

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 1957

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will he inform the House whether the previous Government, the Mission Authorities and the Company concerned reached any stage of agreement in relation to compensation being granted to the Missions and the Aborigines?"

"(2) If so, what were the terms of such agreement, and is it his Government's intention to honour such agreement?"

"(3) If not, will he ensure that in any agreement that might be reached in relation to this matter the moral rights of the Aborigines to their ancient tribal land will be recognised and protected?"

"(4) Does he believe that the policy of removing Aborigines by coercion from their reserves in future mining development in this area is sufficient consideration for the Aboriginal Race, bearing in mind their identification with the land of their fathers and its deep spiritual significance to them?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"(1) No agreement was made between the previous Government, the Mission Authorities, and the Company."

"(2) See answer to No. 1."

"(3) Honourable Members can be assured that in any agreement that might be reached in relation to this matter, the preservation, protection, and welfare of the Aborigines will receive every consideration."

"(4) To speak of a policy of removing Aborigines from their Reserves by coercion, shows either a complete ignorance of the subject, or deliberate attempt to create mistrust and misapprehension. The true facts are that the mining development in the Cape York Peninsula has given the Natives in that area an opportunity of obtaining economic self sufficiency that otherwise could not have been achieved. From my personal talks with many of the Natives of the area, I can assure Honourable Members that the Natives realise this, and are anxious to grasp the opportunity that presents itself to them. As an example, it is interesting to note that the Natives in the Weipa area received from the Company a sum of £65,000 in wages in the last twelve months, giving them a per capita income equal to the average per capita income over the whole of the State. Every Queenslanders should be pleased that a number of our Native People are being removed from a condition of almost complete dependency on charity, to a condition of economic independence. This is indeed a tremendous stride towards the ultimate aim of their assimilation as equal members of the community."

TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER, 1957.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. A. R. Fletcher, Cunningham) took the chair at 11 a.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker:—

Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland Bill.

Governor's Pension Bill.

Department of Justice Bill.

Acts Interpretation Act Amendment Bill.

State Education Acts and Another Act Amendment Bill.

Police Acts Amendment Bill.

Animals Protection Acts Amendment Bill.

QUESTION.

COMPENSATION FOR MISSIONS AND ABORIGINES, MINERAL AREAS, CAPE YORK PENINSULA.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) With regard to the development of mineral resources in Cape York Peninsula,

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1957.

SCREENING OF FILMS.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have to announce that the Premier invites you all to attend a film to be shown in the Council Chamber at 6.30 o'clock this evening. The film "Moomba" was prepared by the Victorian Promotion Committee to publicise its State and it will be preceded by the Premier's own film on the opening of the Queensland Parliament earlier this year.

LAND ACTS AND OTHER ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. A. G. MULLER (Fassifern—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the freeholding at the option of selectors and lessees of lands held from the Crown under perpetual lease tenures and for that purpose to amend the Land Acts, 1910 to 1955, and other Acts."

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS AND
ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. A. J. HEADING (Marodian—Minister for Public Works and Local Government): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1957, and the City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1954, each in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS GUARANTEE
ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (11.12 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Bill contains only two principles. The first removes the need for a written or printed instrument of guarantee with all borrowings by public bodies and substitutes an Order in Council and publication in the Government Gazette as the instrument of guarantee. The second facilitates the transfer by one local body to another of a debt without in any way infringing the validity of the guarantee that attached to the original debt. On the introductory stage I

instanced what had happened with the electrical undertaking at Mackay. The principles were examined in detail then and, while I must confess that over the years I have developed at least a suspicion about the use of the sentence, "This is a simple little Bill containing only one or two little principles" I believe that after studying the Bill, hon. members will agree that that accurately describes it.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.14 a.m.): I agree entirely with the Treasurer that it is a simple Bill. It is a purely machinery measure. It is confined to the two principles he outlined. It has been clearly debated and fully outlined and the Opposition supports it.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

PROFITEERING PREVENTION ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 6 November (see p. 879) on Mr. Munro's motion—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (11.17 a.m.): There are only a few observations I wish to make on the second reading of the Bill. First of all, I express my belief in the sincerity of the Minister for Justice to grapple with the problem that follows the increased cost of living over the last three or four months. I ask that he either do it himself or get his newly-established committee to do it. We know that the basic wage is fixed on the price of certain commodities—the so-called "C" Series index. We know also that is a very false basis, that it has no relation to actual fact. Indeed, for many years I have been troubled with the problem of how the man on the basic wage, or the man receiving a salary or wage even near to the basic wage, could manage to live at all on it.

I think the basic wage in North Queensland is about £12 11s. a week. Let us assume for a moment that a man with a wife and three children is receiving £14 a week. I know many of them, and so do hon. members on both sides of the House. The husband and the wife are reputable people—they are not no-hopers—with two, three or four children to rear. I seriously suggest to the Minister for Justice that he should go into some of these homes and ask about the problems they have to face to balance the

domestic budget on £14 a week. I would hesitate to suggest that there are any people in the blue-ribbon Liberal seat of Toowong who receive only £14 a week. Even if there is a man in that blue-ribbon electorate who is earning £14 or even £15 a week I suggest that the Minister take the very first opportunity to spend a couple of hours with him and his good wife examining the whole problem of living on £15 a week with three children to support. It may be that they own their own home. If their home is clear of debt they are very lucky indeed. But in most instances those families are either buying their own home on time-payment and paying interest and redemption every week, or they are paying rent. Let us assume that the rent of the house is reasonable—£2 10s. to £3 a week. Then there are the other incidental expenses for those living on the basic wage which I am certain have not been appreciated by the Attorney-General or any member of the Government. It is possible that some back benchers who represent more or less working-class electorates have of their own personal knowledge some information on this matter. I am sure that I voice the opinion of every member in this Assembly and the opinion of members of the Press gallery and everybody else when I say that for the life of me I do not know how a man manages to keep his wife and three children on the basic wage or £1 over the basic wage. I am confident that if the Minister for Justice personally conducted an investigation or had one conducted by men of the world that the true position would be revealed to him. If the investigation was conducted by an academic staff or any of the economists they will work it out in facts and figures to prove to him in theory that black is white. Not only are prices rising quickly, but many of the dishonest trade practices are again creeping in. The hon. member for Hinchinbrook mentioned that owing to the rise in the price of meat many poor families were compelled to buy mince meat or shin beef in order to eke out their meat ration. From my observations most of the butchers today do not sell shin beef as such at the price set out. If you want to buy shin beef today in most instances you can by buying a rib roast, because you will find that only the outside flap of the rib roast is rolled in a circle and the middle is filled with shin beef and is sold as a rib roast. The hon. member for Nash is laughing. Probably he has been caught as I and every other hon. member has been caught—with only the flap of the rib roast and the middle filled with scrap meat or shin beef.

Mr. Power: That is padding on the inside.

Mr. AIKENS: The ex-Attorney-General says that it may be padding. I do not know, but I know that it is damn tough to eat and the people pay the price of rib roast for the shin beef filling. If the hon. member for Hinchinbrook can go to any butcher

shop today and buy shin beef as such he is fortunate. That is where most of it goes—into the middle of the rib roast.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the principles of the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: If that is not profiteering by a snide method I do not know what is.

Mr. Munro: What the hon. member is saying has nothing whatever to do with the principles of the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. gentleman is going to set up a board.

Mr. Munro: An advisory board.

Mr. AIKENS: Surely the advisory board will take notice of what is said in this Chamber and it may make certain recommendations to the hon. gentleman on the basis of the speeches made in this Chamber in regard to the overcharging and the snide meat and other trade practices.

Mr. Munro: Most of the points do not relate to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: If they do not I should like to know the hon. gentleman's definition of profiteering. It is supposed to be the foundation of the establishment of the advisory board to deal with only price control. If a butcher selling shin beef at rib roast prices is not profiteering I do not know what is. The hon. gentleman may have a different interpretation of profiteering to mine. I agree with the hon. gentleman's right to hold his opinion and I think he should agree with my right to hold mine.

I now come to the real subject, profiteering and price control. I ask the Minister to state, if he can and will, who should fix the price of various commodities? I said during the introductory stage that the prices of certain commodities today are fixed by the monopolies that control the production of them. I said that every glass article, whether the smallest bottle or the largest and most ornate plate-glass window, in Australia is produced by I.C.I. Every bit of iron and steel produced and sold in Australia is produced by B.H.P. Virtually every drug produced and sold in Australia is produced or controlled by D.H.A.

Mr. Walsh: In regard to glass production you are referring to A.C.I.

Mr. AIKENS: I thank the hon. member for Bundaberg.

Mr. Walsh: I.C.I. is a chemical producer.

Mr. AIKENS: That is so. I meant A.C.I. The same position applies to the timber ring and the electrical ring. I was a member of a local authority for many years and we often called tenders for the supply of various electrical equipment, and the local authority received an identical tender from each firm that submitted one. The Minister is very

prominent in the business world of this State, and he must know of the existence of these monopolies, cartels and price-fixing rings. I do not suggest that he is dumb enough not to know. I have a particularly high regard for his intelligence and sincerity. When he said in effect that Governments should not fix the price of various commodities, he suggests in my opinion that prices should be fixed by the monopolies that manufacture and control the sale of them.

Mr. Munro: I have never said that. I have made it clear that we will continue price control.

Mr. Aikens: The Government will continue price control?

Mr. Munro: Yes.

Mr. Aikens: I suggest that the Government go further than price control of the articles in the C Series Index. Virtually every Government in Australia only exercise price control of commodities affecting the basic wage, in the main the articles that are contained in the C Series Index, knowing that, if they keep down the price of those articles, they can keep down the State basic wage. While the people appreciate the fact that some articles are subject to price control, the stark fact remains that on many other articles just as essential to the wellbeing and livelihood of our people profiteering is rampant, and it is rampant because the manufacture, distribution and sale of those articles are controlled by the monopolies or the holding companies which own all the interest in them.

I suggest the first thing the Minister should do, when the Advisory Board is set up, is to instruct the members to make an immediate investigation into all the commodities that should be brought under price control. The Minister knows only too well that the monopolies and price rings fix the price of those commodities. I ask the Minister whether he believes they should continue to fix prices, or whether the elected representatives of the people should fix prices. I make it perfectly clear where I stand. I believe the elected representatives of the people should be concerned about the interest of the people, and, as elected representatives of the people, we would be recreant to the trust imposed in us if we did not curb the profiteering instincts of the big monopolies, cartels and price rings. Price fixing should be carried out by Governments rather than monopolies, if price fixing is to be indulged in as it should be indulged in. I am eagerly awaiting the Minister's reply to my question on price fixing by Governments rather than monopolies, cartels and price rings.

Hon. A. W. Munro (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (11.30 a.m.), in reply: Prior to the debate this morning some five hon. members from the Opposition side spoke on the Bill, but before replying to them I think I might make a few observations on the speech by the hon. member for Mundingburra this morning.

Mr. Aikens: I am grateful that you give me preference.

Mr. Munro: The speech was very interesting and in other circumstances I should have regarded it as a valuable contribution to the debate, but I must confess I find great difficulty in seeing how he related his remarks to the principles of the Bill. Seeing that particular points were made by the hon. member and that he asked certain specific questions I think I should reply to him. The first part of his speech was mainly round the difficulties of people living on £14 or £15 a week in balancing their budgets. I completely agree with the hon. member in his drawing attention to the difficulty of people on the lower incomes in balancing their budgets. I am as sympathetic in the consideration of their case as he is but I suggest he has introduced quite a number of problems outside this Bill and outside price control.

Mr. Aikens: I differ with you on that point.

Mr. Munro: I shall come back to it later. Fundamentally the difficulty of the problem is that we in Australia and in Queensland have built up a high cost structure and we can never get to the stage where it will be easy for the typical man to balance his budget until we get our production on a more efficient basis and produce goods more efficiently and more cheaply. I do not suggest lower wages, but when we get better value for the vast amount of human energy expended we can solve the problem, and we might be able to make it easier for the average man to balance his budget. In effect, we have to be very careful in restricting expenditure in avenues that are not productive. But the matter raised by the hon. member for Mundingburra is not directly related to the Bill.

Mr. Burrows: Is it not burying your head in the sand?

Mr. Munro: The hon. member for Mundingburra gets closer to the mark when he asks who should fix prices.

Mr. Aikens: That is the burning question.

Mr. Munro: I dealt with it at an earlier stage but seeing that the question has been asked again I say that the policy of the Government is that the best way—not the only way—in which prices can be fixed is by healthy business competition.

Mr. Aikens: How will you get that when everything is controlled by the cartels?

Mr. Munro: You do not get it when everything is controlled by monopolies or cartels and that is why we have made the distinction.

Mr. Power: Will you answer this question?

Mr. MUNRO: Let me deal with one point at a time. If you do not get healthy business competition you have to have some other method of fixing prices. As I said before, we are not going to accept a position where prices are fixed by monopolies or trade combines.

My answer to that question is clear and unequivocal. If prices cannot be fixed by healthy business competition, and if the circumstances are such that Governmental price control can be made effective, the authority to fix prices in Queensland will be the Commissioner of Prices.

Mr. Power: What are you doing with grain sorghum? It has gone from £22 to £36 a ton since decontrol.

Mr. MUNRO: I am endeavouring, Mr. Speaker, to disregard the irrelevancies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MUNRO: The next serious subject also was raised by the hon. member for Mundingburra. It was whether any distinction is made between items that are in the "C" Series Index and those that are not. Again I am prepared to give a clear and unequivocal answer. So far as I am able to guide the Government's policy, no distinction at all will be made. In any determination that I have taken part in so far, the question of whether a commodity comes within the "C" Series Index has not affected my judgment.

Mr. Aikens: Then we have an assurance from you that if you honestly think the people are being exploited in any commodity, you will take action?

Mr. MUNRO: Yes. Of course, I cannot put that in a personal sense. It will be a matter for the Commissioner of Prices or perhaps the Advisory Board. But I will say that the policy of the Government is to see that there is no exploitation. Furthermore, while I have indicated our desire that prices should be fixed by healthy business competition, we shall not countenance a state of affairs where they are fixed by monopolies or trade combines without a Government authority to fix a maximum price. That has already been made very clear, and I am glad of this opportunity to make it clear again.

Mr. Davies: Who will decide whether prices are being fixed by healthy business competition, the Advisory Board or the Minister?

Mr. MUNRO: That will be a matter for the Executive Council on the recommendation of the appropriate Minister, who in this case is myself. That is the position under the existing law and it is not being altered. Of course, as the Advisory Board will consist of three very expert and knowledgeable senior public servants, to a considerable extent I shall naturally rely on its reports and recommendations. After the passing of the Bill

that phase of the law will be very much better than previously, when such decisions could have been made merely on political considerations.

This has been rather an amazing debate. It is a very simple Bill, its object being merely to reconstitute the Prices Advisory Board for the purpose of enabling it to carry out its consultative and advisory functions, and in particular to enable it to act in an advisory capacity in the control, decontrol, and, if necessary, reconrol of goods and services under the Act. Nevertheless, the introductory stage covered three sitting days because of repetition and, on the second reading, we witnessed the amazing scene of five Opposition speakers, one after the other, repeating in the main what had been said and repeated during the introductory stage. I am at a loss to understand the reason for all this stone-walling.

There is little for me to reply to, except for the comments that I have made on the speech of the hon. member for Mundingburra. However, I shall review very briefly the comments of the five speakers from the Opposition side.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke first of the removing of authority from the Commissioner of Prices. I could understand such wild flights of imagination on the introductory stage before hon. members had had the opportunity of reading the Bill, but I am at a loss to understand the reason for the further shadow-sparring at this stage.

Again, the Leader of the Opposition criticised reports of some price increases. In my view it is completely illogical to use that as criticism of a Bill that has not been passed. It could be used as a criticism of the existing administration and as an argument that the Bill is likely to make a change for the better.

It is surprising, too, that hon. members representing country areas, who should understand the position, should be so oblivious of the effects of drought and should seek to attribute every seasonal fluctuation in price to some action by the administration.

The hon. member for Baroona seemed to oppose the idea of a board as distinct from a commissioner. Surely three men in consultation may be expected to arrive at sounder and more authoritative decisions than one man acting alone.

The hon. member for Kedron, even after reading the Bill, appeared to be somewhat confused about the functions of the board. I stress that the proposed board will not be an executive body; its functions will be merely consultative and advisory.

As all the points made by hon. members opposite have been replied to either this morning or at an earlier stage, I see no reason to prolong the debate.

Motion (Mr. Munro) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair).

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—Repeat of and new s. 8; Prices Advisory Board—

Mr. BAXTER (Norman) (11.44 a.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 1, line 23, omit the word— ‘three’

and insert in lieu thereof the word— ‘four.’”

It is necessary that I foreshadow two other amendments.

If my present amendment is accepted I shall move—

“On page 2, after line 6, insert the following paragraph:—

‘(d) A person appointed by the Governor in Council who shall be a nominee of the National Council of Women.’”

I shall further move—

“On page 2, line 24, omit the word ‘two’ and insert in lieu thereof the word ‘three.’”

It is very hard to say where to choose a nominee as the consumers’ representative. Many of the associations, organisations and committees that are in existence are in some way tied up with various political bodies. I felt that it was most desirable that we have a nominee from the largest possible representative body and in addition are free from political bias. Who would be the best qualified person in any community to make a decision on prices of all commodities?

Mr. Windsor: The housewife.

Mr. BAXTER: The housewife, as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley says. There are not many hon. members who could say offhand what should be the prices of all the necessary commodities on the family table. I have made a logical approach to the matter. I have taken into consideration the approaches made by various unions and associations. I have come to the conclusion that it would be of great advantage to have a woman on the board who could give the necessary advice about the commodities consumed every day, but a woman from an organisation which fairly represents all sections of the community.

A Government Member: Why not the C.W.A.?

Mr. BAXTER: An hon. member said, “Why not the C.W.A.?” The Country Women’s Association is quite a small body in comparison with the National Council of Women. It is not representative of the whole of the community. It is very difficult to find organisations that are completely non-sectarian and non-political. Affiliated with the National Council of Women are approximately 100 associated bodies, the membership

of some of them exceeding 1,000. Hon. members cannot tell me that that organisation is not a representative body.

Mr. Aikens: I can tell you honestly that until you foreshadowed your amendment I had never ever heard of them.

Mr. BAXTER: The intelligentsia has spoken! The following list of associated and affiliated bodies shows the extent to which the National Council of Women covers all sections of the community:—

Australian Association of Occupational Therapists.

Australian Association of Social Workers.

Association of Women Pharmaceutical Chemists.

Australian Trained Nurses Association.

Albert Street Methodist Ladies’ Guild.

Ann Street Women’s Guild.

A.B.M. Women’s Auxiliary.

Associated Churches of Christ, Women’s Conference Auxiliary.

Australian Scots Association of Queensland.

Bardon Women’s Club.

Bardon Mutual Friendship Club.

Brisbane Kindergarten Training College Graduates’ Association.

Brisbane Grammar School Old Girls’ Association.

Brisbane Jewish Women’s Guild and Benevolent Society.

Brisbane Women’s Club.

Business and Professional Women’s Club.

Council of Child Care Centres.

Catholic Daughters of Australia.

Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland.

C.O.S. Welfare Services.

Dickens Fellowship.

District Nursing Association.

Florence Nightingale Memorial Committee of Australia.

Girls’ Friendly Society.

Girl Guides’ Association of Queensland.

International Order of Good Templars.

Kindercraft Civic Nursery.

King’s College Ladies’ Committee.

Lady Musgrave Lodge.

Ladies’ Auxiliary St. Andrew’s Ex-Servicemen’s Pipe Band.

Ladies’ Harbour Lights Guild.

Lady Mayoress’ Committee.

League of Women Voters.

Lyceum Club.

Methodist Church Women’s Auxiliary to Young People’s Dept.

Methodist Girls’ Comradeship.

Methodist Women’s Federation.

Mothercraft Association.

Mothers' Union Diocesan Council of Brisbane.
 National Council of Jewish Women.
 New Settlers' League.
 Playground and Recreation Association.
 Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union.
 Queensland Assistant Mistresses' Association.
 Queensland Baptist Women's Union.
 Queensland Braille Writing Association.
 Qld. Bush Book Club.
 Qld. Bush Children's Health Scheme Women's Auxiliary.
 Queensland Congregational Women's Association.
 Queensland Ex-P.O.W. Women's Auxiliary.
 Queensland Girls' Secondary Schools Club.
 Queensland Girls' Secondary Schools Headmistresses' Association.
 Queensland Housewives Association.
 Queensland Methodist Children's Homes Committee.
 Queensland Methodist Home Missions Women's Auxiliary.
 Queensland Spastic Children's Welfare League.
 Subnormal Children's Welfare Association.
 Queensland Temperance League.
 Queensland Wattle League Women's Auxiliary.
 Queensland Women's Electoral League.
 Queensland Women's Forum Clubs.
 Queensland Women's Interchurch Council.
 Quota Club International Inc.
 Queensland Ladies' Amateur Swimming Association.
 Queensland Welfare Stock Association.
 Relatives and Friends Association (Hansen's Disease).
 Returned Sisters Sub Branch R.S.S.A.I.L.A.
 Royal Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty.
 Salvation Army.
 Save the Children Fund.
 St. John's Social and Political Alliance.
 Scottish Ladies' Club.
 Social Club for Nurses.
 Sommerville House Old Girls' Association.
 Soroptomist Club.
 South Brisbane Council of Jewish Women.
 Sunsetholme Ladies' Committee.
 Theosophical Order of Service.
 Toc H (Women's Section) Branches A & B.
 Town and Country Club.
 Trades and Labour Council Women's Auxiliary.
 Travellers' Aid Society.

University of Queensland Women's Club.
 University of Queensland Staff Wives Club.
 University of Queensland Graduates' Association.
 V.A.D. Club.
 War Widows' Guild of Australia (Qld. Branch).
 Wesley Methodist Women's Church Help Society.
 Women's Council of the Liberal Party.
 Women's College Standing Committee.
 Women's Christian Temperance Union.
 Women's Democratic Council.
 Queensland Women's Historical Association.
 Young Women's Christian Association.
 Young Men's Christian Association Ladies' Committee.
 Xavier Society.

Nobody can reasonably say that those bodies which are affiliated with the National Council of Women are not representative of all walks of life. I think it is of the utmost importance that the number of members on the Prices Advisory Board should be four instead of three and that the fourth should be a woman nominated by the National Council of Women and appointed by the Governor in Council. The Australian Labour Party in opposition are of the opinion that every consideration should be given to the amendment and sincerely hope that the Minister, realising its value to the community, will see his way clear to accept it.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (11.55 a.m.): I congratulate the hon. member on two points, his political strategy in taking up so much time that I would have only a limited time in which to reply today, and his political sagacity in moving these amendments, which so obviously provide political propaganda among people who have not an opportunity to understand the real nature, functions and responsibilities of this board.

The suggestion that women should be on certain boards is always popular, but the hon. member must know quite well that the amendment is illogical and could not be acceptable to the Government. For the last nine years the Act provided for a Prices Board, but for the last seven years that provision has not been operative.

The Opposition had ample opportunity in Government during those seven or nine years to give effect to this amendment, if it was considered practicable, but they waited until they were in Opposition to suggest it.

There is in fact less cause for the amendment now than at any time during the last nine years, because the board is being reconstituted on a new basis which makes it substantially a means of better liaison and co-operation between three Government departments. I emphasise that. With this as its

main purpose, the present is clearly not an appropriate time to appoint a woman representative to the board. Furthermore, the Commissioner and officers of the Prices Branch are really representatives and protectors of the consumers.

On the general principle of appointing women to advisory boards and committees in appropriate circumstances, I agree with the views of the hon. member for Norman, but, as I have explained, and as responsible Opposition members should understand, this is not an appropriate case for the appointment of a woman member.

For that reason I regret I am unable to accept the amendment.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.58 a.m.): I take it we are dealing only with the amendment, the deletion of the word "three" and the substitution of the word "four" to provide for an additional representative. On the amendment I think it is competent for hon. members to suggest who should be that additional member. In his reply the Minister stated only that he does not think this is an appropriate time to appoint a woman member.

