experts mentioned by the hon. member for Kurilpa. Unless we have the journeymen, the trained artisans, we may be at a serious disadvantage in the future in the building of homes and public offices for Government departments.

Much has been said during the debate about the system of amalgamating local authorities in greater areas. Quite recently the city of Ipswich became the Greater City of Ipswich, and in the main the idea was well received. I heard no adverse complaints at all until after the elections. After the amalgamation a part of the Moreton Shire Council came into the Greater Ipswich area and the people from the Moreton shire area that has been absorbed by the merger are complaining that they are not adequately represented in the new Greater Ipswich City Council. There is some point in their argument when we bear in mind the fact that these people in the old Moreton Shire Council had six representatives on their council and despite the fact candidates from that area were nominated at the election, they succeeded in winning only two seats on the Greater Ipswich City Council. On a population basis that representation may be correct, but they think that at the present time they are out of touch with their municipal representatives. There is some strength in their argument and something to be said for the suggestion that a ward system should be created. The old shire of Moreton was divided into divisions and they contend that if it was possible to have divisions in that shire it is equally possible to have the ward system in the city of Ipswich. The problem of creating wards in the Greater Ipswich area is much more difficult than in the Greater Brisbane area. The State electorates in Brisbane form the wards in Greater Brisbane but the problem is not quite so easy in the Greater Ipswich area. But it would be no more difficult to create wards in Ipswich than divisions in the shire of Moreton.

This does not imply that benefited areas should be reinstated. There are no complaints about their abolition. In the old Moreton shire we have the unhappy position with regard to the Moggill ferry, which gave a valuable service to the public for as long as I can remember. Nos. 1 or 2 divisions of the shire had to bear the Moreton Shire's portion of the cost of maintenance of that ferry until the time came when they felt they could not continue to do so any longer. It was a legitimate charge over the whole area. One half of the cost was borne by the Brisbane City Council. The Ipswich City Council would not agree to bear any of the cost. The cost of repairs and maintenance was borne equally by the Brisbane City Council and Moreton Shire Council. I do not want it to be inferred from my remarks that

I subscribe to the principle of benefited areas. I agree with the Minister in that respect, but I am in disagreement with him on the ward system, which would give better direct representation to the people. It would enable them to feel that they had representation of their own locality, as in the city of Brisbane and in the State electorates.

It would not be argued for one moment that the 75 members who will assemble here after the next State election should be elected on a single-electorate basis, and the elections for the new Ipswich City Council are held on the same principle but on a smaller scale. The people who have been embraced in the Greater Ipswich area from the old shire of Moreton contend that the ward system should be introduced to give them direct representation on the council.

The greatest demand of the people in the area is that they should be supplied with water. From the Bundamba State school right down to Goodna on the boundary of the Greater Brisbane area the people have no water at all. That need is aggravated by the fact that during the war years water was brought to Waacol, and water in abundance was brought to Redbank, where thousands of troops were concentrated for some years. The lack of water in the area I mentioned is aggravated too by the knowledge that many years ago, even in the time when John Cooke and Co. owned the Redbank Meatworks, water was laid on there. The people in the Bundamba-Goodna area are partly to blame for the fact that the area is not reticulated. They agitated for water during dry spells but when the drought broke and rain came they were content with their wells and tanks. That in the main was the argument in the past. Now there is no doubt they want the water. The Government have been fairly generous to both the Moreton Shire and Ipswich City Council. Engineers have been at work to see what can be done to reticulate this area, but delay has occurred through difficulty in getting the necessary piping. I appeal to the Minister and his officers to have this area reticulated as quickly as possible.

I conclude by adding my compliments not only to the Minister and his officers but to all the employees in the department.

**Mr. HEADING (Wide Bay) (8.31 p.m.):** First I wish to congratulate the Minister for carrying out some of the promises he gave us when he took over the portfolio of Secretary for Public Works. He promised us then that he would prosecute the work of the department with vigour and see that much of the leeway was made up. While he has not given us all the buildings required or carried out all the repairs that were necessary on the various Government buildings, I do want to say that in my opinion the Minister has done a very fair job. That does not mean that I agree with everything he said during the speeches he made on this vote, and it does not mean that I am not going to criticise some of the things he has done. He certainly has put some vigour into his job as Minister for Public Works.

