

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 1956

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STATE TRANSPORT FACILITIES ACT—
15-MILE LIMIT.

Mr. V. E. JONES (Callide) asked the Premier—

“With reference to the promise contained in the policy speech delivered by him prior to the recent State general elections to the effect that the distance over which goods may be carried without incurring liability for transport tax would be increased from 15 miles to 25 miles, and the reference to this matter contained in the speech of His Excellency the Governor on 1 August last to the effect that a legislative amendment would be necessary and would receive the attention of the Government in due course, will he kindly advise if this much-needed relief will be granted before the close of the current session of this Parliament?”

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane) replied—

“There are other associated matters involved in any amendment of the State Transport Facilities Acts along the lines mentioned, and in accordance with the promise I gave in my policy speech, the matter will receive attention at the earliest possible moment.”

THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

CROWN LEASEHOLD TENURES.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) asked the Secretary for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“Will he kindly advise—

1. The total number of Crown leasehold tenures held throughout Queensland for grazing purposes, exclusive of any Perpetual Lease tenures;

2. The total area comprised in such Crown leasehold tenures;

3. (a) The total number, and (b) the total area, of recognised living areas comprised in such Crown leasehold tenures;

4. In respect of that portion of Queensland, being the land lying south of latitude 22 degrees and east of longitude 145 degrees, (a) the total number, and (b) the total area, of recognised living areas comprised in all such Crown leasehold tenures within such portion of Queensland?”

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

“1. The total number of pastoral holdings, grazing selections, forest grazing leases and settlement farm leases in the State, is 10,790.

“2. 342,167,744 acres.

“3. This information is not available and would require extensive inspections of leasehold lands in order to obtain it.

“4. See (3) above.”

DRILLING MACHINES, IPSWICH RAILWAY WORKSHOPS.

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. What was the basis by sale or hire on which a drilling machine was made available from the brass shop of the Ipswich Railway Workshops to a private engineering firm?

“2. Is it a fact that the two machines which are now in the brass shop at Ipswich are of very old vintage and are in a very bad state of repair, whereas the machine made available to the private company was modern and in first-class condition?

“3. Has the absence of the third machine seriously handicapped fitters and retarded output of the Ipswich Workshops?”

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

“1, 2 and 3. There are three drilling machines remaining in the brass shop at the Ipswich workshops, one of which has been listed for replacement, it being in a similar condition to the one on loan forming the subject of the question. The other two machines are in a better condition than the one on loan. These three machines adequately meet the department's requirements, and there has been no retardation of output at the Ipswich workshops by the absence of the machine on loan. It has been lent to one of the department's contractors for the purpose of facilitating the

drilling of brake-gear bushes in connection with the carrying out of wagon repairs. Whether it will be purchased by the contractor or whether its use will be on a hire basis has not yet been definitely determined. This aspect is a matter for negotiation between the chief mechanical engineer and the contractor concerned. I once again wish to express my thanks to the hon. member for delivering himself into my hands, as his question affords me still another opportunity of showing how ill-informed he is on railway matters, and I respectfully suggest that he concentrate his energies in a sphere where the results will be more rewarding. Contrary to his statement that the machine on loan is a modern one, it has, as I have mentioned, been surplus to the department's requirements, is a non-motorised drilling machine and is 44 years old."

BUILDING SOCIETIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Attorney-General) (11.6 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Building Societies Acts, 1886 to 1952, in certain particulars."

This Bill is brought down to deal with the borrowing powers of terminating societies. The Building Societies Acts provide the conditions upon which terminating societies may borrow money.

Building societies are organisations established and conducted on co-operative lines. A number of persons establish a society into the common fund of which each member pays a small weekly contribution, based on a fixed proportion of the "shares" for which he contributes. The "shares" are not analogous to shares in companies, but are purely the total amount to which the member desires to contribute.

From time to time, when sufficient moneys are held in the common fund, advances are made to members, up to the amount of the "shares" for which they contribute, for the purpose of erecting a home or building on land the member already owns, or for the purpose of purchasing a home or building already erected. All advances by members are secured by mortgage to the society.

No building society actually "builds" anything; the purpose of the society is purely the lending of money.

Upon an advance being made to a member, his contributions are increased to such a figure as will permit him not only to continue his weekly contribution but to repay weekly an amount of redemption and interest on the amount borrowed.

These societies have always been covered by some supervisory legislation to ensure that the interests of the members are, in a measure, protected, and to ensure that the society is conducted on reasonably safe premises.

Such legislation in almost all countries has seen fit to permit the societies to borrow moneys from outside sources to supplement the moneys available in the common fund. As can be imagined, the small weekly contributions of the members do not aggregate large sums, particularly in the early years of the life of the society. Later on, after many advances have been made, the income being received from contributions, repayments of principal and interest by the borrowers, and other sundry sources of income, do help to amass greater amounts of cash, which, in turn, are again put out on mortgage, all of which tends to have a snow-balling effect in the later years of the society.

At the same time, all legislation has wisely safeguarded the members from the danger of inefficient or irresponsible administration by placing an upward limit on the amount which may be borrowed from outside sources at any given time. Naturally, as the income increases, so the limit which may be borrowed rises.

Building societies are of several types, but all can be classified into two distinct classes. These are permanent societies and terminating societies. As the name implies, permanent societies are such as continue to function so long as there are persons willing to become members and contribute to the funds with the object of eventually obtaining advances when their turn comes. There are several of these in Queensland which have been in existence since the last century and these have sums running into millions advanced on mortgage to their members.

Terminating societies are societies which provide at the time of establishment for closure at the end of a given term of years or earlier if it can be done. The total shareholding which may be taken up in these societies is fixed beforehand and as soon as each member has received his advance and all members have repaid their advances the society terminates. As the principle of these societies and the amounts of weekly contribution, redemption and interest are all based on practice over many years, which practice was itself first based on strict actuarial or mathematical figures, there is little danger of the collapse of a terminating society unless irresponsible or extravagant administrators, or inexperienced persons borrow from outside sources unwisely, or advance on mortgage without sufficient security.

The present Bill deals purely with the powers of terminating societies to borrow from outside sources. Permanent societies, by their nature, are in a position to borrow fairly substantial sums once they have been operative for a few years, and a few years

is but a very small proportion of their total life. In any case no representations have been made on behalf of such societies for any further concessions in relation to borrowing powers, and it is not thought necessary to consider any such concessions at the present time.

The number of terminating societies registered as at the relevant date, namely 31 December, 1955, was eight. At the present time there are nine. In Queensland, the practice is to provide for a society to terminate at the end of 20 years, but experience in recent years is that these societies are terminating in periods ranging from 17 to 20 years.

Representations have been made on behalf of these societies for a more advantageous upward limit in the amount which may be borrowed at any given time during the life of the society. The principal Acts originally provided that such limit must not exceed "three years' income on the shares for the time being in existence." This limit is a satisfactory limit in the later years of the life of the society, but during the early years the income is not great. The effect is that the society is able to advance to more members late in the life of the society, whereas, in these times, it is vital to assist the members to obtain their homes as early as possible.

In England, in New South Wales, and in other places, the upward limit on borrowing powers gives an alternative to the "three years' income." These alternatives vary between countries, but in England the alternative is "two-thirds of the amount for the time being secured to the society by mortgages from its members." In New South Wales the alternative is "four-fifths of the amount secured to the society by mortgages from its members," but New South Wales differs from England in that the English Acts require the society to adopt either of the alternatives for the whole of its active lifetime, whereas in New South Wales the society may adopt both and use whichever allows a greater borrowing at any given time.

Therefore, by selecting the most advantageous provisions of both the English and New South Wales Acts, the present amendment has been framed to permit the terminating societies in Queensland to borrow up to either—

(a) three years' income on the shares,
or

(b) two-thirds of the amount secured by mortgage, whichever is the greater at any time.

It is considered that this limit is still within the bounds of safety. As most societies only lend on sufficient security, and certainly do not lend to anywhere near the full value of the security, the assets of the society, which include the moneys out on mortgage

to members, should always be more than sufficient to cover a borrowing by the society up to two-thirds of those mortgages.

Sub-section (3) of the proposed new section 26 puts into effect the limits proposed.

The Bill goes further than this. Section 26 of the principal Act has been twice amended, once in 1943, and again in 1952. Prior to 1943 the restriction on borrowing powers of certain terminating societies was limited to three years' income on the shares for the time being in existence. Because of war conditions the 1943 amendment eliminated the restrictions imposed in the original Act for a period of five years and then again the amendment in 1952 continued the position until 31 December, 1955.

At 31 December, 1955, there were eight terminating societies in existence and these societies anticipated that the restrictions would not apply for a further period, and on that assumption these societies embarked on a lending programme to the members, which would require greater sums of ready cash than would be available from current income.

It was intended to supplement the ready cash available by borrowings from banks and other sources, but, as the normal three years' income limit again became effective as from 1 January, 1956, these sources were not available to the societies. The result has been that since 1 January the societies have been unable to continue lending to certain members who had been assured of early advances and had entered into contracts as a result of that assurance.

The eight societies referred to include six in the Ipswich district. The hon. members for Ipswich, Bremer and Somerset have been very active in seeking amendment of the Act, but this is the first opportunity I have had of presenting the Bill. These six societies in their active lifetime, and some of them were only in their second year at 31 December last, had by then assisted their members to erect 284 new homes and to buy 121 homes already erected. That is a very good effort.

Experience has shown that these eight societies are efficiently administered, and that they have given invaluable assistance to the general purpose of getting people into their own homes, so it has been decided to allow these eight societies, and these alone, to continue to borrow without any upward limit for a further period to 31 December, 1960. By this date those societies will have either terminated or will have overcome the present temporary difficulties they are meeting.

After 31 December, 1960, these societies, together with any terminating society which may be established hereafter, will again be covered by the limits prescribed by the new section 26. As has been previously

explained, this limit will be more advantageous than has been the case, and all terminating societies, as from 1 January, 1961, will need to ensure that their lending programme will be such as can be financed from current income plus such sums within the limit as they may borrow. The societies are well aware of means whereby annual income can be increased. I mention only one, by providing for a greater number of shares in the society.

Proposed new terminating societies will be informed of the limit of borrowing powers before establishing a society and, as the new limit is considered satisfactory, there should be no occasion for any further amendments of this section. After all, these societies were established on a co-operative basis with the purpose of lending the funds of members, one to another, from time to time, and they should not become purely vehicles through which moneys borrowed from other financial institutions may be channelled to the members.

Mr. MUNRO (Toowong) (11.19 a.m.): At this stage I shall speak only in very general terms. The details of the Bill will require very careful consideration. Generally speaking, I think I can say with confidence that hon. members on this side of the Chamber will welcome the introduction of the Bill, not because of any particular interest in building societies, but because building societies are a form of machinery to promote home ownership. Hon. members on both sides will be fully in agreement that home ownership is something completely desirable whether we regard it from the aspect of the needs of the people requiring homes or from the economic aspect of having a well established, reliable, and self-sufficient community. In this sense building societies carry out a useful function in this State and if there is any matter for regret it is that building societies have not been developed in Queensland to anything like the same extent as in other States. If the passing of this legislation will encourage interest in building societies and facilitate their carrying on and provide greater safeguards to see that they are well managed and conducted in an effective manner it is all to the good. Every hon. member will agree that home ownership is a good objective, although there probably might be differences as to how that can be achieved. I do not want to go into that matter in detail but in support of the general idea of the encouragement to building societies I would say that our legislation in Queensland introduced to facilitate home ownership has been too sectional. We have succeeded in doing the best we can for certain needy types of people but we have not been sufficiently broad in our approach in helping others who require assistance. The approach to the encouragement of building societies should be not only to help people but to help people to help themselves. If we can establish and develop that principle of

helping people help themselves we would be doing valuable work. I have before me the latest report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies and Building Societies. It is stated in that report that the number of building societies registered at 31 March, 1956, was 16 of which 15 were actually operating. It also states that there has been some revival of interest in building societies, numerous inquiries having been made as to the requirements of registration. It further states that whether building societies will eventually register is as yet unknown but next year's report should indicate whether the present interest is superficial or not. Attached to that report is a schedule of building societies which gives some rather interesting figures as to their liabilities and assets, amount of share deposits and amount of mortgages.

The main point of interest in the abstract of financial returns of building societies is that only two can be regarded as being in a big way. They are the Toowoomba Permanent Building and Investment Society and the Darling Downs Building Society, both of which, I understand, are doing a very useful job in their respective areas. Most of the others listed in the report are only in a small way. However, considerable benefit to the State will result if this legislation enables them to develop.

I point out for the information of hon. members that it is possible for incorporated companies to carry on substantially the activities of building societies without being registered under this legislation. One very good example of that is the Brisbane Permanent Building and Banking Co. Ltd., which is an incorporated company under the Companies Act. In addition to its banking activities, it carries on others very similar to those usually regarded as being within the sphere of building societies. It has given a very good service to the city of Brisbane and its people in, on the one hand, facilitating the investment of small sums by people who have them available and, on the other hand, lending out corresponding amounts on reasonable and convenient terms to people who wish to acquire or erect their own homes.

I feel that hon. members on this side of the Chamber will welcome the Bill. However, I should like to see it in print and study it before I express my further views on it.

Mr. SKINNER (Somerset) (11.28 a.m.): On behalf of the Ipswich Mutual Benefit Building Societies, which are registered under this legislation, I express sincere appreciation and thanks to the Minister and the Government for again amending the Building Societies Acts. I refer particularly to Section 26, which restricts the amount that can be borrowed by a society in any year for the purpose of making advances to shareholders who wish to build new homes, purchase homes already erected, or renovate their homes.

I agree with the hon. member for Toowong that building societies are giving good service to the community. I should say that those in Ipswich are unique in the Commonwealth in that they are purely mutual; they are mutual in formation, in the election of officers, and in the benefits to shareholders. They are not conducted for the purpose of making profits. They are run purely in the interests of the responsible citizens who formed them. Even the sale of shares for profit is not allowed.

The hon. member for Toowong said that the Brisbane Permanent Building and Banking Company Limited did good work by making possible small investments and also advances. Terminating societies, or mutual benefit societies, also cater for the small investor. He has, of course, to accept the ruling rates. The fact that mutual benefit societies have operated in Ipswich for over 50 years is proof that they have won the confidence of people interested in owning homes.

The revenue of the societies is derived in the first place from the issue of shares, of which a shareholder may hold a minimum of five and a maximum of 50. The contribution a share is 1s. a week. An advance of £50 a share may be made, whereupon the

rate of contribution increases, to 1s. 6d. in the case of those with a 15-year term, and to 2s. for those with a longer period. Because of increased building costs, societies formed since the war have had to increase the rate of contribution after advance and also the length of term.

The Commonwealth Bank in Ipswich, through its respective managers, has been the mainstay of the societies because their own funds are not sufficient to meet advances applied for. The Commonwealth Bank makes available 50 per cent. of the total advances made by them and insists on their providing the rest. For instance, if in any month or quarter a society needs £10,000 to advance to shareholders, the bank will advance £5,000, provided the society advances £5,000 too.

Five societies now operate in Ipswich and one in Rosewood. No doubt hon. members will be interested in a brief summary of their activities. Societies No. 3 and 8 have both ended. They were terminated in pre-war years and these two societies alone advanced £150,000. They provided finance for 181 new homes and 101 ready-erected homes. This table sets out the advances by some of the building societies—

Society.							Date of Commence- ment.	Advances.	New Homes.	Re-erected or Ready-erected Homes.
No. 4	..	..	..	..	..	..	1947	£ 107,500	72	31
5	..	..	..	..	..	..	1952	92,600	47	14
6	..	..	..	..	..	..	1954	78,000	42	9
9	..	..	..	..	..	..	1949	125,200	60	44
10	..	..	..	..	..	..	1953	84,900	43	15
Rosewood No. 1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1953	40,000	20	8

The total advance by these societies to date amounts to £682,300 for the purchase of 465 new and 222 ready-erected houses. We cannot analyse these figures without acknowledging the mutual benefit societies' great record of achievement. They have provided many people with homes without the profit incentive adding to the cost, without the heavy administrative costs that are involved when full-time salaries have to be paid to people who would normally be employed in permanent societies. The only administrative charge that a shareholder is called upon to pay is 1s. per year per share. Of course, he is obliged to meet the cost of drawing up the mortgage and that sort of thing when he originally signs his mortgage with the company. I had the privilege of obtaining my home through the mutual benefit societies in Ipswich and I pay tribute to the men who have been associated with the formation of such societies since the beginning of the century. It would not be possible to enumerate all the men who have been associated with the societies but I must refer to one man who has worked for over 30 years in an honorary capacity. He has given his professional advice in the interests of the

societies in the past and he is now acting as a guide to new societies recently formed. He is an esteemed friend of mine and I know he is also an esteemed friend of the hon. members for Bremer and Ipswich. I refer to Mr. Harry Francis of Booval. With his knowledge and experience he has been able to make sure that any new society got off on the right foot and continued to operate in the proper manner in accordance with established principles.

The Bill will give an upward lift to the amount of money that can be borrowed. I hope that it will considerably reduce the time-lag in the societies' advances. The societies have been waiting for this amendment. I know that the Attorney-General has done everything possible to speed it up, but in Ipswich we have applications to these societies for advances totalling almost £130,000. We have been unable to make that money available because of the restrictive nature of clause 26 which operated when the previous amendment terminated in December, 1955.

We appreciate the Minister's action in bringing down this Bill and making it operative until 1960. We did not ask that it be extended to cover any new societies that might be formed, but we did ask that the

amendment be introduced to continue the benefit to the societies that were already in operation. I commend the Minister and the Government for their actions.

Mr. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Leader of the Opposition) (11.41 a.m.): I have no objection to this legislation. My only regret is that it was not introduced years ago when it was first suggested by members of the Opposition that building societies in this State should be given greater opportunities. That is another example of the effectiveness of the advocacy of the Opposition over the years. For years and years we have asked the Government to improve the legislation covering building societies in this State to enable them to operate in Queensland as they are operating in other States, particularly New South Wales and Victoria, so as to give the people here the same opportunity of building homes or improving them. The hon. member for Somerset pointed out the advantages of the societies in this State under this very limited legislation.

Mr. Skinner: There has to be some limit. You cannot make the sky the limit.

Mr. NICKLIN: Who suggested we should make the sky the limit? That is the sort of interjection one would expect from the hon. member. He gets up and thanks the Government for doing something that should have been done years ago to give greater opportunities to the building societies that are now operating. If the Government are irresponsible in regard to these things, we on this side of the Chamber are not.

Mr. Walsh: The law is already in existence.

Mr. NICKLIN: Admittedly the law is already in existence, but to a very limited extent.

Mr. Walsh: We are only re-enacting it.

Mr. NICKLIN: They are making it workable. As the Treasurer knows, the Government have been wedded to the State Advances Corporation. They think that everybody should build houses through the State Advances Corporation.

Mr. Walsh: You are dealing with the wrong Bill.

Mr. NICKLIN: If the Commonwealth had not amended the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, I doubt very much whether this legislation would have been introduced now.

Mr. Power: The delay in bringing in this Bill was to enable us to see exactly what the Commonwealth was doing, to make sure that it did not conflict with this Bill.

Mr. NICKLIN: To see what the Commonwealth were going to do! The Minister has known that for months. The delay in introducing this legislation has prevented people from getting the benefit of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. The Minister cannot get away from that.

Mr. Power: You are wrong there. Do not misunderstand me. The reason why we did not bring in this Bill was because we did not want to do anything contrary to what the Commonwealth were going to do in regard to advances to co-operative societies. Now the position is clear, the Act is being extended.

Mr. NICKLIN: I thank the Minister for his explanation, but that does not get away from the fact that we have been denied the full benefit to building societies owing to the restrictive nature of this legislation. That was the point we made when the Co-operative Act was amended. We pointed out that it was limited in many important respects. We should have an Act framed on the lines of the New South Wales Act which is one of the best Co-operative Acts in the world. They took the best features from the Acts in the various countries. An important section deals extensively and effectively with building societies. The benefit to building societies in New South Wales as a result of the operations of the Act has been such that they have built a greater proportion of homes in New South Wales than any other building authority.

Mr. Power: The Queensland Housing Commission built more homes than any other authority.

Mr. NICKLIN: Of course it did, because it would not allow anybody else to build them.

Mr. Power: The hon. member for Somerset refuted that argument. There is no need for me to reply to it.

Mr. NICKLIN: The building societies which the hon. member for Somerset was talking about did a mighty job within their limited powers. If these excellent building societies of which the hon. member spoke about had been given wider powers and greater opportunities to operate which they will have after the passage of this Bill they would have extended their activities and there would have been more of them in this State. By restrictive legislation the Government limited the activities of building societies. This legislation should have been introduced years ago, nevertheless it is better late than never. This legislation will encourage building societies to extend their operations.

Mr. Power: They had that right for years.

Mr. NICKLIN: They had the right for years but their operations were very limited under the legislation. Why are we bringing in this legislation? To give them an opportunity to extend their operations.

Mr. Walsh: This law has been in operation for 13 years.

Mr. NICKLIN: I know, but it has been limited.

Mr. Walsh: No.

Mr. NICKLIN: Why amend it if it is not limited? The existing building societies should be given the benefit and the opportunities that they want, and that is why the law is being altered. The Bill gives them opportunities and they will be able to give greater benefit to their members. Possibly more building societies will commence in this State. Undoubtedly the Government would not have moved in the matter if they had not known the advantages that would accrue to building societies as a result of the amended agreement between the Commonwealth and the States in regard to housing and the fact that a certain sum of money has to be utilised per medium of building societies. The Treasurer and the Government strenuously resisted that section of the Commonwealth-State Agreement.

Mr. Walsh: Of course I did.

Mr. NICKLIN: Because the Treasurer wanted all the available money.

Mr. Walsh: And we would still resist it in the interests of the home builders.

Mr. NICKLIN: Are not building societies operating in the interest of the home builder?

Mr. Walsh: No. The only result is higher rent.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Treasurer does not know where he is.

Mr. Walsh: The result is higher rent.

Mr. NICKLIN: Then why introduce this Bill?

Mr. Power: This Bill extends for another four years a condition that you say did not exist.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am not saying it did not exist. The Bill should have been introduced earlier to allow building societies to give benefits to their members. They have been restricted.

Mr. Walsh: This Bill does not give building societies any new power.

Mr. NICKLIN: The hon. member for Somerset should not have thanked the Attorney-General. He should have criticised him for not introducing the Bill long ago.

Building societies are doing a wonderful job, and can do a better job with encouragement from and backing by the Government. They will now be able to expand in the interests of people who want to build homes other than through the State instrumentality, with the restrictions imposed by that instrumentality. I support the Bill. I criticise the Government for taking so long to see the light.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (11.52 a.m.): I do not wish to prolong the debate. The Bill is of benefit to building societies and people who wish to build their homes; the longer we speak on it the longer that benefit will be

denied to them. I am compelled to speak in view of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Toowoong. This is not new legislation; it is amending legislation. I cannot understand the thoughts of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Toowoong. The Bill returns to building societies the condition that existed prior to the end of last year. As the Attorney-General said in his introductory remarks, the Act was amended in 1943 and again in 1952. The Government cannot be blamed for not introducing the Bill earlier. It is freely admitted by officers of the building societies in Ipswich that they failed to remind the Government that the condition expired in December last year—after the dissolution of Parliament. The Government, at the earliest opportunity, introduced the Bill to extend that condition and privilege for a further period. There is not much, if anything, new in the Bill. So it cannot be said that it should have been introduced years ago.

