

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 1958

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Hon. A. G. MULLER (Fassifern) replied—

“Whilst the questions asked relate only to the Clare Irrigation Area, I have included in the answers the relevant details in respect of the other irrigation areas on the Burdekin River—that is—Millaroo and Dalbeg, for the information of the Honourable Member.”

“(1.) In the 1957 tobacco season 138 farmers in the Burdekin Area grew tobacco comprising 56 at Clare, 52 at Millaroo and 30 at Dalbeg. Current season plantings of tobacco are: Clare, 48 farmers, 380 acres; Millaroo, 48 farmers, 410 acres; Dalbeg, 35 farmers, 360 acres; total, 131 farmers, 1,150 acres.”

“(2.) The quantity of tobacco leaf sold during the last 12 months was—Clare, 286,000 lbs.; Millaroo, 314,600 lbs.; Dalbeg, 297,000 lbs.; total, 897,600 lbs. or 448.8 short tons.”

“(3.) The average price per pound of tobacco leaf sold at the 1958 sales was 129.5d. (Clare), 121d. (Millaroo), and 128d. (Dalbeg) with a district average of 126.5d.”

“(4.) Practically all of the Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg farmers have relied on tobacco to provide their main source of income but a number have produced other crops in addition, such as seed beans, fresh beans and maize.”

“(5.) Twenty-three farms at Clare are known to have moderate to severe nut-grass infestations and the balance of producing farms are understood to be substantially free at the moment. No farms in the Millaroo and Dalbeg areas are known to be seriously infested.”

“(6.) Of the 62 Clare farmers in residence in their farms at present, 14 are not growing tobacco this season. At Millaroo 5 farmers are not growing this season. All farmers at Dalbeg are growing this season. Some of the settlers not growing tobacco are growing small areas of other crops but they are mainly working for other farmers or in other private employment.”

“(7.) The following farms are vacant at present:—Clare, 9 (vacant from a few weeks to two years); Millaroo, 3 (two recently vacated, third vacated some time ago); Dalbeg, Nil; total, 12.”

“(8.) Irrigation supply is available to all farms opened for settlement in the Clare, Millaroo, and Dalbeg areas.”

TUESDAY, 28 OCTOBER, 1958.

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

QUESTIONS.

CLARE TOBACCO FARMERS.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“(1) How many farmers at Clare grow tobacco?”

“(2) What is the total quantity of tobacco leaf sold from this settlement during the last twelve months?”

“(3) What was the average price received?”

“(4) How many farmers are dependent entirely on tobacco growing?”

“(5) On how many of the farms does nut-grass not interfere with the development of the tobacco plant?”

“(6) How many farmers do not grow tobacco and what crops do these farmers grow?”

“(7) Are any farms unoccupied at present? If so, how many, and how long have they been unoccupied?”

“(8) Is irrigation available for all farms?”

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS AT LOAN COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“Does he receive a transcript of proceedings at the Loan Council meetings?”

so, will he table in Parliament any reports of meetings held since August, 1958, and seek permission to have them printed?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice), for **Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Coorparoo), replied—

"Unlike Premiers' Conferences, there are no verbatim recordings made of proceedings at Loan Council Meetings. However, minutes of such meetings are circulated and a copy thereof is received by the Honourable the Treasurer. It is not proposed to table any reports of any Loan Council Meetings for any one or more of the following reasons—(a) Such minutes are marked "Strictly Confidential." (b) Attendance at Loan Council Meetings is confined to Loan Council members and their attendant staffs and Commonwealth and State Ministers; members of Government Parties in the Federal Parliament have been specifically excluded from Loan Council Meetings. (c) There have been no meetings of the Loan Council since August, 1958."

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the State Children Department for the year 1957-1958.

Report of the Queensland Radium Institute for the year 1957-1958.

Report on the operations of the Sub-Departments of Native Affairs, "Eventide" Sandgate, "Eventide" Charters Towers, "Eventide" Rockhampton, Institution for Inebriates Marburg, and Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under the Abattoirs Acts, 1930 to 1949.

TUBERCULOSIS FURTHER AGREEMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga—Minister for Health and Home Affairs): I move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to authorise the Governor in Council of the State of Queensland to enter into with the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia a further arrangement for the continuance by this State, subject to agreed conditions, of services and facilities for the diagnosis, treatment, and control of tuberculosis provided pursuant to a previous such arrangement, and for other incidental purposes."

Motion agreed to.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Registration of Firms Acts, 1942 to 1953, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

BUILDING SOCIETIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Building Societies Acts, 1886 to 1956, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 22 October (see page 790) on Mr. Morris's motion—

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

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) (11.14 a.m.): The Minister for Labour and Industry said that there had been no opposition to the Bill by the trade unions that met him in conference. Advice received by me from persons who attended that conference indicated that there was opposition to every provision of the Bill. They wanted the Act to remain as it was. Evidently there has been some misunderstanding about what took place at that conference. When a Bill is to be introduced affecting only one section of the community—in this instance the ice manufacturers—why are representatives of the meat companies and milk companies who are in no way affected by it called into conference on such a measure? It looks to me that this Bill is the first step towards further exemptions for pressure groups who are today forcing the Government to introduce legislation to benefit them alone.

I remind the Minister that some time ago there was an explosion of a refrigeration plant at an hotel and some persons lost their lives. Any action that the Government may take to remove safety precautions and conditions is a retrograde step and one not in the best interests of the people. It should be our desire at all times to provide the necessary safety regulations for the protection

of the public. I do not know of any hardship being inflicted on anybody by the Inspection of Machinery Acts. When I administered these Acts, there was no opposition from the people who were affected by the legislation, which provided for the protection not only of the people operating the machine, but also the people employed in proximity to it. This Bill is a very retrograde step and one that has been strongly opposed by the trade unions. If they were not opposed to it why were they at a conference dealing with the matter? I cannot understand the information that has been supplied by the Minister. I do not suggest for a moment that he is misleading the House, but somebody must have misunderstood the position, because there is violent opposition from the trade unions to this Bill. If it is passed in its present form I foresee further interference with the authority of the Machinery Department; further risks will be inevitable. Under this Bill Orders in Council may be issued granting certain exemptions. I remind hon. members of the bitter opposition of members of the Government to this power when they were in opposition. They complained that we were being governed by regulation, but they now realise that it is necessary for a Government to have power to issue Orders in Council to meet circumstances that arise from time to time. I am glad that hon. members of the Government have been converted and now realise that what was done by previous Governments was essential in the interests of the people and the State. The exemption which it proposed to grant is not worth the paper it is written on. It says—

“Any such exemption may be subjected to such conditions (including conditions requiring a person who holds under this Act.”

“A certificate of competency authorising him to take charge of that refrigeration machinery to be in attendance thereon at periodical intervals, and so that the same shall not be left continuously unattended by such a person for longer than a specified period of time) . . .”

The Government realise there is some necessity for some person to be about the place from time to time. They seek to put the onus on the Chief Inspector. There is nothing mandatory in the amendment. I am not satisfied that the Government are providing a proper measure of protection for the people affected. I propose in Committee to move an amendment deleting the word “may” and inserting the word “shall,” thus making it mandatory that somebody must be about the place at given times so that the machine will be subject to some supervision.

Mr. DEWAR (Chermiside) (11.20 a.m.): The debate on the Bill has been fairly extensive, but I should say that only 10 per cent. of the comments of hon. members opposite have been based on fact. The material they did not read from briefs was pure claptrap; indeed, most of the prepared material could be put in that classification.

For the last 20 to 30 years in industry there has been a continuous trend to improvement. We have come a long way from the horse and buggy days. Very few horses are used on farms. Their place has been taken by tractors. Hon. members of the official Opposition have not advanced beyond the horse and buggy days. Although we see no horses and buggies in the streets, hon. members opposite want to retain the horse troughs on the roads. They may serve a useful purpose. The members of the two Labour Parties may like to use them for dipping their respective Leaders. That is the only good purpose I can think of for horse troughs in these days of mechanisation.

As I have said, improvement in industry has been continuous. We have witnessed the evolution of power machinery. At first steam was the motive power. The suction gas engine was then developed, to be followed by the semi-diesel, the diesel and then the electric motor. Surely this or any Government must amend legislation to keep pace with modernisation in industry.

The steam engine was fitted with a governor. On occasions the governor jammed and the engine raced, and so there was need for continuous attendance on that engine. Without that attention, a steam engine could cause havoc or damage. The suction gas plant also needed constant attention. It had to be greased and re-fuelled and gauges had to be read. When used in the ice manufacturing industry, this plant needed constant attention. As the diesel engine was perfected, the need for constant surveillance became less. The diesel is the most efficient type of internal combustion engine. The next step in the pattern of progress was the introduction of the electric motor. I suppose it would be safe to say that over 90 per cent. of industrial machinery is now run by electric power. Even electric plant was not entirely efficient at first, because the electric motors in those days were fairly crude. They generally had an open end through which dust and fluff was sucked into the motor. These particles of dust tended to cause shorts in the armature, and fires started. Tremendous improvements in these motors have now been made, and today they are totally enclosed with an inbuilt fan circulating system, and it is virtually impossible for dust to enter the motor. Electricians of skill have effected a further improvement, the electric cut-out, for use on air compressors, refrigeration compressors, and other plant working on a pressure system. When a certain pressure is reached the motor automatically cuts out. I should say that the safety factors that apply to electric cut-outs are more efficient than the human mind.

Mr. Houston: How long have they been in?

Mr. DEWAR: They have been developed in the post-war years.

Mr. Lloyd interjected.

Mr. DEWAR: As the hon. member for Kedron has not been present during the discussion he will find reference to the fully automatic equipment on page 1 of the Bill.

I remind the hon. member for Baroona that in 1952 he introduced a Bill to amend the Inspection of Machinery Acts to provide that certificated operators must be provided for all machinery with engine capacity of 64 circular inches. At that time I pointed out to him that my inquiries from eminent consulting engineers disclosed that they had never heard of circular inches. I found out that the circular inches referred to by the hon. member for Baroona represented the square of the diameter. In other words, if you had a diameter of 3 inches you had a circular inch capacity of 9, and if you had 6 cylinders in the engine you had 54 circular inches. A man could drive a Ford V8 down the road with a 72 circular-inch capacity by proving that he could steer the car, but if he stopped the car and fitted an air compressor at the side of the road he would need a certificated man to operate it. I pointed that out to show the farce of the measure. On that occasion I pointed out that the hon. gentleman was protecting the inefficient and created a hazard to human life. The only important thing concerned with a diesel engine is the horsepower capacity. Diesel manufacturers work on effective pressure. A man who builds an engine with a large cylinder has a low pressure, a great safety factor. The Bill that was introduced by the hon. member was to protect the man who produced the small cylinder with the high pressure. So much for the hon. member for Baroona and his knowledge of this particular subject.

In the early stages of this Bill the hon. member for Baroona asked how many ice manufacturers there were in Brisbane with plants under 50-ton capacity. He said that he had made inquiries and found that there were only two. I have taken the trouble to get the figures. Let me say that a 50-ton compressor theoretically can produce only 24 tons of ice every 24 hours. In actual fact, the average 50-ton compressor produces between 16 and 18 tons of ice in every 24 hours.

The Leader of the Opposition made many mistakes, which is not unusual. He quickly found his level when he went into Opposition. There are 18 ice producers in the Brisbane and Redcliffe area. Many cater for cold-storage facilities to make a living. Of 11 ice-producers in Brisbane, two have plants with a capacity of 10 tons and under 10 tons, six have plants with a tonnage capacity of 20 tons and under, three have plants with a capacity of over 20 and only one as a capacity of more than 50 tons. It is significant that this firm does not have an automatic plant, nor does he intend to have a automatic plant, and so he will not be

included under the provisions of this Bill. So much for the inquiries made by the hon. member for Baroona.

We have heard much about safety factors and fire hazards. The hon. member for Baroona took us for a trip out to Cunnamulla and spoke of a hotel there that was burned down. Being a member of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, I made inquiries of the Chief Officer this morning. I learned that in 1957-1958 there were 974 fires in the Brisbane metropolitan area, 26 of which were probably caused by refrigerator units. Most of those 26 were caused by the old-type kerosene refrigerator units or the old-type refrigerator unit driven by the open type of motor that sucks in dust and felt particles, which get onto the armature and cause a short circuit. If there were any fires at all that were attributable to the modern-type automatic electric motor with the cut-out, they would be infinitesimal in number. I should say that there would not be more than one at the most out of the 974 fires during the year. However, that is not of very great importance. What is important is that thousands of refrigerators are operating every day of every week in the metropolitan area. As I have pointed out, there may have been one fire out of 974 in the last 12 months that was caused by the modern sealed-unit type of electric motor.

Mr. Morris: That is bringing in all domestic refrigerators.

Mr. DEWAR: It brings in all refrigerators.

I got some very interesting information about the ice-making industry from people who know something about it. The comment on it from Home Hill was, "Trade declining." A report from Mossman says, "Ceased manufacture in 1952. No ice being made in Mossman." The report from Ravenshoe was, "No longer making ice." From Gordenvale, it was, "Ice-making no longer economic. Ceased making." The report from Booval was "No longer in ice-making." Those comments from various parts of the State indicate the state of the ice-making industry.

Cold stores in the Brisbane area, and probably in meatworks throughout the State, are using refrigeration machines of a higher capacity than 50 tons. For example, a machine at the Hamilton Cold Stores has a capacity of 350 tons. The modern machine, which is the only one covered by the Bill, is operated by a modern electric motor with safeguards such as electric cut-outs and oil-pressure cut-outs for the protection of machinery, and consequently of human life. There is no need to have a certificated operator for that machinery.

The measure should help to lower operating costs and thus keep the cost of ice low. The ice industry is no longer very profitable. In pre-war days when ice-chests were the rule rather than the exception, the ice industry

was flourishing. Today, it is not. Refrigerators are essential in any home, and the percentage of domestic refrigerators would now be extremely high. Naturally, this has affected the cold storage trade tremendously, and it is necessary to do everything possible to protect the ice industry for those who wish to stay in it. There are still quite a number of people in the community, mainly working men, who cannot afford a refrigerator and thus have to depend on the use of ice. If ice manufacturers were forced out of the industry because the Government were unsympathetic to their needs the working man would be the only one to suffer.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. DEWAR: Hon. members opposite had 30 years to do something about it and they did precious little.

I assure hon. members opposite that the modern machine, incorporating safety devices, is more efficient and safer than the old machine with human supervision. Are they concerned with consumer costs? They should be. The Bill will help to keep those costs down. Are they concerned with unemployment in the industry? There is no need for them to fear on that score because the main manufacturers the Bill deals with are the small men who run their own plants and do not employ an engineer-in-charge. At present the manufacturer is forced to stay on the job 24 hours a day but the Bill will enable him to get away for a while. As to unemployment, there is no doubt that, with the shortage of skilled electrical technicians, industry, under the expansion programme of the Government as compared with the programme of the previous Government, will very quickly absorb any qualified electrical worker.

Mr. Houston: You are taking a long while to do it.

Mr. DEWAR: We have had a year and I do not think we have done badly in that time seeing that we were faced with the task of cleaning up 30 years of mess created by hon. members opposite.

The Leader of the Opposition made a great play on an accident that occurred in Brisbane away back in 1945, apparently one accident in the ice industry in 13 years—not a bad record. The Labour Party itself has had more accidents than that in the last 13 months. However, I checked on the accident the hon. gentleman referred to and found that it had nothing to do with the transmission, or electric motor, or suction gas plant, or steam engine or diesel. The compressor head itself split and blew. Remember that he used the accident in an attempt to show that it was essential to have a man on the job to prevent accidents or, if they occurred, to take corrective measures. What happened when the compressor head blew down in the Valley in 1945? Every man in the engineroom, including the owner, went for

his life. Anyone who has been near a fair-sized charge of ammonia will know why they ran.

Mr. Graham: I suppose you would have stayed.

Mr. DEWAR: I have run many times in my life but never from criticism or from an attack by hon. members opposite. Right from the time I left school till three or four years after the war, indeed right until the time I entered the House, I was associated with an industry that brought me into contact with every phase of the industrial life of the community. I suppose I have fitted more belts onto refrigerator units than any other man in Queensland and I have had more sniffs of ammonia while doing it than the average man in the street. Any man who will stay in an engineroom when a compressor head blows or a pipe-line blows and there is ammonia about is "a better man than I am, Gunga Din." There is not an hon. member opposite who, as an engineer, or as a good talking member of Parliament, would stay in any engineroom under those conditions. That is exactly what happened in the Valley in 1945 and it high-lights the point of the Bill because the modern type of machinery with built-in safety devices is much more efficient than the old type that needed a certificated officer in charge. The case cited by the Leader of the Opposition is conclusive evidence that having a qualified operator in charge did not mean a thing because he and his companions fled, and I do not blame them. Only a few months ago a boy was killed by ammonia fumes on the northside of Brisbane. No-one could get in to get the poor little fellow's body out. When that sort of thing happens with a refrigerator compressor nobody hangs around. I commend the Bill, believing that it is a step in the right direction. By the introduction of the Bill we are facing up to the realities of the modernisation of equipment and bringing down legislation to meet modern trends in industry.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) (11.41 a.m.): The hon. member for Chermiside prefaced his remarks by saying that hon. members on this side of the House had a brief. It is very evident that he came here with a prepared brief from the manufacturers of this machinery and, by way of advertisement, to let the people who read "Hansard" know that he has an interest in that industry, that he supplies belts to that and other industries. He was deliberately pushing his own barrow and the barrows of the firms he is connected with.

Mr. Lloyd: He might think he is getting the agency.

Mr. DONALD: He probably is. The Minister's main argument against the opposition from this side of the House to the clause we are objecting to was that it was not blanket clause permitting all refrigerat-

plants in the city or the State to be operated without a man in charge during the whole of the shift. He went on to say that permission for the clause to be put into operation would have to come by way of approval by the Executive Council, and by the submission of a regulation to this Assembly. Surely he is not thinking that we on this side could override the decision of the Executive Council or could prevent a regulation tabled in the House from being put into operation. We have tried to do so before because it was our duty, but if the Government have sufficient numbers to get the Bill passed we are in an impossible position to try to prevent any decision of the Chief Inspector being given effect to by the Executive Council or a regulation.

Mr. Morris: When we were in Opposition we were told—

Mr. DONALD: People will live in the past and take all the glory they can get from our past legislation. We are opposing the Bill because we are realistic. We have the human interest at heart, not the interests of people who only want to make profits. It is obvious that if we are unable to prevent the legislation going through we could not hope to over-ride any decision of the Executive Council or the operation of any regulation.

It could also be argued that the Bill would lead to the position where it would depend solely upon the decision of the Chief Inspector whether an exemption should be granted. I cannot see the Executive Council or individual members of the Government refusing to accept any decision of the Chief Inspector. It could mean placing a great deal of power and responsibility in the hands of one person. I do not think that is good business.

The hon. member for Chermiside made reference to 50 tons of ice. Clause 2 provides—

“The Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the Chief Inspector, may, by Order in Council, exempt from the application of this section any fully automatic refrigeration machinery, not exceeding fifty tons refrigeration capacity, specified in the Order in Council, while that machinery is used solely in the production of ice to be supplied for domestic purposes, and is so used at the place specified in the Order in Council.”

It does not say 18 tons or 20 tons, but 50 tons. Fifty tons is a lot of ice! Imagine 50 tons of ice being taken from the vendor's van into ice-chests in the home. It would be taken in in the little pieces that are looked upon as a block or half-block of ice. There would be thousands of those in 50 tons of ice. The Minister described a small manufacturer as one who manufactured 50 tons of ice. It is beyond my comprehension how anyone would think that a man who has a business at manufacturing 50 tons could be placed in the category of a small business man.

Mr. Morris: You are confusing the machine of 50-ton capacity with 50 tons of ice.

Mr. DONALD: I am not confusing it at all. I know that 50 tons can be produced. Even if they are producing 20 tons, I say without fear of contradiction that such a business would not come within the category of a one-man show delivering half blocks and whole blocks over a wide area.

Mr. Dewar: Do you know of any ice works that deliver?

Mr. DONALD: Whether I know of one such ice factory or not does not come into the matter. We were told by the Minister on the initiation and on the second reading that he was anxious to protect the small ice manufacturer and the small ice vendor, the link between the ice manufacturer and the housewife.

Mr. Dewar: The ice works sell their ice to the vendors.

Mr. DONALD: Will the hon. member keep quiet. The hon. member spent much time trying to find out the cause of juvenile delinquency and a remedy for it; he should seek the remedy for delinquency in members of Parliament. If exemption be granted for the production of domestic ice it would not be long before there would be an agitation for the exemption of ice manufactured for any purpose. The Government have not been able to resist the agitation by people producing domestic ice, therefore it is evident they will give way to pressure by those producing ice for any purpose. It is because we have consideration for the people working in these places that we shall oppose this Bill very strenuously. Another argument used by the Minister was that the amendment would remove hardship from the small manufacturer. Suppose these people were suffering a hardship, would the Government be justified in removing safety conditions in those circumstances? What about the hardship that may be suffered by scores of families as a result of the removal of this precaution! It would be just as logical to remove the hardship imposed by safety regulations on mine-owners and miners. Safety lamps have to be used in mines and inspections have to be made before work is commenced. If the argument is logical then why not abolish those safety regulations and permit miners to go down without safety lights?

Mr. Morris: You know there is no detriment to safety in this Bill.

Mr. DONALD: It is because I know definitely that there is a great danger that we object to the Bill. We do so only for that reason. The Bill is not designed to prevent accidents or to make conditions safer for those in the industry. Those are the reasons given by the Minister when introducing the Bill. The Bill will mean a lowering of safety

precautions, and we cannot agree to it. As I have said, the Bill will not prevent accidents; it will increase the risk of accidents.

Mr. Morris: Nonsense!

Mr. DONALD: It is not nonsense.

Let us calmly consider the amendments of the Mining Act, the Machinery Act and other Acts. Those amendments have been introduced following on accidents. The accidents were investigated by competent men who submitted recommendations as to improvements in conditions and the removal of causes of accidents, so that as far as it was humanly possible accidents could be avoided in future. This Bill adversely affects the safety precautions. It will mean that plants can be left unattended. Even the Minister must admit that the risk of accident must be greater when a competent or certificated person is not on the job, but is delivering ice or doing something else. If a competent, certificated man is in charge of the machinery, accidents can be prevented, accidents that may have disastrous and far-reaching effects.

Mr. Morris: Would you suggest that an air-conditioning unit or a domestic refrigerator should be attended by a certificated person?

Mr. DONALD: I am not speaking about domestic units. If I did, you, Mr. Speaker, would call me to order, and very rightly so. I have no desire to get away from the Bill.

The only persons who will benefit from the Bill are those selling these ice-making units. The anxiety of the Minister and the hon. member for Chermide and other Government members leaves me with no doubt that they are not concerned about those in the industry, they are not attempting to make conditions safer, but they are endeavouring to give a direct advantage to the manufacturers of these units and their agents. Those are the only persons who will derive any benefit from the Bill. It will give an opportunity to some firm with modern ice-making machinery to quickly unload these machines on to the public.