The Minister in charge of local-authority work requires a very wide experience—perhaps even a wider experience than the Minister has had, because it covers very wide ramifications and gives him a variety of work to control. He would be well advised to seek the opinion of members of the various shire councils, particularly those who come yearly to the Local Authorities' Conferences because they are people who are imbued with a high sense of duty to the various localities they represent and they are very desirous of seeing more amenities given to the country people. I should like the Minister to pay more attention to the views of those people who are giving much of their time, very often for nothing, to improving the conditions outback. I say that in all sincerity.

I heard the Minister express opinions with which I do not agree. If he lived in the outback parts of the State for a few years he would not express such opinions. For instance, he said that he would spread the cost of amenities in a shire over the whole shire. In many cases the people would not get the amenities in the towns at all, because they would be out-voted by members representing the country divisions. Take my own town and shire of Murgon as an example. There are four divisions, two councillors representing the town and two each of the other three divisions, with a chairman; and when it comes to providing amenities for the people in the towns the whole of the council have a vote and if you sought to spread the cost of tennis courts or baths in the town over the whole shire you would not get the motion carried, for the simple reason that the representative who lived 40 or 50 miles away from the town, and who perhaps got bogged every time he tried to get to town when it was raining or shortly afterwards, would not be likely to vote for amenities that would be handy for the fellow who is living on the bitumen road; and naturally so. I ask the Minister to have another look at the question of spreading the cost of the amenities over the whole shire. It will not work; I say that from experience over many years as a member of a shire council and chairman of one.

**Mr. O'Shea:** There is only one remedy—abolish the shires.

**Mr. HEADING:** That is not a very wise interjection. It is the Labour view, but I did not think the hon. member had that idea. That is a centralising of power in the cities and towns. I did not think an hon. member representing the outback would make such a suggestion. I am quite sure he realised in his own heart that the control of the districts concerned should rest in the people living in them. They are the people who would know their requirements. The centralising of power in the cities or towns would not enable us to get very far with the provision of amenities for the outside.

Today the most important question in local government, as the Minister knows, is

the increasing cost of progress to the towns and districts. Costs are continually rising and members of shire councils are at their wits' end to find new methods of getting sufficient finance to carry on. I do not propose to go into the question of the finances of local authorities at this stage, as it would take me too long and there are one or two other matters I wish to bring before the Minister. I am sure the Minister knows that eventually some new method of financing shire councils will have to be found and moneys will have to be diverted to the construction of roads and the provision of amenities in the shires of Queensland.

I agree with the Minister on the amalgamation of shires when he said that he would proceed with amalgamation only when a request came from the people concerned. That is a very wise attitude to adopt and I hope the Minister confirms my interpretation of his remarks when he speaks. People living in the various shires should have the right to say whether there should be an amalgamation or not. The idea behind amalgamation, that overhead costs are reduced, is not altogether realised as the result of experience. There is always the possibility that the area is too large and therefore too unwieldy, that people cannot get the attention they deserve after they have found the means to do a job. I myself prefer a compact shire rather than a large unwieldy one. Once it reaches a certain area or population there has to be a duplication of officers and that sort of thing and so it becomes uneconomic.

The hon. member for Kurilpa said that hon. members, particularly of the Opposition, worked the parish pump. I do not know whether the Minister worked the parish pump but he gave the Committee a long story of all the things he had done.

**Mr. Aikens:** He worked the propaganda pump.

**Mr. HEADING:** Perhaps that is the better term. He worked it very hard. Never once during the course of his speech did he mention schemes or buildings for the Wide Bay electorate. I do not apologise to the hon. member for Kurilpa or anybody else if I work the parish pump. If I criticise the Minister I do not think for a moment he would cut out the Wide Bay electorate from any improvements. The Minister has a fairly broad mind. He knows that we on the Opposition are here to criticise the actions of himself and his colleagues and that being so I am sure that merely because we offer criticism he would not deprive us of any works or projects in our electorates.