The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Toowoong failed to realise why building societies have not been formed in Queensland to the same extent as in other States. There was not the same need for them in Queensland because of the assistance given to the people to purchase or build homes under the various schemes of the Queensland Government—the workers' home scheme, the workers' dwelling scheme and the Queensland Housing Commission schemes. I have nothing but admiration for the co-operative societies of New South Wales and the legislation mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. I know the benefits received from those societies by mine workers in New South Wales and throughout Australia.

The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement has nothing whatever to do with this Bill. That agreement has retarded the introduction of this Bill. Building societies are not out to make profits but to help the people purchase homes or build their own homes. They have been doing that work successfully for half a century as the hon. member for Somerset said. Although I am not a member of a society I know the hon. member is and that he is very interested in their work. Building societies have been active in Ipswich for 30 years, doing wonderful work and making not one penny profit. Such societies as the Darling Downs Building Society and the Toowoomba Permanent Benefit Building and Investment Society are in existence for two purposes. The main purpose is to make a profit and not only to erect homes for people who have not got a home. Other societies operate for the sole purpose of building homes or purchasing homes for people who want them. It is true that professional men in Ipswich give their time voluntarily to building societies, not month after month but year after year, and they are to be commended for it. I join with the hon. member for Somerset in extending my gratitude to them. If hon. members opposite were anxious to see

to it that people were able to receive the help this Bill will give them they should be supporting it instead of opposing it.

I am afraid that the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement might insist that these building societies charge interest to their shareholders, that there will be delay in the construction of homes by them and that it will not allow the societies to function in the way they have functioned in the past. I hope my fears are unfounded. The agreement might mean the difference between the success and failure of these societies. We know that the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement provides for £550,000 to be set aside for building but only £300,000 will go to building societies. The State Housing Commission in Queensland has been the means of bringing about a greater percentage of home ownership in this State than in any other State. That is proof of the advantages we have had from our State building authority in Queensland over the years. No credit must be taken from the work of those connected with little building societies in and around Ipswich. The Leader of the Opposition said that the proposed legislation will encourage people to form building societies, but they have had that opportunity for many years.

Progress reported.

At 12 noon, in accordance with Standing Order 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Clark, Fitzroy, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1956-1957.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Debate resumed from 30 October (see p. 1196) on Mr. Diplock's motion—

“That £209,883 be granted for ‘Department of Public Instruction-Chief Office’.”

Hon. L. F. DIPLOCK (Condamine—Secretary for Public Instruction) (12.2 p.m.): I am aware that the time allotted for this debate is limited, and I assure hon. members that I have no intention of debarring them from speaking by making unnecessary replies.

In my capacity, not only as the Minister responsible for the implementation of the Government's education policy and the administration of schools, but also as the representative of a country electorate, I listened with great interest to the remarks of the hon. member for Marodian on agricultural education. I assure him that I realise fully the problems facing country

parents in the education of their children. The whole of my 30 years' experience as a school teacher was gained in country schools from Mackay to the border. I always made it my business to acquaint myself with the conditions and the work of the people among whom I lived.

The hon. member said he was opposed to the practice of sending country children away from their homes to large towns to get their education, as it resulted in their being turned against country life only to become part of the general drift to the cities. I heartily agree with him. He advocated education to fit country children for life on the land. Again I agree with him. However, his statement is open to the inference that we are not doing that. Over the years, present and previous administrations have been fully cognisant of this problem. As far back as 1946, a committee composed of high-ranking technical and education officers toured the State and took evidence from many sources on education, particularly agricultural education, in country areas. At that time Nambour was the only centre with an agricultural course leading to the Junior Examination.

Partly as the result of the findings of that committee, agricultural courses were established. They are now offered in the high schools at Warwick and Nambour and in the secondary departments of the primary schools at Kingaroy, Murgon, Atherton and Malanda. A course was also established at the Ingham High School. Present enrolments in the courses in the Junior and Sub-Junior forms are as follows:—

School.	Junior.	Sub-Junior.	Total.
Nambour ..	22	18	40
Warwick ..	8	5	13
Atherton ..	2	3	5
Murgon ..	2	—	2
Malanda ..	1	1	2
Kingaroy ..	1	3	4

I have not given figures for Ingham because there were no candidates. Indeed, enrolments in many cases have declined. My officers and I are of the opinion that the response generally has been very disappointing, and no doubt hon. members will agree.

Mr. Heading: Remember I said the other night that you want to sell it to them.

Mr. DIPLOCK: The disappointing response is particularly evident in Murgon, a secondary department well known to the hon. member for Marodian. No sub-junior boys there undertook the course in the current year. The hon. member suggested that the department should give the utmost publicity to the courses or, to use his own words, that we should sell them to the parents of the children concerned. He must know we are doing all that is possible. The parents are well aware of the courses because head teachers publicise them through the

school. Despite the poor response the department will give them a fair trial, and it welcomes suggestions.

Consideration is now being given to an agricultural course at two other State high schools, namely Banyo and Gympie. The proposal of a course in a city area like Banyo may be questioned, but many leading public men, including some hon. members opposite, have at different times advocated it to encourage city boys to seek careers on the land. I do not think anyone would argue against it. It must be remembered that the establishment of such a course involves provision of a specialist teacher, special equipment, and laboratory accommodation and field space for experimentation. It is therefore only common sense that before a course is offered it must be firmly established that enrolments justify commencement. Once commenced there must be some certainty that there will be sufficient students continuing the course in the second year.

I noted with considerable satisfaction the compliments paid by the hon. member for Marodian to the efficiency of the Agricultural College at Gatton. He said that his son had benefited considerably from his course at Gatton. Let us consider Gatton College. It represents a Government capital investment of approximately £1,250,000. The courses offered cover practically every phase of rural activity. They cover agricultural activity of all kinds, the horticultural side of primary industry as represented in fruit-growing and the growing of vegetable crops, the pastoral side including dairy and beef cattle, horses, sheep and wool, and also dairy manufactures. Irrigation is also represented. The Gatton Agricultural College has accommodation for more students than similar colleges in any other State, even where there is more than one college.

Mr. Coburn: Is there accommodation for all who want to attend?

Mr. DIPLOCK: Yes. No-one has been turned down. Gatton College has accommodation for 560. In New South Wales Hawkesbury College can take only 214, and Wagga only 60. Comparing the rural population of New South Wales with the rural population of Queensland any fair-minded person must agree that the Queensland Government have done a fair job.

Mr. Pizzev: You cannot grow much sugar-cane and tobacco at Gatton.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I anticipated that remark and I will reply to it in a moment.

A case has been put forward by the hon. member for Marodian for the establishment of other agricultural colleges in North Queensland, and if necessary in Central Queensland. However, at the present time, Gatton College can meet the demands for the whole State. The establishment of other colleges at this juncture would mean duplication of the great capital investment already

made at Gatton, which includes not only land and buildings, but machinery, equipment and stock.

Mr. Heading: A couple of years ago you could not take them all. Sixty were turned down in one year. I was told that in answer to a question in this Chamber.

Mr. DIPLOCK: The position is as I state it. I have no hesitation in saying that most of the content in any course, say, in agriculture or in animal husbandry, must be given irrespective of the location of the college. To be more specific, a college in North Queensland would have to give much of the same theory, and in these days of high mechanisation, give the same instruction in the use of machinery as would be given at the existing college. It is true that Gatton College is not located in a cane-growing centre, but this is offset by the fact that for certain practical purposes, to observe actual field work, trips are made under the guidance of teachers and experts to cane-growing areas such as Nambour and Bundaberg. The time might come when there are sufficient students to warrant the establishment of agricultural colleges elsewhere. But at present there is sufficient accommodation at Gatton to meet the requirements of the State. There is a concentration of excellent facilities at the college and the huge capital expenditure that would be involved in an additional college cannot be justified just now.

Mr. H. R. GARDNER (Rockhampton) (12.16 p.m.): A close perusal of the Estimates and the report of the Director-General of Education shows just how big the department is and how deserving of praise are the Ministers who have been in charge of it in the last 12 months. I congratulate the hon. member for Gregory, Mr. Devries, upon his work as Secretary for Public Instruction. The present Minister will carry on just as efficiently.

The Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health and Home Affairs are somewhat similar, because their operations are State-wide. There are 16 sections in the Department of Public Instruction, covering a very wide field. When one has only 25 minutes to discuss a programme of works involving an expenditure of £11,347,952, one must deal with the points that interest him most as the member for his electorate. State school education is compulsory in Queensland. On this occasion we are asked to consider the expenditure of £7,592,035 for State schools and £1,070,366 for technical education and practical instruction in State schools. We must analyse these figures and see what they actually mean. In primary schools, the daily average attendance was 161,657, and the net enrolment, 185,962. The average daily attendance for secondary schools was 9,461, with a net enrolment of 10,866. Provision is made for new buildings, but we must have teachers to inculcate in the

minds of the children the advantages of education. There are 6,314 teachers under the control of the department at present.

The huge sum of £7,103,038 represents the cost of instruction for school children, and is some indication of the task that confronts the teaching section in Queensland. The primary intake of students is 7,000 a year and secondary school enrolments have showed a marked increase from 6,000 in 1951 to 12,000 in 1956. It is expected that it will reach 24,000 by 1961, a clear indication that the people are anxious that their children should get the benefits of more education. Whether a boy or girl goes to a secondary school is often determined by the economic position of the family. Over the last 10 years there has been a marked improvement in numbers receiving secondary education. The improvement in the economic position of the workers is responsible to some extent for the increase. Education is of great importance, especially in this changing world bristling with conflicting problems. Secondary and technical education are a great help to young people in industry.

I agree with the Director-General of Education when he says that there are too few taking secondary education. I have some figures relating to technical training which I think are interesting. For many years I have been interested in the industrial section; I fought hard for better apprenticeship conditions than I experienced in my youth. There has been a great improvement in them since then. The young apprentices should appreciate the many facilities now provided by the apprenticeship group committee under the control of the Department of Public Instruction.

For the year ended 30 June, 1956, 3,295 apprentices were indentured, including 927 in the building trade and 1,051 in the engineering trade. The soundness of the economic position of a country is reflected in the number of employees in the building trade. They are vitally affected during a depression. The number of apprentices indentured during the year indicates the great amount of work in those industries.

The number of apprentices in the engineering industry is indicative of world trend—the introduction of electronics, nuclear energy and so on. Apprentices who qualify as tradesmen may take a diploma course to qualify for higher positions in industry.

I pay tribute to the Director-General of Education. His statement at page 32 of the report appeals to me very much. It reads—

“Education is an expanding and continuing process. At no time in our history have complex needs of society made such demands on the resources of Government as Education is making today. A generation or so ago, it was considered sufficient to provide facilities for education in the basic

skills in reading, writing and simple mathematical calculation. This was accomplished, in the main, in the primary school. Only a small percentage of the school population enrolled in secondary schools and a still smaller percentage proceeded to the University.

“The attitude towards Education has today undergone a radical change. What was adequate in Education a half century ago is totally inadequate today. The application of science to industry, transport, commerce, in fact to the whole of our lives, calls for training of technicians and technologists. The workshop and the laboratory are gradually replacing the classroom as the chief unit in school architecture, and with the provision of laboratories, workshop units and specialist rooms, the cost of school buildings and equipment has increased to a sum not previously entertained. Costs of education have increased and will continue to increase. This is inevitable if we are to retain our place among the enlightened nations. The cost in money will be great. The cost to the nation will be greater if we do not provide facilities and educational opportunity in an expanding world.

“It is, in the final analysis, an investment in the future, a contribution for peace, security and progress to citizens of the years which lie ahead.”

That was a splendid summing-up of the educational system and I offer no apology for reading it so as to have it recorded in “Hansard.” It is a statement of great value to the people. It is the true picture of the world on education. We speak of technicians and technology and training to meet the conditions of a changing world but we have to ask ourselves whether we are progressing on the soundest lines. The educational facilities for our children are second to none not only in Australia, but in the whole world. The family unit has security and the ordinary working man knows that he can get free education for his boy or girl from the primary school to the university.

I recently suggested to the Minister and I do again now, that Rockhampton, with a population of 40,000, should have more adequate facilities for technical education. Plans were made years ago with resumed property but it was difficult to get the tenants out. Now we have vacant possession and I hope the Minister will have plans and specifications drawn up for better science rooms on this Alma Street property in accord with the general policy of the Government. It is no-one's fault that there has been delay; there were circumstances over which the department had no control. I hope the change will now be made.

I commend to the Minister a very fine speech by Mr. Honour, officer in charge of the Rockhampton High School to the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce. This is the part that appealed to me most—

“Mr. Honour urged the encouragement of young people in the area to proceed as far as possible with their education and to encourage them to attend the University Centre, which was possible even for students who had not matriculated, and to press for wider scope in courses and more subjects to be covered.

“As a long-term aim he recommended that the chamber make representation for the appointment of a permanent tutor, and the establishment of first-year courses, which would lead to the eventual establishment of a University College.”

Then children in outside centres will have the same opportunities as those in Brisbane. Rockhampton already has a university centre controlled by the Department of External Studies of the University. The people of Rockhampton want to move along with the rest of the people of the State.

I compliment the department on its excellent work in providing transport for children attending country schools. I have travelled extensively in Central Queensland, and I know the feeling of appreciation by country people towards the Government for arranging road transport services for country children attending primary schools. Although some people are still inclined to be rather critical of the service, much good work has been done. At present 340 road transport services are in operation, and 8,418 children are carried to school daily. The aggregate daily distance covered by road transport services is 12,931 miles. The total cost of transporting country children to schools so that they can get the education to which they are justly entitled is £202,085. In addition to road transport, in some places children are conveyed to schools by boat. The average annual cost of conveying a child to school is £24. No-one will deny, however, that the results justify the cost. In addition, road transport services are provided for children attending vocational centres at both primary and secondary schools. At present, 103 of those services are in operation, the number of children carried weekly is 2,525, and the total annual cost, £10,425. The total cost of providing conveyance for school children is £212,510. The Director-General and his officers are to be commended for catering for country children in that way.

I compliment the department also on its free library scheme. A subsidy of 50 per cent. is allowed on books, accommodation and equipment, with a limit of £4,000 a year. It is a great help to local authorities who are interested in providing free libraries for the people. Three conditions must be observed, firstly, that only one local body shall operate in any one area; secondly, that

the library must be open to all members of the community; and thirdly, that the library shall be conducted to the satisfaction of the Library Board. At the present time 36 local authorities in Queensland have such libraries. As a member of the Rockhampton City Council, I am very proud to say that Rockhampton has an excellent library for the use of the people. I am a great believer in free library services for the people. Rockhampton has the largest free children's library in the State with a membership of 5,125. In other words, 43.7 per cent. of the children of Rockhampton take an interest in the children's library. It is noteworthy that 34.7 per cent. of the books issued to the kiddies were under the heading of “Cultural, Educational and Informative.” On the other hand, the 2,248 adult members, who are asked to contribute, represent only 8 per cent. of the adult population. Obviously, for best results, we should introduce the free library system even if it costs the Government and the Councils more money.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (12.41 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister and the department on their good work. Much depends on the facilities for the proper education of our youth and the Minister, in taking up his important responsibilities, must be pleased at having a good band of energetic and enthusiastic senior officers, including Mr. Watkin, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Nimmo, all of whom I have always found to be very courteous and helpful.

I was sorry that the former Secretary for Public Instruction had to relinquish the portfolio because of temporary ill-health but I am pleased to note that his health has improved.

The shortage of teachers in Queensland has been a worry for all but the campaign to remedy it is proving very successful. It was pleasing that every hon. member accepted the challenge. At many functions I have heard Government and Opposition members make strong appeals to young people about to leave school to consider taking up the teaching profession. Conditions for teachers have improved considerably. I left it to my daughter to decide for herself what she would like to do when she left school and I am happy to say that, after thinking it over very seriously, she decided to join the teaching service.

Mr. Baxter: A very honourable profession, too.

Mr. LOW: It is indeed. My daughter, Janette, is very fond of children and from her association with the school and the members of the teaching staff she formed the desire to do her bit in the department.

I am sure the Minister is aware that there is still a shortage of teachers, despite the record recruitment this year. The Kin Kin State school needs another assistant teacher and I hope that next year its staff will be brought up to full strength.

When the Government have sufficient funds, they should concentrate on the erection of hostel buildings at all important secondary schools, particularly in country areas.

I pay special tribute to the work of the Queensland Country Women's Association and church organisations in the establishment of hostels at various centres throughout Queensland. If they are all carrying out their work at the high standard that the Queensland Country Women's Association is maintaining and conducting in their hostel at Nambour I am sure it will be of very great benefit to the children of the State. The demand for hostels has become so great that perhaps we should not lean so much on the Q.C.W.A. and church organisations to accept the full responsibility of erecting hostels. If the Government provided the hostels and asked the organisations to conduct them it would certainly be a great step in the right direction. It is pleasing to know that the Government have granted a 50 per cent. subsidy to the Queensland Country Women's Associations and local authorities for this purpose.

Improved seats and desks are urgently needed, in country schools in particular. Old desks and forms should be replaced by modern classroom furniture.

Mr. Diplock: We are doing it progressively.

Mr. LOW: I understand the department is doing it progressively. It is certainly a big job but it should be speeded up. It will incur the department in heavy expenditure. It is pleasing to note that the floors of shelter areas under some schools have been sealed to obviate dust in dry weather and mud in wet weather but there are other schools where it is still required. I hope the Minister will pursue this course of looking after the health of the children.

I listened with great interest to the remarks of the hon. member for Marodian and the Minister's reply about the establishment of agricultural courses at all important secondary schools, particularly in rural areas. I am very glad to know that with the additional courses now provided in some schools that the work is to be further extended. The department should not be disappointed at this stage at the small number of students who have applied for the courses. I have made a close study of the agricultural courses at the schools and it is not an easy job to induce children to take them up. In some instances, the future in primary industries is not as bright as the future in secondary industries. However, we must encourage the young people to take up agricultural courses at the secondary schools and we should extend them to other secondary schools.

Mr. Baxter: It is necessary in a primary-producing State.

Mr. LOW: Very necessary. We should take the matter up very seriously. I am President of the School Committee of the

Nambour High and Intermediate School. There, the number of students was dwindling, not increasing. I am pleased to say this position has now been corrected. Fortunately the principal, Mr. T. Maher, is very interested in agriculture. We must make sure that the principal of the school is interested in the course we are trying to develop. That is something we must not lose sight of. Many have had little training in those subjects and can give very little assistance to the student teacher appointed to do the job. We must all endeavour to increase the number of students for this course.

I was pleased to hear that agricultural courses were to be introduced at the Gympie High School. I listened with great interest to the appeal by the hon. member for Nash early in the session. I suggested as far back as 1950 agricultural courses should be introduced at Gympie. I even said that I might be able to find land for the school because suitable land was hard to get then. I hope agricultural courses will also be introduced at the Pomona High School. It is in the centre of an important rural area. There will be no difficulty in getting suitable land there.

I pay tribute to the teachers at primary schools who undertake project clubs and forestry plots, both of which are associated with training in agriculture. But for the enthusiasm of those men, who in many instances are headteachers of primary schools, the children would receive no coaching in this work.

I ask the Minister to speed up the construction of teachers residences at country schools. I noticed with interest that allowances paid to teachers in lieu of residences in 1955-1956 amounted to £17,648, and that £18,500 is required for 1956-1957. Where a residence is not provided the headteacher gets £50 a year, so approximately 370 teachers must receive that allowance. No doubt the Government are getting out of it very cheaply at £50 a year. I say without any hesitation that no headteacher in any part of Queensland can provide a residence for £1 a week.

Mr. Diplock: Is not that the court award?

Mr. LOW: It may be, but it is in urgent need of revision. While the Government pay only £50 a year to each teacher they will do little or nothing to provide residences.

Mr. Diplock: I do not think it is the fact.

Mr. LOW: The Government's programme of providing teachers' residences in Queensland has shown very poor results; it is disheartening. Since I have been a member of this Parliament, I have consistently advocated residences for teachers, but in 10 years not one has been provided in my electorate. I can name at least half a dozen places where they could be provided with benefit to both the department and the teacher. They would remove the cause of

much dissatisfaction in the service, and teachers would not be so reluctant to go to country areas.

Mr. Diplock: As I have had 30 years' service surely the hon. member does not think it is necessary to convince me of the need for teacher residences.

Mr. LOW: I believe the hon. gentleman will do the best for those who have to live in the country and that, working in conjunction with the Secretary for Public Works and Housing, he will soon be able to remedy the position. If he does not succeed within a reasonable time we shall renew our criticism. He is thoroughly acquainted with the problems of the department and I think he will be able to do much.

The increase in transport fees for children was appreciated by transport drivers and the motor boat services, two of which operate on the Maroochy River in my electorate. A school road transport service cannot be established unless there are twelve children who live beyond the 3-mile limit. There are many places where the parents of children have to provide a service themselves, and I suggest that where no approved school transport service is in operation an allowance be provided where primary school children reside three miles or more from the nearest school and they provide their own conveyance—be it a car, truck, horse, buggy or bicycle. That would give every child the same opportunity to attend a State primary school.

Last financial year the Government paid £153,459 to the Commonwealth for pay-roll tax and this year £170,200 is required for the same purpose. That sum would build many high schools. I know that the Commonwealth Government are sympathetic in regard to expenditure on education. Although I am a strong supporter of the Commonwealth Government I think the Department of Public Instruction, though the State Government should press for the elimination of this pay-roll tax. I cannot understand why it was imposed in the first place. A sales tax is not paid by the State Government or by local authorities, and it is beyond my comprehension why the Department of Public Instruction should be asked to pay pay-roll tax. I make a further appeal to the Minister to increase grants to kindergarten associations throughout the State. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha has always been closely associated with creche and kindergarten work; he has made appeals for extra assistance by the Government.

For the year 1956-1957, £7,000 has been made available by the Government. The parent body distributes the grant to the various associations. The Government should subsidise £1 for £1 the money raised by local committees. The raising of the entrance age for school children from 5 to 6 years has made the work of kindergartens very much more important. Only recently Lady

Lavarack honoured us by opening the new kindergarten at Nambour, costing in the vicinity of £3,000. Most of the money was raised by subscriptions, fetes, and so on. The assistance should not be limited to £200, the grant received each year from the parent body.

I am sorry the hon. member for Somerset is not present, as I want to deal with a school in his electorate. I recently attended a Country Party meeting in that area. Monsildale is situated about 20 miles from Kilecy. I visited the town during the afternoon to investigate local school and telephone facilities. I was horrified to discover that the school building at Monsildale, an important timber and grazing area, was nothing short of a shanty or an improved henhouse.

Mr. Morris: Similar to Elaroo.