Some suggestion has been made that the unions, particularly those interested in this industry, have given this legislation their approval. Nothing could be further from the truth. The unions are not happy about the legislation, and they have asked Opposition members to oppose the Bill with all the power and eloquence at our command. These men have an expert knowledge of the industry. They are competent and certificated, and know the danger that could arise. At this late hour I suggest to the Minister he get in touch with Mr. Whiteside, secretary of the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association, other unions and men on the job, and seek their views on the Bill. I advise the Minister not to listen to so-called experts such as those who supply belts for machinery,

but to get in touch with the experts who look after these machines and can speak with knowledge of them.

Safety first is an excellent slogan, that no hon. member would deny. Let us put that slogan into operation. Let hon. members adopt the slogan, and not remove safety regulations from any Act to make conditions more dangerous for the general public and the workers.

I have referred to the hon. member for Chermide and his allegation that we on this side of the House have been briefed. I make the confession that I have been briefed by my conscience alone and that I have been prompted by an earnest desire to protect the public who might suffer by the removal of safety provisions, and the people working in industry. I am briefed from a humanitarian viewpoint without their coming to see me specifically on this matter. Before I entered the House I was engaged in a dangerous industry, one that became more dangerous because more modern machinery was being put into it. I was connected with an engineering position around the pits. We all know that this machinery has to be tested every so often and we know that the men working must have medical check-ups every so often too. We did not object to that because it meant safety. It was an inconvenience to many of us at the time but, we did not object, for nobody doubted the wisdom of safety regulations in respect of mining and mining machinery. Every hon. member should hesitate before voting on this Bill. He should ask himself, "Am I doing the right thing?" The only argument that has been put forward by the Opposition is that of maintaining the safety level. That should override arguments used by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Chermide accused us of not knowing what we were talking about. He spoke about horse troughs and the uses of horse troughs, but if the day ever comes when he thinks he is good enough to put the Leader of our Party in a horse trough, he is due for a sad awakening. He spoke about the development of machinery. This Bill is a retrograde step. It is not a safety measure. Safety catches are used on cages that descend the pits. As a safety measure they are required. Does anybody think that legislation should be introduced to remove them? The more modern machinery or the equipment, the more skill that is required to install, operate and maintain it.

Mr. Nicholson: That is rot.

Mr. DONALD: It is not rot. If the hon. member can say that any fool can contro an automatic machine or be conversant with the need of automation he is wrong. Automation calls for more skill in invention, more skill in its installation, in its operation and its maintenance. Less skill is not called for. That is the problem we have to tackle.

are crying out for more technicians to develop machinery, to see that it is used effectively and efficiently as well as safely.

The hon. member for Chermside with crocodile tears told us about the decline in the ice-making industry. Nobody is surprised at that. Even Mr. Menzies tried to lecture us on how industry is becoming more modern. Is it not a step forward to have domestic refrigerators instead of the iceman bringing a block of ice once or twice a day! That is why the industry has declined.

At 12 noon, in accordance with Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—THIRD AND FOURTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1958-1959.

PREMIER AND CHIEF SECRETARY.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Debate resumed from 23 October (see p. 846) on Mr. Nicklin's motion—

“That £53,313 be granted for ‘Chief Office’.”

Mr. RICHTER (Somerset) (12.1 p.m.): First of all, I should like to congratulate the Premier, who is the administrative head of this department, on the very dignified way in which he is filling his office. It is one that has passed through the hands of many capable and experienced Premiers but never has there been a more conscientious, hard-working and highly-respected man than the present occupant. In the past, when the Premier was Leader of the Opposition, his critics doubted his ability to lead a Government. However, he has given them a very effective answer and has proved beyond doubt that he has the necessary qualifications. As a matter of fact, he demonstrated that very forcibly only the other day in the Budget debate, when he left the Opposition standing.

In addition to having the necessary qualities, the Premier enjoys the utmost loyalty of every member of the Government. That is something that the Opposition cannot understand. They find it difficult to realise that two different parties who may disagree on unimportant matters can still agree on main subjects such as socialism, whether democratic socialism or communistic socialism. Furthermore, the present Premier does not have to worry about being overruled by the Q.C.E., or any other outside body. That is where the previous Premier broke down. Although the majority of his team were behind him he was deserted by the minority, who were controlled by an outside body, the Q.C.E. In contrast with the previous Premier, the present Premier has absolute control and enjoys the full confidence

of every member of his team. The result is that he is able to hold his team together and thus is able to run his department efficiently, which the previous Premier could not do.

Leadership is very important at the present time. That is clear in the Federal sphere, where the Leader of the Australian Labour Party is bargaining his leadership for second preference votes. There is no need for our Leader to trade his leadership for second preferences.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Vote under discussion deals with the administration of the Department of the Premier and Chief Secretary. I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to that subject.

Mr. RICHTER: I compliment the Premier on the splendid way in which he carried out his duties as host to the Queen Mother, the British Prime Minister, and other distinguished visitors during the year. He carried them out with great dignity and I congratulate the officers of his department on the excellent arrangements that were made.

Again this year we look forward to a visit from a member of the Royal family and I have every reason to believe the arrangements will be carried out with the same degree of excellence. It is very pleasing to hear the Premier say he will give the princess the opportunity to see as much of Queensland as possible. That is very wise. I agree with his suggestion, too, that as many functions for young people as possible should be arranged. I can think of nothing more terrible for a young lady of 21 than to come out here and have to shake hands with a whole host of parliamentarians, civic leaders and other dignitaries. That can be overcome.

I congratulate his Under Secretary, Mr. McPherson, and his officers on their efforts during the previous visits of royalty. The centenary year will be a great opportunity to advertise the State; it will put Queensland on the map, and I believe the officers of the Premier's Department will do their job well. The centenary will encourage investment and will stimulate the tourist trade, which is what we are trying to do.

Mr. Lloyd: It is time you did something about the unemployment that is around everywhere.

Mr. RICHTER: I should like to be allowed to speak on that now, but I will have the opportunity to do so at some other time.

I am sorry that the Leader of the Opposition is not in the Chamber. When he spoke of the Agent-General and the Public Relations Bureau he was critical of the Deputy Premier's trip overseas to attract industries to Queensland. He termed it propaganda. I point out that the Government have set out to do something that has already been done most effectively by Sir Thomas

Playford for South Australia and by other Premiers in the Commonwealth. It is nothing new.

Mr. Davies: We are just waiting for the results.

Mr. RICHTER: I will come to that. Industry has grown tremendously in South Australia because of the efforts of the Playford Government. Sir Thomas Playford has been overseas many times. Mr. Bolte has done the same for Victoria and the Labour Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Cahill, has done exactly the same for his State. So it is an accepted principle. I ask hon. members opposite, are they critical of the principle of sending the Deputy Premier overseas to attract investment, or are they merely having a crack at him?

Mr. Lloyd: We are having a crack at the Deputy Premier.

Mr. RICHTER: At least they admit it. We cannot expect immediate results. Nobody expected the Deputy Premier to come back to Queensland with a whole string of industrialists tied to a chain.

Mr. Lloyd: We did expect some results.

Mr. RICHTER: We did not expect immediate results. We will get the results.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to develop that theme when the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry are being debated.

Mr. RICHTER: I am only following the lead of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I believe that in advertising the State the Premier's department is doing a splendid job. I am confident that the good work will continue and that it will definitely get results.

I should like to make a few comments about the Co-ordinator-General's Department. First of all I take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Holt and members of his staff on the excellent work they are doing. It is pleasing to see that the full amount of £23,000,000-odd was expended. It shows that if more money had been made available it could have been spent with advantage.

The Co-ordinator-General's Department controls and plans the development of the State. It is important that the money should be spent on projects that make for the speedy development of the State. I know that it is an accepted principle that long-range planning, even though there is not any immediate result, is very often desirable, but in Queensland, indeed throughout Australia, our position calls for speedy development and increased population.

Mr. Davies: Do you agree that the construction of the Tinaroo Dam was a wise development?

Mr. RICHTER: It was very wise in the first place. At some future time it will be

of maximum use, but not at the present time. That is the point I am trying to make. Money should be spent on projects that will give speedy development. Queensland and the Northern Territory are the northern outposts of Australia.

Mr. Davies: Do you believe that that development should have been postponed?

Mr. RICHTER: I am not coming in on that at all. I believe that there is a very close relationship between development and migration. The development of the North is a national responsibility. It is a problem that concerns not only Queensland but the whole of Australia. Every person residing in Australia must face up to the problem. We must all realise that unless we do more to develop the North we shall have to face the possibility of losing it. We must realise that there is a threat to our future. We are threatened by an area that does not understand democracy, an area where we are outnumbered by about 140 to one, people who do not understand our way of life. While I do not want to be an alarmist or impute wrong motives to any of the people north of Australia, no matter how friendly they may appear to be towards us, sheer economic necessity in about 10 or 20 years may force them to look in our direction for expansion. What would be the attitude of United Nations if we continued to neglect the development of our North? In order to develop our State speedily we need more investment; we need more money from the South and from overseas. We must have greater development if we are to expand. Some members of the Opposition hold up their hands in horror when it is suggested that we should encourage American capital.

Mr. Davies: Who said that?

Mr. RICHTER: It has been said by Labour members, particularly in the Federal House. We should encourage American investment as much as we can. The Opposition has criticised Holdens and other American investment. We are out to encourage American capital. It is not only good business, but good defence policy to do so. It is only natural that Americans will protect their own interests. The more American capital is invested in Australia the more quickly will the United States come to our aid if we need it.

The Somerset Dam is situated in my electorate and I wish to congratulate the Co-ordinator-General on the installation of the two-way radio flood warning system linking Brisbane with Somerset Dam, Lowood, and Watts Bridge in the Brisbane Valley. The department is experimenting with an automatic radio reporting flood gauge not far from Lowood and the indications are that it will be successful. This system of control is much appreciated by the people of the Brisbane Valley who in the past have experienced devastating floods in that area. The system provides a link of communication

between the flood gauges and Brisbane and the Somerset Dam. Under this control the flood waters of the Somerset Dam can be regulated, thus preventing serious flooding of the Brisbane River where it meets the Stanley River. If the automatic device which the department is experimenting with is successful, it could be used in all the river systems in the State with great advantage.

Mr. DEWAR (Chermside) (12.19 p.m.): I wish to congratulate the Hon. the Premier on the enthusiastic manner in which he has applied himself to his very important task of Premier of this State.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DEWAR: He is regarded by all people in the community as a man above reproach—a man of the highest moral character. Those politically opposed to him recognise him as a man of great sincerity and honesty of purpose and one eminently suited to lead a Government.

I sincerely congratulate the Premier on the enthusiastic way in which he has applied himself to his onerous tasks.

I trust that the visit of Her Majesty's representative, Princess Alexandra, will inspire the people to dedicate themselves to achievements just as glorious in the next 100 years as in our first 100 years of constitutional government.

Queensland has made great strides in the last 100 years, bearing in mind that before that time the country was virtually barren. It goes without saying that with more encouragement from previous Governments greater achievements could have been made. It will not be long before that lag is overcome with the impetus and drive of this Government for the real development of Queensland. It is obvious that overseas investors will react to the election of a sympathetic Government by deciding that Queensland is an ideal place in which to invest their money. At this stage I shall do no more than compliment the Premier on all the services provided by his department. Later I shall have more to say in particular on the services provided by the Co-ordinator-General.

The Estimates, at page 14, denote the new approach of this Government to Miscellaneous Services. The items of that vote reveal that a private secretary and clerk-typist are now provided not only for the Leader of the Opposition but also for the Leader of the Queensland Labour Party. That is in direct contrast to the action of the previous Government and the conditions under which the then Opposition had to labour. I use the word "labour" deliberately, and as a pun. In the last eight years of my period as an Opposition member, the eight to ten hon. members of the Liberal Party were accommodated in a small room near the main staircase. They were provided with one table and had no facilities for interviews. Under pressure

from the Leader of the Liberal Party, the Minister for Labour and Industry, the previous Government made a second room available. No secretarial assistance was given to the Leader of the Liberal Party. On one occasion, if my memory is correct, the outside secretarial assistant obtained by the Liberal Party was put off the premises. The Miscellaneous Services vote highlights the different approach of a Government interested in the decent things of life. The Queensland Labour Party is not greater in strength than the Liberal Party from 1950 to 1956, but the treatment of the Queensland Labour Party is in marked contrast to the treatment of the Liberal Party in those years.

In this morning's newspaper there is quite a clamour about a motor-car for the Leader of the Opposition. I speak at the risk of incurring the wrath of the hon. member for Bremer. In the debate on a recent Bill he said, "Do not live in the past." That is the statement from one of those who have thrown the Moore Government in our teeth for the last 30 years. How could he say in all sincerity, "Do not live in the past"? It amounts to pure, mealy-mouthed hypocrisy. Perhaps there is some reason for a little delay in providing a car for the Leader of the Opposition in view of the additional services that the Premier has made available for all parties in this State. There is perhaps some delay in thinking about it. The Premier has made a car available to the Leader of the Opposition to attend functions in the metropolitan area. The "Courier-Mail" says quite rightly that no doubt the Premier will think about this matter at a later date. I refer to the tone of the sub-leader in these words—

"The Nicklin Government would completely shame the little-minded meanness of its predecessors in office by conceding this and providing Mr. Duggan with permanent use of a State car . . ."

That high-lights the mealy-mouthed meanness of the former Government.

I now refer to the Department of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works. The matter I am about to mention might not necessarily come within the ambit of that department but I raise it now in the hope that it will be considered by the Premier. We have heard much about the capacity of Queensland industries to expand. There is a saying in the services, and you will be aware of this, Mr. Taylor, that if things are left to the "back-room" boys or the boffins, anything might happen. Heaven help Queensland industrial expansion when it is left in the hands of the boffins. People over the years who have made inquiries about starting an industry in this State have met with such frustration that 50 per cent. of their enthusiasm has been taken from them. Let me illustrate my point. If an industry has a piece of land it has to apply to the Brisbane City Council to get site approval. It may have to wait a week or a fortnight

or a month and then, having received site approval the industry has to submit building plans to conform to the ordinances of the Brisbane City Council or, if it is in the country to the local authority there. That approval might take an unlimited time. Then it may be found that there is no water available. There is much fiddling work to be undertaken. The industry finds that it has to pay £15 for the right of entry into a main that is perhaps a hundred yards away from the site. There is more messing about. There is perhaps no gas, and application has to be made to the respective gas company and, if electricity is required, to the electricity department of the Council. Then application has to be made to the Postmaster-General's Department for the installation of a telephone, which department might take up to a month to reply. The reply only records the receipt of the application for the installation of a telephone. The applicant company has then to wait for the next letter which says that the application is being proceeded with. The application might be granted in three months' time. I repeat, heaven help Queensland industrial expansion if it gets into the hands of the boffins. There is need for some organisation to be set up to handle the requirements of an industry to be established in Brisbane or elsewhere. If that organisation was established the man or woman interested in setting up an industry in this State could go to it and so avoid the multitudinous difficulties that now confront him or her in the matter.

I ask that consideration be given to the appointment of an industry co-ordinator who could get in touch with the Brisbane City Council and the various Commonwealth Government departments each week and say, "I have here a list of people who are anxious to establish industries here." He could attend to all the various matters controlled by those bodies. There is a crying need for something of that nature.

Mr. Graham: Would not the Industries Assistance Board do that?

Mr. DEWAR: I recently had personal experience in finding a suitable piece of land for a small factory, and the only efficiency I could find was with the Secondary Industries Division. Within a matter of minutes, approval to go ahead was given. Although we are not dealing with the Estimates covering the Secondary Industries Division, I should like to place that fact on record.

There is a crying need for some body to co-ordinate these matters and so overcome the problems that now face industrial expansion. Until that is done there will be very little chance of encouraging industry in Queensland.

I am glad that the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation is in the Chamber, because I want to tell him that there is also a great need for co-ordination within the

Department of Public Lands throughout the State. For example, if a man wanted to establish an industry in Townsville he should be able to go to the Lands Office in Townsville and say, "I want five acres of Crown land so that I can start an industry in this area." The Lands Office in Townsville should then be able to show him a map and point out what areas of Crown land are vacant. More important still, it should be able to say to him, "If you apply to the Secondary Industries Division, you will be able to get that area of Crown land on which to establish your factory." But that cannot be done now. After having ascertained what areas of Crown land are available, the applicant has to submit his application to the Brisbane office. Surely that is part of the work of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works? If anything needs co-ordinating, surely this does. At present there is no co-ordination at all. An application that is made in Townsville for land in the Townsville area has to come to Brisbane. If a man from Sydney had the initiative to make inquiries about establishing a factory on 10 acres of Crown land in the Townsville district, the land would be offered at public auction and he runs the risk of not getting it. Ninety-four per cent. of the land in this State is held by the Crown, and Lands Department officials in the various parts of the State should be able to say to an applicant, "If you apply for a perpetual town lease of the land that you need, your application will be granted."

In conclusion, I refer the Premier to the tremendous strain that has been placed on the city of Brisbane over the years by the immense industrial development that has occurred here. Recognition should be given to the fact that Brisbane is growing to the extent of having a city of the size of Warwick added to it each year. The money that has been spent on developing the city has been inadequate because of the tremendous influx of people and industries. I ask the Premier, therefore, to consider allocating additional funds for water reticulation in the Brisbane area. The one thing that can hamper industrial development in the south-eastern part of Queensland is a shortage of water.

Mr. HANLON (Ithaca) (12.35 p.m.): The hon. member for Chermside and the hon. member for Somerset made interesting contributions to the debate, but the way in which they wandered into a discussion of anything up to six other departments bears out our claim that it was most unfortunate that the Premier should have instructed his own members not to speak on the Budget. If they had, they would have been able to make their speeches at the right time and not as the Estimates came up for discussion.

Mr. Morris: You know that is completely untrue. Why do you say it?

Mr. HANLON: If I have your permission to reply, Mr. Taylor, the reason I say it is that the Premier himself said in the Hou

on Thursday evening that it was under his instructions that hon. members opposite did not speak on the Budget.

Mr. Morris: And your members followed that instruction, too?

Mr. HANLON: If the Minister checks "Hansard" he will see that it is not my opinion that I am expressing. The Premier's own words to the House were, "It was under my instructions that hon. members on the Government side did not speak in this debate."

Mr. Morris: I am asking you: why didn't your own members speak?

Mr. HANLON: I will not take up any more time answering the hon. gentleman. Eleven Opposition members spoke.

Mr. Morris: They had nothing to say.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HANLON: The State Public Relations Bureau is a very important subsection of the Department of the Premier and Chief Secretary. Its main job is to see that the people of the State are adequately informed of what the Government are trying to do and particularly of the various facilities and amenities made available to the people by the Government. For that reason I agree that the Bureau is important and that we should not begrudge it any reasonable allocation of funds; but hon. members opposite must certainly blush at the way in which they have used the Bureau in view of the criticism that they hurled at past Labour Governments for allegedly using it more for political purposes than for anything else. The Leader of the Opposition has commented on the matter at various times. This year £5,300 is provided for contingencies, a completely new item in the Vote. I know the Bureau is doing good work in its efforts to attract industries and tourists and no doubt its work has some value. If it has been stepped up, it might make up for the unfortunate failure of the Minister for Labour and Industry to bring about any substantial improvement in the capacity of industry to provide employment.

But the political propaganda pamphlet put out by the Public Relations Bureau—"Nine Months of a Country-Liberal Party Government"—might with advantage have been reduced in size. I do not suggest that the Government are not justified in trying to inform the public of their objectives but the pamphlet includes a great number of photographs of members of the Cabinet. On page 2 appears a photo of the Premier. I do not say that should not have been included; after all, the Premier's department is responsible for the publication and having his photo at the front is in order. On page 6 is a photo of the Minister for Labour and Industry, the leader of the Liberal Party. I do not know

how long he will remain in that position if the Treasurer and some of the other Ministers have their way.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HANLON: The pamphlet includes photographs of the following, too:—

On page 18, the Minister for Education.

On page 22, the Minister for Justice, with a flashing smile.

On page 30, the Treasurer and Minister for Housing.

On page 38, the Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads.

On page 52, the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation.

On page 60, the Minister for Health and Home Affairs.

On page 66, the Minister for Agriculture and Stock.

On page 70, the Minister for Public Works and Local Government, and

On page 80, the last of the Mohicans, the Minister for Transport.

I would respectfully suggest if £5,300 is going to be spent this financial year on publications of this nature that instead of devoting 12 or 16 pages to photographs of Ministers and outright political propaganda, they publish something of more value to the people. Perhaps in association with the Queensland Housing Commission the State Public Relations Bureau could publish a small pamphlet outlining the activities of the Queensland Housing Commission under the various phases of its administration. They could outline details of the workers' dwelling scheme, the £250 deposit scheme under the Commonwealth-States agreement and other matters about which the people do not know a great deal. All hon. members continually have inquiries about what advances can be made, what deposit is required, whether a person must completely own land on which he wishes to build a worker's dwelling and many other matters that could be adequately covered in a small pamphlet of 12 or 16 pages, space which is now used to publish photographs of Ministers. Such a pamphlet would be an advantage to all hon. members because it would let people know what the Government are doing and what facilities are available for housing through the Commission.

In the days of Labour Governments we were told that the Public Relations Bureau did nothing but churn out political propaganda. I have not a great number of the many pamphlets put out by the Labour Government but here is one issued about 1950, "Background to Democracy," and another one, "A.B.C. of Government Departments and Services," a very handy little pamphlet which sets out an alphabetical index of the various services provided by the Government and the departments to which people should apply if they require any of the services. Recently under the authority of the Minister for Justice

the Public Curator issued a booklet. It may not have been published by the Public Relations Bureau but it is the type of publication that the Bureau should issue to let people know what facilities are available. I do not always have a great deal of praise for the Commonwealth Government, particularly the present Government, but it is to their credit that they issue publications like "Commonwealth Social Services" in which there are no photographs of Mr. Menzies or anybody else. I do not see why publications put out by the State Public Relations Bureau should not be along the same lines. Other good publications put out by the Commonwealth Government include "Unemployment and Sickness Benefits," and "Repatriation Benefits." The State Public Relations Bureau could do a great deal more good for the people of the State if they devoted more time to that type of publication rather than the outright political propaganda which has certainly been a feature of this Government's publications. It is really unfair to the officers of the Bureau to expect them to act as sort of political gun-slingers for the Premier or the political parties in Government. Only recently, under the name of the Premier, an article appeared in the "Telegraph" which included a statement which I am sure the Premier would not have made because he is a man of experience, with political knowledge. But in an endeavour to score a point off the hon. member for Baroona the article said that the hon. member for Baroona had been in charge of the Police Department in recent years. The statement was not true. In the last few months of the previous Government various statements were attributed to the then Premier, the hon. member for South Brisbane, wherein he allegedly made intimate claims about the trade unions, the Q.C.E. and other matters. I am sure that mistakes were made, mistakes which I am confident would not have been made if the public servants employed in the Public Relations Bureau had not been called upon unfairly to carry out that sort of political shotslinging that has really got nothing to do with their job, a function which I am sure they do not want to carry out.