**Mr. Aikens:** If you did not speak for the people you represent, you could not expect anybody else to do it.

**Mr. HEADING:** I was about to say that.

**Mr. Power:** You do not think I should be so despicable, do you?

**Mr. HEADING:** I said the hon. gentleman would not and I adhere to that opinion. At the beginning of my speech I said a few nice things about the hon. gentleman and I have not taken back what I said.

The time has arrived when greater attention should be given to school residences. We ask men and women to go into the outback areas to take charge of schools and impart education to our children. Sometimes we ask them to live in buildings that we should not like to live in ourselves, and I have in mind a few places about which I shall tell the Minister later. Greater attention should be paid to school residences. The head teacher of a school occupies a rather high public position and he is entitled to some comfort for his wife and family. If special attention is given to residences at country schools some inducement will be offered to teachers to go out there.

During my term as a member of Parliament I have had a number of requests for cementing the area underneath schools. Upon making representations to this end I have always been put off with the argument that the materials were required for more urgent works, such as the building of schools and houses but in view of the answer given by the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs to the hon. member for Sandgate the other day about the vast amount of cement he has stored up, that excuse is no longer valid. It is not good to keep thousands of bags of cement very long because it deteriorates and I suggest that some of this cement might be used for concreting under schools. One school in particular is the Tin Can Bay State school, which is in a very sandy area. There, on a windy day, sand is blown into the children's lunches and a little of the cement held by the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs might well be used to remove this inconvenience. It is of no use putting gravel underneath schools because that is stony and is liable to cause the children to hurt themselves.

At this stage I thank the Minister for receiving a deputation from Pialba that I introduced to him while he was at Maryborough. Pialba is a rapidly growing district and when building restrictions are lifted it will develop even more rapidly. At present there are between 700 and 800 children there but they have no facilities for domestic science or manual training. They have to travel 20 miles to Maryborough for that training.

**Mr. Power:** That is a matter for the Secretary for Public Instruction.

**Mr. HEADING:** I agree, but the Secretary for Public Works has to erect the building. If we had the building the rest would be easy.

**Mr. Power:** But the Secretary for Public Works cannot take any action until requested by the Department of Public Instruction, so I think you ought to save that up and have a word with the Secretary for Public Instruction.

**Mr. HEADING:** I will have a word with him, but if I first get the good will of the Secretary for Public Works I shall have gone a long way.

They have done well in that district in that two rooms have been added to the school at Urangan Point, two rooms have been added to the Torquay school, and many improvements have been made to the Pialba school. Of course, the number of children was increasing so rapidly that the department could not do anything else.

The Murgon Shire Council is endeavouring to get a civic centre started and wants the police station and Government offices removed so that the land can be used for the Department of Public Instruction. I suggest that the Minister look into this matter.

I want to refer to the attack made by the Minister on the hon. member for Aubigny on the question of the valuation of land—

**Mr. Power:** I did not.

**Mr. HEADING:** The hon. member told me that the Minister did and asked me to reply. Valuations were increased in the Wambo shire by 182.33 per cent. That was a terrific rise and although I am not attacking the Minister for that I do so on his criticism that the shire council reduced the rate by 50 per cent.

**Mr. Power:** I did not criticise it. I simply said that rates were reduced. There is nothing critical in that.

**Mr. HEADING:** Apparently there has been a misunderstanding. If rates had been kept at the same level after that violent, almost savage, increase the council could have been accused of bleeding its own people. There was no intention to bleed the rate-payers white by keeping the rate at the same level because it would be more than the people could afford to pay, particularly the returned-soldier settler. I make that statement because in the passage-at-arms between the Minister and the hon. member—

**Mr. Power:** The hon. member said that we put valuations up to get extra land tax, whereas we did not get any more.

**Mr. HEADING:** That is a different question from the one with which I am dealing.

The hon. member for Townsville said that the Government have not done all he would have liked them to do and said that the lack of equipment was not the fault of the Government, as there was a world-wide shortage. I was particularly impressed by that statement because ever since I have been a member of this Committee I have heard hon. members criticising the Moore Government, ignoring the fact that there was a world-wide depression at that time. They also ignore the fact that four out of the seven Australian Governments were Labour and they all agreed on one financial plan. I wish to pump it into hon. members opposite that that was a world-wide condition.

