

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 1950**

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**TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER, 1950.**

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

**CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.**

ASSENT REPORTED BY MR. SPEAKER.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL ACCOUNTS.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the books and accounts of the Brisbane City Council for the year 1949-50.

Ordered to be printed.

**QUESTIONS.****POLICE PENSIONS.**

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"1. Is it a fact that members of the Police Force in Queensland contribute 5½ per cent. of salary towards superannuation whilst police in New South Wales and Victoria contribute only 4½ per cent.?"

"2. Is it a fact that retired police in New South Wales and Victoria are granted a maximum pension at the rate of three-fourths and two-thirds, respectively, of the pay of the officer at time of retirement?"

"3. Is it a fact that a constable of the Queensland Police, retired before completing 30 years' service, is entitled to a pension of only £125 after 15 years' service, with an additional £5 per annum for every year of service thereafter?"

"4. Is it a fact that widows and dependants of deceased members of the Police Force in New South Wales receive much more generous treatment than in Queensland? Will he kindly supply a comparative statement of the allowances under these headings for each of the two States?"

"5. Is it a fact that legislation has been passed recently in Victoria under which police pensions are increased in accordance with increases in the basic wage?"

"6. Has the Government yet reached a decision regarding police pensions in this State? If so, will legislation be introduced during the present Session to give effect to such decision?"

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

"1. Rates of contribution to Pension Funds by members of the Police Force are:—Queensland 5½ per cent. of salary, New South Wales 4 per cent. of salary, Victoria 4½ per cent. of salary.

"2. and 3. If the hon. member, in asking this question, is activated by a desire to ascertain the relative merits of the schemes in each State, as I feel sure he is, an answer to the question, as framed, would not give the necessary information. Whilst

it is a fact that retired police in New South Wales and Victoria are granted a maximum pension of three-fourths and two-thirds, respectively, of the pay of their office at the time of retirement, these maximum rates are payable only to officers retired after service of 30 years or more. No pension whatever is payable to officers retired with less than 20 years' service in New South Wales, or with less than 10 years' service in Victoria. In Queensland, however, pension is payable to an officer retired as medically unfit, even though he may have completed only one year's service. The schemes in New South Wales and Victoria are on a long service basis, but the Queensland scheme provides protection to an officer from the first year of service.

"4. There is no statutory provision in New South Wales for pensions to widows and dependants of deceased members of the Police Force, such payments as are made are at the discretion of the Governor in Council and may be varied at will. In Queensland, widows and dependants of deceased members of the Force have a statutory right to a pension. A widow is paid £104, irrespective of the length of service of her husband, plus £32 10s. for every dependent child under 14 years of age. If the child should pass Scholarship, the allowance of £32 10s. per annum is continued until his or her education is completed, irrespective of age, and even though he or she should carry on through the University.

"5. I have no knowledge of any such legislation having been passed.

"6. A decision has not yet been arrived at."

**ALLEGED CRUELTY TO HORSES.**

Mr. F. E. ROBERTS (Nundah) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"Would he kindly have inquiries made as to complaints received by me concerning the cruel use and treatment of hire riding horses by seamen in the Pinkenba district with a view to some adequate control being exercised over the hiring and use of such animals?"

Hon. W. M. MOORE (Merthyr) replied—

"Investigations made by the Commissioner of Police do not reveal that horses hired from the Hamilton Riding Academy are being ill-treated. There appears, however, to be some grounds to believe that foreign seamen riders, who are not conversant with the Traffic Regulations or the locality, ride at times on the incorrect side of the roads and on footpaths. Steps have been taken by the Commissioner of Police to rectify the position. The proprietor of the Hamilton Riding Academy has undertaken to ascertain the efficiency of a rider before hiring a horse. Non-competent riders will be permitted to ride only on a reserve of 150 acres used by the proprietor and situated opposite the Riding Academy.

if the rider is a foreigner he will be accompanied by an employee of the Riding Academy to ensure compliance with the Traffic Regulations and proper use of the horse."

STATE HOUSE SOLD TO MR. PEEL.

**Mr. HILEY** (Coorparoo), for **Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha), asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

"Will he please advise how much longer it will be before the Housing Commission finally completes the repairs on the plaster work of the home known as Brisbane 1244, in Edith Street, Enoggera, and being purchased by Mr. Peel?"

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

"This work will be completed as early as possible after supplies of plaster sheeting become available for this work. Supplies of plaster were unloaded during the week-end and deliveries are being made today to manufacturers of plaster sheeting."

UNPROTECTED GULLY TRAP, ENOGGERA.

**Mr. HILEY** (Coorparoo), for **Mr. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha), asked the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government—

"1. Is he aware that, in Hilda Street, next Edith Street, Enoggera, in the estate recently opened up by the Housing Commission, there is a street gully trap which, although installed about three years ago, has never been covered by a grill, but only by loose boards easily removable by children

"2. Is he further aware that this gully trap has been blocked so badly for several days that dirty water is overflowing from it across the road, which blockage constitutes a real menace to the health of the neighbourhood and the safety of children?

"3. Is he further aware that although Housing Commission officials have been notified of this danger nothing effective has been done to rectify it?"

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

"1. Yes. Wrought iron gratings have been in short supply for some time and are not available. Consequently, the gully traps were covered with hardwood planks. These planks are placed over the gully traps for safety purposes. They are being replaced in this and other estates by concrete slabs."

"2. Plans and road dedication documents in regard to this estate have been lodged in the Titles Office for some years. The roads have therefore, been dedicated and are the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. The blockage caused the water to flow a short distance across the street to the proposed park area but it did not pond and was not of any real menace to health."

"3. Although the matter is the responsibility of the Council, as an act of grace the blockage was cleared by the Commission's Maintenance Section."

BUILDING RESTRICTIONS, REDCLIFFE.

**Mr. NICHOLSON** (Murrumba) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"As Redcliffe is as much a place of permanent residences as any other suburb in Brisbane and is not to any material extent a place where temporary seaside homes are erected, will he give favourable consideration to removing Redcliffe from Zone B under the provisions of the Building Operations and Timber and Building Materials Control Acts?"

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers) replied—

"I am aware that numbers of people who reside in Redcliffe travel daily to work in Brisbane, but the hon. member cannot deny that Redcliffe is a seaside holiday resort and is used as such by large numbers each year. I am not prepared to exclude Redcliffe from Zone B as to do so would give those people with ample finance the opportunity of utilising building materials to erect week-end seaside homes or premises for holiday letting. However, in conformity with the policy of the Government, no permanent resident will be refused a permit to build a home if he does not already own one."

REMOVAL OF HOUSE, REDCLIFFE.

**Mr. NICHOLSON** (Murrumba) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"Is it a fact that recently a direction was given by his department to a Mr. Henderson to discontinue the dismantling for removal of an old house in Sutton street, Redcliffe. If so, as this house was built long before 1945, under what authority was such direction given?"

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers) replied—

"Mr. H. M. Henderson was not prevented from dismantling the house in Violet Street, Redcliffe, but as he proposed to re-erect it elsewhere the transaction came within the ambit of the Acts. Mrs. Henderson is the owner of a block of flats known as 'Edor Flats,' in Sutton Street, Redcliffe, one of which flats is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Henderson and daughter. The department was not prepared to allow him to vacate this flat and occupy the re-erected house, thus giving him another flat for holiday rental. In order that the City Electric Light Co. Ltd. may proceed with the construction of the sub-station on the property in Violet street, I have issued directions that Mr. and Mrs. Henderson be given a permit to re-erect the house on Mr. Henderson's property, provided the land is subdivided and provided that the re-erected house is let to a permanent tenant."

RECOMMENDATIONS OF FISH BOARD  
INQUIRY.

**Mr. WORDSWORTH** (Cook) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"1. In reference to the report of the Fish Board Inquiry Commission, tabled on 4 October, 1949, is it a fact that of the 52 recommendations made by the commission only one, viz., 'Any losses in respect of discrepancies in stocks of nets, lines, hooks, etc., in the physical control of the Queensland Professional Fishermen's League be borne by the league,' has so far been implemented?"

"2. If this is not correct, to which of the recommendations, stating the numbers, has effect been given?"

"3. In addition to recommendations already adopted, to which ones, stating the numbers, is it proposed to give effect and when?"

**Hon. A. JONES** (Charters Towers) replied—

"1. No.

"2. All recommendations except Nos. 10, 11, 17, 22, 24, 31, 33, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52.

"3. Legislative action is required with respect to recommendations Nos. 36, 43, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52, and they are still under consideration. Other recommendations requiring action by the Board will receive due attention."

BURDEKIN RIVER PROJECT.

**Mr. BYRNE** (Mourilyan), without notice, asked the Premier—

"Has his attention been drawn to the record of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates of 2 November, 1950, of a question asked by Senator Courtice about the Burdekin River project and the answer of the Minister for Trade and Customs, Senator O'Sullivan, in which he stated the proposal put forward by the Haulon Government in Queensland was found to be completely unsound?"

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca) replied—

"The Commonwealth 'Hansard' referred to by the hon. member was delivered in my mail this morning and, having seen a reference to the Burdekin River project in the index, I turned to the page indicated. There, to my amazement and disgust I read Senator O'Sullivan's answer to Senator Courtice.

"Senator O'Sullivan's statement is a wanton perversion of the truth. The Commonwealth committee appointed to examine the scheme arrived at no such conclusion and no expert opinion has been given that could justify Senator O'Sullivan's impudent and irresponsible denunciations of the proposal.

"Senator O'Sullivan said: 'The Proposals of the Hanlon Government for the development of the Burdekin River project envisaged the production of many hundreds of thousands of tons of sugar-cane for

which there would be no market in Australia and any attempt to dispose of it on the overseas market would constitute a violation of the International Agreement.'

"Hon. members of this House will agree with me, I am sure, when I describe that statement as unmitigated balderdash without the slightest foundation in fact. No such proposal was ever made by me or by anyone on this side of the House.

"It is worthy of note that Senator O'Sullivan thinks we market our sugar-cane abroad. He would not know.

"To complete his perfidy, Senator O'Sullivan told Senator Courtice that proposals were now being made to use the land for the production of tobacco and other rich crops and inferred that the Commonwealth was taking the whole business out of the hands of the Queensland Government.

"I deplore the attitude of Senator O'Sullivan and call attention of the people of Queensland and particularly those of North Queensland to the manner in which their interests are misrepresented by the Liberal Senator."

THROUGH TICKETS FOR SOUTH COAST  
CO-ORDINATED SERVICE.

**Mr. KERR** (Sherwood), without notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

"Will he give consideration to providing facilities to railway travellers to purchase through tickets on the co-ordinated services to the South Coast, especially those residing in the western suburbs, such as is available in respect of train travellers using the Sandgate-Redcliffe co-ordinated service?"

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

"No. Tickets for the South Coast co-ordinated service are issued at South Brisbane only, except at week-ends, when they are issued at stations Brunswick Street to Sherwood inclusive, for the trains dispatched from Brunswick Street.

"There are six different issues of these tickets, all of which would have to be stocked at the stations mentioned, and the traffic does not justify such issues."

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.

PREMIER AND CHIEF SECRETARY.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier) (11.14 a.m.): I lay upon the table a copy of the Government Gazette Extraordinary issued today, notifying that His Excellency the Governor has, by virtue of the provisions of Section 8 of The Officials in Parliament Acts, 1896 to 1949, authorised and empowered The Honourable Thomas Andrew Foley, Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Premier and Chief Secretary by any Act, rule, practice, or ordinance, on and from 8 December, 1950, and until the return to Queensland of the Honourable Vincent Clair Gair, and also authorising and empowering

the Honourable Vincent Clair Gair, Treasurer, to perform and exercise all or any of the duties, powers and authorities imposed or conferred upon the Premier and Chief Secretary by any Act, rule, practice, or ordinance, on and from his return to Queensland, and during my temporary absence.

#### PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The British Probates Act, 1898  
(23 November).

The Aliens Acts, 1867 to 1948  
(23 November).

#### SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—  
SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell,  
Maryborough, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1950-51.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS AND  
IRRIGATION.

DISTRICT OFFICES.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) (11.15 a.m.): I move—

“That £109,457 be granted for ‘District Offices.’”

The amount appropriated for 1949-50 was £100,238, of which £99,924 was expended. The increase in the Vote, amounting to £9,219, is made up of a net increase of £5,404 in salaries, although the number of officers has decreased by seven, and an increase for contingencies amounting to £3,815.

It will be noticed that the Vote covers salaries of the various land commissioners, of which we have 17 throughout the State, assistant land commissioners, land rangers, cadets and other officers connected with land administration or who have been seconded to that work for the time being.

As I mentioned earlier, today we are carrying out increased work with 36 fewer trained field officers than we had in 1939. Hon. members will gain some idea of the increase in the amount of work if they peruse the report of the Land Administration Board, in which it will be seen that during the year just past applications for selections in the various parts of the State numbered 10,062, compared with 5,944 in the previous year. The applications for occupation licences numbered only 51 whereas the number applied for in 1949 was 55. Applications for pastoral tenures numbered 410, compared with 499 in the previous year, while the applications for certificates of performance—and this involves detailed reports by the various inspectors after visiting the selections and pastoral holdings concerned—numbered 413 as against 337 in the previous year. Applications for deeds numbered 216, compared with 292, while other applications amounted to 98, compared with 109 in the previous

year. Other work performed during the year covered the issuing of 606 timber licences, 2,389 royalty notices, 38,000 receipts—the previous year they numbered 36,000—and 12,697 rangers’ reports, compared with 12,357 in the previous year. Incoming letters numbered 96,000, compared with 88,000 for the previous year, whilst letters dispatched numbered 79,000 as against 71,000 in the previous year. Packets dispatched during 1949-50 numbered 37,000, compared with 33,600 in the previous year.

I quote those figures to give the Committee some idea of the increase in the amount of work to be performed by our district offices.

The revenue for the year ended 31 December, 1949, amounted to £1,584,393, selection rents being £703,134 5s., and amounts received for pastoral tenures was £409,281, and forestry collections yielded £353,929. The number of pastoral tenures, that is to say, new leases acquired during the year 1949 was 43, representing an area of 7,121 square miles. These will gradually be reported upon by district officers, and if, in their opinion, subdivision is warranted, the district officers will make their recommendations accordingly and they will be examined by the Land Administration Board, and the holding subdivided into living areas and offered to the general public for selection. Four holdings were forfeited during the year for failure to pay rental dues, and the areas concerned were very small. This is a very fine record. The number of pastoral holdings standing good at the end of 1949 were 2,532 with an area of 380,068 square miles. A considerable area of country is represented by those holdings and the figures give some idea to hon. members of the Committee of the leases of the State, which are really owned by the people of Queensland, the Government acting as trustees for them for the time being.

There is another very important point relating to the district lands of Queensland. From time to time, as pastoral leases fall due, they are subdivided into selections and in some cases leases are renewed to the existing lessees, but in all cases we endeavour to impose developmental conditions that will enable our pastoral lands to be improved and put into a better state in the course of time than they were when the lessees took over. Today, the total number of holdings subject to one or more developmental conditions is 1,030, scattered from the New South Wales border right to the Gulf country. Those subject to conditions as to permanent water supply amount to 631, to netting fencing 207, to other fencing 369, to structural improvements 94, and to other improvements 260—probably including dips and various other yards required—and to ringbarking 469. It is rather interesting to note that the number in which conditions imposed have been fully complied with to 31 December, 1949, amounted to 467. The amount required to be expended in the areas I have mentioned is £1,149,333. I am quoting these figures to give hon. members some idea of the policy that the department is following with regard to improvement wherever possible of the pastures for which we are acting as trustees.

The area to be ringbarked amounts to 2,342,195 acres. By the clearing of useless timber there will be a better and greater volume of grass, if the country is looked after properly and this, with the water improvements to which I previously referred and the water improvements already on existing holdings, will bring about an increased carrying capacity on our pastures and so we shall have more cattle and more sheep, more stock generally on these holdings than we have today.

We have also laid down conditions in connection with 18 stud sheep holdings. For instance, we require the lessees to maintain 77,500 stud ewes and to sell 15,350 purebred merino rams to grazing selectors annually, the object being to enable grazing selectors to improve their flocks. The condition has been very well observed, because from 1945 up to the present time the lessees have maintained 52,200 stud ewes and they have sold 8,988 pure merino rams. It will be seen that they have not yet reached the maximum capacity laid down in the conditions. When the leases expire and a renewal is to be considered we take into account how the lessees have observed the conditions laid down. If they have carried them out or can give valid reasons why they were unable to do so to the full the leases are renewed, in the hope that eventually the lessees will reach the maximum of the conditions laid down.

Four cattle holdings are held under stud leases. In addition, there are a number of private studs on freehold property but I am referring now to leases of Crown land held under stud leases and set aside specifically for stud purposes. In these cases we have laid down the conditions that the lessees shall maintain a certain number of stud cows and be in a position to sell at least 750 bulls annually to graziers to enable them to improve their herds. I mention these things to give hon. members some idea of what we are doing and the policy we are carrying out.

There has been very little trouble in the collection of pastoral rents. For instance, for the past few years there has been no need to impose the 10-per-cent. penalty because both sheep and cattle graziers are in receipt of very fine incomes for their products and are in a position to carry out improvements and meet all their current indebtedness.

During the last financial year 148 perpetual-lease selections, totalling 57,600 acres, and 255 grazing selections, with a total area of 4,461,000 acres, were taken up. If we have good seasons, these selectors will carry out the developmental conditions and improve their selections. We can therefore look forward with some optimism to an improvement in the productivity of these lands. The number of selections on our books today is 24,353 and the total area is 95,611,544 acres.

Another important phase of activity on our land, although it does not come directly under the control of the Land Administration Board, is the Land Court, together with its effect not only upon the land itself but on the cost of production also.

The court at certain periods revises the rents in order to ascertain whether they are warranted or not, and whether the selector should pay an increased rent for the Crown land he has leased. For the year just closed, rent was increased for the second period of perpetual-lease selections in 66 cases, the aggregate increase being £255 9s. 0d. That increase cannot in any way be considered a hardship on the leaseholders. In 15 cases rents were decreased by an amount aggregating £28 while rents remain unaltered in 38 cases. In 44 cases rents were increased in the third-year period by £92 10s. 0d., and were unaltered in 21. It will be seen that these Crown tenants will not be handicapped as a result of the operations of the Land Court.

I have given a fair review of the operations of the department to indicate the general position on land matters, and the department will go on endeavouring to do what it can to help its tenants. Hon. members know that a royal commission has been appointed and is at the present moment inquiring into various aspects of land administration and land policy, and will be in a position after completing its inquiries, which I hope will be some time next year, to make recommendations to the Government indicating possible changes or improvements it thinks necessary as a result of evidence submitted at its sittings throughout the pastoral areas. One big question engaging the attention of the commission is why our rural population is leaving country areas for the city areas. Is it due to some maladministration or some policy adopted in connection with our land tenures, or is it due to other factors? The commission will also give attention to whether it is advisable to further subdivide some of our pastoral lands. No doubt we shall be guided by the recommendations it makes. In the meantime I feel that the Department of Public Lands, with the aid of the trained officers on its staff, has carried out a very fine work over the years, and, generally speaking, I do not think the average selector's or pastoralist's difficulties can be attributed to any action of the department, but to droughts and acts of God.

**Mr. Muller:** What became of Beatty's survey?

**Mr. FOLEY:** I have not seen that.

**Mr. Muller:** That was a Commonwealth survey.

**Mr. FOLEY:** Generally speaking, as I pointed out, the work will proceed along the lines we have been following for a number of years. If the royal commission is able to make recommendations for improvement I am sure they will be carefully considered by the Government.

**Mr. EWAN (Roma) (12.37 p.m.):** First of all, I should like to place on record my sincere thanks to the Minister for the very lucid and clear address he gave us this morning and for his marathon address on Thursday evening. It is readily recognised that all things come from the soil, therefore

members will agree that this department is perhaps the most important of all Government departments. Although some hon. members may have been tired at the end of the Minister's long speech, I was particularly interested, and I want to place on record my thanks to the Minister for taking us into his confidence and placing the very many aspects of our industry before the Committee.

**Mr. Foley:** I listened to hon. members for eight hours and I spoke for only two and a half.

**Mr. EWAN:** I wish to place on record our thanks to the Minister for reopening matters so comprehensively as he did this morning. I have a few things to say, and I was wondering how I could get them in; but in view of the Minister's enlargement of the subject I am sure, Mr. Farrell, you will extend to every member the privilege of touching on any of the matters to which the Minister referred.

I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that in some of the country towns—and I quote Injune particularly—for some reason or other departmental officers have not made available sufficient town blocks. I was informed by the clerk of the Bungil Shire Council that every block has been sold and absolutely none are available. In that shire 98 per cent. of the rates have been collected, so it does not look as though the council would be making blocks available in future by way of sales because of unpaid rates. I respectfully suggest to the Minister that he take cognisance of my remarks and take the necessary action to have such blocks surveyed and made available for settlement in the town of Injune. I know that the Minister and his department are experiencing trouble in getting surveyors but if he will communicate with me I feel I can help him materially in that respect. I have been in touch with a certified surveyor in this city who has intimated to me that he would probably make his services available.

With regard to the developmental conditions on grazing areas to which the Minister referred a moment ago, as for ringbarking and so on, I would place on record that I believe that this type of provision is ideally suited for the development of our industry although I would at this juncture strike a note of warning in that labour conditions in the western areas today are such that a great many of the conditions that have been imposed and accepted by the various lessees are quite incapable of being carried out. I know that in many instances this has been so for a number of years and the department has given very sympathetic consideration to requests to extend the time for carrying out such work. I suggest that the Minister and the department continue to extend that sympathetic consideration until labour conditions improve. It has been said that migrants may be able to fill the bill in this connection but here again I strike the note of warning that ringbarking particularly is a skilled operation. How often have we seen country largely spoiled by ineffective ringbarking? I have seen migrants working in

the West—in fact I was going to employ migrants to carry out certain conditions imposed on my own block—but after seeing them in action I have come to the conclusion that unless it is possible to obtain at least one experienced man for every two migrant ring barkers, the country is gravely in danger. Perhaps these men could be taught by or placed under tutors, to teach them to ringbark effectively. If so, their services could be used to very great advantage in the western area.

The department should consider tightening up the issue of ringbarking certificates, particularly in the red-soil western areas. There are areas of country, particularly sandy and sandy-loam country, on which it is undoubtedly a retrograde step to ringbark, in that all sorts of wire and other coarse grasses are thus brought up. In the type of country where the clay comes to within a foot of the surface in many instances it is improved at least 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. by ringbarking. In most instances the permits are issued more or less on the application of the lessee without regard to the type of country to be ringbarked. In some instances the lessee has to buy his experience only at the expense of the results achieved after ringbarking. Perhaps it might be wise, in imposing conditions and issuing permits, to make a survey of the type of country on which the Crown proposes to impose ringbarking conditions.

**Mr. Foley:** What is your knowledge of the gidgee area?

**Mr. EWAN:** Very good in certain gidgee country: excellent results are achieved.

**Mr. Foley:** Is there a danger that what is known as dogwood will take its place?

**Mr. EWAN:** That would be so in certain areas. No two areas are alike and I would stress that point. Country may appear to be the same as in another area, but it will be found that in some areas certain conditions apply that prevent the regrowth of timber. Take a mulga area as an instance. If the mulga is knocked down or got rid of, it is very hard to get a regrowth. In other areas, if you ringbark old mulga, or knock it down with tractors, you get a very good growth of young mulga after about seven years, particularly if you have had good rainfall. Every district must be treated on its merits, in the light of experience gained over a number of years.

It has been said in this Chamber, and rightly so, that today it is much easier to improve watering facilities on properties than to ringbark. In view of that fact, and because of the shortage of labour for ringbarking, I suggest that as water is of paramount importance the department might give consideration to waiving the ringbarking conditions if lessees are prepared to expend an equivalent amount of money on the provision of extra water.

It was suggested at a sitting of the Land Court that one lessee had endeavoured to put so much water on his land that he had defeated the Crown's intention of improving

it. That statement is utterly absurd. Having had 25 years' experience of the West, I can say with confidence that it is impossible to put too much water on the land.

**Mr. Foley:** Would you say that more cattle die during drought from lack of water than from lack of pasturage?

**Mr. EWAN:** Yes, particularly in the scrub areas. If you are in scrub country, mulga country in particular, and if you have good fresh water, not boggy silty muck that would kill human beings, the cattle have a fair chance of pulling through. Clear water is essential. Once it begins to go stale the cattle begin to go off and I urge the Minister to give serious consideration to the waiving of ringbarking conditions if lessees will undertake similar expenditure in the provision of watering improvements.

Another matter of grave importance is the urgent need for some liaison with the sub-department of Forestry. To give some idea of this need I quote an incident that happened in 1930, when that year the Department of Public Lands issued permits to certain lessees to do ringbarking. The work was done and it was inspected by a land ranger, who made no comment, which was taken to mean that he approved of what had been done. Now, within the last few years, Forestry rangers have come along and told these people they should not have ringbarked this or that particular tree and in some instances they are compelling the landholders to recompense the department.

The grazier or selector receives a permit from the land commissioner, which states that certain timbers must not be ringbarked. The landholder has the work carried out either by contract or day-labour and, before the work is started, he shows his employees or the contractor the conditions that must be carried out. In good faith they endeavour to carry out the conditions, although they might transgress to a minor extent. Imagine some 10 or 12 or 15 years later the landholder is visited by a forest ranger who says that he must not do this and he must not do that. If it is decided to take the pine or the hardwood off that area, the landholder is expected to pay the difference between the first-grade and the second-grade timber and he is thereby being penalised by the activities of the sub-department of Forestry for an infringement of which he was not conscious. This is of wide application in my electorate and I ask the Minister to look at the matter with the object of seeing whether some alleviation could be given to those people who might be affected. I think that in the near future a considerable area of my electorate will be so affected and I ask now that the Minister have a survey made and take the requisite action to bring about a more harmonious relationship between the department and the lessees concerned.

I was pleased to hear the Minister's remarks in relation to stud sheep holdings and cattle holdings and in considering resumptions I think he would be well advised to extend very generous conditions to the studmasters of this State because, after all,

they have done a magnificent job and the quality of our stock is dependent upon their efficient working. I know it is the policy of the department to extend generous consideration to studmasters but I ask the Minister to err on the side of generosity. It has been proved conclusively that the stud breeders of this State can compete successfully with those of New South Wales and Victoria.

**Mr. Foley:** I have recently given an assurance to Crown stud lessees that they will get a priority in renewals if they comply with the conditions.

**Mr. EWAN:** It is in the establishment of new studs that I ask the Minister to be sympathetic. I understand that there are only four cattle studs and he might give sympathetic consideration to applicants for new studs. There will be quite a few in the future and I should say that in 99 per cent. of the cases it is not the intention of the applicant to defeat resumption conditions. A state of prosperity exists at present and rather than pay money away in taxation these men aim at improving their stock. By virtue of that prosperity, there will be quite a few applicants for stud conditions in the cattle industry.

I wish to bring the question of Land Court procedure before the Minister's notice because the Crown, in considering a case, is always represented by a barrister and although the atmosphere of the court is reported to be friendly the average country man when he gets into the court immediately becomes uncomfortable and in many cases, not being represented himself and having a trained advocate at him for a few minutes, is placed in an invidious position; in such circumstances, to use the vernacular, most landholders do not know whether they are coming or going. If they make inconsistent statements it is not that they are untruthful but that they are in unusual circumstances, being bullied about by a trained advocate of the Crown. I have been in these circumstances myself and I have been in the Land Court quite a lot. Some of the tactics of the Crown advocates are such as to bring the Crown into disrepute.

**Mr. Crowley:** That is untrue.

**Mr. EWAN:** It is not untrue.

**Mr. Crowley:** It is unfair.

**Mr. EWAN:** Unfair, thank you. Sometimes the members of the Land Court have had to correct the Crown advocate and it has been my experience on quite a few occasions.

There is this important aspect of the matter, that the lessee has to send in his report, or fill in the required form, which amounts to a report, 21 days before the court sits. But has he access to the Crown land ranger's report or the departmental report? No. He gets access to it when the court opens and he does not know how to base his case. I know that representations have been made, if not to the present Minister then to previous Ministers, that the report

of the Crown land ranger should be furnished to the lessee 7 or 14 days before the court sits to enable him to study it and have an idea of the views of the Crown land ranger. Otherwise, the poor chap going into court is placed in the unusual and uncertain surroundings after his report containing his case has been submitted to the Crown.

**Mr. Crowley:** They are not always poor.

**Mr. EWAN:** Many are. It seems strange that the Crown land rangers usually wait until it rains before they assess the value of our lands, and I say that quite openly. A ranger never seems to come to assess our country until the grass is high and sheep and lambs have full and plenty to eat and drink. I know that the Act provides that if you wish to have your rent determined you can make an application to the Crown accordingly, and if it does not determine your rent the amount determined at some future time shall not be retrospective, but there are many land-owners in this State who have never seen a Land Act. Some of them, those who study it, have but the great majority of them have never seen it—they do not know what rights they have. They do not run along to solicitors to see what they can do.

I know that the Minister will give sympathetic consideration to this matter. I hope that he will endeavour to see that the reports of Crown land rangers are made available to lessees 7 to 14 days before the sittings of the court so that the lessee will be on the same footing as the trained barrister of the Crown. It is only a fair and reasonable thing to ask. I know that the members of the Land Court will say that we cannot do this, that it is contrary to procedure and tradition, but I am not worried about tradition or procedure. What I am worried about is to see that the young people who go into the western areas with their wives and young families in an endeavour to make a living for themselves and by so doing improve the Crown estate and thus remove from the Crown the liability to keep them in their old age, should receive fair and reasonable consideration. These young people who are prepared to do these things in the early days of their lives, that is, develop the country, should have some consideration.