Mr. Munro: And that this is not an appropriate board. That is the main point.

Mr. WOOD: To which a woman could be appointed?

Mr. Munro: Yes.

Mr. WOOD: But the Minister did not say whether he approved the alteration in membership from three to four.

Mr. Munro: I do not agree with that either.

Mr. WOOD: Hon. members of the official Opposition think it is necessary to have on the board a consumers' representative. The problem of determining who should be the representative is not easy. Whether it should be a woman or a man, the main point is that the consumers' representative must have the interest of the consumers at heart.

Mr. Munro: Do you not think the Commissioner of Prices has the interests of consumers at heart?

Mr. WOOD: I do, but I am disturbed by the fact that the Commissioner has been relegated to the position of deputy chairman of the board.

Mr. Munro: He is a member.

Mr. WOOD: The Government do not recognise the interest of the Commissioner in consumers; they have taken from him the responsibility of chairmanship.

Progress reported.

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—NINTH AND TENTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1957-1958.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (12 noon): I move—

“That £134,553 be granted for ‘Department of Justice—Electoral Registration’.”

The increase in this vote is £80,270 of which £1,183 is for payment of award salary increases. The balance of the increase, £79,087, is in respect of contingencies. The cost of the recent general election is paid from this Vote, which is the reason for the extremely large amount being set aside for contingencies. Most of that amount has, in fact, been paid.

Mr. Jesson: What is the cost?

Mr. MUNRO: I have not the exact cost of the election with me at the moment.

Mr. Aikens: Whatever it was, you reckon it was worth it.

Mr. MUNRO: I agree with the hon. member for Mundingburra that it was money well expended. The final costs of the 1956 general election paid in the 1956-1957 financial year amounted to £8,206. The provision this year is £75,394 in excess of this. In addition, the cost of printing annual rolls is expected to exceed last year's expenditure by £3,209.

Mr. TOOTH (Kelvin Grove) (12.4 p.m.): I join with other hon. members in complimenting the Minister for Justice on his assumption to office and I wish him well in the handling of the affairs of his department. The Vote before the Committee deals primarily with the organisation responsible for the conduct of our elections. The conduct of elections is indeed a great responsibility, a responsibility to see that they are conducted in such a way that there will be respect for their results. Indeed, in the long-range view, respect for democracy itself depends on the proper conduct of our Parliamentary elections. During earlier debates reference was made to electoral matters, particularly to the practice that obtains in Queensland of numbering ballot papers and placing the numbers on them against the names of the respective voters on the rolls.

Mr. Davies: Do you object to that?

Mr. TOOTH: I do.

Mr. Davies: Why?

Mr. TOOTH: I intend to explain why, I hope, quite clearly. This matter has been before us for consideration and discussion,

and it was interesting to notice that members of the Opposition showed considerable anxiety lest the present system be abolished.

Mr. Walsh: Naturally, when you consider the frauds that were committed prior to Labour's assuming office.

Mr. TOOTH: Fraud is something that perhaps the hon. member for Bundaberg should not raise. It would be unwise of him to pursue that matter, because it opens many matters that I do not wish to deal with.

I personally hope that the practice of numbering ballot papers will be abolished without delay. There are sound reasons for its abolition. First of all, the support from the Opposition for its continuance occasions me some surprise. The platform of the Australian Labour Party has something to say on the matter. Of course, I am open to correction; I do not claim to be an absolute authority on the interpretation of the platform of the Australian Labour Party.

Mr. Aikens: Most of them over there have not read it.

Mr. TOOTH: That may be a point at issue now.

I have here a copy of the platform of the Australian Labour Party. Apparently it was printed in 1953 and has had amendments added to it. It is obtainable from a certain counter at a certain office in Dunstan House, and it contains also the platform of the Queensland Branch. On the third page under the heading "Constitutional," Section 10 reads—

"The State Elections Act to be amended to provide for a secret ballot vote, by terminating the practice of noting the elector's number on the Electoral Roll and Ballot Paper."

Mr. Aikens: There is another split in the party.

Mr. TOOTH: I hope so.

I do not presume to know precisely the meaning of the section that I have just read. Frankly, it is rather loosely worded. It talks about the elector's number being noted on the electoral roll. The only number that one could call the elector's number is the one that is already in the roll, so that there seems to be some looseness of thought and wording there. However, it is reasonable to assume that if it means anything at all, it surely indicates opposition to the present method.

Mr. Walsh: Give it to the Q.C.'s over there.

Mr. TOOTH: I imagine that the hon. member for Bundaberg has subscribed to this platform in the past—I do not think the clause has been recently added—and his opinion on it probably would be authoritative.

Hon. members opposite support the present practice in the face of what appears to be

a condemnation of it in the platform of their own party.

Mr. Lloyd: When was that said?

Mr. TOOTH: I said that members of the Opposition appear to support the present practice, notwithstanding what is in their platform. I use the word "appear" advisedly, because at times it is rather difficult to pin these things down.

We are accustomed to seeing members of the Labour Party depart from their platform at times, but it rarely happens except for some very good reason from the point of view of the party. I should like to know the reason in this instance. I do not think the curiosity on that point is confined to me.

The Leader of the Opposition said something to this effect in the course of the debate—

"I do not know of any person associated with an election who found himself in a position in which he could use to his advantage the system of numbering ballot papers. I certainly do not know of anybody who has attempted to take advantage of it."

Mr. Davies: The Minister said something like that.

Mr. TOOTH: I repeat that the Leader of the Opposition said something to that effect. I have always regarded the look of boyish innocence that mantles his face as being merely a facade hiding a keen intellect and a broad and deep knowledge of the principles and practices of politics; but if he is sincere in the views he has expressed, I will be tempted to take him at his face value.

I say advisedly that the system of numbering ballot papers has been used to the advantage of the Government in power for years and years in Queensland.

Mr. Power: Will you enlarge on that statement and show us how?

Mr. TOOTH: I propose to do so. I continue and qualify that by saying: not by any invasion of the secrecy of the ballot, not by any breaches of trust by responsible officers but by deliberately creating a fear complex, by deliberately sowing the seeds of doubt and suspicion in the minds of timid electors, so that people in dozens and in hundreds have been afraid to cast their votes according to their conscience and their ideas.

Mr. Hanlon: The Minister in charge of railways told us the other day that he knew how railway men voted.

Mr. TOOTH: I am not prepared to follow the hon. member in that. I am speaking about elections. If hon. members opposite do not know that this has occurred over and over again in recent times they are naive indeed.

Mr. Aikens: Ever read my figures against the A.L.P. man in Mundingburra?

Mr. TOOTH: Yes, but I understand that you hold meetings in the Regent Theatre up there.

Mr. Aikens: The numbering of the ballot papers does not stop them from voting for me.

Mr. TOOTH: No, sir!

Let me give an example from the recent elections. During the last weeks of the campaign a young woman rang me and said, "I want to vote Liberal but my husband's people, who are all Labour supporters, are suspicious and have told me that they can find out how I vote because the ballot papers are all numbered."

Mr. Davies: She must have been talking to a Liberal.

Mr. TOOTH: I was talking to a Liberal. She said to me, "Can you give me a guarantee that there will be no possibility of their knowing how I voted if I cast my vote in your favour?"

Mr. Aikens: And did you?

Mr. TOOTH: I reassured her. I think I got her vote. I told her that the hon. member for Barooka was the Minister in charge of the poll and that nothing nefarious was likely to take place in it. (Laughter.)

Mr. Aikens: Why did you lead her up the garden path like that?

Mr. TOOTH: I should regret to think that she was being led up the garden path. The moral of the tale is that it is a very poor show indeed if there is anything at all in the electoral system that lends itself to that sort of intimidation.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. TOOTH: I say that the present system does lend itself to that sort of intimidation. It occurs over and over again, and not merely in family circles or small groups. It is very commonly known that it has been practised widely by people associated with political organisations opposed to ours.

Mr. Power: If you eliminate the number how will you detect a fraud?

Mr. TOOTH: What is the use of discovering a fraud? Where do we get? A fraud was discovered in comparatively recent times.

Mr. Lloyd: It is a reflection on the Elections Tribunal Judge.

Mr. TOOTH: It is not a reflection on the Elections Tribunal Judge. The Judge declared that fraud had been committed but there were no apparent means whereby the culprit could be identified and suitable punitive action taken. Anybody at all who takes any part whatever in any form of electoral fraud is, in my opinion, in the top class of criminals. It is a blow against the very

things being attacked in Australia today, the things dearest to us upon which our very life and liberty depend.

There is an even more dangerous aspect, a problem which has become very urgent because of developments in post-war Australia. There are thousands of New Australians in our midst today, people who have recently become naturalised and are thus eligible to vote. The majority of them have lived for years under circumstances and under Governments where life and liberty were imperilled.

Mr. Aikens: Some of them were Fascists and Nazis themselves.

Mr. Lloyd: And they welcome them in the Liberal Party.

Mr. Aikens: I am not saying that, but some of them were Fascists and Nazis.

Mr. TOOTH: No doubt the A.L.P. has a bar on New Australians. No doubt the A.L.P. refuses to take them and regards them with terror. Thousands of these people have become eligible to vote. It is not easy to tell them that there are safeguards. It is no use explaining to them the various processes by which the secrecy of the ballot is protected. Because of the circumstances under which they previously lived and the perils through which they have passed many New Australians have had to develop a keen sense of caution. They have had to test and try everything. It may surprise hon. members to know that many of them are aware that in the late '30's some numbered ballot papers were discovered under a cottage in South Brisbane. They know that there was a Royal Commission into the matter. The ballot papers could have been scattered far and wide to the four winds and any person picking them up could have found who cast a particular vote.

Mr. Aikens: You would have to have the master roll as well as the ballot paper.

Mr. TOOTH: How many rolls are there that are marked with these numbers?

Mr. Aikens: Only the master roll is marked with the lot.

Mr. TOOTH: With the lot, I know, but in the normal election there would be a minimum of 25 complete rolls subdivided. What happens to these rolls? I am not asking the question. It is not any suggestion I am making. I am telling hon. members that these people now coming onto the State's electoral rolls are concerned about this matter. It is reasonable that we should do something to assuage their fears. It is reasonable that we should take steps to see that these people who, we hope, will become pillars of democracy, will be able to exercise their rights as citizens without fear. At present they cannot exercise these rights without fear because of the existence of this practice under the Elections Act. That and that alone is sound

enough reason for the abolition of the system. I think I have made my point. I believe all hon. members on both sides of the Chamber will agree that steps should be taken to see that the New Australians in our midst, people who are savouring for the first time democracy in its real and ultimate expression, are put at ease. They should get the opportunity of casting their votes without the fear that they will be imperilled in any way whatsoever.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.20 p.m.): I was disappointed that on the introduction of this important Vote the Minister did not give a greater outline of the functions and activities of the very efficient Electoral Office.

Mr. Aikens: Does he know?

Mr. WOOD: Of course he knows. I think the hon. gentleman would have a better knowledge of it than the hon. member for Mundingburra. I think that the Chamber was entitled to a wide explanation of what has been done and of the responsibilities of those officers.

Mr. Munro: I explained earlier that I would like to give you the maximum opportunity of expressing your views.

Mr. WOOD: I was also greatly disappointed with the contribution by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove. I sincerely offer the hon. member this advice: if the hon. member approaches his subject with a lesser degree of condescension and sarcasm his contribution will be much more acceptable on this side anyway. We do not care how we are attacked or how the actions of Governments for which we have accepted responsibility are attacked, but I feel that most members will agree that the continued use of the sarcastic approach does not in any way add strength to a case. The hon. member had much to say about the numbering of ballot papers, and made what he seemed to think was a world-shaking discovery, that there is reference to this in the platform of the Australian Labour Party. I raise this matter for the reason that I have known it was there for some time and I thought, from the point of view of the Opposition, some explanation should be given to the Committee why this system has been continued. Recognising that it has been there for some years, I think some reference should be made by members of the Australian Labour Party to some of the reasons why it was retained over the years. There was not one valid reason given by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove as to why this practice should be discontinued. The hon. member never gave one example where this system had been abused. He did not give one example or make one suggestion that any member of the electoral staff who had access to those rolls in any way prostituted his position. Had the hon. member done so, we would have listened to his remarks with a degree of sympathy. The

hon. member laboured to create a fear complex. Let me say this: any fear that has been instilled into the minds of the electors has been instilled by members of the Liberal and Country Parties. If electors have been made suspicious, if they have become distrustful, it is because of the constant repetition by Liberal and Country Party spokesmen that this system led to corruption and was being used corruptly. That is the basis of the fear complex in this matter. There is no evidence before this Chamber of any way in which the system has been abused. If this had happened, I am sure that members of the Committee and members of the public would be aware of it and definite evidence of it would be available.

It ill becomes hon. members of the Liberal Party to speak of instilling a fear complex in the people, particularly new Australians. I have in mind the little brochure sent by the Liberal Party to applicants for naturalisation. It explains the general political set-up in Australia dealing among other things with the freedom for which the Liberal Party stands. It points out that many new Australians come from countries under Communist tyranny and deliberately tries to instil in the minds of those people the fear that if they support the Australian Labour Party they are supporting a policy of communism. If the hon. member for Kelvin Grove does not know of that brochure, I shall let him look at a copy. It has been distributed for some considerable time. I know of no party that more unscrupulously sets out to instil fear in the minds of the people, including new Australians, than the Liberal Party. Hon. members of the Liberal Party should be the last to speak here or elsewhere of anyone endeavouring to create a fear complex.

Mr. Windsor: They joined you in the last election.

Mr. WOOD: They did not. I say publicly that I do not want them under any circumstances. I have never sought their support, nor do I ever want it under any circumstances and I make no apology for that statement.

Much was said during the election campaign about postal votes. All hon. members know of the weaknesses in that structure. No doubt suggested alterations will be put to the Minister, but, as I said earlier we should try to give the franchise to the maximum population. One suggestion was that an official appointed by the returning officer could visit homes, and that he should be the only one who could give postal votes. That may be suitable in the metropolitan area, but it would be completely impracticable in the larger western and northern cities, in fact, in all cities outside the metropolitan area. Take the electorate of Gregory, of 92,000 square miles. Under that system people outside the main polling area would be denied a postal vote. Despite the disadvantages of the present system, I hope that any steps that may be taken to alter it will be aimed at

giving the franchise to the maximum number of people, old, sick, and others. They have an inalienable right to a postal vote, and it should not be restricted unnecessarily. Few people are more insistent on their right to vote than some I have met over 90 years of age. They cannot get to the polling booth, but they value very highly their right to a postal vote. I object to any step that will take that right from these infirm people.

Mr. Nicholson: Those are the people for whom the provision was inserted.

Mr. WOOD: Yes, and women approaching maternity and no-one should take away that right. It is wrong for an elector to declare that because of illness or infirmity he is unable to attend at a polling booth, if he is going to a race meeting or some other function. Again, once you get to a position like that, it is the hardest thing in the world to check. The returning officer accepts the declaration that the person makes before a witness, and it is not possible for him to make a personal investigation into the veracity of everyone who makes such a declaration.

Mr. Power: In any case, he only gets one vote.

Mr. WOOD: The moment it is issued the returning officers's roll is marked and a second paper cannot be issued.

Mr. Coburn: It is a matter of convenience rather than dishonesty.

Mr. WOOD: The person cannot vote twice.

I pay a tribute to the returning officers throughout Queensland and the efficiency of their staff. I have contested six State elections and in no case have I ever found a returning officer who is not absolutely impartial and not scrupulously fair. Each returning officer with whom I have had dealings has been the type of man who would conduct an election without fear or favour. I have never asked for anything to which I was not entitled, and I have always received absolutely fair and scrupulous treatment from returning officers. Neither have my opponents asked for advantages nor have they received any. Nobody has any right to ask for anything but an impartial and fair approach. I have not seen any returning officer who has taken any other form of approach than one of extreme impartiality.

Mr. Power: He would not last long if caught.

Mr. WOOD: Of course not. He has nothing to gain. Generally speaking, the standard of elections in Queensland is extremely high. Those days before Labour when we read of the terrible frauds that took place are now gone forever. We have in our Public Service men of high standard, men who take an interest in their work and the sanctity of the ballot and I will resist attacks by members of any political party on

those who control our elections. I have never known of any cause for complaint. I lost one election and won five. I have been associated with many elections where the candidates I have supported have won and where candidates have lost, and in no case have I seen any departure from the very high standard we should expect from those entrusted with the care of the ballot. I shall never be backward in paying tribute to the returning officers throughout the State. Generally speaking, too, the presiding officers and poll clerks have reached a high standard, although sometimes we find some who show a degree of competence below what is expected. They do the job once in three years and they might officiate at Commonwealth elections—

Mr. Aikens: What do you think of the presiding officer at Eventide, Charters Towers?

Mr. WOOD: As that matter is to come before the Elections Tribunal it would be improper for me to make any comment and I do not intend to do so. The presiding officers and poll clerks generally speaking have reached that standard set by returning officers. The change of Government will not in any way make any change in the probity of those entrusted with the conduct of elections. Those who have carried out electoral duties in the past have lived up to their responsibilities to the full. I am certain that under the new Government they will show the same efficiency and give the same impartial service as they have given in the past under Labour Governments.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.35 p.m.): I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and have no hesitation in saying that I have had a particularly good "spin" from the returning officers that have been appointed for Mundingburra. I think there have been four different ones in the six or seven elections that I have won, and each of them has been the soul of honesty and has given me everything I desire from a returning officer. None of them has shown either favouritism or antipathy towards any candidate.

Mr. Wood: They have given you and your opponents the same consideration?

Mr. AIKENS: Every one of them. They have shown no antipathy towards any candidate and have given me and my opponents the same fair and honest deal that I would have given had I been in their place, and I could not pay anyone a higher compliment than that.

The hon. member for Kelvin Grove said that people were blackmailed because the numbers of the ballot papers were placed opposite their names on the roll. That is not borne out by facts, and anything that does not conform to facts is obviously untrue. Recently a by-election was held in Gregory, and the Country Party candidate romped

home an easy winner. Would the hon. member for Kelvin Grove suggest that the people of Gregory were blackmailed into voting for Mr. Rae?

Mr. TOOTH: I rise to a point of order. Throughout my speech I made no reference to blackmail.

Mr. AIKENS: It was "intimidation."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member for Mundingburra used the word "blackmail," I ask him to accept the denial of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove.

Mr. AIKENS: I shall indeed accept it, Mr. Taylor, because I was breaking it down. In fact, the hon. member for Kelvin Grove said that people were intimidated, which is a much more heinous word than "blackmailed."

Does the hon. member for Kelvin Grove think that the people of Mundingburra have been intimidated because the ballot-paper number is placed on the roll? At the election that was held last year I got over 77 per cent. of the total votes, and this year, when there were three candidates, I got 75 or 76 per cent. Does the hon. member for Kelvin Grove suggest that the people of Mundingburra were intimidated when they voted for me? His argument is so ridiculous and so fallacious that we can disregard it.

Mr. Power: What about the number of people who voted more than once?

Mr. AIKENS: I got from the returning officer the usual return showing how many people voted more than once, and every one of them was an Australian Labour Party stooge. Not one of my supporters was shown by the returning officer as having voted more than once. If the former Attorney-General would like to see the return, I shall be happy to show it to him.

The Chief Electoral Office in Townsville is in the court house, about which I should like to pass a few remarks. It is very old and unpretentious—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot refer to court houses under this Vote.

Mr. AIKENS: That is the place in which the electoral officer does his business. Any one who wants to see him must go to the court house. I am sure that everyone must agree with me that the building is very dingy in comparison with some of the very fine commercial buildings that are being erected in Townsville.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Now that the hon. member has made that point, I ask him to proceed with the matter before the Committee.

Mr. AIKENS: In 10 or 15 years' time, Townsville will have a population of between 75,000 and 100,000 people, 80 per cent. of

whom will live west of The Causeway. The great centre of population will be in what is commonly termed the Hermit Park-Pimlico-Aitkenvale area. The Minister should look ahead in his plans for electoral officers and electoral offices. He should get in early and show some of the courage and vision that have been lacking in previous Governments by making provision in that area for a new court house and a new Supreme Court building. In the old Supreme Court no-one can hear the barristers or the judge because of the noise of the white-ants eating up the old building.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member persists in referring to the court house or the Supreme Court I shall be obliged to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. AIKENS: I know that the hon. member for Townsville has suggested the betterment of the buildings as they now stand. I am suggesting that a new centre of justice be established in the Hermit Park area, but I cannot get on with that so I will not proceed with it. But it will have to be done! (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: I understand that the State and the Commonwealth are to have a uniform roll. I do not know whether any other hon. member had the same experience as I had at the last State elections. It was brought home very vividly to me just how the Commonwealth Electoral Officer works. Just before the State elections the police were sent out helter-skelter from door to door to enrol people who are qualified to vote in their electorates and after the canvass the usual supplementary roll was published. The Commonwealth Electoral Officer in Townsville, I presume—because this is the only way he could have done it—got that State supplementary roll, immediately checked it with the Federal roll and began to bombard all the people in the Mundingburra electorate shown on the supplementary State roll who were not on the Federal roll. When you talk about intimidation and fear—and I hope the hon. member for Kelvin Grove is listening—at least 20 people either came to my home or pulled me up in the street. Each one of them had the khaki-coloured Commonwealth electoral cards, on which they have to fill in all the particulars to get on the roll, and two great big forms threatening all sorts of prosecution and penalties because they were not on the roll. There are many people—and we cannot dodge this fact—who do not discriminate between a Federal election or a Federal roll and a State election or a State roll. Many people do not know there are two separate rolls. They came up to me and said, "Here, I am going to be prosecuted. Tom. I am not on your roll. I have just got these forms to get on the roll and I have to fill them in or I will be prosecuted for not being on the roll."

I want to be quite plain about this. I have no objection to the Commonwealth Electoral Officer in Townsville getting from the State rolls the names of people who should be on the Commonwealth roll. The Attorney-General might examine how otherwise the Commonwealth Electoral Officers get the names on the Commonwealth roll. In the main they get them from the State rolls and from the canvass made from door to door by the State police. I have no objection to that. I have no objection to the Commonwealth Electoral Officer's checking his Commonwealth roll with the very latest State roll, which, in the case of an election, is the supplementary roll; but I have a violent objection to his sending out those threats of prosecution to people right on the eve of a State election.

Mr. Hanlon: If people are not on the Commonwealth roll 14 days after the time limit expires, the Commonwealth send the form straight out and then fine them a dollar.

Mr. AIKENS: That may be so. I am only talking about the confusion, the fear and apprehension that it caused in the minds of everyone in the Mundingburra electorate who was put on the State roll by the police canvass and who was not on the Federal roll. At least 20 people came to my home or met me in the street in fear and trembling of being prosecuted. They said, "The policeman came round to my home, Tom. He took my name and address and actually helped me to fill in the card, and I naturally thought my name would be on the State roll so I could go along and vote for you as member for Mundingburra, and here I have this card with threats of prosecution from the Electoral Officer." I had to explain to them that there was no need to fear, that the card and forms were from the Commonwealth Electoral Office and not from the State. However, I think it was very badly timed by the Commonwealth Electoral Officer in Townsville. If he was going to build up his roll from the State supplementary rolls in all fairness he should have at least waited until after the elections.

We heard a great deal about New Australians and how they are afraid of being intimidated. I know that many New Australians perhaps victims of Communist oppression came to this country in search of freedom. But I am the sort of chap who likes to face up to facts and truth all the time. I know that many of them were Nazis and Fascists. Many were Luftwaffe pilots and officers in the German Army. I know that many of them since they came to Australia have not been acting as democratically as we should like them to. Only recently during elections in New South Wales an organised gang of New Australians smashed a table at a polling booth being conducted on behalf of a candidate of whom they did not approve. I draw these happenings to the attention of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove and all those who might be prepared to accept all New Australians as being people who

came to Australia in search of democracy and freedom. Most of them did, but some of them did not. Some came here only because they were chased out of their own country, not by fear of oppression by the Communists but by fear of retribution from their own people.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to get back to electoral registration.