I was interested too in the remarks of the Minister on the question of contract versus day labour. The hon. member for Kurilpa

referred to it; naturally he and the Minister stand by their principles. The Minister, however, said that he could not get contractors to go to Coen and Thursday Island. I suppose he called tenders for those jobs because no day labour wanted to go up that way. Why did the Minister call tenders only for the work at those two places? They were the only ones he mentioned. He has a grudge against contractors because they would not go to those places. Let the Minister tell us whether he has called tenders for work in Southern Queensland. I am not at all surprised that contractors would not go to Coen or Thursday Island. I suggest to the Minister that if he is so wedded to his day-labour system he carry it out alongside the contract system and compare the cost of the various works. I know that the hon. member for Kurilpa spoke about shoddy work under the contract system, but would that not be the fault of the architects and the inspectors? If I take a Government contract there are officers of the department to see that I carry out the conditions, and if I do not, they will remain to see that I do. Again I suggest to the Minister that he call tenders for work in the South and make materials available to the successful tenderer in the same way as it is available for day-labour work and then compare the costs of the various jobs. Let him then say whether it is more economical to do the work under the day-labour system than by contract.

**Mr. Roberts:** Some contractors do a part of their work by day labour.

**Mr. HEADING:** I am not arguing that they do not.

All I suggest is that the Minister use both systems and compare the costs. I do not know what it costs today to construct schools under the day-labour system but some years ago one was built near my place and I know I got a shock to learn the high cost of it. It could have been built by a contractor for half the price.

I come now to the subject of the removal of schools. Sometimes they are closed and left for two or three years, in the hope that the attendance will grow to justify reopening them. Where a school has to be taken only a short distance, say a few miles, it would be cheaper to take it as a whole by lorry rather than take it apart. There is one near my own home, and it is to be moved about seven miles. I have suggested to the department that it be taken away by lorry. There is a contractor in Kingaroy who could do this work. It would provide a suitable school for children at once. That would be better than pulling it to pieces. I hope the Minister will bear that in mind.

I approve of some of the actions of the Minister. He has infused some vigour into his job, but I hope that before he loses the job in May next he will carry out much more work than he has already done.

**Mr. SMITH (Carpentaria) (9.54 p.m.):** I commend the Minister for the valuable work he has done since he assumed control of this department. There is this to be said

for him, that he is energetic and broad in his outlook. He has done much good work in every part of the State. His officers are busily moving about in the North and far North-West, making reports on the work to be done in the interests of the development of the State.

I was amused to read the speeches of hon. members opposite, in which they virtually said that the department had taken no active steps in the construction of various public buildings throughout Queensland.

I have perused the report of the department, which contains a number of splendid illustrations of public buildings. I am sorry I did not hand over to the Minister a photograph of the school that I attended in the north-western part of the State in order that he could publish it side by side with photographs of the beautiful school buildings now being erected. The contrast would be striking. I could also have supplied him with a photograph of the home in which I was reared to publish alongside the beautiful workers' dwellings and workers' homes now being erected. They would have provided a similar contrast. The people in the remote districts of the State built their homes with scrub timber. There were no such things as workers' homes in those days. These photographs if published side by side, would have revealed the great progress that has been made in building, particularly in schools and homes. The Minister and his Government are to be commended for their progress in this direction.

The hon. member for Wide Bay was concerned because the Government had called for tenders for a school and police quarters at Coen and a pearl-culture centre and additions to the hospital at Thursday Island. That work was estimated to cost £30,000. Why should not a contractor be asked to go to Coen and Thursday Island? Why should contractors be allowed to centralise building operations in Brisbane and the more populous centres? Why should they be allowed to hang round these centres and tender only for the lucrative jobs? If they refuse to tender for public buildings in Coen and Thursday Island or the Gulf districts they should not be allowed to tender for public buildings in this part of the State. A condition should be inserted in contracts prohibiting contractors from submitting tenders for public works in the more populous centres unless they would tender for public buildings in our remote districts.