Mr. LOW: It is comparable with the old school at Elaroo. I told the local people that I would bring this to the notice of the Minister. It is a provisional school with an enrolment of 22 pupils. The district warrants a proper school building. I appeal to both the Secretary for Public Instruction and the Secretary for Public Works and Housing to transfer one of the unused school buildings throughout Queensland to that area at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Morris: It is fortunate that you went there.

Mr. LOW: Yes. I very much doubt whether the hon. member for Somerset knows of this state of affairs. If he does not, I advise him to visit the school. I now bring it to the notice of the Minister in the interests of school children generally of the State. Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to know that a new school has been provided at that place in the Somerset electorate.

I congratulate the hon. member for Isis on his presentation of the case for the Opposition on these Estimates. As a former member of the department he knew most of its requirements and I know that his remarks were appreciated by the Minister. I know also that the speeches of hon. members on this side will receive the careful consideration of the Minister and his officers.

I thank the Minister for accepting the invitation to attend the Nambour State High and Intermediate School on speech night, 3 December.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) (2.21 p.m.): This morning the Minister gave some very astounding and disquieting information in regard to the agricultural opportunities provided in this State and the small numbers taking advantage of them. He said that in some important agricultural districts there were as few as two in the Junior class and none in the sub-Junior class. Such a state of affairs in a State that depends to a large extent on primary production warrants a searching investigation to ascertain

whether there is something wrong with the course, whether it is not sufficiently attractive or whether the poor attendance is entirely due to apathy. It is of such a grave nature that we should tackle the problem earnestly.

I have not much criticism to offer of the department and because of that I have undertaken a certain amount of research in the hope that I could find something that was being done somewhere else that would be an example to us, something we could take advantage of. In my searching and reading I came across something that might be the solution to the grave problem of education in rural areas. It might with benefit be adopted in preference to the agricultural junior course which is not being taken advantage of.

In Tasmania there are area schools. There is much misunderstanding amongst hon. members if I can judge from statements about these schools, because some are of the opinion that if we close down half a dozen small schools and transport the children to one larger school we could bring about a system of area schools. The area schools in Tasmania were not successful because they closed down a certain number of small schools and brought children to the central schools but they are important because they introduced a new concept of education, a new attitude to what could be done in the training of children in rural areas.

Mr. Wood: Particularly for those not suitable for higher education.

Mr. COBURN: No. From nine years onwards they could go to these schools. They catered for pupils who were not prepared to take an academic course up to the Junior or Senior standard.

The area schools in Tasmania have brought a new concept of, and a new attitude towards education, and have gained the approbation of the people of that State. They have the wholehearted support of the Education Department and the Government, including the Premier, Mr. Cosgrove, and now, 20 years after the establishment of the first one, 39 of them are operating to the satisfaction of the people. The first was established at Hagley, 17 miles from Launceston. It is in the centre of a fairly rich agricultural district. Previously there were a number of small schools in the district, each under one teacher. It was decided to allow a Mr. Maslin to experiment with an area school, and he was given full freedom in the curriculum and conduct of the school. It is due largely to his pioneering, and that of his wife, that the wonderful system of area schools is operating in Tasmania.

When a film of the Hagley area school was shown to a large audience of Australian service men in Borneo, they were inclined to be incredulous because it was so different from anything they had experienced in their school days. When they were assured that

the story portrayed in the film was true, they said, "That is a new idea of a school to us. Is there any chance that our kiddies will be able to attend a school like that?" In passing, I suggest it would be a good idea if Mr. Speaker could arrange for films of Tasmania's area schools to be shown in the Legislative Council Chamber, so that hon. members can see for themselves some of the work being done in them. I know films are available. There is something about Hagley that stirs the imagination. Hundreds of visitors have left it filled with enthusiasm, although 20 years ago it was virtually unknown. Hagley and Sheffield were the pioneer area schools in Tasmania and, as I have said, Mr. Maslin, ably assisted by his wife, was the leader and the inspirer at Hagley from the beginning.

Many educational theorists have emphasised that the school should be a centre of democratic living and co-operative activity. I think you will agree, Mr. Clark, that not many of our schools achieve that objective. But Hagley has. If all schools were as attractive, happy and beautiful as that interesting Tasmanian area school, many of our problems of human relationship would probably disappear. As is the case with many similar ventures, of course, success would never have been achieved by Tasmania's area schools without the presence, behind the scenes, of someone with faith, personality and vision. Mr. Maslin was that person, and all honour to him for what he has done in giving us an excellent example of what can be done in providing excellent schools for our children. His ideas are dynamic; he never allows himself to become dismayed or discouraged. He allowed the school to develop of its own accord, and put himself more or less into the background. He guided, inspired and advised, but the executive activities and policies had to be those of the school itself. The children participated in the whole scheme because his aim was to arouse interest in them. Fortunately help and encouragement were given by an enlightened and progressive Education Department in Tasmania. The area schools have gone a long way towards solving the problems of rural education in Tasmania and I am sure they would do the same for Queensland. One of the most striking tributes to their effectiveness was paid unwittingly by an Australian woman who wrote, after visiting them—

"I don't like these schools. They are so attractive that the children talk about nothing else. It tends to make them dissatisfied with their homes."

One of the biggest problems is to find comparable facilities for the children of crowded industrial areas in the cities, that is to say, to modify the schools to suit urban conditions. After 20 years, 39 area schools are operating. The hon. member for North

Toowoomba has seen them and at one time he wrote about them in one of the Brisbane newspapers.

Children are the most valuable of God's creatures, each created with an individual soul, mind and body, and it is the duty of the educational organisation to develop each part as well as to take into consideration the child's relationship with the community. That is where we differ from the Communist belief that people are merely cogs in the machine of the State, to which the rights of the individual are subordinate.

A school may be said to have failed if, by assiduous instruction, it consistently produces a high percentage of brilliant results in academic work and sends its pupils into the community imbued only with a sense of the importance of their success. That is what most schools aim at today. Life demands more of students than the ability to pass examinations in academic subjects; they must be equipped to take their places as worthy citizens.

Mr. Diplock: Do you not think the teachers are trying to do that for them now?

Mr. COBURN: They are. I criticise the methods adopted because they do not allow enough freedom. I do not advocate the degree of freedom that characterised some schools where routine was put to one side and meant nothing; but our schools have a hidebound syllabus to which every teacher must adhere. Because the tastes of all cannot be catered for, we try to make the pupils fit the syllabus instead of trying to make the syllabus fit the individual pupils. Wrong direction is causing us to fail in many of our aims today.

Mr. Devries: Would you suggest that a teacher should be given complete power to introduce his own creative ideas?

Mr. COBURN: To a very large extent, yes, as they did in the area schools. Nobody interfered with Mr. Maslin. I realise that we must have a basic syllabus but we should not adhere strictly to it. The idea in Tasmania is that there is no lazy boy. If a boy will not take an interest in his work it is because you cannot arouse an interest within him because he is not interested in a particular subject. When a syllabus is devised with such a comprehensive range of subjects there is little possibility that at least one subject will not suit him. Take the example of one lad who was not doing very well in any field. He was put in charge of an onion patch. He made such a success of it that he was given praise. The praise aroused within him such confidence that there was a remarkable improvement in the standard of his work in other subjects he was taking. In our system in an endeavour to bring children to the necessary academic standard to pass examinations very often we are responsible for developing an inferiority complex. Children get the idea that because they cannot pass

an examination they are worthless. Because of that lack of confidence they do not become the citizens they could if confidence were infused into them by the use of a syllabus of such a range as to create an interest.

The development of the child's right attitude towards the community of his fellows, the encouragement of an appreciation of the conditions necessary for a happy and contented home life and its importance to the individual and the nation, the training of the individual to "delight in pursuits and rejoice in accomplishments," to appreciate what is beautiful, good and true, to face the ups and downs of life with a faith and fortitude which will inspire his fellows, and the arousing in the child of some interest providing motivation towards achievement in some sphere of our complex life today, I believe to be truer educational aims than those which gauge success by the measuring rod of bank balances or acreages that have been acquired. We must develop qualities in children that will make them decent citizens. The best thing we can do is make people honest, truthful and upright, kindly, helpful and not merely people bursting with money or able by all sorts of means to acquire great possessions.

The experiment associated with the area schools of Tasmania is a story of an attempt to translate a new vision of education into a reality. That is where it differs from our system. We have gone along in the old orthodox ways but they have not provided us with what we are looking for. The Minister admitted this morning that although he has provided special courses for the education of children in rural areas he cannot get more than a dozen outside Garton College who are sufficiently interested even to enrol. Contrast that with Tasmania's scheme. In Tasmania the school system arouses the children's interest. They are motivated by the interest and thus they achieve things which establish confidence which makes them better and worthier citizens because of the community life they lead while at area schools. The main objective of the initiators of the area schools was to convert a school into a juvenile community. They did not regard it as a place in which to teach their people how to earn a living. They regarded it as a place where they were going to teach them how to live, and they showed them how to live in the community in which they were being taught. They believed that only by means of education, rightly conceived and rightly practised, could a solid foundation be laid for the re-construction of human society, because "All roads lead to education and all lead from it." False ideals, ill health and malnutrition, the evils of industrialism, economic maladjustment, self seeking of individuals and peoples and international prejudices and hatreds could all be cured through education, and through education alone.

But that education has to be of the right type. It must produce worthy men and women, not scholarly men and women. The ideal would be to combine both; but if we are to have only one, let us have the person who is decent and who possesses those qualities that make him a man or her a woman who is worthy of the society in which he or she lives. To do this, the initiators of the scheme felt that a complete breakaway from the old concept, tradition and method of education was imperative. They felt that education in the past had been too academic in outlook, too instructional in approach, too mass-productive in method, too much controlled by economic factors which accept false standards of success, and too narrowly restrictive in vision. Because they believed that, they did something revolutionary. It has been a success, and nobody can gainsay the fact that it was right. I think a close study of what has been achieved in Tasmania might be of assistance if a similar scheme were introduced in Queensland.

Those people believed that education must be made a vital and elevating factor in our national life and be so planned and practised that it will give youth a new vision and a new hope for the future. It must develop a new national outlook and a spirit of community among our young people. They have tried to provide in their area schools the environment and stimuli that will develop the varied individual abilities of all children for the well-being and happiness of their own small community. Through this personal contribution towards the welfare of the whole community the individual gains in self respect and develops in personal power and ability. They sought to produce that type of person by their system of education. In these schools the emphasis is laid on achievement rather than on competition. It takes all sorts to make a community. Few reach the lead in the old competitive system based on academic studies, while many, failing in the early race, develop inferiority complexes in which are rooted many of our personal and national ills. By providing an extremely wide range of activities, the area schools endeavour to tap the creative interest of all types of youth. They aim to make the school a living community. These schools were first established in 1936, so they are comparatively new. They have achieved much in that period. The reorganisation was planned primarily to meet the needs of children from 12 to 15 years of age who would not be proceeding to secondary education in the cities, and the aims of the courses as planned were as follows:—

1. To consolidate and extend primary school work in formal subjects.
2. To secure an appreciation of English literature and promote a higher standard of intelligence and appreciative reading.
3. By a co-ordinated group of social studies to provide a background against which present day happenings may be more intelligently gauged and understood.

4. To provide an elementary commercial training that will raise the business ability of the future rural community.

5. To provide cultural work that may be applied to and will raise the standard of home and community life.

6. To give such training in handicrafts that will not produce tradesmen but will develop that practical and constructive ability so desirable on the farm and in the home.

In addition to the ordinary school that they had in the beginning they established a residential farm school built on the type of the Kingsley Fairbridge Schools, established in Western Australia, that catered for the children of the slums of London. These residential schools proved to be so attractive that they were not able to accommodate all the children who would have attended them if they were able to do so. In regard to their poultry clubs, these were valuable parts of the equipment, and they got to the stage when they were able to donate to the school as much as £1,000. Two boys of the school were given the full responsibility and control of these poultry clubs. Their initiative and confidence in their ability was developed and they managed so successfully that the whole venture was eminently successful.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (2.46 p.m.): I wish to congratulate the Minister on his lucid speech in introducing his Estimates. He was making his initial effort in this connection and he made it very impressively. When the honourable the Premier allotted the portfolio of Secretary for Public Instruction to the hon. member for Condamine he made a very wise choice because the latter's wide experience in the educational sphere makes him eminently suitable for the position. The Minister has graduated through the ranks, from pupil teacher to assistant teacher, to head teacher, through all grades, ultimately to the exalted position of inspector. By virtue of this experience he knows the needs of the department from the viewpoint of student, teacher and administrator. His knowledge as a teacher and an inspector will be very valuable to him as Minister. It is a well-known saying that the training of the future citizens is the chief business of the State. The Department of Public Instruction and similar government institutions tend to receive more lip service than real service from all classes in the community. The importance of this work is readily admitted, but the amount of money available for it is never as much as the Government would like it to be. I am positive that if it were possible to add many more thousands to the appropriation for the coming year the Minister would have no difficulty in spending it to the advantage of the State and the children who attend the schools. Let us hope that the discussion on the Estimates of this department will become an annual

matter and so result in a more intense interest and a greater appreciation of the work of this most important department. Constructive criticism is welcomed by the Minister. The work of the teachers touches the family more intimately than the work of any other group. That is why teachers come under discussion in the family to a greater extent than any other group in the community. Naturally enough opinions are divided, and this is as it should be, being conducive to added effort, to improvement and to progress. However, it is the acceptance by those in authority, not only those in the Department of Public Instruction, of the opinion of one of the several groups that has resulted in what might be termed the refusal of young men and women to enter the Department of Public Instruction.

There are different opinions in each community about each teacher, some vociferous, some modest, and some aggressive, some unexpressed, and the truth lies not in the acceptance of any one of them but in a judicious admixture of them all.

The realisation of this and the willingness of those in authority to act only on such a basis would remove much of the contempt and contumely which the average teenager shows to taking up the profession of teaching.

Some years ago there was a tendency to accept the view that the establishment of large central schools would be an improvement to the educational system of the State.

Today wiser counsel prevails and it is the generally accepted view that no school should have an enrolment exceeding 600 pupils. There has also been a sustained attack on small schools in country areas. This attack on small schools is due in the main to two factors, the first being the lack of facilities available for the staff and the second being the teachers themselves, that is, those who have been appointed head teachers of small schools. Many who have been appointed to these positions are temperamentally unsuited. For some reason or reasons their temperament and personalities are such that they have absolutely no chance of being assimilated in the atmosphere, social, spiritual, physical or political, of the community where they have been sent. In such circumstances the position for all concerned, the parents, the residents, the children and the teacher, becomes what can only be described as tragic, and such a situation exists until the unfortunate teacher is either transferred or resigns. There are some teachers whose temperament is such that they could never possibly be a success as a head teacher of a small school, but at the same time they are efficient and capable assistants. A suitable and efficient head teacher of a small school has a greater influence for good than any teacher in any other position. That is a bald statement, but elaboration of it would require a great deal of time. The opinions of teachers in

capital or near-capital cities, other than those which are expressed to the children and a few members of the school committee are positively swamped in the opinions of business executives. It is one opinion in thousands, whereas in country districts at the worst it is one in a hundred or a couple of hundred.

It is generally accepted now that no school should consist of more than 500 or 600 pupils and this idea is to be commended, although I realise that building difficulties make it almost impossible to implement the idea. In schools of that size or below it the school itself represents a social hole in the environment of which the young and the very young scholars learn to mingle and mix with others of more mature age and experience as well as those of their own age. The seniors on the other hand learn how to behave towards and mingle with those junior to them and to accept the responsibility of teaching the younger children by their own example. Anyone who has attended the school's annual ball, school picnic, or the breaking-up ceremony could not fail to realise that. The older pupils naturally and instinctively put the younger pupils through their paces, look after them, instruct them and accept full responsibility for their conduct. In schools of huge numbers we find a class or two tending to become apart or a separate whole within the whole school. The valuable opportunity to mix with other age groups is lost and it might lead to the ridiculous position where grade so-and-so plays in one part of the playground and another grade plays in another part of the playground. From this position excessive rivalry springs and then the whole idea of education is abrogated in unwholesome competition between class and class, teacher and teacher, or house and house. Not that wholesome competition has anything wrong with it nor am I arguing that it is not one of the finest aids to complete education.

The school-leaving age as well as the school-commencing age has been under fire or subject to criticism for some time and there is much talk of extending the school-leaving age to 16. However, the school-commencing age is no longer subject to much criticism. Evidently the departmental decision about it is now generally accepted as being the correct one. I want to speak of the school-leaving age. There has been a drive for some years to make it compulsory for pupils to attend the State primary school until they attain the age of 16. Whilst that is a laudable aim would it not be wiser to allow the school-leaving age to be elastic between 14 and 16 according to the economic conditions of the day? A child, in my opinion, having reached the age and educational standard of allowing him to be apprenticed, and this standard is today reached at a little below scholarship standard, should never be forced to remain at school until he reaches the age of 16. Two valuable

years would be wasted, and in those years he could quite possibly develop habits of dilatoriness and laziness which were quite foreign to the ambitious industrious lad of 14. If he is ambitious, facilities are available to him to study at night and it is paradoxical that the greatest scholars of all time were not those to whom opportunities to study were freely available but those to whom the opportunity to study was almost denied, and those who had to fight against heavy odds to gain their knowledge and opportunities.

The staffing position in our 1,557 schools and the accommodation for 185,962 children has progressively improved, but I do not think acceleration has been fast enough. We now have 344 more teachers than last year made up of 221 adult females and 123 male teachers making a total number of 5,760.

Mr. Pizzey: A lot of resignations.

Mr. DONALD: In spite of that we are 344 to the good. The only point I quarrel about is that of that number some 123 are males and 221 females. The position cannot be regarded as satisfactory whilst so many married female teachers are being re-admitted to the service. It is admitted that these ladies are rendering a very valuable service to the State, the department and the children and I do not know what the department would have done without them. The unmarried female teacher feels that she and she alone is liable to be transferred and that brings about a feeling of discontentment which will possibly be removed when we get sufficient male teachers. I believe the solution of this problem, and it is only one that the department has to meet, will be overcome.

Hon. members who have spoken have stressed the fact that a number of schools in their electorates were neglected. There are only seven schools in the Bremer electorate and each has had some attention from the Department of Public Works. Extensive alterations have been made to some of them. However, in most of the seven schools additional classrooms will be needed in the New Year to accommodate increased enrolments.

Mr. Pizzey: Have they all got sewerage?

Mr. DONALD: Those at Silkstone and Bundamba have. The others are not in closely settled areas.

The new school at East Ipswich will greatly relieve the present congestion, but I would be failing in my duty if I did not express the disappointment of the North Booval people, who for years have agitated for the erection of a new school. Although they are to get a new school, it is not being built where they wanted it. However, in spite of their disappointment that the school is to be built some distance from where they wanted it they are pleased to know that their constant

agitation has had results and that they are at least getting a new school. The department is to be complimented on the stand it took in refusing to acquire for school purposes the land owned by the Ipswich Ladies' Vigoro Association. Although it was an ideal site for a school, to the department's credit it refrained from acquiring it. It recognised that the Ipswich Ladies' Vigoro Association was providing health-giving activities for the young women of the district.

Other hon. members who have spoken on these Estimates have not drawn attention to the great value of school committees. Previously I thought I knew much of the work that they are doing for the children of the State, but since I have been a member of Parliament and have had to identify myself with schools to a greater extent than the average member of the public, I have realised fully the important part that school committees play in education. These men and women do a great service voluntarily. Each of the seven schools in the Bremer electorate is blessed with committees composed of very competent men and women.

The hon. member for Sherwood complained about the great difference between the subsidies granted to schools in rich and poor districts. However, he was mistaken. It matters not whether a school is in a rich or a poor area. The size of the school is largely the governing factor. Although the parents of children attending large schools are no more unselfish or better equipped to help their children than those of children attending small schools, there are more of them to whom to appeal for help. It would be much easier for a large school to raise £50 than it would be for a small school. Consequently, as small schools cannot raise as much money as large ones, they cannot get equivalent subsidies.

The department's subsidy scheme is an excellent one. Last year it gave £50,000 in subsidies to schools throughout the State. Some little time ago the department wisely bought extra land for the children attending the Redbank State School but it is not fit for them to play on because it needs grubbing and grading. The job is too big for the committee to handle unaided and I appeal to the department to give them a subsidy.

Time does not permit me to expand on the value of State School committees in general so I will concentrate on what has been done at the Silkstone State School. Hon. members on both sides have complained about the difficulties of getting swimming pools at various schools. The committee of the Silkstone State School years ago took off their coats excavated a pool and completed it by voluntary labour, with the help of parents. After some years they wanted a pool of Olympic dimensions and they set to work on it. A retired mine manager, who was a surveyor, did all the survey work and found the levels, a contractor was engaged, and, helped by a subsidy, they got their Olympic-sized pool.

That was only one of their efforts. The latest effort is the renovation of a temporary building erected by the Department of Public Works to accommodate the overflow of children. When new school rooms were being built the committee asked the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Instruction to let them retain the old building. By voluntary effort they strengthened it, put new stumps underneath it, and painted it inside, including the floor, and today it is a pleasure to look at. I think they call it the arts building and in it children are taught various arts. So, thanks to the work of the committee, the department has, at a cost of about £300, a building worth more than £1,000. Other school committees in the Bremer electorate are also doing excellent work.

As time goes on, I am becoming more than ever convinced that provision should be made in the Estimates of the Department of Public Instruction for all work on school buildings. I know it has been argued that having a Public Works section in the Department of Public Instruction would lead to duplication but, instead of so many thousands of pounds being voted to the Department of Public Works, it should be voted to the Department of Public Instruction. Then, when the Department of Public Instruction wants work done on school buildings it could call on the Department of Public Works to do it, having the necessary money already provided for on its own Estimates. Too often the schoolmaster or the school committee wants an alteration or an addition to a school and the Department of Public Instruction agrees that the work is essential but the Department of Public Works rules either that it is unnecessary or that it is too costly. If the Department of Public Instruction wants a job done, it does not come to its decision lightly and the work should be carried out. Any hon. member who does not find time when speaking on this Vote to praise the valuable work done by correspondence courses is not aware of the excellent service that they give.

Correspondence courses are sent to children in the outback parts of Queensland, to other parts of Australia, and even as far as the United States of America. It is a service we can be justly proud of. It reflects great credit upon the Government. Children in the outback have an opportunity to receive education enabling them to pass the Scholarship examination. We all realise that it is more difficult to assimilate knowledge by correspondence courses: it is not possible for these children to attend primary schools.