Then there is another view of the matter, one touched on by the Minister, that is, the drift to the cities. We must undertake a campaign to bring these young people back onto the land, and how can we do it? Only by making conditions sufficiently attractive, by giving them values that will enable them to leave the gilded tinsel of the city and go out into the western and other inland areas of the State to develop the State and their own characters by giving them specially good conditions and by providing them with roads and other facilities, we shall in due course bring about that desirable state of affairs, but if we continue the injustices I have spoken of, one of which is in relation to the Land Court, our population, as our statistician informs us, will increase by so many millions in so many years, particularly in the great metropolis which is to have its suburban

railways electrified and possibly an under-river tunnel that also will attract people from country areas into our secondary industries, and then the people of the metropolis will have to eat each other to live.

**Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (12.1 p.m.):** I quite agree with the hon. member for Roma that the Minister presides over one of our most important departments. The development of our Crown lands is necessarily of considerable importance. It is really of basic importance, because if they are not developed we cannot prosper, and if we do not prosper we cannot increase our population or attract citizens to the land to build up the rural industries that are necessary to our economy. The Premier is leaving this State for England in a few days for the purpose of completing negotiations in connection with the International Sugar Agreement. That fact brings before our minds the development of this State by the growing of sugar-cane and its manufacture into sugar, and hon. members on both sides of the Committee will wholeheartedly support the Premier in his great efforts to achieve this very desirable objective. We hope he will be able to bring his negotiations to the fruition we all desire, that is, that our quota will be written into the International Agreement and the prosperity of Queensland will be ensured to that extent. We must also have regard to the fact that the progress of our sugar industry will mean, as I have indicated previously, the settlement of our people on our seaboard, where the land is adapted to the production of this crop.

Reference has been made in this chamber to the Abergowrie lands. The settlement of this land is very necessary and those who know it visualise considerable settlement in this area as a result. The preliminary steps to this end have advanced to such an extent that by 1953 we shall see this land producing cane and cane assignments granted under the War Service (Sugar Industry) Land Settlement Act, which gives preference to returned men who are prepared to go on the land and engage in the production of sugar-cane. Much criticism has been levelled at that Act. My interpretation of it is that 3 per cent. of the existing sugar mill peaks go to the landless men and 50 per cent. preference applies where lands are leased from the Crown or are owned by eligible persons. I do not see anything wrong with that. I think it is quite a good thing.

I should like to mention the Central Sugar-Cane Prices Board's announcement in respect of the sugar industry, which will be applicable to the new lands in that area. This is what it said—

“Applicants to become eligible for assignments must be land owners or holders of options to purchase land. The time has arrived, therefore, when further subdivision of the lands must be made in order that further applications for assignment in the Abergowrie area shall be made. So that the current land holders may judge their position as to the advisability or necessity of subdivision, and in order also that applications for assignments on such

new subdivisions may be made, the Board now outlines the general principles to be followed in the granting of new assignments in this area."

What has actually taken place in Abergowrie reflects great credit on the Department of Public Lands and especially on the Government. I refer to the opening of the new lands. Already there are 50 to 60 ex-service men holding land in that area and I am confident that by the time the assignments have been granted there 50 per cent. of the settlers will be returned soldiers. The conditions for the sale and purchase of land will be such that there will be no chance of exploitation.

In this regard I should like to quote further from the statement by the Central Board—

"In order to prevent exploitation of intending settlers the Board will closely investigate the price and/or terms and/or conditions of sale of any of the lands which are the subject of application for assignment.

"The Board expects that all land holders adjacent to or within reasonable distance of the projected tramline will realise their public responsibility towards district progress and co-operate by the voluntary subdivision of their lands forthwith. However, if the scheme be in jeopardy through lack of co-operation by large land holders, then the Board may have to consider other means to insure its success.

"In order to expedite the matter of subdivision, the Board is fully prepared to accept surveys made by prismatic compass until such time as the services of an authorised surveyor become available."

So in the settlement of the Abergowrie lands I feel sure the board will see that no unfair conditions are placed upon ex-service men who are intending purchasers of land and that everything is carried out in the usual way. I do not think there will be exploitation in connection with the Abergowrie lands and the large land-holders will be obliged to subdivide their land, and I think they will do that voluntarily once it becomes known that they are not going to reap any benefit themselves by getting more than one assignment.

In regard to the necessity for the duplication of sugar mills, I do not wish to transgress or exceed the proper scope of debate on this Vote. It would be obviously wrong to ask our cane-growers to produce more cane unless our mills are equipped to crush it in an economic period. It is true that we have had wonderful growing conditions this season and that the crop is such that our mills are going beyond an economic period, but the only way to obviate that in the future will be for the mills to realise their obligation to crush the crop in an economic period.

We realise too that the pool of labour from which the can-growing areas for years past have drawn their cutters is now virtually dried up and we shall have to look to the harvesting of our crops by mechanical means. So long as there is a demand for manufactured goods people are attracted to the cities by the excellent conditions offered to them

by manufacturers and consequently the labour pool previously in the North is attracted to the South.

Although I do not wish to anticipate the decision of the royal commission now inquiring into the sugar industry whose report, I understand, will not be available until early next year—I expect my district will have an opportunity for development in the growing of the product for which it is so well adapted. I hope that ex-service men will have the opportunity of acquiring land there. I know a considerable area is already owned by ex-service men, and if they should get assignments they would be able to put it under cane immediately.

I wish to refer briefly to a condition operating in my area that calls for attention. Some lessees of perpetual-lease residential allotments pay only 3 per cent. of the capital value but lessees in my area are obliged to pay 5 per cent. There is a reason for that, and probably a very good reason, but I would ask the Minister to give special consideration to the matter to ensure that the Tully lands are rated on the same basis as lands in other parts of the State, in other words that the 5 per cent. is reduced to 3 per cent.

Moreover, when the department is offering residential allotments for sale, I would ask that a greater number be thrown open than it is now the practice to make available. By the auctioning of only a certain number there is a tendency to encourage speculators to operate and boost up prices, to the detriment of the genuine buyer desiring to acquire land on which to build a home. I ask the Minister to have steps taken as early as possible to ensure that when the survey is being made a considerably greater number of allotments are set aside for this purpose and subsequently offered for sale.

I take this opportunity of tendering my compliments to the Minister. We have listened to him addressing this Committee on a number of occasions. The other evening the hon. gentleman spoke at length and I have been pleased to learn this morning from the hon. member for Roma that he listened very attentively and that he very much appreciated the Minister's remarks. The Minister has given a great service to the State and I feel confident that hon. members will appreciate the information he has given the Committee. I am sure the hon. gentleman will accord all hon. members every consideration in their difficulties and problems.

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (12.15 p.m.): I listened with attention while the hon. member for Roma was putting up the case for the land holder, and although I do not agree with him entirely, I do agree with him in some respects. I find that generally speaking a certain section desire to exploit the land, ignoring the fact that it really belongs to the people and that the Government are charged with the responsibility of looking after it as trustees. When the hon. member for Roma attacks officials of the Government for carrying out their duty, he indirectly and unconsciously praises them for being faithful to the trust reposed in them.

The hon. member suggested that the Government should turn a blind eye to the non-compliance by some landholders with certain developmental conditions. It is my opinion that the department should review the whole position, especially developmental leases. I know of such leases that have been held for the past 20 years and on which an axe has not been put into one tree or one panel of fencing has been erected, and when we see such things happening we feel perhaps that the Government have not been faithful to their trust.

**Mr. Ewan:** Not one per cent. of the landholders would be in that category.

**Mr. BURROWS:** The hon. member can see no fault in his own class but he knows as well as I do that the people who desire only to exploit the land, taking everything from it and putting back nothing, the people who want to make all the money they can from it in order to realise their ambition of buying a house at Redcliffe or Southport, number more than one per cent. Such persons are deserving of no consideration whatever and their leases should be cancelled.

The hon. member then said that lessees were being prosecuted for the wilful destruction of timber.

**Mr. EWAN:** I rise to a point of order. I did not say they were being prosecuted; I said they were being penalised. The statement that they were being prosecuted is offensive to me and I ask for its withdrawal.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I will not offend the hon. member by reviving any memories he might have when I mention prosecutions and I withdraw the word he complains of and substitute the word "penalised" for it. I remind him that the majority of the ringbarkers work on contract and if the landholder tells them not to ringbark certain trees they are only too happy to comply with such an instruction. But you do get the hungry employer—and the hon. member for Roma knows him—who wants everything ringbarked. I have done a bit of this work myself and I know that some of them want you to ringbark dead trees. The arguments used by the hon. member are somewhat inconsistent, because in the first place he said that ringbarking was a specialist's job and that a man had to have experience in it. He should have a yarn with his friend the hon. member for Aubigny who pays 30s. a week to men to do ringbarking. He comes along with the plea that the migrant should be taught ringbarking and other trades before being sent out here. Whose responsibility is it to teach men to ringbark or do any of the other unskilled jobs? Will the hon. members for Aubigny and Roma go to the Industrial Court and have ringbarking classified as skilled work and pay the extra 1s. a day skilled men are entitled to command? If the A.W.U. was applying to have ringbarking classed as skilled work, the hon. members would get the best advocate in the world to oppose the claim, and they would bring forward evidence to say that any fellow

could ringbark. When I was in the district of the hon. member for Roma I never saw white men employed at ringbarking.

**Mr. Ewan:** you must have been there a hundred years ago.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I was there in 1916 and all the flats between Mt. Abundance and Bungeworgorai were ringbarked by Chinese.

**Mr. Ewan:** And they died of beri-beri.

**Mr. BURROWS:** No doubt because of the tucker you people offered them.

The destruction of usable timber has been mentioned and I think that the penalty should be more severe than it is. Quite often when we go through the country we see evidence of the criminal destruction of timber, and I use that word advisedly. It is said that ringbarking is carried out to improve the grasses but very often country that has been ringbarked may show greater carrying capacity for a few years but after, say, five years—and this applies in my own electorate, where country has been cleanly ringbarked—it will revert to spear grass.

**Mr. Ewan:** Sandy country?

**Mr. BURROWS:** All types of country. I have seen it on blacksoil flats—although it is not the true blacksoil country—where thick spear grass has grown after intense ringbarking. Although the quantity is there the quality is not, and what you might make up in quantity is lost in quality. Speargrass is all right as a fodder while it is growing, but as soon as it reaches maturity it is useless. Then the hon. member said that the landholder should be relieved of the responsibility of the actions of his ringbarkers, which is a pretty big thing to ask of anybody.

**Mr. Ewan:** I never said that; be fair.

**Mr. BURROWS:** If the hon. member says he did not say it, I am prepared to take his word for it. However, I was listening to him when he was speaking and I had pencil and paper in my hand, and I am capable of writing down notes fairly accurately. This Parliament should be very reluctant to relieve any employer of any responsibility for the action of his employee, as that could open the gate to some very grave abuse. For instance, a ringbarker could go along and ringbark a good deal of valuable timber, and then when you went along to prosecute the owner of the land he would say, "You cannot prosecute me, you must prosecute the man who did it. I paid him his wages last week and you will have to find him." It does not require much imagination to picture the result of the adoption of that suggestion.

Then the hon. member suggested that the Government, should more or less, tail off the powers of resumption in respect of anyone who had a stud, and that again could lead to very grave abuse. There would be a number of mushroom studs springing up, but from what I can see of stud breeding, it calls for a considerable amount of skill. I know a man who bought some bulls quite recently from a person who was supposed to have a

stud, or at least he held himself out as a stud-master. This man bought some Hereford bulls from him, and the bulls had white faces, and looked like Herefords, but their progeny had long horns and were really of the Ayrshire type. In my electorate, there are cattle studs that can hold their own with studs anywhere else in the State.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. BURROWS: You cannot tell from the bull what the calf is likely to look like. The hon. member knows that progeny can throw back, but any buyer of a bull depends to a great extent for its standard of breeding on the honesty and integrity of the stud-master, and nobody knows that better than the hon. member for Roma, or anybody else with any experience. In any case, half the breeding goes down their throats. If a beast is well-fed, has a shining coat, with horns polished, that makes up for a lot of sins. As I said before, the Government should regard with great caution any excuse that is used for the establishment of a stud, otherwise we shall before long have more studs than there are cattle stations. I quite agree that the maximum consideration should be given to studs like the Calliope stud in my electorate, and similar studs throughout the State. Their work must be recognised, because in improving the herds they are improving the production of the State. We want to be wary of the mushroom stud breeder.

Mr. Ewan: Do you not think the small landholder can grow just as good stud cattle as the big landholder?

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member asked me that question in the hope that it might embarrass me. The small landholder might be able to grow just as good stud cattle as the big landholder and I do not suggest that a man has to be a big landholder to be a studmaster but stud breeding is an entirely different profession from ordinary cattle-raising. A man may be an ideal cattle-raiser but if he is put in charge of a stud he may do considerable damage not only to himself financially but to our future herds. I know it would be a matter for another department but we might enforce a stricter supervision of studs to see that the proprietors are qualified to run them. As I said, stud-masters can prove a menace and do a lot of damage to our herds that will take a lot of correcting.

The hon. member for Roma complained about our Land Court advocates, those men who have studied our land laws in order to become skilled advocates. It is only natural that they should command an excellent knowledge of our land laws. A Land Court advocate, if he possesses any qualifications at all, must after a period acquire a certain amount of skill by reason of his experience. I have given evidence in the Land Court and I suppose no-one has given me a bigger dressing down than Mr. Stewart, who has since been elevated to the bench. On that occasion I was a witness. It was early in my life and I have lived to appreciate very much what Mr. Stewart said to

me. He made me realise, too, that if I wanted to talk about anything I had to have some knowledge of the subject. (Laughter).

Men who complain about the Land Court in nine cases out of 10 make foolish statements about the carrying capacity of the land. That, as the hon. member for Roma knows, is a weakness of lessees. Land that the Crown officer estimates will carry a beast to 20 acres can, in the opinion of the lessee, only carry a beast to 40 acres. These leaseholders enter the witness box in the Land Court, where they are subject to cross-examination, and they come out of the Court very bitter, not only against the court but against the Government as well, whereas the only persons to blame are themselves. They have a right to employ counsel but very few of them do so. They enter the witness box to give evidence without the aid of an advocate. I know, too, that they can be led astray by employing third-class counsel or second-class commission agents. But it does not matter whom they employ as an advocate, if they have a bad case. From my own observations I know that if the Land Court does err, it errs on the side of the tenant or the lessee. Taking it all through, the court is generous. When a man appears for himself he asks for the protection of the court. I remember that on one occasion when I was being cross-examined by Mr. Stewart, Mr. Deshon, a member of the court, came to my rescue and helped me out. There is not a member of the Land Court who would not come to the help of a witness, particularly if he was impressed with his honesty and sincerity. No doubt, if the court thought a witness was trying to mislead it, it would not wish to protect him from the verbal bashing the advocate was giving him.

The hon. member for Roma maintained that we should make it more attractive for people to live in the country by making rentals cheap and generally making the holding of land more attractive. In reply to that I point out that whenever a block of land is advertised for selection there is a great number of applicants. That is a practical demonstration that the Government have not imposed unduly harsh rentals, and that the terms and conditions offered are acceptable. It is not logical to say that the people would apply for these blocks if the terms and conditions were harsh and unreasonable. The Government are very anxious to see more people on the land. I should be happy if I thought the people already on the land took a less selfish view of the position themselves.

Mr. ALLPASS (Condamine) (12.38 p.m.): I appreciate very much the care and the time that the Minister took in putting his case before the Committee; he always gives a very clear explanation of the matter we are considering. I am sure the Minister was very interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Roma and that he will give them due consideration.

It seems to be incumbent on some member on the Government side—and in this

case it was the hon. member for Port Curtis—to get up and attempt by destructive criticism and ridicule to belittle the speeches made by the hon. member for Roma, whose speech was well received by the Minister, and who I am sure was not pleased by the exhibition given by the hon. member for Port Curtis who brought a type of humour into his speech—which is perhaps permissible—but also was guilty of very near distortion of the remarks of the hon. member for Roma.

**Mr. Burrows:** Tell me what was distorted.

**Mr. ALLPASS:** I did not interject when the hon. member was speaking. Many times I could have drawn the hon. member's attention to his distortion.

**Mr. Burrows:** Itemise the distortions.

**Mr. ALLPASS:** The hon. member proceeded to tell a story of how graziers as a body are out to exploit the land.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I rise to a point of order. I particularly said that I did not regard all graziers as exploiters. I said there was an element among the graziers who did this sort of thing.

**Mr. ALLPASS:** I will accept the hon. member's statement but when the hon. member was speaking the hon. member for Roma interjected that there was a very small percentage who would exploit the land and the hon. member for Port Curtis said he did not agree with that statement: he thought that a great many did. But the hon. member for Port Curtis is quite wrong, to my knowledge. If it was as he said in the years that have gone, it is certainly not so today because I know that the great majority of graziers in my area today know they will have a priority on their leasehold, and can any person imagine that they would exploit the country that they know is theirs? It was a very stupid thing for the hon. member for Port Curtis to say. The thing that detracts most from the value of the land is the fact that the areas are too small and the graziers or selectors have to overstock to get a living. The hon. member for Port Curtis stated that the hon. member for Roma attacked the Government, but he did no such thing. I know the Minister valued the hon. member's speech. He showed how the Government and lessees could work together for the mutual benefit of both. It is idle for the hon. member for Port Curtis to try to detract from the speech of the hon. member for Roma.

**Mr. Devries:** What is the difference between a grazier and a selector?

**Mr. ALLPASS:** The Minister knows very well. In the years gone by the big men were known as graziers and the selector was looked upon as a small grazier. A selector was the man who took up the land. The selector was the occupier of Crown land. However, the term has nowadays gone out of use.

**Mr. Burrows** interjected.

**Mr. ALLPASS:** I am surprised that the hon. member for Port Curtis should show his

lack of knowledge. I did not interject when he was speaking but now he is trying to take up the time allotted me. I had intended to leave him alone but I will go further in connection with him. I can just imagine what would happen if he was in the witness box of the Land Court and spoke as he did before the barrister who was appearing for the Crown. He would not have anything left on him.

And here I would refer briefly to the procedure of the Land Court. I have had some experience of hearings before this court and I feel that the whole atmosphere in the court is wrong. A great deal could be done to have better co-operation and understanding between the Land Court and lessees in hearings of reassessment of rentals and so forth. It is absolutely useless to ask a lessee whether he agrees with the contents of a land ranger's report, which is handed to him only a few minutes before he is asked the question. How could he peruse two pages of a report and decide almost immediately whether or not he agrees with the contents?

Then he is asked, if he does not agree with it, whether he can suggest any good reason for disputing it. He is at a disadvantage right from the start. The ranger has the whole of the sources of the department behind him and he is an experienced man, yet the lessee is asked whether he agrees with the report. I know that many times lessees have asked that copies of the ranger's report be made available to them some days before the court sits, and the request has always been refused. If it is impossible to provide copies some days before, at least they should be provided 24 hours before the court sits. This would give the lessee a reasonable chance of perusing the report and of putting forward his views about it. I am not attacking the capabilities or honesty of purpose of any of the Crown land assessors I have seen, but as a general rule they are on a property for perhaps 10, 12 or 24 hours and they cannot be expected to know just what that land is capable of producing. The lessee, on the other hand, has certain knowledge that the ranger cannot hope to have, and often he might be able to refute certain phases of the report if he had time to study it. Again I plead with the Minister to make copies of these reports available. Too often do we find the lessee placed in a position similar to that of a defendant in a civil court. Even if he retains an advocate he still is required to go into the witness box, and as a general rule he has not the training and wit of the Land Court advocate. That being so, he should be given all possible facilities to enable him to put up his case. Such a step would make for greater harmony between the Crown and the lessee.

Another point that exercises my mind—and this cropped up when the Valuation of Land Act Amendment Bill was being dealt with recently—is that no basis seems to be laid down for rangers to follow when making assessments. I have known of cases in which the ranger has been asked how he arrived at his figure and in which he has not been able to give a reasonable answer because the

Commissioner has stated, "Apparently if we sent down another ranger tomorrow to look at this land he would come back with a different figure." I have known of instances in which four valuers have gone onto as many properties and all have given different figures, the difference between some being very marked indeed. Several of them were upset on appeal. The fact that there is no proper basis for valuation places greater responsibility on the assessor, but with more co-operation between the Crown and the lessee a more equitable basis of rental could be arrived at. If the court could meet in a better atmosphere instead of the legal atmosphere that makes country people so uncomfortable, we should get better co-operation between the parties.

We have to be careful not to stick to hard and fast rules as to conditions imposed upon land, and I think there is a great danger in imposing certain stud conditions. One condition is that you have to send out so many sires a year, which to my way of thinking is dangerous, because it would be better if you required so many over a number of years. It might be that a stud-master would be selling sires to people that he would not think of doing if the matter rested in his own hands. The stock sent from a property could deteriorate because the stud-master had to send quantity instead of quality. I suggest that the Minister give that matter consideration, and that in applying that condition he spread it over a period of years, say five.

I appreciated the explanation, although lengthy, given by the Minister the other night. I listened to him very attentively during the whole of his speech.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) (12.53 p.m.): I thank hon. members for their kindly remarks about my speech, which was brought about as a result of the many matters raised by hon. members during the debate. I did not introduce any new matter but dealt only with those raised by hon. members, and whilst my speech may have been lengthy it was interesting and, I am sure, full of information.

This morning the hon. member for Roma raised the question of the residential blocks at Injunc. I am making inquiries into it, but feel that the difficulty will lie, as he intimated, in getting some surveyor to survey some of the sections that possibly are unsurveyed now. This is a difficulty we meet from time to time. Only yesterday I took a matter to Cabinet dealing with a selection for which approval to retain the lease was given to the selector in 1946. It was only recently that that lease was surveyed. We have eight staff surveyors—that is all we can get—and we are depending upon the work of about 29 contract surveyors for the hundred and one jobs required in all parts of the State, in connection with grazing selections, pastoral holdings, and the like. One or two of them give us their full time and the rest give us time ranging from 50 per cent. down to, in some cases, 2 and 1 per cent., and hon. members will realise that at times it is difficult to meet every demand.

Two hon. members referred to developmental conditions and the difficulty of getting labour to carry them out. One has only to sit in the ministerial chair for a little while to appreciate the difficulty of getting labour. I find that graziers as a whole are getting such remunerative prices for their products and are thus able to offer such attractive wages that they are getting a fair share of the labour supply available. In the cypress pine area in the South-West sawmillers are losing their hands. Benchmen, hauliers and people working in the bush supplying logs to the mill are finding the wages offered by the graziers for fencing, post-splitting and similar work so attractive that they are leaving their ordinary jobs in the sawmilling industry. Consequently we are having great difficulty in supplying timber needs from the cypress pine area. However, if a man has a good case, if he can give legitimate reasons for not fulfilling all his developmental conditions the matter is sympathetically considered and he receives an extension of time in which to carry out the work.

Another hon. member referred to the need to have skilled ringbarkers. It is true that unless you do such work carefully there is the possibility of ruining an area of country.

Where a legitimate case is presented to the department that labour is unavailable and cannot be procured, save at exceptionally high rates, it is only too pleased to consider the whole position. Usually an extension of time is granted the lessee to enable him to fulfil the condition, whether it is ringbarking or anything else. I do not know whether it is a wise policy, although it may be done in certain cases, to waive ringbarking conditions in favour of water improvements. A good deal of damage can be caused in certain areas, and each area has to be treated according to the local circumstances; if ringbarking is not properly done, particularly in some areas, and is not done at the right time, loss may result. However, every application for exemption from the conditions of a lease on the ground of excessive expenditure will have every consideration by the department.

Only yesterday a man representing a lessee flew up from Sydney to ask the department that certain ringbarking conditions in regard to a gidgee area should be waived on the ground that although the work had been advertised the cost would work out at £2 an acre, against 3s. 6d. to 5s. in 1939. This representative was endeavouring to avoid that expenditure. There was another reason, too. In this belt of gidgee it was found that where ringbarking had been carried out dogwood grew immediately. The gidgee was killed, it is true, but the dense growth of dogwood that took its place retarded the growth of grass to a greater extent than the gidgee. That case is under consideration by the Land Administration Board and I am sure that after it takes all facts into consideration it will deal sympathetically with it and arrive at some compromise.

Hon. members also said that settlers were penalised for ringbarking certain trees on his

land. If an officer of the Sub-department of Forestry discovers that valuable timber on a lease has been ringbarked he consults the Department of Public Lands to ascertain whether a permit to ringbark was granted. If a permit was issued a copy of it is obtained and if ringbarking has been carried out in contravention of its conditions appropriate action is taken, usually by the collection of a royalty to the value of the timber destroyed. Cases arise where some men who do not care a hang destroy valuable stands of young ironbark and other timber that in the course of a few years could have been used by the Railway Department as piles, sills, and girders, or for commercial purposes. The case of 10 years mentioned by the hon. member for Roma, cannot be recalled, but in one or two cases several years have elapsed before discovery, and on discovery forestry officers have followed the matter up in an attempt to rectify the position.

I will quote a specimen copy of a permit that is given to the lessee when he receives a permit for ringbarking. It reads as follows—

“The within permit is subject to the following conditions—

1. No trees apparently suitable for sawmill purposes, or for railway sleepers, girders, or telegraph poles, and no trees within 2 chains of a main road, or of the bank of any river, creek, lagoon, or main water course, shall be ringbarked.”

The idea is to conserve some of these commercial timbers, and the objection to ringbarking close to the watercourse is to prevent the erosion.

The permit also states—

“The ringbarking of spotted gum, lemon-scented gum, ironbark (other than silver-leaved ironbark), sandalwood, sandalbox, also known as false sandalwood, budda, rosewood, and cypress pine, is strictly limited in accordance with the conditions stated here below.

(a) Spotted gum, lemon-scented gum, and ironbark—all reasonably straight trees (no matter what the growth) must not be ringbarked.

(b) Sandalwood must not be ringbarked or otherwise destroyed.”

That is a valuable timber that we export and it provides a good deal of employment.

The permit continues—

“(c) Sandalbox—all trees that are suitable for fencing purposes, and sufficient of the most promising young trees as will provide fencing material for the future are to be preserved.

(d) Cypress pine—

(i.) No tree over 6 inches in diameter breast high is to be destroyed unless it is crooked or otherwise useless for present or future utilisation for fence posts, mill logs, or other purposes.

(ii.) Dense stands of cypress pine may be thinned to a spacing of 20 feet between saplings provided that, where such stands exceed 60 acres in extent, no trees at all are to be

destroyed on a belt 2 chains wide included in and surrounding the stand.”

One can see this is also a valuable commercial product, and provided it is very dense thinning out is permitted and this will allow a certain amount of grass to grow for the benefit of the lessee. The permit continues—

“(iii.) The holder of the land and/or his agents are required to take all reasonable precautions to prevent the destruction of thinned stands by fire.

“3. The following trees are to be preserved for fodder purposes and must not be ringbarked:—Whitewood, boonery or western rosewood, creek oak, Emu apple, mustard tree or current bush, mulga, myall, beefwood, bottle tree and kurrajong, baubinia, dead finish, vinetree, and any other fodder tree.

“4. Sufficient trees (approximately 10 per cent.) shall be preserved for shade purposes.

“5. All young growth, suckers, or scrub, which may result from ringbarking, shall be thoroughly and effectively destroyed from time to time.

“6. The destruction of trees contrary to the terms and conditions of the within permit shall render the holder liable to a penalty of not less than one shilling and not more than ten shillings for every tree so destroyed.

“7. Save as provided in Section 155 of the Land Acts, 1910 to 1945, where the same is applicable, no compensation will be payable by the Crown in respect of anything done under this permit.”

The permittee receives full notice of what he can and cannot do. Naturally it is desirable, when a person contravenes these provisions, that he should be penalised in some way, otherwise the whole system could be loosely administered and very valuable timbers could be lost.

The hon. member for Roma raised the matter of applications for new cattle stud leases. This is a matter that can be handled from day to day by the Land Administration Board. On the approach of the expiration of a lease, application is lodged with the board, and if its members are satisfied after consultation with officers of the Department of Agriculture and Stock that it is desirable that additional stud leases should be granted in particular areas, they give consideration to the granting of such a lease. Here again, we expect some advice from the royal commission that is now sitting. The matter comes within its Terms of Reference and I feel sure that the advice will be worth following.

Some hon. members opposite referred to the handling of cases in the Land Court and one hon. member stated that some of our assessors, who were really representing the Crown in the Land Court, have on occasions bullied ragged selectors, throwing them off their balance as it were.

**Mr. Ewan: Barristers, not assessors.**

**Mr. FOLEY:** I can assure the hon. member they are not asked to do anything like that and if it is ever found that it is being done I do not think the barrister responsible would get another brief. Since the matter was raised, it has been pointed out to me that the lessee is not asked to furnish a report. All he is asked to do is to give an estimate of the rental that he thinks is a fair rental and the period. Immediately on receipt of that information by the Land Court the lessee is sent an estimate placed on the land for rental purposes by the assessors of the Department of Public Lands. He then has the opportunity to balance one with the other, as it were, and if there is a variation, he is in a position to make out his case or have a solicitor do so in order that he will get fair treatment. On one occasion I discussed this matter with the president of the Land Court, Mr. Payne, and asked him what attitude the court took, and he told me that it always endeavoured to conduct hearings informally. In other words, if the court thinks a lessee is not skilled in putting his case before the court properly the court goes to the trouble—and this applies to all the judges of the Land Court—of trying to get down to a round table basis of discussion. Information is obtained from the lessee a little bit at a time and having obtained the necessary information, and knowing that it has been a frank declaration, the court is in a better position to assess the evidence submitted to it. On the whole, the position is not so very bad, even though certain lessees may have been bully-ragged and have not had the facilities it is contended should be accorded to them.

The annual report of the department sets out actually what has happened in various cases. In the second period for perpetual-lease selections, there have been rent increases in 66 cases, total amount being £255 9s. 10d., so that the average for each was not so very great and hardly gives ground for complaint. In the next period, there were rental increases amounting to £28 4s. in 15 cases, and in 38 cases the rents were unaltered. In the third period there were increases amounting to £92 10s. 1d. in 44 cases, and in 21 cases the rents were unaltered.