Mr. AIKENS: I am telling the Committee about it now. When I am in Brisbane, indeed when I am in Townsville, I attend any election meetings addressed by prominent people. I go along to the City Hall to hear Dr. Evatt, Mr. Menzies or Sir Arthur Fadden. I go along to hear any speaker whose views I think I should hear or any speaker who may be able to teach me something about flights of oratory. I went along one night to hear Dr. Evatt speak in the City Hall. I am not saying anything in his favour because there is very little I could say in his favour. Nevertheless, I went along to hear him. At the back of the hall there were about 50 New Australians organised into an interruption group. They were booing and cat-calling all night. The very next night I went back to the City Hall for another purpose. A concert was being held. The same New Australians who had been booing and interjecting when Dr. Evatt was speaking were walking up the stairs to attend a meeting convened by the Young Liberal Society, or whatever they call it. I have mentioned this in the Chamber before, I mentioned it within a few days of its actually happening. If the hon. member for Kelvin Grove is concerned about the preservation of democracy and the removal of intimidation from voting at election time, let him look at it from the broad, clear view point. Do not let him class all New Australians as being good New Australians because they are not all good New Australians. Most of them are but some are not.

Mr. Tooth: We hope that they will become so.

Mr. AIKENS: We hope that they will become so, but they will not if they are going to be lauded with senseless adulation by men like the hon. member for Kelvin Grove whether they deserve it or not.

Mr. Knox: If they join the Young Liberals they will become so.

Mr. AIKENS: It is their democratic right to do so. If they join the Young Liberals party I hope that they will be guided by men like the Minister for Justice and others who appear to have a sense of balance and a vestige of democracy and political decency.

Postal votes have been mentioned. Postal votes are cast by some people who just do not want to take the trouble of going to a polling booth on polling day. Many of them do not want to mix with the common herd

and consequently take advantage of the postal vote facilities. The ex-Attorney-General and the Leader of the Opposition said that there is no question of fraud involved because they get only the one vote whether they cast a postal vote or go to the polling booth. At the same time we must realise that if the facilities for postal voting are abused too much there will be a kick back from the people. Everyone is going to say, "If so-and-so can avoid going to the polling booth by being allowed a postal vote, why must I get dressed and walk up in the sun or rain to the polling booth to cast my vote in person?"

If you want to know how it can develop—I know it has not developed to this extent at any State election yet—you have only to look at what occurs at the Townsville municipal elections. You will allow me to quote this, Mr. Taylor, as a shocking example of what can occur if it is not checked or curbed. At the last municipal elections at Townsville 20,000 people voted, and of that number not fewer than 1,300 had a postal vote. The postal vote was organised by the present T.C.A. aldermen. They have an office to organise the postal vote, not only for those who are sick, infirm or pregnant, but also for those who do not want to bother to go to the polling booth. If you get down to the reason for postal voting according to law at the last Townsville municipal election one person in every fifteen was either ill, infirm or pregnant because one in every fifteen had a postal vote.

Mr. Davies: They may have been outside the electorate.

Mr. AIKENS: Very few were outside. Many were at Magnetic Island, but it is within the boundary of the city of Townsville, and there are voting facilities there. The T.C.A. aldermen boast of this facility that they make available to the people. Anyone who cannot be bothered to go to the polling booth on municipal polling day can get a postal vote. The moment they apply for it the T.C.A. organisation sends out a T.C.A. How-to-vote card. They openly boast, "It does not matter where you run with the ballot box, we will beat you with the postal votes." Sure enough they do. When every vote was out of the ballot boxes last council election. I was running eighth, well ahead of Alderman Sheriff and Alderman Molloy. They said, "It does not matter; we will beat you when the postal votes are counted." And sure enough they did; they beat me by two to one in the postal votes.

Mr. Thackeray: What does T.C.A. stand for?

Mr. AIKENS: Townsville Citizens' Association. Owing to the fact that they have not done very much sewerage work for many years they are now known as the E.C.A. That is a feature of Townsville at the present time—rows upon rows of earth closets. Not one of these people voted illegally,

because they were entitled to a vote, but they did not want to go to the polling booth. Over the years the T.C.A. has built up a huge postal voting organisation. The Attorney-General must have been staggered when I read those figures—out of 20,000 who voted not fewer than 1,300 voted according to the postal voting facilities provided under the Act, and of course they voted in accordance with the provisions of the Elections Acts. If you do not do something to stop it you will have a tremendous percentage building up in the State electorates.

Mr. Munro: We do not have that in Toowong.

Mr. AIKENS: We do not have them in any electorate in any State elections. I know that because I do not think there is any organisation set up in any State electorate simply to save the people the inconvenience of going to the polling booth.

Mr. Davies: You would not say there was a percentage increase in the State or Federal elections.

Mr. AIKENS: I would be glad to have the hon. member's information on it, but I do not know of any State electorate where one person in every 15 or 6.5 per cent. voted according to the postal voting facilities. No-one voted who was not entitled to vote. This organisation said in effect, "Do not bother to go to the polling booth, do not mix with the hoi-polloi; drop into Angus Smith's shop or somebody else's shop and get an application form for a postal vote and we will see that it is sent to you, and on the same day we will send a T.C.A. How-to-vote card." I do not suggest any collusion between them and the Town Clerk, but they know the people who apply for postal votes, and see that they get the right How-to-vote form.

Mr. Davies: They are mostly Liberals.

Mr. AIKENS: All are Liberals. They masquerade under the name T.C.A. or E.C.A. The hon. member for Aubigny on one occasion truthfully said in this Chamber, "They call themselves the T.C.A., but they are really our mob."

I repeat that there is nothing illegal in what they do, but the Minister must see that postal voting is never used in State elections to the extent that it was used in the last municipal election in Townsville.

I have mentioned the need for a new court house in the Hermit Park area and a new Supreme Court, but in deference to the Chairman's ruling I shall not discuss them further. Nevertheless, they must be built if the Government are sincerely desirous of improving conditions.

Mr. DONALD (Brumer) (12.56 p.m.): I endorse the statements of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Mundingburra about those in charge of elections, and I pay a tribute to the officials in the

Bremer electorate. The first returning officer during my term in Parliament was Mr. Charles Innes. He was the acme of courtesy and efficiency. I was always of the opinion that any mistake in any election he conducted would be a genuine one. Since he retired Mr. Kingston has been the returning officer, and he has carried on in the same efficient way. The officers employed by the Government to conduct elections are very efficient and completely fair. There could be no suspicion to the contrary.

I was very surprised at the outburst of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, particularly after the discussion on the Chief Office Vote. The consensus at that time was that the numbering of ballot papers in no way interfered with the secrecy of the ballot. I think he was guessing when he said that the numbering of ballot papers destroyed the secrecy of the ballot.

Mr. Ramsden: He did not say that at all.

Mr. DONALD: He then went on to say that those conducting the election in no way betrayed the trust reposed in them.

The interjector has said that he did not say it interfered with the secrecy of the ballot. If it does not and those conducting the election do not betray the trust reposed in them, his case is destroyed and his speech must be classed as sheer political propaganda.

He then went on to say that it created a fear complex, but he gave no facts or illustration to prove what he said could happen. He also said that previous Labour Governments had instituted the system so as to instil fear in the minds of the public, including those in their employ. Such a statement by an ex-school teacher does not reflect credit on him as a member of Parliament, as a school teacher, or as a citizen, particularly when Government members have unequivocally stated that the numbering of ballot papers does not interfere with the secrecy or the efficiency of the ballot. It was not introduced by previous Labour Governments to instil fear or to gain an unfair advantage.

I am not suggesting that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove has no knowledge of Queensland's political history because I believe that he has an extensive knowledge of it and therefore he should know that previous non-Labour Governments took special care to prevent the militant section of the working class exercising their vote, and at the same time made provision for plural voting. Thousands of intelligent hard-working men were compelled by the nature of their work and the development of a new colony to travel extensively following their various occupations. At the same time the property-owner could exercise a vote in every electorate in which he had property, and as a consequence some exercised their vote in as many as thirty electorates. That is the record of a non-Labour Government in this State. He spoke of fear and

intimidation but non-Labour Governments had another way of doing this besides numbering ballot papers. The numbering of ballot papers was not an act to instil fear and intimidation. What does history tell us? In 1892 the number of people enrolled in Queensland was 98,065, but the Government of the day, anxious to protect themselves, revised the rolls and reduced the number to 83,005—10 per cent. of the votes belonged to voters with more than one vote and this reduced the effective number of voters to 75,005, leaving 30,411 disfranchised. The fear of the Government, an anti-Labour Government, was the rising power of organised labour and the fear that they would lose their position in Parliament. The fear was justified, because the workers through their various organisations ultimately won their way to power in this Parliament. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove told us of a lady who rang him and asked him whether it was true that it could be learnt how people had voted. She said that her people were predominantly Labour but she wanted to vote Liberal and asked if there were any means of finding out how people voted. He correctly reassured her that that was not the case, that her vote would be secret. That incident prompts me to make two observations, the first of which is that he does not believe what he gave utterance to in this Chamber this morning that the numbering of ballot papers was a form of intimidation and also that it was a policy of former Governments to bring about a fear complex. He either does not believe what he said this morning or he was prepared to bring about family discord to obtain one miserable vote. That is the only meaning to be taken from his remarks. It is a fact that the numbering of ballot papers is a safeguard against corruption and fraud. The Labour Party would not be a party to corruption and fraud and its actions in the past have demonstrated that. Had it not been for the numbering of ballot papers fraud would not have been discovered. That is the justification for the numbering of ballot papers.

Mr. Ramsden: Who was punished for the fraud?

Mr. DONALD: The law of the land took its course. As a result of the findings of the Elections Tribunal another election was ordered in Bulimba and the electors, in no uncertain manner, returned the A.L.P. candidate.

Mr. Ramsden: It shows that ballot paper numbering is no protection against fraud.

Mr. DONALD: What an illogical mind the hon. member has. He admits in one breath that the numbering of ballot papers was responsible for discovering a fraud, and in the next he says that it is not a protection against fraud. Let us rid ourselves of political bias in these matters. That is the only reason the hon. member has for making

his interjection, and the only reason for this campaign to instil into old Australians, as well as New Australians, a fear that the numbering of ballot papers is a form of intimidation. Both industrially and politically, the Australian Labour Party has no need to engage in a campaign of fear and intimidation to win supporters. It has been demonstrated again and again that it can look after its own affairs. It is useless for the hon. member for Kelvin Grove to quote from pamphlets in an effort to convince us that such is not the case.

The hon. member went on to say that a number of ballot papers had been discovered under a residence in a certain part of the South Brisbane electorate. I do not know what he wanted to imply, but it certainly proves nothing. Would the numbering of the ballot papers be the cause of their being lost? They would have been lost in any case.

Mr. Tooth: Surely it was significant?

Mr. DONALD: Significant of what? It was significant that there was carelessness somewhere, but that was not because of the Government's policy to number ballot papers.

For the same reason, many trade unions number their ballot papers.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. DONALD: No purer ballot is conducted anywhere than that of the Miners' Federation. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove cannot prove otherwise. It is a very clean ballot. The ballot papers are numbered for convenience and as a protection against fraud. The returning officer knows that the papers numbered say from 1 to 50 went to a certain branch of the union and it would be impossible for anyone who felt so inclined—and some people are—to fake the ballot because he would not know what number to use. The numbering of ballot papers is an assurance that the ballot is conducted fairly and without fraud.

Mr. Gilmore: Do you believe in court-controlled ballots?

Mr. DONALD: I do not, any more than the hon. member would believe in court-controlled ballots in his organisation. A union that asks for a court-controlled ballot is admitting it cannot manage its own affairs. However, enough has been said on the numbering of ballot papers.

The need for a redistribution of electorates in the metropolitan area is obvious, but it would be extremely unwise to create any additional seats in Brisbane. The present proportion of seats in the metropolitan area to those in the whole of the State is already high enough, and to increase it would not give us better government. The only result would be to bring into the State Parliament the position that prevails in the Commonwealth Parliament, that is, the giving of preference by Parliament, consciously or unconsciously, to

those districts that return the greatest number of Government members. Every hon. member will agree that irrespective of what party is in office in the Commonwealth Parliament, New South Wales and Victoria always receive preference because they send the majority of Government representatives to Canberra. If this or any other Government increase the number of electorates in Brisbane so that they become the deciding factor in the policy of the State, it will be a very bad thing for Queensland. I hope that that day will never come. The protection that was given to the rest of Queensland by the Haulon Government, eliminating the possibility of Brisbane members influencing the Government, is desirable and should be retained. Nor do I think it desirable to increase the number of members of the Queensland Parliament. We already have sufficient to cater for the needs of the State and of its citizens. I do not wish it to be thought that I favour a reduction in the number. I remind those who might like to bring that about that we have only one House of Parliament and fewer Parliamentarians than we had over 30 years ago. The reason for my opposition to any reduction in number will be apparent from the following figures of Parliamentarians in other States—

	Upper House.	Lower House.	Total.
New South Wales	60	94	154
Victoria	34	66	100
Queensland .. .	—	75	75
South Australia	20	39	59
Western Australia	30	50	80
Tasmania	19	30	49

Bearing in mind the size and population of the areas hon. members represent, Queensland members of Parliament bear a greater responsibility and do much more work than those of any other State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member that the question of an increase or decrease in the number of Parliamentarians is a matter for legislation and is not a subject that may be discussed under this vote.

Mr. DONALD: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Taylor, but the Electoral Registration section has to find the money to conduct elections. That is the only reason for raising the matter. It will have to be done with money from this Vote and on these Estimates. There is no other way. Legislation will not provide the extra money. It will have to be provided under the Vote now being debated.

I believe I have made out a case for retaining the present number of members of Parliament in Queensland; it should not be increased and certainly not reduced. In only one or two States are members required to look after more electors. It is easier to look after a large number in a small area than a small number in a large area. Western Australia is the only State where members of the State Parliament have to cater for

bigger districts than those in Queensland. I appeal to the Government to hearken to my plea and to leave the number as it is.

Mr. POWER (Baroona) (2.29 p.m.): I regard this as one of the most important Votes to come before the Committee as it deals with the election of members of Parliament and the Government of the State. I agree to some extent with the remarks of the hon. member for Kelvin Grove. Where malpractices take place the offenders should be dealt with because they undermine democracy. I remind him, however, that malpractices took place long before Labour was in power. I have with me a book written by Mr. Bernays, a former Clerk of the Parliament, and, dealing with the life of the Honourable Patrick Perkins, he has this to say—

“One Gargett, a railway contractor, had a large work on hand at the period of a general election, and being an intimate associate of Perkins’s, what could be more simple than to load up half a dozen trucks with Perkins’s XXX ale, and a vast number of navvies, and tour Aubigny electorate recording an uncountable number of votes at each little polling-booth for the owner of the beer?”

“What’s the good of being a big brewer if you cannot apply some of your own beer to your personal advantage?”

Mr. Davies: Who said that?

Mr. POWER: Mr. Charles Arrowsmith Bernays. What happened on that occasion? There were more votes cast than there were people entitled to vote. Malpractices first started long before the advent of Labour Governments. We should not destroy a system that enables us to say that at least the representatives of the people are elected democratically, not by any false means. The numbering of a ballot paper does not destroy the secrecy of the vote. Although it would be physically impossible some people have been intimidated because they believe that there is a method of discovering how they vote.

Many years ago in North Queensland a person was accused of not having voted for a certain candidate. He said, “I will not be caught next time.” Following the next election when somebody said to him, “You did not vote for so-and-so”, he said, “You are a liar. Here is my vote”, and he pulled it out of his pocket to show how he had voted. That is the sort of thing that happened years ago.

The number on the ballot paper is essential for the discovery of any fraud that might be practised. But for the numbering of ballot papers the fraud would not have been discovered in the Bulimba electorate a few years ago. Although nobody was convicted of the offence at least the fraud was discovered and another election was held. How can fraud be traced if there is no record? The practice of fraud in elections is a very serious matter.

Mr. Herbert: They get on all right in the Commonwealth elections without them.

Mr. POWER: That may be so, but two wrongs do not make a right. The Commonwealth rolls are the worst in Australia. I can speak with some authority. It has been suggested that Commonwealth rolls could be used for State elections. For many years I was campaign director for Mr. Lawson and I found that there were more names missing off Commonwealth rolls than I have ever discovered missing from any State rolls. When they went along to the polling booths many people found that their names were not on the rolls. On one occasion the Commonwealth did not even have new rolls for an election. I made it my business to see that rolls were as near perfect as possible for the 1956 State election.

All sorts of statements are made by different people. One woman said that she posted her application but it was later handed in by a police officer. The lady had not posted it at all. Police officers sent in enrolment cards the day after the closing of the rolls and consequently many names were left off. On one occasion the canvass was carried out in a disgraceful manner in the electorate of the Minister for Justice. Sub-Inspector Doherty was detailed to take control of enrolments and directions were issued that all applications for enrolment had to be sent to the Electoral Office the same day as the Police received them.

We know the system that operated when people were told to leave them at the shop at the corner where they would be picked up. In some cases they were not picked up. I know that to be true. The 1956 rolls in Queensland were the nearest to perfection you could possibly get. Not only were the police instructed to check the rolls here, but arrangements were made throughout the State whereby school teachers and clerks of petty sessions in the remote parts took action to see that names were correctly recorded on the roll. That is what operated on that occasion. It has been said that there have been malpractices in regard to elections. I remember at the end of one campaign sitting behind some members of the organisation that was opposed to Mr. Lawson. We were doing pretty well. One lady said to the other, “Wait until the postal votes come in; we fixed up a lot of those.” I said, “Did you, lady? What is your name?” She immediately left. Apparently they did not fix up enough, because Mr. Lawson won. Everybody knows the method adopted in the early days by supporters of the Government parties in regard to postal votes. They were masters at it. They could put others in the shade. During the 1956 election campaign we found that some supporters of my opponent called at various places and obtained signatures for postal votes and did not put them in. One woman said she was most disturbed because a person got an application signed by her and had not put it in. As Attorney-General I made a statement about what was

taking place, and that night they were all posted or received by the Returning Officer. I immediately sent someone to the woman's house and had an application fixed up by one of my organisations. I understand that the same night the applications of a number of people were returned to the Returning Officer.

Mr. Coburn: What action could the returning officer take?

Mr. POWER: In this case the application had not been sent in. Applications had been sent out to people to sign and they were asked to return them to the address of the campaign director of my opponent. I have numbers of them in my possession. Investigations were made and the gentleman concerned said that he had no knowledge of it. I had no evidence to convict him of the offence. Applications are also sent out ad lib. to people for postal votes. I do not think that that is a good practice, because postal votes can only be obtained under certain conditions laid down by the Act. There is some doubt about the legality of getting an application signed before the writs have been issued.

Mr. Coburn: That is done, too.

Mr. POWER: I do not think there is any breach of the law in connection with that. A ballot paper cannot be sent out until the writ is issued. A son of mine was accused of having an application for a postal vote signed by a certain person before the writs were issued, but that was entirely untrue. The application was received by a supporter of the Liberal Party. These points are thrown in for good measure for the purpose of criticism. Hon. members of the Country Party have complained that they were not supplied with applications for postal votes. They are supplied from the Government Printing Office. The practice of the previous Government was not to supply them to anyone who asked for them until after the issue of the writ. All parties sought them from the Under Secretary for Justice prior to the issue of the writs, and they were refused by him.

Mr. Ramsden: Only one Party got them.

Mr. POWER: That is not true.

Mr. Ramsden: It is true.

Mr. POWER: If it is true, then it was the hon. member's Party. I have evidence that a member of the Liberal Party was seen taking postal votes from a certain person in an hotel. The regulations provide that no candidate must touch the votes. I shall not name the hon. member, but he has been elected to Parliament and I can furnish evidence of that offence if hon. members desire me to do so, but I have no desire to do it.

The hon. member said that only one Party received the application forms. Some application forms may have been held as

surplus from the previous election. I know that the Government parties employ paid canvassers for the purpose of obtaining postal votes, and I do not object to that practice. Those canvassers had application forms.

Mr. Hanlon: That is against the Act.

Mr. POWER: I doubt whether it is.

Mr. Hanlon: It says so on the application form.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member for Bremer said he did not want any reduction in the number of members of Parliament. I want a reduction in the number of Government members; as a matter of fact I cannot get it quickly enough.

Some hon. members have suggested the use of Federal rolls in State elections. The Attorney-General in the previous anti-Labour Government, Mr. Macgroarty, when the suggestion was made to him, rejected it. It would be impossible, because the boundaries differ. Take the Brisbane Federal electorate. There is no Paddington subdivision in the State roll. It is not in the Baroona or Ithaca electorates. The electorate of Brisbane takes in parts of North Brisbane, Kelvin Grove, Ithaca, Baroona and Toowong. Part of the Baroona electorate is known as Paddington on the Federal roll. How could the Federal roll be used in these circumstances? The use of the Federal roll was considered some time ago, but the suggestion was rejected.

Mr. Hilton: "The Courier-Mail" may be able to tell us how to do it.

Mr. POWER: Probably, and probably the Government Parties will be able to tell us.

Let me examine the electoral system. The application for enrolment is sent to the Electoral Office, where it is recorded, and then sent to the Printing Office. Rolls are compiled as quickly as possible. I think it was the hon. member for Kelvin Grove who said that some ballot papers were found underneath a house or underneath some steps. I take it he was referring to unused ballot papers. All that proves is that the scrutineer, the returning officer or the presiding officer did not do his job correctly. If the correct procedure had been followed, the scrutineer would have checked the number of ballot papers issued to the presiding officer, and the number used, and he could have struck a balance by counting the number left, but apparently he did not do that.

Mr. Burrows: He would be a school teacher.

Mr. POWER: He might be.

If a returning officer makes a mistake, the Government or the electoral machinery cannot be blamed for it. Returning officers are not nominated by any Party. I have mentioned from time to time that in the main they are public servants. They are Crown employees and we have some control or hold over them. I do not know of any returning officer who would give any favour to anyone.

Mr. Tooth: I do not think they do.

Mr. POWER: I can assure the hon. member that had I known of it I would not have hesitated to remove him from his position. If we take away from the people their democratic rights we would fall into the position that operates in dictatorship countries. Ballot papers are sent to the various polling places throughout the State by post and plane at times on account of floods and when they are handed over they are counted. The scrutineers for the parties are present to see what is going on. I was a scrutineer for many years and I know what takes place. Nobody can tell me that the scrutineer for a particular party would not be watching to see what is done. I do not know what is behind the belief of Government members. They have not furnished one bit of evidence to the Committee to show that there has been any malpractice or that anybody has been victimised as the result of the numbering of ballot papers. The first instance of malpractice occurred prior to the advent of a Labour Government. The numbering of ballot papers allows investigation to be made by the Elections Tribunal to see if there has been any alteration to a ballot paper.

Mr. Tooth: Why does the Labour Party object to the numbering?

Mr. POWER: The Labour Party has a right to vary its platform. It is not bound hand and foot to one platform. For instance, the platform was recently varied in regard to the socialisation of industry. The party has that prerogative. As a matter of fact I do not think it will be long before everybody will swing over to our policy.

Mr. Tooth: It will not be long before you are over here.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member has no chance of getting me over there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. POWER: I see no justification for the proposition for the elimination of the numbering of ballot papers. I can see a great danger in it. The way would be left open to fraud and corruption and there would be no means of checking it. I referred to the days of Paddy Perkins in 1880 when more votes were cast than there were electors on the rolls. In those days you could print your own ballot papers or have them printed for you. The elimination of numbering would

destroy the whole foundation of democracy. If the Government can point to one case where a man has been victimised, criminal action can be taken against the person responsible because it is an offence to expose the secrecy of the ballot. I urge that no alteration be made in the present system.

It seems likely that there will be a redistribution of seats in the near future, and it must be a terrible headache for both parties on the Government side. Each of them will be trying to make sure that the other does not swallow it.

In conclusion I pay a sincere compliment to the officers of the State Electoral Office on their excellent work.

Mr. RAMSDEN (Merthyr) (2.51 p.m.): I have listened to members of the Australian Labour Party and the Queensland Labour Party for so long that if they keep going much longer they will soon be able to celebrate the centenary of their very virile propaganda department.