It is very pleasing to see the excellent work done throughout the State by the Apprenticeship Committee. It is still maintaining the reputation built up in the initial stages of having the best apprenticeship scheme in the Commonwealth. Overseas experts have said that it compares more than favourably with any scheme anywhere in the world. At the present time and for many years to come

we will need technical education to equip our future tradesmen and technicians with the knowledge necessary in the age of automation. Without proper training and technical knowledge we cannot take full advantage of what automation offers.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (3.12 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the manner in which he has applied himself to his heavy responsibilities and on his comprehensive and detailed report. Recently in Maryborough we had the privilege of a visit from him. A rather full programme was arranged and with his usual enthusiasm he coped with it. He visited all the schools and during the day spoke to some 3,000 children. The main purpose of his visit, of course, was the presentation of the Lilley medal won in 1955. My congratulations also go to his splendid officers, Mr. Watkin, the Director-General, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Nimmo. I regret that a number of his officers have been ill during the year and I hope that they will be speedily restored to good health and so be able to carry on their good work in their respective offices. The Minister has come up through the ranks; he has the necessary experience, knowledge and enthusiasm to fit him admirably for the role of Secretary for Public Instruction. I also congratulate the hon. member for Gregory on his achievements as Minister in charge of that department.

Juvenile delinquency is causing great concern throughout Australia, indeed in all parts of the world. The hon. member for North Toowoomba recently made a very thoughtful contribution on this subject. Let me place before the Chamber a summary of observations which I think might provoke some thought. I have no desire to convince hon. members whether there has been an increase or decrease in juvenile delinquency. The information that I shall place before the Committee may give some indication of the difficulty in arriving at a decision as to whether the social behaviour of young people today is worse or better than it was in the past.

Personally, I think the youth of today is just as good as, if not better than, the youth of our generation or previous generations. I speak in their defence. I dislike the word "teenager". In my mind it has become associated with wrongdoing and crime through statements so often put before the public by speakers, and particularly by the Press. I think the word will gradually fall into disuse, and I also think that the term "juvenile delinquency" will fall into disuse. "Juvenile delinquency" is a term that defies precise definition and orderly measurement. During the last decade there has been much less thinking about this problem. Newspaper headlines stir the public interest, usually towards some isolated and exceptional event. The metropolitan Press sets a poor

standard. The ugliest and most sordid features of social life are featured, evidently with both eyes on sales and profits. No one doubts the mighty power of the Press, but one regretfully reaches the conclusion that the public good is a matter of secondary consideration. Too much publicity is given to the wrongdoer. Many men will gladly risk a term in gaol if they can expect headlines and publicity in the daily Press.

Mr. Dewar: That is a bit wide, is it not?

Mr. DAVIES: After making a thorough investigation and drawing on the experience of men who deal with criminal offences, I am afraid it is all too true. Sensational headings give rise to the assumption by citizens that there is a crime wave. Diligent efforts are then concentrated on prevention and suppression activities and a rise in arrests may follow. This does tend to affect the information that may be collected at that particular time. It is difficult, therefore, to make a comparison between information collected in one generation and that collected in another. At such times the assumption that there has been a marked deterioration in public morals is not justified.

In California recently a very detailed report was prepared covering a period of years. It was one of the most comprehensive and exact reports prepared in the United States of America. California comprises some 58 counties and 33 counties supplied information, which shows the high degree of co-operation and interest. They collected and collated factual information on California's rehabilitation processes and delinquency prevention activities for youths. They claimed that juvenile delinquency in California had increased, but figures that I shall quote later showed that the crime recordings of adults are static. They believe there that many of the juvenile delinquents tend to become stable and settle down in the community when they reach the age of 20 or 21 years. There are certain pictures that must be kept in mind that tend to affect one's judgment in comparing data collected for different periods. These are as follows:—What is it in terms of offences that is presumed to have increased or decreased? And, what is process level at which offences or offenders are being counted? How reliable is information about the rise or fall of juvenile delinquency? What is the variation in completeness and consistency of records and recording procedures? There is also the matter of the absence of explanation of significance of the rise or fall if either can be reasonably deduced from a given set of data at a particular period. There are doubts as to whether in a delinquency index of offences of both boys and girls or only those of boys should be taken into consideration. What are some of the possible levels of detection or treatment of anti-social juvenile conduct which might serve as

a focal point for an index of juvenile delinquency? All those points were kept in mind in preparing the report. In 1953, there were 19,013 male juvenile offenders referred to the probationary department and in 1954 the number was 19,643, an increase of 630 or 3.3 per cent. During the same period 1953-1954, the cases per 100,000 of the population remained static. There were 177 cases per 100,000 referred in 33 counties. In an interesting report from Great Britain there is a record of a number of boys in Glasgow who left school in January, 1947.

The group consisted of—

(a) 1,349 ordinary boys who left school in January, 1947—at the earliest permitted date after the 14th birthday;

(b) 489 physically handicapped boys;

(c) 301 who left special schools for mentally handicapped boys on attaining the age of 16.

All were included and fairly complete information was available about home background as well as performance of boys after leaving school. Up to the 18th birthday all convictions were recorded and a detailed record was kept of environmental circumstances. Let us consider the records in regard to youth and young children in the years gone by. In Scotland, in 1579, a law was introduced for the suppression of begging in the streets. The Act said that the strong and the idle should be dealt with between the ages of 14 and 17, but apparently those under 14 were not worthy of consideration. In 1880 it was recommended that a school of industry be established, close to what was known as the general hospital, which was the equivalent of the paupers' home. The functions of these schools of industry were similar to our reform schools. In 1850 it was stated by the sheriff that children attending industrial school were dwarfish in body and mind, puny, pigmy, feeble and deformed creatures. At that time many boys or girls of five, six and seven were found begging in the streets and pilfering and stealing.

The evidence before the British Association at the Glasgow meeting in 1840 showed that there were 700 destitute boys who virtually lived by thieving only, of whom 250 stole property of an average value of 1s. a day when loose on society.

The Chief of Police in Glasgow observed the close relationship between crime and unhealthy environment.

The Glasgow police reports of 1857 show that of the children under 15 years 11 per cent. were charged with crime.

Until 1867 the age limit before a child could be regarded as a juvenile offender was 15 years. In 1867 that was increased to 16 years and in 1933 to 17 years.

After 1905 trivial cases no longer appeared before an ordinary court but the offenders were admonished in the Superintendent's room. In 1907 16 per cent. of those charged

with crimes before magistrates were females, and of offenders under 16 years 10 per cent. were females. By 1950 the percentage had dropped from 16 per cent. to 10.7 per cent. for females, and in respect of those under 16 years the percentage was reduced from 10 per cent. to 4.4 per cent.

In the early part of this century in England, particularly the poorer parts of London, and there are still many of those places, it was common to turn a corner and disturb at night dozens of young lads who slept in barrels and boxes and scavenged on the streets and among the leavings in the backyards of establishments.

In the early part of this century many children were badly clothed, and it was common in the schools of London for young people to have sore eyes, sore ears and running noses. In the last 20 years those conditions have been overcome through social work in the schools. In addition to that, there is a personal understanding between the parents and the teachers, whereas in the early part of the century there was hostility towards schools, between teachers and pupils and teachers and parents. It was dangerous for teachers to go home through certain streets. When I taught in a school in London for 12 months I found an entirely different attitude. No children were hungry. Warm meals were provided. Nurses were in attendance. The children were bathed if necessary. I found that parents came to the school in the afternoon to speak to the teachers and to take their children home. That resulted in a decline in juvenile delinquency.

It has been noted that among boys described as church attenders delinquency rates were low both during and after school years. There was a low proportion of these boys with more than one conviction. Among boys who were in organised social groups such as the boy scouts, boys' brigades, social and welfare clubs, the incidence of crime in post-school years was appreciably lower.

It was found that there was a high percentage of juvenile delinquency among those who lived and worked under bad conditions, those who accepted poor, unskilled, stop-gap employment, with frequent changes of employers, those who lived in bad housing districts with severe crowding in the homes,

poor family environment and among those of low scholastic ability. Among those of low scholastic ability who lived in severely crowded homes 44.4 per cent. were convicted in a court of law. Where there was no overcrowding, the percentage of convictions among boys and girls was much lower. This table indicates the position—

INCIDENCE OF DELINQUENCY.

Degree of Crowding in the Home.	No. of Children in family.	
	1-4.	5 or more.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
Up to 2 persons in a room ..	7.0	6.3
4 or more persons in a room ..	11.2	19.2

Even when furnished with a comprehensive range of data about a large number of young people, it is difficult to unravel the many interwoven social and environmental factors bearing on juvenile delinquency. Coming to Queensland, the total number of males and females in the age group 10 to 19 years charged in Queensland inferior courts was 1,423 males and 47 females, or a total of 1,470 in 1939, whereas in 1953-1954 the number of males was 1,379, 144 females or a total of 1,523. When these figures are expressed in percentage of population it appears definite that the problem of juvenile delinquency is no worse. The respective percentages are—

	Males.	Females.
1938-1939 ..	1.55	.06
1953-1954 ..	1.35	.15

However, figures for 1954, 1955 and 1956 show a rise for males from 1,379 to 1,560 and 1,698. In 1938-1939 there were 530 cases of evading railway fares and only 57 "other traffic offences" in 1954. Big rises occurred for males for drunkenness and stealing as shown in the following figures:—

	1938-1939.	1953-1954.
Drunkenness ..	115	271
Stealing ..	506	659

Taking the State as a whole we find that Queensland is in a better position than the other States. If we take the rate of criminal convictions in Supreme Courts per 100,000 of the population we find the following:—

Year.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	Queensland.	South Australia.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.	Australia.	California. (33 counties)
1952	48	38	33	43	35	57	42	..
1938	29	34	14	29	20	23	28	..
1953	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	177
1954	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	177

Those figures are most favourable to Australia and particularly Queensland.

I commend the children in the respective State schools for their response to discipline.

Queensland is far ahead of the other States in the matter of home ownership and this makes for less overcrowding and hence less child delinquency. The percentage figures of housing shortage per 100 families are—

Tasmania	2.5
South Australia	7.0
Victoria	7.0
Western Australia	8.0
New South Wales	12.0
Queensland	.6

In Queensland a larger percentage of people own their own homes than in any other State as these figures show—

	Per cent.
New South Wales	66.8
Victoria	70.0
South Australia	69.4
Western Australia	69.1
Tasmania	65.7
Queensland	74.4

I commend the young people of today on the manner in which they are facing up to their responsibilities. Our towns are orderly and there is an absence of gangs. The education system has been responsible for this. Churches also are to be commended for their youth movements. Youth clubs and other organisations for young people, especially those that engage in sporting activities, also do commendable work. In Maryborough, for example, almost all the young people take part in sporting activities during the week-end. Children are responding to the increased number of interests being provided for them. I should like to see a club formed in Maryborough similar to the Gordon Club in Bundaberg, where the members can participate in organised games and have the facilities of a reading room and a gymnasium.

I had intended to comment on the annual reports of the Comptroller-General of Prisons and the Director of the State Children Department. I commend both reports to hon. members and advise them to read them, particularly the sections on child delinquency. I have much admiration for the Comptroller-General of Prisons, Mr. Rutherford, whose job is his life's interest. This is what he has to say on the youth of today—

“Far from condemning modern youth, I feel that, where its members have the benefit of sound guidance, they are now more purposeful, self-reliant and desirous of taking advantage of the excellent educational opportunities available.”

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (3.37 p.m.): I commend the Minister for the way he has applied himself to his task. Of course, if we were the Government we would do much better, but if we must have a Labour Government we could not have a much better Minister than Mr. Diplock. Of course, the previous Minister was very good, too, and the present one is getting away to a good start.

I hope he listens attentively to a problem confronting the educational system in my electorate, and that he will find a solution.

I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough on child delinquency. It is greatly over-emphasised today. The young people of today are no worse than those of previous generations. The blame for any child delinquency that may exist can be laid at the door of the parent rather than the child. We should, of course, take notice of child delinquency, but it should not be over-emphasised. Only two weeks ago, I spoke to someone who had recently been to America. As an example of how things that flare up for a short time soon die away, this man told me that from the moment he left Australia till he returned he heard nothing of Davy Crockett. He did not hear him mentioned in America, nor did he see a coon-skin cap. Although the Davy Crockett legend emanated from America, it has died out completely over there. So, too, will rock'n'roll, jive, jitterbug, and the bodgie and widgie cult pass. Last Saturday week, while driving from Petrie Bight down Barry Parade, I saw for the first time evidence of teenagers gathering in the streets. I must have passed 50 or 60 of them collecting in gangs. However, even that does not indicate more child delinquency than in the past and, with a proper approach, the problem will not assume alarming proportions.

I was very interested in the remarks of the Director-General of Education on page 26 of the report of the Secretary for Public Instruction. Dealing with technical education he says a White Paper recently produced by the British Government makes it clear that there is already a great shortage of technologists and technicians in industry and that the shortage will become more pronounced with the increasing rate of scientific development of industry. I remind hon. members that in my speech on the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply I referred to the need for tackling early the problems of automation and for setting up facilities in the University well in advance. If nothing has yet been done, I strongly urge that all possible research on automation be undertaken to that end.

I have not mentioned the matter for five years or so, but about six years ago, when I became a member of this Assembly, I was asked by the Chamber of Manufactures to represent them on a research committee to inquire into the advisability of setting up a Technological Museum in Queensland. If I remember correctly, the committee comprised five people, including a senior officer of the Department of Mines. It arrived at quite bulky findings and submitted them to the then Premier, the late Mr. E. M. Hanlon. I discussed the report privately with him one day while walking into the dining room. He said he had received it. There was ample evidence that, if the Government were interested, exhibits would be made available by the business community at not very great

expense, but it was essential to have a suitable building to house them and the report called on the Government to set one aside. The Government pigeon-holed the report, as Governments, whatever their colour, so often do.

Now that the Director-General has made his comments on page 26, I remind the Minister of those findings. With the rapid growth of industry, youths are having their thoughts turned more and more towards secondary industry and technical jobs. The Minister will find a study of the report well worth while and he may see fit to set up the museum to help youth choose avenues of employment.

I was very disappointed that there was virtually no reference in the report of the department's work on behalf of spastics. I am in a position to record the thanks of the League at New Farm for the provision of teachers. The hostel soon to be opened will accommodate 32 spastic kiddies from country centres. It will mean that from 32 to 40 spastic children will be able to come to Brisbane to receive the best education Queensland can provide.

I pay high tribute to the teachers themselves. Hon. members will understand that a good deal more is required from them when they teach handicapped children. They must have all the sympathy and understanding it is humanly possible to give. The great patience displayed by the teachers is extremely commendable. They are getting wonderful results. On behalf of the Spastic Welfare League I express its great appreciation of their work.

As it is generally excusable during the debate on Estimates I should like to talk about one or two things in my own electorate. If a member of Parliament is on the job he should know more about his electorate than anything else. For a number of years there has been an ever-increasing problem at the Nundah State School. In case any hon. member is going to interject I stress that the Nundah State School is in my electorate. I have mentioned this matter in the Chamber for the last five years. It was mentioned by Mr. Frank Roberts when he represented Nundah. Unless something is done very quickly the greatest chaos of all time will be caused at the Nundah State School. There are nearly 1,400 children at the senior school and 600 at the infants' school at the present time. After Christmas the senior school will have an intake of 300 from the infants' school, they will lose 135 who will sit for Scholarship, a net gain of 165. There is nowhere to put the 165 now and this is November. I wrote a letter to the Director-General of Education today. Assuming that the need for three additional classrooms is recognised and building started tomorrow, unless half the construction force of the Department of Public Works were put on the job it would be humanly impossible to complete it in time. It is obvious that on

29 January, or whatever day school recommences, three classrooms of kiddies, young Grade II. children coming from the infants' school, will have to be housed under the school on concrete floors. I object to children being taught in classrooms with concrete floors at any time, and I object to the fact that in the existing infants' school a class is being taught in a room with a concrete floor in a building that was constructed last year. It is bad enough when children of 12, 13 and 14 years of age are taught in classrooms with concrete floors, but is absolutely wrong in principle that children of five and six years of age should be taught in those rooms. As a matter of fact, my own child is in that class, so I should have a personal interest even if I were not representing an electorate. The classroom has a concrete floor. It is on the West side and gets the full force of westerly winds, so it is obvious that the health of the children is impaired.

Mr. Devries: Is there no covering on the concrete floor?

Mr. DEWAR: There is no covering. I made representations on that point at the time. Many of these rooms are now being built under existing buildings on high stumps. I think that is a commendable practise because it effects a considerable saving in expense, and I think concrete floors are a good idea. But I understand that the buildings that are being constructed in that fashion have the concrete floors covered with malthoid or even with flooring. I think that should be done.

At the Nundah senior school in February next year we shall have three classes of children being taught under the school in rooms with concrete floors. That cannot be avoided. I ask the Minister to give immediate consideration to that problem. What is to be done to overcome this problem that occurs at Nundah every year? It is the largest school in Queensland, with an enrolment of 2,000 children. Conditions are chaotic, and it is farcical that a school should be allowed to grow to that size.

Mr. Wood: It is too big.

Mr. DEWAR: It is too big. There are two schools there now. An infants' school was built last year to accommodate 600 children, leaving 1,400 children in the senior school. I have asked on many occasions that a school be provided on the eastern side of the railway line between Nundah and Northgate stations. I discussed this matter with an officer of the department some time ago. He told me that the department realised the need but that no land was available. The Council has land there, and an approach was made to them to get their reaction to cutting part of it off for the department. It certainly is not my job, but I approached the Town Clerk this morning and asked him what the council's attitude would be to setting aside part of this recreation reserve situated between Melton Road, Nudgee Road, and

Nellie Street, for a school. He told me quite definitely that they would readily receive a request from the department. There are 28 acres of land there, and the Town Clerk agreed that they did not need all that for recreational purposes. He is agreeable to receiving a request from the department provided the department does not say, "We want that piece. We will not take another piece." It is all good land. Where a local authority and a Government department are negotiating, it is no use the person who wants the privilege going to the person who is able to give the privilege and saying, "We want this piece and no other." Ten acres is all that is needed which would leave the council with 18 acres, and if the Government went to the Council with an open mind I have not the slightest doubt that the Council would make the land available. That land is situated on the east side of the railway line. The provision of a school there will eliminate the problems at the Nundah school. Six years ago there were approximately 1,100 children at that school and today there are 2,000. Assuming that the intake at the Infants' School will be 250 it is obvious that the position at Nundah will be accentuated. There is a great number of young people living at Wavell Heights. I shall have a small son going to school in January. There will be many hundreds more children attending the Nundah school next year. The problem will remain until the school which I have suggested is built. I urge the Minister to take immediate steps to have a building erected on the land to which I have referred. It looks as though there will be 2,100 or 2,200 children within the area of the Nundah school next year. After pressure by the school committee for many years, the council have agreed to cut off Boyd Road at either end of the school grounds, so the department will have the use of that park of 10 or 15 acres for the use of the children.

Last year I deplored the fact that the Department of Public Works was in the habit of commencing building alterations in August or September and not finishing till May, many months after the accommodation was required. I am pleased to be able to say that five of the seven schools in my electorate have had extensions and that the work will be completed within a week or so. I commend the department for its expedition on this occasion. The Nundah school requires three additional rooms. There is a septic system at the Nundah School which was built to provide for 1,100 or 1,200 children and now there are 2,000 children attending the school. It broke down two or three months ago and I made representation to the Director of Primary Education who suggested to me that I take the matter up with the Secretary for Public Works and Housing on a personal basis. I commend the Secretary for Public Works and Housing for his prompt action. I understand that the matter is coming before Cabinet before the end of this month, and I am hopeful that before

long there will be a separate septic system built for the infants' school. It is not right that the infants should have to use the same lavatories as the grown-up children. I am sure the work will soon be done. The existing septic system is fairly primitive. The urinals are in a bad state and the seats are damaged. I made representations some months ago about this matter. Electric light should be installed. The rooms require painting.

The health of the children is paramount. Under present conditions disease could spread quickly through the children and become an epidemic. I bring these matters to the notice of the Ministers in advance, so that they will not happen. I ask that the stable door be closed before the horse gets out.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (4.1 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the fine job he has done. I also congratulate his officers and thank them for the kindness and courtesy they displayed at all times. I mention particularly the Minister's private secretary.

This is a very important portfolio, requiring a great deal of skill. There is no person more fitted for the post than the Minister, with his training and background.

Our educational system is one of the finest in the Commonwealth, and that opinion has been expressed by visitors from other States and overseas. Our system has been copied in other States.

The Vote for this department is £11,347,952. The scope of work has been widened in that many subjects have been added to the syllabus. There has been a natural increase in population and an increase in school enrolments because of that and the immigration policy. Those things add to the cost.

The Minister and his officers have successfully carried out the policy of the Government. We are proud of their work.

Many courses are open to students. Scholarships are granted by the Government, and under this system doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons and others are trained. Their University fees are paid by the Government, and in return these students must serve for a certain period in Government departments after they are trained. The fellowship system makes it possible for the child of the parent on average income or the poorer member of the community to receive the same advantages of education as that available to the wealthier classes in the community. The system has been very successful and its scope has been widened. A greater number of fellowships and scholarships are being awarded each year.

The Director-General of Education, Mr. H. G. Watkin, stated that an appropriation of £286,000 had been made for this year to secondary schools for scholarship allowances. This is another of the many allowances provided by the department so that boys and girls who have been awarded a State scholarship might receive free education for two

years for their Junior examination. If the scholarship holder attends an approved secondary school other than a State school, the department may pay his fees at the rate of £18 a year. Scholarship allowances may be paid to Junior scholarship holders at the rate of £16 a year when living at home and £65 a year when living away from home if their parents' income does not exceed the basic wage.

Mr. Pizzey: How many parents are there who do not get more than the basic wage?

Mr. KEYATTA: I pause to hear what the hon. member for Isis, a former member of the department, has to say. These scholarships are extended for the two Senior years if the students pass their Junior examination at an approved standard. State school tuition fees remain free and the department pays fees for students at other approved secondary schools at the rate of £20 a year. A means test allowance is made during the senior years to the extension scholarship holder at the rate of £20 a year when living at home and £82 a year when living away from home for the first year and £104 a year when living away from home for the second year. Students receiving allowances are entitled to have their Junior and Senior examinations fees paid for them.

The University of Queensland is rendering noble service. The State bears the cost of buildings and maintenance which will amount to about £200,000 for 1956-1957. The State Government have already spent £1,800,000 on University buildings at St. Lucia. I refer to this matter so that publicity may be given to it. The Commonwealth Government also makes a grant of £7,000 a year to the University colleges. There are 5,198 students at the University at present, 2,041 being day students, 1,311 evening students, and 1,846 external students. Seventy per cent. of the day students and 13 per cent. of evening students held Commonwealth scholarships, State Government fellowships, University open scholarships, and other benefits.

I commend the Government for their action on education in the community. We must create in our young people a desire for knowledge so that they can take their places in the community. They are the citizens and the administrators of tomorrow, and they should be given every possible means of acquiring knowledge.

I congratulate the officers who give the Government technical advice and direction. I refer to Mr. Watkin, Mr. Murphy, and the other departmental officials, all of whom play an important part in framing the Government's education policy. The education system of the State is a monument to those gentlemen.

This State has a greater potential than any other country in the world. It was named Queensland after Queen Victoria, and it is very appropriately named, because of its great potential.

Dr. Noble: Especially North Queensland.

Mr. KEYATTA: I am not parochial. I am a Queenslander first, and of course, North Queenslanders are playing a great part in building up the economy of Queensland.