For the second period for pastoral holdings, there were rental increases amounting to £2,343 in 37 cases, covering an area of 3,357 square miles. This works out at an average increase of only £63 in each case. For the third period, there were rental increases in 14 cases amounting to £1,267 8s., and for the fourth period there were increases in only four cases, the total increase being £1,158 over an area of 1,660 square miles, giving an average of £287. For the fifth period there were increases in six cases, the total being £858 for an area of 1,287 square miles, an average of £143 each. In the sixth period there was an increase in only one case, the amount being £5 2s. and the area being 68 square miles.

It will be found that when fixing rentals the court does not take into consideration such factors as the present very high prices

for beef and wool, because it takes the view that we are now enjoying what is perhaps the boom period of a cycle and later there may be decreases.

It is mentioned in the report that for the second period in connection with grazing selections, there were rental increases amounting to £12,656, spread over 442 cases covering an area of 4,858,000 acres. There were rental decreases amounting to £71 in 7 cases and no alteration in 52 cases covering an area of 387,800 acres. A similar position obtained in the succeeding periods, up to the eighth.

On the whole it will be seen that even though in certain cases the advocate may have bully-ragged a landholder in the court, we do not encourage it, and wherever it is possible to do so we dispense with the services of such an advocate. Hon. members, if they peruse the report, will find ample evidence that the increases granted by the court have been reasonable and certainly not beyond the capacity of the settler to carry. When I hear of the tremendously high prices being received for wool today I sometimes feel that it would be good if I could step rents up and so get a little extra revenue for the Crown, but unfortunately the system has been laid down and we have to comply with it. On the whole the court has not been unduly harsh.

The hon. member for Mourilyan spoke of the percentage charge for perpetual-lease residential blocks at Tully, which has been brought about as he said because of the extraordinary expenditure incurred by the Crown in establishing the Tully mill, and all the organisation required in subdivisions, roads and amenities that were provided at the time. Instead of the ordinary 3 per cent. laid down, the special Act that was passed provided for an increase to 5 per cent. of the capital value of the land in question. I think hon. members will agree that where there has been unusual expenditure, such as that I outlined, it is only fair and reasonable that the Crown should be enabled by a little increase—not an exorbitant one—to recoup itself for some of the expenditure.

The hon. member mentioned also the Abergowrie lands and referred to what had been stated in previous debates. He corrected the misconception that had been created and it is agreed that when he speaks of the sugar industry he knows his subject. He happens to know that area and I think he has satisfactorily explained to the Committee the whole position.

**Mr. DAVIS (Barcoo)** (2.38 p.m.): I believe I can speak on the Vote before the Committee with some knowledge. To speak with authority one can only speak of those things of which one has practical knowledge. As a representative of an outback area of the State I can say that the Minister and his officers have not gained their experience of Queensland in Queen street, Brisbane, but have traversed the whole of the State to gain the knowledge they are now

applying to the administration of the Department of Public Lands to the benefit of the whole of the State. I go so far as to say that its administration in an endeavour to develop this country, ranks this department as parallel in importance to any other department of State.

The hon. member for Roma sought information this morning from the Minister with regard to the possibility of substituting certain improvements for other prescribed improvements. I should like to say to the hon. member that in my approach to the department on similar matters I have received nothing but sympathetic consideration. If the hon. member for Roma has any difficulty in this respect and he approaches the department the request will be sympathetically considered.

I notice that during the hon. member's speech the Minister directed a certain question to him as to what would be the greatest destroyer of stock in a period of drought or an ordinary dry period. My observations on the subject are very wide and cover many districts. The greatest destroyer is the fact that we have failed to provide that most important essential, water, for our stock. Stock will exist without feed if we do not compel them to travel for their water and they will exist without feed on an ordinary diet of water and salt-lick for a considerable period. Thousands of stock have perished not because of lack of fodder but because they were compelled to travel miles to water. And what are the consequences in the ordinary dry period or drought when sheep or cattle have to travel six or seven miles to water, especially when they have reached a low condition? The hon. member for Roma, I know, is an experienced grazier and I feel he will understand and agree with me because there are certain factors that have operated even on his own property.

**Mr. Devries:** Some stock travel 14 miles to water.

**Mr. DAVIS:** Yes.

**Mr. Ewan:** They do not do it for very long.

**Mr. DAVIS:** I know. The greatest destroyer in drought is the fact that on many properties we have failed to place water facilities within reasonable distance of the feed. I am very concerned about the restrictions that were placed upon graziers prior to the conditions that exist today. I remember the time when the financial institutions governed the destinies, and governed the table too, of the graziers and selectors. They would not advance them two bob to enable them to buy a pot of jam, let alone help them put watering facilities on their properties. We are in the financial position today to be able to say to those who governed our destinies in the past that we are going to create something we believe to be of greater advantage to the pastoral industry than we have had in the past. Those conditions cannot be applied now because labour and machinery are not available. Of all the essentials necessary in the development of the industry the greatest are watering facilities placed at

reasonable distances on every property so that stock can avail themselves of them. I remember, and the hon. member for Gregory well knows the time too, when we saw drought conditions operating down the Diamantina and Thomson and in all that area. The hon. member for Roma said this morning that certain types of water were used at times that even stock revolted against. That is true. Men of the back country, men like the hon. members for Gregory, Roma, Balonne, Aubigny, and Carpentaria, have at times been compelled to skim the surface of water that the stomachs of many city dwellers would revolt against. But there is no alternative in that country; it is a matter of necessity. Such conditions are accepted in the back country because we must accept them, but unfortunately the people of the cities think they should not have to share the conditions we are compelled to accept in the West and the outback parts of the State. Whatever may be said—and we know there is a lot of recrimination against the department—I do know that the Minister and his departmental officers are men of experience. Sitting here on my left are the chief departmental officers of the department and they, like others of us, can tell stories of having to skim the top off the water before drinking it. They have only reached their present positions by reason of their western experience.

Some mention was made in the discussion this morning of our stud properties. Every one in this Committee who has a knowledge of the pastoral industry will agree that the department has done everything within its power to establish both sheep and cattle studs. A few short years ago virtually the whole of our stud rams came from the southern States, whereas I believe that today 75 per cent. of them are bred within the State; and that is all to the betterment of Queensland. I respectfully suggest to the department the possibility of extending our sheep and cattle studs. After all, the wealth that is kept within the State belongs to the State, and it is all to the good if we can produce stud stock equal in quality to that of the southern States or overseas. If we can do this, why not give Queensland an opportunity to do so?

**Opposition Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Devries:** The hon. member for Aubigny had plenty of opportunity.

**Mr. DAVIS:** And I believe he made rather a good job of it. There is one thing I am much concerned about—and most graziers and most members representing western areas will agree with me—and that is that there is a definite danger in the fact that when we have completed the whole of our resumption programme we are going to find a falling off in the quality of our sheep products within the State and the Commonwealth of Australia. It is a well known fact—and this cannot be denied from any quarter—that most of the flocks are bred to the standard that exists today, first from the class lines on any big property and from the culls and residue that were sold from those properties. When the whole of those avenues

have been closed to the selectors of the State, what will happen? The fact that we breed stud rams within the State will not be sufficient to maintain our flocks. To bring about quality flocks it is not sufficient that we have good rams; we must also have good ewes on every selection and on every property within the State. The Secretary for Public Instruction and the hon. member for Roma can verify the fact that most of our flocks that have been built up from the resumptions of our great properties have been obtained from only one source, and that was the residue and the culls used from the great properties of this State. It is a serious question for us to ask ourselves. I am not quibbling with the policy of closer settlement. I am unable to do so, owing to the fact from that side of the Committee has come the cry, "The drift from the West to the cities."

How can I criticise the policy for closer settlement? If we are to maintain population in the West, then to some extent we must have closer settlement, but let us be wary lest we destroy the quality-fleeced sheep that has been built up over the years from one particular source of supply. It is not for me to advocate; I am only respectfully making the suggestion that the Department of Public Lands make an investigation of the possibilities that lie ahead.

In conclusion, I might mention that what I have said in this Chamber today is merely the result of observations down through the years of one who has lived in the pastoral districts of Queensland who has seen its ups and downs. I am not concerned very greatly about what may happen to the grazier or selector; I am primarily concerned with those whom primarily I represent—not that I do not represent the grazier, because after all in a democracy if a member after taking his place in Parliament is not prepared to give full representation to every section within his electorate, that member is not worthy of being sent as a representative of the people to this Parliament of Queensland. With the knowledge I have of the hon. gentlemen who are sitting on my left, who are acquainted with the whole of the ramifications of the land and its possibilities, and with the knowledge the Minister has, I believe we can look forward to the future with some hope at least that the best will be done in the interests of this State.

**Mr. SMITH** (Carpentaria) (2.59 p.m.): Dealing firstly with closer settlement in my area, the Gulf part of the State, I feel that the result of investigations recently made by departmental officers there indicates scope for an early beginning of some form of closer settlement. We had recently departmental officers investigating the Gulf area, the Gregory River in particular, which I have frequently mentioned in this Chamber. These reports are favourable to something in that direction, and if possible at the earliest possible time. As I said formerly in this chamber, I am sorry that the Department of Public Lands and the Department of Agriculture and Stock did not inform the

members of the British Food Mission of its resources, with a view to ascertaining whether some similar scheme to that at Peak Downs could not be started on the Gregory River.

Recently reports were furnished by departmental officers concerning the development of certain areas in the far North-West and they bear out what I have said on previous occasions, as well as the reports of previous royal commissions. As this question of settlement of the land is of extreme importance I feel that I should place on record in "Hansard" the reports to which I have referred. The following is a letter to the Minister from one of his divisional officers on an investigation by him of the Gregory River and the lands it waters:—

"Bureau of Investigation.

"Investigation of the Gregory River Lands.

"The Honourable the Minister for Lands,  
"Brisbane.

"With reference to your previous instruction that the Bureau investigate the possibilities of settlement in the Gregory River lands of the Gulf Country, it is desired to advise that this matter has been examined in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Stock, the C.S.I.R.O., and Prof. F. W. Whitehouse (Geologist) and Mr. C. Ogilvie (Hydrologist).

"Following an examination of data obtained from these sources I have, by direction, to submit the undermentioned views of the Bureau:—

(1) The Gregory River has a permanent flow of water which is fed by springs and passes through an extensive area of good quality land.

(2) There are no good water storage sites in proximity to the good land.

(3) If the available water (without storages) from the flow of the Gregory River was utilised for irrigation in conjunction with dry farming, this area would carry in the dry season more breeding cattle and their progeny than at present.

(4) Integral factors in a scheme to carry these extra cattle would be the establishment of an irrigation settlement and the provision of adequate transport to enable store cattle under two years of age to be moved annually to fattening areas.

(5) Unless the existing lessees are prepared to implement irrigation the Bureau considers that it would be inadvisable to establish an irrigation scheme at present in this area when other irrigation schemes in districts of Queensland closer to markets have been approved but not yet established.

(6) In connection with the growing of fodder crops under dry farming conditions in these lands for direct feeding to stock, the Bureau is of the opinion that this matter might be deferred until details of the experiments now being

carried out with fodder crops at Wrotham Park, Granada, and Millungera are available. These areas would give some indication of what might be expected in the Gregory River district.

(7) Having regard to the foregoing findings the Bureau submits that—

“In the Gregory River district with its extensive tracts of good-quality land, a reliable summer rainfall and a permanent flow of water in the river, closer settlement should be possible at a later date, provided the necessary transport is made available.”

“P. M. Silcock, Secretary.

“18th October, 1950.”

We should give favourable consideration to some form of settlement in that area. Having in mind the acute food position throughout the world, I suggest that this is a case in which the Government could co-operate with the Commonwealth in embarking upon some large-scale food-production scheme similar to that in operation in Peak Downs.

There is another long report by a divisional officer on the Gulf area. I refer to the report of Divisional Officer Bell, and as it is so long I propose quoting only certain paragraphs. In one paragraph he says—

“The whole of this country is given over to cattle raising and it constitutes one of the most important cattle-breeding grounds in Australia. In view of the necessity for greatly increasing beef production in Australia the Gulf now assumes added importance in the scheme of things.”

In another he says—

“Under present conditions Gulf properties can carry about 12 to 15 head of cattle to the square mile. Fat cattle are turned off the stations nearer the railheads but elsewhere the turn-off is mainly store cattle intended for fattening in areas nearer the markets. Properties are not highly improved and carrying capacity could be increased by fencing, better water facilities and more intensive management. But . . . these improvements are very difficult to effect with the current labour shortage.”

“Properties are not highly improved and the carrying capacity could be increased by fencing, better water facilities and more intensive management. But these improvements are very difficult to effect with the current labour shortage.”

That goes to show that many landholders are not developing their lands as they should. Perhaps it is that they want help from the Government, from the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation in particular, but these improvements are very difficult to effect because of the current labour shortage. I remember the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock making a broadcast through Station 4KQ in the early part of the year in which he said that the only way to develop the Gulf country was to give the people better road and rail facilities than they have at present. That was the argument I have advanced on the floor of this Chamber on several occasions

and it is supported by reports of royal commissions and by the two officers who recently visited that area and made recommendations to the department.

The report I was quoting goes on to say—

“The black soil of the Downs is good agricultural soil. Experiments on the growth of summer crops are now being initiated with a view to ultimately improving the carrying capacity of the land and reducing losses, particularly among breeding stock. There is no doubt that quick-growing summer crops such as the sorghums, can be produced, but the economics and the methods of feeding have yet to be worked out. It is one thing to feed stock on fodder crops on a 1,000-acre property and it is another proposition to deal with a crop on a 1,000-mile property.”

It will be seen that these matters have been gone into by the departmental officers and it is true that many landholders have gone along not caring what happened to their land. I have been on a number of these properties—properties owned by wealthy landholders in the Gulf—and I have noticed that they have not carried out one pennyworth of improvements.

Some co-operation should exist between the Department of Public Lands and the Department of Agriculture and Stock to help these people if they want to develop their properties as they should. Recently I had an inquiry from the manager of a big property in the North-West asking me what help the Government would give in the way of a school and a teacher if his company carried out an extensive building programme to house its employees on the station. The manager of this station—Carrandotta—asked me about the possibility of getting help from the Government either in money or a reduction in rail freights if the company carried out a scheme of housing its employees. The idea was that if the company built homes there would be an attraction for married men and their families to go out there to work. He asked what was the possibility of getting a school and a teacher if there were sufficient children there. I told him that whilst I was only a rank-and-file member of the Government party, I knew that the different departments were eager to help pastoral companies in this direction, just as they had helped Mount Isa Mines. I told him that there was no difference so far as the Government were concerned between Mount Isa Mines and a pastoral company and that if his company set a housing programme in train the Government would be only too happy to help. I told the Secretary for Public Instruction of this and, being a western man, he knew the advantages to station people of having married people working on their properties and said that consideration would be given to the establishment of a school if sufficient children would attend. That is one way to help people to develop the northern and north-western parts of the State. I hope that the reports of these departmental officers will not be overlooked and that their suggestions will be carried out at the earliest

possible date, because by improving the State we improve the Commonwealth and the nation.

It has been said by some hon. members that the responsibility for the destruction of noxious weeds should rest on the land-owner but I share the view that the Crown also has a responsibility in this connection because many of the seed beds are found on Crown property. The seeds of noxious weeds and burrs are brought down by creeks and rivers and watercourses generally from a source of supply usually on Crown land. I was a member of the Cloncurry Shire Council for 10 or 12 years and I know that that local authority spent hundreds of pounds a year on the destruction of burr on council property and that many private land-owners carried out a programme of burr destruction on their own properties within the shire, but I also know that the seed supply of the noxious pests and weeds came from luxuriant growth on Crown property. Therefore I suggest that there should be co-ordination of effort between the Crown, the local authority and the land-owner in the destruction of noxious weeds.

I have always held the view that the destruction of noxious weeds and dingoes is a national matter, not one for the shires or the land-owner alone. I heard the hon. member for Fassifern say the other day that if a land-owner did not destroy the noxious weeds on his property to the satisfaction of the department or make some endeavour to do so the land should be taken from him, but from my knowledge of how abundantly noxious weeds have grown on Crown land I hold the view that the responsibility is not one for the local authorities and the land-owners only but should be shared under a scheme of co-ordinated responsibility between the Crown, the local authority and the land-owners. But I repeat that the destruction of noxious weeds and dingoes is a national matter. I hope that in the near future we can encourage the Commonwealth Government to join in the campaign for the destruction of pests on the lands of the State.

I come now to the dingo pest, which has been pretty bad in my area. I have written to the Minister on the subject. Men go out of their way to deal with the pest—to lay baits, set traps, or use other means of destroying it—but, no matter how it is destroyed or who destroys it its destruction creates a national benefit. Therefore the responsibility for its destruction is a national one.

Sometimes departmental officers in my area have split straws over the question of what constitutes a dingo scalp. In some instances the departmental officers have refused to pay the pound for a scalp brought to a local authority by a scalper. A dingo might pick up a bait, walk a good many miles to a waterhole, take a drink, when the poison will take effect, and die. The layer of the bait may not find the dead body of the dingo for three or four days or even a week, but in the meantime the carcass is attacked by ants, hawks and eagles and part of the scalp may be destroyed, including an ear. The

ear that is destroyed is usually the one nearer to the ground. The trapper scalps the dead dingo and there is one ear missing from the scalp. I have seen the departmental officer at Cloncurry refuse a scalp because an ear was missing. He contended that the scalp had been split, notwithstanding that the two nostrils were attached to it. In many instances these scalps are not sent into local-authority offices in the back areas immediately. There may be only a weekly service to the town and the mail contractor may not like carrying a parcel of dingo scalps that are several months old because of their smell. I know that very often because of the straw-splitting of departmental officers a scalp is rejected, and this discourages many people in the North-West from carrying out a policy of dingo destruction.

I will give you an illustration. Some time ago my lad, in company with three or four other lads, was travelling by motor-car from Mt. Isa to Cloncurry. They carried rifles. They saw a dingo and destroyed it. None were expert scalpers but took the scalp from the carcass to the best of their ability. It was found that the scalp taken was not according to regulations as part of one ear was missing. The shire clerk said to me, "There is a quid here for your lad." He paid me and I gave it to my lad, but within a couple of weeks, when the scalp was submitted to the departmental officer, he decided it was not a dingo scalp as part of one ear was missing. I have the correspondence on the matter.

I ask the Minister to look into this question with a view to taking some action to bring about uniformity in his officers' decisions on what is a dingo scalp. Every scalp is of importance, especially when we know of the ravages of the dingo in the Cloncurry district. I hope legislation will be introduced to define a dingo scalp more clearly. The scalps I mention were brought to the Cloncurry Shire Council's office, and quite a number of them have been seen by its members, some of whom are pastoralists.

I have seen domestic dogs doing greater damage than even the dingoes. If a domestic dog is operating on sheep outside the town boundary it is just as important that a pound should be placed on his scalp as on a dingo. It is high time that all concerned were stricter about the registration of domestic dogs. I do not agree with the hon. member for Roma that the Alsatian is the only destroyer of sheep. A person should be entitled to keep a dog in the western areas only if he conforms with the local-authority by-laws. I have heard arguments about the Alsatian dog, but I have seen fox terriers and sheep and cattle dogs do greater damage amongst sheep outside the town area than the dingoes have done. I feel that the matter of dingo destruction is something that should not be taken lightly. Even a domestic bitch going outside the town boundary and mating with a dingo may breed a type that would be a greater menace than the dingo.

I hope that legislation will be introduced to simplify the definition of a dingo scalp. At the present time many people have the outlook that it is not much use shooting a dingo if you are not going into town immediately, because you put the hide away and if vermin eat a piece of it, it may be declared to be not a dingo scalp. There has been an agitation among sheep men for the raising of the bonus for the dingo. I know that when there was a high price for kangaroo hides the destruction of the kangaroo was very great. In 1947, when kangaroo hides were bringing 7s., 8s. and 10s. for ordinary sizes and big hides were bringing 15s. to £1, I travelled approximately 3,000 miles during the election campaign and I hardly saw a kangaroo. Many graziers and kangaroo-shooters even suggested that the Government should be asked to bring in a close season for these animals. Kangaroo-shooting was a seasonal occupation. If the dingo bonus was raised for one year to £3 it would help greatly in the destruction of this vermin.

**Mr. TURNER** (Kelvin Grove) (4.23 p.m.): When I first came to this Parliament I realised that there were many things about which I knew very little, but after paying attention to debates I have learned a good deal. I have travelled as much as I could, and I have taken advantage of every opportunity offered to me by Ministers to visit the various parts of the State, and as a result I have been able to analyse the statements made by members on both sides of the Chamber. Because many members opposite have lived on the land I used to think they were real experts on all matters pertaining to the land, but I have learned that the officers of our department have been able to guide them on all aspects of land settlement.

I was interested to hear the hon. member for Nash giving an account of an experience that he had many years ago when he was Secretary for Public Lands. That was away back in 1929, I think, when the Government took over Mt. Abundance for closer settlement for returned soldiers. He called a public meeting, to take place in the town hall at Roma. The hall was packed with actual and prospective settlers and the community generally. The Minister put to the people in the hall, those who were opposed to the scheme, this question: what do you think is a living area on Mt. Abundance? And a second question: what do you consider a fair rental as to recoup the Government for the price the Government paid for the resumption? The settlers, who were professed experienced men, gave as their opinion 680 acres to 1,240 acres as a living area and to the second question about the rental they gave as their opinion 2s. 6d. an acre per annum. The opinion of the officers was then sought by the Minister, these officers who were termed by the so-called settlers only technical men without practical experience. The result bears out the statement of the hon. member for Barcoo that these officers did not get their experience sitting in an office in Brisbane but by being out in the distant areas

of the State. There they got practical experience and with the study they undertook they were able to obtain their diplomas. These so-called technical officers said that 2,000 acres was necessary for a living and to the second question they replied that the lessees could not possibly pay 2s. 6d. an acre a year for the land but could pay only 1s. 3d. to 1s. 7d., or roughly 50 per cent. less than the estimate of rental made by the settlers. However, the settlers went onto this land and within 12 months they were living on the doorstep of the Minister telling him that it was impossible to carry on with the areas allotted and they could not pay the prescribed rental.

These so-called technical men are the men who are today advising the Minister and I am prepared to listen to their advice for an additional reason. When the Bill dealing with the Queensland-British Food Corporation was going through the House I listened attentively to the speech made by the hon. member for Fassifern, who, being a practical man, made a very fine speech. He almost had me changing my mind and doubting whether we were doing the right thing by going on with the development of Peak Downs. Last year I visited Peak Downs and a week or so before several hon. members opposite visited the scheme. These hon. members were professed specialists in grain-growing.

At 3.30 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order, the questions for the following Votes were put by the Chairman and agreed to:—

	£	
Department of Public Lands and Irrigation—District Offices .. .. .	109,457	
Department of Public Lands and Irrigation—Balance of Votes .. .. .	666,421	
Department of the Treasurer	1,824,711	
Department of Agriculture and Stock .. .. .	536,682	
Department of Labour and Industry .. .. .	276,482	
Department of Justice .. .. .	676,698	
Department of Health and Home Affairs .. .. .	6,730,020	
Department of Public Instruction .. .. .	4,693,443	
Department of Mines and Immigration .. .. .	369,129	
Department of the Auditor-General .. .. .	61,754	
Trust and Special Funds ..	32,240,467	
Loan Fund Account ..	19,630,000	
Supplementary Estimates, 1949-1950—		
	£	s. d.
Revenue .. .. .	1,176,873	0 9
Trust and Special Funds .. .. .	1,161,281	6 4
Loan Fund Account	254,542	6 1
Vote on Account ..	14,000,000	0 0

**SEVENTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY—RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.**

Resolutions reported and, on motion of Mr. Foley, received.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.**

The Resolutions being taken as read—

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Acting Treasurer): I move—

“That the Resolutions be now agreed to.”

Hon. members indicating a desire to discuss certain Resolutions—

Resolutions 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 agreed to.

Resolution 1—Legislative Assembly—

**Mr. JESSON** (Hinchinbrook) (3.38 p.m.): I want to make a few observations on this Vote because in the last few days we have had the spectacle of the hon. member for Kedron seeking to lower the prestige of this House. We know that he has been a very disappointed member of this Assembly. He came here a few years ago as an Independent with a great blare of trumpets and as the “Great I-am of Hamilton.” Quite recently he announced to the people that Independents in this Assembly had only a nuisance value; of course, he has put himself in that category now. Believe me, the hon. member for Kedron has been a nuisance in this House ever since he came here—a nuisance only to himself. By his tactics he has adopted the Fascist trick of trying to lower the prestige of Parliament and to make out that people do not agree with democratic government. We have had this spectacle over the years. I do not like attacking an hon. member in his absence, but he should be here. He is being paid a considerable sum of money by the taxpayers and he should be here, and consequently I feel that anything I have to say can be said in his absence.

To show how the prestige of this Assembly has been lowered, I would remind hon. members that it is not so very long ago when if an hon. member interjected during a speech being made by the hon. member for Kedron he would invite the interjector outside the House. After all is said and done, no matter how a subject is argued or debated from either side of the House, whether the viewpoint is right or wrong, each member is entitled to express his own opinion. But the hon. member for Kedron would challenge another hon. member to come outside. He has challenged me on several occasions to come outside.

**Mr. Sparkes:** And you stayed in the Chamber.

**Mr. JESSON:** My word I did, but if I had been 10 years younger I should not have stayed in the Chamber. As a matter of fact, I am not too proud to go outside with the hon. member for Aubigny now.

What I was saying was that no matter how a subject is argued in the Chamber, from one side or the other, whether the debate is good or bad, that is no reason

why an hon. member should challenge another to go outside the Chamber. If I had gone out, the hon. member for Kedron would have belted the life out of me, but that does not mean he would have won the argument, except by fisticuffs. Why should any hon. member lower his dignity and prestige when he loses an argument by resorting to fisticuffs? When the hon. member's resignation from this House is received the House will be the better for it.

I have no great love for the Liberal Party, but I have a great deal of respect for its present leader, the hon. member for Coorparoo. I have a high regard for him and to think that a person in the class of the hon. member for Kedron should make insinuations and belittle hon. members in this House by his irresponsible interviews with the Press without even discussing the matter with his party is beyond my comprehension. He did not even discuss the matter with his party and the majority of the people of Queensland will not mourn his passing from this august chamber.

I very much deplore the leader in today's “Courier-Mail” about this unfruitful session, according to that paper. I say quite candidly, and I think every hon. member will agree, that this session of Parliament has been a very good one, and much good work has been done for the people of Queensland. The standard of the debate has been high. I compliment the Press, the “Telegraph” and the “Courier-Mail,” on having given wide publicity to the debates, but I deplore the leader in the “Courier-Mail” today.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Pity him!

**Mr. JESSON:** I look upon the leader-writer of the “Courier-Mail” in sorrow and with sympathy and with no hatred at all. I think he has a wrong conception of things. As a matter of fact, I say quite candidly that I believe the leader-writer of the “Courier-Mail” receives more money than the Premier of this State, while private members here have had to battle along on the breadline for years. Let me say quite candidly to hon. members that the salary of a private member was £750 in 1929.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. JESSON:** My point is that our salaries have gone up by virtually only £300 in the last 18 years. I repeat that the leader-writer of the “Courier-Mail” gets more money than any private member of Parliament. Let me say this too; that the cost of advertising has gone up by over 100 per cent., and not only that but they have increased the price of the paper by one penny. They have a circulation of over 300,000 copies a day; what a nice rake-off at a penny extra a copy! We admit that wages have gone up too, but it is very paltry for a respectable newspaper to have this last dying shot, you might call it, regarding the increase in members' salaries.

I will not discuss the question further. I read the article in the “Courier-Mail” with a great deal of indignation. When listening

in on the wireless on Sunday night I heard of the resignation from the Liberal Party of the hon. member for Kedron, and his projected departure from this Chamber with a great deal of gratification and joy, because I know exactly how the hon. member feels. He has tried to ride roughshod over everybody. He is not a party man. I cannot understand the hon. member because he states that Independents have a nuisance value only. Why, he is not even loyal to his own leader!

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the hon. member to keep to the resolution—Legislative Assembly—under discussion.

**Mr. JESSON:** I would not depart from the resolution for the world, as you know, Mr. Speaker. I do not do that sort of thing. My object all the time is to uphold the prestige of this Parliament. The point I wish to make is that the hon. member for Kedron, who is an individual with personality, came into this Chamber as an Independent member. Then he took great pride in being a member of the Queensland Peoples Party. Then he kicked the Lord Mayor of Brisbane out of the party and assumed the leadership. Now he is not even loyal to his own party in this House.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. JESSON:** My object in rising was to refer to the article in the "Courier-Mail." The leader-writer had very little to do in writing the leading article this morning. He said that this House was heading for recess and a long holiday. You, Mr. Speaker, as one of the working members of this House, know that we work all the year round. Immediately the House adjourns our work becomes more intense than when it is sitting. We are called on to travel to the distant parts of the State to meet our constituents and then return and make representations on their behalf to the various departments. In that respect we are unlike the hon. member for Kedron, for when the House rises his work ceases. His whole conception of the work of a member of Parliament is wrong and I only rose to let the public know the true facts.

Resolution 1—Executive and Legislative—agreed to.

Resolution 6—Department of Public Lands and Irrigation (Balance of Department)—

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR** (Clayfield) (3.48 p.m.): I was hoping that during the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation we might reach the Vote for the sub-department of Irrigation and Water Supply, in which I have taken a special interest in the last few years. I want to deal mainly with one subject, that is, the problem the Government experience in getting and holding engineers, and, if the opportunity presents itself, I may refer to the Dawson Valley project. This is a rather important Vote, because it asks for an appropriation of 50 per cent. more money than was expended last year. I have been favoured with a copy of the last report of the Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply and I expect that he will be engaging in some very important undertakings in the coming year.