The Government have for months endeavoured to get contractors to tender for the erection of a hospital at Cloncurry, estimated to cost about £160,000, as well as half a million pounds worth of Government buildings in other places. People are compelled to live in the North-West and Gulf districts in order to pursue their various vocations and supply the wealth for the cities. Therefore, contractors should not be allowed to tender only for lucrative jobs in the more settled districts. Hon. members opposite have time and again expressed concern about centralisation, yet they were astounded at what they termed the audacity of the

Minister in asking contractors to tender for public works in remote centres. Their outbursts on these matters are not sincere.

I know the work that is going on at all times as a result of the progressive public works system. I regret that hon. members opposite do not travel more because then they would see more of the progressive work that is carried out by the department. In my electorate there are more one-teacher schools attended by an average of 10 pupils than in any other and these schools are of a standard in comparison with attendance, equal to that of the schools in the metropolitan areas.

I believe that a real local-authority policy has been needed for a long time. When we go back a few years and see the system that operated then, we realise the improvement that has been made. The local authorities had a policy of collecting all the revenue but spending very little of the money in the area. It was not until the Main Roads Commission started to work and the loan and subsidy system was established that local authorities became progressive. I say in all sincerity that many local authorities today are becoming too political.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** You are making them political.

**Mr. SMITH:** Not at all. We find they sit down at their council meetings and they turn them into political meetings. They criticise Government policy and say what they should do and what they should not do. If they are going to argue continually about Government policy I agree with the hon. member for Warrego that the sooner we wipe them out the better, so that we could put a progressive public-works system into operation to bring those areas to the progressive stage in which they should be. Take the Lord Mayor of Brisbane. What has he been doing during the whole of the period of the debate on the budget in the Brisbane City Council? He has continually brought politics into it and urged what the Government should do and what amount of money they should give to him for losses incurred during the strike and so on. If that is his policy and if he wants to sit in the City Hall and call on the Minister and others, let us take over the Brisbane City Council and run it. In my own electorate the progress of the area has been retarded by squatters or graziers who get onto the local authority and will not agree to spend any money in the shire because they might have to pay more in rates. Those councils are so backward that no progress can be made. They are continually asking the Government to give higher subsidy rates, up to 95 and 100 per cent. If numbers of them are going to sit round and argue what the Government should do and what the Government can do it is time we eliminated those local authorities and set up a progressive public-works system in that part of the State.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** That is the Socialist State.

**Mr. SMITH:** It is not the Socialist State. Hon. members opposite are crying out about what the Government should do. We could set up an authority such as they have in New South Wales—a public-works system for the benefit of the State. We find the north-western areas crying out for amenities. Only yesterday the Brisbane "Telegraph" reported Mr. O'Brien, an executive head of the Australian Railways Union, stating that after making a tour of the North and North-West he found there were no amenities for the members of his union. He said they should have swimming pools and libraries. The Government grant subsidies to local authorities to establish libraries. Why should the Government be blamed when local authorities do not take advantage of the loan-subsidy scheme for providing amenities? For instance, the council in control of the town of Richmond has only recently taken advantage of the reasonable loan-subsidy money made available by this Government. In 1932, when the Forgan Smith Government came into power, they decided to pay a £1 for £1 subsidy but that shire council did not take advantage of one penny of this scheme until about four years ago.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor.** What did they do?

**Mr. SMITH:** They sat down and did nothing. It is only now that the main streets in Richmond are being sealed with bitumen and that concrete channelling is being provided. They ask for an electric-light scheme and a public library but from 1932 to 1947 nothing was done. There are such examples to be found all over the State. These shire councillors merely sit round a table and argue as to what the Government should and should not do. A scheme should be formulated to control these local authorities in a more progressive way, for example, under a policy of a public works to be controlled by the Minister handling that department at the present time. The Department of Public Works is a very important part of the set-up of this Government.

In conclusion, as I know the Minister desires to make a few points and the time for closing this debate is drawing near, I would point out that we must see to it that local authorities make more progressive advances than what they have done in the past. If they are not prepared to do so, the Government must bring in ways and means of forcing them to do it for the benefit of the people.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government) (9.8 p.m.): I have much to say but in the limited time allowed me to reply I shall have to eliminate some of my remarks.