I thank the Minister and his predecessor, Hon. G. H. Devries, and the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Immigration and his predecessor, Hon. P. J. R. Hilton, for their work in building schools throughout Queensland, particularly North Queensland. This is a Press report of what the Minister said when he opened the Central State school in Townsville—

“Minister at Opening.

“Not seen a School to equal
Central State.

“In his 40 years' association with the Education Department, he had never seen a primary school to equal Townsville's new £101,000, Central State, the Minister for Public Instruction (Mr. L. F. Diplock) declared on Saturday.

“He was speaking before a large crowd at the official opening of the school.

“Mr. Diplock spoke from the flag-draped balcony of the administration block, overlooking the grounds. The School Committee conducted a fete in conjunction with the ceremony and it created a carnival atmosphere.

“Mr. Diplock told the gathering that there had been a Central State School almost since Townsville was Townsville. It dated back to the days when schools were under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education.”

I commend Mr. Murphy on securing the site for the new school. Mr. L. C. Allan, the headmaster, and Mr. Whitmee, have already been referred to. The building is modern, well ventilated, and hygienic, and has plenty of light. It is an excellent primary school.

I commend the Under Secretary to the Department of Public Works, Mr. T. F. Lyons, and his staff, especially Mr. Gordon Bright, the supervisor of the work, an officer of high skill and standing. Mr. Lyons was reported in the Press as saying that Queensland is in a far better position than some other States in high and primary school classrooms.

I suggest that in the construction of school buildings greater use be made of Queensland timbers, such as black bean, walnut, silver ash and maple, some of the finest fancy timbers in the world. Besides creating a happier environment it would educate the pupils in the value of Queensland timbers.

Every facility should be provided for the serving of the Oslo lunch to school children. Many children take a dry and unappetising lunch of little nutritional value and more often than not throw it away.

Mr. Pizzey: What about the pie?

Mr. KEYATTA: The humble pie should not be scorned, nor should the Cornish pastie. There is nothing wrong with a steak and kidney pie—a meal in a shell of pastry. Mulberry pies, too, are appetising and full of nourishment.

We are proud of the Adult Education service. Townsville has a full class almost every night. I know of no finer move by the Government; it is playing a very important part in the life of the citizens. Mr. Johnston, the senior officer, and Mr. Collins, both highly qualified officers, have arranged many interesting courses and they are well attended. I was amazed to see the number of older folk who attend. On one occasion one man was very anxious for instruction in nautical work, another was interested in astronomy. If instructors in highly technical subjects are not available the department arranges for men to go to Townsville to give the required lectures. Later students are asked to write papers which are checked by the officer in charge.

The department provides night classes at the Polytechnic. Many people who cannot afford day tuition at college or the University have an opportunity to study in their spare time at very little cost—8 guineas a year.

What an excellent report has been prepared by the Minister and his officers! It has been prepared by a highly qualified staff. Just glancing at it we see the various items—State Scholarship Allowances, Teachers' Scholarships, Scholarships to the University, Teachers Employed, Promotion of Teachers, the Teachers' College, Evening Tutorial Classes, Religious Instruction, Radio and Films in Schools. We all know how important is the visual training of children. I was most interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Yeronga when he said that visual training was a vital factor in educating handicapped children by lip reading.

Dr. Noble: Television will play its part too.

Mr. KEYATTA: Yes, and we are on the right track there. Purchase of equipment, assisted by departmental subsidy on a £1 for £1 basis, represented a total expenditure of approximately £24,000.

The Research and Guidance Branch has paid dividends in the guidance and direction of children. The officers discuss the problems with parents and give helpful advice.

The report says that during the year the research activities of the branch have been directed to administrative and teaching problems to a greater extent than in any previous year.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CHALK (Lockyer) (4.26 p.m.): As most hon. members are speaking for the full 25 minutes allocated to them in this debate, I think we shall probably get no

further than the Chief Vote. It was my intention to mention matters covered by various sections of the department, so I shall make those observations now.

I join with other members of this Chamber in complimenting the present Minister on his elevation to office. It has always been my belief that any member of Parliament who has been associated with a profession or calling and who is appointed to administer a department covering his profession or calling is better able to administer it than any one else. The Minister has been a school teacher, a head teacher, and an inspector, and that qualifies him to carry out his duties of Secretary for Public Instruction ably and well.

I also pay a tribute to the officers of the department for their courtesy and attention to members of Parliament. Other speakers have praised the work of Mr. Watkin, Mr. Murphy, and other members of the staff, and I wish to add my praise. On every occasion on which I have had to refer a matter to the department I have received the greatest courtesy and reasonably prompt attention.

Yesterday the hon. member for Marodian mentioned the overcrowding in departmental offices. When one goes to the department to interview a particular officer, one often finds that four or five men are called upon to work in a very limited space. That is not in the best interests of efficiency. If the Department of Public Instruction can get greater accommodation, the work of the officers will improve and urgent and important matters will be dealt with more promptly. I have little ground for complaint in regard to school buildings in my area. Virtually all the schools in the Lockyer electorate are well served. Large extensions have been carried out at the Harlaxton school which, although in the Lockyer electorate, is attended by a large number of pupils from the North Toowoomba electorate.

Mr. Wood: The head teacher has improved it too.

Mr. CHALK: I agree with the hon. member for North Toowoomba that good service has been rendered by the head teacher, Mr. Nicholas, and other members of the staff. Their good work has influenced the increase in attendance. Many years ago children attended the Harlaxton school until they were 10 or 11 years and then went to other schools in the Toowoomba district where it was thought they would receive a better preparation for Scholarship. That is not the position today. I agree with the hon. member for North Toowoomba that is due to the attention and teaching ability of Mr. Nicholas and the members of his staff. Improvements have also been carried out at Gatton, Forest Hill, Helidon and Grantham. The 70 schools in the Lockyer electorate are in reasonably good condition with one exception. I do not think that the department is entirely to blame for

the position at that school. Some of the responsibility lies with the Department of Public Works. There appears to have been a considerable amount of money wasted at the Ma Ma Creek State school. For about five years the school has been virtually riddled with white ants. The Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works have inspected the building.

Mr. Power: Is that the one out of which you got the slate?

Mr. CHALK: It is not the one from which the slate was alleged to have been taken. White ants have eaten it so much that one would have no difficulty in getting a slate through the walls. An amount of £500 or £600 has been spent by the Department of Public Works over a period with the object of eradicating the white ants. New timber has been added. After a few months white ants are in it. Pencils can be pushed through new boards after a few months. I have mentioned the matters on several occasions. I hope that something of a permanent nature will be done urgently.

I compliment the department on the attractive painting of the interior of school buildings. Perhaps it was because of the shortage of paint after the war, but for some years the department seemed to be prejudiced against the painting of interiors. To-day a new policy is in operation. I visit schools on project days, arbor days and on jubilee celebrations. The interiors are brightly painted in pleasing colours. The lighting is thereby improved and the interests of the children better served. I hope the practice is continued and that all schools throughout Queensland will receive similar attention.

Mr. McCathie: That is general policy.

Mr. CHALK: I am pleased to hear that. Favourable comments are heard by all those who inspect the schools.

The hon. member for Bremer voiced the thought I had, that it should not be necessary to refer to the Department of Public Works and Housing requests for attention to school buildings. I know it is Government policy, but it means a considerable loss of time. The hon. member for Bremer was on the right track in suggesting the setting up of a separate department to give attention to school buildings. On the other hand I have heard arguments to the contrary by Government members, and those arguments are in many ways sound. It would create an overlapping in public works. If the Government are not prepared to adopt the suggestion, they may be prepared to go part of the way and allocate certain money to a new sub-department to deal with repairs to schools and the erection of new school buildings. Under the present arrangement, one day the Department of Public Works is attending to a police court building or a police station, the next day it is attending to a building associated with some other form of governmental activity, and finally it

gets round to the Department of Public Instruction. That system does not produce the same results as one in which the Department of Public Instruction had some greater say in deciding when repairs to school buildings should be done. Frequently when members of Parliament visit a school the headteacher or a member of the committee points out minor repairs that are necessary and asks the member to bring the matter before the notice of the Department of Public Instruction. In most cases, when the work is ultimately done, so much time has elapsed that the minor repairs have become major ones.

Very little reference has been made to the project work carried on by the department. Many project clubs are conducted in the Lockyer electorate; some have cotton, some calves, some poultry, and so on. I pay a tribute to the men who visit the schools and act more or less as inspectors on project days. They devote a good deal of their time to helping boys and girls in small centres to carry out project work. It is not only the way in which the children do their project work that I am interested in. It is an education for anybody to visit one of these schools on its project day and see how the children conduct their annual meetings. They elect officers and submit reports and conduct the meeting quite as well as adults could. At a place called Caffey in my electorate, I saw two young lads named Smith who were brothers conduct a meeting more efficiently than many adults would have done. They were given no prompting, they were able to express themselves clearly and, as I say, conduct the meeting very efficiently. That sort of training enables young people to enter public life with the ability to express themselves. If young people can be taught to express their views at a public meeting, it is not only to their own advantage but to the advantage of the community generally.

Another thing that has been developed in the Lockyer district is the Junior Farmer movement. It is a worthwhile one; it has made excellent progress during the past 12 months. The department should appoint more officers for the work. I think only one man, Mr. Parkes, is directly associated with it. In my area there are about a dozen clubs. I have visited some of them as a guest speaker and I have seen how the young men and women are being trained. Just recently a lad from the Lockyer electorate, Mr. Stewart Jackson, was chosen to go to New Zealand, and only two nights ago a young lady from the same electorate ran second to a Miss Jean Hunt from Maleny, who was selected to visit Tasmania. Those young men and women visit other areas and places outside the Commonwealth and, besides being good ambassadors for the State, they bring back much valuable information for their clubs.

The Queensland Agricultural High School and College at Gatton is doing excellent work. The attendance at normal classes is

over 500 and about 300 students attend shorter courses at various times of the year. The Minister said that the college was capable of taking all the students who desired to be enrolled.

Mr. Diplock: Eligible.

Mr. CHALK: I am pleased that the Minister has interjected. I agree with the policy of the Government on the eligibility of students, but I ask the Minister to make it clear which students are eligible. Parents may have a child who has just passed scholarship and who expresses a desire to study agriculture. Immediately they think he can attend the agricultural college. That is how overcrowding has occurred in the past. Today, as I understand it, eligibility is restricted to students desirous of taking a diploma course. In other words, a lad is expected to attend a high school or other secondary school until he has his junior pass.

Mr. Morris: That is the greatest mistake that could occur.

Mr. CHALK: I do not want to debate that at the moment. The Minister used the word "eligible" and I hope he will clear the matter up so that the Press may publish it. Very often we are asked to help a lad get into the agricultural college.

Another matter that concerns the hon. member for Toowoomba, the hon. member for North Toowoomba and me, and probably the hon. member for Cunningham, is the appalling condition of the playground facilities at the Toowoomba Technical College. Some action is being taken to improve it but for many years it has been a serious problem. If the new Minister has a look at the situation himself, as he promised, I am sure he will realise that something should be done. At the present time students use the adjoining parks. They have to cross the main street. At 12.30 p.m. students run great risks in crossing the street. There is some responsibility on drivers of motor vehicles, but it is still dangerous for the children.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba) (4.51 p.m.): It has been most gratifying to see that there has been no lack of speakers on these important Estimates. During this session the Estimates of one department were not debated for the full time of three days but on this Vote there has been no shortage of speakers. Most hon. members have shown their interest in this important branch of governmental activity.

Hon. members opposite, as well as Government members, have paid tribute to the Minister, departmental officers and the education service generally. They have rightfully taken the opportunity to bring to the notice of the Minister the requirements of their electorates. They would be lacking in their duty if they did not do so. Generally, all

hon. members have recognised the department's efficiency. I feel quite safe in saying that not one Opposition member has seriously criticised the fundamental way in which the system operates. Not one serious objection has been made against the efficiency of the education service. There has been no bitterness in the debate and it is certainly not my intention to inject the slightest feeling of bitterness into it. Of all government departments there is none more close to each of us as parents, and none that is of greater importance to the future of the State. As I have said before, the watch word of the Queensland Teachers Union is, "The training of its future citizens is the chief business of the State." There is no-one who can say with any degree of justice that the Government do not recognise their duty in this direction. They do all they can to see that the State's future citizens get the sound basic training that is their right. Such is an obligation of any government. On this occasion the debate on behalf of the Opposition was led by the hon. member for Isis. Generally speaking he paid tribute to the work of the department since 1951. I congratulate the Minister who was responsible for much of the development since 1951, the Hon. G. H. Derries. As a schoolteacher and since leaving the department I have seen many Secretaries for Public Instruction but I have not seen any one who has applied himself more diligently to his task. The new Minister was also a school teacher, and I have every confidence in predicting that under him the department will continue to progress as it did under the guidance of the former Minister.

Mr. Pizzey: You have every confidence in the new Minister?

Mr. WOOD: Yes, of course. No man has a greater practical knowledge of educational problems. Why should I not have? I join issue with the hon. member for Isis, who spoke of the unfortunate apathy of parents towards education. That is not my experience. Just as members of this Chamber, year by year, show a greater interest in education and its problems, parents realise more and more what a sound education means to their children. I know of no time during my lifetime when parents have been more interested in education. I visit schools frequently; I talk over education problems with the Minister.

Mr. Pizzey: How many parents turn up at the selection of committees.

Mr. WOOD: I will come to that in a minute. I discuss educational problems with departmental officers and parents, and I see a great awakening of interest in education today. The thing that strikes me first at any school function is the pride of the parents in the school that their children attend. Two or three weeks ago I went to a fete at the North Toowoomba school, one of the two schools in my electorate. Many

of the hundreds who went there did not go for a social outing, they did not go to buy jams, cakes, or vegetables; they went because they were interested in the school.

Mr. Pizzey: Do they go along to the meetings when committees are selected?

Mr. WOOD: Of course they do. I do not know what happens in the electorate of the hon. member for Isis, but I can assure him that in my electorate no meeting lapses for want of a quorum. The parents show a keen interest in the activities of the school and they attend in good numbers at the triennial meetings to elect their committees. It is no good the hon. member for Isis, to cover the weakness of his own case, saying that the parents do not show an interest. My experience is that the parents realise more and more what education means to the child. The average parent is determined that his child shall have greater opportunities than he did to receive a sound education.

I have only two schools in my electorate, the North and East State schools, and I am proud of them. I believe there are no better schools in Queensland, and I have seen schools all over Queensland. Toowoomba is noted for its schools, primary and secondary, State and denominational, but there are good schools in every part of the State. Hon. members opposite have spoken with pride of the progress that has taken place in their own electorates. While some things may be lacking, they admit that, generally speaking, the standard of education is very high.

We have in our schools the finest of all materials on which to work—the Queensland child. Tradesmen, whatever calling they may follow, have particular material on which to work, sometimes good, sometimes bad. But I know of no better material on which any craftsman can work than the Queensland child, and I believe that the teachers of this State develop to the best of their ability the qualities inherent in that child. I think a teacher can be compared with a doctor. It is impossible to express in terms of money the value of a good doctor. No payment is enough for the doctor who saves lives, who conscientiously sets out, with no thought of monetary reward, to cure the sick and heal the maimed. We all condemn the unscrupulous doctor. I believe that no praise is too high for the good teacher who sets out conscientiously to develop the characteristics of the child that is placed in his care. I have always been most indignant at those who sought to belittle the teacher; and it has happened in this Chamber.

Mr. Pizzey: From your side of the House more than ours.

Mr. WOOD: I am not speaking politically in this regard at all. I have always been indignant when anyone dismissed a

remark by saying, "You were a teacher." Such a person apparently regards a teacher as a moron. I say to the hon. member for Isis that I am not being political in this matter. We should not give lip-service to the teacher and then dismiss a reference by one who has had the honour of being a school teacher simply by saying, "But you were a school teacher." I do not know of anyone who does a better job than a good school teacher does. Most of our school teachers are good; they do the work according to their ability; they do it with all sincerity, and not entirely for monetary reward. The position of our teachers has immeasurably improved over recent years. A good teacher goes on regardless of whether he is working on his own, regardless of the inspector, and regardless of the Department of Public Instruction. I shall always defend the school teacher whom I regard as one who more than plays his part in the community when he is doing his job. Far and away the great majority of school teachers do their jobs well and often without the reward that they deserve. A good teacher works with enthusiasm without worrying whether the inspector is coming along to assess his work and without thinking while he is doing his lessons about how they will be regarded officially. To my mind the best of them all is the teacher who serves in the one-teacher school.

The hon. member for Burdekin spoke of the area schools in Tasmania. I have spoken on this matter before. I have seen their work. I think the hon. member has a misconception of their general purpose. In Tasmania there are three types of secondary schools, the modern school, the high school and the area school. Generally the area school caters for those who have not, in the opinion of departmental officers, the qualifications that would enable them to undertake higher academic training which is given in the high school. In the Tasmanian area school stress is laid on those little features that might be fitted to the pupil. In the small-fruits area the principal project would be the cultivation of small fruits. It may be apples in another area and it might be hop-growing in another area. Generally speaking, an area school is not only a central school but a school to cater for children not suited for the higher fields of education. In Queensland no matter how we develop the area or central school, in my lifetime and the lifetime of every other hon. member we will have the one-teacher schools in all parts of the State. In some places they are situated hundreds of miles from the centres of population. It is there that we find the most zealous of all teachers. There we find the teacher who, to use an analogy, would rather be the skipper of a coal tramp than the second mate of an Atlantic liner. Rather than work under a head teacher, he is prepared to go hundreds of miles from the main centres of population and live under extremely poor conditions,

denying himself all the amenities of city life. I know of no other officer in the Public Service who deserves more praise than the efficient and industrious teacher at a one-teacher school. The department is proud of the work done in these schools, often under extremely difficult circumstances.

I join issue with the hon. member for Isis on his statement that the Government makes a miserable allocation for education.

Mr. Pizzey: I think I said it was insufficient.

Mr. WOOD: The hon. member used the word "miserable." I made a note of the word. He said the Government made a miserable allocation to education.

Mr. Pizzey: It is miserable.

Mr. WOOD: He now repeats his statement.

As I said about the Railway Department during the debate on those Estimates, the Department of Public Instruction could easily spend £20,000,000 this year to provide extra school buildings and facilities, if the money was available. That can be said of every department.

Let me deal with the suggestion that the allocation is miserable. I took the trouble this morning of comparing two Budgets. There was no significance in the first I picked, but it happened to be the year mentioned by the hon. member for Isis. He spoke of the progress made since 1951. I compared the Budget for that year with the present Budget. For the year ended 30 June, 1951, the appropriation for all governmental activities was £41,245,000. The appropriation we are seeking this year is £84,760,282, an increase in those six years of 106 per cent. I take now the increases in departmental Estimates. I did not examine all of them. Before I give details I should explain that in 1951 the Police Department was under the control of the Department of Health and Home Affairs. To get the increased percentage, I subtracted the appropriation for the Police Department for that year from the Department of Health and Home Affairs and credited it to the Department of Labour and Industry. On that basis the increase in appropriation is 84 per cent. These are the details—

Department.	Increase. Per cent.
Premier and Chief Secretary ..	66
Labour and Industry	84
Department of Public Works and Housing	88
Railway	103
Health and Home Affairs ..	138

The appropriation for the Department of Public Instruction has been increased from £4,693,443 for the year ended 30 June, 1951, to £11,347,952 this year, an increase of 142 per cent.

Mr. Pizzey: What about building costs?

Mr. WOOD: That is the highest increase. The hon. member for Isis said that less money was spent per head on education in Queensland than in any other State. I remind him that in other States the cost of school buildings is included, whereas that work is provided for in the Vote for the Department of Public Works and Housing.

We have reached the stage when the Commonwealth Government, irrespective of the party in power for the time being, should recognise the national importance of education and should accept a far larger share of responsibility for education than they do at present. I do not mean, of course, that the State should pass over to the Commonwealth its function of administering education. But the Commonwealth Government should make a special vote to each State for expenditure on education. The States have a very strong case for putting such a claim before the Commonwealth Government. Education is national; it is not parochial. It is not Toowoomba education or Queensland education; it is something that is fitting our young people to be good Australians, and Commonwealth Governments would do justice to the citizens of the whole of Australia if they realised their obligations and made extra payments to all the States to enable them to give our children the education that is their birthright.

The hon. member for Lockyer spoke about the lack of facilities at the Toowoomba State High School. That is something that has disturbed the people of Toowoomba for a long time. As a secondary school it can hold its own with any in Queensland. It is now building tradition for itself, but it is labouring under great disadvantages. The Minister will be visiting Toowoomba shortly and will see it for himself. His predecessor, the Hon. G. H. Devries, was very anxious to do what he could and was always sympathetic towards our claims. I know that the departmental officers, too, recognise the justice of our claim for more breathing space at the school. It is a fine building, but it is on a very small block of land. The toilets are almost up against the classrooms. I do not think extensions to the present building would solve the problem. It is attended by approximately 600 students, and although there is space for teaching, there is none for recreation. Through the good graces of the Toowoomba City Council, the students can, under certain conditions, use Queen's Park, which is just opposite the school. To relieve the congestion, a suburban high school was established at Harristown. It is now in its second year of operations, and has shown remarkable expansion under a very efficient principal, Mr. Les Jacob. But that does not solve the problem of Toowoomba's main State high school. Several suggestions have been put forward, one of them being to acquire the drill hall next door and to offer the Army authorities alternative land. However, even that would not solve the problem.

Mr. Pizzey: What do you suggest?

Mr. WOOD: An entirely new State high school, and the use of the present building as a technical college. I do not see what else can be done. It is a serious problem.

The Toowoomba State high school has set a very high standard of academic and general achievement. Boys and girls—they are almost young men and women—are turned out academically sound and with a high attainment of character building, but they are taught under great disadvantage. Following the lines of his predecessor, the Minister has promised to give this matter his earnest consideration and, in the near future, he and his officers will visit Toowoomba. I hope that following their visit something will be done to alleviate an extremely unsatisfactory state of affairs.

When the hon. member for Townsville was speaking on visual education, the hon. member for Yeronga, by interjection, mentioned the aid that television could be in schools. I agree, but I hope that when television comes to this State it will be of a better standard than it is in the United States of America. I hope it will not be prostituted by commercial interests and that it will not make those unsavoury features of life its chief presentation. It is to be hoped that the programmes will be of a type that we can cheerfully present to our children not only in the schools but also at home. So many programmes in the United States and England are too unsavoury for children to view.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ROBERTS (Whitsunday) (5.16 p.m.): At first I could not understand the praise of the hon. member for North Toowoomba for the medical fraternity, but as his speech continued he began to pat the teachers on the back and, incidentally, himself. Perhaps he thought he might get a broken arm out of it and might need the services of the medical fraternity.

The report of the Secretary for Public Instruction contains many interesting items but the one that interests me most deals with apprentices. Last year the total number indentured was 3,295, quite a gratifying figure. The pleasing feature of it was that 1,694 were in the country and 1,601 in Brisbane. So apprentices are entering the trades in great numbers in the country. If most of them complete their training in the country, there will be a reasonable chance of holding them there as tradesmen.