Throughout the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation we heard the Minister talking about the difficulty of getting technical officers, such as surveyors and engineers. That is possibly the Government's greatest problem. Engineers for irrigation and other works are extremely scarce. Earlier in the session I asked how many engineers had joined the department since the resignation of the previous Commissioner till 30 June, a period of seven months, and how many had left the service during that period. I was informed that 12 engineers had been engaged and 10 had left. Naturally one immediately suspected that those who left might have been offered better positions in the Snowy River project, so I inquired and I found that since the departure of the previous Commissioner only one engineer from Queensland has gone to the Snowy River project. That accounts for one of 10, so the Commonwealth Government and the Snowy River project cannot be blamed for taking engineers away from this department, the exception being Mr. Munro. I notice by the last report that although that gentleman left seven months earlier up to 30 June the commission had not been able to replace him. It is extremely serious that the Government are not able to replace the chief mechanical engineer in a period of seven months.

I want to tell you why the Government do not get engineers and why they do not seem to hold them when they do get them. I want to take the position of the university student who sets out to follow a profession. I think I quoted the instance of a university student who had made up his mind to become a water engineer. During the period of his study a friend of mine spoke to him and asked him how he was getting on and he said that he had given away the idea of being an engineer. He said, "I find the Queensland Government have introduced a Bill permitting dentists to practise when they are 21 years of age, and I know that when I pass my dental examinations I can immediately go into practice and earn £1,000 a year at 21." We all know that the young engineer who leaves the university at 25 years of age cannot earn more than about £600 a year; and it is only natural these young men look to the future. I have chatted with young engineers on various projects and I have talked with them about their ambitions. Every one of them is ambitious and aspires to the top position, but he finds that the amount paid to the senior man ranges from £1,500 to £2,000, which is not in line with the amount paid to other professions, consequently he hesitates to enter upon this profession because he believes the prospects are not satisfactory.

We have the spectacle in Australia of Governments competing with one another for men trained in engineering. Not only are the Queensland Government in this position of not being able to get engineers, but other authorities are similarly placed, and they have sent to England in an endeavour to get them. When in Sydney a month or so ago I heard of a meeting in London of selecting officers for two authorities in Australia. They were

chatting about the success they were having in getting engineers for their respective authorities. They found that although they were empowered to go to London and suggest to an engineer that he might come to Australia for a £1,500 a year job the engineers they were approaching were already getting £2,000 and £2,500 a year. The demand for men was not only greater than the supply but the demand had to be supplied from highly-paid technical men. We must face up to that fact. If the Government want to buy a motor-car for which the price is fixed they do not argue with the distributors about a reduction of the price to one they are willing to pay. They pay the price fixed. The price for highly qualified technical men of the sort we require in this State is high and if we want them we must pay it. We must disregard the question of what the repercussions might be throughout the Public Service. We know that the Government are concerned because they think that if they pay one set of technical men what appears to be an abnormally high salary every other set of technical men will contend that they are just as valuable and require a similar salary. We must get the men and consequently we have to pay them.

The class of work these engineers are engaged on is another reason why they are justified in demanding a high salary. Engineers, unlike other professional men such as doctors, dentists and barristers, do not live in comfortable surroundings with all the amenities provided by a city. The engineer has first to get a training in the field and there he lives a comparatively rough life. These young engineers, if they see that when they reach the top of their profession they will be suitably rewarded, are willing in the spirit of adventure, to go and live in the less comfortable surroundings in which the engineer is obliged to live while working to the top of his profession.

The number of men required must necessarily be great, because of the amount that is asked for in the Vote, which, as I said, is 50 per cent. greater than last year. I believe Mr. Lang when he wrote in his first annual report of 1947-48 that there is good reason to believe that ultimately the total irrigated area of Queensland will be greater than any other State and it is important that this House and the public should know the results that come from irrigated areas. When Mr. Lang wrote his report there were 92,000 acres of Queensland under irrigation but today I understand the acreage has risen to 98,000. At that time the annual value of production from those 92,000 acres was £8,000,000, and the total production from agriculture in Queensland was £25,000,000, and we had 1,900,000 acres producing. So that the irrigation of less than one-twentieth of the agricultural lands enabled them to produce almost one-third of the total value of production. That is why I rose to speak. The value of irrigation to this State is enormous.

On Sunday next, accompanied by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I shall go down to the Snowy River project, because ultimately that is going to be the largest

irrigation project in Australia. As I said during the debate on the Financial Statement, nine-tenths of the Snowy River proposal means getting water from the mountains out to the west of New South Wales while one-tenth deals with the generation of electricity. So important do I think that project is and so desirable is it that every hon. member of this Parliament should go down along the Murray from Mildura to Yarrowonga right through the Murrumbidgee irrigation area and see what is being done in other States, and then return to the Burdekin, Theodore, and Dimbulah areas to see what can be done here that I make the suggestion that every hon. member of this Assembly should be invited to inspect the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Snowy River hydro-electric authority and see the production results of water conservation and the organised distribution of water. As a precedent for a mass Parliamentary inspection like that, I quote the fact that when the 16 nations involved in the European recovery plan asked the American Congress for 19.3 billion dollars to institute the Marshall plan, 200 Congressmen of the United States crossed the Atlantic to study and master the facts. I use that as a precedent in justifying my suggestion that every hon. member of this Parliament, during the recess period, when the people think we do nothing, should go out on these visits to these large projects and see what has been done elsewhere and what could be done in Queensland.

Even the traditional isolationist farmers of the Middle West of the United States of America formed their own unofficial group and booked passages to Europe to study the advisability of the Marshall Plan. Their experience, as would be the experience of every hon. member of this Parliament, had a remarkable effect upon their thinking and the Bill passed through Congress with an unnaturally large majority because Democrats, Republicans, Isolationists, indeed all parties, voted on the same side.

If the hon. members of this Parliament could see, as I have done, the development that has taken place in the irrigation activities in northern Victoria and southern New South Wales, they would come back as convinced as I am that irrigation offers a great future to this State. There would be no hesitation about voting for money for irrigation.

**Mr. Power:** There is not now.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** There would be a greater demand by hon. members on both sides and a greater amount of activity in getting the men to carry out the projects. By his interjection the Secretary for Mines suggests that I am questioning the right or the justification for the Government's request for an appropriation of 50 per cent. more than last year. I should probably ask for a greater appropriation. (Government interjections.) In reply to the hon. member for Hinchinbrook, who said something about Victoria lending itself more to irrigation than Queensland, I quote what Mr. Lang said. He said that this State will become the greatest irrigation State of all. We have to move

faster than we have been. The Secretary for Mines suggests that I am complaining about the amount of money asked for, but what I am complaining about is the progress the department makes. Each time we ask a question we get the same answer—"We have not got the men; we have not got the engineers; and we cannot get surveyors." There is only one answer to that—pay them. Let us offer these technical men the salaries that the rest of the world is prepared to pay them, and I think we shall get them.

I have made it my business to go through a few areas in Queensland and the last one I visited was the Theodore or Dawson Valley project. I am very keen to see the development of that area, because it is one of which we have all the data, all the surveys, and we have some idea of the production possibilities. Why, I have even seen irrigated pastures, and I am hoping and praying that some day I shall see irrigated pastures on the Burdekin. For two years we have been trying to make up our minds to grow irrigated pastures. There is inertia somewhere, and in those two years not much progress has been made in developing irrigated pastures in North Queensland, although it has been accomplished at Theodore. There does not seem to be much expansion, and I cannot see any greater expansion in the Dawson Valley this year than two years ago. The reports received do not suggest expansion. I am pleased indeed to see a picture of the new power-house under construction at Theodore. It is not before its time.

**Mr. Foley:** We have reclaimed a big area that was previously not an irrigation area.

**Mr. H. B. TAYLOR:** Probably reclaimed for dry farms. I read in this report that one whole mile of channelling had been done in 12 months. Is that a case of crawling before you walk? I rather think it is crawling all the time.

I refer to the Minister's own words, as contained in an article in the "Courier-Mail" of 1 August, 1949, a little over 15 months ago, in which he said that a full investigation was being made into the proposed Nathan Dam and the key storage scheme to cost £8,000,000 on the Dawson Valley. He explained that it was planned to hold 2,500,000 acre-feet of water and would irrigate 70,000 acres of land. Let me say in contrast that 22 years ago our Labour Government spent £1,053,057, including £404,436 for a railway extension, on the Dawson Valley irrigation works. One settler still retains the attractive booklet that invited him to come and "make his home in the Valley of Content" and "grow with Queensland." It was contended also the Dawson Valley was "destined a decade hence to be the heart of rural Queensland" and it would establish 5,000 farms and provide a livelihood for 50,000 persons. Were the Government then justified in neglecting this project? That was the story told about it then and it is the same sort of story today. What has happened? The progress has been so very limited that I fear it is not satisfactory.

In conclusion, I say that I am anxious to see the Government develop the Nathan Dam project because I wish to see irrigation extended in an area where surveys have already been made and we know what that country will produce. That should be the first project, it should receive Priority No. 1, before some of these highly coloured projects are brought before the Government.

In 1944 the Bureau of Investigation headed by Mr. Kemp made the trip that I suggested a while ago, and it should be taken by every hon. member. It was because Mr. Kemp and his colleagues came back to Queensland convinced that the future of this State was wrapped up in the establishment of irrigation projects quickly that the Burdekin scheme was born.

I want to see irrigated pastures developed as quickly as possible and Theodore is the first place to establish them with reasonable prospect of success. In that area we should be fattening cattle as rapidly as possible, developing it by irrigation so that we can get the benefits that irrigation can give.

**Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (4.15 p.m.):** I do not wish to take up the time of hon. members unduly but I do wish to reply to the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, who made a remarkable statement. He said that practical men on the land were asking for a higher rent for their land than officers of the Department of Public Lands placed on it. I want to tell the hon. member that most of my time in the court-house has been spent in contesting the rents placed on my land by those officers. In not one instance have my estimates been higher than those of the department. The hon. member has been misled.

I want to tell the hon. member, too, as to this alleged big meeting in Roma, that it is advisable for him to go to Roma, to consult the hon. member for Roma, when he will find that the meeting he spoke of was held in a very small room that would be filled by 10 or 15 people. Officers of the Department of Public Lands will bear me out that in most instances the agitation to cut up resumed holdings into small areas can be traced to over-zealous townspeople, not country people.

I just wish to make these few remarks to put the hon. member right, as it would appear that he wants to go on the land. If he does so he will be a much wiser man after 12 months' practical experience than he is today.

**Mr. TURNER (Kelvin Grove) (4.17 p.m.):** I was very interested in the speech delivered by the hon. member for Clayfield. Queensland's hope and salvation lies in irrigation and water supply. I thought the hon. member would have mentioned the remarkable experience of Ballarat, that the people do not pay any water rates because the timber reserves on the water-supply area provide sufficient funds to compensate the department for all water and reticulation work that the people of Ballarat require. There will be areas in the Burdekin project that will be capable of carrying some of our soft timbers, particularly as soft timbers

thrive on a plentiful supply of water, and that will not be useful for pastoral or agricultural purposes.

I was interested to hear the hon. member for Barcoo relate some of his experiences. I, too, have had such experiences. It would do a lot of townspeople good if they saw what the people of the West had to endure, of going to a little waterhole that once held water and finding in it dozens of bodies of dead beasts, which had gone there to quench their thirst and perished because the water had evaporated. Water conservation will be the salvation of this country. I should like to see millions of pounds available for water conservation, not only on the Burdekin but in many other places. When I have observed the Barron Falls in the height of the wet season, and seen the spray come over the train as it passed the falls I have wondered why that water was not dammed up towards its source, as a standby in dry weather to keep the turbines of the hydro-electric scheme going.

The conservation of water should not be left to the Government alone, it should be a question for both the large landholder and the financial institutions that get all the benefit from that work. Last year our wool cheque amounted to £45,000,000. The woolbrokers engaged in receiving and handling the clip, charge the grower and the purchaser who buys it, approximately 9s. a bale in various charges, and on top of those charges a commission of 1½ per cent. is charged on any clip over £500. Last year the clip was worth £45,000,000 and their rake-off would be in the vicinity of £400,000. Surely some of that money should be made available for providing water facilities for cattle and sheep. These people also get a commission for selling cattle.

**Mr. Ewan:** They pay taxation the same as anybody else.

**Mr. TURNER:** Everyone knows that. The hon. member sticks to these people, although they bite his hand. Everything he possesses he owes to the Labour Government of Queensland, but he will stick to these men, who are fleecing him at every opportunity. These people should be called upon to provide water facilities. All these people are not on Crown land; some of them are on private holdings. I hope the Government will in the near future bring down legislation to compel these people to put water on their areas. The Secretary for Public Instruction interjected when the hon. member for Barcoo was talking and said that he had known cattle go 40 miles to get water. What a tragedy! That happens because these people take everything off the land and put nothing back into it. Take Peak Downs; it was absolutely destroyed as far as sheep production was concerned. The country was eaten out and the owners laughed at the Government when they paid them their price because they thought they had put one over the Government, but our officers knew that the land could be rehabilitated. If we continue to take the advice of our expert officers we shall do much to avoid the disasters that have occurred in the past, when millions of sheep and thousands of cattle perished.

The hon. member for Barcoo gave us some idea how long cattle could live without food and how short a time they can live without water. Great losses would be prevented if we had more water conservation. If the people knew how long a drought was going to continue they could bring the sheep in to be slaughtered before they lost condition, but after a time the sheep became too poor to move them. Men are paid to pluck the wool off the dead sheep, but its value is not as great as if the sheep were shorn alive.

For the information of the hon. member for Aubigny I repeated what was said in this Chamber by the hon. member for Nash, whose reputation will stand the most minute scrutiny and who cannot reasonably be charged with making a false statement. That hon. member said the town hall of Roma was filled with settlers and the general public, and if, as the hon. member for Aubigny says, there were only 10 there the hon. member for Nash must have been in a trance. If there is one man in this Parliament on whom everyone can rely it is the hon. member for Nash. I would retell what he stated in 1949. It can be confirmed by a perusal of "Hansard" by any hon. member who cares to read. The hon. member for Aubigny was present in the Chamber when the hon. member made the statement, but he did not contradict him then.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR** (Balonne) (4.26 p.m.): I have listened to a great deal in this Chamber this session about closer settlement. I believe in closer settlement in certain instances but in some cases I am opposed to it. I am only giving my personal view on this matter. I know, and every other hon. member knows, that at the present time a royal commission is going into these matters and the recommendations of the commission will go to Cabinet and Cabinet will decide what is to be done. I believe that Noondoo for example, should be cut up.

**Mr. Ewan:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** It belongs to a big firm.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Are you speaking for the Government or yourself?

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** If the hon. member had been listening he would have heard what I said. I repeat that these are my personal views. At present a royal commission in Queensland is considering what should be eventually done with holdings but I believe that Noondoo should revert to the Crown.

**Mr. Sparkes:** You know what you will get for saying that.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I shall not get anything. Fortunately, we on this side are allowed to state our views but members of the Opposition are not allowed to do that. I repeat that these are my personal views. I believe this holding should be cut up. In certain circumstances I do not believe in

cutting up these areas, especially in districts where the country is rough and not suitable for closer settlement.

I have frequently stated in this Chamber that mistakes have been made by this Government and other Governments when they have subdivided the land into areas that were too small. In the past areas have been cut up in such a way that they did not leave the people on the land sufficient stability in drought periods. I know of land that will run one sheep to 4 acres or 5 acres in good times but in my opinion we must give the grazier or selector sufficient land to carry him over drought periods. It is not much use assessing the carrying capacity in a good season because when a bad season comes along the land is eaten out before the selector knows where he is and when the drought hits him he is in a bad way. The paddocks are eaten out and there is not sufficient grass to keep his sheep or cattle alive. I believe that in the past the mistake has been made by this Government of cutting up land into holdings that were too small and in future consideration should be given to what is really a living area and in addition we should have a safe carrying capacity prescribed for whoever draws that piece of land. It cannot be disputed that the prosperity of the State is governed by the prosperity of the people on the land.

This vote covers also the Department of Irrigation. Every time the opportunity presents itself I consistently advocate irrigation because I believe it will be the salvation of this country. If more irrigation was undertaken by both the private person and the Government, a good deal more could be produced from the land. In the electorate I represent, we shall be very fortunate in the weirs that we shall have. There is one under construction at Surat, another at St. George, a third at Dirranbandi, and a fourth at Mungindi. When these are completed—the wet weather has delayed the work—they will be of tremendous benefit.

But the private person could do much to help himself. Mr. K. B. Cameron has done a magnificent job at Thallon, but it was suggested the other day that the Government had interfered. That is not correct. Mr. Cameron admits that the Government helped him considerably and certainly did nothing to prevent him from building the weir.

**Mr. Kerr:** After he had done it.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** That is not so. I have been to Bullamon Plains on several occasions and watched this weir grow. I am very pleased that it is in my electorate, and Mr. Cameron has done a marvellous job. He has invested something like £30,000 in the work and he has told me that he has had many conferences with the Minister and Mr. McLean and on each occasion on which he has sought aid from the Government he has met with success.

**Mr. Ewan:** He had many conferences with Mr. Bell, too.

**Mr. J. R. TAYLOR:** I do not know about that, but I do know that he rarely comes to

Brisbane without going to see the Minister, Mr. McLean, and me. He was with the Minister this morning. After he had been talking to the hon. member for Roma the other day he told me he was quite satisfied with what the Government had done. The hon. member for Roma has not seen the job and therefore cannot know anything about it. If we had more men following Mr. Cameron's example we should have much more prosperity in this State than we have. Many of our creeks and streams lend themselves to weiring and if others followed Mr. Cameron's example this State would benefit considerably. I congratulate Mr. Cameron on what he has done, for he has safeguarded himself for all time against drought.

**Mr. EWAN (Roma) (4.34 p.m.):** I feel that I should rise mainly to reply to the ridiculous statements made by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove. He makes unsophisticated statements, rushing in where angels fear to tread, because he lacks practical knowledge. To the practical man the statements he makes are, to say the least of it, laughable. He takes the words out of the mouths of practical men like the hon. members for Barcoo, Aubigny and Condamine and he talks about beasts walking 40 miles to water as if it were an everyday occurrence.

**Mr. Turner:** Rubbish.

**Mr. EWAN:** The hon. member says "Rubbish" because he knows no better. You will always notice, Mr. Speaker, that the man who knows nothing about a problem is always the first to offer a palliative for it. We have had these cure-all suggestions advanced over many years in the grazing industry by such men as the hon. member for Kelvin Grove and others. The hon. member for Barcoo knows what he is talking about and he would not tell you that it is the usual thing for cattle to walk 40 miles.

**Mr. Turner:** Neither did I.

**Mr. EWAN:** That sort of thing happens once in every 25 or 30 years.

Let me tell the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, in regard to his laudatory remarks about departmental officers, that theoretical training, highly desirable as it may be, stands for naught in the school of practical application because over a period of years, no matter how practical you are you will find that you have to review your previous ideas by virtue of the many aspects of experience on the land. Take the early part of the twenties. In 1915 we had a bad drought throughout the State. 1929 was a bad year in western areas; 1930 was also pretty bad and in 1940-1946 we had the big drought. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that water improvements that were classed by our forefathers as permanent for 80 or 90 years were proved not to be permanent. We found waterholes in the inland rivers of the State dried up, a state of affairs that had never occurred before in the history of white men. It is all very well for these gentlemen who have no practical experience to offer suggestions, but it is a different matter when you get out in the West and start to work for a period of years. Let me also tell you, Mr. Speaker,

that native timbers died out in the 1940-1946 drought but yet we have men—glib of tongue with no practical experience—expressing opinions. Gracious me, I would liken them to the vapourings of a child.

We have heard the hon. member for Balonne talking about the findings of the royal commission appointed to inquire into land matters. Looking at the personnel of that commission we find Messrs. Crosser, Bell and Creighton, Mr. Dufficy, an A.W.U. organiser, and one practical man, Mr. McLean. Theorists, with one practical man, are taking evidence from practical men or from those people the hon. member for Kelvin Grove told us about when he said that a committee took evidence from the townspeople of Roma with regard to Mt. Abundance.

**Mr. Turner:** You were there.

**Mr. EWAN:** I did not live in Roma in 1916; the hon. member's interjection marks his statements as unreliable. All that royal commissions do is to place before the Government the views expressed before them and unless practical men come forward and give their views and their experience to royal commissions, the findings of such are well-nigh worthless. Furthermore, without digressing to reply to inane interjections, I would ask what cognisance the Government have given to the findings of royal commissions? What cognisance did they take of the Payne report, perhaps the finest report on land matters ever put up to this or any other Queensland Government? What became of it? It was pigeon-holed and no cognisance was taken of it whatsoever. I venture to say that the Royal Commission on the Pastoral Lands Settlement that is now sitting will serve only one useful purpose and that will be to help hon. members opposite to make speeches and so clutter up the pages of "Hansard."

The hon. member for Balonne gave us a great deal of detail about irrigation, as though he were the father of irrigation. He talked about Mr. K. B. Cameron. Mr. K. B. Cameron is to be congratulated on the magnificent irrigation scheme he has undertaken. Do not forget that I made the statement that Mr. Cameron had succeeded with his scheme in spite of the opposition offered to it in its early stages. Mr. Cameron built an earth dam across the river and what happened? Departmental officers were sent out to instruct him to take the dam away and he refused. So amazed were they when they saw the dam that they came back and reported the matter to higher officials in Brisbane who were in turn equally amazed, so that the Government decided to give Mr. Cameron some assistance.

**Mr. Collins:** What is wrong with that?

**Mr. EWAN:** That is splendid. If some of the lesser lights than Mr. Cameron had not been overawed by the threats to have the dam taken out other people might have been encouraged to go in for this highly desirable work that Mr. Cameron undertook. Goodness gracious me, if you want to put a

dam across any watercourse you have to go through certain formalities and the average country man, perhaps not well educated, does not understand the various Acts and when he meets obstruction to his schemes he says, "I will give it away." That is what happens.

**A Government Member:** Don't you run the country folk down.

**Mr. EWAN:** I treat the interjections from Government benches with silence, I ignore them. The intelligence shown by hon. members opposite is such that it does not call for a reply.

If you take a survey of the inland areas you will find that 99 per cent. of the landholders are looking after their land, developing it as it should be developed. We had the statement that some of the graziers were flogging the land and taking every bob out of it, but that statement is untrue. It maligns one of the finest sections of the community. If the Minister would make a survey of the area from Roma to St. George across to Cunnamulla and Quilpie and back to Charleville and along the western line I venture to say he would find thousands of miles of dog and rabbit netting fences erected and paid for by the lessees, hundreds of thousands of acres of ringbarked timber killed out and hundreds of watering facilities, permanent and not permanent. He would also see a considerable number of reasonably fine residences of which he, as Minister in charge of the department administering land matters, would be very proud.

I want to throw the lie back into the teeth of the people who say that those people are taking the best out of the land without regard for the Crown estate. Not 1 per cent. of those engaged in the pastoral industry have been guilty of that charge.

**Mr. Collins:** Why were there more sheep and cattle in 1894 and 1896 than there are today?

**Mr. EWAN:** I have been angling for that interjection since I came into the House because I know that is the Minister's pet theory. I will tell the hon. gentleman why. If he is a practical man with sheep and cattle he will know that the carrying capacity of virgin country is greater during the first 10, 15 or 20 years than the rest of its life. I can take him out to some mulga country in the South-West where a sheep was carried to 4 or 5 acres for five years, and thereafter you would be lucky if you ran a sheep to 10 acres in the same country.

**Mr. Collins:** Shift to 1921. Was it still virgin country?

**Mr. EWAN:** I knew the Minister would walk in, boots and all. (Laughter.) Let me tell him that from 1921 to 1935 practically the whole of the south-western portion of the State was opened up and put under sheep. That is why the cattle population fell. Again, the Minister seems to lose sight of the fact that the north coast of Queensland—I know what I am talking about because I was looking through family records recently and my

grandfather had country up there—most of which is under sugar today, grew cattle in the early part of the century.

**Mr. Collins:** Rubbish!

**Mr. EWAN:** Right out to Dalby was all sheep and cattle. The Minister in his enthusiasm to bolster up his case says, "Because you did certain things to the land you cannot carry as many sheep and cattle in 1950 as you did in 1910."

**Mr. Collins:** I am asking you why, and you cannot tell me.

**Mr. EWAN:** I have told you, if you have any intelligence to listen to me. I am not going to say that the decline was due to an act of an unsympathetic Government because it was brought about by conditions over which neither this or any other Government had very little control, but I will say that the decline was complementary to unintelligent administration.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation) (4.49 p.m.): I was very interested in the suggestions and criticisms that have been offered. I will refer firstly with the remarks of the hon. member for Clayfield. He is very enthusiastic on irrigation. I know he has travelled through all the main irrigation centres throughout Australia with a view to improving his knowledge of that subject and I respect any suggestions that he offers on it. He has referred to the difficulty of obtaining engineers, particularly in the period since Mr. Lang left Queensland to take up a position with the Snowy River irrigation project. When Mr. Lang arrived in Queensland one of the first tasks I asked him to carry out was to examine the staff position and report to me, so that I could advise Cabinet what the position was and to what extent we could carry out irrigation projects here. At that time the position was not bright. For instance, we had approximately nine engineers in Division III., including all grades, nine assistant engineers, nine cadets and scholarship-holders, ten draftsmen, five on the survey staff and five on the hydrographic staff, four on the boring staff, nine works supervisors, and three employed at Roeklea and Theodore on what is known as plant inspection, making a total of 63 engineering and technical staff. Naturally one could come to no other conclusion but that we could not carry out much construction with a staff of that strength.

After receiving his report I reported the matter to Cabinet and I was given authority to go straight ahead and build up a staff in order to carry out some real irrigation work in this State. Mr. Lang visited Melbourne, Sydney and our own University and addressed young engineers who were just receiving their diplomas, and everything possible was done to make contact with engineers who worked with the various commissions and boards throughout Australia. He advertised extensively and also induced the Public Service Commissioner to raise the classification, but the response from engineers throughout Australia was very poor. The classification

was again raised, and then through an automatic classification for the whole of the service it was raised once more. The result is that whereas we had 63 when Mr. Lang took over, by June 1949 he had built the staff up to 154, and by June 1950 to 187. So hon. members will see, notwithstanding the remarks of the hon. member for Clayfield, that we have made remarkable progress in building up our engineering and technical staff.

Since that time Mr. Nimmo has taken the opportunity of addressing students at the Melbourne and Sydney universities and he has hopes that we shall be able to obtain some staff from those centres as time goes on. Our greatest difficulty has been in getting what are known as senior or experienced irrigation engineers. A large number of our staff are university graduates, with no practical experience, but notwithstanding that many of these young fellows who have had responsibility given to them on various jobs have carried out the work very satisfactorily to the department.

I would emphasise that while we were endeavouring to build up the staff we advertised every few months in an endeavour to gradually create interest throughout the Commonwealth. We had numerous applications from engineers in various parts of Australia, but then we had the spectacle of many of them, after being appointed to the positions applied for, the appointments gazetted, and the applicants notified by letter from the Public Service Commissioner, informing them of classification and salary—which of course they knew—showing these letters to their colleagues and the information eventually getting to the head of the commission or authority by which they were employed, with the result that the chiefs made recommendations to their principals to have the classification in that commission or authority lifted by £100 or £150 a year, thus making these Queensland appointees slightly better off than if they had brought themselves and families to Queensland. That happened in dozens and dozens of instances, not once or twice.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** You say there were dozens of instances like that?

**Mr. FOLEY:** Absolutely dozens of instances; not one or two. I know that on one occasion I had before me two foolscap pages enumerating each person concerned, the job applied for, the appointment, and the resignation. I quote this as an illustration of the difficulty that faces us in building up a staff. We have raised the classification on three occasions, I think it is, to where it is today, but if we are going to embark on a system of competition with departments in other States employing irrigation engineers, hon. members can well imagine what the bill will be. A former Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, Mr. Lang, thought he was very well off when he left Victoria and accepted a position in Queensland, for which the salary was £1,700 a year, moving up by annual increments to £2,000 a year. A Mr. Hudson was appointed to take charge of the Snowy River project and was looking

round for an associate engineer. He advertised throughout Australia, but applicants were not of the standard he required. He then made a personal offer, and received support for this, first by telegram and then by letter to Mr. Lang, offering a salary of £3,000 a year.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Mr. Lang told you and the Premier that he was not interested in the salary.

**Mr. FOLEY:** He did mention that fact.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** He was put on the job of building weirs and he was not given a major job.

**Mr. FOLEY:** In Queensland the major jobs would have developed had Mr. Lang had a little patience, but I am afraid the inducement of £3,000 a year, compared with £1,700 a year, rising to £2,000 a year, was the main consideration.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** It was not.

**Mr. FOLEY:** If it was not the only factor that induced him to accept the position, at least hon. members will agree it was a powerful factor that would have had an effect upon most men in Mr. Lang's position.

This question has been put before Cabinet from time to time. Cabinet has asked me to make inquiries as to whether it is possible to obtain experienced irrigation and other engineers in America, Great Britain, India, or any other part of the world. Those inquiries are being made by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, who will possibly recommend that we make offers to certain men.

The classifications at present are—

Chief Engineer—£1,155, rising to £1,405.

Deputy Chief Engineer—£1,105, rising to £1,305.

Senior Construction Engineer—£1,080, rising to £1,280.

Senior Engineers—£1,035, rising to £1,250.

Executive Engineers—£995, rising to £1,080.

Grade I Engineers—£880, rising to £1,005.

Grade II Engineers—£730, rising to £885.

Grade III Engineers—£630, rising to £740.

The Grade III engineers are young men who have really just received their diplomas from the University.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** What would be the approximate age of those men?

**Mr. FOLEY:** Approximately 23, 25 or 27, depending on the age at which they passed through their five years at the university.