**Mr. Muller:** You have monopolised nearly the whole of the time.

**Mr. POWER:** I am here every day but the hon. member is here only part of the time. I give my full time and attention to my duties as a member of Parliament whereas the hon. member is engaged in

another business. I will not allow members of the Opposition to tell me how to conduct the debate. I will not take directions from them.

I can assure the hon. member for Bremer that I will ask the department to have a look at the matter of the technical college at Ipswich and see what can be done to give the building a face-lift.

I agree with him also in regard to the shortage of apprentices.

The water supply to Greater Ipswich is under consideration at the present time and when my departmental officers inform me that a loan has been granted and plans have been prepared there will be no delay by my department in having the plans completed.

As to the local-government system, that is a matter on which the hon. member and I agree to disagree. The Local Government Act provides the best way to have local government—of having one election over the whole area. However, it is a matter on which some members have their own views. There is some merit in the argument of the hon. member for Bremer, but the system of divisions gets back to the old parochial idea that operated in the ward system.

The hon. member for Wide Bay was very complimentary but to a certain extent critical of the way I have dealt with some matters. I appreciate constructive criticism at any time—one can always learn from criticism—but when I am criticised, I reserve the right to reply.

The hon. member said the job requires a man with wide experience in local government. I agree with him. I have been a member of the Brisbane City Council and I have made a close study of local government. I have also asked many members of local-government bodies whether they have ever read the Local Government Act or had a copy of it and a large number have admitted that they have not. I compliment those men who have long years of service in local-government work, for they have done a good job, but the old days of the horse and cart and the man running round with the shovel filling in holes have gone. We are living in an age of machinery and we have to develop along progressive lines. Some local authorities have the idea that if they spend a penny on any work it means that the rates go up. Then they complain of lack of amenities, but you cannot have amenities if you are not prepared to pay for them, and some of the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Wide Bay are the best I have ever heard for the abolition or merging of local authorities. Let me make it clear again that it is not the intention of the Government to merge local authorities unless there is first a request from the local authorities themselves for an alteration of boundaries. He complained about my suggestion that the charges for amenities should be spread over the whole area. It is the duty of a local authority to develop its area, but some members adopt the parochial view and retard progress. In Gayndah some time ago the chairman of the shire said that if he wanted to do anything

in the town representatives from the outside areas voted against it and he could not do anything. If ward representatives take that attitude there can never be development, and such an attitude is a sound reason for the abolition of the ward system.

Then the hon. member referred to the increased costs of local government, but I remind him that it is not confined to country areas. Increased costs operate in every part of the State and it is in an endeavour to meet those increases that we have provided subsidies for local authorities.

Then he spoke of my criticism of the hon. member for Aubigny in connection with the reduction in rates. I did say to the hon. member for Aubigny that with the increased valuations there had been a reduction in rates. He describes the Treasurer as a Shylock and said that the Treasurer and I had sent a valuer out to increase valuations so that we might collect more land tax. I pointed out to him that we would not get an increase in land tax, because it was levied on values pegged at 1942 values. He said he had grave doubts about that but I remind him that I do not get up in this Chamber and say things that are untrue. The Act is here for all to see, and the hon. member knows that land values are pegged also for probate and succession-duty purposes.

Let us look at what has happened as a result of the action of the Valuer-General. The hon. member for Aubigny said that you should have a valuation for sales purposes and a different valuation for land-tax purposes. That is an absurd statement. He suggests that you should have a valuation of £1,000 if a man wants to sell and a valuation of only £500 for land-tax purposes. If we are to have two values to meet the wishes of the land speculator or landholder, we might as well destroy the Valuer-General's Department altogether.

**Mr. Decker:** You have two values in the Department of Public Lands.

**Mr. McIntyre:** One for resumptions for soldier settlement and one for rating purposes.

**Mr. POWER:** I want to inform the hon. member that values are pegged at the 1942 values and remind him that he must not forget that there has been a considerable increase.

**Mr. McIntyre:** It is not comparable.

**Mr. POWER:** The hon. member and his friends asked these men to go and fight for their country but when they want to sell their land to the men who fought for this country they want to sell it at a greatly enhanced price. It annoys me to think that a man who went through all sorts of conditions in the defence of this country and wants a piece of land on his return—the land he fought for—is charged an exorbitant price for it by people who hold the land and who were able to invest money in war loans. They want the highest price they can get—which shows the great patriotism displayed by hon. members opposite.