Mr. Power: You have a very shaky hold on Merthyr.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I realise that. That is why I am speaking now.

At the outset, I shall have very little to say on the numbering of ballot papers. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove covered the ground adequately this morning. In spite of everything that has been said by Government members, however, it does not seem to infiltrate into the minds of hon. members opposite that we are not asserting that the numbering of the ballot papers interferes with the secrecy of the ballot. Our point is that many people in the community believe that because ballot papers are numbered, their votes can be scrutinised and identified.

Recently I was in the country and was talking to a member of the Australian Workers' Union. Surely hon. members opposite will not allege that he would be on my side.

Mr. Lloyd interjected.

Mr. RAMSDEN: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition cannot tell me that. The man to whom I am referring was a union representative on the job. He said to me, "I hope you fellows keep your election promises." I said, "What promises are you referring to?" He said, "I hope you get rid of the numbers on the ballot papers and give us court-controlled ballots."

Government Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members to allow me to hear what the hon. member for Merthyr has to say.

Mr. RAMSDEN: The Government have not made any accusation against the propriety of the officials in the State Electoral Office. The secrecy of the ballot to a large extent is destroyed by the present method of

handling absent and postal votes long before they reach the returning officer. I suggest that we examine a number of points. The hon. member for Barooka took me to task for saying by interjection that at the last election one party had postal vote applications long before they were available to the other parties. I repeat that statement.

Mr. Lloyd: What party was that?

Mr. RAMSDEN: The party that had it in Merthyr was the Q.L.P. The endorsed Labour candidate asked me if I could spare him some postal vote application forms because he could not get them. I am being as honest as the hon. member was.

Mr. Power: I still say he did not get them from the Electoral Office.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I do not care where he got them.

Mr. Power: He could have had them over from last year. I had some over from last year myself. (Laughter).

Mr. RAMSDEN: That may be so. I am not holding any brief for the A.L.P. but I know that the endorsed Labour candidate and I had both applied for application forms and had been told they were not available. The very day we got them I called at a house to leave one and the woman said, "I filled one in last week." It was not for the A.L.P. or the Liberals and there were only three candidates. The postal vote system has got out of hand and the only way to ensure that justice is done is to take all postal vote applications out of the hands of all political parties, including the Liberal Party.

Mr. Davies: How would you do it?

Mr. RAMSDEN: It can be done.

Mr. Davies: Tell us.

Mr. RAMSDEN: Nobody has to go around filling in application forms for Commonwealth Scholarships for people or for those who want to take out education awards and nobody needs to tout for postal votes. I use the word "tout" advisedly. The whole postal vote system should be revised and taken out of the hands of all political parties. It should be left entirely to the electoral office and the returning officers. I suggest further that it be made an offence for any person other than a member of the family to pick up a postal vote.

The secrecy of the ballot through the postal vote in Queensland has almost been destroyed. After the primary count in Merthyr in the last election, I had a very small majority—I think about 182—and although some 750 votes were outstanding, both my opponents came to me and said, "Congratulations! You have won." I could not quite see why as there were so many postal votes outstanding. The amazing part of it was that both candidates were able to

tell me within 20 how many postal votes were cast in their favour. When the returning officer opened those votes and recorded them there was a discrepancy of 25 at the most.

Mr. Lloyd: How many out were you?

Mr. RAMSDEN: I was well out.

Mr. Lloyd: Would not you say they would be able to assess it from their experience at previous elections?

Mr. RAMSDEN: Of course they can assess it because they go to the homes. I have seen it done and I have heard of its being done. They say, "Here is an application form. Fill it in. We will return it to the returning officer." They know very well at what time and by which mail the postal vote will be received and a representative of the Party is there ready to pick it up. If any hon. member wants to argue on that, I can instance a phone call I had from one family asking me if a certain gentleman was authorised by the Liberal Party to pick up postal votes as he had been round that morning claiming that he had been. We had no-one at that time picking up votes. I draw that to the attention of the Minister for Justice.

An A.L.P. Member: You will be a wake-up yourself now.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I am awake to the hon. member.

Mr. Lloyd: You would not have won it if you had done anything about it.

Mr. RAMSDEN: That is very funny, in view of the next comments I should like to make. For years now the Liberal candidate has been defeated on postal votes. I have the figures issued by the returning officer for the electoral district of Merthyr. Do not tell me that we are here on a minority vote. I shall save hon. members opposite the trouble of making interjections. Of the ordinary votes polled at polling booths I received 36.66 per cent., but under Section 71—the postal votes we are talking about—my average dropped almost 10 per cent. to 27.76 per cent. It is amazing to consider that when the voters go to the polling booth where everything is open and above board the figure is 36.66 yet when they vote in the privacy of their own homes my majority drops by nearly 10 per cent! It bears out my grave suspicions.

Let me point to another abuse again borne out by documentary evidence. We were told this morning, I think by the Leader of the Opposition, that once a postal vote was issued a voter could not get another vote. I agree with what he said. However, he can get another vote, as a matter of fact. It happened here. Somebody drew a postal vote only to go somewhere else and vote absentee.

Mr. Lloyd: There must have been a mistake on the part of the returning officer.

Mr. RAMSDEN: There was a mistake, and the returning officer has advised me of the mistake.

The hon. member for Mundingburra referred to the high percentage in Townsville. He said that 1 in 15 were sick, aged, infirm, or, to use his own words, pregnant. Again referring to the official figures from the returning officer, out of a total enrolment of 8603 for the electoral district of Merthyr 497 people were either sick, aged, infirm, or pregnant. In other words, 1 in every 17 or 18 people on the roll came within that category.

Plural voting is another abuse I wish to refer to. I do not know what the Minister for Justice can do about it. Like the Bulimba fraud, you know it is there, but it is hard to drive home a charge. I have a page and a half from the returning officer showing that in the small electorate of Merthyr there were 30 people who voted in two centres.

I venture to suggest that most of these people who did vote plural were not my supporters. I do not know exactly what we can do to stop it. While on the matter of abuses, I might mention another one. Up to and including the 1956 election the Labour Party was determined that no matter what happened they had to hold power. I know that from my experience as a defeated candidate at that election. During the 1957 election there was a vast change. I do not know whether I may be telling family secrets, but the position was this: I had two Labour opponents and one of them said to me, "If we cannot get in I hope you win." I commend him for his good thinking. The other party said the same thing. When we were to come to the returning officer's count my political opponents were warning me to watch for all sorts of things in order to make sure that I was not done out of my seat. I shall tell the House what some of these things were.

Mr. Davies: I heard about this: they said it was a great joke.

Mr. RAMSDEN: It must have been a great joke. One of the parties warned me to make sure that the envelopes containing the votes had not been steamed open. One of them said, "You want to watch, when they steam them open and the vote is against the Party they want to get in they either deliberately mark it so that it will be counted as informal or they forget to witness it."

Mr. Power: Is that the way you won the election?

Mr. RAMSDEN: In the returning officer's office one of the other parties challenged the postal vote date stamp on an envelope. He said to the returning officer, "I want you to check that date on the envelope containing the ballot against the date on the brown envelope, because a vote is ruled out of order if posted after the due date." According to the Act there was no way in which the returning officer could open the

white envelope and check the date (on the brown envelope). Under the Act it has to be returned to the Clerk of Parliament (in the sealed white envelope).

I was warned to watch where the votes had been cast in pencil and make sure they had not been obliterated and another name written in. These things were calmly told to me by members of the opposing party in the hope that I would win the seat. The hon. member for Barooka says, "Is that how you won the election?", to which I can say, "That is how the Labour Party held power for 25 years."

Mr. Davies: Why not bring in sworn statements, instead of this idle prattle?

Mr. RAMSDEN: It has become idle banter only since the split in the Opposition.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition seemed to be very worried about the redistribution of electorates.

Mr. Lloyd: I have not spoken.

Mr. RAMSDEN: It may have been the hon. member for Bremer. The statement was that the Government were deliberately delaying the redistribution, that we were too frightened to touch it and that we would have no part of it. It is a very weighty subject, not to be dealt with lightly. The Government will give it the serious thought warranted by such an important subject, but I assure hon. members opposite that when the Government do the job there will be no weighting of electorates in favour of any party.

Mr. Lloyd: Tell us about gerry-mandering.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I am sorry that I cannot do that. No pupil can teach his master.

I draw the Minister's attention to what my returning officer described as a ludicrous state of affairs. Section 48 (2) of the Act reads—

"After every election the returning officer shall pay to each of the candidates who has duly retired from his candidature or who has been returned without a poll, or who has declared a number of votes equal at least to such fifth part whether he is declared elected or not, all moneys so paid by or for him."

That sounds sensible, but it is not as sensible as it appears, because frequently candidates cannot personally lodge their deposit money. A candidate will say to his brother or campaign director or someone else, "When you are in town, will you pay my deposit for me?" The campaign director or some other person pays the deposit, but after the election the campaign director does not receive the refund; it goes direct to the candidate.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. RAMSDEN: From the many interjections it is clear that the A.L.P. got all the refunds.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (3.14 p.m.): After listening to hon. members opposite I have learned quite a deal about the devious ways of interfering with ballots. I did not imagine that the human mind could conceive as many devices as that. I am satisfied I am in the kindergarten class. It is amazing that I have ever succeeded in winning an election.

Government members give much advice, but rarely practise what they preach. They have mentioned the shortcomings of the present system and incidents that have occurred from time to time, but have not instituted steps to correct that state of affairs. The Government, of course, have been in office for a short time only but Opposition members will watch with interest whichever steps they may take to remedy the faults. Quite a deal has been said about the creation of a fear complex. The greatest threat is Press advertisements, radio broadcasts and other means of publicity arranged by hon. members opposite. This propaganda is having a devastating effect on the minds of the people. Advertisements in newspapers appear over the signature of the campaign director of the party concerned. We on this side of the Chamber are not offenders in this respect to any great extent. The Act lays it down specifically that not more than a certain amount shall be spent on advertising but hon. members opposite have spent not hundreds but thousands of pounds in this way. What are they going to do about the fear they put into the minds of the people by their broadcasts? That is something that will have to be corrected.

There is another matter, one that concerns seasonal or casual workers who have perhaps left the district in which they were living and whose names appear on the rolls. In my electorate, because of businesses closed down and for other reasons, hundreds of electors were deprived of their votes. In many cases people removed to another street in the electorate. I checked and found that 18 had moved from one street to another and although their names appeared on the roll they were not living at the address given. There were 800 electors erased from the Townsville roll at the last election, but the amazing thing is that one by the name of Charles Cleveland Giffin who was senior vice-president of the Liberal Party in Townsville had shifted from Hale Street 18 months before to another electorate in the Townsville district, but his name was not erased from the roll. How was it that his name was left on? I suppose you can place the blame for that at the door of the former Government, but the onus is on the individual. He failed to carry out his obligations under the Act when he went to another electorate. His name was in the Townsville telephone

book after he had moved to another electorate. He wanted to vote against me and under the Act he could claim a vote.

Mr. Power: You could have lodged an objection if his name was on the roll.

Mr. KEYATTA: We did. Doubtless, in addition to the case of Charles Giffin, there were many others. As I say, 800 names were erased from the Townsville roll.

Mr. Dewar: There will be a lot more next time.

Mr. KEYATTA: And Townsville will become a much stronger electorate, to the sorrow of the hon. members opposite. In the 18½ years that I have been in Parliament, at every election it has been thought that I would be defeated. However, I am still here.

Nothing affects the liberty of the subject more than tactics that are designed to intimidate the people and make them afraid. The greatest offenders are the professional propagandists whose services can be bought by hon. members opposite. I suppose that 90 per cent. of the people who are influenced by their intimidatory tactics are supporters of the Australian Labour Party.

Mr. Pizzey: What happened when you lodged your objection?

Mr. KEYATTA: I do not know whether we got a reply. The man whose name I mentioned—he is a member of the hon. gentleman's party—should have set a better example. He is our butcher and we know him very well. He exercised a vote which should have been in another electorate. He should have transferred to another electoral roll within a month, but his name was on the Townsville roll for 18 months after he left the electorate. By a strange coincidence, it was not erased when the other 800 names were. I would not have raised this matter but for the charges that were made in such a subtle way by members of the Government.

Mr. GARDNER (Rockhampton) (3.24 p.m.): I compliment the Minister on his elevation to Cabinet rank. At the outset, I should like to say a few words on electoral reform. In spite of what many of us may say in the heat of an election fight, generally speaking all those who have been associated with politics over a number of years appreciate the excellent work that has been done by electoral officers throughout the State.

Members of past Labour Governments should never feel downhearted or disturbed at their opponents' criticism. They have done well in keeping up to date the electoral legislation of the State and giving the people every voting facility and privilege. It all comes back to the presumption that in this modern age the people are sufficiently educated to understand the meaning of the Elections Acts.

It is rather disturbing to have people like the hon. member for Merthyr suggesting changes in the handling of postal votes. Hon. members are aware of the difficulties. It is no good the Liberal Party suggesting that Labour men are behind the scenes with postal votes. It is not so in my electorate and I do not think it is so in the electorate of any other Labour member. It can be said that the Liberal Party has led the way in the field of working in the interests of postal voters. Aged people and other workers support Labour principles just as some who require postal votes support the Liberal Party, and they all want the system to be fair.

What is wrong with the facilities provided by the Act? All petty criticisms and arguments must be considered very carefully and acted on judiciously, if at all. In most cases they lack foundation and cannot stand up to tests. Labour's opponents have been unable to point to any serious anomalies or weaknesses because of the numbering of ballot papers. I have never heard that anyone was greatly interested in the numbers. Scrutineers are interested in having the figure placed against the name of the candidate, but there is no reason to doubt the honesty of purpose in a general way of returning officers, presiding officers and poll clerks. Mistakes can be made, but over the years they have been very few, and they have been bona fide. The officers have done a magnificent job throughout the State. In the heat of electioneering, many statements are made. Electoral officers have no protection whatever against criticism by the representatives of political parties and candidates.

In the last election at Rockhampton I was very disturbed at the attitude of my opponent and some of his colleagues, especially when Mr. Duggan was there. They waved two affidavits at the public meeting and claimed that the Queensland Labour Party had received postal votes from inmates of a benevolent institution there on false pretences. I refuted it in the Press. Everything that was done was done in accordance with the Act.

People get up on public platforms and make all sorts of statements about something being wrong. The officer in charge on this occasion was a police magistrate, a public servant of 40 years' standing. Would he be sufficiently interested in Gardner or Fraser or Mrs. Pilbeam to place his own job in jeopardy? Unfortunately the official who is acting in the best interests of this great democratic institution to enable the people of the State to exercise their right of franchise has no redress. The stigma is left and after the election is over nothing is done about it—no apologies are tendered. That is the only matter I wished to raise. I think all other points have been thoroughly thrashed out. I have yet to learn from hon. members opposite why Labour should feel in any way disappointed about the legislation enacted over a period of years for the benefit of the people of the State.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (3.32 p.m.): I am very glad to see that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove is still in the Chamber. For his edification I shall read from the Queensland Statutes of 1884 to 1887—

“An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws relating to Parliamentary Elections and to make better Provision for Preventing Corrupt Practices at such Elections.”

The Elections Act of 1885, assented to on 19 October, 1885, very clearly stated that it was introduced to prevent corrupt practices at elections. Section 71 reads—

“The presiding officer shall then, and before delivery of the ballot paper to the elector, fold down the corner of the paper so as to entirely conceal the number so written, and shall securely fasten the fold with gum or otherwise in such a manner that the number cannot be discovered without unfastening the fold.”

It may be very informative to hon. members opposite if I tell them that that legislation was introduced in 1885 by Sir Samuel Griffiths. The Australian Labour Party were not elected as the Government of Queensland until 1915. If there is anything wrong with numbering ballot papers, it seems that Sir Samuel Griffiths was the perpetrator of the wrongful practice. That effectively disposes of the point raised by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove when he referred to it as a practice introduced by the Australian Labour Party. Indeed it was introduced by Sir Samuel Griffiths, a representative of the predecessors of hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove agreed with the Minister—and I also agree—that there have not been any incidents shown where the numbering of ballot papers has destroyed the secrecy of the vote. Why all the talk about fear unless they themselves are the people who have attempted to destroy this democratic right, as Hitler did, by introducing a fear complex into the minds of the public as a whole and at the same time attempting to secure political capital out of legislation which was introduced by their predecessors? The hon. member for Merthyr made a number of irresponsible statements, one of which was in relation to postal votes. I doubt the truth of his allegations which cannot be substantiated. The hon. member made a number of statements about the majority which the Australian Labour Party received in past elections from postal votes. The postal vote is generally exercised by the sick and the aged section of the community. It is generally recognised that this section traditionally votes Labour. At Grovely, in my electorate, I received 769 votes compared with 104 for the Liberal Party. At Kedron I got a minority vote. There are two different types of voters. The same applies to absentee voting. I had a slight majority over the Liberal Party. Wild statements were made by the hon. member for Kelvin Grove and the hon. member for Merthyr, but let us be factual and truthful and get down to the basis of

our State electoral laws. Running right through that legislation is the principle that nothing shall obstruct an elector in the exercise of his entitlement to a vote. There shall be no obstruction by a presiding officer, a returning officer or any other person. It is essential that that should be considered carefully before any amendment is made to our electoral laws. That salient feature of our legislation—that nothing shall obstruct the elector in the exercise of his entitlement to a vote—must be maintained. There is one important feature which I wish to bring before the notice of the Minister in relation to the casting of absent votes. In the past it has not been the practice of the State Electoral Office to open on Saturday morning. People work during the week and having Saturday off they come to town, and it should be possible for them to cast their vote in the city. Of course they can go to the returning officer in their electorate but this other facility should be provided. I suggest to the Minister that he give serious consideration to the opening of the electoral office on Saturdays during the election campaign, in order to give the people that additional facility to cast an absent vote. In many cases people leave the State and never cast a vote. They find that they cannot make application for a postal vote. If they were given this extra facility it would be a great advantage to them.

Government members have not followed tradition by raising gerrymandering of State electoral boundaries. Their statements have rebounded, and they have come to realise that the present system is not too bad after all. They have been returned as the Government on a minority vote. Hon. members who can cast their minds back several sessions will remember speaker after speaker of the then Opposition raising the subject of gerrymandering in this State. I shall give an example of it in South Australia. Mr. Stevens, the hon. member for Port Adelaide in the South Australian Legislative Assembly, who visited this Parliament, informed me that there are 33,000 electors in that electorate. He secures a greater vote than the combined vote of the six members of the South Australian Cabinet who are members of the Legislative Assembly. After all there was some semblance of electoral honesty under the previous Government. They instituted an honest form of electoral distribution. The Government having been returned on a minority vote should be pleased with the system of distribution here compared with the system in South Australia. The example I have given indicates dishonesty in State boundaries in South Australia and failure of that Government to uphold the traditional system of democracy.

I should think the Minister will administer the Acts as they have been administered in the past, that he will endeavour to maintain a system that will ensure adequate representation for the residents of country and

metropolitan electorates. I believe he will institute a system capable of the closest scrutiny in the interests of stable government such as Queensland has enjoyed in the past.

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (3.42 p.m.): The hon. member for Kedron paused during his speech. His tongue was so far into his cheek that he bit it. He went to great pains to prove something about the electoral boundaries in South Australia. He need have no fear that Government members are not thinking about gerrymandering. The subject has been discussed by them at length and action will be taken in due course. There is no need to talk about it; we are in the box seat and in a position to do something about it, and hon. members opposite can rest assured that we will do something about it.

The hon. member for Kedron said that legislation for the numbering of ballot papers was introduced by Sir Samuel Griffith in 1885. Hon. members opposite do not frequently emulate action taken in 1885, but it suits them on this matter to do so. I do not care whether Sir Samuel Griffith or anyone else introduced the system in 1885; if it stinks, it stinks, and that is all there is to it. The fact that the previous Government perpetuated the policy proves that it was to their advantage.

As far as I know, Queensland is the only State where ballot papers are numbered, and there is only one reason for it—to create a fear complex in the average citizen that someone, somewhere, at some time will find out how he voted. That is the only reason why numbers are kept on the ballot papers in this State. It is the fear complex that has existed under Labour Governments who keep the screws on people in every walk of life. They were able to create in the minds of the people the thought of intimidation that somebody could find out how a person voted. I know that the system is sound and that no one can touch a ballot paper except under the instruction of a Supreme Court Judge. I know that, but the man in the street does not know it. He has the fear and there is no way you can dispel that fear from his mind. The system has worked to the advantage of the Australian Labour Party, because a man who was prepared to vote against Labour was not game enough to do so, because of the fear that somebody in the Government could find out how he voted. I shall do everything in my power to see that the numbering of ballot papers is not continued. Have hon. members ever heard of election scandals in the other States? Have they ever heard of election scandals in the Federal sphere? No, yet in the other States and in the Commonwealth there is no system of numbering. They do not need them. There has been no electoral problem arising as a result of elections in those States. The

Australian Labour Party with bogies of fraud and rigging of ballots have created the present position.

There has been a great deal of talk about the problems of postal voting and again I say that I shall do everything in my power to see that there is a correction of the methods employed round hospitals in regard to voting by patients. I draw your attention, Mr. Taylor, to the scandal that took place at the Diamantina Hospital this year. A woman associated with the collection of the forms and the finalisation of ballot papers on behalf of the Liberal Party, who lives in my electorate, a woman of the highest possible character, told me that when she went there the first day to collect applications for postal votes an old man was sitting up in bed quivering and distressed. She told him who she was and who she represented and he said, "Thank God you have come at last. I have been sitting here for a week watching the corruption going on in this institution. We have seen the stooges and hangers-on of the Labour Party not only collecting applications to deliver postal votes but forging the signatures of old men on them. They have also forged signatures on the postal votes." That is the type of corruption that went on and I shall use every effort to see that it is wiped out of the electoral system.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (3.49 p.m.): We have had a most interesting debate on this vote and that is as it should be because I cannot think of any particular subject of more importance for the preservation of our democracy, than that we should have fairness and cleanness in electoral matters. How could we expect the people to have confidence in this Parliament if they are not assured that our electoral laws are as fair and clean as it is practicable to make them?

This afternoon various points of view have been put from both sides of the Committee. On occasions they have been put rather vigorously. Notwithstanding that there may at times have been a little repetition, the cases for and against have been put very soundly. In the short time left to me I should like to supplement my remarks on this subject during the debate on the Chief Office Vote by reviewing briefly the more important issues that have been discussed.

The first matter to which I should like to refer is the rather contentious one of the numbering of ballot papers. In discussing it at an earlier stage I conceded that there were some advantages as well as disadvantages in it. However, I strongly support the view that has since been expressed very vigorously from this side of the Committee that there is a great disadvantage in it because undoubtedly many people in the community fear that it may result in violating the secrecy of the ballot. The electoral laws of the Commonwealth and the other States work quite well without the

numbering of ballot papers. I do not intend, off the cuff, to make any announcement of Government policy on this matter, but I shall express my own views in fairly general terms. We must approach this subject with an open mind. If we can get rid of the evil of having some people very timid about casting their votes, we must do so. At the same time, it is necessary for us to study the procedure of the Commonwealth and the other States to see whether, if we do dispense with the numbering of ballot papers, we can still be assured that there is an adequate safeguard against fraud.

Mr. Davies: What percentage of the people do you think are really affected by the numbering of ballot papers?

Mr. MUNRO: I have been practising as a chartered accountant for far too long to state a percentage off-hand. However, enough people are affected by a fear complex to make us dispense with the numbering of ballot papers if we can possibly do so. We want to evolve a system whereby we can get rid of the numbering of ballot papers but remain reasonably sure that we have every practicable safeguard against fraud.

Mr. Power: Can we take it that you will not do anything about removing the numbers until you get another system?

Mr. MUNRO: I would not say that, but in the process of removing the numbers we will consider every practical method of retaining proper safeguards. For example, there is the initialling of ballot papers by the presiding officer before they are handed out. That might be a better safeguard than the numbering of the ballot papers. One thing that concerns me greatly is the handling of the ballot papers before they are issued to the elector. Numbering is quite useful at that stage. It would be a safeguard to have the ballot papers printed in books with numbered butts. Of course, no distinguishing number would appear on the ballot papers.