I do not say for a minute that these classifications are all that is to be desired, but I can assure hon. members that with the rising costs of today we are at our wits' end to know how to pay the present classifications in all Government departments. We

are increasing railway fares, and royalties on timber, and endeavouring in other ways to raise the funds necessary to meet our ever-increasing salaries bill.

I agree with the hon. member for Clayfield on the value to this State of irrigation. The more one studies the question the more convinced one becomes of the enormous possibilities for development and carrying increased population there are in the application of irrigation to our land. It has been pointed out by our engineers that the annual discharge into the sea from our rivers equals 96,000,000 acre-feet or 48 per cent. of the total discharge of the whole of the river system of Australia. One can visualise what a tremendous thing it would be for this State, apart from mitigating flood, if we could develop our organisation rapidly to dam our rivers and streams.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** That figure is misleading.

**Mr. FOLEY:** It is not misleading at all.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** You could not stop all the water from going out of the rivers.

**Mr. FOLEY:** You can. The hon. member for Clayfield referred to the Dawson Valley project. If one has seen the Dawson in flood one can visualise the tremendous volume that comes down the Dawson Valley and one would never believe that it was possible to harness the Dawson River at Nathan Gorge. It is an enormous river system and if this can be done on the Dawson we could do something similar on some of our other river systems. I have received from the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply a preliminary report on the possibilities of finding a site on the Dawson River adjacent to the old Nathan Gorge where we could hold back this enormous quantity of water. All the old records have been reviewed by the present staff and there have been extensive surveys all along the river and the department has correlated all the old surveys and the whole of the findings are embodied in the report I mentioned. That has been taken to Cabinet and Cabinet has given the go-ahead signal for the preliminary investigations that are necessary in all such schemes. We have to find foundations and although it is contended on the geological investigation made by some engineers that they can find a suitable structure that will have sufficient strength to support a big dam to hold back the water, we have to carry out boring and drilling operations before we know where we are.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** The old dam site has been put aside.

**Mr. FOLEY:** This is adjacent to the old dam site; there is no great distance between the two. That work is going on and I emphasise these points: a rough estimate of the cost of the job is approximately £8,000,000 and as a result a tremendous area of land will be put under cultivation; it is estimated that it will increase the annual production by at least £1,500,000 and population by approximately 7,000 or 8,000. I quote those

figures from memory to indicate, as the hon. member for Clayfield says, the enormous possibilities for irrigation in this State.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** It could be another Mildura.

**Mr. FOLEY:** That is true. Reference was made to the fact that there has been no great progress at Theodore. As hon. members know, Theodore was part of the Dawson Valley irrigation scheme and the Nathan Gorge was to be the site of the dam. It was to be the major dam and all the valuable lands along the river were to be irrigated by gravitation from the dam but the scheme fell through because of faulty foundations and the lack of funds to go on with the work necessary to find a better site. We are reviving the matter. The Theodore proposal was really the first stage of the scheme, more or less on an experimental basis. Naturally, this small experimental project could not be expected to carry the heavy capital cost involved in building a road from Wandoan to the dam site and a railway from Baralaba or thereabouts into Theodore.

It is also unfair, when one knows the whole of the circumstances, to throw back at the Government the capital cost involved. The original settlers started, or at least some of them did, claiming to have a knowledge of everything about irrigation, while a few of the wiseheads listened to the advice of the engineers and graded their land and they were the ones who were successful. They are there today. Those who did not do that virtually had to hump their swags off the place, having gone broke in the process. Since then the idea has caught on and today we go so far as to help them to grade the land on payment of a reasonable cost. Today you will find that all the areas irrigated are thoroughly graded and the settlers are getting a good return from the land. There was a part of the area that was under water during times of flood and could not be used for either dry-farming, except in a very dry year, or for irrigation. We have been working for a number of years without incurring any huge expenditure and we have built a levee on the bank that will enable us to reclaim this flooded area of about 600 acres for irrigation in the very near future.

**Mr. H. B. Taylor:** Has there been any extension of that levee bank this year?

**Mr. FOLEY:** Yes, it has been going on all the time. I understand that another bank is to be erected in another part of the district to reclaim some more land and naturally that will improve the development and returns in Theodore.

The old steam plant, which originally was secondhand, has now been in operation for many years and engineers have been almost unable to understand how the engine-drivers have kept it going so long. However, they have done so but now a new power-house has been built; it is almost completed and the machinery will be coming to hand gradually. It will not be long now before a switch-over is made to the new power-house.

The Moura weir, which is part of the irrigation scheme, was built during the war period. Mr. Kemp had the idea that it was a waste of money just to build the bridge across the river for the Moura highway and that it would be better to have a combination of works, the bridge and the weir, and so they were constructed. It remained idle for quite a while because we could not get the labour required but it is in use today and is being used by the Queensland-British Food Corporation for the production of necessary fodder and it will pay its way as time goes on.

We went through a very dry period in 1948, I think, when our water supply got to a ridiculously low and dangerous point and we had to pump water from areas right away from the Theodore dam itself. To overcome that in the future we are building what is known as the Binda weir, a few miles out of Theodore. Work there has already started, and at a later period we shall be able to carry out some very fine work there.

I could go on for a couple of hours without any difficulty outlining just what the Government are doing at various other points in works associated with water conservation. Other main works in the Dawson Valley irrigation area to be carried out this financial year are—

Continuation of construction of Binda Weir near Theodore ..	£ 20,000
Moura irrigation area .. ..	45,000
New irrigation area in the Dawson Valley near Theodore .. ..	10,000
Improvements to Hotel Theodore ..	8,461
New houses, extensions to existing houses at Theodore .. ..	6,454
Grading lands, purchase meter wheels, levee bank, etc. .. ..	6,500
New aerodrome .. ..	4,000
Town water supply .. ..	7,000

It is not a programme of works that hon. members will contend can be carried out in any one financial year. As will be observed, provision is made to the Loan Fund Estimates for the construction of weirs and irrigation and water-supply projects at an expenditure of £407,000. This includes the project on the Walsh River, which embraces the preliminary work on the Nullinga dam at a cost of £10,000; the Leafgold weir, a concrete weir below Dimbulah, £55,000; the Solanum weir, below Dimbulah, £16,000; Eureka Creek weir, £16,000; provision for the completion of the Tinaroo Creek weir at a cost of £4,207; a further low weir near Gumlu on Molongle Creek, £1,796. Provision is also made for the construction of the Marian weir on the Pioneer River at a cost of £46,000.

On the Nogoia we are at present constructing a weir, the actual cost of which will be approximately £49,000.

I now turn to the Burnett River basin. Here we are expending £10,377 on the Mundubbera weir; £10,000 on the Silverloaf weir, £6,074 on the Nanango weir, £7,621 on the

Monal Creek weir, and £4,019 on the Mulgeldie weir. It is estimated that the construction of a concrete weir on the Balonne River at St. George will cost, in the present financial period, £33,000. The Whetstone weir on the MacIntyre Brook, near the town of Whetstone, will cost £3,056. Again, provision has been made for the construction of weirs on the Alice and Warrego Rivers at a cost of £27,000 and for the construction of fishways on the weirs on Lockyer and War-rill Creeks, costing £2,000.

I have mentioned briefly a few of the projects that are under construction. We have trebled our staff in a short period of years, and we intend to double that staff again either from Australia or other countries. When we do so we shall be able to engage in a bigger programme of works, which will cover the big projects I have mentioned.

Time will tell whether the Federal authorities are going to join forces with Queensland, as they have done with some of the southern States, in some of the bigger projects. We have possibilities here, and it is just quibbling to say that the project at this stage is definitely uneconomic. Over the years people have proved in a small way that you can grow fodder and tropical fruits of all kinds, virtually any type of vegetable, and cotton and other valuable crops. Notwithstanding that, we have the effort by the Federal authorities to side-step the question of joining forces with the State Government so that we can push ahead with these projects at a much faster rate than otherwise and do something that will be a great benefit from the viewpoint not only of wealth production but of defence also.

**Mr. Wordsworth:** What about letting the Opposition see your report on it?

**Mr. FOLEY:** I have only spoken of the preliminary report submitted. I will suggest to the Premier, that we supply some of these reports. We have a fine report on the Burdekin, which I think has already been distributed. I think it would be worth while having that report printed, leaving out the expensive maps, which many of us would not use anyway, in order to give hon. members some idea of the possibilities of the scheme. When you realise that 250,000 acres of irrigable land, and possibly more, could be served with a reasonable-sized dam, we realise what a tremendous thing it would be for Northern Queensland and for the future of Australia. It is estimated that the annual increase in the wealth that could be produced at that centre would support a population of at least 40,000 in addition to those there at present.

**Mr. Hiley:** Do you not think its hydro-electric potential is a more immediate and necessary requirement than land use?

**Mr. FOLEY:** There is no need to confine yourself to the hydro-electric side. I am advised by Mr. Nimmo that by building that dam in stages we should be able to water certain areas during the progress of the building and it would also be possible to do something in the way of hydro-electric

power at the same time in a limited way compared with what would be possible when the job was finished.

The conservation of water in some of our dry areas was mentioned and it was pointed out what a valuable thing it would be if our graziers concentrated on providing more water so that cattle would not have to walk great distances in drought time, and so that our losses may be reduced very considerably. I think the average grazier realises the value of an adequate water supply on his holding, but unfortunately, until the present rise took place in the value of the products from the grazing industry, he was limited considerably in the amount he could put into that work annually; but today, no matter what part of the State we visit, we find graziers, as a result of increased returns, investing considerable amounts of money in water and other improvements that are urgently required on their holdings in order to increase production. As time goes on, we shall find the value of water conservation to the State to be enormous.

I would now refer to the work being carried out very silently but vigorously by the Stock Routes Co-ordination Board, a body of experienced men representing various pastoral interests who meet and consider projects from all quarters for improving stock routes. Improvements to be effected include the construction of at least 30 major water facilities on the following stock routes:—

From junction to Burke and Georgina Rivers, via Bedourie, Carcoory, Betoota, Gilpeppee Creek and Durham Downs to Wary Wary Gate.

Bedourie to Currawilla.

Gilpeppee Creek, via Tanbar, to Canterbury.

Tanbar to Coombill.

Wheeo to Quilpie-Eromanga route.

Eromanga, via Thargomindah to Hungerford.

Glencairn to Thargomindah.

A number of other minor jobs are being done—bores or wells. In many instances pumps are provided or windmill equipment is installed to lift the water from the bore, earth tank or dam. Stock can move freely and we shall never again hear of an instance that was referred to in this Chamber of stock having to travel 40 miles for water. This is all work that is being done in the interests of the stock-owners. I again emphasise that the Government are acting on their conviction as to the importance of increasing the productivity of the land and improving watering facilities wherever possible, encouraging the grazier to carry out such improvements, and providing water on the stock routes, but this of course is a long-range programme that will take many years to complete.

The only difficulty that is in any way affecting our irrigation programme is that of obtaining trained engineering and technical staff but as we have overcome difficulties in the past I think it follows that we shall eventually overcome this too. The young

engineer appointed during the last three or four years is gaining knowledge and experience on the various jobs with which he is entrusted. The majority are doing a very fine job and as a result I think we shall find them better fitted to carry out the bigger jobs to be entrusted to them in the future.

Resolution 6—Department of Public Lands and Irrigation—agreed to.

Resolution 7—Department of the Treasurer—

**Mr. KEYATTA** (Townsville) (5.29 p.m.): I desire to refer to certain matters that have come to my mind but first of all to the work carried out by the Premier and the Treasurer and Cabinet on the establishment of a Torres Strait shipping service. This is of vital importance to the State particularly North Queensland, and it is a move in the right direction. In former years that service played a very important part in the development of Queensland, particularly North Queensland.

Since then the plotting and charting of trade routes have been greatly improved and provision of more lighting facilities, and, with the progress made by science in the manufacture of direction instruments, the installation of instruments to give accurate warning of cyclones and other vagaries of the weather would be of untold benefit. This is important in the North because it is both the first port of call for incoming vessels and the last port of call for outgoing ships. It is clear that great work has been done by this Government when we remember that eight major ports are being maintained, together with a number of smaller ports throughout the State. Of course, as time goes on, we are hoping that more facilities will be provided for both discharging and loading so that a quicker turn-around of ships will be possible. No State in the Commonwealth has a greater policy of decentralisation of ports than Queensland. It is possible, by co-ordination between harbour boards, the State Transport Commission, and shipping companies to lay down a rate that would be satisfactory to all concerned should it become necessary to divert shipping to other ports because of congestion at any one port.

Another great improvement would be the provision of some scheme for utilising the high rise and fall in the tides for the generation of electricity. I understand that in Scotland, Sweden and certain parts of Germany this is being done successfully and I suggest that the harbour boards and regional electricity boards or similar authorities might co-operate with a view to investigating the possibilities of such a scheme in some of our ports. Of course, that could be a matter for the future. It may not be essential at the moment but I offer the suggestion for future consideration.

Wool sales can have an important effect on the North. I suggest that Townsville, Rockhampton, and probably one other port could be developed to a greater extent for handling wool. I have mentioned previously that the Townsville Harbour Board is prepared to

expend £100,000 on providing sheds and other facilities for the appraising and handling of wool. The development and stabilising of the work at ports has a great effect upon the decentralisation of population. Most northern ports provide only seasonal work and should it be decided to undertake the provision of the extra facilities so greatly desired this extra work would give stabilised employment to seasonal workers throughout the year.

I want to make reference to the possibilities of land reclamation at ports and to say that the Government should plan for a policy in this direction. Adjacent to many of our ports there are low-lying areas that could be reclaimed by first of all building a retaining wall and then dumping silt behind the wall. This would create land of use to harbour boards. In the lower reaches of the Brisbane River we have some valuable property that has been reclaimed and similar reclamation work had been carried out at Cairns. Not only could areas be reclaimed for harbour-board purposes but swamps and low-lying areas could be built up for building sites. At Townsville a retaining wall could be built at the mouth of the Ross River and the whole area to the elbow could be reclaimed. A great amount of silt comes down the Ross River and this could be diverted and silt from dredging could be pumped onto the land. Sites for industrial purposes at Townsville are in short supply and apart from the 22 acres at the inner harbour there should be further planning for reclamation work, as sites could be allotted to business and industrial houses. I suggested this years ago but unfortunately, because of the war, the work had to be put back. I now submit that Cabinet should give consideration to the matter. At present our dredges take the silt they dredge and dump it at sea. That is a real waste of material. There are hundreds of acres of low-lying country that could be reclaimed and put to some useful purpose. At Cairns silt is carried half a mile by overhead pipes and deposited.

By co-operation between the harbour boards and the Department of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works we should be able to devise ways and means of doing such work in the future. We could establish a pool whereby equipment and materials could be taken to where they were required. There might be a dredge pool, for example. Townsville has contracted for a dredge, which will cost a large sum of money. It will be of the latest type and will be able to pump sand and be used for general dredging purposes. There is a cutter and by means of suction the material is drawn up—

**Mr. Kerr:** What sort of a dredge?

**Mr. KEYATTA:** We have a bucket dredge at present and whilst it is good for certain work we shall have to have another dredge for this general purpose.

**Mr. Kerr:** The material is pumped ashore?

**Mr. KEYATTA:** Yes. Cairns and Townsville will have their dredges and they should be put to work for the common good of

Queensland. Unfortunately this matter has lagged for some years, with resultant harm to the ports, but it is gradually being overcome.

The reclamation scheme that I referred to in the Ross River elbow and the jetty would serve a dual purpose. If I may explain, there is a cross-tide sweep at the moment, which carries siltage into the channel. It has been difficult to keep the harbour channel clean and that was the need of the second dredge. However, it is expected that at the end of the year the suction dredge will be ready and we shall be able to remove the siltage menace and the port of Townsville, although an artificial one, will be a deep port and one of the safest on the coast.

It has been possible, by virtue of Government policy, to help the harbour boards not only in administrative matters, but in providing equipment and the necessary facilities for operating on a sound basis. The Townsville Harbour Board proposed to carry out extensive works involving an expenditure of £1,000,000. It is one of the most solvent ports in Australia, having a capital investment of about £500,000. The board has been able to develop these assets pursuant to the policy laid down in the Act. It has permitted of sound and sensible budgeting and sensible administration. Major items in the first phase of the Townsville Harbour Board's scheme will cost almost £500,000 and will include the reclamation of 22 acres of tidal land near the present facilities at a cost of more than £45,000. The new suction dredge will cost £350,000 and the board has already spent £50,000 on a new tug. The reclamation work should be completed within the year and shipbuilders in Newcastle have stated that the dredge should be delivered by the end of 1950.

While work on the first phase is being done, the board intends to draw up plans for a new pier and while the pier was being built the board would give attention to the deepening of the berths and the channel in the harbour to provide a minimum depth of 30 feet at low water. The board has decided on a development scheme to meet the growing needs of the port. It has in mind much heavier demands as projects for the opening up of agricultural lands in the Burdekin area and the establishment of secondary industries in the district are put into operation. The board is co-ordinating its endeavours and planning for future development. That has been the policy of the Government in their memorandum to the harbour boards.

The Townsville port trade is recovering from the effects of the last war. Last year more than 408,000 tons of inward and outward cargo was handled for a revenue to the board of £97,000. With higher port charges and increasing tonnages the board expects its revenue to rise to £120,000 during the next 12 months.

The export tonnage handled at Townsville at one period exceeded that of Brisbane. In fact, Townsville was rated as one of the six ports of Australia. That shows the importance of Townsville as a port and some credit is due to the policy and administration of the

Government. The Premier is now devoting much attention on behalf of the Government to the restoration of the old Torres Strait service. He has taken a very active part in the project, backed up by his Cabinet. When that service is restored it will give an impetus to the development of North Queensland and probably be the means of developing a port in the Gulf area, as well as a feeder port north of the Gulf. These are important matters, because the development of our western districts calls for a new outlet and consequently greater port facilities will be required. All this will be planned for. I am confident, from the keen interest displayed by the Premier in this matter, that within the next five years the planning will develop Queensland on sound and effective lines.

**Mr. MUNRO (Toowong) (5.47 p.m.):** There are two matters I desire to submit for the consideration of the Treasurer and the Government, although I realise that the available time will not be sufficient to debate them fully. The first is what is commonly known as the problem of double death duties. At an early stage in the session both I and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made some references to the need for some review of the Commonwealth and State's financial relations, and in the course of my remarks I suggested that one of the terms of reference of the committee to be appointed on the matter should be the elimination and avoidance of double taxation.

**Mr. F. E. Roberts:** It only applies to higher incomes and higher estate duties.

**Mr. MUNRO:** It applies to some smaller estates also. I do not wish to go into the matter in any detail at this stage, except to say that apparently at some time in the past there have been different schools of thought as to the relative merits of assessing death duties on the basis of the domicile of the deceased person or on the basis of the situation of the property or the particular items that might comprise the estate. As a result, our death duties or succession duties are not uniform. We may have a particular estate subject to succession duty in Queensland and the same item subject to a duty in some other State of Australia. This is a state of affairs that should be avoided because we in Australia are one nation and there should be nothing to deter a person who lives in Queensland from having investments in New South Wales or a person living in New South Wales from having investments in Queensland. I do not wish to disturb the Treasurer during the coming period, but I think it is a matter that should receive further consideration. I know it has been considered. Before legislation is framed conferences and some measure of agreement between the various parties would perhaps be necessary.

**Mr. Hanlon:** There are some catches in it, you know.

**Mr. MUNRO:** I know, as the Premier indicates, that it is not altogether an easy problem but very often we have had similar

problems. Take income tax: we had grave difficulties about double taxation between the Commonwealth and the United Kingdom, but in a substantial measure they have been overcome. Whatever difficulties there are in this problem they are not as great as the difficulties we have overcome in other spheres. I hope that it will be tackled in order to remedy the situation in the coming year.

My second point is the quite unnecessary circumlocution that takes place in relation to stamp duty on sales of what are commonly known as rights. Hon. members will know that in the inflationary trend it is quite an everyday occurrence, and a necessary occurrence, for large public companies—

**Mr. Burrows:** You do not agree with the Queensland-British Food Corporation proposal.

**Mr. MUNRO:** I sympathise with the hon. member but I do not think his point is entirely relevant. I am referring to stamp duty, and I am pointing out that it is more or less an everyday occurrence for public companies to make new issues of capital. The point I wish to emphasise is this: that does cause quite considerable inconvenience under the present Stamp Act because the necessary legal procedure when those rights are sold, is that instead of a simple form of transfer we have what are called a form of renunciation and a form of acceptance. The substance of the transaction is almost identical with a sale of shares, in which the payment of stamp duty is quite a simple matter—by the ordinary adhesive stamp—whereas in a sale of rights it is necessary under the provisions of the present Stamp Act to have impressed stamp duty.

Incidentally, the duty is rather high but I am stressing now not that point but that the provision requiring the impressment of stamp duty in such circumstances causes a very considerable measure of inconvenience to professional men and the public in general. I am sure it also causes a very considerable volume of unnecessary work within the Stamp Duties Office. To the public it causes particular inconvenience where the holders of the rights happen to be persons residing in other States or countries. I make this suggestion and commend it to the Treasurer as one in which public convenience could be served and a considerable economy of time could be made by altering the schedules of the Stamp Act so that in sales of these rights the stamp duty could be paid merely by affixing adhesive stamps to the necessary forms of renunciation and acceptance.

**Mr. F. E. ROBERTS (Nundah)** (5.57 p.m.): I propose to follow the lead of the Hon. member for Toowong very briefly. It is not very often I follow the lead of hon. members of the Liberal Party and in doing so now I am wondering whether my premises may be false. Listening to the hon. member reminded me of something in relation to the Titles Office that I think might well be mentioned now in the hope that the Minister during the next few months may be able to do something about it. I think that most hon. members

will know that a number of financial institutions, particularly such institutions as the Commonwealth Bank and the War Service Homes Commission, insist that a person applying for financial help to build a home or anything of that kind, shall produce the actual title deed before they will make an advance. Time and time again people are unable to get the financial help because of the hold-up in the Titles Office. It is no exaggeration to say that today, if a new deed has to be issued, one has to wait at least twelve months, and in order to get an ordinary transfer registered one has to sit down and wait for from 8 to 12 weeks.

I bring this forward in the hope the Minister might be able to do something to expedite the registration of transactions in the Titles Office. Nobody appreciates more than I do the work that the office at present has to cope with and nobody appreciates more than I the courtesy and attention one always receives from the officers of that Government department.

I really believe that the delay that is causing inconvenience to the public at present is due to the fact that there is not sufficient staff in the Titles Office to cope with the tremendous amount of work that is going through it at the present time. I have in mind an instance that I might cite to illustrate how this inconvenience can arise. A property was left to a man under a will. In due course transmission was entered up in favour of the devisee and then, before the property had been registered in his name, he sold it to another man, and some weeks afterwards that purchaser sold it to yet a third person. That third party was desirous of getting financial assistance in order to complete the purchase of the home. He approached the two financial institutions to which I have referred and, of course, met with the reply that nothing could be done until he had obtained the title deed. In order to complete the purchase, it was necessary for him to go to one of the private banks, which was prepared to advance the money, knowing full well that the title was all right even though it could not actually be produced. The result was that when the third transaction took place a memorandum of transfer was lodged in the Titles Office with a note on it that the title to the property was in the Titles Office for the registration of a transfer to the devisee, for the registration of a transfer from the devisee to the purchaser from him and then, of course, was the dealing from that person to this third party. In that instance it would have suited the borrower much better to have been accommodated by the War Service Homes Commission or the Commonwealth Bank—or so he assured me—than to be compelled to go to one of the private banks.

It might be said that the Commonwealth Bank and the War Service Homes Commission could have done likewise. I quite agree. There is sufficient protection in the Titles Office, if anyone cares to make a search there and discover exactly what dealings are happening; but apparently the policy of these institutions is not to do that, consequently these people are put to the inconvenience I have mentioned.

Only last week I received a letter from one of my own constituents in connection with the same matter, in which he told me that some weeks ago he bought a house property but had been unable to obtain the certificate of title. He did not tell me why he particularly wanted it. Quite often, of course, if there are no further dealings in a matter there is no reason why the certificate of title should not lie in the Real Property Office.

In the letter asking me to do what I could to expedite the matter this gentleman, who is unknown to me, mentioned by way of encouraging me to do something that some politician—and he did not name the politician—had been able to get a transfer registered in a matter of a few days. From my experience of the Titles Office I do not believe the gentleman who gave me that information. The fact remains that such suggestions do get abroad and politicians get blamed for many things; apparently we are blamed for being able to get Real Property Office transactions registered more expeditiously than the general public. I appreciate the inconvenience that is caused at the present time to many members of the public through the delay that is occasioned because it takes so long to get transfers registered on certificates of title in the Real Property Office.

I bring this matter forward at this stage in the hope that the Minister might be able to do something by way of providing additional staff whilst so many land sales transactions are going on to cope with the tremendous quantity of work in that office.

**Hon. W. POWER** (Baroona—Acting Attorney-General) (7.23 p.m.): I wish to deal with the matter raised by the hon. member for Nundah because what he said is true, that it takes some time to get deeds through the Titles Office. That position has obtained for some time; you could wait up to 12 months in some cases, but the position is getting better each day. The delay is caused because the department, like others, has been unable to get sufficient clerical staff to do this work. We hope, as a result of the Junior University examinations now being held, that the position will be relieved. The Public Service Commissioner has admitted in a temporary capacity lads who sat for the Junior and if they are successful in passing their examination they will naturally be appointed to the permanent staff through the Commissioner's office. Every effort is being made to overcome the difficulty, which has arisen through no fault of the department.

**Mr. Kerr:** Could not representations be made to the Commonwealth authorities to do the same thing as the private banks do?

**Mr. POWER:** I am coming to that. It is true that a number of financial institutions are adopting the attitude that they must have the deeds before they will advance money required by the borrower but there are other institutions that will accept a letter from the Master of Titles saying that the transfer has been lodged in the Titles Office together with the deed, and it is free of encumbrances. That has been accepted by many financial institutions.

**Mr. Evans:** They should all accept it.

**Mr. POWER:** Yes. To meet the situation mentioned by the hon. member for Nundah—I acted for the Attorney-General during the illness of the late Mr. Gledson—I discussed the matter with the Master of Titles and I pointed out that there were some financial institutions that would not accept the certificate and asked whether there was any other way of meeting the wishes of those people who were desirous of borrowing from financial institutions that wanted the deeds. In some cases the terms of repayment to these institutions are better than those offered by others and that is why a number of borrowers deal with them. The Master of Titles assured me that if representations were made in connection with any persons who wished to borrow from certain financial institutions every effort would be made to meet their wishes. I now give the assurance to the hon. member for Nundah and every other hon. member that if any solicitor wants to lodge title deeds and transfers in the Titles Office and wishes to get the deeds because the people concerned want to borrow from a certain company or financial institution, then if proper evidence is furnished to the Master of Titles he makes the deeds available as soon as possible. That should satisfy the wishes of hon. members.

Of course, there are occasions when it takes some time to get a deed through. There may be letters of administration or probate to be taken out and the transmission by death to be noted and, of course, that takes some time. A period must elapse so that any interested person may lodge a caveat against transmission by death if he so desires. I can assure the hon. member for Nundah and other hon. members that this is a difficulty that has occurred through no fault of the Government, no fault of the Registrar of Titles or of the Master of Titles. The Public Service Commissioner is hopeful of getting an increased number of juniors into the Public Service, and indeed some students have already been admitted on a temporary basis pending the results of their examinations. Should they be successful they will be appointed to permanent rank. That will help to overcome the present difficulty to some extent. We hope to have more junior workers in the service in the coming year than we have now.

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (7.27 p.m.): The news that the Torres Strait shipping service is to be opened up consequent upon representations by the Premier will be welcomed by anyone who has studied the transport problem and the economy of the State, because it will make a substantial contribution towards the solution of our transport problems. We read in the papers that lorries are lined up waiting to get on to the wharves in Brisbane. Much of the cargo is unloaded from overseas boats at the already congested port of Brisbane, later to be sent by rail by an already over-congested rail system to northern and western towns, sometimes going past the very ports that a few days previously had been passed by the

very ship from overseas that had unloaded the goods on to the congested Brisbane wharves. That is significant and it is an example of what the oil companies would do. I believe that they would continue to do this if there was no control over the price of petrol. In some respects the oil companies do not worry about what something will cost—they seem to be slaves to custom or tradition, whichever you like to call it.

**Mr. Sparkes:** The price of petrol is the same everywhere.

**Mr. BURROWS:** You would be able to buy petrol much cheaper in the country towns than in the cities if we forced the oil companies to pay a little attention to the economies of its distribution. At Gladstone the Shell Company will unload some petrol and recently the Vacuum Oil Company also has taken steps to unload petrol there. As the Shell Company has an installation in Gladstone it can unload and distribute all its Central Queensland supplies from that port, but the other oil companies, which have not an installation at Gladstone, unload at Brisbane. They tank it. Quite a number of tankers come from the Near East down through the Torres Strait to Brisbane, where the oil is unloaded, railed back to Gladstone and sold at the same price. If the tanker could be unloaded on its way from the Near East it would afford some relief to this overloaded and overworked port. The efforts of the Premier in persuading merchant ships to use the Torres Strait route is to be commended. Although Gladstone for the time being is not included in the ports of call I know that other ports are, and once these lines use those other ports it will be a matter of time only when the oil companies will realise the economy of doing so and its tankers will call there.

Gladstone is the most economic port from all points of view in Australia. Its harbour dues are at a minimum, ships can get a quick turn-round and the facilities for working are excellent. Most of these advantages are due to the natural advantages of the port. Once the Torres Strait service is established the ships will realise Gladstone's advantages and many of our transport problems will be overcome or relieved. It would not hurt if we could shift half the freight of Brisbane and distribute it among the northern ports. When Senator McLeay visited Gladstone he was taken down to the wharf where he was shown sheds capable of holding 4,000 and 5,000 tons of cargo, a jetty where boats up to 14,000 tons could berth and discharge their cargoes. There was not a soul about at the time of his visit, not a sign of activity, and the sheds were empty. Two ships can be berthed at the one time at the Gladstone jetty, but thanks to the sympathetic consideration of the Treasurer the further extensions to the jetty now being begun will when completed enable more ships to berth at the one time.