I should like the Premier to tell us the reason for the rather substantial rise in Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses. For the year 1957-1958 the appropriation was £13,460, and the amount expended was £18,888. I should like to know the reason for the extra £5,000 expenditure, over the appropriation. It is not anticipated that it will be as high this year, but there is an increase in the appropriation of about £3,000, bringing it up to about £16,000. The Incidental and Miscellaneous Expenses show perhaps a greater increase than any other item in the whole of the Chief Office vote. I note that the Government anticipate an expenditure of £57,000, and £11,000 for printing, in relation to the centenary celebrations. I should like the Premier to tell us whether the £57,000 includes the anticipated expenditure in connection with the visit of

Princess Alexandra. I should like to know also whether the Royal visit was taken into consideration when the Estimates were being prepared. That would clear up the point and obviate our raising it on the Estimates of other departments.

We join with other hon. members in expressing our pleasure that a Royal visitor will be here for our centenary celebrations. I noticed in the Press that the Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department, has been asked to go to Canberra to discuss the proposed Royal visit with the head of the Prime Minister's Department, Sir Allen Brown. I hope the Premier will see that our State public servants, who are quite capable of making arrangements for Royal visits, are not pushed around by Sir Allen Brown, although they would be capable of standing up to him. I recall the last Royal visit when the Queen Mother was here. Sir Allen Brown came up here and treated the State and our public servants as though they were a lot of backwoods hill-billys who did not know anything about entertaining anybody. That was most unfair to the officials of the Queensland Public Service who have always done a very good job in connection with any important visitor to this State. I hope the Premier also will see to it that the Commonwealth officials realise that it is our centenary that is the reason for the visit of Royalty, and that we do not permit our public servants to be ridiculed by those attached to the Prime Minister's Department.

I now turn to the State Stores Board. The hon. member for Somerset claimed that the A.L.P., or an hon. member of that Party had indicated that we were opposed to attracting American capital to this State or country. I do not know where he got that idea. We are not opposed to attracting American capital, but we are opposed to exploitation of this country by overseas firms, whether American or of any other country, who have an opportunity of establishing their businesses here and so assisting in the development of Australia. The people of Australia should play a major part, a sizeable part, in the operations of those companies and should hold part of the investments of those companies in Queensland or Australia.

The hon. member for Sandgate made an interesting speech some time ago in which he stressed the need to favour Queensland industries in governmental purchases. I think that policy has been followed where practicable over a number of years. It is an admirable practice, but it could be carried further, in that second favouritism or second priority could be given to purely Australian companies in governmental purchases through the State Stores Board. If the Board is unable to secure certain goods from a Queensland-based industry or company, it should turn to Australian companies. If it is still unable to obtain the goods at a reasonable price, it would then seek the goods from overseas companies with establishments

in this country. I make no apology for my belief and the belief of other hon. members of the Australian Labour Party that preference should be given to Australian companies if it is practicable to do so. In governmental purchases, first preference should be given to Queensland companies, with second preference to wholly Australian companies.

I shall now touch on amenities for the Leader of the Opposition. I am sure the present Leader of the Opposition will not suffer any heartburn if he does not receive the amenities provided for his counterparts in other States, but I think there is a case for some extra consideration. It has been said that certain amenities have not been provided in the past. We are ready to admit that possibly the Labour Government were at fault in that respect. We are not trying to present a one-sided case, but I remind hon. members opposite, and particularly the Premier, that, when he was asked on 12 September last year why he had created a precedent by providing a secretary and other assistance for a third party in the Chamber when such assistance had been refused for the Liberal Party by the Gair Government, he said—

“My Government has no intention of perpetuating practices which it considers to be wrong. My Government has not only given practical expression to its views but has also followed the practice adopted in all other Australian States where similar circumstances exist.”

The hon. member for Bremer pointed out that in all other States amenities not provided in this State are provided for the Leader of the Opposition. If the Premier is going to refuse reasonable amenities for the Leader of the Opposition, that attitude will bear out the suspicion widely held throughout the State that there is a great difference in the provision of amenities for the Queensland Labour Party and the Australian Labour Party. I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the Premier has adopted this attitude because he wants to keep the Queensland Labour Party more or less as a stick to wield over the Liberal Party should any difference ever develop between the Liberal and Country Parties. The Premier wants to be in a position to say to the Liberal Party, “If you people are going to do the dirty on us on redistribution or anything else, I will call on my eleven buddies on the cross-benches, and you can then see where you stand.”

In the brief period still available to me, I have a few comments to make on the vote for the Co-ordinator-General. I know that all things cannot be achieved at the one time, and that care must be exercised to ensure that money is spent in the most essential directions.

But I am sorry to see on perusing the Estimates of Expenditure from Trust and

Special Funds that there has been a falling-off in the fund for the Burdekin River authority. In 1957-1958 £94,000 was appropriated to the fund because of planning by the former Government, but only £65,647 was actually expended. I hope that that does not indicate that the scheme is going to die out completely. I was also disappointed with the provision being made this year for Special Works Investigations. It may be that many of the matters connected with this Vote were completed during the last financial year, and that it is not expected that the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works will be carrying out any more special works investigations. For 1957-1958 £19,700 was appropriated but the amount sought this year is only £4,800.

I do not know why the Premier, in his answer to my question could not tell the Chamber if the Commonwealth Government were going to help towards the rehabilitation of the Mt. Isa railway line. If they are why all the secrecy about it? Why not tell the people of the State? Over the years they have refused to assist Queensland development, although the Prime Minister went about telling the people that we must develop the State. If the Commonwealth have refused to help financially in the rehabilitation of this line, we should be told now whether there is a Federal election in the offing or not. If that is what restrains the Premier from telling the full story, it does him little credit. It does not augur well for this State, particularly if the people are unfortunate enough to return the Menzies Government at the forthcoming elections. I hope the Premier will tell us whether an approach has been made to the Commonwealth Government in relation to the rehabilitation of this line and whether they have refused to help. We are entitled to know. It would not be a breach of confidence now that negotiations are being conducted with the World Bank. If Parliament is not to be told we may as well close up Parliament and allow the Government to govern as an executive without any control whatever from a Parliament.

Mr. RAMSDEN (Merthyr) (2.15 p.m.): On page 14 of the Estimates, under Miscellaneous Contingencies, two items are mentioned that I wish to refer to. They are the third and fourth last items respectively. One is the grant of £1,000 to the Kingsford Smith Memorial Appeal, to which I believe no Queenslander will raise any objections. The money for the appeal came from donations by firms and people throughout the State, and it has permitted Queensland to erect a very worthy memorial to this fine son of Australia at a spot near where his historic plane first touched down when aviation history was being made so many years ago. There, on an ideal site, the old plane, renewed and rejuvenated as though it had just emerged from the factory, stands in perpetual memory to deeds of heroism in an age that is now fast being forgotten. I am sure that the people of Queensland will not begrudge one penny of

this grant. Whether he gave as an individual or in any other way, every Queenslander will regard himself as a shareholder in that very worthy memorial.

The other item to which I wish to refer is the grant of £500 to the Queensland division of the Australian British Empire and Commonwealth Games Association. Although the hon. member for Nundah and I personally submitted to Cabinet the case for the Empire Games Committee, some explanation of the grant is due for two reasons. We all know that the Queensland team for the Empire Games consisted of a certain number of seeded competitors whose fares and expenses were guaranteed by the Empire Games Committee, which raised the money by public appeal to meet those expenses. In addition to the guaranteed competitors, however, there were three others, two girls and a man, all fencers, who had been accepted as competitors on behalf of the Commonwealth provided they found their own way to Wales.

These three freelances—I described them thus for want of a better name—were Miss Denise O'Brien, and Miss Barbara McCreagh, who was the Australian women's champion, and Chris Drake, four times holder of the Queensland title. As the latter lived in my electorate, he approached me to see if there was any way in which he could be helped in raising money to go overseas. He did not put a selfish case to me; rather did he put up a case for the three freelances who were in the peculiar position of being chosen to represent Australia but who were not recognised as the financial responsibility of the Empire Games Committee.

I immediately consulted the Merthyr District Youth Club, of which I am president, and told the Executive Committee of the approach that Mr. Drake had made. That committee agreed to sponsor the appeal for these three young Queenslanders provided that the Empire Games Committee in Brisbane gave the green light and agreed to the proposal. Armed with that decision, I called on Alderman Buchan at the City Hall in his position as Chairman of the Empire Games Committee. I told him of the approach that had been made to me by Chris Drake on behalf of himself and the two lasses who were in a similar position to him, and asked him if those three young people were members of the team. He assured me that they were. He pointed out that once they got to Wales they were just as much members of the team as any other sponsored competitor, and that any medals that they won would be credited to the Australian team. On arrival they would be issued with a team blazer and other equipment and would live with the rest of the team in the Games village under the same discipline and the same authority as the rest of the Games team. The point was that they were obviously freelances only for the point of financing their trip to Wales. On that occasion Alderman Buchan told me that Drake as an elector of mine had acted within his rights in

coming to see if we could help him and he told me in his own office that he did not expect to have very much money left after catering for the needs of the sponsored team but he thought that there might be a couple of hundred pounds available and he assured me that whatever he had over after taking care of the official sponsored team he would gladly make available to assist the other three so that they could take their rightful places with the Empire Games team in Wales. I reported this back to the executive of the Merthyr Youth Club and told them of my conversation with Alderman Buchan. They immediately went to work and drew up plans to try to help the three youngsters to go overseas even though the club was in dire need of funds for its own purposes. It was considered that the appeal for the three young fencers was of paramount importance, and my club was prepared to forgo appeals on its own behalf to throw its weight in behind the Games appeal to try to get these three unfortunate people overseas.

Then I was approached by the hon. member for Nundah, Mr. Knox, M.L.A., who advised me that there was a local committee looking after the appeal for Miss Barbara McCreagh, and it was felt that that committee would raise enough to send her to Wales. He also gave me to understand that there was a similar committee behind Miss Denise O'Brien, and that the only one we had to worry about was Chris Drake. Having this information I went by invitation of Alderman Buchan to a meeting of the Empire Games Committee. It was a bad night for Alderman Buchan because somebody stole his motor-car.

Mr. Power: Perhaps that was a political stunt.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I do not know whether it was or not, but by the time he recovered the car the meeting was over.

Mr. Power: He was my opponent.

Mr. RAMSDEN: If the hon. member for Baroona had anything to do with it, I accept his explanation.

Alderman Buchan was unable to attend the meeting, but I explained to those present my purpose for attending, which was to place our cards on the table and get official approval from the Empire Games Committee for the appeals to send the three freelances away.

Mr. Davies: What is the purpose of this story?

Mr. RAMSDEN: If the hon. member will keep quiet and just sit on his perch till I have finished he will understand it.

Mr. Lloyd: Have you the rest of the manuscript there?

Mr. RAMSDEN: Yes, the whole of it. I am not going to miss a word.

At first there was some slight resentment from some members of the committee wh

apparently had not known that Alderman Buchan and I had talked about the matter. The view expressed there at first was that the three young people had been told they could go to Wales at their own expense, yet they came along and tried to get others to finance them. It was true that they had been told they would have to find their own finance to go overseas, but they were not told that they could not accept donations from interested parties prepared to help get them to Wales. It is also true that it was clearly understood that they would not be a charge on the Empire Games Fund Appeal at the expense of any of the sponsored competitors. I do not for one moment believe that it was ever intended to deny them assistance from that fund when the needs of the sponsored team had been met in full even to the extent of the provision of travelling cases and rugs. I told the committee that these three were either in the team or out of it. I asked for a ruling. I was assured that they were in the team, that they were recognised as full members of the team by the Empire Games Committee. The Games Committee at first said, "These people were supposed to find their own finance overseas. Now we find there are springing up small committees to help them." After further discussion it was agreed by the committee that the small committees which were desirous of helping these three could carry on with the blessing of the Games Committee and indeed could associate themselves with the Empire Games Appeal. Later on I attended another of these official committee meetings, again by invitation. This time Alderman Buchan was present and in the chair. At that meeting it was decided that each of these three committees, one for Barbara McCreath, one for Denise O'Brien and one for Chris Drake, could raise a certain specified sum which was considered to be adequate for the needs in each particular case. The amount approved of was to depend on the actual needs, in the case of Drake, £650, being the cost of air fare to Wales as it was necessary for various reasons that he go by air. In the case of Barbara McCreath, the committee approved of the raising of £370, because she was to go by sea. In the case of Miss O'Brien, a lesser amount was approved because it was thought that she had some cash resources of her own and would be going by sea in any case. The clear understanding of the committee was that if any of these three committees exceeded the amount approved, the surplus was to be paid into the Empire Games Appeal. On the other hand, the chairman of the committee gave me his personal assurance that if the Empire Games Appeal was over-subscribed, any over subscription from the public purse would be divided between these three freelances and added to the funds their own committees had raised for them, provided that in no case would the total amount exceed the amount approved by the Games Committee. That

was the clear understanding given to me on a number of occasions by the chairman of the Games Committee.

Mr. Coburn: Who was the chairman of the Games Committee?

Mr. RAMSDEN: Alderman Buchan. On one occasion after we came out from a meeting he told me on the footpath that he was very worried about how he would be able to apply the surplus to assist these three people as the two girls had already arrived in Wales and Drake was still in Brisbane. The point was that Miss O'Brien raised sufficient funds which added to what she already had of her own capital enabled her to leave on the "Roma" for Wales. Miss McCreath was short of some £250. I want the committee to note this: private citizens guaranteed that amount with the bank. With that generous help she was able to travel to Wales on the "Roma" with Miss O'Brien. In the meantime, I was approached by Alderman Buchan who asked me whether I could do anything to assist the Games Appeal through the State Government. I suggested to him that he write me on the matter, letting me know what he wanted and that I would do what I could. As the hon. member for Nundah was also interested, I talked to him about it. After receiving from Alderman Buchan a copy of a letter sent to the Under Secretary of the Premier's Department, the hon. member for Nundah and I drafted a submission to the Premier suggesting that the Government give consideration to making a grant of £1,000 to the Empire Games Committee so that all members of the team, including the two girls and Drake, could be assisted to go to Wales to do their best for Queensland without any financial worries. This was done as the result of my receiving a letter dated 28 April, 1958, in which Mr. Wedgwood, honorary secretary of the Australian British Empire and Commonwealth Games Association, wrote and told me that at the request of Alderman Buchan he was forwarding me a copy of a letter posted that day to the Under Secretary of the Premier's Department. That letter asks the Under Secretary to approach the Premier with a view to getting a grant from the Government for the Games appeal. Inter alia the letter stated—

"We have a tremendous task in raising the necessary finance to make sure that the Queensland members of the Australian team will go to the Empire Games at Cardiff. We believe that these Queensland sportsmen and sportswomen who are to represent their country overseas will make fine ambassadors for the State and any encouragement by the Government would be most appropriate."

It concludes by saying—

"All Queensland money will be devoted to financing Queenslanders only."

I wrote and told Mr. Wedgwood that the hon. member for Nundah and myself would interview the Premier and place the position

before him for Cabinet consideration. I concluded my letter to Mr. Wedgwood in these words—

“Should Cabinet approve of a grant then I hope that your committee will not merely decide that the amount of the grant is just so much less to be raised, but will continue in its efforts to raise finance so that anything over and above the actual requirements for the official team may be made available towards the expenses of the three unofficial members who are required to go without official assistance.”

It will be noted that the hon. secretary did not write back to me and advise me that I was under a misapprehension and that no part of the funds could or would be made available to the three free-lances. No comment whatsoever was made and indeed no comment could have been made to that effect because it would have been a direct negation of an assurance given to me by the Chairman of the Games Committee himself.

Mr. Davies: Where was that given?

Mr. RAMSDEN: It was given on three or four occasions. The Government made a grant of £500 which is shown in the Estimates we are discussing today. The grant was received with a very bad grace. The Games Committee saw fit to describe the grant in the Press as niggardly and that was at a time when I was asking the Government to consider an increased grant. But apparently the Government had information which justified them in limiting the grant to £500, and their assessment of the position proved to be most accurate for the Games Committee finished up with about £1,000 over-subscribed. One would have thought that with this large amount oversubscribed the Games Committee would have been only too happy to send the free-lances overseas with the aid of the over-subscribed money. But when the Games Committee was approached about keeping to its part of the bargain and releasing some of the surplus to assist three struggling amateurs it blandly refused to do so. Nobody then would raise a finger to help two of the competitors who had gone to represent Australia in Wales at a great personal cost to themselves. They had actually gone into debt in order to represent their State whilst the Committee which had appealed to the people and the Government of Queensland to help send these fine ambassadors overseas refused to do anything to help them although it was in their power to do so.

Mr. Davies: Could the hon. member give us some lead as to whom he is trying to blame?

Mr. RAMSDEN: If the hon. member does not understand me I am afraid I cannot make it any clearer. The chairman of the Games Appeal Committee replied to the Premier in answer to my representations through the Premier for assistance to be made available. I should like to read this letter.

Mr. Lloyd: Is that a letter to the Premier?

Mr. RAMSDEN: Yes.

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. member is disclosing departmental letters.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I have already said that I have the permission of the Premier to do so. The letter is dated 16 August, 1958. It reads—

“Dear Sir,

I refer to your letter of 4th August, regarding Misses B. McCreath and D. O'Brien.

Prior to the selection in Sydney of Australian fencing representatives in April, 1958, the selectors were told by both Miss McCreath and Miss O'Brien that they would be able to go to Cardiff at their own expense. It was on that condition only that the Australian British Empire and Commonwealth Games Association (the Federal controlling body), allowed them to nominate in the fencing events at Cardiff.

After representations by persons on behalf of Miss McCreath, my committee allowed such persons to raise up to £370 for Miss McCreath's expenses.”

Time will not permit me to read the complete letter, but I want to place this passage on record—

“Never at any time was any undertaking given or any understanding arrived at by me or my Committee that any funds raised in excess of the requirements of the official team would be applied towards Miss McCreath's expenses, or any other member outside the official team.”

That letter to the Premier was signed by “N. L. Buchan, Chairman.”

I draw the attention of hon. members to the reasons given for that stand, reasons that evidently did not exist when he came to his arrangement with me about the disbursement of funds. He refused to make funds available on three grounds—

(i.) That to do so would be outside the authority and powers of my Committee.

(ii.) It would be a breach of faith with the many donors to the fund raised by my Committee.

(iii.) It would render my Committee liable to investigation and consequent prosecution under the Charitable Collections Act and possible cancellation of registration thereunder.”

To use his words, “My Committee has been advised that if it used any of the moneys donated to the fund for a purpose other than that for which they were collected . . .”, these things would happen, but I suggest he knew that at the time he offered that money. It is difficult to reconcile that stand with the statement appearing in the Brisbane “Telegraph” of 24 June 1958, under the caption, “Money there, but no trip.” Rosemary Lassig had broken

swimming record in the North. The article in the "Telegraph" of that date contained this statement—

"Queensland Empire Games Committee chairman, Alderman Norm Buchan today offered the necessary finance for Bundaberg breaststroker, Rosemary Lassig to be included in Australia's swim team for Cardiff."

On the one hand he said that to make money available would break faith with the donors to the fund and make the committee liable to investigation, and on the other hand he stated that his committee would make money available for sending someone not in the official team.

Mr. Hanlon: Was she not included in the official team?

Mr. RAMSDEN: No. Which story are we to believe, the one set out in the letter to the Premier, or the story in the "Telegraph"?

Miss B. McCreath won a silver medal at the Games after going to Wales at her own expense. She was refused assistance from the Empire Games Committee. Drake who could not go remained in Queensland and won the Queensland State title for the fourth time. The committee must be castigated if all it was interested in was sending people overseas who it thought could win a medal. If amateur sportsmanship has sunk as low as that in this State, I suggest it is time we gave up sport.

Mr. Knox: And the Committee had £1,000 surplus money.

Mr. RAMSDEN: Yes, and £500 of it provided by this Government. If those provisions had been in force then Alderman Buchan had no right to mislead myself and the hon. member for Nundah in the fact that he would make the surplus funds available.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (2.40 p.m.): There is no question that a considerable amount of time has been taken up by the hon. member in explaining some imaginary grievance in the administration of the British Empire Games Committee. The State has no say in the selection of people to go overseas to represent Australia in the Empire Games or the Olympic Games. Unfortunately the hon. member spent 25 minutes of his time in airing a grievance which time could have been otherwise used for some definite purpose. The time that he devoted to this matter has been more or less wasted.

I associate myself with the expressions made by hon. members on both sides in congratulating and complimenting His Excellency the Governor on the way in which he has conducted the various activities of his high office. It is a little bit sickening to hear hon. members occupying the Government benches in their professional flag-waving and

the way in which they conduct themselves as members of this Chamber, particularly in their attacks upon members of the Australian Labour Party. On many occasions those hon. members opposite who have served their country in times of war have attempted to belittle members of my Party on the question of loyalty. I say that we on this side take second place to nobody in our devotion and loyalty to the Throne. Many working people and members of the A.L.P. have expressed their loyalty to members of the Royal family by their spontaneous welcome to royal visitors. There are members of the Party in high office fighting a war against Communism and it ill-becomes hon. members of the Government side to throw aspersions on us. The officer commanding the Royal Australian Air Force Squadron in Malaya, a man with a proud and distinguished record during the last war is a member of the Australian Labour Party and proud to be such. By their efforts members of the Liberal Party are attempting to secure some cheap notoriety and some internal pleasure at the expense of members on this side.

Next year we celebrate Queensland's centenary year indicating 100 years of self-government in this State. It is to the credit of Great Britain and the British Crown that they have developed that spirit of self-government. It is now being extended to many of the native nations of the world, India, Burma and Malaya. It is wonderful to see how this spirit has matured but it is unfortunate that the example shown by Great Britain has not been followed by many other nations. They are continuing with their policy of colonialism and are denying countries under their control the freedom that has been extended by Great Britain to other people. By so doing they are endangering democracy in a way that could result in another World War. They are continuing to deny to those countries the advantage of self-government, something that we in this State are to celebrate next year. If Great Britain's lead was followed by the other nations it would help the cause of democracy rather than tend to destroy its value in the eyes of the people who have been refused self-government. It is only for the reason that we have enjoyed self-government for so many years that Princess Alexandra will receive such a warm and spontaneous welcome when she visits us next year. Members of the working class—people who work with their hands—have reason to be thankful for the high standards of living that they enjoy, which have resulted only from self-government. It is for that reason alone that there is in this country intense loyalty and devotion to the Throne of England.

The development of Queensland has been referred to by the hon. member for Somerset. It seems to me that he had every reason to attack his own Government. He said, for example, that large developmental schemes should be undertaken. In the 12 to 14 months that his Government have been in power—and in the budgeting for this finan-

cial year—many of the large-scale schemes that Labour planned and initiated for Queensland's development have been either set aside altogether or slowed down. When hon. members opposite were on this side of the Chamber they criticised the slow progress of those projects but now, probably because of the shortage of Commonwealth loan money, they have made matters much worse, as the hon. member for Ithaca has pointed out, by a reduction of expenditure on the Burdekin River Authority and the Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme.