The wages of apprentices and of young men in general today are very much too high. The lads do not know the value of money. We could do much worse than put some of their money aside for them. Perhaps the master could be asked to set aside 10s. a week for the first 12 months. He could pay it into an account, on which the apprentice could not operate. In the second year the

amount could be increased to £1 a week, in the third year to 30s., and in the fourth and fifth years to £2.

Mr. Gair: Is that in addition to the apprentice's wages?

Mr. ROBERTS: No, I mean that to be taken from his present wage and held for him.

Mr. Gair: How is he going to live in the meantime?

Mr. ROBERTS: Seven years ago my son began his apprenticeship and his wages were £1 10s. 9d. a week. I think today they are about £3 10s. However, particularly in the early years, the parents contribute greatly to the upkeep of the apprentice.

Mr. Gair: Many parents are not in a position to do it.

Mr. ROBERTS: I know, but they carry on just the same, and those same parents would be pleased to have a sum set aside for their son.

Mr. Gair: An apprentice eats as much as his father.

Mr. ROBERTS: There is no doubt about that. If my son is any guide he eats a lot more than his father. I do not know where else it applies but an apprenticed jockey's money is paid into the bank. At the end of the five-year period when a lad comes out of his apprenticeship he would have £364, which with interest, would total about £400. It would be a useful little nest-egg for any lad coming out of his time. The majority come out at 21 and many marry about that age. It could provide a deposit on a home. It is a controversial matter but one that should be given consideration. Parents, and ultimately the lads themselves, would be thankful for it.

I intend to refer to some of the works that have been authorised or commenced in my electorate during the last year. Whilst the construction work comes under the Department of Public Works Vote the buildings are for education purposes so I am in order in referring to them. Of course, like everybody else, I should like to have seen many more, but the following represent the main works:—

				£
Additions to school	Eimeo	Road		2,887
Residence at school	Glenella	State		3,216
Additions to State school	Mackay	North		10,526
Residence at school	Yalbaroo	State		3,450
Total				<u>£20,079</u>

I had hoped to be able to include a residence for the Cannon Valley State school. It was the department's intention six or eight

months ago to remove the residence from Foxdale to Cannon Valley. This decision was the result of a misunderstanding but after further investigation the department allowed the Foxdale residence to remain because it was not in danger of flood as we had previously been led to believe. Apparently the department did realise the necessity for a residence at Cannon Valley. I will not go into details but I hope the department has a future residence at Cannon Valley State school well in hand. Many school residences are required throughout the State. It is a difficult problem because what is the use of putting up residences here, there, and everywhere when perhaps in the very near future consideration may be given to area or central schools? In my electorate, many people would be interested in sending their children into Calen if there was a good road. Because of gullies and creeks it would be dangerous to send them there now because of danger through flooding of gullies and creeks. They might go to school one day and not get home again for several days because of floods. I shall refer only to areas that have a school. Perhaps a school bus could leave Bloomsbury and go through Elaroo, Yalbaroo, Wagoora, Rise and Shine, and Pindi Pindi to Calen. Another could go through the other area, taking in Cameron's Pocket, Mt. Charlton, Silent Grove, Mt. Pelion, Mt. Ossa—coming into Calen the other way. I know the department has to be very careful in matters of this kind, but I believe that it has to be even more careful in deciding to build many of these small country schools. If an area has an enrolment of 12 with an average attendance of nine, it usually gets a school. There is no public transport of any sort for school children in the whole of my electorate of 6,500 sq. miles, but it would be possible to bring them by road. In a farming area, there is always the possibility that a farmer, with two or three children attending school, will sell out and that the person buying the farm will have no children. The attendance then drops, and in some cases the school is closed.

Mr. Gair: That is something we cannot regulate.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is so. I have always advocated that the Department of Public Instruction should have its own architectural branch. It should be quite easy to design a prefabricated school to be erected in sections and if small schools were prefabricated, they could be moved from place to place at very little expense. Today it is almost as expensive to re-erect a school as it is to build a new one. I think the department should give my suggestion careful consideration because thousands of pounds could be saved in the years to come.

I also ask the Minister to consider the establishment of a high school top at Collinsville. I do not know what number of pupils are needed to justify a high school top,

but Collinsville certainly needs one. Collinsville is approximately 48 miles by rail from the nearest town of any size, which is Bowen. Children attending the Bowen school are compelled to leave home shortly after 6 a.m. to catch the rail motor and on many occasions they get home at half-past 6 or 7 o'clock at night. Such a long day occasionally would not be felt much, but when it happens every school day for two years while studying for the Junior it becomes a Herculean task. No area in Queensland has a greater Scholarship record than Collinsville. In 1953 there were 10 passes out of 10 at the State school and two out of two at the Convent school. In 1954 there were 18 passes out of 18 at the State school and none sat at the Convent school. In 1955 there were 18 passes out of 18 at the State school and five out of six at the Convent school. Over that period of three years there were 46 passes out of 46 at the State school and seven out of eight at the Convent school, making a total of 53 passes out of 54. Amongst the winners in 1954 was a Lilley medallist, and a few others have gained places amongst the first 10 in the State. It is evident that the children generally are of a high standard of intelligence. We were fortunate in having the services of an outstanding teacher like Mr. Armstrong, who has gone to a higher position. Mr. Grabs, who succeeded Mr. Armstrong, is also a very good teacher, and I am sure that the good examination results will continue.

Mr. Diplock: Why didn't they make application for one?

Mr. ROBERTS: I believe they will be making application for a high school top. I discussed it with Mr. Armstrong before he left. In addition to the children who have passed the Scholarship others who have gone to schools in other centres perhaps would not have gone if the facilities were available at Collinsville. Ninety-nine per cent. of the population are working-class people who cannot afford heavy educational expenses. Any parent who has sent a child away to a boarding school knows how expensive it is. I trust that when the application comes before the Minister and the Cabinet the matter will receive favourable consideration.

Mr. Diplock: Last time an application was lodged was in 1949. Despite the fact that they had many good passes they could not get enough parents to sign to say that their children would go to the high school.

Mr. ROBERTS: I know that is a danger. Many people like to send their children away to schools at Charters Towers, Rockhampton, or Brisbane, and the danger is that there will not be enough left to warrant a high school top. That appears to have been the trouble in the past. That will have to be put to the parents before the suggestion is again made to the Government.

I mention again the Opportunity School or class for backward children in the Mackay area. I have mentioned it before and I thought something would have been done by now. I hope it will not be overlooked by the Minister. It is a pressing need in Mackay. I do not want hon. members to think that there are many backward children in Mackay or that there are more backward children there than anywhere else. Every centre has its share of backward children and it is our duty to help them.

My next point is transport for secondary school students in the Proserpine area. Many areas have rail communication, and an allowance is made for children travelling by rail, but places like Cannon Valley and Kelsey Creek are not near the railway line and the children have to travel to secondary school by bus. The journey may be 14 miles each way. Bus charges are a heavy financial burden on the parents. As the department grants an allowance for one form of transport, the children using the other form should receive the same consideration. I should not support requests for assistance for students near the railway line, but that is not the case in many areas round Proserpine. The parents deserve some assistance in the secondary education of their children.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (5.38 p.m.): When I was discussing the vote for the Department of Health and Home Affairs, I said that there were two departments that should be considered outside the realm of party politics, the Department of Health and Home Affairs and the Department of Public Instruction.

I pay tribute to the Director-General and his officers for their very fine work. I convey to the Minister my sincere congratulations on his appointment to the high rank of Secretary for Public Instruction. His experience and background will be most useful to him. He has my best wishes for a successful period in that office. I hope it will be short, but I know he will give of his best.

The former Minister, the hon. member for Gregory, did a good job. He was always sympathetic and listened to any complaint or request from the Opposition. He is entitled to our thanks.

Education is, perhaps, today more important than ever. First of all we need a healthy child, and then it is the duty of every member of this Committee to see that that child is fitted for after life. Nothing can equip any of us better than a sound education. We realise, too, that it is our duty to see that children born of parents who are not able to afford to educate them up to university standards, are given every opportunity to make good. Our present civilisation demands that of us, and it should be our aim and object to co-operate with the Department of Public Instruction to the greatest possible extent.

I pay a tribute to the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General, the other officers of the department, and every teacher in Queensland. Education in this State faces tremendous difficulties. I have interviewed the Director-General and his officers from time to time, and I am fully seized of the problems that face them in the number of schools, the number of teachers, school committees, the weaknesses of human nature, and the failure of some people to co-operate with the department by providing suitable accommodation for teachers in the outback.

People generally are becoming more and more seized of the importance of giving their children a sound education. Many of them will not live in a country area unless it has a suitable school or there is some convenient means of education. I applaud the department's efforts, therefore, to improve the school transport system, which makes it possible for many children in remote areas to attend a school. It is an excellent idea and should be extended as far as possible.

Any criticism that I have to offer is not of the department or the Minister, but of the Government's failure to carry the education system of the State as far as they could. We hear much these days about the delinquent child. Whilst I agree that it is largely the responsibility of the parent to bring up his child in the correct way, no-one has a greater influence on a child's mind than his teacher. Most teachers accept that responsibility and realise that it is not only a matter of helping children with their lessons, but of setting them an example in the way they themselves live. The child encounters many dangers in life, such as the company with which he associates and the environment at his school, and when I hear complaints from time to time at deputations to the Director-General, I am greatly impressed by the attitude of the officers of the department.

The hon. member for Chermide said this afternoon that juvenile delinquency could be over-emphasised, but it should be somebody's responsibility to remove the bodgie and the widge from society. The possible consequences of waywardness should not be overlooked, and we should ask ourselves whether we are doing everything possible to help children who have fallen by the wayside.

Mr. Power: Parents have some responsibilities.

Mr. MULLER: I mentioned that a moment ago. I think parents should accept greater responsibility; but we must remember that in these days so many mothers and fathers go to work to earn more money and some of them forget that their first duty is to their children. Those children return to an empty home after school, and that makes the teachers' task more onerous.

We are not children but it is our duty to give credit where credit is due and anyone doing his utmost, particularly in the public interest, deserves commendation.

I am a keen advocate of large central or area schools. I agree with the hon. member for North Toowoomba that there will always be the one-teacher school. In many places the central school would not be convenient but, wherever possible, it should be established. We have been talking about such schools for many years, but nothing has been done. Each time I have complained to the Minister or to the Director-General of Education or to his assistant, I have been told that the Government have accepted the principle. That is no different from my accepting responsibility for a debt and then failing to pay it. It is not good enough. We have spent large sums of loan money in recent years, some of it foolishly on supposed developmental works that will not return anything for many years to come. For these schools we do not require the many millions that have been spent on such works, and we should get on with the job.

Mr. Skinner: Do you want to make it compulsory and not leave it to the choice of parents?

Mr. MULLER: I am glad the hon. member has raised that point, because that is the stumbling-block and the Government have used it as a way out. If they wait till they have the unanimous approval of the people, nothing will ever be done. People are never unanimous about any reform, whether it concerns education, public health or anything else. In primary producers' marketing organisations we never have anything like unanimity.

Mr. Power: You are spoiling a good speech by becoming political.

Mr. MULLER: I am not becoming political at all. Any suggestion I have to make to the Government can be made without political bias but when I criticise I speak my mind and I will do so now. I can be kind and I can be critical. Still, I am fair in my criticism. I am not now being severe. I am being very mild when I say that the Government have failed to do the job because they have said they accept the principle but have done nothing about it.

Mr. Davies: If the majority of the parents were against it, would you still advocate it?

Mr. MULLER: Has the hon. member the majority of the parents against it? Some little time ago I presented a case for Rathdowney, a typical instance. Rathdowney is some 60 miles from Brisbane. The proposal embraced about eight different schools. We did not have 100 per cent. of the people but we called a joint public meeting of people from all the schools. At least 80 per cent.

supported the proposal. In the end only one school stood out. Only a minority opposed the idea and some schools were unanimous. The ex-Minister will remember the deputation that waited upon him. They offered every co-operation but all we got was the statement that the principle was accepted—nothing was done about it. If we are to advance the standard of education we must do more than adopt or accept the principle. We have to do the job. If the Government can spend millions of pounds on various works which I will not mention, no-one can tell me that they cannot build area schools. It would not be all additional cost. A big saving would be effected in various ways. If 200 children were collected in one centre from six or seven schools the teaching costs would be less. It would be cheaper to provide the required number of teachers at the combined school than to pay seven teachers at seven different schools. Similarly, building costs and maintenance would be lower for one large school than seven separate schools. Perhaps these savings would more than offset the cost of establishing a central school. What I am more concerned about is the benefit to the children. I realise that Rathdowney is not the only place in Queensland but the people there are concerned about the future of their kiddies. They realise the associations the children would enjoy in coming together in a bigger school. At the moment there might be only 10 or 12 children at a one-teacher school. Bring them to the combined school and they will benefit from the environment. The sport and other community interests in which they could take part would be an education in itself. At the present time when children reach the seventh grade in one-teacher schools it means the end of their education. The establishment of a central school would be the first step in the provision of a high top. Rural schools have done a good job in many districts but we hear so much about children leaving the country for the city after finishing primary school. If they could be given rural training it would have a big influence on their remaining in the district. In some centres provision is made to transport children long distances to central rural schools but this is not very satisfactory. If we could collect all the children in a given area and establish rural classes in addition to academic classes, when they reached the higher grades they would be in a position to carry on at the high top. It would not cost a colossal sum of money because savings could be effected in many ways.

I was impressed with the figures mentioned today showing how schools have been stabilised. The figures generally reflect credit on the department. The following figures show the number of schools in operation since 1952—

1952	..	..	..	..	1,571
1953	..	..	..	..	1,563
1954	..	..	..	..	1,553
1955	..	..	..	..	1,557

In 1955 there were 14 fewer than in 1952. I am not critical of the fact that there are 14 schools fewer, because you accommodate more pupils. I think that rate of progress is too slow. There should be considerably fewer schools, a higher standard of education, and more convenient methods of carrying the children to and from school. I know it can be done. I am not concerned about the stick-in-the-mud person who is in a mental groove and does not care about the child's future welfare. I have heard people say, "If you take away the school, you take away the only place we can use as a hall for meetings or dances." They lose sight of the importance of education.

The following figures give the net enrolments:—

Year.	Primary.	Secondary.	Total.
1952	175,867	7,518	183,385
1953	173,341	9,231	182,572
1954	181,079	10,569	191,648
1954	185,962	10,886	196,848

Those figures show a tendency for children to seek a higher standard of education. The number attending secondary schools rose from 7,518 in 1952 to 10,886 in 1955.

Mr. Davies: Do you not think the Government have done an excellent job in catering for that tremendous increase?

Mr. MULLER: That is a political question. I do not say the Government at all; I say the Education Department.

Mr. Power: Who controls the Education Department? Is it not the Minister and the Government?

Mr. MULLER: Yes, but—

Mr. Power: You are splitting straws now.

Mr. Gair: In future you blame the department for what is wrong, not the Government. That suits me. We will put it on that basis. That is not what you say at an election.

Mr. MULLER: I am making a speech that I could make from the Government side of the Chamber.

Mr. Gair: Let us keep it on that basis.

Mr. MULLER: I say that the Government are not going as far as I should like them to.

The following table shows details of school transport services:—

Primary schools.			
	1953.	1954.	1955.
Number of services ..	270	305	340
Children carried daily ..	6,786	7,620	8,418
Total cost	£140,651	£168,358	£203,960

There is an increase of £63,000 in those three years, but look at the benefit you received.

You closed a number of schools, you carried many more children, and you provided a higher standard of education.

Four years ago a deputation waited on the former Secretary for Public Instruction in connection with the establishment of a rural school at Rosewood. The matter was approved in principle and the intention was to build a rural school. All schools in the area supported the application. It was expected that the work would be carried out in January, 1954, but it is now nearly January, 1957, and nothing has been done. Perhaps money is tight, because the Government lost £1,300,000 in operating State coal mines. If the Government had got rid of State enterprises it would have had enough money to carry out this work. It is not proper to continue to carry on State enterprises that are showing a loss while our children's interests are being neglected. The Department of Public Works has let the Department of Public Instruction down. That is the opinion of nearly every school teacher in Queensland. Work that has been approved has not been carried out and some of the work carried out has been very costly.

I understand that the hon. member for Bremer recommended the creation of a subsidiary building organisation to carry out work for the Department of Public Instruction. I think it is a very good idea. The Department of Public Instruction should carry out its own work. The present system causes duplication. The Department of Public Instruction sends a man out to report on a suggested building and then the Department of Public Works sends out an inspector. When inquiries are made at the Department of Public Instruction people are referred to the Department of Public Works. We cannot afford to neglect the education of our children because the Department of Public Works has fallen down on its job. Immediately after the war the Department of Public Works may not have been able to cope with the work, but today local builders are available to do the work at less cost. If the Government will provide the money I can find the labour to do the work in my district. That is a fair offer. There is no reason why the Department of Public Instruction should have to spend large sums of money to have work carried out by day labour when that work could be done on contract at much less cost.

(Time expired.)

Hon. L. F. DIPLOCK (Condamine—Secretary for Public Instruction) (7.19 p.m.): In response to the hon. member for Lockyer I wish to make a statement in connection with the eligibility of students to attend Gatton College. The Gatton Agricultural College, in common with all agricultural colleges throughout Australia, exists primarily to provide education in rural activities leading to the award of diplomas. A student proceeding to a diploma course needs an educational background at least to Junior

standard. This, therefore, is the qualification for entry upon a diploma course in Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Manufactures. Ample accommodation is available for all students who wish to enter upon a diploma course and have the necessary educational qualifications. Any places available after all diploma students are enrolled are reserved for boys who have completed the primary course and who reside in areas where secondary facilities are not available.

Mr. Chalk: I wanted to hear that.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I realise that.

I might add that the entrance qualification to agricultural courses in New South Wales consists of Intermediate certificate standard, and minimum age of 16 years.

During the course of this debate, our attention has been once again drawn to the Tasmanian Area Schools and their expressed objectives. It would be unjust to our schools and our teachers to permit the reference to pass without drawing attention to similar merits in our own country schools, and in the professional outlook of so many of our own teachers.

In our own syllabus, "Teachers are urged to relate education to life, to place stress on the principle of social living, to base education largely upon pupil activities and experiences, and to make the development of independent reliable judgment and initiative an important aim in all school work."

Our tendency in rural areas to introduce into the curriculum activities related to rural communities goes back to the years of the first World War. The first rural school was opened at Nambour and there has been considerable development of that type of school since.

The important point to remember is that people in rural areas demand educational opportunities for their children at least equal to those provided for city children. This my Government are determined to provide. There must be no restricted horizons for our children. The curriculum of the country school must give each child his opportunity to proceed, according to his interests and ability, every inch as far as a child in an urban area.

There is abundant room within our syllabus for venturesome teachers to relate education to local community life; there are healthy project clubs, as the hon. member for Lockyer has pointed out; there is a vigorous Junior Farmers' Movement to cater for local interests in immediate after school life.

The hon. member for Burdekin may have left the impression that there is less freedom for teachers here than in Tasmania. I would draw the attention of members to two facts. The first is that Tasmania has a syllabus as we do. The second is that our syllabus is suggestive, not mandatory.

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (7.23 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister and the officers of his department on their excellent work.

There is no doubt that our educational system compares more than favourably with that of other States. Our children are as advanced and in some instances more advanced than children from New South Wales and other States who enrol at Queensland schools.

I congratulate the Director-General of Education, Mr. Watkin, the Director of Primary Education, Mr. Murphy, and the members of their staffs on their excellent work.

I congratulate also the Director of Secondary Education, Mr. Powell, on the excellent work he is doing. I could go through the list of departmental officers, and congratulate them on the part they are playing in educating the children of Queensland. The Regional Director of Education in the Far North, Mr. Whitmee, is also entitled to my congratulations for the work he is doing. I am sure, too, that the other regional directors are doing very good work. As I say, Queensland's standard of education compares more than favourably with that of the other States.

The hon. member for Whitsunday suggested that apprentices should pay 10s. a week from their very small wages into a fund.

Mr. Roberts: Into banking accounts of their own.

Mr. ADAIR: That may be a good suggestion. I have two sons for whose education I found it very hard to pay. One of them is now a doctor. I know what a struggle it is for a parent who is not well off to pay for the education of his children. Many a time I went without so that my lads could get a sound education. The other lad was apprenticed to the panel-beating trade. He is now a tradesman and, incidentally, is earning more than his doctor brother. Nevertheless, they are both very happy in their jobs and I am happy too.

I point out to the hon. member for Whitsunday that although apprentices get very low wages, their employers charge the same for their services as they do for a tradesman's. I am referring now particularly to apprentices working in garages. I think it would be much fairer, therefore, if the employer paid the 10s. a week into a fund for his apprentices. He charges 17s. or 18s. an hour for any work done by them. That applies also in the electrical trade. Apprentices are sent out to do electrical wiring, and although they are on low wages the employer charges on the basis of a tradesman's rates.

The Cairns High School is in my electorate, and it is serving an excellent purpose. Children who attend it are being educated quite as well as any child in the metropolitan area. The Cairns people are very proud of

the schools in their town. The Central State School, which is in the Cairns electorate, is a very modern building. With the schools throughout my area, including Edge Hill, North Cairns, Freshwater, Stratford, and Kuranda, we have had excellent treatment from the Minister and the officers of his department, as well as from the Department of Public Works. I have been given full satisfaction with every request I have made.

The former Secretary for Public Instruction approved of a high school in Mossman last year and I thank him for it. It was an excellent gesture, all the more appreciated because of the isolation of the area. Road transport is the only means of access and, but for the high school at Mossman, the children would have to go straight from school to work in the fields or in the sugar mill or to unskilled work in other industries. Today 33 children attend the Mossman High School and next year more than 50 will attend. Children from schools in such outlying areas as Port Douglas, Cassowary, Mowbray and Daintree, as well as the Central State School in Mossman, now have the opportunity to get secondary education. Some may have to stay with relatives in Mossman because they cannot travel those long distances daily. However, it has been suggested that the council build a hostel in Mossman to board those from outside areas. They will, of course, be able to return to their homes at week-ends.

Bloomfield is another isolated area. The usual means of access is by boat, although I walked the long way round. The timber mill has provided a school, and I have a request for a new school there. Previously Bloomfield had only a floating population but the mill is permanent and assures permanent residents. Today 12 or 14 children are there. They have very little chance of enjoying the benefits of the free milk scheme but perhaps they could share by the use of powdered milk. The teacher at the Cooktown school, Mr. Althous, is doing an excellent job. In the areas outside Cooktown the children are taught by correspondence. They have no chance of coming in to schools. I have visited the areas and the people inform me that they are quite happy with the arrangement. Unfortunately, some of the New Australians, Italians or Yugo-Slavs, who have not a good grip of our language, are finding it difficult to teach their children by correspondence.

Mr. Gair: We might have to supply correspondence courses in various languages.

Mr. ADAIR: Possibly that would help. On the long journey from Cairns to Brisbane I have often noticed how school buildings stand out very prominently from other buildings in the various little townships. Teachers' residences in most instances are the best buildings. I congratulate both the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works on their excellent job.