Another aspect of our transport problem must be realised. The news of the past week has assured us of an established coal trade with the southern States and we must realise that the colliers calling at Gladstone for coal

will return from the South in ballast. Manufacturers in Sydney have insisted, during the present shortages of iron and wire, that if a merchant does not take his quota for one month that quota will not be allowed to accumulate for the next month and it will be distributed to the southern States or anyone who can take it. Consequently if a boat is to call at Gladstone it can load only one month's quota of wire and iron for Gladstone, notwithstanding that 7 or 8 months may have elapsed since a boat had called at Gladstone, Bowen or a northern port. With the installation of the collier service it would not be a dream to say that these boats, instead of coming north empty, would, if they could only get 100 or 120 tons of cargo, not go past Sydney and Newcastle. That should materially help the development of this State.

Altogether I think our ports are making and will continue to make a great contribution to the development of this State. I admit that owing to industrial trouble and a shortage of ships water transport has not received the patronage it did in the past, but in normal times we all know that water transport has many advantages over road and rail transport, and it will certainly continue to play a part in the development of this country. It is pleasing to see that this Government have taken steps to relieve the northern ports in certain places such as Gladstone and Bowen from the political stranglehold from which they suffered in the past. The time has gone when political patronage was all that was necessary in order to establish and develop a port. Full recognition has at long last been given to those ports where nature intended ports should be. I am sure that now we have recognised that principle—and I am pleased to say that this Government have put it into practice—that alone will make a wonderful contribution—and an overdue contribution—to the economy and development of this State.

**Mr. HILEY (Coorparoo) (7.37 p.m.):** Hon. members will remember that on the Address in Reply I examined the problem of silting that was interfering with shipping in our Queensland ports, and particularly I examined the figures supplied by the Engineer for Harbours and Marine and the portmaster of Brisbane concerning silting in the Brisbane River. I am glad to say there is evidence to hand that the Government have met this position very quickly and seriously and I am cheered by the indication that not only have orders been given for an additional dredge but that they are considering the purchase of a further secondhand dredge, I understand, from Nigeria. Added to that is the acceleration of the dredging programme, with the existing dredging equipment, which certainly presents a picture of revived activity that is cheering to people who were becoming concerned over the silting problem of the river.

I observe that in the report of the Department of Harbours and Marine just tabled there is a special supplement dealing with the silting of the Brisbane River, which not only confirms the problem to which our minds are addressed, but contains some examination of the origin of the silting and some

observations concerning the things that might be done to correct it. I ask the Treasurer to have that point examined by his officers in due course.

The last paragraph on page 6 says this—

“At the present time training walls are being extended towards Luggage Point, Lytton Rocks have been deepened, river points have been dredged and cut back, various rocky obstructions are being removed, including 17-Mile Rocks. . . .”

The clearing of the obstruction at 17-Mile Rocks is a factor.

“ . . . and, in short, the river is being regimented to enable the tidal wave to proceed far up the river's length and its energy gradually expended as it moves upstream.”

“This is the correct method of river regulation, and when this has been done, the greater depths needed by deeper and larger ships must be provided by dredging.”

I want the House to observe that statement: the Government policy should be one of clearing the river obstructions, allowing tidal waters to go as far as possible so that you have the best scouring in and out by the tidal movement. But read elsewhere in the report and you find the disturbing factors that are entirely opposed to that policy.

**Mr. Foley:** What page are you quoting?

**Mr. HILEY:** I ask the Minister to refer to page 2 of the report, because there he will read this—

“Town Reach.—Very little work has been done in this reach, but sufficient has been done to maintain 21 ft. L.W.S.T.

“South Brisbane Reach.—No work has been done in this reach, the present depth of channel and berths is sufficient for requirements.”

We all know that those requirements are relatively minor, as now no large vessels come to that reach. The report then proceeds to say—

“Kangaroo Point and Gardens Point.—No work has been done here. The locality is sounded at regular intervals to ensure that the silting common to all river points does not get beyond safe limits.”

It occurs to me that if the basic principle of approach to the problem of the siltation of the Brisbane River is to keep a clear and unimpeded flow as far up the river as the Seventeen Mile Rocks, how in the name of anything that is logical can you justify doing nothing in the town, South Brisbane, Kangaroo Point, and Gardens Point reaches?

**Mr. Foley:** Concentrate on the most important points.

**Mr. HILEY:** That is, no doubt, the explanation, but that merely is a confession of partial defeat. It simply means that our equipment is so inadequate as not to be able to handle the matter fully and so we have to make first things come first and we have consciously to accept the conclusion that we must carry out some of the other essential

features of our programme. If it is necessary to enlarge the opening at the Seventeen Mile Rocks to allow this tidal scouring to proceed, it is illogical to develop a bottle-neck in these town reaches of the river. The whole purpose of the tidal flow is interfered with if you allow your channel depths to deteriorate and hanging points to obtrude out and across what otherwise should be a clear, unimpeded flow of tidal water.

**Mr. Foley:** That is, if we are allowing our tidal depths to deteriorate but you cannot see anything in the report that we are allowing them to deteriorate.

**Mr. HILEY:** I gave very considerable figures on the last occasion on which I spoke on this matter and now if the Minister will turn to page 2 of the report he will see, dealing with the Hamilton Reach cutting—

“Dredging of wharf berths has been carried out by the ‘Remora,’ ‘Morwong,’ ‘Mourilyan,’ and No. 2 Clam. Due to the berths being occupied by shipping maintenance dredging has been rendered very difficult.

“Bulimba Reach.—Maintenance in this reach has been done by the suction dredges, and, while this reach, too, has experienced the heavy silting due to the rainfall, the least depth in the reach is 25 ft.”

**Mr. Hanlon:** It does not matter how much you take, the silt will come again.

**Mr. HILEY:** I am delighted to have that comment by the Premier, for the simple reason that his reasoning as to where the silt comes from is the same as mine, but if he reads the report by the Chief Engineer he will see that he says that both the Premier and I are wrong as to the source of the silting and tells us that the silt comes into the Brisbane River, not down the river but from the banks.

**Mr. Hanlon:** He did not tell you anything of the kind. The hon. member does not understand.

**Mr. HILEY:** He states that the huge volume of silt mentioned, 1,500,000 tons to 2,000,000 tons, ascends the river from the reservoir of material outside the river mouth.

**Mr. Hanlon:** It goes down the river and then comes back with the tide.

**Mr. HILEY:** The statement occurring in the report is that it comes from the river mouth and the first observation I want to make is on the theory that a clear unobstructed tidal wave is a material factor in relieving the trouble of river siltation; and then, at least if we are to be logical, we should not be clearing the Seventeen Mile Rocks while we are not dredging some of the reaches in the city area.

I pass now to the next question, that of silt ascending the river. I think everyone who has moved round the foreshores of Moreton Bay will have observed that with a rising tide with the wind onshore you do get some beating up of the mud on the foreshores as the tide advances, and to the extent that you have extensive banks on

either side of the river entrance it is quite logical to assume that with a rising tide and an onshore wind you are going to get some muddy water swept into the river entrance.

I have made a particular point of observing this from time to time and I have noticed that where silt is present in water in any quantity you will invariably get detectable discoloration. You can go to the mouth of the Brisbane River on any day when the conditions I have mentioned are prevailing—when you have an onshore wind and a rising tide—and you will find the discoloration confined to a few feet out from the bank on either side of the river. When you go to the main centre of the tide flow where your great body of water is going, you will find no discoloration at all. That is quite logical, because most of these muddy silts are colloidal in nature and colloids are very quickly precipitated in salt water. That is one of the reasons why you can have flood water which is brown and discoloured at the mouth and as soon as that water gets to the sea and the salt water does its work you get a precipitation of the colloids.

**Mr. Foley:** And then a fresh tide brings it back up.

**Mr. HILEY:** Take the last paragraph on the left-hand side of page 604, which says, "How the silt ascends the river is difficult to explain. Nevertheless it does come from the banks at the river mouth." We are dealing here with a technical report that, if accurate, leads us to ask ourselves what action we are taking to meet the problem. If it is true that 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 tons of silt is coming annually from the banks at the river's mouth, you would expect to see some denuding of those banks. I challenge the Minister to have inquiries made to discover where there is any easing off in the size of the banks either on the north or south side of the entrance to the Brisbane River, because I am assured by people who are competent to judge the position that there is no easing back of the banks.

When most of us first went down the bay on school trips there was a channel cut right across from the Old Pile Light and it was navigable by ships of the "Koopa's" draft at any half-tide or greater. It cut about three miles off the journey across to Redcliffe.

**Mr. Hanlon:** That is the old main channel.

**Mr. HILEY:** I know the Premier is fond of the bay and knows it very well. If he will examine that channel next time he is down the bay he will find he could not take the Fisheries Department's launch through it at low tide. That is the extent to which it has silted.

**Mr. Hanlon:** That is Shark Gully leading from the river.

**Mr. HILEY:** That is the channel that was the short cut over to Redcliffe. If there is any logic in the position that 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 tons of silt ascends the river from

this reservoir at the river mouth, one would expect that those banks, instead of making, should actually be easing away. It is a matter of proved observation that far from easing away those banks are continuing to make. I do not deny that there would be some return of silted matter deposited at the mouth rolled back by the tide, but let us be fair and admit that the tendency of speed of tidal movement is for the ebb tide generally to move a little bit faster than the flood tide.

If this colloidal matter that settles in the lower reaches is silt there is at least a faster current tending to take it out and roll it back again and the only exception I make is where that colloidal matter reaches a dip in the river bottom—such as a dredging berth or a swinging basin—and rests there and is trapped in a pocket and is not taken out when the ebb tide flows.

If what we are told in the report as to the cause of this silting is true, I think consideration should be given to one proposal that the chief engineer makes. This is what he said—

"As a cure for the silting problem here discussed, it seems likely that continuing the training walls out to the 5-fathom contour (Moreton Bay) would be effective, but it is at present uncertain whether a good deal of the mud comes from further out."

That, I submit, is the question that in the interests of the port of Brisbane should be resolved. It should not be hard to discover the source of the mud and the silt—whether it comes from the banks adjacent to the entrance to the river or whether it is coming from much deeper areas farther out past the 5-fathom mark. There are not many parts deeper than 5 fathoms, and I suppose the great majority of Moreton Bay is less than 5 fathoms rather than beyond it.

**Mr. Hanlon:** And a lot of no fathoms at all.

**Mr. HILEY:** Yes, a matter of inches rather than fathoms—it is a question of fathoming the inches. I suggest that if there is to be a proper approach to this important question—with it is linked up the successful reintroduction of the Torres Strait service, in which we are going to bring vessels to Brisbane as the first port of call—there should be an accelerated examination as to the sources of the mud. Does it come from beyond the 5-fathom mark or is it all coming from the banks on either side of the entrance or are both explanations merely part of the explanation or are they fallacious? Until those charged with the responsibility of administering the department know the issue with certainty they cannot approach the question of an appropriate remedy. The chief engineer says that if it comes from the banks at the mouth, a retaining wall carried out to the 5-fathom mark would probably meet the position, but he does not know whether some does not come from deeper water. I commend a thorough examination of this question to the Treasurer.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier) (7.54 p.m.): I would point out to the hon. member for Coorparoo that a couple of paragraphs before his quotation he will read—

“From Hamilton to Luggage Point the river, in its natural form, consisted of wide reaches containing mangrove islands, such as Parker Island, Gibson Island, Bulwer Island, Whyte Island, and the Fisherman Islands, while outside the river mouth extensive sand and mud banks have been formed by the silt-charged flood waters from the upper river and its tributaries.”

The mud and silt have come down the river and the hon. member says that when this gets to the mouth the action of the salt on the mud precipitates it quickly, and in addition there is the impact of the waters of Moreton Bay meeting on the flood-tide the last of the ebb. Although on the surface the tide is coming in the water underneath is still running out but running out slowly and the slower the water moves at the mouth the greater the precipitation that takes place.

The trouble is that the Brisbane River does not run all the year round, that there are long periods of dry seasons with no fresh water coming down the river at all. Then you have only the upward and downward movement of the tide. If you were to go into the water you would sink to your knees in mud and this mud is in movement in accordance with the movement of water. This silt is always in motion up and down the river, not only going up but also going down. It is ridiculous to say that the silt does not go down the river. We have only to get a couple of inches of rain in the upper reaches and the Brisbane River is a muddy river and when you get a prolonged wet season the whole of Moreton Bay is muddy. I have come along the coast by flying boat and opposite the Clarence River I have seen a huge yellow patch of discoloured water 7 to 8 miles from the mouth out to sea and at the Burdekin there is a colossal amount of discolouration of the water, depending on the flow of the river. In the case of the Amazon River in South America there is fresh water in the sea out of sight of the land, I am told, for upwards of 20 miles.

The real danger in this matter is the run off of so much good soil because of erosion. This deposit of soil against the action of salt causes a quick precipitation of solids. Remember, also, that every time a ship of deep draught comes up the river it stirs up the mud. One can notice as a big ship moves towards the mouth of the river that it leaves a muddy wake behind which moves with the tide. The soil must move up and down the river.

More than likely the silting of the channel is due to shifting sand and the sand does shift about a great deal in Moreton Bay—sandbanks have been built up and sandbanks have disappeared. Not many years ago you could move quite freely over Stradbroke Island but today at low tide you can see land from the southern end of Moreton Island right down to Peel Island and that will eventually become one long island.

**Mr. Hiley:** And Rous Channel will close?

**Mr. HANLON:** No, the channel can probably be kept open. As I said, at low tide you can see a stretch of land above the water from the southern point of Moreton Island right down to Peel Island. In the course of years it will build up unless there is some heavy disturbance and it will form into one long island. On the other hand other islands have disappeared. Bird Island, near Dunwich, has completely disappeared and there is very little left of Goat Island above water except a few mangroves. We used to camp on Goat Island some years ago. King Island, opposite Wellington Point, has disappeared. Changing conditions make for changes in Moreton Bay. At the present time we are having a long period of south-easterly wind, which is moving the bottom of the Bay all the time and the higher the wave the lower the trough, with sand moving all the while.

One of our problems today is that the requirements of shipping are much higher than they used to be, more equipment is needed now than before. Previously one could get a dredge in a reasonable time, whereas we have to wait for two years to get a dredge now; indeed, he would be a bold man who would say when he would be able to get one. In addition we are endeavouring to buy an additional dredge. You cannot do all these things quickly. We must not forget that during the war years ships of all kinds and sizes called at Brisbane. They are still calling here and on only an odd occasion do we hear that one encounters any trouble through its draught.

Reference has been made by some of my colleagues to the restoration of the Torres Strait service. The Government have been trying for some time to bring about a direct service from Britain through the Mediterranean, via India, to Queensland ports. At present shipping from the Old Country comes mostly via Fremantle Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney to Brisbane. Mostly it comes as far as Brisbane and stops here. It has to run the gauntlet of all those ports of call, which are also crowded. Sydney, for example, is an immense port, with an immense wharfage area, where a huge volume of cargo is handled and where a whole row of ships are anchored in the harbour unable to get berths when they arrive. Shipping must also run the gauntlet of those four ports and the possibility of industrial hold-ups. It takes three months for a steamer to come from Hull and London to Brisbane via the southern ports. If a service could be established via Torres Strait the journey from London to Brisbane would take six weeks only. The ships would travel via the Mediterranean ports and India, and call at Cairns, Townsville and so on down the coast to Mackay, Gladstone and then to Brisbane.

A couple of years ago when I was in London attending a conference of the Empire Parliamentary Association I discussed with shipping people the possibility of getting a service from the United Kingdom via Torres Strait. I pointed out the possibilities of the Queensland-British Food Corporation plan and the proposal to attract new settlement under the Burdekin scheme. It was realised by one shipping company that there would be

an advantage in getting ships to traverse that route and call at Queensland ports, and it advertised a direct service to Queensland ports. It was not realised at the time that ships fully loaded could not enter some of our northern ports, consequently those ships had to be sent round the southern ports again to enable them to arrive at the northern ports virtually empty. That was no advantage. What we are endeavouring to do now is to get a line of ships of a draught small enough to enable them to use the Torres Strait route and call at Cairns, Townsville and other ports on the way down. We should then get a service from Hull or London in six or seven weeks, but less than that to Cairns and Townsville.

**Mr. Hiley:** What are they, 7,000 or 8,000-ton ships?

**Mr. HANLON:** Yes, 7,000 or 8,000-ton ships. We are discussing the matter with the companies here. If we succeed we shall then be able to cut out the 30s. a ton terminal charge for all northern cargo landed at Brisbane. A charge of 30s. a ton is very important to traders in the North who have to pay that surcharge. They get their terminal rate to Brisbane and then pay 30s. a ton in addition. Ships frequently will not go beyond Brisbane, as they have been too long in Australian ports altogether. They unload their cargo for the North here and the transport of that cargo to its destination is at the mercy of a spasmodic service. The Railway Department does its best to freight it to its destination, but there again you have additional charges. If we had the Torres Strait service we should cut out not only that terminal charge but the immense delay in getting the northern cargo to its destination. This delay is important because people who have money tied up in goods have it tied up double the length of time when it comes round the southern ports.

The real difficulty we struck was the fact that the heaviest cargo handled on the return journeys comes from northern ports—lead, zinc concentrates, and so on—and the heavy cargo is required to go down at the bottom. That is one of the problems you have to solve—to save making two calls, coming to Brisbane and going back to Townsville to load lead and zinc and coming here to complete the loading. One idea is the ships can reserve certain holds. One proposal is to put a layer of lead on the floor of the freezing accommodation. You cannot throw cargo about anywhere; it has to be loaded properly, for the safety of the ship.

It may be possible to work out a satisfactory programme. We do not intend to commit the Treasury to any fabulous sums in this matter but the idea is to make a contribution to the establishment of this service.

Ships cannot afford to enter a port under a couple of hundred tons of cargo, because of port charges and delays, and one proposal was that we should undertake to guarantee a minimum quantity of cargo at each port of call. That would mean that if we had 50

or 100 tons less than the required amount the Treasury would have to pay that amount in freight. The other proposal was to guarantee them against loss, but in that there is the difficulty of establishing whether they make a profit or a loss. All these things are being examined and I am hopeful that early in the New Year we shall be able to come to some arrangement to give a service. We have ample to justify that service. We have difficulty in getting rid of our sugar. The hangover from one season becomes an embarrassment the next year. Taking it by and large, if satisfactory arrangements can be made I think we shall not only help the people of those ports to get a real shipping service at regular intervals but they will also have lessened freight charges and they will have a six weeks' tie-up instead of 10, 12 or 14 weeks. There are many advantages and I think the State Government would be justified in spending money in trying to get that service.

**Mr. KERR (Sherwood) (8.9 p.m.):** I was pleased to see that work was being carried out at Seventeen Mile Rocks. Vessels from further up the river, running for the Riverside Colliery Co., will not now be held up waiting for a tide when coming down or going back empty. There is a bar of rocks more or less right across the river at this spot. The greatest patch of gravel is above that point at Seventeen Mile Rocks. I wish to sound a note of warning, however, and that is that we must see that the channel is sufficient to enable the vessels to get through on any tide, but at the same time see that it is not made too wide.

There is no question where the silt comes from originally. It comes down in large and small floods. The gravel to be found in the Toowong, Milton and South Brisbane reaches comes down in the large floods. It is carried over the bar at the Seventeen Mile Rocks and gets into the lower regions, from which are taken the sand and gravel used for building purposes in the city. The greater quantity of gravel is above the Seventeen Mile Rocks and if the channel being made past these rocks is made too large a great body of gravel will get over it and be brought down to the lower reaches. Some protection is necessary to keep the large body of gravel from getting across this bar. The heavier gravel is brought down, then the lighter gravel and then the silt. Therein lies the danger of silt getting into the lower reaches of the Brisbane River.

**Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (8.12 p.m.):** I wish to bring under notice the need for reviewing and possibly amending the Fish and Oyster Act. This is a very old enactment that has not been amended for a great number of years. It has certain weaknesses, particularly in regard to the control of oyster beds. It needs tightening if we are to increase the oyster industry in this State.

Reading the report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries and studying the statistics, one will find that the fishing industry in this State is on the downgrade and if something is not

done to protect our edible fish, and particularly to bring about protection of the breeding grounds of mullet, the most common of our edible fishes, this downgrade in the total catch of fish will continue. The Act requires strengthening, particularly in respect of penalties for dynamiting, the illegal staking of nets, and other methods of catching fish that are at present destroying a number of young fish and consequently are affecting the catch of the adult fish. This question has been debated in this Chamber quite recently and now I wish to speak on the possibilities of oyster culture in Moreton Bay.

Actually Moreton Bay has all the possibilities in the world for culture of oysters. Up to the present we have only played with the growing of oysters and have relied chiefly on the hit-and-miss method of picking them off the bank or knocking them off the rocks. We have not followed to the same extent the modern stake and tray methods of cultivation but there are all the facilities available in Moreton Bay for this method and it would bring to this State a very valuable industry. Several growers have adopted this stake and tray methods of growing oysters, the only ways in which we shall ever make a success of the commercial growth of oysters. Unfortunately these oyster men are the prey of everybody who may come along to rob their oyster banks and get off with the results of their labours.

A good deal of labour is involved in the stake and tray methods of growing oysters. They can easily be picked up by any light-fingered person and it is particularly hard for the owners of the banks to protect them against the depredations of such people. The present penalties in the Act are not a great deterrent to those people who help themselves to other people's oysters, and I suggest to the Minister that he give this matter attention with a view to seeing whether he can amend the Fish and Oyster Act to tighten up these anomalies. If we do not protect those men who are prepared to invest a good deal of money in oyster culture we shall not build up our industry here. After having handled an oyster for approximately two years to bring it to a state of maturity for marketing, it is not encouraging to find the beds raided one night and the best of the oysters stolen.

In his report, the Chief Inspector of Fisheries states that Moreton Bay is ideal for the stake and tray methods of culture of oysters.

**Mr. Jesson:** But you have to be careful about growing oysters in some parts of the bay because they are poisonous.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** Not in the bay. You have to be careful with oysters round Luggage Point, at the mouth of the river. There is no danger from oysters that may be grown in the bay. The only trouble there is that such pests as the bream, worms, crabs, and stingrays attack them. They all do considerable damage to the oysters on the banks but that can be controlled to a large extent by the stake and tray methods of culture.

The present haphazard method of just throwing them on the bottom leaves them open to these pests, which it is difficult to control.

A good deal of work is involved in both the tray and stake methods of culture because the oysters have to be handled at least a dozen times from the time they are put into the trays or on the stakes until they are fit for marketing. I hope the Minister will give the matter attention, with the idea of building up what can be a particularly valuable industry to this State.

Another great need is the encouragement of the trawling method of prawning, within the bay and along the beaches north and south of Moreton Bay: This is a new method of prawning.

**Mr. F. E. Roberts:** Have you seen any of those they have caught down the bay lately? They are great king prawns 13 or 14 inches long.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** I know that there are plenty of prawns in the bay and along the beaches north and south of the bay and if they are 13 or 14 inches long then it would seem that only one prawn would be needed to make one feed.

This new method of catching prawns is gradually extending and will add considerably to the wealth produced from our fishing industry. The prawns caught in this way are much superior to those caught in the rivers and estuaries. They are also more readily saleable and more profitable to the fishermen.

I come now to the illegal staking of nets. The staking of nets has been allowed for some considerable time at the southern end of Moreton Bay. It is now being extended to the northern parts of the bay and to Pumice Stone Channel. Unfortunately, this concession that is being given to fishermen to enable them to work areas it is particularly difficult to net by other methods is being abused and this is bringing about the destruction of many immature fish and crabs. I admit the difficulty of policing these regulations because the Bay is a mighty big place and the bush telegraph warns some hours ahead of the arrival of a Fisheries Department inspector. It is therefore difficult to get convictions against offenders although I notice that there have been quite a number of prosecutions during the year for the illegal staking of nets.

**Mr. Jesson:** Don't you ever catch crabs down the bay?

**Mr. NICKLIN:** I suggest that it would be a good thing if we allowed the fisheries inspector from Hinchinbrook to help the department in its many problems.

This illegal staking of nets is having a detrimental effect on young and immature fish as well as crabs and I suggest that the Minister examine that part of the Act, which

might be strengthened to prevent it. I appreciate that it is impossible to adequately cover the large area involved with the number of inspectors available.

**Mr. F. E. Roberts:** It is having a detrimental effect on amateur fishermen too.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** Yes, and the supplies of fish that should be coming forward to the people of Brisbane and other parts of the State. All hon. members know that we have had a lean time in the matter of fish for a considerable time, probably because we are not paying sufficient attention to the nurseries that provide the fish that we hope to eat in the future. The nurseries that raise most of the fish are the creeks and rivers entering Moreton Bay and the many branches and estuaries to the north and south of it and if we do not look after these nurseries we shall find a further decline in supplies. The fishing industry is important to the future of this State and it should be built up to a very valuable one. It would pay the Minister to examine the Act and see whether it is adequate to deal with the problems of the industry so that we can get a greater supply of one of our most valuable foods.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Acting Treasurer) (8.24 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition has raised a very important point in regard to the preservation of our fishing banks in Moreton Bay. If hon. members read the report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries they will find that he has been fairly busy throughout the year endeavouring to meet the various circumstances that arise and have some bearing on the question raised. He said—

“In general, operations in Moreton Bay have been fairly satisfactory. There is a greater demand for suitable ground for the cultivation of oysters by the stick and tray method. The number of licensed oyster banks in this area increased from 204 in 1948-49 to 276 in the year under review, although the number of persons engaged in the industry was only 50 compared with 57 in the previous year.”

He goes on to say—

“Activities in the northern part of Moreton Bay have been extended to banks in the vicinity of Caloundra, where the tray method has now been adopted for the maturing of oysters.”

The Treasurer will naturally be guided by the advice of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries concerning any amendment of the Fish and Oyster Act to provide for greater penalties.

It is also interesting to note that the following orders in council were issued during the year—

“Closing portion of Victor Creek (Mackay) to net fishing.

“Closing portion of Seaforth Creek (Mackay) to net fishing.

“Amending and consolidating Orders in Council relating to the types and sizes of nets to be used.

“Authorising the staking of nets in additional areas in Moreton Bay and in Tin Can Bay and Sandy Straits (Maryborough).

“Amending the schedule setting out the minimum lawful length at which fish may be taken.

“Amending the closure of portion of the Maroochy River to net fishing.

“Extending the area in Moreton Bay in which the setting of nets for the taking of sand crabs is permitted.”

It will be seen that very important changes have been made in these matters and apparently the Chief Inspector has the matter in hand. The points raised by the Leader of the Opposition will be brought under the notice of the Treasurer and the Chief Inspector for attention.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Coorparoo, raised a very important matter and I thank the Premier for his contribution to the debate in connection with it. The attitude that has been taken on this question could raise a good deal of misunderstanding in other parts of Australia and even abroad. The other day I had a visit from a Mr. Speak, organiser for the Medical Benefit Fund of Australia. I had never met the man in my life. He came to me as Acting Treasurer of the State and he was concerned about what he called the slander going on at the present time in Brisbane about the Brisbane River. He was a man who possessed quite reliable knowledge about the river and he desired to put an end to the abominable statements that had been cropping up. I had a shorthand writer present at the interview, who took notes. Mr. Speak had been a resident of Brisbane for the past 20 years and during the war period 1942 to 1946 was commissioner in the United States Army in charge of the whole of the shipping in the Brisbane River for the American Forces. He was proud to say that while he was in charge of that work no accident or major hold-up had occurred in the Brisbane River and even when a minor trouble happened he had quite enough men and material to sidetrack it and fix up things immediately. In view of the millions of tons of cargo that had passed up and down the river, Mr. Speak said it was a record unparalleled in any major port. That is a rather emphatic and interesting statement to make. He said he had repeatedly received congratulatory messages from all over the world on the job he had done in the Brisbane River and he emphasised that the river owed its great value to its natural physical features rather than to any secondary work of improvement. He had been prompted to seek an interview, with me because of present repercussions overseas. Mr. Speak had been asked by the Pioneer Company of New York what had happened to change the Brisbane River from the safe stream that they knew so well to an allegedly dangerous and difficult waterway.

I have quoted these remarks made by this gentleman, whom as I say I had never met before and who was in charge of shipping

for the American forces during that period, to give some idea of the effects of Press reports throughout Australia and overseas of discussions in this House on the silting of the Brisbane River.

The Chief Engineer of the Department of Harbours and Marine in his annual report for the year ended 30 June, 1950, has this to say on the problems confronting his engineers and himself—

“Since 1900 the river has been gradually regulated from Hamilton to Milton and the regulating walls are still being built. The lay-out of these walls is in accordance with definite mathematical disquisitions.”

Evidently silting has been taking place since 1900. It is the job of the Chief Engineer for Harbours and Marine to see that the river is kept open for traffic. During the war period that job was carried out in a way equal to that of any other port in the world, according to this gentleman, who had the handling of millions of tons of traffic. We can safely leave the matter in the hands of our engineers commissioned for this work. This, combined with the fact that in the course of time the dredges ordered will be delivered should be sufficient. The department will then be able the better to carry out the work the Deputy Leader of the Opposition regards as urgent.

The hon. member for Toowong referred to the relations between the Commonwealth and State. I can assure you that this matter is in the capable hands of the Premier and Treasurer, who from time to time attends conferences between the Commonwealth and States at which these important matters are dealt with. We can safely leave it in their hands to see that as far as possible no undue action by the Commonwealth will in any way severely react on this State.