Mr. Power: How would you check fraud in that way?

Mr. MUNRO: I have not the time to answer too many questions.

Another matter that was raised was postal voting. It was referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Mundingburra, the hon member for Cherm-side, and other speakers. It is a difficult problem. We must make provision for people who through illness or other causes cannot vote in person. I do not think there is very much wrong with existing provisions.

Mr. Power: I do not know how you are going to improve on them.

Mr. MUNRO: We may be able to improve on the way they are carried out. A balance must be struck. There have been some questionable practices with postal

voting and as far as possible they should be discontinued. On the other hand, we do not want to bring in a whole series of regulations and practices, like having butchers make out meat docketts, making the system so complex as to be unworkable. However, consideration will be given to all the points that have been raised.

Mr. Davies: No matter what you did, judging by what we have heard today there would always be someone who would be able to think of a way out of it.

Mr. MUNRO: That may be so, but the whole history of the making of laws and the perfecting of administration has been to concentrate on finding means of dealing with the rogue without making the path too difficult for the honest man.

I say unequivocally that if we can find a practicable way of getting them, uniform rolls for Commonwealth and State purposes will be a great advantage. Again, I know the difficulties. As the hon. member for Baroona pointed out, uniform rolls will not give very much relief without uniform boundaries. It would be very simple to make the boundaries uniform but that would have other disadvantages. We may have to compromise a little and adopt the practice of the other States that have the one roll for both purposes.

Finally, I thank hon. members for their contribution and I express my appreciation to all the members of my department. If I am permitted to do so on this Vote, I include all the officers of the Department of Justice, not merely those in the Electoral office. It makes the work of the public servant much harder to have new members of a Ministry taking over. By and large the departmental heads have adhered to the highest traditions of the Public Service. They have endeavoured to leave their politics at home. The ship has changed direction somewhat and the change of Government has created new problems, and placed greater burdens on them. They have risen to the occasion and helped to the best of their ability.

At 4 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 29 October, I shall now put the questions necessary for the Vote under consideration and for the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Justice.

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

Department of Justice—	£
Electoral Registration ..	134,553
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds	1,202,318

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Hon. J. A. HEADING (Marodian—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (4.1 p.m.): I move—

“That £153,546 be granted for ‘Department of Public Works and Local Government—Chief Office’.”

Mr. Aikens: Not half enough.

Mr. HEADING: I agree with the interjection. On three occasions the Estimates were cut because of the restriction of loan moneys and revenue. I for one would have been very happy to spend much more money in this department between now and the end of the financial year. Unfortunately the money is not available so this time I agree with the hon. member for Mundingburra. It is appropriate that I should refer to the work done by the department in the last financial year. The Committee will realise, of course, that I was not responsible for the work done during the year but I am responsible for giving a report on the department's operations over that period.

The Department of Public Works is the building constructing authority for all State Government departments, apart from the Railway Department which has its own construction organisation. We work in the closest co-operation with other departments. Let me clear up one misunderstanding. Many people think that because the department is not building a police station in one centre or a school in another centre, it is not helping the areas concerned. The department for which we build give their views on what work should receive priority. We discuss school construction with the Department of Education so that we will have their opinion about what school buildings should receive priority.

Mr. Wood: Do you believe that the Department of Education should have their own separate works department?

Mr. HEADING: Definitely not. I used to think that before I became Minister for Public Works. I have changed my mind since I have taken over the portfolio, particularly because the co-operation between the two departments has increased in recent months.

Mr. Wood: In what way has it increased?

Mr. HEADING: Because we consult one another. I remember the time when if you went to the Department of Education about a matter they would tell you to go to the Department of Public Works. They did not like to do the asking. The position has changed today. We have constant consultation between the two departments. We discuss the desirability of erecting new schools. It is not I or my department who decides the priority. We build to the requirements of the department affected. We build

for all departments with the exception of the Railway Department. The department is responsible for the design and construction of new public buildings, additions, and improvements to existing buildings, as well as for the maintenance and servicing of existing Government buildings. When you realise that is done all over Queensland you will realise what a big job it is. In the main the department's building activities extend to all parts of the State and are directed to the erection and maintenance of educational establishments, Government hospitals, maternity hospitals, court houses, police stations and to the provision and maintenance of administrative offices for the housing of the various Government departments throughout the State. The total amount expended on buildings during the year was £3,646,462, and £3,562,178 was expended during the previous financial year. Having regard to building conditions generally, such an expenditure indicates that a heavy programme of building construction and maintenance has been carried out. Of the total amount expended on buildings a sum of £2,114,615 was expended in providing accommodation for educational requirements representing 58 per cent. of the total expenditure on buildings.

Mr. Wood: Would you give an indication of how many teachers' dwellings were constructed this year?

Mr. HEADING: I can give those figures now. Did the hon. gentleman say residences?

Mr. Wood: Yes.

Mr. HEADING: An amount of £60,000 has been allocated on this Department's 1957-1958 Loan Programme for the provision of school residences. Nineteen centres have been selected to date by the Department of Education at which it is desired erection of residences be commenced during the current financial year. The position with respect to these centres is as follows:—Tenders have already been accepted for Cloyna, Balaclava, Mothar Mt., Magnolia, Dalcooth, Shirbourne, and Yerra, making a total of seven. Tenders are being accepted for Brigalow and Jackson. Plans and specifications are being developed for the purposes of calling tenders for Benarkin, Laravale, Peachester, Yorkeys Knob, Bowenville, Mirriwinni, Berrembea, Cedar Pocket, Bushy Creek and Cannon Valley, a total of 10. The total altogether is 19, and in addition a residence has been purchased at Aratula. We have built other houses for other departments besides the Education Department. More than once, when sitting on the Opposition benches, I asked the Government why they were not able to build more residences for school teachers. Last year they built about two and other years they built four or five or six, yet at the same time they were building hundreds of houses round the city. I wondered why they could not build houses for school teachers who occupy a fairly high position in the community, and were expected to live in any old house. We set out to build houses for school

teachers. This year we speeded it up to 19 or 20 with the house that we bought. Next year we hope to increase that number greatly. Owing to the shortage of loan funds and the necessity to provide accommodation for primary schools and State High schools, it has not been possible to meet the requirements of all the Departments. Indeed, within the priority work of schools it has been necessary to confine expenditure largely to the provision of basic classroom accommodation. One of the difficulties was the shortage of surveyors. In addition to our own architects we have employed outside architects. Every action is being taken in order to improve the position. I hope that next year we shall get more money for school houses. This will be a dire necessity in view of the rate of increase in the numbers of children reaching school age, and the overcrowded state of the schools.

Mr. Davies: Do you think the prospects are bright for getting that money?

Mr. HEADING: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." I suggest that we wait and see. It will be noted that of the total expenditure on buildings of £3,646,462, the amount expended on State educational establishments was £2,114,615. School attendances continued to increase, and it has been necessary to erect new school buildings in various centres and to provide additional classrooms at a large number of schools throughout the State. In recent years there has also been a great demand for accommodation for State high school purposes. This problem is increasing every year. More students desire secondary education, which means more buildings and more teachers, but I leave the latter aspect to the Minister for Education. Twenty new primary schools were completed or under construction during the year, which is a very good effort. I hope the Government can improve on the figure next year. Additional accommodation was provided at 153 other primary schools, a total of 319 classrooms being provided. In addition extensions were made to classrooms at 18 primary schools.

For a number of years there has been a considerable expansion in the provision of high school accommodation. A high school was completed at Camp Hill during the year and 64 additional rooms were provided at 19 existing high schools. The total number of new classrooms at high schools was 71. The amount voted for school buildings during the year 1956-1957 was £1,909,305. The actual expenditure on school buildings in that year was £2,114,615, or 10.8 per cent. more than the amount voted. This excess amount could only be provided by reducing expenditure on capital projects of other departments.

In addition to providing the buildings necessary to meet the educational requirements throughout the State, provision has also been made to meet the urgent requirements of other Government departments, particularly Government hospitals and asylums,

and public buildings generally. A major project under construction is the North Queensland Mental Hospital at Charters Towers. The kitchen block is almost complete and work continued on the chronic and senile ward, both of which are in an advanced stage of construction.

Installation of water and sewerage is also well advanced. Owing to the restriction in loan funds, it was not possible to undertake the erection of the convalescent ward last financial year, but work on this project was recently commenced. That job will be undertaken this year. At the Brisbane Mental Hospital the construction of the new block of buildings comprising the farm colony, is proceeding satisfactorily. The construction of a ward building for females at the Ipswich Mental Hospital is also proceeding satisfactorily. New buildings are also being constructed at other mental hospitals.

The maintenance of public buildings continued to be an important feature of the department's work. A large proportion of public buildings in the various parts of the State are of timber frame construction. Regular inspections are undertaken and repairs and painting carried out to ensure that these buildings are kept in a reasonable state of repair. In the past some of the people in charge of these buildings did not look after them and they got into a bad condition. We are endeavouring to overcome that. Queensland is divided into eight zones. Steps will be taken to see that these buildings are kept in a reasonable state of repair. That can be done if all officers do their job. In addition to the officers in charge of those zones the department employs inspectors.

The department has continued its policy of connecting public buildings, particularly schools to sewerage, where town sewerage systems are in operation and in other cases the installation of septic systems where the water supply is adequate and the absorptive capacity of the soil is satisfactory. The number of installations completed or under construction at schools and public buildings during the year was 46. In addition 15 other installations were authorised but were not commenced before the close of the financial year. Outside the metropolitan area water for septic systems is a problem. Unless water supply is satisfactory it is impossible to put in a septic system. The aim and objective of the Department of Education and Department of Public Works is to install them wherever possible.

To carry out its building programme satisfactorily branches of the department are set up in those centres of the State which offer the best facilities for de-centralisation. Each district office maintains its own day-labour staff of building trade operatives. Workshops are maintained by the department at Ipswich Road and Hamilton, Brisbane, for the manufacture of joinery, furniture and equipment at schools and other public buildings. These

workshops are equipped with modern wood-working machinery and the quality and workmanship of output is of a high standard equal to the requirements of the department.

As an employer of labour, the department has at all times played its part in the training of apprentices in each branch of the building trade. The intake of apprentices is proportionate to the number of journeymen employed in each particular trade, but the department endeavours to absorb the maximum number prescribed by the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929-1945. We are doing our share in the employment of apprentices and almost weekly I sign papers for apprentices to take up work. We only engage the number we are supposed to have in proportion to the number of journeymen employed.

The Sub-department of Immigration has continued to play an important part in the development of Queensland. It is responsible for the reception on arrival, transitory accommodation, welfare and after-care of British migrants who travel to Queensland under the Assisted Passages Scheme for personal nominees and the various Queensland Government sponsored schemes. It also offers advice and guidance to all migrants both British and non-British who choose Queensland as the land of their adoption. The State Government, under its Group Nomination Schemes, by acting as sponsor, has attracted good types of migrants to Queensland who otherwise would not have the opportunity of migrating to Australia.

This is a most interesting sub-department and we should care for it to the best of our ability. It is everybody's job to welcome new citizens to Queensland. We want to build up the population of Australia and in Queensland we should do our share to that end. It is really everybody's job to see that the people who come to the State get an opportunity to make good. If people come here and make good they will write favourable reports to their relatives and friends and so encourage others to come here. We want people to come here and we want them to write home to say that the people of Australia will give everyone who comes here a right royal welcome amongst friends.

Mr. Davies: Don't you think that the Immigration Department in Queensland has done a good job over the last five or six years?

Mr. HEADING: I have not said a word against the sub-department. Since I took over I can say that it has done an excellent job. I am not being critical of what the previous Government did. If I see that a department is doing a good job I say so, but I shall draw attention to some things that need correcting.

The total expenditure for the year inclusive of administration was £4,427,264. This sum was £128,464 in excess of the sum expended during the previous year. Of the total expenditure £1,068,697 was provided

from Consolidated Revenue, £3,082,150 from Loan Fund, £129,072 from Trust Fund and £147,345 by other departments.

Building expenditure totalled £3,646,462. Of this amount, the sum of £2,760,981 was provided from Loan Fund, £645,192 from Consolidated Revenue, £129,072 from Trust Fund, and £111,217 by other departments.

Building expenditure from Loan Funds was £84,758 less than the amount of £2,845,739 expended in the financial year 1955-1956 from Loan Fund.

The amount of £645,192 expended on the maintenance of Government buildings exceeded by £111,910 the amount so expended in the preceding financial year. Expenditure from Consolidated Revenue for services to Government buildings during the financial year 1956-1957 totalled £281,412, which sum was £18,779 in excess of the amount so expended during the previous financial year.

It will be noted that the total amount appropriated under the Chief Office Vote for the financial year 1957-1958, namely, £153,546, is £7,447 in excess of the amount so appropriated for the financial year 1956-1957, which was £146,099. The increase is accounted for by the fact that additional provision has been made to meet increased expenditure for salaries because of an increase in the number of officers being paid from Consolidated Revenue.

The increase on this account is partly offset by a decrease in the provision required for items of contingency expenditure, particularly for lump-sum payment for the cash equivalent of long-service leave.

Dealing with salaries, the appropriation of £105,546 now requested is £12,247 in excess of that appropriated for 1956-1957, and £14,054 in excess of that expended in the past financial year. The higher provision for salaries is required to meet increased salary payments due to the appointment of additional staff, award increases granted by the Industrial Court, and annual increments.

The variation in staff whose salaries are paid from Consolidated Revenue is as under—

Provision made in 1957-1958 ..	123
Provision made for 1956-1957 ..	108
	15
Increase ..	15

The additional staff is necessary to carry out the work of the department.

On contingencies, the appropriation of £48,000 is £4,800 less than the sum of £52,800 provided for 1957-1958 and £2,601 less than that expended for the past financial year. The decrease in the total amount required for contingencies is due in the main to the fact that an amount of £550 only is required for lump sum payments for the cash equivalent of long-service leave, whereas an amount of £4,700 was expended in 1956-1957. In addition a lesser amount is required for temporary assistance due to the retirement

of two temporary officers last year and their replacement by permanent staff. The decrease on these accounts is partly offset by provision being made for the purchase of a motor vehicle for use by the electrical and mechanical branch of the department and also for increase in general items of Contingency expenditure.

Increases and decreases in the Contingency estimates are as follows:—

Decreases—	£	£
Cash equivalent of long-service leave	4,150	
Temporary assistance	850	
	5,000	
Increases—		
Purchase of motor vehicle	1,000	
Purchase of stationery, etc.	400	
Pay-roll tax	250	
Incidentals	200	
Sundry small increases and decreases—		
Net increase	550	
	2,400	
Net decrease		£2,600

At this stage I intend to say something about what I found when I took over control of the Department of Public Works. I find it necessary to say it, particularly as hon. members opposite hold themselves up as the champions of the workers. Firstly, I shall refer to the conditions that I found in the department.

Mr. Keyatta: Be fair, be kind.

Mr. HEADING: I intend to be kind to the workers, whom I represent. The people of Queensland are now beginning to realise that the Tory Government, as hon. members opposite refer to us, are looking after the workers much better than Labour did. If hon. members opposite do not believe that, I ask those who have not visited the kitchen in this building to do so. Let them have a look at what the workers in the kitchen have had to put up with for years. When I was on the Refreshment Rooms Committee, Mr. Chalk, Mr. Plunkett and I tried to have something done about the conditions in the kitchen. I wrote a letter on behalf of the committee and described the conditions as appalling. The Premier agreed they were unsatisfactory. The architect's estimate of bringing the kitchen up to date, including a Temprite for cooling beer was just over £7,000. Surprisingly enough, all that came of it was that the Temprite was installed to cool the beer—an indication of how the minds of some people work. The staff were left to work in a smoky, sooty kitchen, probably the worst public kitchen in Brisbane. I have never seen a worse collection of saucepans in my life. The stove was bought back in 1888.

Mr. Gair: Nearly as old as yourself.

Mr. HEADING: Far too old.

Mr. Windsor: Sir Samuel Griffith bought it.

Mr. HEADING: Before that. The records show that it cost £200. Hon. members should go up and see it. It smokes shockingly. On four mornings recently the cook sent a message down to the manageress that she could not stay in the kitchen for the smoke. In another corner there is another worn-out gas stove and an arrangement for boiling. The only new thing about the place was a refrigerator. The only chair is an old squatter's chair, with the canvas worn out and replaced by a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch iron bar.

As to the amenities room—God help us if that is an amenities room.

Those are the conditions in which the so-called champions of the workers left the staff to work. Although I mentioned the matter last year I never expected to be handling it today. The Estimates in the past have never included 1s. for the improvement of the kitchen. We are supposed to be the enemies of the workers but we have been able to find £9,000 to bring it up to date. After all, this is Parliament House and with all the modern equipment that is available today we should not expect the staff to put up with what was installed 75 years ago. If some of Labour's supporters could see the kitchen they would never vote Labour again.

The previous Government could not find the money for more than two school houses. We have found enough for 19—and they did not leave the finances very rosy.

Mr. Aikens: Have you seen the dirty old sink the "Hansard" writers have to wash in upstairs?

Mr. HEADING: I have inspected the rooms of the "Hansard" staff and I am ashamed of them, too. The lighting is very bad. We have arranged for fluorescent lighting to be installed but it has not been done yet. I do not think it is fair to ask the "Hansard" staff to work under the conditions they have had to tolerate.

Parliament House should have the best facilities but take a look at the ladies' conveniences. There is only one retiring room for all the women on the lower floor—cleaners, typists, telephonists, and visitors. We will provide another as it is urgently needed. There is no amenities room. If a girl becomes ill she rests her head on her desk because there is no place for her to lie down.

Mr. Power: You might provide an amenities room for hon. members while you are on the job.

Mr. HEADING: The Labour members could not even look after themselves. How could they be expected to look after the people of Queensland? It will cost over £9,000 to bring the kitchen up to date. We

had hoped to build a kitchen on a level with the refreshment room but unfortunately the estimate was £24,000, including equipment. We just could not find that much money. The collection of soot and dirt on the walls will be scraped off, it will be painted throughout, and when it is finished I am quite sure all hon. members will be happy to eat a meal coming from the kitchen.

Mr. Gair: Tell us about the air-conditioned Minister's room.

Mr. HEADING: Is that the one the hon. member had?

Mr. Gair: No.

Mr. HEADING: I am glad that the hon. member for South Brisbane came in on that one. I have walked through the room he occupied—carpets to the wall, lovely chairs, refrigerator, everything that could be desired. I do not think there would be a better room in Queensland. I often wonder whether he wakes up at night worried by the fact that he forced the people upstairs to cook under such conditions. It is no good his saying that he did not know because he had a letter.

Mr. Wood: Who is using that room now?

Mr. HEADING: The Premier, as he should be. Nothing was too good for the ex-Premier and nothing was too bad for the kitchen staff.

Mr. Gair: Did he air-condition it?

Mr. HEADING: That will not keep the hon. member out of trouble. I stress again that the hon. member for South Brisbane knew of the conditions because we wrote him a letter. He knew that it would require over £7,000 to bring the kitchen up to date. All he did was spend £400 on a Temprite to cool the beer. One of the shearer members said, "You know, Jim, if we went to a station to shear and the kitchen was like that we would not stay. We would tell the boss he would have to fix it up." He took another look at it and said, "Fancy our wives being asked to cook in there!" I am not going to stress the matter any further but hon. members of the Labour Party who occupied the Treasury benches for the last 25 years were not the friends of the working people. Because they were out of sight these people were allowed to work under these conditions. Why they ever stayed there, I do not know.

I saw a number of girls walking up and down the stairs in the Treasury Building. The lift was there with the door open. I said to the attendant, "What is wrong with the lift? Why are the girls walking up and down the stairs?" He said, "They come down to the retiring room on this floor." I said, "What is wrong with the top floor?" He said, "There are not any there." When I asked him about the bottom floor he said, "There is none there

either.' There are over 300 girls working there who have to use the facilities between the first and second floors. I would not like to tie a dog up in the amenities room, let alone put a sick girl in there.

Mr. Aikens: What were the Ministers' rooms like?

Mr. HEADING: They are very nice. The Ministers looked after themselves very well. My room is a very nice one. I wondered how I could divide it. I could not very well do this because if I did I would lose the air and light from the windows. I am staggered at the accommodation after years of office by the Labour Government which pretended to look after the interests of the people who worked for wages. If they had not shifted the Statistician's Department and the Police Department they would be nearly sitting on one another. I did not know where to put them. This was the result of the neglect of the late Government in not providing for the future.

Mr. Gair: Many of your people criticised the purchase we made of extra accommodation.

Mr. HEADING: I never heard of any criticism. I know what the hon. gentleman did, I know of many things that he should have done and did not do. The lack of assistance to the worker by the late Government is staggering. It will need millions of money to get somewhere within reasonable distance of providing fair accommodation for the public servants of this State. On one occasion I spoke about the crowding in the Education office. Since I have been there I have decided that I was not too severe in my criticism. Today the conditions are fair, I assure you. There was a long veranda there and not a seat on it on which people could sit and have their meals. Meals were eaten where they did their work, and as one officer said to me, the crumbs brought cockroaches and they ate the papers. I draw attention to these matters so that if there is any complaint in the future I will be able to say, 'Read my speech when I introduced the Works Department's estimates and you will know what I thought about it.'

Mr. Aikens: Are you going to do anything about it?

Mr. HEADING: Have a look at it. I came from the bottom up. I have a great interest in the people who are battling to make a crust; and the effort of this Government will be a big one to improve the conditions of the staffs in the various offices.

Twice I spoke of the fact that Ministers kept their drivers sitting out in the sun. They could not sit in the cars; they were too hot. I appealed to them to put a seat on the veranda so that they could sit on it. The hon. member for Cooroora also raised it. But not a thing was done about it. After a little investigation I found that

I could buy chairs for £2 4s. each. About £20 provided chairs on which they can sit in the shade with comfort. They were most co-operative. I said to them, 'If you look after them and when you are finished stack them up inside, you will have seats for life.' That is something that could have been done for £20 but they would not do it. Yet they claim to look after the interests of the workers.

Unfortunately the ex-Minister in charge of Local Government is not here. The same amount of decay and lack of effort was evident in that department too. Take the town plan for instance which the Government had the right to veto or approve. I do not know how long the file has been in my office. The estimate varies from 3½ to 5 years. It has been there for a considerable time and in the meantime Brisbane has been growing like Topsy without any town plan. That can be laid at the door of the hon. member for Bundaberg, who did not do his job. The file has been in the archives of the Department of Local Government, being eaten by cockroaches and collecting dust. The very able Director of Local Government, Mr. Sewell, went to no end of trouble to read the submissions and acquaint himself with all aspects of town planning. As a matter of fact he wrote two books on the subject and suggested I read them. I think I am past the stage of studying town planning, but I will see that the job is done by somebody else. If the Labour Government had been returned to office, Brisbane would never have had a town plan.

I raise that in condemnation of the hon. member for Bundaberg.

Another matter I raise in criticism of him is the building of a new morgue. After a site was surveyed in the domain the argument started against the building of it there. The problem was too difficult for the ex-Treasurer and the file was left in the archives of the department. The building of a morgue is now a problem for me. I inspected it, and I should say it is as old as the stove in Parliament House. It will not be long before action is taken to build an up-to-date morgue. I visited Sydney and Melbourne and inspected the morgues in those places. This Government will erect an up-to-date morgue that is not repulsive. It will be surrounded by trees and shrubs.

The ex-Treasurer's action on the Films Commission was typical of him. Applications to the Commission are in some instances two years old; the members did not have the time to do the work. I could not imagine a better officer than Mr. Sewell, but he asked to be relieved of that work on the ground that he had too much other work to do. In the few months the Government have been in power new men have been selected as members of the Commission. Three or four applications have been dealt with and they are getting on with other work. I hope that before Christmas the lag will be over; it will be done as quickly as possible.