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We very often hear criticism from hon. members opposite that the Government have neglected their electorates. I travel through their electorates and I see the buildings there too. Their complaints are imaginary.

Coen is very isolated, accessible only by boat or plane. Even there, an excellent school residence has been provided. The children at this most northern school in the Cape York Peninsula are receiving just as good an education as children in Brisbane.

Mr. Walsh: Did not the Federal Government close the airfield there?

Mr. ADAIR: They closed everything.

There are two schools on Thursday Island. The State rural school was established for the white children of the Island. There are more coloured than white children on the Island, but they all receive the same education. The other school is Weiben School for coloured children on the island. The buildings are excellent, and the children are well cared for.

On the West Coast of the Peninsula there are seven mission stations run by religious bodies. The Labour Government pays big subsidies to those missions. Much of that money is devoted to the education of aboriginal children from the mainland who would otherwise receive no education. The children at the Cooktown mission and other missions are getting an excellent education too. They are well dressed, well cared for, and I compliment the missions on the wonderful job they are doing.

Mr. Gair: Mainly because of the financial aid from the Government.

Mr. ADAIR: With the help of the Government, yes.

I have taken hon. members for a Cook's tour of my electorate. I am proud of the Cook electorate, and I am proud of what the Government are doing for the people in it. I know they will carry on the good work.

The school at Port Douglas is one of the oldest schools in Queensland. It was built when Port Douglas was the port for the Tablelands. I do not know what the department had in mind when it built that school, but it excavated the side of a hill, built the school and left very little playing area for the children. I have approached the department to build a school on a more suitable site, and the department has sent officers up there to try to find suitable ground. The two sites they looked at were unsuitable, but I am informed that they will go back and look at another block of land. I am sure the school will be transferred as soon as possible.

Mr. Gair: Having seen the present school site, I think there is some merit in your advocacy.

Mr. ADAIR: I know that I am working the parish pump when I claim that North Queensland is the best part of Queensland,

but we have something there that is found nowhere else in the Commonwealth. I have suggested previously that an agricultural college should be established on the Tablelands. Atherton with its increasing population is an ideal site for an agricultural college. It has an excellent climate. Maize and peanuts are grown extensively and a short distance away cane-growing is carried on, also it is the best tobacco growing area in the State. The Government are spending millions of pounds on the Tinaroo dam and the Mareeba-Dimbulah scheme. These projects will attract thousands of people.

(Time expired.)

Mr. FLETCHER (Cunningham) (7.46 p.m.): I take the opportunity of congratulating the new Minister. I have done it personally and I now do it publicly. I regret that our old friend, the hon. member for Gregory, is no longer there. I do not mean that as a back-handed compliment. I regret that the hon. member for Gregory is no longer there because he has done so many kindnesses. I would like to say to the new Minister that if he retires on as happy a personal note with the other hon. members of the House as his predecessor did, he will be due for congratulation. I have no serious criticism of the department to make on general policy. I have always admitted that the department is limited and circumscribed by the policy laid down by the Government and the amount of money made available to it. At all times it was dependent on the degree of priority which the Treasurer or Government policy was willing to give to it.

Mr. Walsh: It was a very high priority.

Mr. FLETCHER: I would say that it has been a pretty high priority, but possibly it could have been higher. I have a high opinion of the department.

Mr. A. Jones: We are getting along so well together I think it must be because of the atomic bomb.

Mr. FLETCHER: It could be the aftermath of the shearers' strike. I have had much to do with the heads of the department and they are doing an excellent and helpful job. I do not think they could do much more than they are doing, considering the financial limitations. So high is my opinion of them that when bodies have approached me with the object of getting a high school top at Millmerran or Pittsworth I have told them not to depend upon getting the progress association and the shire council and all the organised bodies to go to town on the department and try to wear it down with propaganda, but rather put the whole facts in writing and bring it down to a factual basis and they would have as good a chance as any other place in Queensland. That is my honest opinion. The deciding factor is the amount of money available to the department. It would be useless having a most enthusiastic Secretary for Public Instruction and a most enthusiastic Secretary for Public Works and Housing if they did

not have any money to spend. It always gets back to the Government policy and the priority in spending of Government finances. If there is any criticism to offer, it would be on that score.

It is pertinent to ask how important is education in these days. Most of us including the Minister agree that it should have the very highest priority. Our wealth in Queensland and Australia is far better expressed in terms of educated men and women than in any other terms. Our national resources of which we speak so much and of which we are so proud are only potential wealth until they have been exploited. We must have scientific brains and technical brains to exploit those resources. Our skill and technical brains are very much more important than unskilled man-power. Those of us engaged in agriculture are going to develop Queensland. It will be a wonderful place and a great asset in the Commonwealth, but it can only be developed by scientific methods. In transport and light and heavy industries we are dependent on trained men, and we will be more dependent on them in years to come. Training is education. Our defence forces could not defend this country without scientific brains. No longer do we depend on man-power; we depend on education.

To hold our place in the modern world education must be given a very high priority. What priority has it been given in the past? A claim was made today or yesterday by an hon. member on this side of the Chamber that Queensland is spending less per head of population than other States on the education of our youth. That was vigorously denied today. It was said that the figure quoted was not fair, and that the statistician did not take into account the money spent by the Department of Public Works and Housing on school buildings because it was not shown under the heading of educational expenditure. I felt that this was not likely to be the case. My respect for statisticians is such that I was sure they would make this comparison on an honest and comparable basis. I obtained from the Library the report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission in 1955. It gives interesting figures on the States' expenditure on education, excluding expenditure on public works, that is, buildings and works of that nature. Those figures bear out as far as I can see the claim made yesterday that Queensland is at the bottom of the list. These are the respective amounts spent by the States per capita on administrative and general and for training teachers, primary and secondary—

State.	Amount.
	s. d.
New South Wales ..	129 6
Victoria ..	107 7
Queensland ..	96 9
South Australia ..	110 8
Western Australia ..	145 4
Tasmania ..	141 5

To carry the comparison a little further, the same disparity is evident in the expenditure on universities, technical education, agricultural education, libraries, and the education of the deaf, dumb and blind. The figures are—

		Per capita.	
		s.	d.
New South Wales ..	..	157	8
Victoria	..	141	5
Queensland	..	121	4
South Australia ..	..	145	8
Western Australia ..	..	173	9
Tasmania	..	178	5

Again Queensland's figure is the lowest. It would seem from figures I have quoted that the suggestion of the hon. member for North Toowoomba that the claims of the hon. member for Isis were based on a fallacy, was itself incorrect. The figures are quite trustworthy, and are exclusive of any money spent on public works. However, be that as it may, comparisons are odious and they should not be taken as the be-all and the end-all in an argument such as this. The important thing is to ensure that what we are doing is sufficient and reasonable under the circumstances and that we are leaving nothing undone. Therefore, I am not particularly concerned with the figures I have quoted, except to contravert a misapprehension that could probably arise if the alleged facts quoted by the hon. member for North Toowoomba were accepted as correct.

I should like to be able to say that nobody in Queensland who can reasonably expect to be reasonably educated is missing out in that expectation. Unfortunately, however, the department cannot meet that expectation because it has not enough money. I am thinking of the very special case of country children that I have mentioned here on previous occasions. I know it is very easy when you are in Opposition to suggest things in a general sense, because after all we have not the responsibility of finding or spending the money. But it is our duty to say what we think in the hope that it might inspire some action that will overcome the disability, either partially or completely. The special case I am thinking of for country folk relates particularly to secondary education. It is very difficult for parents in the country to give their children a secondary-school education. Unfortunately, there are too few of the excellent high schools that dot Queensland in places where they are needed. In many cases parents of children of secondary-school age feel that the only way their children can get a secondary-school education is to send them to a boarding-school, but frequently their financial position precludes them from doing so. It is not an inexpensive thing these days to send your children to a boarding-school, as I know. Most of them are excellent institutions and nothing better could happen to a child than to be sent to one of them, but it is quite impossible for a

man on the basic wage level to do it. It is those people I am thinking of when I suggest that something should be done to help the parents of children with potentially valuable brains to give them a secondary-school education. Of course, I am not able to say categorically just how it should be done. Some monetary help could be given and I think it must be. In many cases the best types in the community come to the city to live because they want their children to have secondary education. I have personal friends who have taken uncongenial jobs in the city for that reason. By the very fact that they want secondary education for their children they show that they are the type we want to keep in the country. However, they sacrifice their comfort and wishes in their children's interests. I know one man who drives a tram in Brisbane who would dearly love to be out in the country but he prefers to have his four children enjoy the excellent education available free in Brisbane. Serious thought should be given to helping his kind. Much potentially valuable material is lost to the community because parents cannot afford secondary education for their children. Transport for secondary school pupils would be a help.

I should like the Minister to explain whether the insurance of children travelling in public transport to primary schools is purely a matter for the transport driver, or the owner of the bus, or whether some automatic insurance scheme has been adopted by the department. The matter worries some parents.

The Minister and his department are doing their best to build as many high schools as possible in the country. Certainly that is one of the things that must exercise the mind of any conscientious Minister. How he can increase the number with the amount of money and the staff available I do not know.

Mr. Diplock: We do not want to turn down any applications if the necessary numbers are there. They are considered on their merits.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am glad to hear that.

There is a perennial need for more and better residences for primary-school teachers in the country. So many teachers, particularly those with families, have to endure unsatisfactory housing conditions that it must be an acute problem for the Director-General of Education when allocating his teacher strength. I know of many teachers' residences of a deplorable standard. One, that at Back Plains, has been up for 75 years. It is part of the school building and is a dreadful place for a young mother to rear her children in. Something should be done about it because one day in a cyclonic blow it will fall down and the department will be another teacher short. I have previously complimented the Secretary for Public Works

on the standard of new residences being built. I had a close look at one erected close to my home. Considering Queensland's climate, and the general needs of the family using it, I think it is an excellent type of residence. However, I would draw the Minister's attention to one thing. The occupier could never get a piano into the house. The steps both back and front end in a small landing around which you have to turn at an acute angle. Any furniture as large as a piano could never be taken in by the ordinary methods of ingress. A crane would be necessary to lift it through the roof. Some embarrassment could be caused in the future if a musically-minded teacher occupied the place.

At least one agricultural college is needed in North Queensland. If the Minister had unlimited money to spend I know that he would say, "We need two and we will build two." At least we need one because of the difference in climate and agricultural conditions up north.

Junior farmer organisation activities should be extended. The movement deserves much more support than it is getting. I feel very strongly about this because it is one of the fine things that has developed in the last few years under the State's education system. Help should be given to country parents who wish to educate their children to secondary school standard.

I wish to refer to something I said during the Budget debate on 11 October last. The Minister was probably not here at the time. I realise that he cannot be here all the time because he has other important work to do. Possibly his attention was not drawn to what I said about the rather touchy subject of political patronage. I said that during the election campaign there was a widespread impression around my electorate and the Minister's electorate that he was almost propounding the idea that political patronage was his policy. The idea was being spread, "If you vote for me, if you vote for Labour, you will get more money spent." I have already said that I do not believe that occurred. I have also already said that if you give the impression that something has occurred the damage is almost as great. I condemned this policy. I said that it was vicious, rotten and destructive of all democratic principles. I gave the Minister the benefit of the doubt and suggested that possibly I was mistaken. I would like him to put his feelings on the matter on record. Considering his position, it would be a good thing for him to clear the air.

Mr. Diplock: I think your own members will deny that.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am asking the Minister now. On 11 October I said—

"As the hon. member for Condamine is now a Minister of the Crown and, probably in the view of many mistaken men up

there, is in a position to carry out what appeared to me to be his policy, I beg of him to state his position."

I think it would be a good thing to put the whole matter beyond doubt and for him to put on record just where he stands. I think the Minister should tell us exactly where he stands. I am not suggesting for one moment that his department would be a party to anything of that kind.

Mr. Diplock: I do not think any members of the Opposition would back that up, and actions speak louder than words. I will leave it to them to tell you whether or not they are getting a fair deal.

Mr. FLETCHER: I think the matter is important politically, and I shall leave it to the Minister to tell us what standard he adopts.

Mr. RASEY (Windsor) (8.11 p.m.): In my association with Parliament and politics I have heard it said from time to time that it is not wise to appoint a railway man as Minister for Railways or a school teacher as Secretary for Public Instruction. The Minister, who was a senior officer in the Department of Public Instruction, is presenting the Estimates in such a practical way that I am sure he will prove that to be a fallacy. I congratulate the Minister upon the report he has presented to Parliament, and I join with other members in congratulating the Director-General and the Deputy Directors of the Department of Public Instruction on the work of the department in 1955. The report covers the work of the department from the preparatory stage to the university. It refers to the work with backward children, and the work done at the agricultural high school and college at Gatton and at the various technical colleges. I think the education system in Queensland compares more than favourably with that of any other State in Australia, perhaps with that of any country in the world. I have spoken to men who have travelled in America, England, and other parts of the world. Although it has often been said that the standard of education in America is higher than it is here, those men tell me it is not so and from my reading, I believe them. Most of our small towns and cities have much better schools, and the standard of primary education in Queensland is higher than it is in America and most other countries of the world. It is also said that men from Queensland go to the southern universities to take their degrees in different faculties because our standard is higher than the standard in the southern States. That speaks well for the work of the Department of Public Instruction during the long years the Labour Government have been in office.

There has been very little serious criticism from the Opposition in this debate. Even the hon. member for Fassifern, who is one of the leading warriors for the Opposition,

was almost congratulatory on many aspects of the report. Two or three years ago the Opposition relied almost entirely on what we might call a bashing of the Government in connection with the work of the Department of Public Instruction. The lack of criticism in this debate shows what a wonderful job the Director-General, the Deputy Directors and all the senior officers associated with the administration and general running of the department have done.

Mr. Sparkes: We are a very generous Opposition. We realise that you have enough trouble to meet just now.

Mr. RASEY: We have no troubles at all; we are a very happy family. Only yesterday I heard from our Whip that he is doing all right; he sends his best regards to this happy family. A Whip ought to know how his Party is. It is usual for the hon. member for Aubigny to take a crack at me, and I enjoy it.

The main criticism levelled by the Opposition was directed to lack of foresight in regard to teachers. The teaching position has improved considerably. The number in the average class is much lower than it was a few years ago, and the 1,200 teacher students who are now in training will do much to overcome the teaching shortage. An important feature of the report is the increase in the numbers enrolled for secondary education and the number of new high school buildings. The increase in enrolment for secondary education is indicative of more prosperity and a change of outlook by parents. The average working man could not afford to send his children to a secondary school. Some people held the view that what was good enough for them was good enough for their children. I recollect when my teacher sent a letter home asking that I be allowed to enter for the Scholarship my father said that what was good enough for him was good enough for me. I feel happy when I visit the Windsor, Woolloowin and Wilston schools and find as many as 120 and 130 children, the majority of whom are workers' children, sitting for the Scholarship. The standard of State High School buildings is excellent. During the Budget debate I spoke of the Kedron State High School building. I visited it yesterday. The second section, costing £40,000 is up to the second floor. I am confident that there will be sufficient accommodation in the new school for the increased enrolment next year.

The grounds of the Woolloowin School are small in area, in relation to the enrolments. Manual training and domestic science classes are conducted for pupils of the school and many other schools. The increased number of students in those classes has meant overcrowding and a straining of the facilities. I understand that some classes cannot be properly handled. Domestic science and manual training are very important subjects.

Several years ago I asked the headmaster if the manual training teacher could bring his class to Parliament House at the end of the year. He did so and members of the class displayed their work in the room of the Chairman of Committees. Recently domestic science students gave a display. Some of the girls modelled the dresses they had made. The cooking section also gave a display.

I realise that the financial position is difficult and that the department is not likely to erect a new State school in my area for some time, but I make a suggestion for future consideration. The old Kedron Park race-course has an area of 34 acres. About half of that will be used by the Kedron Park State High school and I understand the other 17 acres has been set aside for a future teachers' training college. I have heard it said that a teachers' training college should be near the University. I do not know whether that is so or not, but I make the alternative suggestion that a new type of building be erected on this area to replace the Woolloowin State School. Because of poor lighting and bad ventilation that building has been altered considerably over the past few years. If a new State school was built, the existing Woolloowin State School could be converted to a manual training and domestic science centre.

Mr. Dewar: That would be the answer. I agree with that suggestion.

Mr. RASEY: The old Kedron Park race-course is a central point for transport from Chermside, Aspley, Stafford, and Everton Park. I suggested the building of the State High School on that site.

The grounds of the Woolloowin State School are small. After my election to Parliament in 1950 it took me nearly 12 months to convince the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health and Home Affairs that to ease the congestion they should include in the school grounds portion of the land of the Woolloowin State Children's Home. Because of the restricted playing area and the type of building, it could with advantage be converted into a manual training and domestic science school. That would be a great improvement from an administrative point of view. Wherever possible, domestic science and manual training classes should be removed from primary schools. I am very pleased that the hon. member for Chermside and I agree on that.

I have been very interested for years in the work of two sections of the Department of Public Instruction. One is the Adult Education Section. During the depression, when I was a member of the committee of the Transport Workers' Union, I realised the shortcomings of my primary school education and I spent five years with what was then known as the Workers' Educational Association. It is now the Adult Education Section of the Department of Public Instruction. Since then I have been keenly interested

in adult education, because I feel that I owe much to the opportunity given to me to further my education. The Adult Education Section is doing an excellent job. I often send young people who desire to further their education to Mr. Les Carter, and he has been a great help to them. I hope that the Minister and the Director-General will be able to persuade the Public Service Commissioner to allocate space for the Adult Education Section in the new State building in Ann Street adjoining Anzac Square. Many people who attend evening classes have their evening meal in the city and then have the long journey down to the present building past Parliament House. Further, it is a very old building and is not at all suited to adult education work. If space was allocated in the corner of the new State building facing Anzac Square, lectures could be given to hundreds of young people sitting on the lawn in the square. It would also be convenient to all forms of transport.

Another phase of education in which I am interested is national fitness work. I have been associated with it for 14 years. We hear a good deal about child delinquents. When I was an alderman I took a great interest in any organisation that helped children to spend their leisure time in a way that would be profitable not only to themselves, but to the nation. The National Fitness Organisation, in National Fitness week and throughout the year, does a great job, particularly for adolescents in the difficult age group of from 15 to 20 years. National fitness is not confined to physical fitness. The organisation also caters for the cultural development of young men and women.

One Sunday, about two months ago, I visited the National Fitness camp at Lamington Park for the first time and I was amazed at the work done by the small committee there. It is in the Darlington electorate and I have mentioned to the hon. member for Darlington the excellent work of Mr. Enright, a storekeeper in Beaudesert, and Mr. George Mavor, a school teacher who has been stationed at Beaudesert for many years. He does not want a transfer because he is so interested in the district. I spent all day at the camp and I was fascinated. The committee, helped from the funds of the National Fitness Council, has built a camp in a lovely spot almost in the shadow of the Lamington Plateau. It has a very fine kitchen and a dining room and huts of an excellent standard, for the most part built by voluntary labour. The water supply is of the clearest possible water, and a pump is installed. Twenty miles or so from Beaudesert, the ladies' and gents' conveniences are served by an excellent septic system. Brisbane or Sydney could not offer better facilities. I enjoyed looking at the Caves above the camp through binoculars and Mr. Mavor invited me to come out any Sunday and, if I could stand up to it, he would show me where the Stinson was found and take me on any number of day or half-day trips

through that beautiful scenic country. Some boy scouts and girl guides have already used the camp and I recommend all of them, and other young people associated with reputable youth organisations, to get in touch with Mr. Mavor. They will learn something about the national park and will derive great benefit in relaxation, in health and in culture.

Mr. Gaven: It is only an hour's run from the seaside.

Mr. RASEY: Yes, it is only a short distance from the South Coast and right near the centre of the national park.

Mr. Mavor could very well sit back and enjoy his leisure after school hours but he is so imbued with the high ideal of looking after the welfare of young people that he spends almost every week-end in the camp for their benefit.

I have always been well received with my representations to the department whether to the Minister, Mr. Watkin, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Evans, Mr. Powell, Mr. Nimmo, or anyone else. They are more than interested in their job. It is a vocation to them. As people grow old in the teaching profession they store up many memories. I well remember Ted Dunlop who taught me at the Normal school. He coached me for a couple of years in English expression under the Workers' Education Scheme. Once I asked him why he was so happy. He said, "I see the result from year to year of my life's work."

(Time expired.)

Dr. NOBLE (Yeronga) (8.36 p.m.): The hon. member for Windsor finished on the note that Mr. Dunlop saw the result of his life's work. We who know the hon. member, can have no doubt that Mr. Dunlop must have done a very good job in the teaching of English expression. The hon. member made a very good speech just now.

In his opening remarks the Minister told us that he spent his whole life in the teaching service. As boy and man, he has been a teacher. He started as a pupil teacher, then assistant teacher to head teacher, finally reaching the height of his service in the department by becoming an inspector. That is all very true. I was going to draw an analogy but it would not be a true one. I had in mind the famous boy from "H.M.A.S. Pinafore" who polished up the handle of the big front door and later became the ruler of the Queen's Navee. The Minister should know all about the education service because he has made a life study of it. The same might be said of all who reach the highest point in the State's teaching service. They start with a humble beginning, work through the positions of assistant teachers, to head teachers, to become directors-general and assistant directors-general in the department. They should know their system. They tell us that Queensland's educational system is the best

in Australia. They tell us it might even be the best in the world. I have had no experience of education systems outside Queensland or in other parts of the world. I have a suspicion that men who have spent their whole lives in the service of one system would be prejudiced in their comments. It might be the greatest system in the world but it is not for me to say. I do not think any hon. member in the Chamber knows what the systems are on the other side of the world. However, I want Queensland's education system to be the best because nothing less than the best is good enough for our children. Never has there been any general inquiry into the efficiency or otherwise of Queensland's education system. I would like to see a committee set up to make such an inquiry. It should include men from Queensland and other States, and indeed other parts of the world—noted educationalists of world fame. Their inquiry should be directed to finding out whether we have the best education system in Australia or the world, or whether it is lacking in very vital things which could be improved to make it the greatest system in Australia and the world, the system that I am sure every hon. member wants to see. When I say this, I think of the remarks of the Minister, who started as a boy, became an assistant teacher, then a head teacher, and finally an inspector.

Mr. Diplock: What is wrong with that?

Dr. NOBLE: There is nothing wrong with it. By the grace of the electors of Condamine, he has jumped over the heads of those who were ahead of him and become the Minister in charge of education in this State, and I congratulate him on his elevation. As I said, all these men who run our system have risen through the ranks. They have been trained in the system and know no other system. A few have gone overseas on exchange, but very few. I should say that our system of education is becoming a little inbred because no fresh blood is being brought into it from overseas. The introduction of new blood is stimulating and brings with it new ideas. I think we should have brought the best brains in education from overseas, paid them while they were here, and asked them to tell us what happens on the other side of the world and what they thought of our education system.

The exchange of teachers is a very good idea. I think it should be extended. More of our teachers should go overseas, and we should bring teachers here from overseas. Our sister dominion of New Zealand is very close to Australia. How many of our teachers have gone there on exchange? It would cost very little to send our teachers there and to bring their teachers here.