Let me inform the hon. member also that rates were reduced at Toowoomba, Gatton, Tiaro, Millmerran, Chinchilla and other areas as the result of valuations made by the Valuer-General's Department. We are told about the need for providing amenities for the people in the country, but when rates are reduced shire councils come to the Government asking for money. What high finance on the part of local authorities! Rates have been increased in the city area. I am not in the habit of telling untruths and I have given the names of some local authorities in whose areas rates were reduced.

The hon. member for Wide Bay referred to school residences. They are being built in many places as quickly as possible.

With regard to the cementing of the areas under schools I want to say that we have not the material to do it, and if another department has the material it is not controlled by the Department of Public Works. I am not critical of contractors because they have done a fair amount of excellent work for Queensland and for that I give them full marks. There are a number of contractors doing work for the department and for the State Housing Commission. I said that we could not get contractors to go to certain places, and we could not get contractors to tender for the building of the hospital at Cloncurry, the cost of which was somewhere in the vicinity of £250,000. What is more, we have not been able to get contractors to build homes in many parts of the State, and if it were not for the fact that we have a day-labour organisation many of our people would be homeless.

On the question of the removal of schools Mr. Chapman was asked to give a price to pull the building down. As to the school mentioned by the hon. member for Wide Bay, the department is looking into the question and if the school is not required at its present location it will be moved to the site suggested by the hon. member. The Department of Public Works is a constructing authority and we only do work when requested to do it. I continually get letters from hon. members opposite and from school committees and other people that should not come to me at all. They should be addressed to the departments concerned, with a request to have the work undertaken. If the matter is then referred to my department it will receive early consideration.

I desire to have recorded in "Hansard" letters of appreciation of the work of the Department of Local Government. Various local authorities submit loan proposals that have to be investigated and recommendations made to the Treasurer concerning them.

Two letters of appreciation of the department's work in this respect have been sent to the department by the Mareeba Shire Council. The first is dated 24 March, 1948, and is as follows:—

"Dear Sir,  
"Sand Trap at Mareeba Water Intake.

"At a recent meeting of this council the council had before it a report from

the pumping engineer, which included reference to the sand and silt trap recently installed at the Mareeba water intake.

"The engineer reported that the trap has proved entirely successful, and in addition to trapping sand and silt sufficient to prevent damage to the centrifugal pump, it has acted as a settling chamber to such good effect that discolouration in the water supply to householders during flood periods was considerably reduced.

"The council has expressed pleasure at the success of the installation, and instructed that I write your department conveying the thanks and appreciation of the council for the plans supplied, and for the personal interest shown in the work throughout by engineer Peak.

"Local councillors recently had an opportunity of personally conveying their appreciation to Mr. Peak, but it is desired to place on record the official gratitude of the council.

"Yours faithfully,  
 "(Sgd.) R. Arnold,  
 "Clerk."

The second letter dated 7 June, 1948, is as follows:—

"Dear Sir,  
 "£3,500 Loan and Subsidy.

"Improved Water Supply for Mareeba.

"In connection with this council's intention to proceed with plans, &c., for an improved water supply scheme for Mareeba, and for which the Treasury has agreed to advance £3,500, I am directed to ask if your department can make staff available to carry out surveys, &c., and to prepare the necessary plans, specifications, and estimates of cost.

"The council has adopted the scheme recommended by engineer Peak, and we do not expect that complete plans would be required immediately. The construction work would be carried out over a period of years, in sections, and plans would be required from time to time for the various sections.

"Our most urgent work in the scheme would be the replacement of the existing steel reservoir with a larger concrete reservoir, as suggested by engineer Peak, and plans, &c., for this work would be required at the first opportunity."

That is the point I want to make—

"The council has every confidence in your department's engineers and staff, and would be glad to have your acceptance of this work.

"Yours faithfully,  
 "(Sgd.) R. Arnold,  
 "Clerk."

Those letters indicate that the local authorities appreciate the work done for them by the Department of Local Government from time to time.