I should like to mention particularly the reduction in expenditure on Special Works Investigations, which is one of the most important duties of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works. We frequently see the value of the recommendations that that officer makes to the Government. Surveys of development in Central Queensland have shown that it would be impossible to benefit from many of the schemes put forward unless the recommendations of the Co-ordinator-General were put into effect. He points out that in the areas where large-scale works are to be undertaken, the natural resources must be developed. I point out to the Minister for Labour and Industry that many areas of Queensland today are in need of a special investigation by the Co-ordinator-General, who has more or less the final say on what works shall receive priority according to the money available. The Government should realise that money ought to be expended in areas with the highest priorities. Twelve months ago they said that if unemployment became centred in any one section of the State, it would be necessary to divert capital expenditure to that area. However, that is not being done, regardless of the recommendation of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works. Consideration is not being given to the depressed conditions that exist in many parts of Queensland. Local unemployment in different areas should be examined in the light of the Co-ordinator-General's recommendations. For example, at the present time primary producers in south-west Queensland are in very difficult straits. If they can market their crops they cannot market them at a price above the cost of production. So the whole area in the south-west and near south-west of the State suffers badly from depressed business activity. An adequate works programme would give the district a shot in the arm. Funds for the purpose could be diverted from more prosperous centres. There is certainly a great deal of work to be done. The roads are in a shocking condition. Housing is either inadequate or sub-standard. Many people are unemployed. Some are carrying their swag and going from one place to another in search of work. Last week a young man walked from Toowoomba to Thallon and fortunately was able to find four weeks' work there. All these pockets of unemployment should be investigated by the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works and a direct attempt made to improve conditions.

The Minister for Labour and Industry seems to be mainly interested in attracting capital from overseas and the South, but secondary industries alleviate unemployment only in the areas where they are established. What good is that to the people of other areas? If the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works related the incidence of unemployment to the priority of works when making his recommendations he would find that the south-west and the west of the State deserve first consideration. Pouring additional funds into the local economy would correct the unfortunate tendency to revert to the bad old days. We should not then have the spectacle of men carrying their swags around country areas, and we certainly should not have to put up with such conditions when the State has such a huge potential. If the Government's works programme is inadequate to meet unemployment in certain areas it is time that the Co-ordinator-General was asked to investigate the matter and make recommendations.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (2.54 p.m.): In the short time available to me, and in order to allow as many speakers as possible to join in the debate, I shall raise only a few points.

I agree with the previous speakers that heavy and onerous responsibility rest on the shoulders of the Premier. It is most unwise and unfortunate that the Deputy Premier should see fit to desert him when Parliament is sitting. He should be at his side, and not going on tours that he alleges are in the interests of the tourist traffic of the State. Such trips should be kept for the parliamentary recess. Surely the duties of Parliament and of the Premier are heavy enough to call for the assistance of the Deputy Premier, unless, of course, the feud that we know exists between the two parties is such, and the conspiracy has so far advanced, that he is being slowly but surely pushed out of having a real voice in the making of decisions. I notice that the Public Service Commissioner comes under this Vote. I wish to be a little parochial in my next remarks. I consider that there is a shortage of land available for Government buildings in my area. We missed out on the New South Wales bank property.

A Government Member: Bad representation.

Mr. DAVIES: The representation was all right; it was the fault of an inexperienced Government. The Commonwealth Government stepped in and purchased the land. I suggest that the Public Service Commissioner, in whom I have every confidence, investigate the congestion in public buildings in Maryborough. Even if additional buildings could not be commenced in the immediate future at least we should have the lands available in

central position for buildings that will be required. I supplied the department with detailed plans of two sites—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will show how this relates to the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. DAVIES: The Public Service Commissioner through the Premier's Department. I have finished with that.

I should like to turn to the Vote of £5,000 for the Elizabethan Theatre Trust. I should be pleased if the Government would consider a request to someone like Dr. Lovelock, Director of the Conservatorium of Music, to represent the Government in keeping an eye on the types of plays, etc., sent throughout the Queensland countryside. I am not going to spend any time in criticising "The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll" because I know I would be told immediately that it has received world-wide acclaim and therefore it must have been a good play to send round Queensland. But I consider that when Government money is being spent in sending shows round the countryside, particularly when there is a long time between tours, the shows should be such that every member of the family can see them. Families were considerably embarrassed by two of the shows that toured Queensland, whereas comedies like *Fra Diavolo* are a source of great delight. We do take an interest in the way Government money is spent, even though the amount spent in this connection is only small by comparison.

An hon. member representing a metropolitan electorate devoted a large part of his time to the subject of the elimination of level crossings.

Mr. Gaven: It is a hardy annual.

Mr. DAVIES: It is an old hardy annual, as the hon. member for Southport says. He has so many hardy annuals of his own. I will say that he is a great battler for the things he believes in even though it might cause dissension in Caucus. I congratulate him on that. We have been told that it is not wise to construct a flashing-light system at Oakhurst crossing similar to the one installed at Howard—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! How do level crossings come under this Vote?

Mr. DAVIES: Page 60 of the Auditor-General's report.

The CHAIRMAN: Has that any connection with the Chief Secretary's Department?

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. I thought about it very carefully to make sure that my remarks would conform to Standing Orders and that you would not be embarrassed, Mr. Taylor. I shall be brief even though there is much I desire to say. My point is that the Government should be prepared to advance money

to the Council to construct an overhead crossing in conjunction with the Department of Main Roads.

This affects a large number of people who were Country Party supporters until the neglect of the dairying industry by the Commonwealth Government. A large number of people are held up at this crossing. During certain hours it is closed and then they have to go to the most dangerous crossing in Queensland, where you cannot see a train approaching. One day there will be a tragedy at this spot and then its danger will be realised. Every organisation in Maryborough district has raised the matter repeatedly. I cannot understand why something has not been done before now. If a bridge were built at the place of the alternate crossing, the trouble may be overcome temporarily. I took the Commissioner of Main Roads over this crossing and he admitted it was one of the most dangerous he had ever seen. I hope the Premier will use his influence to see that something is done. The Co-ordinator-General's report is a remarkable document of great advances made by the Australian Labour Party over the years. Although we have stacks of photographs in the literature from the Public Relations Bureau, I agree that further money should be allotted to the Public Relations Bureau, provided it is used in the interest of the State as a whole and not sectionally. The Government are so determined to use every avenue to build up their prestige with the people that they find it necessary to increase this grant. It is all right as long as the money is used in the best interest of the State as a whole. I notice particularly that mention is made of the Tinaroo Falls dam. When we were discussing the Bill relating to the hydro-electric scheme to be established on the Barron River, the Government were very cold on the Tinaroo Falls scheme. It was interesting to read the statement of the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, who said that the Tinaroo Falls dam was a masterly achievement. That is a great tribute to the work of the Australian Labour Party.

Mr. Muller: I did not say that at all.

Mr. DAVIES: I have to accept the hon. gentleman's statement.

Mr. Muller: The hon. member said that I paid a tribute to the Australian Labour Party. Where did you get that from?

Mr. DAVIES: I realise that the Minister would not make that admission, but I am sure he has a great admiration for the work which we did in that connection. The hon. gentleman must admire the Labour Government for what they did. I shall study with great interest the answers to my questions on the Clare settlement because I had been led to believe by members of the Government that it was over-run with nut grass, but this morning I learned from the Minister that only a small portion is affected. Much more

will be heard of that settlement. Hon. members on the Government side are anxious to speak on the Vote in the absence of the Premier, who refused them permission to speak on the Budget debate. I do not want to enlarge upon my statement, but I draw attention to the fact that the estimate in 1951 according to the Co-ordinator-General's report was £7.8 million, and the statement by the Minister for Lands that it had been constructed at a cost of £7.3 million—less than the estimated cost. The Minister went on to say that this had been done in the face of costs that had continually spiralled since the project was conceived. The Chifley Government was defeated in 1949, the Menzies Government being elected on the promise that they would put money back in the £1. They have failed to do so and costs have spiralled since that time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The value of the £1 has no relevance to the Vote.

Mr. DAVIES: Country Party members are generally much better informed than members of the Liberal Party.

I shall deal with another matter in this report. It covers the Mt. Isa-Townsville, Collinsville Railway Rehabilitation scheme. The estimated cost is somewhere in the vicinity of £30,000,000. We know that £10,500,000 is being spent by the Commonwealth Government on the Albury to Melbourne railway and £1,500,000 is being given to A.N.A., a private airline. The Commonwealth Government are spending £19,000,000 a year on the Snowy River scheme. They are prepared to give those large sums to the other States but they will not help to provide £30,000,000 for one of Queensland's most important railways. The Queensland Government have to provide £7,000,000. I should like an explanation as to why a full and complete answer was not given to the question asked by the hon. member for Ithaca on this subject. The report of the Co-ordinator-General under this heading contains the words, "The National significance of the project." The Co-ordinator-General is a most valued and esteemed officer. In regard to this rail link he speaks of its contribution to export earnings. He emphasises that it is a matter of national importance. It is of extreme importance to the development of North Queensland. I emphasised that during the recent private members' motion on the development of North Queensland. The point was also stressed by a Government member. I think the hon. member for Somerset hammered away at the argument that we must have additional finance if we are to develop the magnificent mineral and other resources of this great State. The Prime Minister with his platitudes and smug complacency is still rejecting representations for Commonwealth assistance for this work. He is confident that he can gull the people into returning his Government at the forthcoming election.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to return to the Vote.

Mr. DAVIES: This matter is of tremendous importance.

This part of the Co-ordinator-General's report concludes with these words, "At time of writing, the Bank's decision is awaited." We have every reason to believe that negotiations have fallen down, and that the Government are seeking money in America and New York. Why should the Commonwealth Government not provide the money? The full amount of £30,000,000 would not be needed at once. Why could that Government not provide money to employ men on this and other development work and so save them from tramping over the many miles of the south-west looking for work, as was stated by the hon. member for Kedron, who has just returned from those areas.

This morning, by way of interjection, a Government member asked if I had received all the information I wanted. My question was courteously answered by the Minister, but the hon. member to whom I refer could not avoid interjecting in his sarcastic manner. Why should the Opposition not seek the fullest information? If the hon. member who asked that question had read this report, his conscience would have been so disturbed that he would have felt compelled—if he wanted to do the right thing—to get on the stump and tell the people to reject the Menzies Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: I am sorry I am not able to continue with that aspect.

Mention has been made of the great project that is being developed in Maryborough at the present time and I refer to the home for the aged. The people of the Maryborough district are interested to see the wonderful contribution made by the previous A.L.P. Government to the welfare of those who were so sadly neglected in social service payments by the Commonwealth Government. We look forward to a change of Government on 22 November when all pensions will be increased.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member that that is not a matter covered by the Vote under discussion.

Mr. DAVIES: By a general improvement in pensions there would be fewer pensioners and less need for homes for the aged. It is believed that the magnificent home for the aged in Maryborough will be opened at the beginning of next year.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am tired of calling the hon. member to order about matters that cannot be discussed on this Vote.

Mr. DAVIES: I have an earnest desire to make my speech in accordance with your wishes, Mr. Taylor. The success of the work of the Premier's Department depends upon

sufficient funds from the Commonwealth Government, and if they cannot be obtained a change of Government on 22 November next is warranted.

Mr. TOOTH (Kelvin Grove) (3.13 p.m.): There has been criticism of the increased Vote for the Premier and Chief Secretary but I want to say that the whole of the Estimates have been cast in an entirely different form to previous years. The Government have no fear of any searching line of criticism and examination because the Vote includes all charges of expenditure. For instance, it includes such items as the "Welcome to Queensland" and a Directory of Government departments which will be issued this year and which are now a direct charge on the Contingencies Vote of the State Public Relations Bureau. In previous years this was not so, but now that every publication is an instrument in promoting increased prosperity and increased benefits to the people of Queensland, that expenditure is charged to the Bureau that incurs the expense. A major portion of the £5,300 for Contingencies is allocated to such publications and expenses are kept at a minimum. I know from experience the rigid economy being exercised in relation to this Bureau. I made application some time ago to the State Public Relations Bureau officer for additional copies of an issue of a new bulletin and I found that because of recent economy measures introduced there was only a limited number for distribution. It has a world-wide circulation. This limited number is carefully husbanded and distributed so that the maximum result can be got from a minimum expenditure. I congratulate the Bureau on the publication of a bulletin so widely read and so constructive and economic in production.

Other factors that enter into the Estimates this year were absent in previous years. As you know, Mr. Taylor, a photographic liaison officer has recently been appointed. That has meant not only that the salary bill has been increased, but that this year there has been a considerable outlay for photographic equipment. Every department, and every Minister, has made use of this officer, who is a photographer of the first rank in his own profession, and the true value of his services has yet to be disclosed. With the expansion of Queensland will follow expansion of the work of this bureau and many demands for the work and services of this officer.

With the removal of those two main items—publications and photographic equipment—a matter of less than £1,400 is left in the Contingencies Vote to cover all expenditure under that heading. In the same way, it was found that the increased activities of the Bureau following the drive for increased development, necessitated the appointment of two additional Public Relations officers to cope with requests from other departments for pamphlets, articles, and advertisements, as well as maintaining the increasing pressure from the office of the Premier. When we

realise that in the Labour-ruled State of New South Wales, each of the 16 Ministers has a personal Public Relations officer, quite apart from the departmental publicity officers, it would be foolish to carp at the Queensland State Public Relations Bureau staff of one Public Relations officer and four assistants. Those officers give excellent service at a relatively moderate cost.

In passing, I should like to say how pleased I am that the Government are reviewing all salaries in the Public Service. Their policy, just as is any business-man's policy, is to buy the best at a just price.

Referring to some of the particular and special aspects of the work of this Bureau, I should like to make reference to the activities of the Director of the Bureau—the State Public Relations Officer—in association with the centenary projects. He is the Chairman of the Publications Committee of the Centenary Celebrations Committee, and he is co-operating with Sir Raphael Cilento in editing a volume that is to be an important centenary project. It is the first complete and up-to-date history of Queensland to be produced. I should like to make some reference to this work of the Committee, in which the State Public Relations Officer is playing such a prominent part.

Mr. Baxter: Is a history of printing in Queensland to be included in that publication?

Mr. TOOTH: I could not say. It is to be a historical document covering all aspects of Queensland's development over the years. It may answer the hon. member's question if I point out what is being done. The book will be titled "Triumph in the Tropics," and it will have as its underlying theme the triumph of the European in tropical conditions. Hon. members will realise, therefore, that it will indeed cover a very wide field. This triumph of Europeans is an achievement without parallel in history. We in Queensland do not realise what an achievement it has been, because we are so close in place and time to what is being done in tropical and sub-tropical parts; we tend to overlook the magnitude of the achievement. It has been proved here beyond any doubt that Europeans can live, work and prosper under geographical and climatic conditions that hitherto have been deemed tolerable only for native peoples and races acclimatised by centuries of residence under tropical skies.

Mr. Baxter: That has happened in many other countries, too.

Mr. TOOTH: That is so, but we are doing it here entirely as a European community. The hon. member will not find that in many other parts of the tropics. We have developed a completely integrated and entire European community. If Queensland is not unique in that respect, it is at least among the very rare examples.

Mr. Lloyd: It is rare only because we kept slave labour out of this country.

Mr. TOOTH: That is not relevant. The point is that Europeans have developed an integrated community under tropical conditions. That is an achievement that we should be proud of. The book "Triumph of the Tropics" will give us a history of that. I go further and say it is here best proved that Europeans can live and multiply—

Mr. Power: If you tell us all that is in the book you will spoil our reading of it.

Mr. TOOTH: I can assure the hon. member that the account in the book will be infinitely more detailed than what I am giving. That is why this aspect of the work of the State Public Relations Officer should be mentioned. The book will contain 450 pages. Its account of Queensland's development will cover the early stages—the prelude to discovery—the road of progress and the final development up to the Centenary year. I commend the project to the favourable attention of hon. members and the public at large.

The State Public Relations Bureau will play a part, too, in the production of an anthology of Queensland writing.

Mr. Power: Quite a good object.

Mr. TOOTH: I should be surprised to learn that anybody questioned it. At the same time, I imagine this is a subject of interest to the Committee, and therefore I propose to continue. The production of an anthology of Queensland writing covering 100 years of literary work in the State is a project of great value indeed. It is planned to limit the publication to 3,000 copies because, as is no doubt well known to hon. members, anthologies are notoriously hard to sell. For the same reason, although the other book will be produced, published and printed entirely in Queensland, it has been thought necessary to secure the assistance of an overseas publishing house with the anthology.

Mr. Baxter: Why?

Mr. TOOTH: As I mentioned, anthologies are extremely hard to sell and it is therefore necessary to have world-wide avenues of sale. But let the hon. member not be unduly alarmed. The anthology will be published by Messrs. Longman, Green & Co., but the greater part of the work—indeed more than 90 per cent. of it—will be done here. I hope that will assuage the hon. member's outraged feelings. The appointment of Mr. R. S. Byrne the President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and Dr. Val Vallis, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Queensland, to be jointly responsible for the compilation of the anthology is a guarantee of a lively, interesting and accurate picture of the development of Queensland literature to be presented in the book.

My time is very limited but I should like to make brief reference to the publication

"Achievements" referred to by the hon. member for Ithaca this morning. He made great play of the fact that, I think he said, some 16 pages were taken up with photographs of the Ministers. The booklet deals with the achievements of the Government and it is probable that the general public would be interested to see photos of the people responsible for them. It must be admitted that the occupants of the Government's front bench are indeed a photogenic group. Their photographs would not in any way detract from the value of the book.

Mr. Power: I should think the photos would lose you votes.

Mr. Morris: Will you distribute a few of the books for us?

Mr. Lloyd: You have got to put the photographs in to fill up the book because of the lack of achievements.

Mr. TOOTH: I understand the complaint was that the book was too big. The fact is that the book has been reduced to the very smallest proportions in which the achievements of the Government could be recorded. In spite of what has been said about the booklet, and in spite of the efforts of hon. members opposite to have the populace believe that it is a Government propaganda publication, let me assure hon. members that it is not.

Mr. Power: Of course it is.

Mr. TOOTH: The Government can make a much better job of propaganda than that. It is a factual account of genuine achievements by the present Government. The booklet contains matter of great interest to the people of Queensland, and it was brought out to give a full and clear account of what Government legislation and administrative action in the last nine months has meant to them—something they could not get from synoptic accounts in the Press, whose policy after all is to entertain and not to instruct. It is something, of course, that they would never be likely to get from the accounts they would hear from hon. members opposite. Unlike our friends opposite, we have never been afraid to have our actions exposed to the light of day, to have them closely scrutinised and meticulously examined. Nor do we try to emulate the example of the too-long line of successive Labour Governments in considering the electors too insignificant and unimportant to be told how we are discharging the responsibilities with which they have entrusted us.

Mr. Hanlon: The Budget debate showed that.

Mr. TOOTH: The Budget debate! There is no doubt that our friends opposite seem to be very upset about this Budget debate. The Budget debate fell down because hon. members of the Opposition were not prepared to carry on the debate. There was

nothing for us to do. The Treasurer had made a magnificent job of it and we left it to him.

It is not misuse of public money to publish an account of our stewardship—to give the electors, as it were, an annual report and balance sheet of the great company in which they are all investors and have a stake—Queensland. If you, Mr. Taylor, want what were, in my opinion, true examples of misuse of public money and government facilities, we have only to reflect back on the propaganda indulged in at the public's expense when Labour were in Government. Remember the stream of Labour propaganda then poured out, not with party funds, but with the people's money and facilities. It was this use of public funds and public facilities which my colleagues attacked with very good cause in the past when they occupied the benches the Australian Labour Party now finds so strange and uncomfortable. We have removed these practices and the personnel of the State Public Relations Bureau and Government facilities are wholly engaged in work for the benefit of Queensland and its people.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove made a statement that the previous Australian Labour Party Government had misused public funds for party political purposes. That is untrue, not in accordance with fact, and objectionable to the A.L.P. Opposition. I ask for a withdrawal.

The CHAIRMAN: I was speaking to the Whip, and did not hear the expression that the hon. member for Kelvin Grove used.

Mr. Morris: He was merely expressing an opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member for Kelvin Grove would please give me his interpretation of what he said I will be able to decide whether there is a point of order or not.

Mr. TOOTH: I express it as my personal opinion that in the past in the use of the State Public Relations Bureau the former Government had misused public money for party political propaganda.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member for Maryborough that that is no personal reflection on any hon. member and therefore not a matter which requires withdrawal.

Mr. DAVIES: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. It appears that the hon. member has withdrawn his statement.

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha—Minister for Labour and Industry) (3.29 p.m.): It is not very often that a deputy has the privilege of handling the concluding stages of the debate on the Estimates of the Premier's department. It has only

happened on this occasion because of the very important function held at Mary Kathleen last night. I am delighted to have the opportunity, as the deputy Premier, to make one or two comments, which I might not make in the presence of the Premier. First of all let me say how very proud we in Cabinet and also we who sit behind him in government, are of our Premier. We often think of the statements made against him by our political opponents when they said he was too honest to be a Premier of Queensland. We are very proud to recognise that the Australian Labour Party's criticism has been unjustified because the Premier's honesty is beyond question. He is an excellent Premier.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. No member of this group on the Opposition made a statement that the Premier was too honest to be Premier of the State. This Party believes that the probity of a person in that position should be above question.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no personal reflection on any member of the Opposition, consequently there is no point of order.

Mr. MORRIS: We are very proud to serve under such a leader.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORRIS: I doubt whether there is a Parliament in the whole of the British Empire where the Government are so completely and absolutely behind their Premier as we are in this State.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hanlon: Does that go for the Liberal Party too?

Mr. MORRIS: It certainly goes for the Liberal Party. I tell the hon. member for Ithaca that we are all of the one mind on this side of the Chamber.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORRIS: The longer the period of time that we can sit behind Frank Nicklin as Premier the happier we will be.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORRIS: We know that the people of Queensland are going to give us many years of opportunity to do so.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORRIS: It has been a very pleasant experience to hear all the things that have been said by members on both sides about the Premier. I repeat that if anything they were under-statements rather than over-statements.

There are very few things to be answered. Most matters were dealt with by the Premier on Thursday night last, but I feel called upon to answer one or two statements that were made today. I propose to treat seriously those matters that have been presented. Many

suggestions have been made by hon. members on this side and they will be noted very carefully. We recognise that however good an administration may be suggestions can be made for the future. Very good suggestions have been made from this side, and they will be carefully examined. The hon. member for Kedron raised a couple of points—I am sorry the hon. member has left the Chamber—with which I shall deal. He asked why the expenditure on the Burdekin River bridge had been reduced. I point out to the hon. member the first stage of this project has been practically completed, therefore expenditure is being progressively reduced. I remind the hon. member—it is a pity he did not know it—that the Gair Government had already made the decision to defer the next stages of that project. The next stage involves the construction of a major dam on the Burdekin River estimated to cost many millions of pounds. I refer the hon. member to the report of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for the year ended 1955. At page 86 of that report it is stated that although planning and investigations were proceeding no funds were available for the construction of the main dam. It is rather a pity that the hon. member for Kedron, who should have known that this was printed in 1956, has either forgotten or neglected to read the report. I regarded it as a serious question.

The hon. member raised the question of the Tully Falls scheme and referred to the reduction in expenditure on this scheme. I point out that this is due to the reason that the first stage has been completed and officially was declared open by the Premier in September last year. In regard to the supply of power to the grid system it has been stated by the Premier that it has been decided not to proceed with stages two and three but to carry out the Barron River hydro-electric extension project which our advisers believe has an advantage over the further stages of the Tully Falls project. Broadly, the Government are endeavouring to bring these schemes to fruition. We do not subscribe to the policy of the previous administration which was to have a number of projects proceeding year after year, very slowly, projects that were not really serving the best interests of the people.