When discussing the Estimates of another department, one hon. member opposite said he hoped the Government would not do anything to destroy the stability of the government Queensland has enjoyed in the past. If the position in other departments is the same as in my department, it was certainly not stable administration. The worst thing that could happen to Queensland would be the return to power of the previous Government. Unless members of that Government improved greatly in the interim, they would once again allow everything to fall into decay.

Mr. Graham: Tell us what fell into decay.

Mr. HEADING: I have enumerated many instances. If the hon. member for Mackay was absent from the Chamber, I suggest that he read my statements in "Hansard." If he can answer my criticism, I shall be pleased to hear from him. I suppose hon. members will want to say something about the Valuer-General's Department. A case was recently brought before the Full Court and is sub judice because we have not had the judgment of the court. I take it that hon. members will not be allowed to discuss that case.

Mr. Power: Do you propose to abolish the Valuer-General's Department?

Mr. HEADING: I have no intention of abolishing it, but I shall put it on a better basis. There is the question of costs involved in going to the court. A person with a valuation of £3,000 or under can go to the magistrates court at a reasonable cost, but if the valuation is over £3,000 he is required to go to the Supreme Court. In such an instance the taking of the case to the Supreme Court might involve him in thousands of pounds in costs particularly if it drags on. I propose to provide a cheaper court. I cannot see very much wrong with the Valuer-General's Department. Most people do not understand it. Since I have been the Minister I have had to understand it. Many people say things about the department that are not true. It is doing a good job and I am quite sure if hon. members study the position they will realise that the people who buy the land really fix the valuation. What people pay for land is the basis of the Valuer-General's decision.

Mr. Power: Not in all cases.

Mr. HEADING: The hon. member says, "Not in all cases," but I have not come across one case with the exception of the one where you pay rates on 20 times the annual rent. Only this morning I found a report of a commission of three on a review of the Valuations Act of 1952. The commission consisted of Mr. Justice Sheehy, Mr. J. F. N. Murray and Mr. C. K. Carmody. I agree with the decision arrived at by Mr. Justice Sheehy in which he said that cheaper courts should be provided for people who want to appeal against the Valuer-General's

decision. I know that values are fixed on the prices paid for land surrounding a particular property. Of course, in such cases, the value of improvements is taken into account and also the cost of clearing the property, and in the case of grazing properties provision is allowed for suckering after clearing.

Mr. Power: Can you tell me that when a person pays £14,000 for a suburban allotment other allotments nearby should be valued at £14,000?

Mr. HEADING: In valuing a property adjoining one at £14,000 care would be taken to see that it was a fair value, and not an excessive one because somebody particularly wanted to buy that land for a specific purpose. I am thinking now mainly of country areas. Often a property-owner will buy an adjoining property for a member of his family so that he will have him living alongside him. In such a case, he will pay half as much again as what it is worth. The Valuer-General would not use a sale such as that as a basis for valuation.

Mr. Power: It does not apply in all cases. That is what I wanted to be assured of.

Mr. HEADING: The Valuer-General would regard such a case as an exception. Of course, he would have to disregard other properties in the vicinity that were obviously under-valued. In general he takes the values of the surrounding properties and deducts the value of the improvements. I shall probably have more to say on this matter at a later stage.

Mr. WOOD (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (4.51 p.m.): In his very interesting and comprehensive outline of the activities of the department that he administers, the Minister spent a great deal of his time in outlining its very meritorious achievements over the last 12 months, but during the last quarter of an hour he has referred to what he calls signs of decay in the department. I am very pleased to have his assurance that the extremely disturbing conditions under which the staff in this building evidently work are to be corrected. I know that all members of the Committee will hope that the correction will take place very quickly.

I was interested also to hear the Minister speak of the energy that has been thrown into reorganising the Picture Theatres and Films Commission. I have felt for some time that for various reasons there have been inexcusable delays in determinations by the Commission. An example of that was the delay of approximately two years in determining two applications for a drive-in theatre at Toowoomba. It was of no personal interest to me whether the application was granted or rejected or which of the two applicants—Greater Union Theatres and a man named Hennessy—was successful, but it

was essential that the application be heard and determined more speedily than it was. I do not know why so many determinations have been delayed, but the one in Toowoomba was an outstanding example of delay that could not readily be excused.

The Minister has outlined the activities of the Department of Public Works, which as he said is a building and constructing authority. Although from time to time we hear criticism of the work of some of the department's employees, I believe that those who have been employed on the construction of public buildings over the years have done an outstanding job. Evidence of that can be found in schools, hospitals, mental homes, maternal and child welfare centres, all of which bear striking testimony to the skill and industry of the great mass of workmen employed. I was pleased to have the Treasurer's assurance that day labour will not be discontinued but that the Government will blend the contract system with the day-labour system as the previous Government did over the years.

When Ministers take up their responsibilities many of their statements are directly opposite to those they made when in Opposition.

Mr. Windsor: They have more information.

Mr. WOOD: I do not know that they have more information. We still have the same facilities for observation on this side as we had when we were in Government. We can still find things out for ourselves. Admittedly, a Cabinet Minister would have better access to departmental advice than any private member. It is hard to understand how members of a party while in Opposition, can year after year launch bitter attacks on the Government for not constituting a separate constructing authority for the Department of Education and then change their opinion immediately on taking up office as the Government. The Minister will admit that when he was on this side he strongly supported the idea that the Department of Education should have its own constructing authority. The bitterest opponent of the Government on that was the present Deputy Premier, the Minister for Labour and Industry. Year after year in his speeches in the Chamber he savagely attacked the Government. We find a startling reversal of form as soon as they assume responsibility as Ministers. I have listened to many members of the Country-Liberal Party, especially at election time, making statements that would lead people to believe that under Labour works would be carried out only in Labour electorates.

Mr. Low: That is fairly right, too.

Mr. WOOD: On the other hand, time after time I have heard the hon. member for Cooroora admit in the Chamber that that certainly did not happen in his electorate, that he was very reasonably treated.

Mr. Low: I have found out a bit more since then.

Mr. WOOD: The buildings that the department is chiefly concerned with are primary and secondary schools and hospitals. I do not think any hon. member would suggest that a Government could hope to achieve public esteem if they set out on the principle of punishing the children of those who voted against them politically. I do not think any Government in the State have ever done that. Politics should never enter into the provision of facilities for education, hospitals, mental homes, or maternal and child welfare homes, and I do not think it ever has. As his birth-right every child in the community is entitled to good education whatever his standing and whatever the political opinion of his parents.

The members of the Cabinet will freely admit that the Australian Labour Party over the years played its part in developing all parts of the State. The last thing to be considered would be the political affiliation of the electors. I was very glad to have the Minister's assurance that in the next financial year 19 homes for teachers will be commenced in the country and one will be purchased—a total of 20—whereas last financial year two were built, tenders were accepted for two and one was purchased. In an earlier debate I drew Cabinet's attention to a definite promise contained in the policy speech made by the Deputy Premier on behalf of the Liberal Party. He said that the construction of school buildings would be given first priority. I am very happy to learn that the Minister is making plans for the construction of 19 new teachers' residences and the purchase of another. Hon members with the education of children at heart will know that one of the greatest handicaps to a contented teaching service is the insufficiency of school dwellings for married teachers. It is a matter of great discontent to a young ambitious teacher when he marries to find that he is debarred from going to the country because there is no residence. I freely acknowledge my gratitude for the Minister's statement. Instead of 20, I hope next year he will be able to make it 40, and the following year 60. If he could do that he would certainly have the thanks and not the criticism of hon. members of the Opposition.

The Minister very quickly became accustomed to using a phrase which, when he was in Opposition, he was inclined to receive with derision. "Owing to the shortage of loan funds" was a phrase that fell very smoothly from his lips today. He will admit quite frankly that for many years Government members have told the Committee that the shortage of loan funds was real and acute. Because of the attitude the Commonwealth Government had adopted towards all States, adequate facilities could not be provided.

Mr. Heading: Take particular note that I did not blame the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. WOOD: I am using the exact words the hon. gentleman used—"Owing to the shortage of loan funds." That shortage existed previously. It exists today and it will continue to exist while we have a Commonwealth Government that so callously disregard the deserving requests of all States. It does not apply only to Queensland. If there were an A.L.P. Government in Canberra that gave the same treatment to the States as the Menzies-Fadden Government give today, my remarks would be the same, and I would make no apology for them.

I have no intention of being hypercritical because, as the Minister has said, the report tabled in Parliament covers the activities of the department before he assumed office. I am very pleased to hear of his belief in the efficiency of his officers. I am pleased that the Minister has shown a desire to do what he can to improve amenities. In that we are one hundred per cent. behind him. The only person who would know all about those amenities would be the Minister himself. The hon. gentleman did not know of the lack of toilet facilities for female employees until he took over the administration of the department. It is to his credit that when he did know the position he immediately brought the matter before the House and promised to do what he could to remedy the deficiencies. Every hon. member will be behind him in those very praiseworthy endeavours. We wish the Minister well in his office. We know that he goes to it with a high degree of honesty and much enthusiasm. It is good to see the Minister looking better in health than I have seen him look for years. I hope, leaving political considerations aside, that the hon. gentleman will continue to enjoy good health and continue to show the same enthusiasm and interest in his job while he remains in office.

Mr. NICHOLSON (Murrumba) (5.7 p.m.): I take this opportunity of congratulating the Minister on attaining his high office, and on the introduction of his first Estimates, which cover a good deal of ground. The responsibilities of the Minister's office cover the servicing of public buildings, the construction of new public buildings, the Valuer-General's Department—which at times is subject to criticism perhaps both warranted and unwarranted—the Immigration Department and the Department of Local Government. The Minister is apparently determined to do his very best. There has been a great improvement in the co-operation between the various departments, particularly between the Department of Public Works and those departments whose buildings require attention, particularly the Education Department. The Public Works Department is the constructing body for the Education Department. In the past, I was one of those who was very vociferous in my agitation for a separate Works Department for the Education Department. With the change of government, and a little more liaison between the

two departments, things are working out more smoothly, and we do not find the Department of Public Works refusing the requests of the Education Department.

Mr. Davies: Do you not think the previous Ministers got on too well, or the departmental heads? Which was it?

Mr. NICHOLSON: I do not know. Being a member of the previous Government the hon. member should have a better idea. All I can say is that in the past there was not the same co-operation between the two departments as there is now. I can only speak of conditions as I find them. I pay a tribute to Mr. Longland, the Under Secretary of the department. The report has a new look. The manner in which it is set out makes for enjoyable rather than tedious reading. I am astounded at the amount of money and the number of employees involved in departmental activities. The figures are given in the current bulletin, No. 31, for the total labour force employed by Government authorities in building. Those employees include carpenters, bricklayers, painters, electricians, plumbers, builders' labourers and others including clerical staff. Government employees in the building trade total 3,029 of which 1,742 are employed in the Department of Public Works—a considerable number to keep in constant employment.

There may be many aspects of administration that could be criticised, but on the whole the department is doing an excellent job.

As a time-saver I suggest transport-accommodation facilities such as are supplied for railway workers. It would mean a great saving in construction costs, particularly in outlying areas. I do not want to return to the days when employees of the department lived in tents or a shed adjoining their job, but the Minister could consider supplying adequately equipped caravans in which the men could live while on the job. Travelling takes a considerable time, and under the regulations it is done in the employer's time. The men may leave Brisbane at 8 o'clock and take an hour or an hour and a-half to get to their work. With the return trip, the travelling time amounts to two or three hours a day. I do not think it would be a hardship on the employees. I shall illustrate my point by mentioning a small job at Dayboro that took three or four days to complete the building of a partition on the veranda, of the school. Travelling time added greatly to the length of the job. It may be a minor matter, but these factors add considerably to the length of jobs and time means money. If facilities such as I have suggested were provided, the men could stay on the job.

Queensland can be proud of the modern schools erected by the department. They are tropical in style with emphasis on plenty of fresh air and light. Some of the schools that are being built today compare very favourably with those in other States.

Although the authorities in the southern States must build schools to cope with very cold weather—in some case with snow—and the main emphasis is on keeping the building warm rather than cool, the new schools being built in Queensland are a credit to the department and its architects and designers.

As one who has travelled a good deal and seen many schools not only in Australia but in other countries, I suggest that a great deal of emphasis should be given to sound-proofing in schools, particularly where they are of two storeys. Much attention is given to light and air and the placing of partitions and blackboards, but unfortunately the benefit derived from it is offset because of the absence of sound-proofing—the noise from one class disturbs another. Greater attention should be given to sound-proofing partitions, and also the ceiling of the bottom floor in two-storey buildings.

As I say, I have seen schools in other parts of the world but I do not think any of them are better than those in Queensland, particularly the brick buildings, which predominate in the colder climates.

In the building of the new high school at Redcliffe, provision has been made for brick-veneer external walls. From my experience and from what I have been told by builders, brick veneer is the ideal type of construction at the seaside. Cavity-brick or cavity-concrete construction is not advisable because the damp seaside air sets up a mould. With brick veneer construction, a flow of air is maintained between the bricks and the lining walls. The heat penetrates through the inner wall and the building dries out much quicker than in the case of cavity-brick construction. In many buildings constructed along the coast—I am referring now not only to Redcliffe—the mould that sets up on the inside because of the cavity-brick method has caused a good deal of concern. Brick-veneer construction serves a useful purpose in that it keeps the building cool and it dries out much quicker than is the case with cavity-brick construction.

Mr. Windsor: What is the difference between veneer and cavity-brick construction?

Mr. NICHOLSON: The cavity wall is built of two layers of bricks, face bricks on the outside. On the inside of the building, the inner wall is generally covered with plaster. With brick-veneer construction, however, the outer wall is generally of face brick and the inner wall of fibro cement, fibrous plaster, masonite, or timber. There is a wooden frame inside the external brick wall. That allows a better penetration of air and a quicker drying-out of the structure.

Another suggestion that I should like to make—and I have put it forward frequently in the Chamber—is that in extending schools we should not encroach too much on parade and playing areas. Complaints have often been heard in the Chamber that after a school committee has gone to a great deal of

trouble and expense in putting down a playing area, the Department of Public Works has added a wing to the school that has encroached on it.

Mr. Lloyd: Was there somewhere else to put the new wing?

Mr. NICHOLSON: In some instances, yes. It could have been laid out much better. Fortunately the Department of Public Works, with its better liaison with the Department of Education, is now seeking the co-operation of the committees and asking them to supply a sketch plan of any proposed works, such as cricket pitches and tennis courts.

When additions to schools are being considered they should, where practicable, go up and not out. The extensions to the Humpy-bong school at Redcliffe, illustrates the haphazard planning of the past. The school has spread all over the place. It has spread so far that very little of the parade ground remains for the children. Admittedly its enrolment has grown from about 300 in 1948, to about 1,200 at present.

Mr. Lloyd: Haven't they taken over the land across the road from the school?

Mr. NICHOLSON: That land is Langdon Park, a public reserve and a public playing area. It is fortuitous that it is so convenient or the children would be very sorely pressed for a sports area. They have permission from the Council to use the park.

Mr. Aikens: Many teachers are opposed to two-storey and three-storey schools.

Mr. NICHOLSON: That might be so. I am not in favour of three-storey schools either. That is going a little too far. I do not know why they object to a two-storey school. They may be too tired to walk up and down the stairs.

Mr. Davies: You do not mean that? That is stupid and unfair.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I do not know why else they would object. The children are energetic enough and the only basis I can see for any protest is that it might be too much trouble to walk up and down.

Mr. Aikens: The noise from the top floor comes down to the bottom floor and vice versa.

Mr. NICHOLSON: The hon. member for Mundiburra appears in the Chamber occasionally. When he does he makes one or two interjections and then goes on his way again. Apparently he was not here when I stressed that two-storey schools must have ample provision for sound-proofing.

Mr. Aikens: I was here all the time, and I thought it was the silliest remark I ever heard.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Artificial lighting should, wherever possible, be fluorescent or

cold cathode. That affects mainly the technical schools. The departmental report stressed the provision of that type of lighting. We know that fluorescent lighting gives extra light, but it is also a cold light. As it gives off almost no heat it does not add to room temperature. Previously the cost of installation has been regarded as too great for the Department of Public

Works to carry. It is now recognised that the initial cost of installation is soon offset by the saving in power, as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley will confirm.

The vote covers the Immigration Department. The following figures show the increases in the number of migrants, or new settlers, that have come to Queensland in the last twelve months—

Nationality.	Immigrants in Queensland as at 30th September, 1956.		Immigrants in Queensland as at 30th September, 1957.		Net Gain.		Number Naturalised.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Austrian	253	84	319	101	66	17	1	2
Danish	143	36	340	168	197	132	4	1
Dutch	2,860	1,972	3,057	2,180	197	208	165	91
Finnish	241	89	255	95	14	6	7	..
French	143	73	152	72	9	-1	4	9
German	1,361	736	1,390	819	29	83	37	33
Greek	1,316	668	1,313	643	-3	75	57	21
Italian	7,916	2,754	8,025	2,951	109	177	473	149
Norwegian	156	16	171	17	15	1	3	2
Russian (ex China)	313	370	343	421	30	51	33	41
Swedish	109	14	108	14	-1	..	7	1

The Russians have been coming over from China only in the last two years or so. As at 30 September, 1956, there were in all 22,805 male and 10,677 female migrants, a total of 33,482. As at 30 September, 1957, there were 22,903 male and 11,207 female migrants, a total of 34,110. It has meant a total net gain of 628 in 12 months. The total number naturalised for the year was 3,968, including 1,651 in October, 1957.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (5.32 p.m.): There are one or two matters that I should like to bring to the Minister's notice. The first concerns the Aitkenvale State school, a matter that could apply to many other schools throughout Queensland. It was a custom of previous Governments to build schools on six or seven feet blocks in the tropics, a very good idea. For some unknown reason, some schools were cemented underneath, some were partly cemented underneath, and some were not cemented at all. There did not appear to be any definite policy in the Townsville area, at any rate. I was at the Aitkenvale school the other day attending an excellent fete. It is the furthest school out of Townsville but the suburb is rapidly developing with its growing population. Although I have been to the school regularly I had not noticed until it was pointed out to me the other day that of the four big rooms in the school only one in the centre was concreted underneath. The other three rooms underneath had the ordinary earth floor which was dusty and dirty. The head master mentioned it to me and I said to him, "Why not drop a note to me and I will put it up to the Minister for Education and he will send it on to the Minister for Public Works and Housing." I have no doubt the Minister for Public Works and Housing will do something about

it. The hon. gentleman appreciates the difficulty and inconvenience of a school on high blocks not being cemented underneath. I mention that in the hope that in the future when extra rooms are added, particularly in the tropics, on 6- and 7-foot blocks, the appropriation will provide for cementing underneath.

Another matter to which I wish to call attention is one of those that more or less makes one's blood boil. We have in Townsville the Mundingburra school which is probably one of the oldest in the city. It has been added to from time to time until now it is a very large school. Unfortunately it is just outside the sewered area in Townsville—not more than 300 or 400 yards away from the nearest sewer. I have made application from time to time during the term of office of the previous Minister for Public Works and Housing and the previous Minister for Education to have a septic system installed there or alternatively to have the Mundingburra school coupled to the existing town sewerage system. I have got the usual stereotyped reply from the department, sometimes from the Minister himself, saying that it is the job of the Townsville City Council to couple up the sewerage pipe to the school if they needed it coupled up. It has been said that the soil in the vicinity of the Mundingburra school is not suitable for the installation of a septic system. They also told me that the sewerage system for the so-called western suburbs of Townsville will be in operation in three or four years' time, and it may be advisable to wait till then to have the school sewered. Anyone who knows anything about the Townsville Council knows that the western suburbs will not be sewered in 10 or 15 years. They have been on the job of making plans and preparations for starting a sewerage scheme for the western suburbs since they were elected in 1949, and there has not been any advance.

Mr. Lloyd: Has there been a testing of soil for its suitability for a septic system?

Mr. AIKENS: I was quite prepared to accept the decision of the Department of Public Works that the soil in the vicinity of the Mundingburra school was not suitable for the disposal of the affluent from a septic system. The Mundingburra school backs onto what is known as Anderson's Park, portion of which the Townsville City Council a few years ago gave to the Jubilee Bowling Club for the erection of a club house and a bowling green. It was an excellent idea which enhanced the beauty of the park and provided relaxation for the bowlers in that area. The fence of the Jubilee Bowling Club would not be more than 100 yards from the back fence of the Mundingburra school, and during a visit the other day I discovered that the Jubilee Bowling Club had a septic system disposing of the affluent, but the Mundingburra school ground 100 yards away, with only the park between them, has been described by engineers of the Public Works Department as being unsuitable for the disposal of affluent from a septic system. To me it is all damn silly.

Mr. Lloyd: My land is not suitable for a septic system but the land owned by the man living next door is suitable.

Mr. AIKENS: That is pure bunk. There is a waterway through Anderson's Park and the Mundingburra school is on one bank and the Jubilee Bowling Club is on the other and between them is the sandy bed of the waterway which is a perfect medium for the disposal of septic affluent.

Mr. Davies: What percentage of Townsville would be sewered?

Mr. AIKENS: I should say not half Townsville with the rapid development of Kurrajong, Pimlico, Aitkenvale, Mundingburra, Cluden, and Stuart. They are not getting on with the job. They have been nine years trying to finish the North Ward and Belgian Gardens schemes which were half completed when they took over in 1949. Garbutt is not sewered yet. However, I do not wish to talk of the failings of the Townsville City Council. I am sorry, Mr. Taylor, that I was diverted by hon. members opposite. I wish to talk about the Department of Public Works.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I do wish you would stop those gentlemen, Mr. Taylor, who are attempting to divert me. I do not like to be diverted from a subject when I am on it. I hope the Minister will consider my appeal. If he goes to Townsville I invite him to make an inspection of the school.

The Minister for Education has promised that he will visit the Hermit Park and Mundingburra schools with me on the 24th instant. He is making a special visit to

inspect the playing areas to see if something cannot be done to overcome the shortage. I shall point out on the spot the absolute stupidity of the ruling of the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Dewar interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I have been knocking around with the filthy rich for five or six weeks, and I find them pleasant company. They are much more pleasant than I expected. I thought I would have more trouble with them but my fears were unfounded.

It is easy for the engineer or the officer concerned to point out some clay here and some clay there, and do a bit of boring here and a bit of boring there and then decide in his wisdom that the soil is unsuitable. Laymen accept the decision but in this case the school is on the same watercourse as the Jubilee Bowling Club. It is an ideal medium for the disposal of septic effluent. The bowling club on one bank has installed a septic system, but the Mundingburra State School on the other bank has been denied a septic system.

I do not know whether hon. members know the sanitary arrangements at schools built many years ago. Now when the department builds a sanitary cubicle, it is at the least 5 feet deep and 3 feet wide, and a fair amount of light enters it. With the headmaster and the chairman of the committee, I inspected the girls' lavatory at the Mundingburra State School. It is an old-style lavatory, with long stalls about 7 feet long, and the box containing the pan is at the far end. To see it in the middle of the day one would have to shine a torch or strike a match. The headmaster told me that some of the young girls when they first come to school will not go into the lavatory because it is pitch dark. I made representations to the previous Minister and he promised to do what he could to get more light into it and so relieve the stygian darkness. I believe something was done, and I shall inspect it on Sunday week. It was a shocking turnout. The little girls who use it have to put up with pitch-black darkness. It is a shocking state of affairs in the heart of a big city with all facilities for the installation of a septic system. Nothing could be done about it because of the bureaucratic iron curtain. I do not know whether the Minister is going to the North in the near future.

Mr. Heading: Some day.

Mr. AIKENS: If he does I hope he will make an inspection of the school but in the meantime I ask him to take some action to overcome the problem. It is a ludicrous position. The department has decreed that the land in the vicinity of the school is not suitable for the disposal of septic affluent, but on the other bank of the watercourse a septic system has been installed by the Jubilee Bowling Club, which is to its credit. I appeal to the Minister to do all he can overcome this problem.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (5.44 p.m.): I am pleased that hon. members have the opportunity to discuss the Estimates of this very important department. Some disturbing features of the department's construction work call for consideration.