The hon. member for Carpentaria, who has travelled extensively and has been over his vast electorate on numerous occasions, makes it a practice on visiting various points to inquire into the needs of those places and to report at once to the department concerning

them. He has travelled in the far North-West and the far North and he knows that it is the policy of the Government to give the people there every consideration. His suggestions almost invariably have our immediate attention. He made certain comments concerning the abolition of local authorities but, of course, they are only his own personal opinions, and every hon. member is entitled to express his opinion on any subject.

We have received applications for financial assistance from local authorities because they have reduced their rates. During the recent coal strike applications were received from local authorities for financial aid because of the increased price of coal, which was obtained from unusual sources. An application for financial help was also received from a gas company.

At the end of the year we shall be losing the services of a very valuable officer in the Chief Gas Examiner and Government Gas Engineer, Mr. Frank Sumner, who has acted in that capacity for 25 years. His work comes under my control. I have found Mr. Sumner to be an excellent and efficient officer. Applications for the vacancy were received from a number of persons, several from outside of Queensland. Mr. Henderson has been selected to fill the vacancy. He is highly recommended and has had quite a lot to do with gasworks. He was selected only after the process of elimination had been applied to the applications.

We thank Mr. Sumner for the excellent work he has performed during his many years' service. The job of fixing the price of gas is not by any means an easy one. Immediately the price is fixed in one district applications for review are received from gas companies in other districts. A very close scrutiny and analysis of the applications must be made. Mr. Sumner recently dealt with a number of these applications. The information supplied by the companies is carefully analysed by an auditor of the Auditor-General's Department whose services are made available to the Gas Examiner. Only recently a number of increases was made in the price of gas in many districts in Queensland and other applications have been received.

The whole question of the price of gas is one that must be seriously considered particularly as only certain classes of coal are suitable for gas-making purposes. During the recent coal strike coal could not be brought from Maitland for one of our northern gasworks. Styx coal, which is suitable for making gas, was supplied in its stead. From time to time the companies say that as a result of the transport of gas coal from West Maitland increased costs are occasioned. It is difficult, after you have made one increase, after having determined the price in Townsville and gone on to Cairns and Bundaberg and had the whole set-up nicely organised, to receive a request for a further increase in price at one of those places.

I find there is a considerable leakage of gas from mains. I recently learned that in other parts of the world gas was transported

up to 11 miles, whereas in Queensland the distance is very short, the greatest I think about 4 miles. The gas companies will have to look to their laurels and see whether there is a leakage of gas and whether there is any way of overcoming it. They have had difficulties in some phases of their business but I have had numerous complaints from consumers about pressure and alleged overcharging after the recent strike. These matters were referred to Mr. Sumner, who adjusted a number of them by explaining the position to the various consumers. I regret that he is leaving us and I wish him long years of active life and I hope that his future years will be very, very happy.

VOTES PASSED UNDER STANDING ORDER 307  
AND SESSIONAL ORDERS.

At 9.30 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Orders, the questions for the following votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to:—

	£	s.	d.
Department of Public Works—			
Chief Office .. .. .	63,865	0	0
Balance of Vote .. .. .	508,433	0	0
Department of Health and Home Affairs .. .. .	5,839,931	0	0
Department of Labour and Industry .. .. .	253,340	0	0
Department of Justice .. .. .	696,312	0	0
Department of The Treasurer .. .. .	1,580,159	0	0
Department of Public Lands and Irrigation .. .. .	738,418	0	0
Department of Agriculture and Stock .. .. .	463,932	0	0
Department of Public Instruction .. .. .	3,093,035	0	0
Department of the Auditor-General .. .. .	54,952	0	0
Trust and Special Funds Estimates .. .. .	23,239,603	0	0
Loan Fund Account Estimates .. .. .	11,959,000	0	0
Supplementary Estimates, 1948-1949 (Consolidated Revenue) .. .. .	1,918,758	2	1
Supplementary Trust and Special Funds Estimates, 1948-1949 .. .. .	791,232	19	8
Supplementary Loan Fund Account Estimates, 1948-1949 .. .. .	131,958	16	5
Vote on Account, 1950-1951 .. .. .	11,400,000	0	0

Resolutions reported, and ordered to be received to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 9.37 p.m.