When the hon. member for Toowong suggested that legislation on the assessment of death duties in the various States should be introduced to prevent double taxation and to bring about uniformity in these levies or taxes the Premier interjected that there were many catches in the way. It could possibly allow people to distribute their property over the Commonwealth to save a little in taxation instead of allowing wealth-producing property to be concentrated in this State. However, those matters will be brought before the notice of the Treasurer on his return to see whether anything can be devised between the Commonwealth and the States to obviate the anomalies that are said to exist.

Some reference was also made by the same hon. member to the inflationary trend that is today compelling companies to make new issues of share capital to avoid taxation and to the desirability of having a simple method of stamping documents in the sale of what are known as rights. That is a matter with which I am not conversant. It may be possible to do something in that respect and put them on the same footing as transfers of ordinary shares, which are stamped by the simple method of fixing adhesive duty stamps.

The hon. member for Port Curtis and the hon. member for Townsville also made suggestions in regard to our ports. I assure both those hon. members that the matters they raised will be referred to the Treasurer and his staff, so that on his return—and I understand he will be arriving here about the 10th—he will be in a position to give attention to these matters and see whether the suggestions offered can be put into effect.

Resolution 7—Department of the Treasurer—agreed to.

Resolutions 8, 9, 10, 12, and 15, agreed to.

## WAYS AND MEANS.

### OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the chair.)

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Acting Treasurer) (8.38 p.m.): I move—

(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1950-1951, a further sum not exceeding £20,404,849 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1950-1951, a further sum not exceeding £21,740,467 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1950-1951, a further sum not exceeding £14,730,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1949-1950, a supplementary sum not exceeding £1,176,873 0s. 9d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1949-1950, a supplementary sum not exceeding £1,161,281 6s. 4d. be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1949-1950, a supplementary sum not exceeding £254,542 6s. 1d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1951-1952, a sum not exceeding £7,000,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1951-1952, a sum not exceeding £5,000,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1951-1952, a sum not exceeding £2,000,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

Motion agreed to.

Resolutions reported, received and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

FIRST READING.

A Bill, founded on the resolutions reported from the Committee of Ways and Means, was introduced and read a first time.

SECOND READING.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Acting Treasurer) (8.43 p.m.): I move—

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

I will refer to the different clauses of the Bill to give hon. members some indication of its contents. Clause 1 of the Bill grants amounts towards the services for the year 1950-51 in accordance with the Estimates, less such amounts as are already specifically appropriated by certain Acts of Parliament. Most of these amounts will be found in the schedules to the Estimates. These latter items are itemised in Parts A, B, C, D and E of the schedule of the Bill and the amounts for which Supply is granted are itemised in Parts F, G and H of the schedule. The amounts granted and supplied by Clause 1 are made up as follows—

	£
Amount of Estimates, Revenue Fund .. .. .	41,245,560
Less Specifically Appropriated .. .. .	6,840,711
	£34,404,849

Under the heading of Trust and Special Funds the amount is £32,242,717. From this is deducted the amount of £2,250, which was specially appropriated, leaving a total of £32,240,467. The amount of the Estimate from Loan Fund is £19,630,000.

The second clause grants supply for the year 1950-51. This provision is made to cover the early part of the next financial year and is approximately sufficient for eight weeks. Were this supply not granted in the Bill, it would be impossible to pay any ordinary accounts after June next year until an Appropriation Bill has been passed by Parliament. The amounts provided for 1951-52 are—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	7,000,000
Trust and Special Fund ..	5,000,000
Loan Fund .. .. .	2,000,000
Total .. .. .	14,000,000

Clause 3 appropriates supply granted in 1950-51 in this Bill and in the final Appropriation Act of last year as well as the first Appropriation Act of this year. The amount

appropriated is £86,275,316, being the total of the amounts granted by the first part itemised in Schedules F, G and H.

Clause 4 appropriates the supplementary expenditure that was incurred in 1949-50. Such expenditure is detailed in the Supplementary Estimates, as presented to the House. The details are itemised in Schedules I, J and K. The amounts are—

	£	s.	d.
Consolidated Revenue Fund	1,176,873	0	9
Trust and Special Fund	1,161,281	6	4
Loan Fund .. .. .	254,542	6	1
	2,592,696	13	2

Clause 5 authorises the Treasurer to pay the sums already mentioned in the Bill as directed by the Governor by warrant and further authorises such payments to be charged against the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

Clause 6 states that the Treasurer shall be allowed credit for sums paid by him in accordance with the Governor's warrant and that receipts of the persons to whom such moneys have been paid shall be a valid discharge to the Treasurer.

The moneys appropriated under clause 4 in accordance with the Supplementary Estimates were expended by authority of the Governor-in-Council and without Parliamentary authority. Clause 7 authorises and sanctions those amounts and indemnifies the Treasurer against all claims and liabilities in respect to such payments.

Clause 8 deals with the title of the Bill. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (8.50 p.m.): Owing to the lateness of the hour and the fact that we are approaching the end of the session, I do not propose to speak at any great length on this Appropriation Bill, but I do feel that as we are appropriating approximately £90,000,000 for the services of this State we should at least examine some of the methods of expending this huge sum as well as inquire why this State, at a time of seeming great prosperity, has budgeted for a deficit of £767,000 and faces the prospect of a deficit that will possibly be in the vicinity of £2,000,000 by the end of the present financial year.

When we look at the finances of the State we can only come to one conclusion, that the State is facing tremendous financial difficulties and it seems anomalous that this should be so. I do not suppose there has ever been as much money available in the State as there is at the present time, yet whilst we have a surplus of money the State is facing such a tremendous deficit. I ask: what would be the financial picture if things financially in Queensland were difficult? Of course, when we find ourselves in a position like this the Government, in an endeavour to justify the unprecedented action of budgeting for a huge deficit at a time when there is no financial stress, blame everybody but themselves. Of

course, that is an old political trick and it is all right, if the Government can get away with it. But it is of no use the Government's blaming anybody other than themselves for the financial position in which they find themselves. When we look at the latest quarterly summary of figures presented in a recent Government Gazette, we find these rather significant facts associated with the finances of the State: that the State in the last quarter received an additional grant from the Commonwealth amounting to £279,031; and that the taxation collections are up £536,803. It was rather significant that one of the greatest sources of taxation was the collections made by the Department of Transport. The figures show £21,073 additional taxation imposed by that department. And we must look at the Railway Department which, as all members appreciate, has a great effect on the finances of the State and we find that the revenue of that department for the quarter is up £706,280 but the expenditure in the same department is also up by £588,138, and in the overall picture in this quarter, notwithstanding that revenue is up by £1,235,879, expenditure is up by £1,454,434. One would have expected that as a result of the large revenue shown for the first quarter of this year we should have been in a better financial position but as revenue goes up expenditure has gone up to a greater extent, and at the end of the first quarter of this year we have a deficit in the finances of this State of £1,080,758 against the comparable position last year of a deficit of £862,203. That is not a very happy or bright picture to finish the session with.

**Mr. Jesson:** Not a dismal one.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** If the hon. member is happy, he is easily pleased, but we on this side of the House, who have some respect for the responsibilities which we accept as members of the House, are not happy. It will inevitably have a very dangerous effect on this State and its people. It is all very well to say that I am a superpessimist but I am a realist, too, and I believe in facing up to the realities of a situation.

Let us examine very briefly the reasons why we have got into such a financial mess in this State. The Government are endeavouring at every opportunity to lay the blame on the Commonwealth Government. Good old Commonwealth Government! Put the boot into them! They are responsible for our position! If we examine the position closely, we find that it is not the fault of the Commonwealth Government, it is not because they have declined to hand out money ad lib. to the States to spend, but in the final analysis the real cause of our financial difficulties at the present time is the action of the present Government in introducing the 40-hour week when they did (Government laughter.) It is all very well for hon. members opposite to jeer at that statement when they know only too well that they are responsible and it is a responsibility that they must face.

**Mr. Rasey:** Let the Commonwealth deal with the rising costs.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** It is all very well to say that the Commonwealth Government should deal with the rising costs but who were the cause of the rising costs? Who started this spiral of rising costs—none other than hon. members and their political colleagues in the Federal sphere who by legislation introduced a 40-hour week at a time when we could ill afford it. Hon. members opposite have endeavoured to shelter behind the judgment of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on the 40-hour week, but do not forget that the Federal Court in its judgment stated that it had been presented with a fait accompli because the Government had introduced a 40-hour week by legislation. All the Labour Governments of Australia had told the court that the introduction of a 40-hour week would not cause any financial embarrassment to Government finances.

Look at the position that has been created. It has caused a terrific increase in Government expenditure in several directions. It has brought about an increased staff in Government departments to do the same amount of work as was done before. In the 2½ years to 30 June 1950 the increase in the number of Queensland Government employees was 4,897 or nearly half of the total increase for the 11 years from 30 June 1939 to 30 June 1950. It has brought about heavily increased overtime. In the Railway Department alone the increase in this item of expenditure was from £428,812 in 1946-47 to £1,279,421 in 1949-50. We are a wonderful country if we can stand up to a bill like that for overtime, and we are going to be a wonderful country if we can stand up to the deficit this year.

This political action has also had the effect of heavily increasing the costs of materials required to carry on our various activities.

This has been particularly noticeable since the introduction of the 40-hour week. Lastly, and the greatest point of all I wish to make, the 40-hour week set up a train of increases in the cost of living and in the basic wage that is still accelerating, and is having the effect of increasing the cost of everything.

The best basis on which we can measure the increased cost of living is the basic wage because the basic wage follows the trend of cost-of-living costs. In the six years from 31 December, 1939, to 31 December, 1945, the total increase in the basic wage was 13s. In the next two years, to 31 December, 1947, the increase was 12s., but this included a prosperity loading granted by the court of 7s. a week. The cost-of-living increase for the two years was only 5s.

Now let us look at the picture since the introduction of the 40-hour week on 1st January, 1948. In the following three years there were increases every quarter totalling 30s., that is, 5s. more than the total for the previous eight years including the prosperity loading of 7s. granted in 1947. Even including the prosperity loading, the average increase in the basic wage during the period of operation of the 40-hour week has been more than

three times the average for the previous eight years. Do not hon. members opposite think that has had a very vital effect on the increased cost of living? Of course it has. After all, the basic wage is a reflex of the cost of living. Unfortunately the basic-wage increase is always at least three months behind the cost of living.

When we realise that every addition of 1s. to the basic wage costs the Government £70,000 per annum in the Railway Department and £120,000 in all departments one can realise the tremendous effect it has on Government expenditure. The increase of 30s. since the basic wage started to operate is now costing the Government £3,600,000 per annum. That increase in State expenditure is mainly due to the 40-hour week, for which this Government and the New South Wales Labour Government must accept the full responsibility. We must not forget that the 40-hour week was not introduced in this State because of the prosperous state of Queensland, or because this State could afford to carry it; it was introduced as a political bribe to save the political hides of hon. members opposite.

Now that the chickens are coming home to roost as a result of their unwise legislation, they are screaming to high heaven for help from the Commonwealth Government. They have had the plums and they should expect to pay for them. A man who buys a flash car he cannot afford only makes himself ridiculous if subsequently he squeals about the price. Actually the Commonwealth Government, while getting all the blame from hon. members opposite, have not been niggardly, as hon. members opposite allege. The Commonwealth grant for 1950-51 is £12,277,500, as against £10,230,827 made by the Chifley Government in 1948-49. If this State is being badly treated by the Federal Government, why is it this Government has received more than £2,000,000 from them more than they received from the previous Labour Government?

The fact is that the increase in the grant made by the Menzies Government for 1950-51 is nearly twice as large as the average annual increase during the previous four years of the Chifley Government. We hear howls about the niggardly treatment by the Commonwealth Government because they think they can get some political advantage and they are endeavouring to cover up their own shortcomings by blaming everybody but themselves and concentrating on a political attack on the Federal Government.

Let us not forget that on top of the large increases in expenditure, for which this Government must accept the responsibility, we now have the additional 15s. granted by the State court, consequent upon the 20s. increase granted by the Federal court on 11 October last. The Treasurer budgeted for a deficit of £767,825, but he made no provision for the basic-wage increase granted by the Federal court, costing £1,800,000 per annum, or £900,000 in 1950-51. He made no provision whatsoever for the effect of the recent increase in the basic wage. That increase will accelerate increases in the basic

wage in future, which will probably total a further 20s. before the end of the financial year and add a further £600,000 to State expenditure in 1950-51.

Those are the increases in wages and salaries alone. In addition, there will be substantial increases in cost of material and in pay-roll tax. Altogether, unless there is a further grant from the Commonwealth, which this Government have no right to expect, this State is facing a deficit that will exceed £2,000,000. Even allowing for increased revenue from the increase in railway charges as from 18 December, on top of the increases imposed in July last, and the increases in motor-registration fees, there is still a deficit of over £2,000,000 to be faced. In 1951-5 the Government will have to bear the cost, for the full year, of basic-wage increases totalling 35s. a week, equal to £4,200,000 per annum, and of further increases to follow during that year.

That is the matter of outstanding importance with which the Treasurer should deal this evening, and that we have to consider when voting almost £100,000,000 as we are doing at the present time. Those are matters the Treasurer should tell the House something about. This House and the public are entitled to an outline of how the Treasurer proposes to meet a condition of Government bankruptcy in a period of abnormal prosperity. I hope the hon. the Treasurer will give to the House and the State some indication of how he is going to meet the tremendous deficit this State faces, which was brought about, I repeat, largely by the unwise political actions of the Government who threw overboard all considerations for the future of this State in an endeavour to bribe the electors to return them to the Treasury benches. It is not a happy prospect when you look at the financial position of this State today and it is something which should concern every member of this Chamber; unfortunately, the hon. members opposite do not care two hoots because they have no regard to the future of Queensland and no regard to the financial position of this State.

**Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (9.10 p.m.):** I do not intend to take up the time of the House—

**Opposition Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. WALSH:** Did I hear somebody in the Opposition say "Hear, hear!" I think I heard the Leader of the Opposition complaining about the introduction of the 40-hour week. If there is anything hon. members are paid for, it is to put in their time in this Parliament.

If there is anything that can be gathered from the long harangue we have had from the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the introduction of the 40-hour week, at least he has expressed himself very honestly as to the attitude of the Opposition to this question, and it will be well for the workers to remember that if ever the Opposition succeeds in getting on to the Government benches of this State, they, the workers, can look forward to the reintroduction of the

44-hour week, lower wages, and a reduced standard of conditions of employment. I concede to the Leader of the Opposition his honesty in that respect. He has given his point of view in this matter. However, I have not risen to talk about that. I realise that there is a desire on the part of hon. members generally to get on to other matters. I want to take this opportunity of correcting some misstatements made by the hon. member for Mirani in connection with local-authority loans and subsidies.

**An Opposition Member:** It is on again.

**Mr. WALSH:** Well, it is on again to this extent: if hon. members on the other side are prepared to sit and listen to the misstatements made by the hon. member for Mirani from time to time in regard to these matters, I for one am not prepared to accept them. During the course of the hon. member's remarks in a previous debate he referred to the loans and subsidies to cities and shires, and, consistent with the usual propaganda put forward by the members of the Opposition in regard to the alleged discrimination of the Government in favour of the city of Brisbane against country areas the hon. member proceeded to show to his own satisfaction that for every £ of loan raised by the Brisbane City Council a subsidy of £6 13s. 9d. was granted by this Government. I know that such members of the Opposition as the hon. members for Toowong, Coorparoo and others understand these things and it is a pity the hon. member for Mirani did not get some instruction from them in regard to them. But I would not expect that. His statement is so fantastic that no member of this Assembly would accept it and the only conclusion I can come to, having regard to the fact that on 30 September last year he asked a question in regard to this matter and information was supplied to him by the Treasurer at that time, the hon. member for Rockhampton, and that he asked a question again this year on 7 September in regard to the same matter and information was again supplied to him, is that the hon. member either deliberately set out to conceal the true position or it was by reason of his ignorance and incapacity to analyse the statements and figures presented to this House.

Actually, everybody knows that the amount of subsidies approved to any particular local authority is governed by the amount of loan that may be raised by the local authority. If the shires and the cities show a lesser amount in the aggregate of subsidies approved by the Government in respect of loans raised, that only indicates that the local authorities concerned have raised a lesser amount of loans but to suggest to this House, as was suggested by the hon. member, that the total amount received by the Brisbane City Council for this last financial year was only £133,000 in round figures is asking hon. members to accept something that is a reflection on their intelligence. As I have previously stated, the information was available to the hon. member and if hon. members opposite care to look up the information supplied by the Treasurer on 25 October, they will see

that he indicated there in the course of his reply that local authorities borrowed from financial institutions a much larger proportion of their loan requirements by means of debenture issues guaranteed by the State, the greater part of which attracts subsidies.

"The subsidies paid in 1949-50 therefore are those in respect of Treasury and Debenture Loans. The Debenture Loan raising approved were as follows . . ."

Then it proceeds to show that amongst other things the debenture loans for Brisbane were £3,873,800. There was the information supplied to the hon. member for Mirani by the Treasurer in this House, yet he proceeds to show that only £133,000 was raised by way of loan and the subsidy granted to the Brisbane City Council was £6 13s. 9d. for every £1 raised. The actual position is that the subsidy granted to the Brisbane City Council for every £1 raised is 4s. 5d. Hon. members can see from that the reason why I rise to correct what is obviously a deliberately misleading statement intended to indicate that this Government are discriminating between the city of Brisbane and the outside cities and shires to the extent that they are granting Brisbane a greater amount of subsidy. I merely wanted to place those figures on record.

In addition I should like to say that while the hon. member made a long harangue about long-term and short-term loans he quoted from a letter received from the Commonwealth Treasurer trying to convey the impression to hon. members of this House that loans were granted to Governments in this country extending over 53 years and that they were receiving those loans at 2 per cent. interest. Again I know there are intelligent hon. members on the other side who understand that the Sinking Fund to which this provision applies has nothing whatever to do with the loans raised by Governments from time to time for works programmes.

It is interesting to note that in this clamour that is going on about lack of interest so far as local authority areas are concerned the figures disclose that since July, 1932, and up to June, 1950, the amount of subsidies granted totals £11,547,947. I should like to impress that on the hon. member for Aubigny, the hon. member for Roma, and other hon. members of the Opposition who are continually harping in this Assembly at this Government, and contending that they are not giving assistance to local authorities. That figure of £11,547,947 represents a complete grant to local authorities. Those local authorities are not expected to repay one penny of that amount. The Government assume the responsibility of paying the interest and making the necessary contribution to the Sinking Fund to cover that amount. The local authority is not called upon in any way to make any contribution to the sums that have been advanced by the State by way of subsidies.

I suggest that before hon. members get on their feet they should at least endeavour to study the financial relations between local authorities and the State Government of Queensland and if they do they must admit

that at no time in the history of Queensland has such a large amount of financial aid been given as was granted by the Labour Government from 1932 onwards.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier) (9.19 p.m.): It was rather amusing to hear the Leader of the Opposition on his old hobby horse. To us over here it appeared as if he had seen on this side some vision from Hades, or something that frightened the life out of him.

This morning I read in the "Courier-Mail" about our united Opposition, about how close together they were, yet I remind the Leader of the Opposition that the Liberal Party supported the introduction of the 40-hour week.

**Mr. Sparkes:** Everybody makes mistakes.

**Mr. HANLON:** The Liberal Party voted for the introduction of the 40-hour week in this House, just as much as the Labour Party did, and we read in this morning's paper about this united Opposition. They see eye to eye in everything except one member of the Liberal Party and one of the Country Party on the question of an increase in salaries to members of Parliament. They are a well-married couple living happily together. The Leader of the Opposition worked himself into a rage against me and my colleagues because we voted for the 40-hour week, but he never said a word to his partners who joined in the perfidious action.

The hon. gentleman says that we were responsible for the trouble. What about the Commonwealth Government? Every State has a 40-hour week and the 40-hour week does not seem to have done the Commonwealth revenue any harm. Commonwealth revenue reached an all-time record last year and I read in the morning Press of a week or two back that in the first four months of the financial year, without the proposed Budget increases in taxation, postal revenue was up by over £2,000,000 in comparison with that of the first four months of the preceding year and customs and excise revenue was £8,000,000 over the first four months of last year.

The people of Queensland are paying their share of all taxes. In 1938-39 the total Commonwealth income-tax revenue was £12,000,000 but last year income-tax revenue alone was £209,000,000, after they had given the States their shares. In other words, £209,000,000 of revenue was left after they had given what they thought they should give to the States. That is the taxation revenue, not the revenue from sales tax, and not the revenue from customs and excise duties.

I point out too that so far as the Commonwealth Government are concerned every bit of inflation, every rise in wages and every increase in prices helps the Commonwealth revenue and hurts the States' financial position. The recent rise in the basic wage does not cost the Commonwealth Government anything because every £1 or 15s. rise in the wage brings thousands and thousands more people into higher grades of taxation. On

the basis of increases in wages the Commonwealth Government make a profit after they have paid the increases to their own employees. At the time the Commonwealth gave increases to their judges all States followed suit and raised the salaries of their judges. Look at what they took from their own judges, not only in the increased taxable income but in the increased rate of tax. They showed a substantial profit on these things and you will find that the Commonwealth revenue will show a substantial profit by increases in the basic wage but the State Budgets are being hurt.

The same thing applies to immigrants, because every immigrant coming into this country means a net annual gain to the Commonwealth of £45 but to the States a loss of £10 10s.

That is the fantastic position we are in in our relationship between Commonwealth and State Governments in the taxation field. There is no possibility of the Commonwealth Government's tackling the inflation problem, because the present situation pays them. The more inflation the more their revenue rises and so they are inclined to encourage inflation rather than tackle the problem.

Let us look at the position this State has got into. The Leader of the Opposition said that rather than ask for what he called more money, but which we call a legitimate share of the taxation revenue for our State, we should look at the expenditure here. Heaven knows we have looked at it enough when preparing the Budget. All the Ministers and their staffs received a very cold and glassy stare from both the Treasurer and me and the Estimates of expenditure were gone over carefully. When we were faced with this position we had to make a choice of methods of dealing with the deficit of £700,000. We could cut down on our expenditure or we could increase our income. We could increase our income by jumping up land tax, or by jumping up railway transport charges. Land tax is the only direct form of tax left to us. Someone complained about death duties and in that direction we could increase charges too. We could either increase taxation or reduce our expenditure.

One of the easiest things for an hon. member opposite to do is to get up in this Chamber and say expenditure should be reduced but ask him in what particular respect and he will not say one word. Do hon. members opposite say that schools should be closed, that hospitals should be closed, that there should be dismissals in the Public Service, and that works should go hang or that we should stop development work? Let hon. members opposite say in what direction we should cut down on expenditure, what particular item of expenditure should be cut. Do they suggest that we reduce the State children allowance, as their predecessors did? What are they going to cut? We have debated the Estimates in detail for 16 days and prior to that we discussed the Financial Statement for something like 10 days and not one hon. member opposite pointed to any item of expenditure that should be excluded from the Budget—not one pointed to one

pound, one shilling or one penny that should be excluded from the Budget. And then the Leader of the Opposition expects me to take him seriously and expects the community to take him seriously when he gets up here and says we should look at our expenditure, that we should cut down £700,000 of our expenditure. Not one suggestion of how £1 should be cut in the expenditure, not one word. It is arrant humbug to talk in that way.

We have to face the position and we are not getting a fair deal from the Commonwealth Government in the taxation allotment. Until the Liberal-Country Party Government were elected in the Federal sphere every State got sufficient reimbursement of tax moneys from the Commonwealth to meet its outgoings. We have had no deficit in this State since 1938 except in the strike year and then we were down only a couple of hundred thousand pounds. We had to meet additional expenditure and railway revenue fell off greatly. That was the only time we had to face a deficit. In preparing the Estimates for that year we could not foresee that happening but at that time it could be corrected the next year because the State got sufficient allocation from the Commonwealth to meet the expenditure that it had incurred. Not once since the Labour Government came into power at Canberra and the uniform taxation scheme has been in vogue has there been a shortage on the part of any Government in meeting their legitimate expenditure. Admittedly we have had to make a case for Canberra; we have had to justify our expenditure. On one occasion when Mr. Chifley was critical of the Budgets the States had presented he made the suggestion that the States' Budgets should be submitted for consideration by his officers and if they were satisfied that the Budgets were correct the proper allocations would be forthcoming. That was done and after a day or so working on it the officials reported to him that they could find nothing in the State Budgets they could object to. The then Prime Minister promptly met the Bill. This year at the outset of the Premiers' Conference the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, said, "So much, and no more." I said, "Will you allow your Treasury officials to check our Budget?" My Treasury officers were present. I asked him if he would allow his Treasury officials to check our Budget with our officers and if he could find anything wrong we were prepared to take it. He would not do so. In fact, he would not have anything to do with it at all, but laid down an arbitrary figure.

Let us look at what that figure is and how fairly it works out. It works out at £10 12s. a head of our population. Then South Australia, a State much smaller in area, much smaller in population—a little less than half of our State—with the bulk of its population within 150 miles of the capital city, receives £16 10s. a head of population, or 56 per cent. more a head than Queensland. Remember, Queensland has an immense area, with 6,560 miles of railways, thousands of miles of main roads, an array of ports right up the coast such as no other State has, and the maintenance of settlement

1,500 miles away from Brisbane, such as a town like Mt. Isa, with its big industry, and is 600 miles deep.

Another thing we must not forget is that this State is a barrier between the Commonwealth and any trouble that might arise. In a war scare any attack on the Commonwealth places this State as the border between the Commonwealth and the enemy, yet we are to get 56 per cent. less per head of population in the Commonwealth Government grant than a State whose only fear of attack is from Amundsen's Antarctic polar bears, and which has not the immense responsibility of developmental works that confront this State. If anyone says that is a fair deal, he has a poor sense of his responsibilities to the people. In the matter of developmental policy nothing is any good in Queensland, yet the Commonwealth Government are prepared to go on with the £200,000,000 Snowy River project.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Who started that?

**Mr. HANLON:** It does not matter who started it. It is still going on. I had an assurance from the previous Prime Minister that the Federal Government would help us in our developmental works.

**Mr. Nicklin:** They never put anything in writing.

**Mr. HANLON:** They are in a different category from some other people; we can take their word.

**Government Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. HANLON:** There was no need for the then Prime Minister to put his undertaking in writing. He said that would be done. During the whole of my occupancy of the position of Premier, when the then Federal Government said they would do a thing they did it. No-one can ever say a word against the then Prime Minister in that respect. He never broke his word when he gave an undertaking to do anything. We got that undertaking. All we can get now about these developmental works are long telegrams, taking up page after page of paper, telling us about detailed examinations and comprehensive reports by the Bureau of Industry and Economics until we get sick of looking at them. First of all, we could not get a decision on the Tully project until we settled the Burdekin scheme and we could not settle the Burdekin scheme until there was an investigation and detailed and comprehensive reports and all that sort of thing. Then when it came to the Dimbulah-Walsh River scheme they needed a detailed examination and comprehensive report by the Bureau of Economics or some other darned thing or another. We are not asking the Bureau of Economics whether we can grow tobacco or not in the Dimbulah area. In their ignorance the people there are growing it, they are harvesting it, grading it, drying it and manufacturing it; and the people of this country are smoking it. At Canberra, the people whom the Leader of the Opposition is supporting tell us we cannot grow tobacco till some long-haired people spend a year or two smelling out whether we can grow tobacco or not.

The other day I was speaking to Mr. Mulholland, the engineer conducting the experiment in diverting the effluent from the Mt. Garnet tin show out of the Herbert River. Hon. members know the history of the trouble in the Herbert River. Mr. Mulholland saw there was some poor cattle country adjacent to this tin show and he thought that if the sludge was diverted to this very gradually falling country, where it could not run fast, the evaporation and the soakage would absorb it. It has done that; the sludge is disappearing. To carry the story a little further, up on this country, some ignorant or criminally-minded person decided that he would revolt against the ukase of Canberra about getting a report from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the darned fool planted tobacco. Mr. Mulholland showed me a picture of the tobacco, and whatever number of weeks old it was, the leaves were about 24 inches long. It was the best tobacco they have seen in North Queensland. They want us to put that man out of action. I felt like wiring down to see if the director could do anything under his de-facto war powers about a man who was in fact growing tobacco before the receipt of this comprehensive report. Here are people growing tobacco of good quality and they are marketing it and getting satisfactory prices with the bit of irrigation they have, and we are told we cannot get help till they have a detailed and comprehensive report by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics or some such thing.

The Leader of the Opposition says that is a fair deal for us. What State is he barking for? What interest is he taking in other States that he is prepared to say that we are getting a fair deal and the people getting a 56 per cent. better deal are not getting anything too good? I am not arguing about what South Australia is getting; I think they are getting what they are entitled to and that we should get ours brought up to £16 10s. a head. We could then balance our budget and extend our educational facilities. Hon. members say that we should open more schools and pay higher salaries to engineers and to teachers, and that we should build more railways and roads.

**Mr. Lloyd Roberts:** What was the figure for New South Wales and Queensland last year?

**Mr. HANLON:** I told the hon. member the appropriation this year. I was not interested in the appropriation last year because we got enough to just balance our Budget. My obligation and this Government's obligation to the people is to keep Queensland's accounts square. We do not want to show a profit or a loss; we do not want to charge the people one penny more than the service rendered to the people. That is the sound basis of Government budgeting. If we got our appropriation on the same basis as South Australia we could extend services and still balance our Budget. We are faced with the alternatives of cutting our Budget, increasing our taxation or budgeting for a deficit.

Finally at the end of the conference the Prime Minister broke down to the extent that he said he was prepared to have another conference of Treasury experts from each State with his Commonwealth experts and if they could put up a formula that would get the position on to something sound he would be prepared to have another Premiers' Conference and correct the position. In the hope that the undertaking would be kept—I believe it will be kept early in the New Year—we are budgeting for a deficit. I still hope it will be met by the taxation pool of the Commonwealth Government. It should be met by the pool; it is there. He budgeted this year for £65,000,000 more revenue than he is going to spend on revenue objects; £65,000,000 of revenue this year is budgeted for to be applied to capital works that normally would be carried out from loan. Last year it was estimated at £90,000,000 and if anyone tells me that that is just and honest dealing with the States I shall wonder what is wrong with him. It is the State's money. This State has to put in its share of this gigantic amount of revenue the Commonwealth is receiving. The sum of £65,000,000 in tax is being taken from the people and is to be applied to capital works that should be done from the Loan Fund. Not a penny of it comes to us.