When he was Speaker the hon. member for Brisbane made a recommendation and had plans prepared for further amenities for the staff of Parliament House. Recent Press statements have indicated that £9,000 is now to be spent on the provision of better facilities at Parliament House. No doubt the cost would have been much less when the hon. member for Brisbane put the scheme before Cabinet, I understand around about £7,000. Perhaps additional cooking facilities would make up part of the extra cost. We are prepared to accept our responsibility in the matter. At least we made an attempt. A recommendation was made and plans were prepared by the then Speaker. It is a matter of great regret that the recommendation of the Speaker was not accepted by Cabinet. I understand that the recommendation was submitted by the Speaker to the Refreshment Rooms Committee and then to Cabinet. It is a matter of regret to myself and to every member of our party that that recommendation was not accepted.

The Minister also referred to recreation rooms and other accommodation in governmental departments. Again we must accept our share of the responsibility. The Minister is to be congratulated on his attempts to provide greater recreation facilities for Government employees. Many hon. members have noticed the effect of the Workers' Accommodation Acts in private enterprise. We have seen the recreation facilities provided by such companies as Bruce Pie and the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing and many other large firms as a result of the Workers' Accommodation Acts introduced by Labour Governments.

Mr. Coburn: Why not apply them to their own employees?

Mr. LLOYD: Every member of the Opposition must accept responsibility in relation to that matter. On many occasions these matters were raised. We do not make excuses. When some things are being done by the Government with which we completely agree we shall extend our compliments to them. But when we think that what they are doing is wrong we shall reserve our right to criticise them.

Some matters were raised by the hon. member for Murrumba and the hon. member for Mundingburra in regard to school buildings. I am inclined to agree with the hon. member for Mundingburra, who said that the toilet facilities at many schools were not adequate. I do not agree with the hon. member for placing the blame on the Department of Public Works for the decision that the Mundingburra school ground was not suitable for the installation of a septic system.

Mr. Nicholson: Are you quoting me?

Mr. LLOYD: No, the hon. member for Mundingburra. I do not know whether this is the practice in Townsville, but down here the school committee or the head teacher makes an application for the installation of a septic system and it is then the responsibility of the local authority to decide whether the site is suitable. There have been many instances in Brisbane where an application was made by the head teacher and the matter was then referred to the local authority, which is the Brisbane City Council, who decides whether the land is suitable or not. It is most desirable that septic systems should be installed at all schools where sewerage is not available. I have no fault to find with the architectural section of the department, which has done a good job. We have all observed the improvements in State and secondary school buildings and the great advantage that has accrued to the teaching staff. If we cast our minds back to when we were going to school we can remember the high ceilings, the poor ventilation, the inadequate lighting and the dark paint. On a dull day the electricity had to be turned on. The improvements brought about by the architectural section have provided greater facilities and convenience for the teaching staff and the children. The ventilation and the lighting system in all modern schools are very good. There is one fault that I wish to refer to. The septic or sewerage system is always installed underneath the school building. In many cases they are semi-two-storied with recreation facilities under the classrooms and the septic system or the sewerage is built in one corner. In many cases, particularly in a semi-tropical areas such as Brisbane, the stench from these urinals under the school is very strong. I think that is aggravated by the policy of building the boys' urinals in concrete. I think an instruction has been issued recently that the back of the urinals should be of stainless steel. That is essential.

Toilets should be constructed outside the school building to get maximum ventilation. I raised the matter with a previous Minister for Education the late George Devries. He was able to appreciate many of these problems and discuss them with the hon. members. His opinion was that toilets should be outside the school buildings. I ask the Minister to consider my suggestion. It is particularly important in semi-tropical areas and the tropical regions of the north and western parts of the State. The heat in those places accentuates the nuisance.

The Mitchelton State School was constructed in the past six years. The vent from the toilet block goes through two storeys of the building. The school has three wings joined at one end. The prevailing wind blows the odours from the vent into one wing, causing discomfort to the teachers and children.

Hon. members representing rapidly expanding electorates such as Kedron and Cherm-side, have a duty to make constructive suggestions so that the problems may be considered by the Minister.

Many school sites selected years ago are unsuitable. Some are in hollows and other sites are incapable of being turned into natural playgrounds. I do not want to overwork the parish pump, but I mention the Mitchelton High School as a case in point. Other hon. members have the same problems. It was erected on the only ground available to the Department of Public Works, but the available grounds are in a valley, and the making of a playground would cost a great deal of money. Facilities for recreation as well as for study must be provided in any educational system. The Department of Public Works is reluctant to undertake the construction of a playground at the Mitchelton High School, possibly because of the cost. As a school playground is essential, the cost should not be considered.

Until 1951, the policy of the Australian Labour Party in government was that schools should have playgrounds in such a condition that school committees could effect improvements such as the building of cricket pitches and football ovals, but unfortunately after that year the policy fell into the discard, and many school grounds, particularly in the metropolitan area, are not fit for sporting activities.

I ask the Minister to consider the present procedure. Proposals are submitted by the Department of Education to the Main Roads Commission for investigation. The Main Roads Commission then reports to the Department of Public Works, and in many instances it is resubmitted to the Main Roads Commission because of the high estimate for the work. I suggest that the Minister investigate these matters and put into effect the policy enunciated by the Australian Labour Party whilst in government.

Mr. Heading: They did not carry it out.

Mr. LLOYD: I agree that in many cases they did not. I instance the Everton Park State school, which has no playground. The site for the school was chosen 50 years ago. It was then a country school known as the Bunyaville State school, and had only one or two classrooms and an enrolment of about 50 or 60 children. With the development of Everton Park, however, the attendance at the school has increased enormously. There are no playground facilities and there are not likely to be any. The Main Roads Department recommended to the Department of Public Works that from £10,000 to £12,000 be spent on making a playground, but it was eventually decided that that was too much money to spend. A very small project costing about £2,000 or £3,000 was carried out, but very little improvement was made.

These are matters that affect many schools in Queensland, and the Minister should be

empowered to spend more money on the provision of playground facilities.

An unfortunate feature of some debates in the Chamber has been the statement that Labour Governments in Queensland spent less per head of the population on education than did any other government in the Commonwealth. That is shown in the Commonwealth Year Book. However, many factors have to be taken into consideration when such statements are made. It is all very well to quote figures baldly, but an important point to remember is that since the end of World War II not one child in Queensland has been refused education facilities because of a lack of accommodation in State schools. In Victoria and New South Wales, despite the apparent larger expenditure per head of population on education, children have been refused education facilities because of a lack of accommodation.

Mr. Nicholson: The age of admission in Queensland had to be advanced a year.

Mr. LLOYD: That was done only recently. I am referring to the period from 1946 on. Even up to the time when the age of entry to State schools was advanced by a year, no child in Queensland was refused accommodation in a State school. Of course, the Government had to resort to the use of temporary classrooms, which are now out of date. In passing, one of the first things the Minister should do is to do away with every temporary classroom at Queensland's State schools. I instance the Stafford State school, which has been divided into an infants' section and a primary section. The infants' section accommodates between 200 and 300 children, while the primary school has an enrolment of over 1,000. The primary school is a beautiful building of brick construction, but the infants' school, which of course accommodates children of tender years, is composed of temporary buildings. That is very unsatisfactory from the point of view of both the children and the teachers. For some time I have been trying to have an infants' school built to plans that are being prepared by the Department. I repeat, the first duty of the Department of Public Works is to do away with temporary classrooms in all schools and give the children their rightful entitlement of a permanent building. I am levelling this criticism at the department itself, not at its architectural section. I know that the department's architects are overloaded with work. The number of children attending both primary and secondary schools in Queensland has increased tremendously since the end of the war, with the result that the architectural section of the department has been grossly overloaded with work.

I deeply regret the delays that have occurred between the decision to draw up plans and specifications for a new school and their completion. The usual procedure is for the Education Department to recommend to the Department of Public Works that a new school building be erected in a certain centre.

The Department of Public Works then approves of the recommendation. First of all the architectural section draws up sketch plans, rough plans for approval. Then comes the actual planning. So many new primary school buildings have to be erected, so many additions to existing school buildings and so many new State High Schools, that the work of the architectural section of the Department of Public Works is overloaded and there is a great delay in the completion of plans. The original approval of the plans for the Stafford Infants' State school, for instance, dates back about two years. Even now only sketch plans are in existence, and that is one of the most urgent building construction needs in the metropolitan area. The solution lies either in recruiting more architects or in facilitating the work of the department.

Far be it from me to criticise any of the officers. I have come in contact with them too often to do that. I know the great job they are doing and the strain under which they work.

The Under Secretary, Mr. Longland, has made valuable contributions to governmental administration. No doubt he will continue to do as good as a job as he did while employed as Migration Officer at the depot at Kangaroo Point.

Mr. Low: He is a very able officer.

Mr. LLOYD: I do not need to be told anything about Mr. Longland's worth. He taught me at school. The work he did in the Immigration Department was highly valued throughout the State and by many migrants from Britain. Those hon. members who did not visit Yungaba while he was there should inspect it some time to see what has been done. Only about 3 per cent. of the total intake of British migrants have returned to England dissatisfied with conditions in Queensland. There is an employment office and many other facilities to make people feel at home. The State can well be proud of Mr. Longland's work and the new Government should be grateful to him. When we look at the Commonwealth administration of immigration and the selection of migrants to Australia other than under the assisted-passage scheme, we can see how the department has worked to the advantage of the State.

(Time expired.)

Mr. RAE (Gregory) (7.39 p.m.): I congratulate all hon. members on their election, and I congratulate our very able Minister, Mr. Heading, on his appointment.

I pay tribute to a very wonderful and a very grand man, the late George Devries. He did an excellent job; he was a great friend and an outstanding citizen.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. RAE: I feel somewhat like a lad who has arrived late at school—nervous and

quite worried about everything. However, I am here at last. The electors of Gregory seemed to think I was a rather important person, and no doubt, would be able to do much for them. However, after being here for a few weeks, I am satisfied that I have a great deal to study. It is almost like going back to school to "swot" again. The reception given to me was very kind and, although some hon. members may differ from me politically, at least we are all anxious to subscribe as competently as we can to the welfare of this great State. It is for Gregory and Gregory alone that I am here. Firstly, I shall debate and deal with education as it applies to the people out there. It is a colossal area, nearly 93,000 sq. miles of country, embracing only two major towns, Longreach and Winton. Smaller, though no less important, are Boulia, Muttaburra, Jundah and Ilfracombe. Out of the 1,000 children that I understand are in the area half of them go to school in Longreach. Longreach is all the more blessed for their coming there. A hostel is necessary to cater for the needs of these children who have to travel 300 or 400 miles by car or aeroplane to attend school. If the Minister for Education and the Minister for Public Works could arrange for the construction of a hostel it would be a great achievement in one of the less thought of areas of Queensland and I am sure that in co-operation with the Country Women's Association, this could be effectively staffed.

Because of the farsightedness of the old pioneers most western towns are situated where there is plenty of water available. If water is available surely school children could have the advantage of septic systems. The sooner we get cracking the sooner a long overdue necessity will be provided. They have them in the city, why not in the West? I know that it is very difficult for some hon. members to think as I do about the outback because these areas are so completely cut off from the cities. For too long there has been no constructive understanding of this. Although we have not received very much consideration in the past, we have contributed more than handsomely to the welfare of the State. Through the Railway Department alone Winton and Longreach have contributed £500,000 in the transport of sheep and cattle, apart from wool and everything else.

I have heard hon. members say in the Chamber that they would like some form of dredging done in Cabbage Tree Creek, or somewhere else to let boats sail about or something like that. It makes me think, "By heavens, we have a lot to wake up to in this State! It is getting all out of hand!" Out in the West we do not get any privileges at all, we merely exist. Various matters like the week-end headlines in the Press are very annoying. It is time that we took serious stock of the situation so that the less privileged people could enjoy the benefit of their hard work and skill and Trojan-like enthusiasm.

I wish to discuss the police barracks, the Court House and C.P.S. offices—the horror of the whole set-up as I see it today. Winton has shown great progress through the efforts of real people who, through determination and personal interest, are prepared to subscribe to the welfare of their town.

Our former Government did not co-operate in any way to help them. Let us show them that the Government of the day is equally as enthusiastic as the people themselves. During the last election campaign many hon. members had the privilege of visiting Winton, and they were amazed at the state of the old police barracks, the courthouse and C.P.S. office. They are damnable. I have never seen such a blot on the landscape. When everything else is going ahead, when personal enterprise is rearing its worthy head and endeavouring to do something, the previous Government sat back and did nothing. Yet these highly qualified men who have studied at night-schools and universities to equip themselves with the knowledge to enable them to hold down these jobs, get absolutely no reward for their personal enterprise or ambitions. I ask the Minister especially to bear this in mind. It not only applies to Winton which is the No. 1 horror as far as public buildings are concerned. We who should set the standard for them to follow. That should be our policy. We have stationed there an Inspector of Police and the Regional Director of Education and the Clerk of Petty Sessions, the lastnamed living in a home that I am certain was designed for a Stanthorpe climate. I never saw any design that was more ridiculous for a western area. The kitchen measures 7 ft. by about 9 ft., in the middle of which is a fuel stove. Imagine a poor woman trying to get afternoon tea; she would not be able to sit in the kitchen owing to the heat. If you are building a home in Cloncurry you do not adopt a design suitable for a home in Warwick. The homes built by the department out there are drab and dull. They are all painted an unattractive brown colour. There is no originality in design or colour. It is an attitude of, "Who gives a damn, let us build it and get out of the place." That is what the foreman says and the men say the same thing. I do believe that by personal approach we shall achieve much for the people who have worked so hard to gain the positions they hold, and who in the past have received such poor support from the Government.

Mr. Ewan: What about the wool expert?

Mr. RAE: We have an industrial inspector, recently married who is doing a good job. He could not buy a home because there was none to buy. There have been nine homes built by the Housing Commission in 16 years. What a record. This is the area that gives you all the money. The land ranger has a small room and a little house down the yard; there is no septic. The

position of sheep and wool adviser has been vacant for a long time. Mr. Oakes, the wool and sheep adviser in Winton when he asked about a home he was told that there was no home. He, his wife and two children, had to board at the hotel for which he was charged £47 a week.

A Government Member: Where is he now?

Mr. RAE: In Winton, living in one or two rooms and sharing a veranda. If no-one makes any noise he may get an hour or two of rest. It is a grim story. The Government must be realistic; they must do something for the people of the area.

Officers of the Department of Public Lands and Irrigation arrived in Longreach with great plans for the area, but found that they could not get accommodation, let alone a place to put a table and telephone. They eventually purchased a private house in Emu street, which is today the office of the department. It is a ridiculous state of affairs. The previous Government spent millions and millions of pounds on this work, but they did not see fit to provide offices or accommodation in keeping with their vision of the work and requirements essential to big schemes and highly skilled officers.

I could mention many other things, but I have not the time to do so. I shall mention only one. Birdsville is a small town, but it is a big centre that subscribes handsomely to the coffers of the State.

Mr. Nicholson: And subscribed handsomely in votes to the Government.

Mr. RAE: 100 per cent. The constable of police has to suffer the humiliation of being the only person in that town depending for light on a hurricane lamp. He receives phone calls from people who may be reporting a shooting affray, and must proceed to take notes of it by the light of a hurricane lamp. This may be in accordance with regulations, but what an unreal position! Every effort must be made to provide for these people who have had so little for so long at least the simple amenities that mean so much to them.

The Government have a huge back-log of work to do, but swift corrective measures must be taken to give officers of the C.P.S. service, inspectors of police, public servants and other amenities, in keeping with their positions, and so make their lives more enjoyable and in keeping with their qualifications.

Mr. KEYATTA (Townsville) (7.58 p.m.): I heartily congratulate the Minister on his appointment. He is a pioneer of Queensland, one who has played an important part in agricultural and show societies. I also congratulate Mr. Longland on his appointment as Under Secretary of the department. He is a very efficient officer. I also commend the officers of the department, who are rendering a fine service to the State. The Department

of Public Works plays a very important part in the activities of the State. Every public building in Queensland stands as a monument to the zeal and enterprise of successive Governments. The Townsville Central State School is a wonderful example of modern school architecture, and is something of which we can be proud. It is a credit to the policy of the previous Government and a monument to the efficiency of the department's employees.

I suggest that in the future planning of every State school provision should be made for a swimming pool. That would help greatly in saving lives. If a swimming pool was built in the grounds of every State school, every child could be taught swimming, life-saving, and resuscitation.

I make a strong plea for the erection of a new school at South Townsville. It is a very large suburb of Townsville and the present school is one of the oldest school buildings in Queensland. It is highly unsuitable for a tropical climate. I know that the Department of Public Works will play its part if it gets the necessary recommendation from the Education Department.

It was with a great deal of sadness that I heard today of the working conditions that exist not only in Parliament House but in many other buildings in which public servants work. It is certainly not to the credit of the Government of which I was a member. If what has been said is true, I was unaware that such a state of affairs existed. Of course, I am not doubting the Minister's word. I have known him for years as a straightforward and honest man. But I cannot understand how the previous Government were allowed to get away with it, particularly when public servants belong to such powerful unions. The Government compel private concerns to conform to their legislation, but they disregard their own laws probably on the presumption that the Crown can do no wrong. I place that presumption on the same basis as the right that a member of Parliament has to malign someone and be protected by privilege from an action for libel.

As I say, I make a strong plea for the building of a new school at South Townsville. There is a very valuable piece of land facing The Strand and running parallel with Mitchell and Stuart Streets that was reserved for a teachers' training college. Housing must be given priority and the Government are making every endeavour to catch up on the lag, but planning for education should be continued. The success of any education system depends on the housing of scholars, the citizens of the future. The school plays nearly as important a part as the home in moulding the mind of the child, and a pleasant and comfortable environment means much to the student.

Improved facilities and amenities for the staff of Parliament House are long overdue. It is amazing that nothing has been done

about it before. I include myself in the condemnation because I have been a member of the Government for so many years. Ignorance may be bliss but we must accept responsibility. It was not brought to our notice by the unions whose members worked under those conditions.

When members of the Opposition were crowded into one room it was no credit to us and it is no credit to the present Government that we are cramped. I have been given just a table. I have no waste-paper basket, a telephone, or even a drawer. Of course, we are members of Parliament and the hon. gentleman was speaking of the staff. I suppose we must be prepared to suffer some of the inconvenience we are responsible for. I commend the Minister on the move to improve conditions.

The plan for a combined Court House and Supreme Court building on the corner of Sturt and Stoke Streets, has been in existence for about 17 years. The late Hon. Jack O'Keefe was responsible for it.

Mr. Heading: It has the dust of ages on it?

Mr. KEYATTA: The old Supreme Court building has been condemned for many years. Townsville is growing fast and spreading far, not only at Hermit Park and Mundingburra, but also at Stuart and Giru and along the line to Rollingsstone. Before long the Minister will be inundated with applications for public buildings to give the people service. Although the hon. member for Mundingburra thinks the Supreme Court should be moved out to Hermit Park, it is important that it be centrally situated in the city. The present Supreme Court building could be converted into public offices. At present vital records have to be conveyed from the Court House to the Supreme Court and vice versa and some may be lost in the process. I am resurrecting the matter in the hope that some action will be taken. The Minister is civic-minded and he has the welfare of the State at heart so he cannot fail to give it consideration.

Townsville is the queen city of the North and the second city in the State, although Toowoomba challenges it. I look forward to seeing the Minister's plans carried out. Even at the present time the high school is overcrowded and additional accommodation must be found for more scholars. This is the only opportunity I have to raise these matters and I commend them to the Minister's consideration. I shall reserve the little time I have left to say something more later on.

Mr. ANDERSON (Toowoomba) (8.12 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the able manner in which he presented his estimates. He has got his teeth into the many problems that confront him. I congratulate hon. members opposite who have admitted the omissions of the Labour Government in not providing certain amenities.

Mr. Davies: Do not forget that a lot was done.

Mr. ANDERSON: Yes, there was a lot done in other respects. I congratulate the past Government on their wonderful job on various public buildings throughout Queensland. On the whole they are of a very high standard. I know that the present Government will maintain the standard and increase the number.

In Toowoomba, and I am sure in many other areas, the red soil in school playgrounds must cost thousands of pounds in maintenance of school buildings. Bitumenising of playground surfaces would reduce maintenance and cost of repainting considerably.

Mr. Wood: Have you any idea how much has been spent on bitumenising playgrounds?

Mr. ANDERSON: I do not know what has been spent, but there is still much more to be done.

Mr. Davies: A grand job has been done with playgrounds.

Mr. ANDERSON: There is still much more to be done.

Reference has been made to the amenities at Parliament House. Why not ask an inspector under the Factories and Shops Acts to go over all Government buildings so that we can put our own house in order before we insist on others bringing their premises up to the required standard?

Mr. Aikens: Why do we not do that with all Government buildings?

Mr. ANDERSON: Yes, all Government buildings. We should set the example and put our own house in order. Have an inspector go over our own buildings and bring them up to standard before insisting that others do it with theirs.

There is a building in George street known as "Binna Burra." It has "Department of Health and Home Affairs" and "Government Statistician" painted on it. What an eyesore it is! I am not referring to the building itself but to the growth of weeds in what I suppose is meant to be a garden. The weeds are 3 feet or 4 feet high. We are trying to encourage development in Queensland but here is an eyesore right at the front door of Parliament House. The new Government have not been in office very long. It was the fault of the previous Government.

Mr. Watson: They planted the seed.

Mr. ANDERSON: We are reaping the harvest. We must have civic pride in our departmental offices.

The increased allocation for the department this year speaks well for the Minister. He must have been able to put up a good argument for more money for his department.

Mr. Davies: Things do not look too promising in this morning's paper.

Mr. ANDERSON: Very good! The week before last a school building was to be shifted into a country area. Because of lack of co-operation between the Department of Public Works and the Department of Transport fees had to be paid first. It seems wrong that one Government department should try to get fees out of another Government department for transporting a school building. There should be closer co-operation between the various departments.

The Migration Department is doing much to encourage immigrants to come to Queensland and I am sure the Government will do everything possible to increase the numbers coming to this country: My policy is a Bring-out-Britons campaign. If we bring out more Britons we will have a better Queensland. I wish to pay a compliment to the Director of Local Government, Mr. Sewell. Being in local government I have had many interviews with officers of the department, and none has been more courteous than Mr. Sewell, Mr. McNamara and their staff. The Minister referred to the delays that have occurred in the approval of plans and he said that the Brisbane town plan had been held up for three to five years. The Toowoomba town plan was held up for a couple of years some years ago before it received approval. It was two years before the Films Commission gave a decision on the drive-in theatre in Toowoomba. We trust that the new Films Commission will speed up decisions, and that there will be no undue delay by the Local Government Department in dealing with town plans. Local Government is closely associated with the people. They provide many amenities such as water, sewerage, and electricity. I commend the Minister for his enthusiasm and drive which augurs well for the future of Queensland.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.22 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the introduction of his first Estimates. I assure the hon. gentleman that as far as the men on the job are concerned he need have no fears. The men working on the various Government buildings are a batch of happy, very conscientious workers. The speed and quality of their work is very creditable. The previous Government adopted a system of building at the Central Technical College which this Government should continue. I refer to the establishment of central classes for the various trade groups. Recently the Department of Public Works completed a school for the teaching of building trades apprentices. I think the Minister will agree it is a very fine school which is approved by the teachers and the apprentices. There are many other trade groups there that have had a very raw deal. Owing to the lack of finance after the war the Governments were not able to erect the new schools required. The school for carpentry apprentices was a good start. It is most essential that the various groups of apprentices have their own school. I do not mean that there should be separate schools; they all should be in the Central Technical

College grounds. At present we have one central part known as the Electrical school. Other electrical classes are held in the building just inside the main gate, and others in buildings in the domain. It is impossible for a senior teacher to supervise work in these scattered classrooms.

Quite a lot of equipment is necessary in the teaching of some subjects. Some are taught in rooms not equipped for the purpose. Answers to questions asked by apprentices may call for a demonstration on some machine, but the equipment is not available. If a separate building with classrooms equipped for the teaching of various subjects were erected, it would be a great improvement. The laboratory is well equipped, and in time will be improved with the introduction of modern equipment, but much specialised equipment is needed for the instruction of electrical apprentices and it is not readily available at the moment. I suggest that consideration be given to the building of self-contained trade blocks when extensions or renovations are possible.