Again we hear the old cry that our education system is exam-ridden. I think the main idea in the minds of teachers is that the children must get through their exams. That applies from the primary schools

through the secondary schools to the University. The main idea is to give our students facts to learn. It is a factual education. They have to learn them off by rote and regurgitate them.

Mr. Diplock: You have not the faintest conception of the new syllabus.

Dr. NOBLE: The hon. gentleman has not brought it in, as far as I know. There are three subjects in the Scholarship examination. The children are taught facts and they regurgitate those facts. They are given no chance in their Scholarship year to develop a critical aptitude, which every student should have if he is to be properly educated. I should like to see some modification made. When one realises that the student has to pass three big examinations in the four years from Scholarship to Senior, one realises how serious the position is. As I have said before, I think the Scholarship system should be abolished in this State and some form of internal test introduced to see whether or not the children are fit to take a secondary education. I think primary education should end earlier and that there should be five years between the Scholarship and the Senior examination. Any child who is judged fit to go on to a secondary school should have his fees paid and subsidised, as does the child who passes his Scholarship now, no matter what school he wishes to go to. Because of this complex which causes head teachers to say, "We must get our children through the exams and get good results in the Senior and Junior examinations," children have no real appreciation of culture, art, or anything else. I know that from my own children. How many children leaving primary schools or secondary schools can discuss in detail or give any real thought to culture which forms the basis of a decent livelihood and allows a critical attitude to develop? How many of them can explain art and music and poetry? The general knowledge taught to our children is becoming very poor. They tell me that the essays are receding from the essays of the past. Examinations in the past were not considered so important.

Mr. Rasey: I have read excellent essays from children who visited Parliament House.

Dr. NOBLE: They were probably praising the hon. member. The idea behind education, besides giving the student factual details, should be to develop in the students a positive attitude to original thought in order that he can be original and be critical of things and not just learn them by rote as he has to do under the present system.

I wish to refer to our highest form of education, the University. I should like to see our University stand up to its responsibilities. What are the functions of the University? It is an institution to spread higher learning. It should be the foundation and basis of learning, it should retail knowledge to those seeking to enter the learned

professions. If it is to be a good university it should also add to the knowledge already known. It should indulge in research in both. It should develop in all students and those who come to it a critical appreciation of knowledge and the power to think originally. This power to think originally is the most important aspect of education. It should be looked upon more seriously and more often by those who run the education system and the University also. For a man to be able to impart his knowledge freely it is necessary that those who teach should be free to think as they so desire. As far as I can see no teacher and no professor can afford to belong to any organisation which lays down strict rules as to thought. I say that no professor and no teacher belonging to the Communist Party can do their job properly. That view is supported when you realise the dictates of the Communist Party that lays down at all times that anyone must take a position in any question that is in line with the politics of the party; that they must display a thorough readiness to accept party discipline, and that inactive or bad members are expelled because they do not have any latitude or discretion in the matter. It becomes as plain as a pikestaff that membership in the Communist Party is *prima facie* evidence of professional unfitness to teach. No man can teach properly and do his job by his students unless he is completely free in mind and thought. Membership of the Communist Party makes it impossible to do this. If he follows the party line, he is no longer free and able to do his job as a teacher or professor. I do not say that all students should be stopped from studying Communism. At any university it is necessary for them to study any "ism" in the world, but they should adopt a critical attitude towards it. It is wrong to hide these things from the students. Let them be brought out into the open and studied by the people. Let them be studied by the students so that they can discover what is wrong in Communism. I think very few of them will follow the teachings of that particular "ism." The professors or teacher in the university must be completely free to teach. He must be absolutely free of any fear of reprisal or outside pressure, irrespective of the source of it. He should be completely free, for example, from any political action if by his teachings he happens to upset the party in power. I refer particularly to this, because of the remarks made recently by the Treasurer.

We must ask ourselves the meaning of academic freedom. This is the statement of Sidney Hook, a noted educationalist of the United States of America—

"What is academic freedom? Academic freedom is a specific kind of freedom. It is the freedom of professionally qualified persons to inquire, discover, publish and teach the truth as they see it in the field of their competence, without any control or authority except the control or authority of the rational methods by which truth is

established. Insofar as it acknowledges intellectual discipline or restraint from a community, it is only from the community of qualified scholars which accepts the authority of rational inquiry."

In effect, he says that anyone is entitled to express any opinion he holds, that he should be entirely free to publish, to say, to discover or to make known the truth of these things without fear of reprisal from outside sources, and that he can be controlled or disciplined only by his peers.

Russell Kirk, another noted overseas educationalist, had this to say—

"Academic freedom is the principle designed to protect the teacher from hazards that tend to prevent him from meeting his obligations in the pursuit of truth."

He said that certain obligations follow if academic freedom is given. He said that a teacher should—

"— adhere to the Truth, according to the light that is given to the teacher; a promise to conserve the wisdom of our ancestors and to extend the empire of knowledge as best a teacher can; a promise to guide and awaken the student, but not to indoctrinate; a promise to abide by the principles of social order, as expressed in the country's constitution; and a promise always to put freedom of the mind above material advantage and the passions of the hour. What the Hippocratic oath is to the physician, such an oath ought to be to the teacher, and more; and no further oath ought to be required by any authority."

Those are very solemn words. If we studied them we would get the gist of academic freedom.

The second point that must be determined is whether our University is fulfilling its destiny of a great university. Is research being carried out at the University? The report of the Director-General of Education shows that it is. I refer to Appendix III. which shows that extensive research is being carried out. I know the research being carried out by the Department of Physiology under Professor Macfarlane in the acclimatisation of seed. That is very fine work indeed. Research is also being carried out out in agriculture, bacteriology, botany, chemistry and so on. I realise the great value of this research. I noticed somewhere that the study of cyclones by our seismograph department is in a very advanced stage. We can congratulate the University on its research work. Thinking back to the past, I remember that our University tested the insects imported to eradicate prickly pear and finally discovered cactoblastis. A number of insects were imported at that time. The diligent research of Professor Herbert enabled the discovery of the one that did the job. It was found that some of the insects attacked other plant life after they had cleaned out the pear. When it was

discovered after years of research that the cactoblastis could destroy the prickly pear, it was released to do the job. It is upon research work such as that that the University is to be congratulated.

The only time when outside bodies such as Parliament should interfere with a university is when the professors are doing no research work or are not carrying out their normal duties. In such cases it is the right of Parliament or the Government to tell the university to carry out its proper functions. Apart from that, however, the professors should have freedom to think and act as they see fit, and to impart the truth as they see it to their students. I am not saying, of course, that they should be allowed to indoctrinate their students. No professor should be allowed to say to his students, "Learn this, or else!" But professors should try to develop in their students a critical attitude so that they can decide for themselves whether what they are being told is the truth.

A university is a very cloistered institution. I left the University after attending it for six years, having seen nothing of outside life and the work of the ordinary man. Not long ago I read an article that was published soon after the war in which the writer suggested that it would be a good thing if the first year of university life was devoted to general culture. He said students should be encouraged during their first year to go out into the world, to hump a swag from town to town and meet the people, to see the ways of life of people in the community, and to broaden themselves. Then, when they have completed the course at the University, they can go out into the world as men, not as youths in men's clothing.

As far as I can see, the Queensland University is doing a good job and is carrying out research work as it should. However, I should like to see more effort put into developing the student mind and into making the student more a man rather than a youth in a man's clothing.

I should like to see an inquiry into Queensland's primary education system to ensure that it is the best in Australia. If it lacks anything that could give the children of this State the best system of primary education possible, it should have it.

Mr. ENGLISH (Mulgrave) (8.58 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister and his predecessor on their excellent work in improving the education system of Queensland. Instead of quoting figures, I shall confine myself mainly to facts. The department intends to spend £11,000,000-odd on education this year, which is a good deal of money. However, it is only half the amount which this Government would like to spend to educate the children of Queensland, which covers such a vast area. The 16 sub-departments that come under this Vote are doing excellent work, due in no small measure to the work of a Labour Minister and his very

efficient officers. The facilities provided today by the Labour Government were not available when I received my education. There has been a gradual improvement.

Take the transport system. In my day we walked.

Mr. Sparkes: You can walk nearly as fast as you can transport now, too.

Mr. ENGLISH: The hon. member knows better than that. Bus services are available throughout the State. There has been the same gradual improvement involving an expenditure of about £250,000. Children of the Mulgrave electorate are very well served by transport. It is a very wet area and they are provided with bus services to give them primary education.

Mr. Chalk: Did you say they transport secondary school children?

Mr. ENGLISH: No.

Mr. Chalk: I thought you did.

Mr. ENGLISH: I said nothing of the kind. The Government provide the facilities for secondary education second to none in any State of Australia.

We hear many complaints about transport today. In my day I had to first milk the cows, then run half a mile or a mile to have breakfast and then catch the train to a little town called Peeramon. After I left the train at Peeramon I had to walk through the big rain forests a further three-quarters of a mile to school. In the afternoon we had to milk the cows again and still do our homework. That was in 1911 and 1912. When the Labour Government came into office everything changed throughout the State. At last we got some main roads.

Mr. Pizzey: They would send you to school in taxis when they came into power, I suppose.

Mr. ENGLISH: Of course they would. The hon. member for Isis was a school teacher and he knows that under Labour Governments education facilities have rapidly improved. Every opportunity is taken for the further development and progress of the education system for the benefit of the children of the State.

Mr. Pizzey: What about a University college in the North?

Mr. ENGLISH: When I went to school you could not even get Scholarship facilities in my area let alone secondary education.

Mr. Chalk: Keep it going.

Mr. ENGLISH: I will keep it going.

Mr. Keyatta: They do not like the truth.

Mr. ENGLISH: They do not like the truth. In my day anybody who received any education at all was required to travel to

the Grammar School in Townsville or a denominational college in some other part of the State, or come to Brisbane.

I remember reading in "The Courier-Mail" recently about the Premier unveiling a plaque to Steele Rudd. Steele Rudd said something like this, "Someone she doctor my red bull and make it very sick." I also know something about doctoring red bulls.

I was chairman of the Malanda School Committee for 12 years. In that period I was successful in having a high school top established. During the last six years I did not have any children attending the school. I was forced to send them to a boarding school for secondary education.

Mr. Adair: You gave them an excellent education, too.

Mr. ENGLISH: The best I could afford. Before I came into the Chamber I was successful in having a high school top established. Since I came into the Chamber I have secured a sub-Senior class and next year I hope to get a Senior class for the Malanda High School. During my term as chairman of the state school committee, an agricultural high school top was established at Malanda, which is the centre of a farming district, and I was very disappointed when I heard the Minister read out the number of pupils taking the agricultural course there.

Mr. Keyatta: It will improve.

Mr. ENGLISH: Of course it will improve, but why is not advantage taken of it now?

Mr. Keyatta: They have not got the technical staff.

Mr. ENGLISH: The technical staff is there.

Mr. Pizzey: The publicity is not there.

Mr. ENGLISH: The publicity is there, everything is there, but they are not taking advantage of it, and I hope the numbers taking the agricultural course will improve. I will do my best to see that it does.

I wish to compliment the department on its provision of modern buildings in Queensland, particularly in the Mulgrave electorate. We have some very modern classrooms and schools, and, where possible, residences for the teachers. As time goes on we shall have more facilities. I think the electorate of Mulgrave has very little to complain about in Labour's administration of the Department of Public Instruction. In the heart of the bush we have metal roads on which to transport our children to modern schools. Most of the buses are free, but in some cases the required numbers have not been reached. At my suggestion some of the schools have been painted in the latest colours.

I compliment the Minister and his predecessor and the very efficient officers of the department upon their wonderful assistance

to the parents and children of Queensland, particularly those in my electorate and for their assistance at all times with my many representations.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (9.14 p.m.): I wish to add my congratulations to the Minister and officers of the Department of Public Instruction upon the wonderful job they have done. I represent an electorate in the metropolitan area which is, I think, one of the best examples of the spread of population from the central areas of Brisbane to the outer suburbs. I shall point out what has been done by the Government and the Department of Public Instruction in this regard. In the post-war years when men were discharged from the defence forces there were insufficient houses to enable them to marry and rear families under conditions that had obtained under Labour administration in this State. There is a great number of children of school age throughout the outer suburbs. The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha and the hon. member for Sherwood also know that throughout their outer suburbs there has been a strong demand for new classrooms and new schools. I commend the Minister and the officers of his department for their efforts to keep pace with the demands upon them. Additional classrooms and new schools have been established throughout the outer suburbs. I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Murray, who is in charge of buildings and sites. Mr. Murray previously worked at the Central Technical College; his whole life has been devoted to the cause of education. He is very sympathetic to all applications that come before him and I am sure every hon. member of the committee will say that Mr. Murray is courteous and sympathetic at all times. During the last few years new State high schools have been erected throughout the State. To use an Irish method of expression, we have centralised education by decentralisation. Secondary education has been decentralised throughout Queensland, including the metropolitan area. Decentralisation of education was introduced by the late Premier Hon. E. M. Hanlon, while I was his private secretary.

Mr. Pizzey: The Premier claims credit for decentralising railway lines.

Mr. LLOYD: What have railways to do with these Estimates?

There is now decentralisation of education, just as there is decentralisation of electricity supplies.

Mr. Pizzey interjected.

Mr. LLOYD: There are ex-school teachers in the Chamber. I have the greatest respect for the ex-school teachers on this side. We can at least understand what they say, but sometimes we cannot understand what is being said by school teachers on the other side.

Mr. Pizzey: You are too dull to understand what is said.

Mr. LLOYD: When I look at the hon. member who is at present occupying the seat of the Leader of the Opposition, I wonder whether being dull is the best qualification for a Member of Parliament. The late Mr. Hanlon introduced decentralisation of education and the system has worked very well. There is now regionalisation of education and regionalisation of electricity. Regional directors are doing an excellent job.

The department has kept pace with the increased population by providing school accommodation throughout the State.

Having regard to the work in my electorate, I compliment the officer in charge of building sites in the Department of Public Instruction and also the director of Primary Education, who was for some years regional director in Townsville. He is sympathetic towards the requirements of education in every part of the State.

The Estimates under discussion show that the amount being spent on education this year is not enough to meet requirements. The Commonwealth Government, who are Australia's taxing authority, allow the States 8s. 6d. for each occupied bed in public hospitals. They also give them grants for main roads, and provide money for other social services. Education is just as important as hospitals, main roads or pensions, and it is to the discredit of the present Commonwealth Government, with their huge surpluses from taxation, that they are not helping the State Governments to improve their education systems.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah) (9.27 p.m.): This is a very important Vote as it affects the education of the boys and girls of the State, who are our future men and women. Although we may claim that Queensland has the best education system in the world, as the hon. member for Yeronga has said, it would be an excellent idea to investigate it to ensure that it is. The hon. member's suggestion is worthy of consideration.

The Department of Public Instruction is one with which members of Parliament have much contact. As there are 77 schools in my electorate, I come into touch with the department quite frequently. I pay a compliment to the Director-General and the Deputy Director-General, who always give help where possible.

The hon. member for Mulgrave said that the £11,000,000 covered by this Vote was only half the amount required to meet Queensland's education needs. Although I should not like to go as far as that, I endorse his view to a certain extent. The Minister, I am sure, would agree that more money is required for additional high schools. School residences, too, are needed in many areas, although no reference is made to them in the Minister's annual report.

The Director-General says in his report—

“During the year 1955 one of the main aims of the Department again was to provide additional schools, class rooms, and teachers demanded by the rising school population.”

Throughout his report not one reference is made to school residences. From time to time the department puts forward the excuse of insufficient money or the inability of the Department of Public Works to cope with the work. I often think that the Government do not know how we in the country feel about it. A teacher is appointed and sent out to a country school. If there is no residence for him, the Government adopt the attitude, “It does not concern us. He has to find his own accommodation as best he can.” I have not time to tell hon. members all the difficulties teachers experience in finding accommodation and the hardships they have to endure with the type of accommodation they eventually find. Often the people of the Barambah electorate have had to face up to the problem themselves. It should not be the responsibility of the parents. At the Durong South school the parents built the residence themselves, and at Brigooda, after years of battling, the people built a residence. Take another place, Moffatdale. The department sent a man out and he had to live somewhere so the people set to and built a residence. Take a place like Cloyna, with no school residence. The teacher has to live in an old house that nobody else would live in. It is the only place available for him. The same applies at Fairdale, another school in my electorate, and at Merlwood.

No doubt the Minister is aware of the position. If we stressed it enough the Government would allocate more money to the Department of Public Works to carry out the work. If an employer in private enterprise sends a man out into the country, he has to make sure that accommodation is available. I ask the Minister to give much more thought to the problem.

The hon. member for Marodian dealt very fully and clearly with the regulation on the three-mile limit. It is a long way and I am sure the Minister will investigate the matter.

The hon. member for Cook referred to conditions in North Queensland. I appreciate his kind remarks about the missions up there. Whilst the missions appreciate the Government subsidy towards food and running costs generally, let me emphasise from the educational point of view that the people of the church concerned pay for the teachers. Perhaps the Minister could enlighten me as to whether it comes under the jurisdiction of his department to give some assistance towards paying teachers or some other assistance in running schools in the various missions.

I appreciated the remarks of the hon. member for Cook. He is a practical man who knows how the native people are being treated.

We hope that the Minister will be able to give us some assistance in the near future in the matter of transport to high schools. There are some excellent high schools in my area. I attended speech night at the Murgon High School. It was very gratifying to know that of all the boys and girls who sat for the examination only one failed to qualify for an extension scholarship. I congratulate Mr. Creagh, the head master, and all his staff. Kingaroy has another fine high school. We look forward to the time when the two schools will be run separately. It is a great responsibility for one teacher to run primary and high schools conjointly.

There is no need to emphasise the importance of project clubs. They are doing excellent work of great value in rural areas.

The Minister drew attention to the religious education being carried out in schools. From time to time we are inclined to overlook this important aspect of every-day school life. We are prone to think only in terms of a good education to qualify children for a good position in the business world, failing to realise the character-building aspects of religious training. Boys and girls are at a great disadvantage if they are unfortunate enough to have no religious training at church. We hear so much about deplorable juvenile delinquency. I attribute this very largely to the fact that so many people neglect to give their children a real Christian education. Therefore, I appreciate the Government's allowing ministers of religion to carry out religious instruction in schools.

I am a great believer in physical training. It is a very important part of any educational programme. Private schools include physical training in their educational policy and State schools should do the same to a greater extent. I notice that there are 32 physical instructors at the moment.

Hon. L. F. DIPLOCK (Condamine—Secretary for Public Instruction) (9.40 p.m.): I am sure that all hon. members were particularly impressed with the spectacular entry into the debate of the hon. member for Yeronga. In fact, had he been in costume one could easily have taken him for Mark Antony. He displayed shocking ignorance about the administrative heads of the department, the workings of the department, and the importance of the syllabus. Mr. Watkin, the Director-General, and Mr. Murphy have both been overseas.

Dr. Noble: I knew that. I said they went overseas occasionally.

Mr. DIPLOCK: Mr. Murphy as late as 1951.

Dr. Noble: I knew that.

Mr. DIPLOCK: He was evidently unaware that distinguished specialists in education had been brought to Australia at fairly regular intervals.

Dr. Noble: By this Government?

Mr. DIPLOCK: Yes. Dr. and Professor Ewing, world authorities from Manchester, and Mr. James Lumsden, Her Majesty's inspector in charge of special schools, came here.

Dr. Noble: You can name only two.

Mr. DIPLOCK: The hon. member for Yeronga seemed to be unaware of the Australian Research Council's educational surveys and the work of our own research officers. One wondered whether he was more concerned with rhetoric than with administering a pill to State education. His views are decidedly opposed to these expressed by the principal speaker for the Opposition.

In answer to the hon. member for Cunningham, the State Insurance Commissioner has issued to the Department of Public Instruction a comprehensive public risk policy protecting the department against liability respecting any claim in the event of any accident in the transport of pupils to and from State schools. The department pays the State Insurance Commissioner an annual premium for such policy.

The hon. member also made some reference to political patronage. I am not responsible for anything the hon. member might have heard, nor am I very much concerned about it.

Mr. Fletcher: You should be.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I am not concerned about what the hon. member heard; I am concerned about what I did. I am quite prepared to leave it to members of the Opposition to tell him whether I am showing any favouritism. I have gone out of my way to meet every request of hon. members on both sides of the Chamber, but it must be understood that each case is treated on its merits.

Mr. Dewar: That was not the question.

Mr. DIPLOCK: What was it?

Mr. Dewar: The question related to the claim made during the election campaign.

Mr. DIPLOCK: I never made any claim.

Mr. Dewar: Will you answer it now? What is your attitude?

Mr. DIPLOCK: My attitude is already proved, and I will let members of the Opposition tell the hon. member.

Dr. Noble: Have you made any statements since in private conversation?

Mr. DIPLOCK: No.

Mr. Fletcher: I should like to hear from you.

Mr. Muller: Will you deny that there is any discrimination?

Mr. DIPLOCK: I do not think the hon. member for Cunningham meant any insult when he referred to my absence from the Chamber. He said he did not, and I accept that. I saw an idiotic grin on the side of one hon. member's face. I wish to tell the hon. member that I am not going to apologise to anyone for my actions in this Chamber. I am responsible to one person and one person alone; that is my leader. The reason that I am absent on many occasions is that I have not as yet refused to meet any deputation or see any member, irrespective of the time. I shall continue to do that. I am sincere when I say that I believe that the hon. member did not mean anything.

In connection with teachers' residences, I was a head teacher for 30 years and I was transferred to places without residences. I can assure hon. members that there is no necessity to stress to me how desirable it is to have as many teachers' residences as we possibly can. I can also assure hon. members on the assurance of my Director-General that we do not transfer married men to schools without residences.

An Opposition Member: Yes you do.

Mr. DIPLOCK: There may be private residences, but we must be assured before making a transfer that a residence is available. Teachers do apply for schools without residences and after they have been there for a time and they have married they apply to the department for a residence almost immediately.

Mr. Coburn: You do not provide residences for the principals of high schools at all? Is it your policy to provide them?

Mr. DIPLOCK: No it is not. I can assure hon. members it is not only my wish but the wish of every member of the Cabinet to see as many residences built as possible; but first things must come first. Hon. members will agree that we had to provide accommodation for about 40,000 pupils over the last five years and the Government, through the Department of Public Works, has done a remarkably good job.

I voice my appreciation to every member of the Committee because this debate has been kept on a non-political level. That is as it should be. I listened intently to every speech and I recognise the merit in many of the suggestions that were made. Hon. members may rest assured that both my officers and I shall go through them carefully and try to implement some of them. In conclusion, I again pay a high tribute to my senior officers and their staffs for the wonderful work they have done over the years.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 4 October, I shall now put the

question necessary for the Vote under consideration and the question for the balance of the Estimates for the Department of Public Instruction.

The questions for the following Votes were put and agreed to:—

	£
Chief Office	209,883
Balance of Votes	11,138,069

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.