The hon. member for Kedron spoke of some diminution in the work of the Co-ordinator-General. I remind him that early this year problems were experienced because of the drought and the consequent closing down of seasonal industries. Work was provided in areas where there was unemployment. The problem was tackled assiduously by the Government, with marked success. There was an extension of the work of the Co-ordinator-General, rather than a diminution of it.

I shall not comment at length on the wild ramblings of the hon. member for Maryborough. In the 10 to 15 minutes of his speech he covered the work of every Government department, and as soon as he realised

that he was in imminent danger of being called to order by the Chairman he would switch to some other subject. In that quarter of an hour he tried to remedy his omission to speak in earlier debates. The Address in Reply debate presented him with an opportunity of speaking for 40 minutes on these subjects. He could even have obtained an extension. He had a further opportunity of speaking along those lines during the debate on the Financial Statement. Did he take advantage of those opportunities? Of course he did not. If ever there was a case of carelessness in regard to Parliamentary duties, the hon. member by his neglect to speak during those very important debates gave us the most outstanding example since I have been in this Chamber. I am very disappointed that an excellent place such as Maryborough should be so carelessly represented. I trust that the Leader of the Opposition will take the hon. member for Maryborough to task, and will instruct him that, instead of adopting the role of that classical character, Uriah Heap, he should endeavour to serve a useful purpose in this Chamber. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will bring to the hon. member's attention the fact that he has wasted many opportunities to speak in this session and will instil in the hon. member a true recognition of his great responsibilities.

The hon. member for Ithaca spoke in serious vein. I shall deal briefly with his statements before proceeding to other matters. He mentioned the production of "The A.B.C. of Government Departments." That very good publication was discontinued for some years, but I am happy to state that it is the Government's intention to produce that book again. Indeed, £250 has been allocated for that purpose in the coming year. I found it a very valuable aid. I am sure all hon. members will be glad to know that it is to be produced again by this Government.

The hon. member for Ithaca referred to the Royal visit next year. I do not question for a moment the statement that he is very happy to know that we are to have a Royal visitor. I should like to tell him that it is the custom for contact to be maintained between Commonwealth and State officials in regard to Royal visits. There are certain functions which remain with the Commonwealth but the Queensland programme, laid down by the Government and carried out by State officials, must receive the approval of Buckingham Palace and the Royal visitor. The hon. member need have no fear that Commonwealth officials will interfere with the conduct of the Royal tour in Queensland. In saying that, it is synonymous with saying that the Royal tour will be well conducted by Queensland. We will have every reason to be proud of the performance of the Government and their officers in relation to that visit.

I was a little disturbed to hear of the feeling apparently existing between certain sections of the Opposition as to amenities

provided by the Government to the Leaders of the various parties in Opposition. I think the Government have done the right thing in making available certain secretarial help to the Leader of the Queensland Labour Party. It is help which I was deprived of when I occupied a similar position in this Chamber. Because I was deprived of it it is no reason why I should now be opposed to the granting of it to some one else.

Mr. Power: You are to be commended for what you have done.

Mr. MORRIS: It was the right thing. There is some unhappiness on the part of the Australian Labour Party over what has been done for the Q.L.P. There is further unhappiness within the A.L.P. that we have not gone the full distance in regard to its request.

Mr. Dufficy: "The Courier-Mail" thought so this morning.

Mr. MORRIS: The Government have gone quite a long way further than the former Government ever went in amenities to the Leader of the Opposition. In one short year we have made what I think are very valuable improvements to amenities. I hope hon. members of the Opposition will be patient because there will be many years during which we can continue to improve conditions. We were patient for a long time and got nothing; the Opposition are not patient for a little while but have got a lot. They have every reason to be satisfied.

The hon. member for Ithaca raised the question of the projected development at Mt. Isa. I think the Premier has given him as much information on that as it is possible for him to give at this stage. The hon. member knows very well that the Premier will, when the time is opportune, give the Opposition all the further information he can give.

Mr. Davies: Will you say that he was let down by the Commonwealth Government?

Mr. MORRIS: The hon. member had the opportunity to talk about that in his Address-in-Reply speech but he was too lazy. Why does he not now keep quiet?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Davies: I was not running round the countryside.

Mr. MORRIS: As a matter of fact, the Premier is doing his job as most other Ministers here—

Mr. Davies: Who?

Mr. MORRIS: The Premier.

Mr. Davies: I was not talking about the Premier, but you.

Mr. MORRIS: I did not neglect the opportunity of speaking. I was not sitting down lazily and doing nothing as the hon.

member was. At least I am doing my job. Seeing that the hon. member for Maryborough has raised the matter, the first person who tries to get every ounce of advantage out of the visit of any Cabinet Minister to his own area is the hon. member who is now very critical because Cabinet members go to parts of Queensland other than Maryborough. Of course, I recognise that Maryborough needs the attention of Cabinet Ministers, because it is being so badly neglected by its own member.

The Premier on Thursday night replied to most of the points that had been raised, and I have only a few more comments to make. He left one matter for me to deal with—a matter that I regard as very important—and I propose to touch on it now. I refer, of course, to the very subtle and unkind criticism by the Leader of the Opposition of the Agent-General for Queensland in London. I remind hon. members of what was said by the Leader of the Opposition, because it cannot go unanswered. This is what he said—

"I think I am justified in attempting to debunk the matter raised by the Agent-General about the work done by the Agent-General and his staff in London."

What a dreadful thing to say! Fancy trying to debunk the work that is being done by one of the most outstanding officers that Queensland has ever known!

Mr. Houston: Did you hear him say that?

Mr. MORRIS: Yes, I did. Did not the hon. member hear him? I heard him, and I am quoting from a transcript of what he said.

Mr. Lloyd: From "Hansard"?

Mr. MORRIS: Yes.

Mr. Lloyd: In this debate?

Mr. MORRIS: Yes. Did not the hon. member know that I could? That is something else that he has learned.

The Leader of the Opposition—and I am still quoting from "Hansard"—went on to say, after a few words of very grudging praise—

"Speaking of the visit overseas of the Queensland Promotion Delegation led by the Deputy Premier, the Agent-General says that the delegation's main objective was to attract more secondary industry to Queensland."

Incidentally, the Agent-General did not say that.

The Leader of the Opposition continued—

"He goes on, in the manner of the rather sickening spate of apologetics we have heard since the delegation returned home, to say" . . . and so on.

Mr. Lloyd: Is that the official "Hansard" proof?

Mr. MORRIS: Yes. That is what the Leader of the Opposition said.

We have in London, in the person of the Agent-General, one of the most valuable servants that this State has ever had. By comparison with other Agents-General, he is outstanding in the work that he has done. He is recognised as being probably the best Agent-General that this or any other State in Australia has ever sent overseas.

Mr. Power: He is not a political hack.

Mr. MORRIS: Of course not; not a bit.

Mr. Power: You know he was selected by a Labour Government, don't you?

Mr. MORRIS: Of course I do, and more power to them for having done so. They selected an outstanding man who is doing an outstanding job.

I have no objection to the Leader of the Opposition constantly being a "knocker" of the Queensland Trade Delegation, but if he continues to be a "knocker" let it be on his own shoulders. It is fatally easy for anybody, whether in Opposition or elsewhere, to criticise people who are in fact doing something even though they may not be as perfect as he would like them to be. For my part, however, I would rather have a man who is doing things and sometimes making mistakes than one who never does anything.

Mr. Lloyd: We would like to see you do something like that.

Mr. MORRIS: May be if the hon. gentleman listens I will tell him something. First of all, let me tell him what the Agent-General is doing. After all, he was the man who was criticised by the Leader of the Opposition. Firstly the Agent-General's officers are providing outstanding representation of Queensland in Great Britain and, secondly, they are doing outstanding work for the sugar industry, Mr. Muir in particular. As Chairman of the International Sugar Council, he has made probably one of the greatest contributions.

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order. I have allowed this to go on for a short time without protesting but it is obvious that the Minister for Labour and Industry has taken remarks by the Leader of the Opposition completely out of their context. I can assure the Committee that there was no attack at all on the Agent-General.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister is entitled to express his opinion.

Mr. Lloyd: As long as it is an honest opinion, we do not mind.

Mr. MORRIS: I say quite seriously that I appreciate the fact that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has apologised for his leader. I am sorry that he should have found it necessary. However, I shall continue to show what good work is being done by the

Agent-General in London. He is giving considerable assistance in the recruitment of migrants and he is making many purchases for the Queensland Government, both very important functions. He is attending to legal work in London for the Public Curator. All those who have been overseas know the outstanding hospitality extended to Queenslanders by Mr. Muir and his staff; it is very much appreciated by many thousands of people.

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order. I resent very much the imputation to the Leader of the Opposition. It is a reflection on the members of the Opposition. I point out that my leader said, "Mr. Muir is a capable, efficient and courteous officer."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister for Labour and Industry.

Mr. MORRIS: I repeat how pleased I am that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition again finds it necessary to apologise for his leader.

Mr. Lloyd: Quoting from "Hansard", too.

Mr. MORRIS: I continue to point out the good work being done by the Agent-General. A tremendous amount of work is being done in London today in the marketing of primary production and, while it is largely in the hands of the primary-producing organisation concerned, it is being greatly assisted by Mr. Muir. He is doing a great deal of promotion work and general public relations work for the State.

Returning to the subject that the members of the A.L.P. are so happy to criticise, he is doing a great deal to follow up the work done by the Queensland Promotion Delegation. He arranged more than 200 appointments for the members of the delegation while they were in the United Kingdom, and they were very important appointments, too. He has steadily followed up all the contacts made. As a matter of fact, some hundreds of letters have passed between the Agent-General and Queensland in follow-up work. Yesterday I received from him a letter from the representative of an organisation in London who wrote to him in these terms—

"Thank you for your letter of the 10th October and we must apologise for not keeping you fully advised of the position in connection with the manufacture of our products in Queensland. We would like you to know that the response on this subject from several manufacturing concerns in Queensland has been most satisfactory and we feel confident that our joint efforts will soon be brought to a successful conclusion."

Mr. Power: What do they manufacture?

Mr. MORRIS: I do not intend to tell the hon. member the name of the manufacturer. The letter continues—

“The position at the moment is, however, that several small, although important, problems have come to the surface and it is taking longer to resolve these than we had hoped for. However, we are working hard on the proposition and will certainly be pleased to advise you the results very shortly.”

There are approximately 60 of these proposals at the moment being handled here by my officers and by the Agent-General in London.

Mr. Davies: Have any negotiations got past the letter-writing stage?

Mr. MORRIS: If the hon. member would speak up instead of mumbling I would probably hear him, but he is as inefficient in his talking as he is in his attention to his duties.

It might be asked: what is the reaction of these people when they leave Queensland after coming out here as a result of the work of the Agent-General? I have a letter here from one of the members of the Quaker Oats Company. I do not mind divulging the name on this occasion because it has been mentioned in the Press. The letter reads—

“I was tremendously impressed by the activity of your Labour and Industry Department. I had calls from those associated with you in the department and from several members of the Queensland Parliament. If energy, drive and enthusiasm mean anything, Queensland is bound to grow.”

That is a letter from a man who was here only last week. I have letters like that from literally dozens of organisations. They are all being followed up by the Agent-General in London. He is doing a tremendous amount of necessary follow-up work.

The hon. member for Maryborough is usually so scathing in his criticism that I want to give him a little information gratis. He can do what he likes about this. While we were away, as a consequence of the work of the Agent-General, we were put in touch with several organisations, particularly to assist Walkers Ltd. in Maryborough as we realised that Walkers Ltd. were having difficulties because of the change-over from steam to diesel locomotives. As we had with us a director of Walkers Ltd. the Agent-General specially put us in touch with a firm which is a subsidiary of Associated British Engineering which makes marine engines. We believed marine engines would be suitable for Walkers Ltd. He also put us in touch with an organisation called Henry Meadows Ltd. that makes diesel engines. We hoped that with the help of these two organisations we could cause diesel engines to be made in Maryborough. We also put Walkers Ltd. in touch with people who manufacture crane skiffs in a very large way, and another company which makes diesel locomotives. Since then there have been constant negotiations between

Walkers and these overseas companies, assisted by the Agent-General, in the hope that they will be to the satisfaction of the people in Maryborough. I am telling the hon. member for Maryborough these things because of his constant harping criticism. If they come to fruition—as I believe many of them will—it will be of great benefit to Maryborough and Queensland, but it is in the hands of the people who are carrying through the negotiations.

At 4 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 16 October, I shall now proceed to put the questions necessary for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Premier and Chief Secretary.

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

Premier and Chief Secretary—

Chief Office	£53,313
Balance of Votes	£7,092,373.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS, FORESTRY AND IRRIGATION.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Hon. A. G. MULLER (Fassifern—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (4.1 p.m.): I move—

“That £300,645 be granted for ‘Department of Public Lands, Forestry and Irrigation—Chief Office.’”

This sum represents an increase of £101,899 on last year's allocation. In actual fact, the sub-headings totalling this allocation are very similar to those of the previous year. There are slight fluctuations mainly due to varied costs and increased salaries but, in the main, the relationship is comparable. In previous years' Estimates allocations for the eradication of *Harrisia cactus*, the eradication of groundsel and the purchase of hormone weedicides, poisons, etc., have been a charge against the Loan Vote. In accordance with this year's Budgetary requirements these latter items will now be provided for under Revenue, and this accounts for the increased revenue vote now sought. Running through the items quickly, for the information of hon. members, an allocation against salaries of £148,440 is sought against last year's allocation of £143,901. Postage and incidentals total £34,230 against last year's allocation of £33,485. Fares, printing, stores, etc. total £11,000 against last year's allocation of £10,140. Acquisition of land for road and other purposes totals £4,000 against last year's allocation of £4,500. A total of £92,600 has been set aside for the eradication of *Harrisia cactus*, the eradication of groundsel and the purchase of hormone weedicides, poisons, etc., against, as I previously mentioned, a Loan Vote allocation of £148,250. An allocation of £4,500 has been made for investigation of watering

facilities on main stock routes. In previous years no such allocation was made to the co-ordinated board for this work. Hon. members will appreciate the importance of this sub-department and the rapid growth it is making has made necessary an increase of staff. Greater funds will be required to finance the services of that department. As we move round the country we appreciate the work of this department all the more. I was greatly impressed when travelling in the West to see that the greater length of our stock routes was provided with watering facilities. I saw stock that was turned back after they had reached the border gate because of the lack of water and I was proud that our stock routes had watering facilities. The job is not yet complete; they are still engaged on that work. In addition to that there are the animal and vegetable pests which have become a serious menace and which are receiving great attention from the department. I shall have something to say on the work of this board later. The work of Mr. Brebner, the chairman, must be highly commended. It has been found necessary to provide additional assistance. Irrespective of the action of the Board, it will always have some critics. In my travels throughout the country I have heard it said that the method used to destroy dingoes is not effective. Others maintain that it is effective. The aerial baiting of dingoes is contentious and debatable. While some condemn it, others commend it. The best evidence to support a continuance at least for the moment of aerial baiting, is the fact that a number of graziers are buying the baits and are distributing them on their properties. Even if the baits do no more than kill some dingo pups, they are certainly worthwhile. It has been said, perhaps with a good deal of truth, that the old dogs are too clever to pick up these baits. Nevertheless, they are dropped in the breeding season and may kill a number of the pups.

I have heard arguments for and against the barrier fence. I do not take credit for what has been done in the past. I am always big enough to recognise the work of previous Administrations in the interests of the State. If something is wrong, it is our duty to change the policy. Some people say that the barrier fence is useless, while others contend it will be very helpful. On the information available to me, I am inclined to the belief that it will be helpful. It is said that it will be difficult to keep the fence in good repair. There may be some truth in that, but the Board has adopted a practical attitude to the maintenance of the fence. It has made arrangements with lessees to maintain the fence in the area in which they are interested, that is, their boundary fences. That will overcome the need for an inspector to travel long distances to inspect the fence. We must be sensible in considering these things. In years of flood or fire there will be breaks in the fence here and there, but I think the fence will tend to reduce the dingo menace. It has been said that this year the

dingo menace is worse than ever. There may be a good deal of truth in that statement, but perhaps it can be attributed to the starvation conditions and lack of water in the West, with consequent movement of the dogs further to the east. The scalps paid for this year show a 50 per cent. increase on the number last year, and, since the end of the financial year, the increase is very much greater. I attribute that to the fact that the dogs are hungry and cheeky and are exposing themselves to the shooters in order to get food and water. The benefit of this increase in the number killed will be felt in years to come.

A sum of £2,000 has been set aside for the cash equivalent of long service leave against £1,800 in the previous year's Estimates. A sum totalling £3,875 has been set aside for Land Court expenses and Incidentals against an allocation of £4,920 in previous years' Estimates.

Summarising the position, the total Vote is something similar to the previous year's allocation, with slight adjustments, due to the inclusion of amounts required in the destruction of *Harrisia cactus*, groundsel and other plant pests and by the inclusion of a substantial sum to be spent on the investigation of stock route watering facilities.

These latter items, in past years, were a charge on the Loan Vote. That accounts for the difference in this year's allocation. In presenting the Estimates for the Department of Public Lands, Forestry and Irrigation for the first time in this Chamber, I think, in view of the importance of them that I should be permitted the opportunity of quickly running through some of the more important activities of those departments during the previous 12 months. The annual reports of the departments have been printed and I shall not bore the Committee with a reiteration of the data made available in them.

I might mention that last fiscal year's activities were severely affected by drought conditions, and in some sections of the State these conditions still obtain. I recently witnessed this during my inspection of the far south-west.

Dealing firstly with the opening of Crown lands for settlement, this phase of the department's activities was somewhat curtailed by the dry conditions referred to. Good rain fell in certain areas of the State during the second half of the year, and following those rains, 56 blocks with a total area of 679,730 acres were opened for new settlement. Since 1 July last a further 63 blocks totalling 688,000 acres have been opened and action is now in hand for the subdivision and opening of a further area of about 6,000,000 acres of sheep and cattle grazing lands, and these will be made available in due course.

It should be appreciated that, with dispossessed owners facing heavy drought losses, it would be unduly harsh for the Crown to exercise its right of resumption rigidly

whilst these adverse conditions operate. Furthermore it would not be in the best interests of new settlers. I have heard a good deal of comment about the area of land held under occupation licence. It is true that the area is very large. I should like the Committee to appreciate the position of the grazier who loses his property through resumption. He is aware that he must hand over his territory but it would be unfair to push him off it and place him in a position where he would not be able to feed his stock during a drought period. We have been humane in our attitude despite the criticism round the country that the Government are hard. If that impression exists in this Chamber I want to remove it. We have considered the rights and privileges of lessees who will be required to hand over and the rights and privileges of those who will take possession.

I should like to comment on this phase of my administration and quote the figures. A total of 1,367,730 acres have been opened during my administration and there is in the course of opening an area of about 6,000,000 acres. That represents a total of 7,367,730 acres for new settlement which is quite a tidy area of country. By way of comparison, I mention that during the post-war period to 30 June, 1957, 11,500,000 acres were opened for new settlement. In effect, during that 12-year period, 12,000,000 acres were made available, whereas over 1,000,000 have already been opened by my administration, and I have 6,000,000 acres up my sleeve, as it were, to be opened in the near future. Those figures illustrate clearly and undeniably the Government's appreciation of and the desire to implement their closer settlement policy. I repeat that we must have regard to the rights and privileges of lessees, who are to hand over the territory. Hon. members need have no fear that the Government are responsible for placing people on starvation blocks of less than living areas. Many of the blocks that were subdivided and designed many years ago were less than living areas but not because of any fault in administration by the Government. I do not condemn the former Government because the blocks were purchased by people with their eyes open; perhaps they knew that they had less than living areas. However, it is necessary for the Government to assist wherever possible. I refuse to accept responsibility for small, restricted areas that were designed before I became Minister. Of course, many blocks that have been taken up since I became Minister were impossible to alter. I am not completely satisfied that they were less than a living area. If they were, although they have been taken up they have not been opened because in my opinion they represent less than a living area.

Mr. Power: You are getting advice from Mr. Payne on the future land policy, aren't you?

Mr. MULLER: Yes, but Mr. Payne has had nothing to do with the matter that I am now referring to. I am talking about the work that has been done over the last 15 months. As a matter of fact, Mr. Payne has already made two or three investigations. He is now reviewing the whole position and will submit his report to Parliament later in the year. Now that the hon. member for Baroona has raised the matter, I point out that Mr. Payne's report will not be a hole-and-corner one; it will not be the type of report that will be submitted to me and then shelved. It will be an open document and all hon. members will be given an opportunity to read it. We cannot be fairer than that. When criticism was offered by some people, I knew that Mr. Payne was regarded as one of Queensland's greatest authorities on land matters and that we could appoint no better man to make an investigation. It is easy to say that people should not be settled on starvation areas, but we must have regard to the rights and privileges of all the people, not only to one section of them.

I should like to stress also for the information of the Chamber, that since I have been Minister very serious consideration has been extended to the designing of all blocks to ensure that they measure up to living area standards. Very early in my administration this matter was ironed out with the Land Administration Board and a clear set of standards that are fair and equitable was laid down.

There has been much loose talk and propaganda and a complete lack of knowledge on this subject, but landholders generally are becoming appreciative of the true situation and are realising that the Government will do all in their power to assist them with their problems. As I said in Quilpie—and I now repeat it—there are some who thought, when this Government took office, that they could write their own tickets. Nothing could be more dangerous than to think that any Government would bow to those who had supported them and give them any area of land regardless of the rights and privileges of others.

Very early in my administrative career, I called in not only members of the Land Administration Board but also the district Land Commissioners, and together we built up the sizes of some of the smaller blocks, particularly those that were subdivided under the provisions of the 1952 Act. I refer mainly to settlement farm leases. When those blocks were designed, the Land Commissioners aimed at an area of agricultural land of about 200 acres. We immediately increased that area to 300 acres, and many of those blocks have much more agricultural land than the area laid down. Furthermore, when graziers design a block of land for the dual purposes of agriculture and grazing, naturally the area is small. People who take up those blocks should be prepared to engage in some form of agriculture. However, some people who take up grazing leases

do not want to do that. We immediately took the responsibility from the shoulders of those lessees. It is now optional for them to cultivate. I took the view that it was most unwise and uneconomic to force a grazier on an essentially grazing property to cultivate against his will. The principle is sound. I would give them every encouragement but I would not force them to do it. It was incumbent upon me, as a Minister, to dispel the earlier view and I can say with justified pride that the people have not found me wanting in this direction. I think I can assure the people of Queensland that the policy I have outlined will be continued. That is not in any way a threat to anyone but it is an announcement of fair play and justice. Immediately I took over my portfolio I said I would be guided by common sense and justice. I have not found it necessary to depart from that.