Two vital subjects are armature winding and welding. At the moment there is no place in which to hold these classes. When I worked on the syllabus it was my desire and the desire of employers that armature winding should be taught as in other States, but inquiries revealed that the Government were not able to provide a building. It would not be possible under existing conditions to teach that subject, but with a new building it could be included in the syllabus.

My remarks also apply to fitting and turning and other trades, but to a lesser degree.

I come now to conditions at the Technical Correspondence School. I worked there for a number of years but I did not enjoy the conditions. The consensus was that they were bad. That may have been due to lack of finance. I ask the Government to give perhaps more consideration than was done in the past to this vital work. The best results can be achieved only if teachers are given the best facilities. These men work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the hours of the public service, not the ordinary hours of teachers. They have to read 40 to 50 pages of foolscap every day of the week. The work is very tiring, particularly on the eyes. The light is very bad, particularly in winter, and towards the end of a week the teachers complain that their eyes are tired. If a new building cannot be obtained for the correspondence section, at least decent lighting should be provided in the present building.

Unfortunately the building is very close to the South Brisbane railway station and the dust nuisance is very bad. Frequently when drawing papers are left overnight on the desks, they cannot be touched in the morning without leaving dust smears all over the papers. The students cannot be criticised for dirty work; it is not their fault. The building is not lined.

Mr. Aikens: Why leave the papers uncovered overnight? Could they not be covered?

Mr. HOUSTON: In what way?

Mr. Aikens: With cloth.

Mr. HOUSTON: If the hon. member inspected the conditions, he would agree that it would not be practicable. I do not know how the building could be made dust-proof, but the expenditure is warranted. If the Minister visited the building and saw the conditions as they ordinarily exist, he would realise that no-one in particular is to blame. The whole of the fault lies with the poor conditions under which the work has to be done.

I feel very strongly on the subject of technical education and I am endeavouring to have things put right. Justifiable allowances have been made for the previous Government, but that is no reason why conditions should be allowed to remain as they are. We must progress with the times.

A previous speaker mentioned the need for septic systems in country schools. However, there is a very great need for septic systems in schools in the metropolitan area because of its very concentrated population. I have referred previously to the Cannon Hill State School, which has 1,100 pupils and is in urgent need of a septic system. I have previously described in detail what goes on at the school, but the Education Department could easily find it out for itself. It is not in the best interests of the children that it should go on. The only answer is a septic system. The Murarrie State School is smaller than the one at Cannon Hill, and if finance is lacking now perhaps it could have a septic system some time in the future.

A matter came to my notice during the week. I do not know if the Minister is aware of it, but if he is I should like him to say something about it during the debate. I refer to the painting of the fence at the Bulimba State School. At one corner of the school grounds is a tennis-court, and two of its fences form part of the fencing of the main school grounds. However, the department has painted the school fences right up to the tennis-court, but has left the tennis-court fences unpainted. That is a very niggardly action, particularly when the painters are on the job and the paint is there. The school committee is a very vigorous body; it has collected more than \$5,000 for school improvements during the last few years. However, the members of the committee cannot be expected to exert their efforts when the department leaves the tennis-court fence unpainted.

Mr. Aikens: If there was no tennis-court the department would have to paint the fence.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is so.

Mr. Heading: Are you referring to the Bulimba School?

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes. I am mentioning this matter not because I want to push the Bulimba School to the forefront; I am merely mentioning facts. Other hon. members may have a similar complaint, and if Bulimba School is the odd one out—

Mr. Heading: I can assure you that it is not the odd school out.

Mr. HOUSTON: Then I hope the Minister will excuse me for working the parish pump.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the swimming pool at the Bulimba State School. It is greatly appreciated not only by the people whose children attend the school, but by those whose children attend the Morningside School and other schools, and use the pool at the Bulimba School. Unfortunately, because of something beyond the control of the school committee, part of the flooring on the area surrounding the baths has sunk. It will have to be repaired, and the school committee has been told that it will have to do the job. I admit that it will be subject to a Government subsidy, but the school committee provided half the money to build the baths. If the committee went out of existence, surely the baths would not be allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that no-one could use them? Is the school committee to be responsible for ever for the maintenance of the baths? They have become part of the school property and are under the school's direct control. Surely the committee should not be required to maintain them.

Mr. Heading: Has the school committee lost control of the baths?

Mr. HOUSTON: Virtually. The committee cannot let them out to an outside organisation and in that way get money to keep them in repair. They have become school property. I have no objection to that.

Mr. Burrows: They are on the department's land.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is true. Some of it could be separated but I am not querying that. Other school children use the baths but the only ones called on to pay are those who supplied the money to build them.

Mr. Aikens: Which school is that?

Mr. HOUSTON: Bulimba. I ask the Minister to see if some better arrangement can be made with the school committee when the baths are being used by others.

Mr. Aikens: Who arranges for the children of other schools to use the baths at the Bulimba school?

Mr. HOUSTON: The Department of Education.

Mr. Aikens: Then they accept full responsibility for the baths, I take it.

Mr. HOUSTON: They should. I leave it with the Minister.

Mr. Anderson: What was the policy of the previous Government on that?

Mr. HOUSTON: It did not happen with the previous Government. They were very generous with the building of baths.

Mr. Burrows: A generous subsidy.

Mr. HOUSTON: They paid their half as soon as the school committee paid its half. I am concerned about maintenance and I think hon. members will be, too.

I do not want to be over-critical of the department but the fences round some police stations are very unsightly. The men at the stations repeatedly repair them until they can no longer be repaired and then they are merely propped up. The neighbours are usually quite disgusted at the contrast with their own attractive fences so I ask the Minister to do all he can to have new fences erected when requested.

When I look up at the public galleries above the Chamber, I think it is high time the Government installed a lift in Parliament House. No elderly person can hope to negotiate the winding staircases. The unsatisfactory state of affairs has existed as long as the building has. Various Governments have been in power so it is not a political issue. But on behalf of the aged people in particular who wish to hear the proceedings, I urge the Minister to consider the installation of a modern lift.

Mr. HEADING (Marodian—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (8.40 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition spoke of day-labour and contract work. The previous Government carried out both day-labour and contract work for a long time and that will continue. I have one in mind at the moment, the school at Childers which is being painted by contract. It is worth about £2,000. I know that during the election it was said that a Country-Liberal Government would sack everybody, but we are hoping to keep all the men in work. If they play the game and do a good job they will not be neglected. Sometimes we have not the staff and have to call tenders to have the work done by contract. It just depends on which suits the department. If the men are short of work, we do it mostly by day-labour.

Mr. Davies: Very often you call tenders and get no response.

Mr. HEADING: There is not much of that today. Tenders are lower these days.

The Leader of the Opposition asked if I favoured a separate Works Department for the Department of Education. I think that with proper co-operation between the two the Department of Public Works should be able to handle all the work. The Minister for Education and I will co-operate and I have no doubt that we will manage all right.

Mr. Aikens: Did not you suggest that yourself when you were a private member of the Opposition?

Mr. HEADING: I know what I said when I was a member of the Opposition. I am saying what I say now as Minister for Public Works. We can do the work for the Department of Education. We confer and matters are dealt with in order of priority.

A great deal was made of what I said about the shortage of loan funds. I do not run round the country saying these things on a political basis. Hon. members opposite have done that. Many loans were not filled. Loan money was simply not available and nobody knows it better than the hon. member for South Brisbane.

Mr. Hilton: What about loan money for drought relief the other day?

Mr. HEADING: That was not loan money at all; that was a gift. The hon. member is miles behind the times.

Mr. Aikens: You did not get any.

Mr. HEADING: That is right. It is not the first time we did not get any, either. I remember the time that the Labour Government did not get any. It is not a matter of whether the Commonwealth Government are restricting us on loan money. Loan money is difficult to get. It is no use making it a political matter.

Mr. Aikens: You know why? It is because of the hire-purchase firms.

Mr. HEADING: I am not going to bring in the hire-purchase firms.

Wherever we can we are putting in fluorescent lighting. Once installed fluorescent lighting does not use as much current as ordinary lamps. It gives a better light and as I say we are installing it wherever possible.

The hon. member for Mundingburra referred to cementing underneath the Aitkenvale school. Wherever we possibly can we intend to cement underneath all schools. Twelve or 18 months ago the Government could not cement underneath all the schools because they did not have the money. Money is still the difficulty. There is no need to tell us that it should be done; we know it. We shall do it wherever we can. Money is a commodity we have all been short of at times; we know how difficult it is to carry on without it.

Reference was made to the unsuitability of the soil at Mundingburra school for a septic system. There might be a different type of soil on each side of the river. On one side the soil may absorb the effluent even though soil on the other side will not because of its clayey nature. That may be the reason. I have not seen the area. Soil types can vary almost within a few feet.

Mr. Aikens: With an extra length of pipe you could run the effluent to where the Jubilee Bowling Club is running theirs.

Mr. HEADING: I do not know whether they are on the same side of the river. I think the hon. member said that they were on different sides of the river or creek. However, I shall have another look at the matter.

The hon. member for Kedron said that the hon. member for Brisbane had an architect's plan prepared for the improvement of the amenities in this building. I know all about that. What I am complaining about is that the plan was never put into operation.

The use of stainless steel for urinals was quite a good suggestion by the hon. member for Kedron, one that we are carrying out with urinals in school buildings.

As to the improvement of playgrounds, it is the responsibility of my department to level them but then it is a matter for the school committees and the Department of Education. The Education Department grants a 50 per cent. subsidy for various schoolground improvements. The hon. member for Kedron referred to £10,000 to £12,000 being spent on a playground. That is a huge amount of money when we are looking for every penny.

The elimination of temporary classrooms was referred to. Temporary classrooms should be eliminated where possible but there must be another building available to house the children. Until you get another building you cannot afford to destroy the temporary classrooms. The other day the Minister for Education in Victoria told me they spent £2,000,000 a year in carrying secondary school children to school. That is better than we do. Unfortunately we have not spent as much money as the other States on education, but we have not had it. The hon. member for Kedron complained that there was much delay in the preparation of plans between the Education Department and the Public Works Department. These things take time. As I pointed out, we are short of architects, but we do employ architects outside the department when we are up against it.

The hon. member for Gregory made a good maiden speech. He said that there is no hostel in Longreach, although there were 1,000 children attending the Longreach school. It appears to me that it is a job for the people themselves to take in hand, with the chance of a subsidy probably from the Government. The C.W.A. would probably build it as they are building them in many other places. At Gayndah in my electorate the Shire Council is building a room for which they are getting a subsidy, and the C.W.A. will run it. If the people at Longreach worked along those lines they should get a hostel. It is a case of where they can help themselves. It is no use expecting the world in a few months. Hon. members must remember that the lack

of school buildings is prevalent all over Queensland, and we cannot catch up in a year or two years.

The hon. member for Kedron said that septic systems were necessary in all schools. We are installing them as fast as we can, because we realise their importance. Many parts of Brisbane are not sewered yet.

Reference was made to the condition of the police station and court house at Winton. There are many others in the same condition. If hon. members have a case for a new court house or a police station they should approach the people responsible for initiating the work. Although we do the building the other departments find the money. We do not say to the Police Commissioner, "You build a police station at Winton." He comes to us and says, "I want some of my money spent in building a police station at Winton."

When the hon. member for Gregory was speaking about the necessity for a hostel, I suggested to my friend, the Minister for Agriculture and Stock, who is sitting on my left, that that was one of his babies. I suggest to the hon. member for Gregory that he put his case to the Minister for Agriculture and Stock. If they want us to build him a hostel, that is all right, particularly if that department finds the money. The remarks of the hon. member for Gregory about the condition of the buildings in his area was a severe condemnation of the Labour Government, who held that electorate, I am told, for the last 51 years. I assure the Chamber that they will have more consideration from me. If I stand for anybody I stand for the people in the back blocks. Our job is to look after them in the best way possible, because we owe a lot to them. The city people would agree if they knew the position. After all, they know that the prosperity of the State rests on the primary producers, who grow wool and other products for export. How often have we said that we are riding on the sheep's back.

An A.L.P. Member: You might remember that when you are redistributing the seats.

Mr. HEADING: Many people will have much to say on the redistribution of seats.

I assure the hon. member for Gregory that we have our conferences and that we look into all their complaints. The hon. member for Townsville mentioned the necessity for building swimming pools at schools. We could not attempt that because of the cost. It is a matter between the school committee and the Minister for Education. When the Estimates for that department are under consideration the hon. member will have an opportunity to bring it up. He also suggested that health inspectors should inspect all Government buildings. If we had put a health inspector into the kitchen at Parliament House he would have closed it long ago and we should have had to go to the hotel for a meal. I shall consider the representations about the South Townsville school. I have no know-

ledge of the file on the building of a court house and police station at Townsville. The hon. member said that they have been planned for 17 years, but at the moment no money is available for this purpose.

It was said that the Government should plan for the future. The Government are aware of that. Cabinet is looking to the future. It is concerned about the lack of amenities everywhere and is trying to overtake the lag of essential work.

The hon. member for Toowoomba mentioned the bitumen sealing of playgrounds. Money would have to be made available for that work, but I suggest that the energetic committee in Toowoomba should take up the matter with the Department of Education.

I shall go into the statements about Binna-Burra.

The Films Commission has been mentioned. New members have been appointed not because the former members were not doing the job well enough but because they did not have sufficient time to cope with this work. The new members are doing a good job and disposing quickly of the work. I had to institute inquiries in Brisbane to find men who could devote part of their time to the work, and the task of finding suitable people was very difficult. It was only after the widest inquiries that three men were obtained.

The hon. member for Bulimba mentioned the Technical College and temporary classrooms in the Domain. The only reason why they are used is that no other place is available for the students. I have promised the Lord Mayor that at the earliest possible moment the buildings in the Domain will be removed, but the work cannot be done in a day. We must obtain other buildings to replace them.

Mr. Houston: I suggested, when new buildings are possible, that each trade group should have its own building.

Mr. HEADING: That will be considered. I am sure the Under Secretary listened intently to the remarks of the hon. member.

The hon. member also mentioned the dust nuisance and the installation of a septic system. That is possible only when money for the purpose, sufficient water and the right soil are available.

The hon. member for Bulimba made representations about the painting of the fence of the tennis court. I take it the tennis court belongs to the school?

Mr. Houston: Yes.

Mr. HEADING: That will be considered.

He mentioned a lift in Parliament House, a subject mentioned by many other hon. members. I have spoken of it, and so has the hon. member for Cooroora. It would cost a good deal of money. The Speaker and I agree that in making improvements at Parliament House we should work from the bottom up, in the first place giving amenities to those

who do the hard work in the building. When further money is available a lift will be considered. I realise only too well the need for it. My doctor has advised me not to hurry when going up stairs. If a lift was available I would not even have to walk up stairs.

Mr. HODGES (Nash) (8.59 p.m.): It is not necessary to elaborate on the work of the department, the administrative capacity and experience of the Minister or the energy and efficiency of the officers of the department.

Local government is a very important part of our democratic system. With adequate finance local authorities provide employment for residents of the area and so add to general prosperity. Therefore, any consideration that is given to local authorities will contribute substantially to the welfare of the areas concerned. Local government is also an avenue for the stabilisation of employment, and a wonderful source for the assimilation of migrants. As we all realise, Australia as a whole and Queensland in particular rely greatly upon an increase in population; to make the State progress a rapid increase in population is essential. The only way that can be achieved is through a vigorous migration programme. We are very fortunate in having Mr. Longland in the Department of Public Works. He was associated for some years with the Migration Department, where he did a wonderful job. If local government received encouragement from the Minister and the Government, it would result in the speeding-up of the migration policy to the benefit of Queensland.

All those who are connected with local government realise that there is insufficient liaison between local authorities and the various Government departments. I refer particularly to the Department of Agriculture and Stock, the Irrigation and Water Supply Department and the Main Roads Department. In cities and towns there is also the Postmaster-General's Department. Frequently expensive work is undertaken by a local authority in laying down a street or a footpath, and shortly after the work has been completed the Postal Department will tear it up to lay cables, or the Irrigation and Water Supply Department will dig it up to lay pipes. If there was a co-ordinating committee, a good deal of unnecessary work could be avoided.

Mr. Davies: Some of those departments are Commonwealth departments.

Mr. HODGES: The Postal Department is a Commonwealth department, but it could be represented on a co-ordinating committee.

Mr. Davies: It would be very difficult to co-operate with a Commonwealth department.

Mr. HODGES: I do not think so.

Frequently when a road is constructed in a local government area, a large fill is placed between two hills to eliminate grades.

If the local authority concerned co-operated with the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply or the Department of Agriculture and Stock, the fill could be used as the basis of a weir. Most main roads go through fertile areas and, as I say, the fills could be used as the basis of weirs for water conservation. At present, reinforced concrete pipes are laid under the fills at ground level, but if they were raised to a height that would ensure that water could be retained without inundating the surrounding property, it would be a step further in bringing about co-ordination in water conservation. I suggest that before plans are completed for the extension of any school they should be submitted to the local school committee for approval or comment.

Mr. Davies: You can quite easily get them if you want them.

Mr. HODGES: That has been done, but it could be made a rule to ask the school committees for suggestions for modifications because they are familiar with the requirements of their own area.

The Minister said the department intends where possible to concrete underneath schools. That was brought to his notice at the new school at Gympie West. It was very dangerous for primary school children to play under it and very promptly departmental approval was given for the concreting.

It is unfortunate that the Gympie West school was built in a very remote area. No doubt in time the population will grow but until it does there will be much heartburning among the residents. The school is well away from any residential area and the children who attend it will have to negotiate a stock route and traverse a very rough and dusty road. I have been assured by the local authority that it will improve the approaches before the end of next year if possible. However, the children will still have to face the hazards of livestock—and livestock from out-back stations are often quite wild. It would have been a different matter if suitable land had not been available closer to settlement.

Mr. Davies: Is the playground area satisfactory?

Mr. HODGES: Yes, very satisfactory, but for the next four or five years the hazards will exist. The whole problem could have been avoided if the local people had been asked to consider the proposal in the first place.

I know the Minister and the officers of the Local Government Department have the welfare of the people at heart and we look forward to their co-operation and help.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (9.12 p.m.): I commend the officers of the Department of Public Works from the apprentices up, including the architectural branch and the clerical staff of the Brisbane office. They have always been very courteous and efficient. Some of them travel about the country and,

as a representative of a country electorate, I can speak well of their work. I commend them for the workmanlike and diligent way in which they carry out their duties.

There has been some recrimination and self-accusation by hon. members about facilities in Parliament House. I sincerely hope that hon. members will look a little further than Parliament House. Any defects here were, and still are, the responsibility of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee. I have never been a member of that committee, but from time to time hon. members from both sides of the Chamber are appointed. Parliamentary records will show that three members of the Opposition and three Government members were appointed. Of course the Speaker is an ex-officio member of every committee. If anything has been amiss the responsibility rests equally upon the shoulders of all members of the committee, or on both parties because they were equally represented. Like many other committees I do not think that they met as often as they should. I do not think any member of the committee has the right to go into the maids' quarters to see whether the accommodation comes up to standard. The committee certainly had a duty and its members must accept full responsibility if the standards have not been reasonable.

In my opinion the Department of Public Works has done a mighty job since the war. We must remember that there was a big back-lag. It was not easy to catch up because it was not fair that merely because they were the Government the Government should unduly compete for the limited supplies of materials. As materials became more plentiful the Government were faced with a serious shortage of loan funds. If you have no socks on you cannot pull them up; if you have no money you cannot spend it. Now that he is ministerial head of the department, the Minister will have a much greater realisation of the problems facing it than when he was an hon. member of the Opposition.

I pay tribute to the work done throughout the State by school committees. There are 45 or 46 schools in my area, and it is wonderful to see the work done by the respective committees in raising funds to improve playgrounds. As the provision of library and sporting facilities, the arranging of picnics and many other activities of school committees do not come within the scope of the present debate I shall not touch on that aspect of their work. As I travel about I make it a rule never to go past a school. It gives me extreme satisfaction to see what has been done by school committees. Very seldom do I find lack of evidence of enthusiasm, interest and expenditure of energy by a school committee attached to a school in my area.

I wish to refer to the installation of electricity at Rosedale, a country school in my electorate. The Railway Department has

installed a plant at Rosedale, and an application to allow the school to connect with the Railway Department supply was generously granted by the Commissioner. The department's supply is more than is required for its own work. It would be many years before the regional board mains came down that far. I asked the school committee what they were prepared to do to assist with the installation. The school is situated some distance from the railway plant and five or six electric light poles will be necessary. The school committee said that they would provide and erect the poles, but they did not know anything about the wiring of them. They ask that the Education Department arrange for the wiring of the poles, and the necessary wiring at the residence. I put that proposition to the Minister for Education.

Mr. Windsor: Is it A.C. current.

Mr. BURROWS: Yes, 240 volts. The installation of electricity will enable the people to enjoy benefits for which they would have to wait many years till the regional board extended their mains to the area. The intervening area is sparsely populated, therefore it would not be an economic proposition for the regional board to lay down the mains. I sent a copy of the suggestion of the school committee to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Public Works. I was bitterly disappointed with the reply from the Minister for Education who told me to take it up direct with the Railway Department. I wish to pay the Minister for Public Works this tribute: I have received a sympathetic hearing whenever I have had occasion to approach him. The hon. gentleman knows the community of which I speak. During the election campaign he and I had tea together at that place. If they get the electricity they have sufficient funds to buy small projectors which will enable them to show films and enjoy an amenity that is otherwise not available to them. I do trust that when the Minister can spare the time he will deal with the matter; and I am sure that the hon. gentleman will give it his serious and sympathetic consideration. The committee of the High School at Gladstone has a credit balance of some hundreds of pounds after spending large amounts on the school. The committees of all the schools throughout my electorate are willing to assist. The total value of the contributions of those committees and all the other committees throughout the State amounts to more than a considerable sum. These committees are to be commended for the way in which they have formed working bees, particularly in the country areas where most of their members are practical men. School committees have in their ranks men of practical experience, and they do a good job.

Concreting under schools has been mentioned. I submitted a proposal to the department that it supply the cement and allow something for the cartage of gravel so that the work could be carried out by the committee. Committees of these schools are made up of bushmen, and the average bushman knows as much about the laying of a concrete floor as the workers of the department.

Mr. Hilton: The department offered to supply material for the work, but the committee would not carry it out.

Mr. BURROWS: I do not agree with the interjection of the ex-Minister.

Mr. Hilton: It is true.

Mr. BURROWS: There was some conflict between us on the subject. The estimates for the work varied. In the meantime further funds became available, and workmen of the department arrived at a school not more than a few miles away to carry out similar work at that school. The committee of the first school learned by the grapevine of this action and naturally wanted similar treatment.

A Government Member: They thought if it was good enough for one school it was good enough for the other?

Mr. BURROWS: Yes. School committees co-operate with the department in the provision of amenities.

I advise the Minister not to discard the day-labour system. My experience is that work of better quality can be obtained in this way. Some contractors are honest and others are dishonest. Before I entered Parliament I was secretary of the Gladstone Hospital for about 21 years and know the work performed there by contractors. Despite the closest supervision the work was never as good as that done by day-labour. The cost of day-labour work is lower. The work performed by day-labour at the Gladstone Hospital is a monument to the system.

All concrete piers are supposed to contain at least four lengths of reinforcing steel. On one occasion some piers erected by a contractor had to be removed. Prior to their removal I was prepared to bet that they contained the specified four pieces of steel, and told the workmen engaged on the removal of the piers that they would have to cut through the four pieces. They drew my attention later to the fact that there was only one piece of steel up the centre. They climb up the ceiling and take off the collar tie after the inspector has gone. They put in weatherboards instead of 6-in. x 1-in. step risers. Departmental officers could mention many other tricks of contractors.

I wish the Minister well. I am sure he is approaching his task conscientiously.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.31 p.m.