Actually, the situation is very bad. Anybody who is looking for stabilisation of the Australian pound from the present Federal Government will look in vain, because that Government, with their growing revenue, are encouraged to go on with inflation. All their advisers are anxious to have a growing and prosperous revenue. No Treasury official ever wants to see his own Treasury not having growing figures. The advisers of the Treasurer in Canberra are firmly predisposed to a course of further inflation and further rises in income. When one considers all these new charges—for instance, customs and excise and Post Office receipts alone account for nearly £11,000,000 more in the first four months—and with all this revenue, one can understand what will happen over the remainder of the year when the additional charges come on. All the basic-wage rises mean higher wages and higher charges for theatres. A tax of 3d. went on 1s. seats. The 1s. seat when up to 1s. 3d. and another 1d. went on. The cheap seats have all gone up 3d. That is, another 1d. on every cheap seat in every theatre in Australia goes to the Commonwealth revenue. What is the pay-roll tax worth to Australia? How many billions of pounds in payroll tax go to the Commonwealth revenue and not the State revenue? It is boosting Commonwealth revenue all the time. You will not get a Government or a public servant, when he is doing so well in his income, to make any real attempt to stop that inflation.

**Mr. Hiley:** You support my proposal that some of that class of tax should be handed over exclusively to the States?

**Mr. HANLON:** They will not hand us over anything.

If we could get some way of controlling our own income, we could take the responsibility for whatever we spend. We should be answerable to our own people.

**Mr. Hiley:** That is what I want.

**Mr. HANLON:** So do I and I hope the hon. member will not forget that when this single-tax system was introduced this Government fought the power of the Commonwealth through the court and both parties of the Opposition attacked this Government and supported the Commonwealth Government in doing it.

**Mr. Hiley:** It was then expressed as a temporary measure. Mr. Chifley made it a permanent one.

**Mr. HANLON:** We were frightened we should never get it back and that is the position we are in.

**Mr. Nicklin:** You would not take it back when it was offered.

**Mr. HANLON:** It has never been offered. The hon. gentleman knows it has never been offered.

**Mr. Nicklin:** It was offered to you at the Premiers' Conference and you would not have it.

**Mr. HANLON:** The last Premier's Conference?

**Mr. Nicklin:** Yes.

**Mr. HANLON:** The hon. gentleman knows that is not correct. What was offered to me was that I get out of the taxation field and I come back here and put £12,000,000 or £14,000,000 additional tax on my people. They offered me the opportunity to get out of the Federal taxation field altogether and get back to the pre-war position of the Federal Government putting on certain taxes and the State Government putting on certain taxes.

**Mr. Hiley:** That was an offer to Queensland alone and not to the other State Premiers?

**Mr. HANLON:** I could get out of it and put my own tax on the State. The Prime Minister told me that certainly I could get out of it. That would mean that I should have to load the already well-taxed people of Queensland with additional taxation to the extent of £14,000,000 a year to make up and I was not prepared to do that.

**An Opposition Member:** In other words, you had had it?

**Mr. HANLON:** It is all right for an irresponsible member of the Opposition to lean back in his seat and make a wisecrack, but this is serious. We are not getting an honest deal from the Commonwealth Government and we have to get an honest deal from them or this State will be in difficulties. The Leader of the Opposition says money was never so plentiful. That is true. Money never was so plentiful among the people, but the draw is all in one direction. It does not come to us. If our deficit this year is not cured, then, believe me, direct taxation within our own sphere will have to cure it next year. Those spheres are death duties, land tax, and

transport charges. We shall have to meet another £1,000,000 or so next year. Hon. members can have it whichever way they like, but they cannot have no taxation, together with expenditure. Whatever expenditure we have, it will have to be met and this Government are not going to institute a system of building up a series of deficits over the years that will finally bring us down anyway. Funding deficits gets you nowhere. You do not get rid of the debt by merely funding it; you only make it permanent. If this deficit is not cleared up we shall have to fund it. Funding £750,000 means that we are permitted to pay 3½ per cent. on that £750,000 plus 4 per cent. redemption on it to wipe it off.

**Mr. Hiley:** What do you say the charges for the rest of the financial year will be?

**Mr. HANLON:** Something about £1,000,000. The position bluntly and plainly is that the more prices go up the more revenue the Commonwealth Government derive. The more migration we have here the more Commonwealth revenue goes up. These things bring us no revenue. The additional expenditure with which we are faced for every migrant who comes here is a little bit of land tax, although they are not able to hold land immediately, a little railway revenue, plus a proportion of death duties, and when everything is taken into consideration we show a net loss of £10 for each migrant.

**Mr. Hiley:** Has that conference of Treasury officials that was spoken about started to operate yet?

**Mr. HANLON:** Not yet. I hope something will be done early in the New Year. I certainly will take it up with the Prime Minister as soon as I come back in an endeavour to get it on immediately because we cannot let it go to the end of the financial year before having something done about it.

**Mr. Hiley:** Is there any particular proposal you have in mind to submit to that conference?

**Mr. HANLON:** No. When the Treasury officials get together they will be able to put up a series of proposals from which we can pick either the best or just take the best parts from them all. I prefer to examine proposals submitted by Treasury experts and State economists with a view to getting something out of them rather than submit something first in my own more or less incompetent way. I think it much better for Premiers and Cabinet Ministers generally to let the Treasury officials and economists put up a series of proposals; then we can examine them from the point of view of practicability. I do not mind carrying the burden of my own sins—believe me, I rarely escape them—but I do not like to have the sins of the Federal Government hung round my neck also.

**Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) (9.50 a.m.):** There are at least two aspects of technical education in Queensland that I think call for close and serious examination by the Secretary for Public Instruction. From the association I have had with him I have great respect

for the Minister and I feel sure that if in his opinion these matters call for a change it will be brought about.

I appeal to the Minister for the appointment of inspectors to the Technical Education Branch of the Department of Public Instruction. In the past the examinations in our technical colleges have been done by the late Inspector George Hendren, a man well known to me and one who was held in the highest respect and esteem by teachers in Queensland and all other people who were privileged to know him. He was concerned mainly with technical colleges and high schools and his academic inspections covered State and rural schools. Promotion to the rank of inspector should be made from the ranks of the teachers already in the technical department. There are many paid teachers in the Department of Public Instruction who hold technical qualifications won as the result of study in various branches of advanced technical education and who have obtained diplomas and certificates and awards granted by recognised technical colleges and institutes. These qualifications include the diploma of mechanical and electrical engineering, an award made to successful students conjointly by the Department of Public Instruction and the Queensland University, the certificate of building construction, a post-apprenticeship course of study prepared by the Department of Public Instruction, and the Royal Sanitary Institute Certificate, a certificate awarded to successful students who have completed a post-apprenticeship course in sanitation. A number of teachers who have won these qualifications have successfully completed a three-year post-apprenticeship course and would be fitted to serve the department as inspectors in technical work. There are, no doubt, other technical awards that could be added to the list I have given.

There is a growing need for the appointment of inspectors to the technical branches of the Department of Public Instruction and I submit that there is a need for at least three—one from the engineering trade, one from the building trade, and one from the plumbing trade. I name those specific trades because they are the dominating trades for which there are teachers at every country college as well as central technical colleges. The expansion and development of technical education over the past 20 years has been enormous and the next 20 years will see an even greater development, as more colleges are established in country towns. The expenditure of this branch is fast becoming a major item of State budgets and the value of machinery and machine tools and equipment in our technical colleges is one of the State's greatest assets and the apprentices who pass out of our technical colleges represent to the State wealth in technical knowledge and practical ability that cannot be calculated in terms of money. The profit that this wealth will bring to Queensland will be the greatest dividend from which our people will benefit in the future. It is essential that this ever-growing potential should receive some attention by the Department of Public Instruction in the light of experience in developing

primary and secondary education and the effective development of efficiency in all other departments.

The Department of Public Instruction has many inspectors whose training has been purely academic. I doubt whether any of them have had any technical training or experience, yet these men find it is part of their duties to inspect manual-training classes and the manual-training teachers conducting the classes. Needless to say, the embarrassment is mutual. The inspector is reluctant to converse with the class or teacher because he knows naught of technical terms, references or jargon; and the teacher is under restraint for he is fully aware that his ability as a teacher will be reflected on the yellow card that the embarrassed inspector is compelled to issue. Without casting any reflections on the present inspectors, I submit that the department cannot, from the reports received from its academic inspectors, accurately assess the work of manual-training classes or rural school classes, nor can the department estimate the efficiency of the teacher or have any useful knowledge of the work of the syllabus covered at the schools.

There are in our technical colleges many thousands of pounds invested in machinery, machine tools, equipment and small tools. It is asking too much of any man who has not had the appropriate technical training to testify, in taking stock at any college, that the machinery, machine tools, equipment and small tools he inspected are those listed in the stock book of the college; nor can he truthfully speak from knowledge gained by experience that they are in good working order, serviceable or adequate. Such reports as these can be made only by a fully-qualified technical man such as those to be found among the trained trade teachers now in the department.

The apprentices are important too. The academic inspector may be able to assess by a system of comparisons the teacher's manner of application and efforts of imparting his knowledge, but what of standard practice? What of the ever-changing nature of trade work? What of the constant revision of syllabus? What of the research necessary to keep teachers and apprentices abreast of modern times? Our technical-education system cannot flourish and prosper unless technical inspectors are appointed to carry out these duties and see that in all our technical colleges the trade teachers, some of whom have been many years away from their trade, are provided with an inspector who is conversant with their trades and who, by his research, is able to pass on to the isolated teachers in country districts the latest information about their trades. Who are better fitted for this work than our own trade teachers who have shown the initiative to undertake post-apprenticeship study and have obtained advanced technical qualifications? The department has always considered highly the importance of domestic-science work and recognised the impracticability of having academic inspectors wholly responsible for the supervision of this work. It has a special inspector for the work—a woman,

Miss A. Douglas, who is well versed in such matters. The department would be acting unwisely in hesitating further to appoint special inspectors for technical education.

There is one point that appeals to me as a teacher in favour of the appointment of the three inspectors I have mentioned. I have learned from reliable officials of the Department of Public Instruction that all of the annual apprenticeship examination papers are prepared by teachers at the Central Technical College many weeks before the examinations are held. This year they were in readiness as early as August and the examination began on 23 October and concluded on 9 November. This places these teachers in a very peculiar position, for they have to continue teaching the classes for the rest of the year in preparation for an examination, the questions of which they themselves have set some weeks or months before. I contend that this state of affairs should, as far as possible, be eliminated. If the duties of the inspectors of technical education included the setting of examination papers for all apprentices of the various callings, this irregularity would disappear in the engineering, building and plumbing trades, and as these trades constitute a very large proportion of the trade apprentices attending our technical schools the bad principle of the practice would be very largely removed. I do not for one moment doubt the integrity of these teachers, who are placed in the invidious position of having to set papers, teach the subject, and then assess the examination work. These teachers would be glad to be relieved of this onerous duty which must place them and their pupils at an advantage over pupils and teachers in country colleges. It is my firm belief that examination papers should be set by independent persons, qualified for the job, who are not teaching the subject to prospective candidates. In the case of our scholarships and qualifying examination papers, these are set by the State School district inspectors, just as apprenticeship examination papers should be set by inspectors of technical schools. These inspectors should also set the manual training papers for scholarship and qualifying examination papers.

If, as is contended by one of the high officials of the Department of Public Instruction, no advantage accrues to the children taught by a teacher who is in possession of the examination questions some months before the examination, it would be only fair to say that no advantage was to be gained if every teacher was presented with those papers right at the beginning of the year. That to you, Mr. Speaker, would be preposterous. What use is the examination if the questions are in the hands of a teacher 12 months before the examination is held? That is exactly what is being done in connection with technical colleges. Although these papers may be ready for the printer in August there would be nothing to stop the teacher whose duty it is to set those questions from being ready with them in January. He would have the advantage of knowing just what his pupils were going to sit in examination for and although he may be the most honest person in the world he must have a bias towards

the questions he himself had set. If we are going to be fair we must have inspectors independent of the teaching profession and those inspectors must be chosen from the technical branch of the technical colleges, many of whom are highly qualified. Then we should abolish the system whereby some members of the profession have a preknowledge of what is going to be presented and others have no knowledge at all.

**Mr. PIZZEY** (Isis) (10.3 p.m.): The Premier issued a challenge to anyone on this side of the House who could draw his attention to one item of expenditure that could be omitted from the estimates. I suggest that the expenditure of £6,000 for the development of opera in Queensland should be cut. I am surprised that the Minister has allowed someone to pull the wool over his eyes and has persuaded him to increase the amount of £3,946 expended last year to £6,000 this year. The State is not getting value for the money that has been spent. I had some experience with the development of opera and with the formation of opera societies and I know the money is not being spent wisely, that there is a lack of supervision among the chosen successful candidates. I feel that even the £3,946 that was expended last year is too great an expenditure for this purpose. I shall be very pleased if the Minister will indicate just how that £3,946 was spent and how his department intends to spend another £2,000 on opera this year.

I got up mainly to draw attention not only to the shortage of teachers but also to the failure on the part of the Government to overcome it. Year after year we had the report saying that the Director-General of Education realised that there was a grave shortage but that we were doing everything it was possible to do, and that the same thing existed in other States and they were unable to do anything about it, and the shortage of teachers was bound up with the school-leaving age. In 1947 in his report in discussing the aim of education Mr. Edwards said:—

“How, I ask, can there be anything but an imperfect realisation of these aims in the case of boys and girls who have to leave school at the age of 14?”

I think we all agree, but nothing has been done to bring about a solution of this problem. If the Government have done everything possible they have failed in their objective.

The following table of figures shows the number of teachers in training in New South Wales and Queensland over a period:—

State	Year	No. of teachers in training
New South Wales	1945	1,403
	1946	1,984
	1947	2,165
	1948	2,287
Queensland	1945	553
	1946	525
	1947	539
	1948	584

We do not seem to be able to get past the 600 mark. The emergency training scheme will bring in a few more, but it will also take away some from the Senior Teacher Student Scheme. Everybody knows that our school attendance is increasing yearly, and increased from 137,000 in 1945 to 154,000 last year. The number of teachers in 1945 was 4,728 and in 1949 4,698, which shows no improvement at all, but a falling off. It is very difficult to get actual figures. The Public Service Commissioner gave one lot of figures, as follows:—

1946	..	..	..	..	4,555
1947	..	..	..	..	4,576
1948	..	..	..	..	4,475
1949	..	..	..	..	4,635
1950	..	..	..	..	4,925

The Director-General of Education gives a totally different set of figures and in reply to a question I asked the other day I got a third set of figures. Apparently the department does not know how many teachers it has. I ask first of all whether anything has been done to tap the reservoir of potential teachers from the small country schools where the children are too far away from high schools. What happens to them when they leave school at 14 and drift to the city or take a job or work in their own little rural community? There must be many brilliant students in that group who have qualifications that would make them good teachers and who would be able, if their parents had financial assistance, to carry on for another two years and become junior teacher students. I think it would help considerably if we could establish scholarships for this purpose instead of spending this money on opera. If we had scholarships of £100 each for 60 country students to enable them to pay their board whilst attending a high school for two years away from home it would be a great advantage.

I am pleased that the Minister has the yellow card on the way to being abolished.

All I wanted to do tonight was to draw the attention of this House to the utter failure of this Government to solve the teaching problem. If the Minister will oblige I shall very much like to hear his plan for solving the problem by means of plans other than those that have failed in the past.

**Mr. Devries:** You would not understand.

**Mr. PIZZEY:** I should like to hear them.

**Hon. G. H. DEVRIES** (Gregory—Secretary for Public Instruction) (10.10 p.m.): I really thought that the hon. member for Isis would have the decency not to attempt to mislead this House as regards some of the activities he had taken part in during his service as a teacher. In one of his speeches he definitely said he had taught in all parts of Queensland, from Isis to Cloncurry and Cloncurry to Cairns.

**Mr. Pizzey:** You know very well I did not say that.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** The hon. member did.

**Mr. Pizzey:** I taught adults.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** Never mind about that, the hon. member said it. He also said definitely that the Minister would not allow him to serve in the smaller outback schools of this State. I interjected and said I would give him his history later. I do not want to be unkind to the hon. member, and I do not want to misrepresent him, but I would point out that it is on record in the office that the hon. member for Isis was offered certain schools and when he put in his application he stated, "I have no desire to serve in the West or North-West of Queensland."

**Mr. Pizzey:** Table it.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** That is the truth. That is what the hon. member said, but he led this House to believe he had a fair conception of the difficulties of the small schools in this State. I have travelled the outback parts of this State, and I now tell the hon. member for Isis that he has no idea of the one-teacher schools. Most of his time he has been in fairly large schools.

**Mr. Pizzey:** I never denied that.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** The hon. member said that the Minister would not give him the opportunity of serving in small schools, but he did not tell the House that on his application, in his own hand, he wrote, "I am not prepared to serve in the North or North-West of Queensland."

The hon. member asks what the department is doing to overcome the lag in teachers. I find there is strong competition from outside institutions, such as banks, in getting students to work in their institutions. Recently, at Nambour, I was at the school and discovered that the banks were flooding Queensland schools with literature, and officials from the banks were visiting the schools and offering jobs to the boys and girls approaching the Junior University standard.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Much better than Commo literature.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** It depends on what the hon. member means by Commo literature.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Some that has been in the western schools.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** Some that the hon. member has put in, too, is bordering on Commo stuff. It all depends on what the hon. member means by Commo literature. The hon. member for Isis suggests that the department could compete with the big banking institutions, big wool businesses, and shipping companies.

They know as well as we do that we cannot possibly do that. On the one hand they suggest that we curtail expenditure and on the other hand they want us to increase it. It is not wages that is preventing the boys and girls from entering the teaching profession. On speaking to them I find that their objection to it is that to enter the teaching profession they do not stop at the Junior university examination; they must go on to the Senior examination, whereas they can enter a bank or a commercial undertaking on their Junior certificates. The girls in particular ask why they should go beyond the

Junior standard when they are offered good jobs at high wages outside. It is all very well to say the department is doing nothing to recruit teachers. We have taken certain action but I feel that it will not get us very far because of the inducements that are being offered by people outside.

**Dr. Noble:** How do the rates of pay in banks and the teaching profession compare?

**Mr. DEVRIES:** The banks pay higher rates, but the banks also say, "If we send you anywhere away from the city we will give you good accommodation, good retiring allowances," and so forth. One of our great difficulties is that teachers do not like to leave the cities. The first thing with which I am confronted when teachers are asked to do a little outside service is a threat of resignation. Only today I was threatened with four resignations if certain people were transferred from Brisbane. Take the hon. member for Isis. During the time to which he referred, he was not prepared to go outside.

**Mr. Pizzey:** I went to Ayr in North Queensland.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** Surely the hon. member does not call that outside service. Let him go to places like Camooweal.

**Mr. Pizzey:** If you are honest you will say I offered to go outside in 1946.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** I am telling the hon. member that he did not offer to do so. Although I do not propose to use his dossier, I am pointing out that he misled the House when he stated that he had done outside service.

I come now to the hon. member for Burdekin. I was sitting with him on a back bench only a few days ago and he spoke about this matter to me, but part of what he said tonight appeared in this morning's "Courier-Mail."

**Mr. Coburn:** That is my right, is it not?

**Mr. DEVRIES:** I do not know whether it is. I listened attentively to the hon. member. The other day he said to me, "Mr. Devries, I propose to tell you this in writing so that you can have a departmental inquiry." Strangely enough, his letter appeared in the "Courier-Mail" before I got it. He has chosen the Press for his battleground. I shall meet him on that battleground. He must decide whether he wants to go into the Press or do the decent thing.

**Mr. Coburn:** I will use that battlefield with you. My case is sound.

**Mr. DEVRIES:** I do not wish to detain the House except to say that everything possible is being done to build up the teaching staff in Queensland. The hon. member for Isis said there was good talent in the smaller towns. Our inspectors and regional directors have been among the schools in those areas to see what they can do. I can assure hon. members, the hon. member for Isis in particular, that the Government will do everything possible to recruit teachers in order

to give the children all those educational facilities that are their right. I trust that the Press will help us, because we see advertisements appearing in the Press from time to time in which the Commonwealth authorities offer jobs at rates of wages with which we and business institutions are not able to compete. I see nothing wrong with the pay attaching to the teaching service, but certain conditions are operating that prevent us from recruiting to the teaching service.

I hope that these difficult matters will be overcome. We at any rate will continue to make every effort to overcome them.

**Hon. T. A. FOLEY** (Belyando—Acting Treasurer) (10.20 p.m.): in reply: The Secretary for Public Instruction has dealt satisfactorily with matters raised by the hon. members for Isis and Burdekin. I should like to comment on one suggestion made by the hon. member for Isis and I think that the Government will not in any way agree to the cutting down of the £6,000 for the establishment of a travelling opera in the State. We have throughout Queensland some very gifted young people, male and female, and the Government are attempting by this move to give them the opportunities to educate themselves in this respect in the hope that they will eventually be able to inculcate into the minds of our people the love of opera. If one went to any of the capital cities in Europe, such as Prague the capital of Czecho-Slovakia, or Rome the capital of Italy, or Vienna the capital of Austria, one would find that they hold cultural and musical festivals at least once a year. At these festivals some of the most gifted artists and students from virtually every town in Europe, including Russia, appear to display to one another the results of the cultural opportunities offered by their respective countries. As a result we find that culture, particularly in music and the art of speech and other subjects, is of a very high standard. We are supporting that in a very small way in this State and, as circumstances permit, it will be found that the next big move by this Government will be the establishment of a conservatorium of music to give further opportunities to many of the gifted young people we have, who have the ordinary facilities in the shape of the teachers of music, to reach a certain standard but who can go no further because they have not the facilities.

**Mr. Hiley:** That is the only step that is worthwhile.

**Mr. FOLEY:** That is so. The next move will be a conservatorium of music whereby we could do something on a bigger scale. The cutting-down of this £6,000 referred to would not meet the position that is facing us today with regard to expenditure.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the expenditure and naturally attributed the position to the calls on the Government of the day. One could refer to the history of price-fixing and to inflation and make a good case for saying that the Opposition have

been mainly responsible for it because of their advocacy during the last referendum campaign. Trace that matter back and you will find that the basis of the trouble will be found in the proposals that were intended to cope with inflation but were virtually vetoed by hon. members opposite, who combined with the Press to induce the people of Australia to turn them down. Consequently we have to suffer.

The Premier made a very fine contribution to this debate, one of the best that we have heard for some considerable time. He warned hon. members of the facts and it would be a pity if I should spoil the effects of his contribution by continuing further with my speech. So I content myself with asking that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion (Mr. Foley) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Farrell, Maryborough, in the Chair).

Clauses 1 to 8, both inclusive, schedule and preamble, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

#### THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Foley, read a third time.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier): I move—

“That this House, at its rising, do adjourn until a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker, in consultation with the Government of this State. Mr. Speaker, or, if Mr. Speaker be unable to act on account of illness or other cause, the Chairman of Committees shall, not less than seven days prior to the meeting date so fixed, give notification of such meeting date to each member of the House.”

Motion agreed to.

#### VALEDICTORY.

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca—Premier) (10.31 p.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

I want to express to the staff of the House, including the Clerk of Parliament and those associated with him, my appreciation and the appreciation of hon. members on this side of the House for their continued kindly service. That kindly service helps us to get through our work. I also express our thanks to the “Hansard” staff for the faithful reports they give year by year of the proceedings of this House. They are very kindly to us and on occasions discreetly leave out things that are said here. We are all appreciative of the work done by the Librarian and his staff and for the way they have handled the library of recent years.

**Honourable Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. HANLON:** We have a very rapidly growing library and one we are proud of. To the refreshment room staff, who look after us so well—even on Friday night when we continued our sittings unexpectedly we sat down to quite a respectable meal—our thanks are also due. The cleaning and ground staff must also be included. It is very satisfactory, after a long session here, to be able to say that we can appreciate the very able and faithful way in which the staff of the House have carried out their duties and their smiling willingness at all times to help members of Parliament in their duties.

I desire to thank all hon. members for their attention here and the attention they have given to their duties. I particularly thank the Leader of the Opposition for his co-operation during the session. A little friendly co-operation between the leaders of the opposing armies in Parliament makes sometimes for a great lessening of casualties. (Laughter.) That is particularly so when you get a Leader of the Opposition who is prepared to co-operate with the Government in the business of the House.

It has been quite a busy session. I was rather amused to read what one of the johnnies wrote in the Press. He is employed to misinform the public, although occasionally by accident he and his kind do otherwise. He stated that it has been a very barren session. It probably matters nothing to that gentleman that this year our expenditure from Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds, and Loan Fund Account totalled £93,000,000, and that hon. members have been engaged for most of this session so far in analysing the expenditure of the Government. It has been thoroughly checked over, searched, and criticised during that period. Believe me, that is worth-while work. The whole foundation of successful parliamentary government is that its finances are kept right.

**Honourable Members: Hear, hear!**

**Mr. HANLON:** It would be a sorry day if members of Parliament were deprived of the very right to criticise the expenditure of the Government. We do not have to consider the Bills now that we did at one time. We shall have a Bill session in March and the Leader of the Opposition will agree with me that much better work is accomplished in the consideration of Bills in that session than was formerly accomplished when they were considered in the same session as the Address in Reply and the Financial Statement. We shall have quite a lot to do in March and it will not be by any means a barren year in Parliament.

Bills such as the Tully Falls Hydro-Electric Project Bill and the Queensland-British Food Corporation Act Amendment Bill have a far-reaching effect on this State; and to say that Bills of that kind do not matter is fantastic. There were 37 Bills before the House, 36 of which were passed, and notices for two others have been put on the business papers but they have not been introduced and will be left there for

the opening of the session in March. Members will note that we have not fixed a meeting date for that session. I am hopeful that in the New Year we shall have another Premiers' Conference and that perhaps it will heal the strained relations between the Federal and State Treasurers at the present time.

I thank all members for their co-operation and help during the year. I extend to each and every one my very best wishes and hope they will all enjoy the blessings this Christmas season can give them and that the next year will be a happy and prosperous one for them.

**Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (10.36 p.m.): I desire to join with the hon. the Premier at this stage, when the House is calm, cool and collected, in expressing my personal appreciation as well as the appreciation of the Opposition to all officers of the House, from the Clerk of the House to the lowliest employee who is here. All have given of their best to serve us. I must say they do serve us well and we all appreciate the way in which they all strive to make our work here lighter.

The session, as the Premier has said, has been a long one and a very busy one. We have dealt with a good deal of legislation, most of which was amending legislation, but the main business in the first part of the session was to deal with the financial affairs of the State. Like the Premier, I believe we get much better work by dividing the session into two periods and reserving the early part of the year for the major legislative programme of the State. As a result, it is easier for members who are able to give more attention to it and the State benefits.

To you, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say thank you on behalf of the Opposition for the way in which you have carried out your duties.

**Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. NICKLIN:** You have carried out the duties of your office with credit to yourself and to the high position you hold.

To the Chairman of Committees, approaching the Christmas season, I should like to be Father Christmas and give a little bit of advice. He is a gentleman who has come into the position of Chairman of Committees without any training and as it is a very important and difficult job he finds it pretty difficult at times, and I suggest to him in the real Christmas spirit that he take home with him under one arm a copy of "May" and in the other a copy of the Standing Orders and that he study them during the Christmas recess; and I believe when he comes back we shall have a Chairman par excellence.

To you, Mr. Premier, on behalf of the Opposition I express appreciation for your many kindnesses and courtesies to us. At

times we have differences of opinion and at times also we have an armistice and during that armistice we are able to make arrangements that I think are of benefit to both sides. You are going very shortly on a very important mission on behalf of this State. We wish you well in this mission, knowing that you will do your best for the great Queensland industry you are going over to represent. We trust you do not find the boys on the other side too tough to deal with. No doubt, if they do get tough you will introduce a little of the same tough tactics you use on the unfortunate Opposition. (Laughter.)

I am very pleased indeed, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier is taking his daughter overseas with him. She has filled the office of the Premier's right hand with great credit to herself and she rightly deserves the enjoyment that we all hope she will get in accompanying her father overseas. I am sure the Premier is proud of the way in which his daughter has carried out her duties, as we are proud, also, and we congratulate her upon her achievement.

**Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

In conclusion, I join with the Premier in extending the season's greetings to you all. I hope that a scarcity of eggs will not interfere with your Christmas pudding and that you will have also plenty of potatoes to go with your poultry. (Laughter). I wish you all a Merry Christmas and the very best for the New Year.

**Mr. SPEAKER** (10.42 p.m.): On behalf of the Chairman of Committees, and the House staffs, including the "Hansard" staff and on my own behalf, I thank the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and members generally—and that includes members of the Government and the Opposition—for the way in which they have helped me to carry on, shall I say, since I have taken over the office of Speaker. I thank the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for the kindly references they have made to me and I extend to the Premier my personal wish that on his journey overseas his health will remain good and that he will have a safe return. I thank the Ministers generally for their co-operation. I do not forget the Government and Opposition Whips. They are only a minority party, but I have been able to take their complaints into consideration. Their assistance and co-operation generally has made my job as Speaker much easier than it otherwise would be. This helps anyone who serves the House in the honoured position of Speaker.

I wish all members a happy Christmas and I extend Christmas greetings to all members of the staff, from the Clerk of Parliament down. I wish you all a Guid New Year and I invite all members to join me in the refreshment rooms before going on their way.

**Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

Motion (Mr. Hanlon) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.