The wool and beef industries have had their troubles through the year. In fixing fair rentals and the like all these matters must be taken into consideration. We have not closed our eyes to them. But I am sure hon. members will realise that a steep fall in wool prices took place during the term of the present Government. Rentals and areas designed 12 months ago might call for slight adjustment if they were examined today. I confidently expect that the recessionary trend is only temporary. Last week and the week before we had evidence of an upward trend in wool values. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that we cannot reasonably expect these excessively high wool prices to continue, particularly on the export markets of the world, when other commodities are returning to somewhat normal prices. The downward trend in prices is a matter of grave concern and the services of Mr. W. L. Payne, President of the Land Court and an international authority on land administration, have been secured to advise the Government. It was no small matter to ask Mr. Payne to do the job. It would be no exaggeration to use the word "mighty" to describe the job he was doing as President of the Land Court. Being the good Australian and the good Queenslander that he is, he was prepared to come in and give us the benefit of his advice. He is now on the job and within the next few months he will be able to give us his idea of what alteration should be made, if any.

Turning to the more important matter of revenue collections—there are two distinct dates of balancing. The balance for grazing leases is shown as at the end of December and that for pastoral holdings at the end of June. The annual report recently tabled shows that the revenue collections—all departmental revenue, not rentals—totalled £4,324,026 for the year ended 31 December, 1957, as against £3,884,591 for the previous year. The rentals for last year were £2,677,279 as against £2,498,145 for the previous year. That does not suggest that

rentals have been increased generally but that they have been adjusted. In other words, rentals that had been increased in keeping with high prices a few years ago and that are now falling due for review are being brought into line with others. Evidence will be submitted later to show that in some cases rentals that were considered high have been reduced.

In the cities and towns the sale of building allotments continued and 752 were offered for sale as perpetual leases or under free-holding title. The figures I have given include town and suburban blocks. As hon. members will realise, in the last 18 months there has been a continual upward trend in the prices paid for leases on the Coast. That has been the reason that the total amount of revenue collected under the heading of rentals has soared the way it has.

An interesting feature of this year's operations was the Government's decision that private enterprise should be afforded an opportunity to develop useless lands, particularly along the coastline, for the purpose of their subsequent subdivision and sale as residential blocks. That is an entirely new departure from the old principle. As hon. members would know, work of this nature has been undertaken on the north and south banks of Tallebudgera Creek, in Biggera Creek, Nerang Creek and large development projects are under way at South Stradbroke and Bribie Islands and The Spit at Southport. The Government are also encouraging development in the Noosa River area extending towards Coolom Beach. Much land has been found to be totally undeveloped merely because there is no road access. The Government have undertaken to arrange with private subdividers to build roads and open up the land. We shall ensure that we collect whatever revenue is due to us from the people who are responsible for the work, whether they be constructing roads or reclaiming land. There is a demand at the moment for these newly developed building sites. I am confident that this scheme of development will be of great benefit to the various districts where it is carried out.

I should like to mention the development on the North Coast, sponsored very largely by the hon. member for Cooroora as chairman of the shire for the district. The adjoining shire, the Noosa Shire, has made representations, indicating that they are prepared to back a similar scheme in its area. Hon. members will realise that no loss will be suffered by anybody because shires want to collect revenue and bring about settlement in their areas. The same conditions, of course, apply on the Gold Coast. These large-scale operations, whilst encouraging new capital into the State are, at the same time, developing the State and converting useless areas into valuable building sites and providing a further measure of assistance to local government bodies.

The annual report discloses that the developmental conditions of the various leases

throughout the State have been in the main satisfactorily complied with. Over the past year most lessees have made a bona fide attempt to bring the conditions up to date in spite of adverse seasonal conditions. We have not been harsh in a season like this when they are finding it very difficult to keep stock alive. Some of them have not been able to comply with developmental conditions, but we have found that it has been wise to adopt a humane attitude and not to enforce them rigidly. However, lessees have been told that any delay that has taken place is to be made up later when they are in a position to do so.

Big areas have either been ringbarked, bulldozed or pulled and many miles of boundary and internal fencing completed. Many water facilities have been established and equipped. Conditions were very bad when I made my tour of the Far Western country only a fortnight ago. I think that they would have been even worse but for the watering facilities provided by the lessees in recent years. Much of it derives from the Commonwealth Government's policy of allowing them to claim money spent in that direction as a tax deduction.

Mr. Power: It was a part of the conditions of their leases.

Mr. MULLER: In some cases, yes, but they have gone even further than that. They have been prepared to spend some of their profits. I am not going to say that they do not gain by doing it. We have adopted the policy of inducing people to engage in spending money in that direction. Today they are not only securing their own position but they are saving the stock, and that means a national benefit as well. This work is becoming more possible every day due to the developments in heavy machinery and earth-moving equipment, and adequate rebates made available by a sympathetic Central Government. In the past they perhaps did not have the machinery to the same extent to carry out this class of work that we have today. The construction of access and subdivisional roads over and above work undertaken by local authorities proceeded and a total of £57,127 was spent in this direction last fiscal year. We are encouraging local authorities to engage in this work. We do not open up the lands and survey the roads and say, "Here you are; we are handing you this." In some cases the construction of roads is a difficult financial problem. We cannot do it in every case. We cannot scatter Crown estate in all directions; but wherever possible we are assisting local authorities.

The department's activity towards the control of plant pests continued and considerable progress was made in that field during the year. I took the opportunity of making an inspection of one of the worst infested areas. I refer to the growth and spread of *Harrisia Cactus* at Collinsville.

I think I am justified in levelling criticism at the previous Government. I was shocked at the spread of the *Harrisia Cactus*.

Mr. Walsh: I shall put it at the door of somebody else—at the door of your officials.

Mr. MULLER: If the hon. member can blame somebody else I shall accept what he has to say. I am stating what I found and I think this Committee and the people generally should know about it. When I took over, about £90,000 was provided on the Estimates for the destruction of *Harrisia Cactus*. I asked the members of the Board what it was. They told me it was an outbreak of this type of prickly-pear that had been in the district for the past 20 years. Despite the fact that the Government were told again and again that it was getting out of hand, virtually nothing was done.

Mr. Walsh: Do you blame the Government for that?

Mr. MULLER: Yes.

Mr. Walsh: Apparently you have not read the bible.

Mr. MULLER: I am not going to say that it is an easy job now, but it would have been comparatively easy if it had been tackled before the pest got out of hand. According to information available, this type of prickly-pear was first grown in a garden on one of the station properties—I think it was "Sonoma." It is a heavy fruiter and seeder. The story is—and I believe there is truth in it—that the birds carried it into the scrub where it takes root very readily and in other protective places such as cattle camps. When I took over I found that gangs of men were engaged in poisoning the plant, and in the circumstances I think they did a mighty job, although they were fighting a hopeless battle. I made enquiries as to whether this was the correct approach. Some suggested that the scrub should be felled and others thought that if that was done we would be in a bigger mess. There were tens of thousands of acres of beautiful scrub country—I know of none better—that were infested with this pest. The lessees were holding this scrub. They had sufficient area to live on without using it. The pest took root in the scrub. My first impression was that the scrub would have to come down. I came to the conclusion because in the open the pest was making little or no progress whereas in the scrub and in cattle camps it was growing very rapidly. In fact, within a few years, it grows so thickly in the scrub that a horse cannot be driven through it. It is no exaggeration to say that a snake could not get through it. The spikes are long, strong and sharp and will pierce boots, leggings or a saddle bag. Something has to be done. I spoke to the lessees and asked for their co-operation. Despite what the hon. member for Bundaberg has said, I was told that my visit was

the first made by any Minister of the Crown. Previous ministers relied on reports. The cactus is spreading at a tremendous rate. I recommended to the Government the appointment of a committee comprising an officer of my department, an officer of the Biological Section, and a representative of the graziers. To encourage the work of eradicating the pest, it was decided to give special leases free of encumbrances, for about 40 years. I think they are better than freehold tenure in this instance, because it is very difficult to make people clear noxious weeds from freehold property, whereas they can be forced to do it by the threat of show-cause, if they fail to carry out their part of the contract. The committee has commenced to operate, and some people have already taken an interest in this work. We have already declared an area to be an infested area. A warden has been appointed, and we are trying to hold the pest in that territory. It has already got beyond that territory. When I was in Chinchilla a fortnight ago, I was shown a sample and I was asked if it was *Harrisia cactus*. I definitely declared that it was. It has been found in the Goondiwindi and Rockhampton districts, but to date little or nothing has been done about it, that is until this action was taken. I called a conference of the committee, officers of the N.S.W. Prickly Pear Board and the C.S.I.R.O. and I was successful in inducing the New South Wales Government to render some assistance.

We have decided not to rely entirely on our physical power to poison it, but are attempting to do something on biological lines. Despite frequent statements that no insect will attack it and that the cactoblastis will not touch it, it may be possible to obtain an insect. Inquiries will reveal that the cactoblastis in the country of origin of the prickly pear was not known to attack the prickly pear, but it must have been a natural enemy because it kept the prickly pear in check. I said to the committee "We will make enquiries in the country of origin of this pest, Argentine." It has not reached pest proportions in that country, and I am of the opinion rightly or wrongly, that there must be some silent enemy attacking it.

Mr. Mann, the Assistant Director of the Biological Section, has been sent overseas. He is going to the country of origin of this pest with the object of obtaining an insect that will attack it. If an insect can be obtained, we will have the cheapest means of eradicating the cactus. We cannot sit back and wait until we get an insect. We are more or less under the control or direction of C.S.I.R.O. and, if an insect is obtained, it will have to be kept in quarantine for some time before it can be released. Mr. Mann has already left this country. We have not lost any time in doing everything possible to attack the pest. I want to warn hon. members and the people of Queensland generally that in my opinion this is the most serious pest we have ever had to deal with. Whilst

it does not make the rapid growth in open country as the ordinary prickly pear, I have never seen anything thrive like it in scrub land. If land is cleared a lot of it could be cultivated and the pest held in check in that way. The method of eradication by arsenic sprays is being continued but it requires as many as six applications of pentoxide actually to kill the pest. The first application will kill the top, the second application will dry it and with falling leaves from timber one is able to burn it. It is considered that from five to six applications are required to destroy it. After spraying five or six times the landholder is still not free because birds are active and if there is a seed about the place they pick it up and drop it and so the plant is re-established. If lessees are not prepared to take follow-up action we will get nowhere. It is estimated that the value of the pentoxide required is slightly more than £4 an acre and on top of that there is the cost of application. It is only a matter of simple arithmetic to get an idea of what the total cost would be. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the land will be rid of the pest unless the occupier takes follow-up action. The new lessees will be told in plain Australian language before they enter into the contract what they have to do and if they fail to do it, they take the risk of losing their country.

Mr. Walsh: Will you give it to them rent free?

Mr. MULLER: That has not been decided. The intention is to apply a light rental but I do not think the land will be rent free. That point has not been settled. The Committee will negotiate with prospective lessees and we have promised them that they will be free of encumbrances—that is to say there will be no resumption in the 40 years and no rent increases. It has been suggested that it would be advisable to give them freehold property. In the eradication of noxious weeds if a freeholder sits back and does nothing, it is hard to dispossess him of his property. The Committee consists of Mr. Muir of the Land Administration Board, Mr. Mann of the Biological Section, and Mr. George Bassingthwaite.

Mr. Foley: Have you ceased spraying operations in the meantime?

Mr. MULLER: No. We are not taking that risk. We are continuing with spraying and we are engaged in pulling. We have entered into a contract with Carter Bros. to pull 3,000 acres to demonstrate what can be done. When I inspected the land, pullers were engaged and this operation cost about £8 an acre. It was pulled and put into wind rows and burnt. It was a costly procedure. After making inquiries we found that it could be pulled for less than that and to demonstrate to lessees that we can do the job at less cost we have entered into a contract with Carter Bros.

to pull and clear 3,000 acres. We are not absolutely certain that it will be a complete success, but with the information available to us it seems that much can be done by getting rid of the scrub and growing grass on the land. That makes the pest vulnerable to attack. The committee has already furnished a report and will go to the Collinsville district next week to interview prospective lessees. Some large companies are becoming interested. Of course, it is a matter for argument whether there should be small areas that would bring increased population to the district, or large areas owned by companies that are prepared to invest a good deal of money in the area. It will be a gamble. We may be successful in getting an insect that will attack the pest. In any case, something must be done and we are losing no time in doing it.

We intend to help the lessees with supplies of pentoxide. At present, pentoxide is manufactured only in the South but we are encouraging the manufacturers to establish themselves in Queensland. If that can be done, the cost of the pentoxide will be reduced by about £25 a ton. We are prepared to supply the lessees with pentoxide at half the actual cost delivered at the railway station.

The biological section of the department is doing experimental work on other plants as well. Over the years an effort has been made to find an insect that might eradicate lantana. That work is still in hand. Although we have nothing definite to report at the moment, the officers of the department think that as time goes on and the insects that they are using become acclimatised, there is a possibility of something being achieved.

Mr. Walsh: You are not blaming the previous Government because the lantana has not been exterminated, are you?

Mr. MULLER: The previous Government were responsible for much more damage than has been done by the lantana.

Under a joint project between the Hawaiian Board of Agriculture and Forestry, the C.S.I.R.O., and the Land Administration Board, the insect enemies of lantana in Mexico and other parts of tropical and sub-tropical America, its native home, were investigated and certain insects were introduced into the Hawaiian Islands. An officer of the biological section spent six months in Hawaii, where he carried out a comprehensive programme of tests with four leaf-feeding caterpillars for the purpose of determining whether they could live on plants other than lantana.

One species failed to pass the test requirements. The other three species completed the tests satisfactorily and were introduced to the Lands Department laboratory at Sherwood for further testing and for rearing and studying. Efforts to rear two of these importations failed. One of them made good progress initially in the cages, but the caterpillars suffered severely from disease

epidemics and all stocks were lost. Further consignments of this latter insect were introduced direct from southern California. As the moths fly very freely they could be dispersed widely before laying eggs, hence it could be established for a considerable time before evidence might be obtained of its presence in the field.

This is really a report by the biological section. It would appear that there is some possibility of the insects becoming acclimatised. I think it unwise to lead people whose properties are infested with lantana to believe that they can rest assured that some day we will have an insect to clear it. There are many ways to clear lantana. Large infestations can best be handled by judicious firing, making use of the hot, dry weather, and scattered stands can be attacked with the mattock or grubber. Some people sit back and say that some day we will have an insect to clear it because we got one to clear the prickly pear. Lantana is not the serious menace that other pests are. As the hon. member for Bundaberg admits, it is not even as serious a pest as the Labour Government were.

As to Noogoora burr, two insects—one from America and one from India—which offered promise of controlling the pest have been imported into Queensland. Twenty-three thousand larvae are at present housed in an air-conditioned insectory, which was built by the Government at Sherwood during last year. The imported dormant larvae are being kept in a dry condition in quarantine and it is expected that the emergence of the insects will take place within the next six to eight weeks. Upon emergence they will be tested under quarantine conditions against approximately 150 plants of economic importance and an estimate will also be made of their capabilities of destroying Noogoora burr. The C.S.I.R.O. are impressed by the work of the insects but some people fear that upon their release they might attack other plants too. Some believe they will attack the sunflower. We could do without the sunflower if we could get rid of the Noogoora burr, which does such tremendous damage in wool country. The work at the C.S.I.R.O. is expected to occupy about two years and if the insects supply the answer to the problem a wonderful service will have been rendered to rural industries.

Turning from the administration of land, I think it appropriate to refer to the workings of the Forestry Department and the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, which are closely allied to this Vote. All hon. members will be aware of the enthusiasm and keenness applied to their vocations by the Director of Forests and the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply and the results of their conscientious efforts are apparent for all to see. Both Mr. Grenning and Mr. Haigh are doing a mighty job. Reforestation is very important work to Queensland. Much has been done but not nearly enough. The same applies to the work of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. Mr. Haigh

has a big job ahead of him. With the Government's new approach to irrigation much more will be done. We can spend money in both departments to advantage as long as we spend it wisely; it is not enough just to spend it.

Mr. Walsh: You had better reply to Mr. Herbert's criticism of the Mount Edwards proposal.

Mr. MULLER: Why is that bothering the hon. member? His Government did all they could to scrap it and it is probably one of the soundest irrigation schemes ever introduced in Queensland. We will be able to tell the Committee a good deal more about it. If I entered into discussion with the hon. member on the merits of some of the schemes the previous Labour Government introduced and compared them with the Mount Edwards scheme, he would look silly.

In recognition of the work performed by the Director of Forests and his staff the Government have extended to what was the sub-department full departmental status. That has already had the effect of inspiring the Director and his officers to greater effort. It has been a real pleasure to me to work with those men, to learn something of their activities and to learn of the great need for further activity. Every member of the Committee should know that. Broadly, the main aims of the Forestry Department are the production of timber and the orderly marketing of it. Both are big jobs. After growth of the timber it has to be marketed. The consultations we have about marketing are not all sugar and honey—sometimes very little encouragement is given to the officers who carry out this work.

Forestry management throughout the world today is an acknowledged science and a job for trained men. I shall not attempt to bore the Chamber with scientific data about what is being done. At the same time, I should like to give a few figures to illustrate the ramifications of this organisation. At 30 June last a total staff of 2,102 was engaged on this work. Reforestation expenditure last year totalled £1,444,540, which means a total expenditure on reforestation as at 30 June last of £15,797,107. A total of over 8,000,000 acres has been set aside for forestry purposes and during last year a total of 4,994 acres of plantation was established, bringing the total plantation establishment to 83,810 acres. Apart from reforested areas, 9,078 acres of natural forests received silvicultural treatment, bringing the total area of natural forests so treated to 577,610 acres.

Mr. Walsh: A pretty fine record for the Labour Government.

Mr. MULLER: Not bad, but not nearly as good as we have done in the last 12 months. We give credit where it is due, but I want to show how we have improved considerably on what the previous Government did.

Mr. Walsh: Give us the acres you planted last year?

Mr. MULLER: I do not want to detract from what the hon. member's Government did by way of reforestation because it is too serious a subject to be made a political football. We are making a business approach to reforestation without throwing in from time to time what the previous Government did not do. There is nothing further from my mind.

When forests are established they must be protected. Firebreaks constructed as at 30 June, 1958, totalled 5,800 miles. Last year a total of 213,000,000 super feet of log timber was harvested from leasehold lands, and the total estimated cut throughout the State on leasehold and freehold areas is estimated at 465,000,000 super feet. About half of that cut is taken off private land, the other half, of course, from Crown land under Crown lease. The figure quoted included 19,000,000 super feet harvested from plantation areas by way of thinning operations, bringing the total cut of thinnings to 30 June, 1958, to 142,000,000 super ft. At the moment there is a little bit of a hold-up in the sale of these thinnings, nevertheless, I am sure we will get over that difficulty. The forests must be thinned.

Criticism has been levelled at the Government about high royalties. We have not increased royalties, nor do we wish to increase them above a fair level. The gross revenue from this sale of timber last year totalled £2,475,152. At 30 June last 959 sawmill licenses were in operation. The issuing of sawmill licences is not an easy job. I commend the previous Government for the stabilisation policy introduced in 1937. It might be slightly out of date today—perhaps it may require changing—nevertheless, at the time the idea was to conserve the State's forests and render protection to some of the mills carrying on a legitimate service. Against that there are people who consider they have a good case but they are denied sawmill licenses. Their cases are being examined at the moment. Despite the fact that this method of control has been operating, the high costs of timber have greatly perturbed us. I am not going to say who is responsible, but it is a matter to be considered. I am personally very concerned about the home-builders— young couples who marry and hope to build a home, only to find that costs are right out of hand with timber prices reaching the moon. I think that is something that requires to be looked into. I assure you, Mr. Taylor, that the Government will not be lacking in their duty. If it is a question of altering the position we are prepared to look at it from that angle.

Mr. Walsh: What proportion of the licensed capacity is used today?

Mr. MULLER: I can give the figures later. The licensed capacity is not being used at the moment; it is still greater than the timber offering. That is not the whole story. In some cases it is a matter of location that has to be considered. Looking at the question

of costs I find the greatest charge is transport. If you have to carry timber a long distance it adds greatly to the total cost. There are other substitutes which are to some extent taking the place of timber. We cannot deny the right of these manufacturers to enter into competition. As the Director of Forests has pointed out, during the years, gradually but surely all national stands of timber are being harvested by the numerous mills scattered about our cities and towns. There will always be a demand for this commodity and it is essential that these stands be replaced—and replaced in handy positions so that this work will proceed on an economical basis. Therefore reforestation must take place close to markets. The greatest contributing cause to the high price of timber is transport. We have plenty of land and the Director of Forests is right on the ball. If re-forestation is to take place let it take place in an area from where it can be marketed economically. The re-forestation and the marketing of timber provide considerable employment. And it is also a profitable business from the State's point of view. This is clearly the case in North Queensland which produces most of our cabinet wood timbers which are acclaimed throughout the world for their beauty, quality and durability. Apart from the world-wide reputation of these special-purpose woods, there is also their high value and ready market to be taken into consideration. As a result of my visits to the North I have taken a keen interest in the growing of these valuable woods, and I commend to the interest of all members, the work that is being done at Kuranda. Later, I shall have something further to say on that matter on the Forestry Vote. On this 40,000-acre State forest valuable timbers are being removed to make way for Cairns hickory, maple silkwood, northern silky oak, silver ash and other valuable trees which have a most rapid rate of growth particularly after receiving correct managerial treatment. The primary objective at Kuranda is the complete utilisation of all millable timber in the forest, while at the same time ensuring continuity of timber supplies by the retention of growing stock of the most valuable and best species. Employees of the department are working through this scrub to prevent the regeneration of undesirable species, and brushing weeds to prevent the suppression of valuable seedlings and marking for sale the less valuable species. Operations on this work have now commenced in four different centres, and an area of 2,614 acres has been given treatment. I mention that these valuable species occur naturally and grow very quickly, and not too many years will pass before re-forestation in North Queensland will be paying dividends for the State. It is also worthy of note that, by comparison with reforested areas, this method of approach is very economical. A little later I shall give hon. members an idea of how we embark upon this work of regeneration in the northern area.

Mr. Walsh: Are you not going to give us a say?

Mr. MULLER: I shall give it to the hon. member later. I do not want to take up the whole of the time. I know the hon. member would like me to resume my seat, but he will have plenty of time after I have finished.

The Department of Irrigation and Water Supply is likewise a most important department, playing a very definite role in this State's primary production. It will play that role, provided the policy for the expenditure of funds is sound. It does not follow that the bigger scheme that will cost the greatest amount of money will be the most economical scheme.

Mr. Walsh: Who recommended this scheme?

Mr. MULLER: Never mind who recommended it. This Government is not deciding these matters on the number of votes to be gained. The hon. member's Government made decisions on that basis, the number of votes that could be attracted if the money was spent in a certain way. Who recommended the Wandoan scheme? It was envisaged by the ex-Minister for Public Lands that approximately £9,000,000 would be spent on that project, the deciding factor being the number of votes it would attract. This Government are not concerned about votes; they are concerned about the economy of the country. We shall institute schemes to conserve water in districts where the land is suitable, where people understand irrigation, in districts with available markets. The hon. member for Bundaberg can engage in as much criticism as he desires on our irrigation policy, but I can assure him that we will be able to answer for our actions.

Mr. Walsh: How many applications did you get under the new legislation from farmers?

Mr. MULLER: More than we can handle. As a matter of fact, the day before yesterday there were 500 people waiting to have their properties dealt with under that Act.

Mr. Walsh: How many have received advances?

Mr. MULLER: We have as many as we can handle. It took some time to pass the legislation and to set up the machinery, district offices, and so on. If we get no further applications, we have as many as we can handle for several months.

Mr. Walsh: It is not much good if you have no money.

Mr. MULLER: Many of them have the money. They are not as poor as the hon. member or myself. We are lending people money if they need it, but some are financing their own schemes. However, they are looking for technical advice. If the hon. member thinks that this farm water scheme is a flop, he can think again. It is one of the

most popular pieces of legislation passed by this Chamber, and I know of no Act that will do more good.

The main project of the department during last fiscal year was the Tinaroo Falls dam, on which a total of £2,179,317 was expended during the year. At an earlier stage it was asked whether the scheme was economically sound. The Government are comprised of business men. A certain amount of money has been expended and we propose to continue with the scheme and to make use of the water already impounded in order to get some return for that expenditure. We do not intend to embark upon a policy of starting schemes in every part of the State in order to attract votes. Use is going to be made of this water as soon as possible.

I am glad the hon. member has interjected. The subject needs very close examination. I realised on taking over this portfolio that sane administration of the Department of Irrigation was most important, and a very serious matter. The Mareeba-Dimbulah scheme was estimated to cost £21,000,000, of which channelling would cost £14,000,000. The dam has been completed. As was said this afternoon, the engineers have done a masterly job. The dam has been constructed at less than the estimated cost, despite increasing costs in the period of construction. The engineers are carrying out Government policy, but we have to be careful and have to know where we are going. We have already altered the policy in regard to settlement. My colleague, the Minister for Agriculture and Stock, is to have some say as to the crops to be grown in the area. The scheme was essentially a tobacco one; its economy was based on tobacco. In case that crop is not successful we propose to alter the system of settlement. It was contemplated that about 1,400 farms would be laid out and under the former Government's policy it would have meant that each farm would cost £1,000,000 for settlement and the provision of improvements. We do not propose to tackle the question in that way. Improvements would have involved another £14,000,000 on top of the £21,000,000. We are encouraging settlers to erect improvements themselves and I can assure hon. members that we will save at least £14,000,000. We will increase the size of the farms because if tobacco is not successful the settlers will be able to go into other branches of agriculture. A sound and businesslike approach has been made, something which was sadly lacking when we took office. If the Government are to spend £20,000,000 of public money it is their duty to spend it wisely. We are getting the co-operation of the Commissioner for Irrigation, Mr. Haig, and all officers in the department. They appreciate our sound businesslike approach. There is nothing an officer hates more than to be part of an organisation which might look like a losing proposition. They have given me all the co-operation I can expect. I am sure we

will bring about a tremendous improvement in water conservation and irrigation in this State.

Mr. Low: They have been given good leadership.

Mr. MULLER: Yes. Every public servant looks for it. We do not intend to drop the St. George scheme that was commenced by the former Government, but hope to make a success of it. This scheme is one of the smaller ones which is more in my line of thought as to how irrigation should be carried out. We have put 20 farmers on the settlement and hope to put another 20 next year. Gates will be placed on the weir and we will increase the water impounded in the dam and in that way we can provide sufficient water to supply the needs of the settlers. I know that it is more or less an experimental scheme and hon. members opposite can criticise it if they wish. The scheme has certain advantages and disadvantages. Because of its location it should have marketing possibilities. The district can grow lucerne and sheep. Some adjustment in the scheme might be necessary. If we can establish irrigation at St. George and the people can sell fodder to graziers we will render a service to that part of the State. We have to satisfy ourselves as to water conservation and irrigation projects. If we get down to the bookkeeping standard to get a sufficient return to recoup ourselves for principal and interest we may not get irrigation. We must have regard to the productive value of the scheme.

The hon. member for Bundaberg is tumbling over himself, waiting for me to say something about the Moogerah dam scheme near Mt. Edwards. Provision is included in this year's Estimates for a start on it.

Mr. Walsh: All that I want is to hear your reply to Mr. Herbert, the economist.

Mr. MULLER: Why should I worry about Mr. Herbert? I do not worry even about the hon. member for Bundaberg. If I think a proposal is sound, I do not care whether Mr. Herbert, Mr. Walsh, or anybody else criticises it. I know, of course, that the Mr. Herbert referred to is not the hon. member for Sherwood.

During the year, investigations will be made into the Fitzroy River, Barambah Creek, Burnett River, Mary River, Caboolture River, Logan and Albert Rivers, and Macintyre Brook, and underground water investigations will be conducted in the Lower Burnett River, Bremer River, Logan and Albert Rivers, Balonne and Condamine Rivers, and the Dumaresq River. That is something that the previous Government did not think of doing. We have spread the amount of money available for irrigation and have chosen the most suitable rivers. We are also investigating underground water supplies. I am not saying, of course, that that was not done in the past.

Mr. Foley: It was done every year.

Mr. MULLER: That is so, but we have extended the work considerably. We have been successful in many places where previously the officers of the department failed. Of course, they now have a very much greater knowledge of the subject than they had in previous years. Probably the hon. member for Bundaberg will be surprised to know that I have received several letters from people in his district commending the work that has been done by the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply on underground water supplies. Much of the success has resulted from this Government's introduction of the farm water supplies scheme. We brought experienced men into the department—hydraulic engineers and hydraulic geologists—who have achieved a good deal of success. By our farm water supplies scheme we are helping people who in the past did not imagine that such help would be forthcoming. We hope to continue with that work and I have every reason to believe that within the next few years farms will be producing crops that previously were undreamt of.

I have given hon. members information on some of the matters that we have been attending to. I have not had time to deal with many of the Government's larger schemes, but probably at a later stage in the debate I shall be able to give the Committee further information. I assure hon. members that the Government have not been parochial; they have not followed the practice of doing work only in districts that are represented on this side of the Chamber. I challenge any hon. member to say that anything we have done has not been in the best interests of the State. If a claim in any district stands investigation, we are prepared to do something about it. In water conservation and irrigation we must have a Queensland outlook, not a political view.

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) (5.19 p.m.): I do not think anybody could accuse the Minister of not giving us a comprehensive survey of his department's activities. He spoke for an hour and 20 minutes, which he is entitled to do, but other hon. members are restricted to 25 minutes. However, I compliment the Minister on the very comprehensive survey that he gave. I compliment him also on coming round to my point of view on a very important matter, that is, the disadvantages of freehold tenure compared with leasehold. A little while ago he spoke of the impossibility of compelling anyone with a freehold tenure to clear his land of noxious weeds and perhaps to do other things. To that extent at least, he agreed with me that it is most important to retain lands under the jurisdiction of the Crown or, in other words, under the jurisdiction of the Parliament, which is the custodian of the whole of the lands for the Crown. I was very pleased to hear the Minister say it would not be desirable to give certain people a freehold tenure of land infested with

noxious weeds because the Government could not compel them to clear it or keep it cleared. It is of some importance to realise that other noxious weeds may be introduced into the State as time goes on; indeed, it is likely that they will be. I should like the Minister to inform the Committee in his reply what action he intends to take about agricultural farmers who have applied or who will apply, under the Act passed by this Parliament, for the freeholding of their agricultural farms up to an area of 2,500 or 2,600 acres. In view of his statement to the Committee, he may agree with me that freeholding may be greatly to the disadvantage of the Crown and Crown lands, of the State, and of future generations, and he may indicate that he will forget any idea he might have had of extending further the freeholding principle. He has demonstrated its weakness and I was very pleased to hear him do it.

I am pleased, too, that he took the opportunity of visiting the south-west, which has suffered drought conditions for some years. It is unfortunate that he visited it while Parliament was in session. I am fair enough to admit that possibly his ministerial duties would not permit his making an extended tour of the South-west while Parliament was in session.

Mr. Muller: I did it over the week-end.

Mr. DUFFICY: I know.

Mr. Muller: I worked Friday, Saturday and Sunday, when the House was not sitting.

Mr. DUFFICY: I appreciate that. I hope the Minister has not returned from his visit to try to convince the Committee that he now knows all about the conditions of the South-west and the difficulties under which the people there live. If he does he will remind me of the person from overseas who visits Australia for three weeks and then returns home to write a book about his trip and tell us about our difficulties, how we should live, and how democracy should be carried on here.

Mr. Muller: I am not simple enough for that.

Mr. DUFFICY: I am glad to hear it. I think the hon. gentleman will agree that it is unfortunate that circumstances made it impossible for him to spend more time in that part of the State. Because of his brief stay I suggest he could not possibly realise all the difficulties out there although I give him credit for taking every opportunity in the limited time at his disposal to acquaint himself with them.

Mr. Muller: I am going back again.

Mr. DUFFICY: I shall be very pleased if the hon. gentleman does. As it is such a very large area I suggest he spend several weeks out there. I do not think he could in

a shorter period cover the country adequately and realise all the difficulties, and the state the country is in.

If Press reports are correct it appears that a number of suggestions were made to him of how relief could be given to that drought-stricken area. I am not aware of all the suggestions that may have been made to him, but I read in the Press that one was a reduction in rentals. Let me say at the outset that I am not opposed to a reduction in rentals in the circumstances. We all agree that these people are entitled to any relief that can be given to them, but to concentrate only on rental reductions as a means of giving relief, to my way of thinking, is just too silly. At the present time the Thargomindah and Quilpie areas are very seriously affected by drought. The Minister might agree that in the Thargomindah area rents would amount to something like 1s. per sheep area. The hon. member for Roma shakes his head. At least I am entitled to accept the figures of residents out there who would know more about it than the hon. member who, after all, was never any further out than on the fringes of the West. I could bring the figures in here but it would be unfair to people to produce their private business affairs in this Chamber. In any case I know areas round Thargomindah where rentals amount to no more than 1s. per sheep area. I am not suggesting that that rental is too small, although I realise there are arguments along those lines. What I am pointing out is that if a person who is running 6,000 sheep and paying 1s. per sheep area in Crown rentals were freed by the Government from all rent for 12 months, what would the saving amount to? It would be only £300. One might say that every little helps—undoubtedly it does—but the fact remains that that help would be so infinitesimal in the cost of running a station of that size that it would not assist the lessee very much. I would suggest to the Minister that if he really wants to assist these people he should go further than a reduction in rental. If rents were wiped out for 12 months, in common parlance, the assistance would be worth less than a round of drinks. Let me discuss another factor that does affect them in the West. Carriers who transport the whole of the goods from the rail terminals, Quilpie and Cunnamulla, and cart wool and livestock back to the rail terminals are paying a very substantial road tax. I shall not go into that question now because I may be out of order in doing so. I suggest to the Minister that he confer with his colleague, the Minister for Transport, to see if some relief cannot be given to primary producers in the far south-western part of the State. After all, some assistance has been given to primary producers in areas where no drought exists. If my memory serves me rightly, there was a hurried amendment of the Act to give primary producers in more favoured portions of the State more relief than they were perhaps entitled to. Let

us say in fairness to the people in the South-west that the carriers are not operating in any way that is detrimental to the railways. They are not competing with the railways. It would not be much use having a railway to Cunnamulla or Quilpie unless there were carriers to transport the goods from the rail terminals and bring goods back to the rail terminals. They are a great help to the railways and are certainly not working in competition with them. I suggest that the hon. gentleman confer with his colleague to see if some relief cannot be given to landholders in that drought-stricken area. It would at least be as fair as giving relief to the primary producers who were not suffering from the effects of drought.

Speaking of reducing Crown rents to the people out there, I am all for it. Let us reduce the rents if the circumstances warrant it, but for goodness sake do not say that you have done everything you can when you have done that. As I have pointed out, if you reduce the rent by 50 per cent. it would amount to £150 for a station, which is simply peanuts. If the Government decide to reduce rents or eliminate them for 12 months, or for the period of the drought, I will support them, but I do suggest that something more should be done.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Do you not care about the rents being reduced?

Mr. DUFFICY: Did the hon. member hear what I said?

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: You said it was only peanuts if they reduced the rent.

Mr. DUFFICY: I said a while ago that if this Government decided to eliminate rents for 12 months or for the period of the drought, I would support them. What was wrong with the hon. gentleman's ears when I said that before? I said that from the point of view of relief if the Government provided a reduction of 50 per cent. it would be just peanuts in the cost of running a station. Unfortunately, I can only tell the hon. member; I cannot give him the intelligence to understand that statement.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: That is a pity.

Mr. DUFFICY: It is indeed a pity.

It was further suggested to the Minister, I understand, that the period of tenure should be increased to 40 years. Let me say at once that I am completely opposed to any increase in the period of tenure as a drought relief measure. Unfortunately droughts in that part of Queensland happen periodically. It is a condition that must be recognised. The present drought is fairly serious, but there can be no guarantee that within a period of 40 years a drought equally as bad will not recur. To be consistent, a further 40 years' tenure would have to be granted on that subsequent occasion. The history of western Queensland reveals that a serious drought occurs at least once in every 40-year

period. Serious droughts occur more frequently than that. Because of the seriousness of the present position the Minister could say, "We will give all lessees an increase in leasehold tenure to 40 years." In 10 or 15 years, and certainly in 20 years, almost inevitably a drought of equal severity will be experienced. What is to be done at that time? Are the lessees to be granted a further period of 40 years? That would be contrary to the Minister's ideas of closer settlement, and my ideas as to what should be done in the best interests of the West.

Mr. Ewan: Would you agree to give them 40 years over a living area?

Mr. DUFFICY: No.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: Why not?

Mr. DUFFICY: The hon. member interjects again. If he would write me a letter, I could explain it more easily.

I have certain ideas about living areas. As I have said in this Chamber previously, it is very much better to err on the side of generosity than to subdivide into very small areas. If scientific discoveries bring about greater production per given area, further subdivisions could be effected, and it is much easier to subdivide than to grant additional areas. The Minister knows only too well the difficulties that arose in the past because areas were subdivided into subnormal blocks. Great difficulties were experienced in granting an additional area to the parent block, on the condition that the resumption from an expired lease was within 30 miles of the parent block. That scheme was neither economical nor sensible, and I do not want the State to be in that position again.

A reasonable living area should be granted, and by that I do not mean an area only sufficient to give a man, his wife and family a struggling existence. Some provision for employment must be made in that country, because many people in the West depend for employment on the pastoral industry. I think that the ideal living unit in the West is an area sufficient to maintain a man, his wife and family in a reasonable standard of comfort, to employ a married man permanently under decent conditions, and one other employee. That is what I regard as a reasonable living area in that country. There is a difference between living 150 miles west of Quilpie and living within 50 miles of Brisbane. After all, a man must leave his property for a time to go for a holiday with his wife and family. He cannot just walk into a town and pick up Bill Smith off the corner and ask him to manage his property while he takes his wife and family away for a holiday. There must be somebody competent and accustomed to the work and part and parcel of what I regard as a living area. I hope I have made that clear.

Mr. Muller: What do you call a fair living area for sheep in the Quilpie district?

Mr. DUFFICY: A minimum of 6,000 sheep. I suggest that probably the Minister's officers might agree with me. The Chairman of the Land Administration Board recommended a new lease for Lundavra which was 70,000 acres and capable of running 12,000 or 14,000 sheep. Surely he would not disagree with 6,000 sheep in the Quilpie area.

Mr. Ewan: And the Thargomindah area?

Mr. DUFFICY: A minimum of 6,000 sheep because the areas are similar. If hon. members want my idea as to living areas let me say a minimum of 3,000 sheep in the Goondiwindi area, down to St. George, anything between 4,000 and 5,000 sheep, and at Charleville I should say between 5,000 and 6,000 sheep with a minimum of 6,000 sheep further out. A better number would be 8,000 sheep. After all, I agree with the Payne report.

There was a report in the "Telgraph" of 24 October which states that there are 30 blocks of land to be sold at Broadbeach under freehold tenure with no conditions whatever attached to the sale. That means, if I understand the newspaper report, that if I had sufficient money and was a speculator, I could attend the sale at Broadbeach and buy the 30 blocks under freehold tenure with no conditions attaching whatever. I could then sit down for 10 or 12 years until community effort and increased population and the money spent by taxpayers on improvements in the area and throughout Queensland generally, had appreciated the value of those blocks by probably 50 per cent. I could then sell them and obtain the unearned increment on them. I should like the Minister to justify that in his reply.

(Time expired.)

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (5.45 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on his very full opening statement and also on the manner in which he has carried out the administrative duties of this important department since he took over this portfolio. It was gratifying to me in particular to know that he had visited the drought areas in the far South-West of this State. I accompanied the Minister on his trip. We started at Bollon, where we met many graziers. We also met representative gatherings of graziers at Cunnamulla, Thargomindah, Quilpie and Charleville. In the first-mentioned places we were told that not since 1912, in the days of the late Hon. Harry Coyne, had those great people been honoured by a visit from a Minister for Lands. Despite the fact that they had experienced frequent droughts and many of the other vicissitudes that beset people on the land, Alf Muller was the first Minister since that time to go out and see the conditions for himself.

I was very interested to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Warrego, because at

least he has lived in the Far West and should know something about his subject. However, his opinion runs counter to that of Mr. Don Parkinson, the President of the South-Western Graziers' Association at Cunnamulla, who to my knowledge took up land there in 1920 and today is a wealthy man. He overcame all the difficulties that beset him from time to time. He disagrees entirely with the hon. member for Warrego and I leave it to the common sense of the great mass of people in the State to decide who is right.

Mr. Graham: A wealthy grazier like yourself must be right.

Mr. EWAN: If the hon. member for Mackay had the same courage and fortitude as Don Parkinson, and had worked and lived as he did, I would be very sorry for him if he was not a wealthy man today. If he failed it would be only because he did not have the intestinal fortitude of Don Parkinson.

The hon. member for Warrego would not agree with providing some measure of rental relief for these people in the Far West. I quote the case of Grazing Farm No. 1367, the rental of which was re-assessed at 9d. an acre from a previous rental of 3d. an acre. Let the hon. member consider that rental.

An Opposition Member: How much would that be per sheep?

Mr. EWAN: It would carry 5,000 sheep and on a sheep to 5 acres basis would work out at 3s. 4d. per sheep area.

Let me deal with another place that is very close to Charleville. I will let the hon. member for Warrego assess his own carrying capacity for the property. I am referring to Oakwood station, which is well known to the hon. member and everyone else in the Warrego area. In 1947 the rental was £4 a square mile. In 1957 the Crown applied to have it increased to £15 6s. 8d. a square mile, and the Land Court fixed it at £12 10s. If my arithmetic is correct, that is approximately 5d. an acre. Despite what the hon. member for Warrego might say, the carrying capacity of that property is a sheep to 8 acres.

The hon. member for Warrego said also that the average sheep rental area was from 1s. to 1s. 2d. in the South-West. I do not know where he got his figures but I can assure him they are definitely incorrect. We can dismiss his suggestion that a reduction in rental, even if it is only temporary, would not afford some relief to the people in the South-West.

The hon. member seized on a slip of the tongue on the part of the Minister, who said that the Crown find it more difficult to compel freeholders to free their properties of noxious weeds than they do leaseholders. The hon. member knows as well as I that the owners of freehold land can be compelled by the local authority to clear their properties

of noxious weeds and predatory animals. If that is the only point that he can find on which to oppose the policy of freeholding up to living areas, that we have the honour to present, his argument falls to the ground. He suggests that it would be no use giving the people of the West a 40-year tenure for a living area instead of the present 28-year lease. I questioned him on it and he said, "No, not even for a living area." The greatest single factor retarding progress in the grazing industry is lack of security. Every practical man in the industry will confirm that. When a man takes up land early in life 28 years seems a very long time but when he goes out West and develops those big areas of country 28 years go quick, smart and lively because he has to have his head down all the time.

Mr. Foley: You did all right under Labour Governments.

Mr. EWAN: I did well despite any Labour Government. If the hon. member for Belyando wants the full story I will give it. I have a great deal to say to him on this matter and I will show the Committee just where he stands. I doubt whether his actions were honest on the same property that I sold. I will tell that story if I am provoked sufficiently. I do not intend to take any more notice of interjections from the rear. That is where those hon. members belong and that is where they will always be.

Mr. A. J. Smith: I will challenge you to tell us. I will provoke you.

Mr. EWAN: Dusty from Carpentaria; that is what they call him.

The hon. member for Warrego says that those people should be denied 40-year leases. I say that 40-year leases will be one of the greatest single factors in bringing about progress. Is the hon. member ashamed of the actions of his own past Labour Governments? When they brought in the rent relief for sheep lands they reduced rentals by 50 per cent. for seven years and extended the leases by seven years. Is he ashamed of that? I think he is a little off the beam. I am not going to bother any more about the hon. member for Warrego because I have much more important matters to deal with.

Mr. Walsh: That was not because of a drought, you know. That was the fall in world prices.

Mr. EWAN: The hon. member for Bundaberg would have the temerity to say that world prices have not fallen at this juncture. That is the sort of Treasurer he is, or was; thank goodness for the State he is ex-Treasurer. He would not know that export commodity prices have fallen. If he does not know that based on a true ratio the price of wool has fallen since 1939, I will explain it to him and his colleagues. In 1939 the price of wool was 10d. a lb. In 1958 the average price is 46d. to 47d. a lb.; but what men

like the hon. member for Bundaberg—illiterate people and people unversed in the grazing industry—do not know is that the cost of producing 1 lb. of wool has increased by 500 per cent. So if my arithmetic is correct we are selling wool on the world market today at the 1939 equivalent of 9d. a lb. The matter must be viewed very seriously. In 1946 when all our wool clip reverted to the auction system after the acquisition agreement with the Imperial Government in the war years, we were getting 15d. a lb.

Mr. Lloyd: What was the agreement?

Mr. EWAN: I have not time to bother about the hon. member. In 1946-1947 the average price rose to 26d. a lb., and, it increased progressively till that wonderful year, that romantic year, 1950-51, when the average price of greasy sold at the Brisbane auction rooms was 141d. a lb. The price progressively declined until the first three sales this year when we averaged somewhere in the vicinity of 46d.-47d. a lb., but our costs of production are still based on the peak production year of 1951.

Mr. Walsh: Are you putting up this case for the benefit of the Industrial Court?

Mr. EWAN: I would not mind putting up a case to the Industrial Court on behalf of the wool growers.

Mr. Lloyd: In what centres would these costs of production operate?

Mr. EWAN: In every centre.

Mr. Lloyd: Regardless?

Mr. EWAN: Yes, all over the State. Many unversed, uninformed and uninitiated people like hon. members opposite ask why the wool-growers have not become very wealthy. If they go back to the Payne report of 1927 they will see that Mr. Payne pointed out that many of the uninitiated thought the wool-growers were millionaires then, a suggestion that is far from the truth. Many of them entered the boom years with heavy overdrafts.

Mr. Beardmore: They have still got them too.

Mr. EWAN: Yes. I thank the hon. member for Balonne for that reminder. Many of them have still got overdrafts even though they used every means at their disposal in the boom years to repay the overdrafts to the various financial houses that had given them assistance. They also had to carry out developmental programmes in accordance with the generous assistance extended to them by the Commonwealth Government—including the present Commonwealth Government—which enabled them to carry out the greatest development of the land that has taken place in Queensland and other States in the history of Australia. Water improvements, subdivision, ringbarking, buildings, etc., were made subject to very generous depreciation

concessions. As a consequence of high taxation and high incomes it was necessary for all graziers to embark on large schemes like that. At the same time they endeavoured to set aside some measure of reserve which they knew, by virtue of their many years' experience, was most necessary if they were to get over the difficulties that would be occasioned from time to time by the droughts which are a part and parcel of western conditions.

Mr. Walsh: And the Menzies Government took much of that from them under the wool tax deduction.

Mr. EWAN: And repaid it to them the next year.

Mr. Walsh: After they took them to court.

Mr. EWAN: The hon. member either does not know what he is talking about or he is a straight-out prevaricator. Having done all that let it be remembered that many of the graziers during the war years and early post-war years were unable to maintain their existing improvements because they could not get the labour or the materials. A great deal of capital was subsequently needed to restore the improvements and facilities on their properties to the ordinary standard. Consequently it can be seen how difficult it was for them to set aside any large reserves. Today many wool-growers, after two years of drought cannot meet the cost of production and show a profit. They are compelled to sell wool at approximately 45d. when their production costs are based on an average selling price of 141d. per lb. The inexperienced say that the wool-grower must reduce his costs of production. That is quite true but how is he going to do it? Let it be realised that 95 per cent. of the wool-grower's costs are not controllable by the individual. He has no control over interest, rents, rates, taxes, transport charges, costs of materials, woolpacks, shearing, wages, and a host of other incidentals. The ways open to him are so limited that unless he eats less or spends less on clothes I cannot see how he can reduce his costs of production. The only other action is that which no employer wants to carry out—the dismissal of his faithful station hands whom he has employed for many years. That would be the last resort. They know full well from their study of economics that if you dispense with an employee's services on a wide scale you create a vicious circle which reduces the overall purchasing power and inevitably bring about a depression. Let me illustrate the case of a small property which is typical of many in my area. I have selected a property of 10,500 acres, leasehold tenure with a carrying capacity of one sheep to 3 acres or an overall capacity of 3,500 mixed sheep. The property was purchased in 1950 for £4 10s. an acre with 1,500 four-tooth ewes valued at £3 a

head. The overall purchase price was £42,750. The purchaser was financed by a relative. At present the property is mortgaged to a financial house to the extent of £10,000. The present earning capacity is as follows:—

Revenue:

	£
Wool—3,500 sheep, 8 lb. per head at 45d. per lb.	5,250
Sale—800 sheep at 30s. per head O/S	1,200
Gross Income	£6,450

Expenditure:

	£
Crown rent at 14d. per acre	612
Shire rates	522
Depreciation, plant, buildings, fencing, etc.	600
Repairs and maintenance	300
Petrol, oils, drenches, etc.	550
Insurances (other than life), stamps, telegrams, stationery, etc.	162
Taxes (excluding income), stock, wool, registration motor vehicles	102
Interest, £10,000 at 5½ per cent.	550
Wages—1 station hand and keep	750
Rams—15 annually at 20 guineas to keep up to 45 head	313
Sheep—Deaths and natural losses 2½ per cent = 87 at 30s.	130
Shearing—Contract at 4s. per head	700
Crutching—Contract at 1s. 6d. per head	262
Woolpacks—93 at 16s. 2d.	75
Rail freights and cartage on wool, etc.	233
Commissions and selling charges —wool and sheep	285
Total Expenditure	£6,146

Mr. Graham: That would not be correct.

Mr. EWAN: I challenge the hon. member to disprove it. That gives the grazier a profit of £304, £6 a week with which to provide for himself, his wife and family.

Despite the fact that he has effected many improvements, if he is fortunate enough to sell the property at the original price, after repaying the mortgage of £10,000, and selling his stock at 30s. a head he would have £37,250 which he could invest in Commonwealth bonds at 4½ per cent., and get a net return of £1,769 or better still he could invest the money in one of the big hire-purchase firms at 7 per cent. and get £2,607 a year. He would be able to give his wife a better deal, while he, as a pastime, could sit on his posterior and sympathise with his less astute brothers who continue to dice with fortune on the land.

When the position is considered in that way, hon. members will agree with me that

it is necessary to recast values if we are to get stability in this most important export industry, on which everyone in the community depends.

It cannot be imagined at this juncture that there will be any magic recovery in wool prices. In the interests of stable economy or prosperity, even a measure of prosperity, it is essential that we have an overall review of costs. As the ship mariner asked, "How?" Despite what the hon. member for Warrego has said, there must be a review of our rentals.

Mr. Duffey: I do not deny that.

Mr. EWAN: I am glad the hon. member agrees with me. It seems he is getting a little more understanding as I go along. Rentals have progressively increased from £1,166,940 in 1948-1949 to £2,722,196 in 1957-1958, and land valuations have increased. That is a particularly important point. In many instances, with revaluations by local authorities, the rates are higher than the rentals imposed by the Crown. We must have a review of rail freight schedules, and in that respect I agree with the hon. member for Warrego, bearing in mind the present earning capacity of rural industries and their ability to withstand the present economic strain.

The romantic period for wool-growers is over, and the wool market is at its lowest point since 1948. Costs of production have risen by 500 per cent. since 1938 when the price was 10d. a lb. I reiterate my previous statement that, with the present market price of 45d. a lb., on a comparable basis with 1938 the present price is 9d. a lb.

To wool-growers and all the people of Queensland, I say that I have infinite faith in the ability of the present Liberal-Country Government to which I have the honour to belong to cope with the dire problems facing industry, with characteristic courage, sympathetic understanding and resolute action, which will in the long run overcome the cumulative effects of the mal-administration of our Labour predecessors which is only now becoming fully apparent in all its ugliness.

Mr. RAE (Gregory) (7.25 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation on the facts contained in his speech of over 1 hour 28 minutes and I have no reason to doubt that the measures he is undertaking will put the land administration policy of the State on a sound footing. In subscribing as I have wanted to do for some time to the various measures associated with the land administration, I should like hon. members to know that the drought we are experiencing involves the whole economic structure of the State. That we should do something about it is the usual cry of the people—understandable for it has few parallels for severity. It has been said that we should do this and that, that we should grant certain privileges and tenures up to 40 years, as the hon. member for Roma

said, to which I do not subscribe. We have to get down to earth about the whole thing. There are many problems associated with land settlement. There is the problem of how it is taken up, how it is to be developed and worked, and whether people are successful or otherwise. All this calls for the tolerance and interest of many parties; it certainly calls for a sympathetic Government with a keen interest in land development. I have been credited with saying that 10,000 acres is a living area. I never really said anything like that.

Mr. Mann: What did you say?

Mr. RAE: Bear with me and hear what I have to say. We should grant privileges and concessions to the man on the land who is today undoubtedly going through a period of great stress. The stress is not only upon him but upon the family unit. Personally I think that the solution to the problem would be in a form of tax relief. Tax in itself is a crippling blow—it is the final hurdle over which he has to get—as the tax comes along whether he wins, loses or draws.

Mr. Dufficy: Did you ever tackle the Federal Treasurer on that?

Mr. RAE: No. I am just one man who is endeavouring to convey a line of thought which may or may not be constructive. I am giving my view. I showed tolerance to the hon. member and I request it of him now. Tax relief would be the most constructive form of relief as I see it, and I suggest to the Minister and his colleagues that a full inquiry into the merits of this would be received as a sound measure of helping the man on the land. The rainfall has been insufficient to encourage a growth of grass or herbage. I have just completed a tour of the outback and believe me, things are bad. Life on the land is a challenge which is accepted by those who like the land. This is not the first drought we have suffered nor will it be the last. Droughts are intermingled with good and bad years, good prices and bad prices, and they have to be accepted. We have to face up to things. People are prone to cry and scream for help when the disc spins against them.

Mr. Graham: They are squealing like stuck pigs because they have a drought on their hands.

Mr. RAE: The graziers have been through the mill. However, they are prepared to accept the challenge and I have no doubt that they will win through if they are helped to overcome the present difficulties, which could cripple those who are just getting onto their feet.

If we are to progress we must encourage development, which can be achieved only through closer settlement. In the past, closer settlement has been the subject of a great deal of maladministration by Labour. They expected a man to make a living on blocks of varying sizes down to 1,280 acres in the

Longreach district! We want settlers to operate as a community; they should be able to support a town; they should have people working for them as family units. There should be all-round progress in developing the State as a whole. I am not saying, of course, that all the large properties should be cut up. There are many angles to development, and I am not advocating the cutting up of all the large areas. Many of those people have been granted fairly long leases, but I think 28 years is long enough, and the privileges as granted at present to stud holdings of 40 years. In every case that I know of under the present administration, they have been rewarded by being granted another lease. Many large companies and pastoral interests naturally wish to retain those huge areas.

This is not in the best interests of progress in the State. Anyone who has about 6,000 or 10,000 sheep normally is doing very well.

In the western cattle areas there has been no greater handicap to the development of the State than the Kidman interests. They hold land from the Northern Territory, through Western Queensland, and New South Wales to Adelaide, and they have not subscribed to the improvement of their areas for what they have been reaping from them. They were obliged by legislation to put in certain water improvements. They "went to town" on taxation benefit and had to have new leases granted. I suppose their books and reports will show that they bought all the fencing material that they were obliged to, but I have seen thousands of steel fencing posts and miles of wire covered with sand. That fencing will never be erected because it is not in their interests to do so. They like to regard that part of the State as land in which you have to be tough; they regard it as corned beef-and-damper land. I am referring now to places such as Boulia, Birdsville, Bedourie and Betoota, which are probably mere place names to most hon. members. The people who are making a success of properties with a thousand square miles of country are being quietly and slowly absorbed by the great Kidman interests who do nothing to develop the land and who do not comply with the legislation of the State.

Most of the troubles being experienced on properties today to within 20 miles of Brisbane emanate in the first instance from the outback where there are no fences and where the landholders have no intention of erecting them. Dingoes are a very serious problem and the most useless form of control and the most stupid I have ever encountered is aerial baiting. I have made it my business to ask many people who know.

Mr. Dufficy: You differ from your Minister.

Mr. RAE: Hon. members opposite started it and I am giving the answer. "Aerial baiting" is a phrase or catchword that perhaps appeals to the man in charge of the

build-up in the department, but the best way to counter the dingo menace is to increase the bonus on the dog to £3 a head. That might sound a lot but it was £1 a head in the depression years and it is still £1 a head. Surely we can stand something extra with the progress of civilisation.

Mr. Mann: I have seen aerial baiting and I do not think it is very effective.

Mr. RAE: I understand it gives a goanna here and there a pain in the "tummy," but beyond that it worries nothing. A bonus of £3 a head will give us some action. Men will be interested and will work over the week-ends. Eventually it will bring about the destruction of the dogs.

Mr. Baxter interjected.

Mr. RAE: I doubt that the hon. member would make a "quid" himself but if he were a bushman he would know something about it.

Land ballots have been of great interest to me for some time. If ever farcical and fantastic legislation has been introduced it is that dealing with land ballots. I have balloted for land in New South Wales, having passed a board of characters—ex-station managers, and what-have-you—who determine whether an applicant is a fit and proper person to hold land in the State. The applicant who satisfies them is given a large document with all sorts of bits and pieces denoting this or that and he is then granted the privilege of taking part in a ballot. The only time I was accorded the right to ballot in New South Wales was when I gave my mother's home address in Sydney. Every time I gave a Queensland address I was denied the right because they said my experience was not of the type that would enable me to run that particular property, despite the fact that I had passed the board, or whatever it was.

Mr. Watson: You had qualified?

Mr. RAE: Yes, that is it. We in Queensland, kind to the point of stupidity, allow southerners in and some people even say it is a good thing to bring New South Wales money into the State. We have plenty of money here ourselves. We have ample resources to carry on Queensland properties and good people capable of doing an excellent job, every bit as good as people from the South can do, and probably better. They appear to be befuddled with preconceived ideas about using the land. They are not able to make the best use of its natural productivity. That is not so much the point as the fact that the man who so often gets the block is a bookmaker's clerk or something of that nature. That is the part that worries me. I think it is very wrong.

Mr. Baxter: The fact that he is a New South Welshman?

Mr. RAE: Not that, but the fact that these people come in—all sorts of odd

characters—to the exclusion of others who have appeared before this panel of judges who determine qualifications. They will not let people in because they give a Queensland address. It is all very one-eyed. Can anyone tell me of a more ridiculous set-up in all the world than the allowing of people under 21 years of age the right to draw a block? When a block is drawn a certain amount of money is required. When people under 21 years of age are allowed to ballot for a block, who gets it? The rich man's son every time. The working man's son or the son of the man on the land who has been working all his life, like the Watsons, to get something for himself and his family, is not allowed to ballot. But some youngster—at least a young fellow unqualified when it comes to running land—is allowed to ballot and very often wins. I know of one boy who won a block at 16 years of age. He has the property on the market now for £100,000 after seven years of happiness. His father put managers on to run it for him for some time pending his finishing school. It is high time we woke up to all of these things. At only 16 years of age they allow them in! By the same token they have women coming in. Do we ballot for frock shops or things like that? Certainly not. Why should we have women balloting for land blocks? Anything more unreal I have never known! It is the most ridiculous thing in all the world. No women, nobody under 21 and no man over 65 should be eligible to ballot. They are three principles I strongly subscribe to. They are rich, real, constructive and basically good. I am quite certain that the Minister will take that to heart and bring forward legislation along those lines.

I have already spoken of the development of the West. There is a chance of the meat works in Winton re-opening. They were operating for some time but it was not a very satisfactory set-up and they closed down. I should say that this would be a matter that comes under the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands. Private enterprise is very interested in the re-establishment of the Winton meat works. I hope that I can interest the Minister in the proposal because it is a good one. The re-opening of the meat works at Winton would be a positive step towards the progress that is so undoubtedly worthy of the people who live out there. Over the years they have paid fantastic taxes yet they have received so little in return. All-in-all I believe that if a positive and realistic approach is made to land matters by the various sub-departments under the Minister's control we will eventually prove to all that we are a very sound and constructive Government for the benefit and welfare of people in all walks of life. They are all entitled to it. The person we require here is the one who will do his best. I am not unmindful of the fact that if the land were cut up into areas to carry only 2,000 sheep or grow 500 acres of sorghum it

would be stupid. We must take into consideration the fluctuation of prices and the pitfalls of marketing. I should say 4,500 or 5,000 sheep would be necessary in the Mitchell and St. George area, and further west 6,000 sheep and at Julia Creek and Boulia 7,000 and 8,000, and a similar number at Jundah and Windorah. Sufficient acreage should be provided in the various areas to ensure the safe carrying of that number of sheep. I express that view because it might relieve a few who are doubtful of my intentions, more especially the U.G.A. I will cop it anyhow, but I do not mind that. We do find in this State men who have made vast sums of money only to become absentee landlords drawing ruinous dividends that were a deterrent to advancement and who now control lands adjacent to towns, which has a crippling effect on the towns. The towns cannot grow and go ahead because of these vast organisations—whatever they may be: I do not wish to name them—would not spend one shilling in a town nor would they employ anybody nor would they start a horse at the picnic races. They own all this land and they are granted these privileges and they are handicapping the progress and development of the towns. I have put it to you, the Minister, and I was told that this was the law. I say, let us be different and smarten the law up if necessary. That is my answer. Surely to God if we can do anything at all it should be something on positive and constructive lines towards the development and welfare of Queensland, particularly cattle, sheep and wool-growing areas.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (7.48 p.m.): I was interested in the speech delivered by the hon. member for Gregory who is a new Government member who is not afraid to say what he thinks. The speech of the hon. member for Gregory was vastly different from that of the hon. member for Roma who spoke with his tongue in his cheek. The hon. member for Gregory said that people in New South Wales were able to participate in land ballots in Queensland. We are in agreement with the hon. member on that.

Mr. Pizzey: You allowed it to go on.

Mr. LLOYD: We disagreed on occasions. On several occasions we were told that Section 92 was to blame for it. Section 92 was overdone by some of the members of the last Government. I do not agree in principle that because one man is living in one State he should not be eligible to take part in a land ballot in another State. Everybody should be allowed to participate regardless of the State in which he lives. While the principle operates in New South Wales and Victoria of prohibiting a resident of another State from taking part in a ballot I cannot see why Queensland should allow people in other States to participate in ballots here. It should be a matter for consideration between Governments.

Mr. Evans: You want pretty strict agreements.

Mr. LLOYD: You do. The other day when I was out West I heard of two land ballots. One was won by the son-in-law of a wealthy grazier from the West, and the ex-service men's ballot was won by a retired grazier. Those are matters that might be considered by the Government. The provisions were designed with the object of settling ex-servicemen on the land. In this and in other avenues ex-servicemen from the First World War are entitled to the same privileges as ex-servicemen from the Second World War, but the former have had a great deal of time in which to rehabilitate themselves. In this instance an ex-serviceman from the First World War succeeded in the ballot and so prevented the settlement on that land of an ex-serviceman from the Second World War. The question whether he should be eligible may have been answered by his decision to retire, but he has now re-entered the industry after his success in this ballot. Ex-servicemen who have been seeking land for years are thus unable to get this block. By participating in this ballot he has denied another ex-serviceman the opportunity to settle on the land.

Mr. Muller: Fifty per cent. of the blocks are reserved for ex-servicemen.

Mr. LLOYD: I understand that, but I am questioning the participation by a retired grazier whose eligibility stems from his First World War service. Many of those who succeed in open ballots have had only limited experience on the land. Many perhaps work in a trade or a business in Brisbane. They may have had relatives on the land at some period or may have had brief experience some 20 or 30 years ago, whereas, as was stated by the hon. member for Gregory, others who have engaged in the industry all their lives and are desirous of settling on the land, are unable to obtain a block. They cannot afford to purchase land. With the easing of eligibility standards, those people are squeezed out and other people with perhaps lower qualifications or knowledge are able to get land.

The hon. member for Roma seemed to be obsessed with the notion that all graziers are impoverished. He seemed to be placing before the Committee a case for a reduction in the wages of station hands.

Mr. EWAN: I rise to a point of order. That is deliberately untrue. I never advocated a reduction in wages; in fact, I advocated retention of the services of all employees. That remark is offensive to me and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to accept the explanation of the hon. member for Roma.

Mr. LLOYD: I am prepared to accept his explanation, but to date I have not said anything to which he can object. I commenced the sentence, but before I was half-way through it, he rose to a point of order.

I said it seemed that he was making a case that could be put to the Industrial Court for a reduction in wages.

Mr. EWAN: I again rise to a point of order. I thought you directed the hon. member for Kedron to withdraw the statement, Mr. Taylor.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Roma has given an explanation. I have asked the hon. member for Kedron to accept the explanation. I hope the subject will not be pursued.

Mr. LLOYD: Certainly not, but I think I am entitled to finish a sentence before a point of order is taken. I accept the explanation of the hon. member for Roma that he was not presenting an Industrial Court case for a reduction of wages, but it appeared to me that the case he was presenting on the costs of production could not be refuted. I asked the hon. member for Roma to state the district in which this property is situated. He did not answer my question but merely said that its area was 10,500 acres. He mentioned that the rental was 14d. per acre, and that the property had a carrying capacity of a sheep to three acres. It would be somewhere in the Roma or Dalby districts.

Mr. Ewan: 3s. 6d. per sheep area.

Mr. LLOYD: From the case quoted by the hon. member for Roma it would appear that the cost of production does not vary in the respective districts of the State, but I am assured by many graziers that it does.

Mr. Ewan: I did not say anything like that.

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member must have been excited when he said it. It is rather over-stating the case to say that all graziers are in the one position today because of the ravages of drought. I think even the hon. member would agree with me that not in all districts are the graziers suffering from drought.

Mr. Ewan: Those figures came from a property not in the drought area.

Mr. LLOYD: I realise that; they must have come from an area with an ample rainfall. The hon. member asks how are we going to assist this industry. I have discussed the matter with a number of graziers from Cunnamulla who tell me that in many cases they are geared to meet the drought in their district. Others are suffering losses by overstocking. If we accept these conditions in the grazing industry we must accept them in respect of the other industries. The dairying industry is suffering losses because the Commonwealth Government have not kept their promises. We find in the Inglewood and Texas districts within the electorate of the hon. member for Carnarvon that the tobacco growers are in a similar position to the wool growers and the dairymen. Growers out there have found it impossible to market their

crop at a price reasonable enough to carry them over the year. The crop is of particularly good quality but approximately 300 tons have not been marketed. They are suffering by receiving less than the cost of production. No matter in what area one goes, even where there has been a good rainfall, there exists depressed conditions with reduced business activity and the people are unable to get a living for themselves. The people of the west are suffering not so much because of the drought, because the drought has been isolated, but because of depressed market conditions. The Government would be contributing more towards the prosperity of the primary producer if they got down to basic facts by either stimulating the market or finding new markets for our produce. Upwards of 14,000,000 lb. of tobacco is imported from overseas. Excise paid on leaf contributes much to Commonwealth revenue. The market is manipulated as many other markets for primary products are being manipulated. If there is not a ring operating there is an arrangement between buyers to keep the price of the commodity low and their own price as high as possible. It is nothing short of criminal that in one part of the State crops are being ploughed back into the soil while in others people are crying out for more fruit and vegetables. Recently in areas round Brisbane fruit and vegetables were being ploughed back into the soil while people in the West could not get any of those commodities. They were being ploughed back because it was said that there was a glut on the market. How could there possibly be a glut when people in the West were crying out for fruit and vegetables?

The hon. member for Gregory mentioned closer settlement, and he seemed to be offside with many hon. members on the Government benches on the freeholding of land. He outlined the many problems that flow from land aggregations. One of the present problems is the tendency by graziers to overstock because of the high prices now offering.

The hon. member for Warrego has given his opinion on carrying capacities. If the Government continue a policy that gives people less than a living area, they must run the risk of land aggregations. We have gone a long way since the days of the absentee owner, but we now see the possibility of a return to those conditions and to impoverished towns resulting from the fact that money earned in a district is not circulated locally. Labour's policy resulted in the growth of prosperous towns in country areas, particularly in the West. Since the war there has been a growth of business activity in country towns because prosperous families who have settled on the land have circulated money mainly in their own district.

If the areas are not large enough to provide the landholder with a decent living he is forced to sell, with the result that large areas are aggregated in the hands of one or two owners. That must endanger the prosperity of the West. I point out, for example,

that an area of 60,000 acres of rich land in the Yelarbon district is lying idle and unproductive. Many hon. members have been prone to sneer at one of Labour's projects—the Queensland-British Food Corporation—and to brand it as a failure. It was certainly far from being a failure in bringing about closer settlement and greater productivity. Many people are now settled in that area and prosperous townships are sure to spring up there.

We also have the example of Foleyvale, land that the Department of Health and Home Affairs resumed from an owner who said that it would not grow grain of any description. It is now a thriving place run by aboriginals for the grazing of cattle and the growing of wheat, sorghum and other crops. As long as there is a freeholding of land, some land will remain unproductive. That is a sin in a country such as this when markets are available. If the sub-division of land is continued that will occur. The Tinaroo Falls scheme is a case in point. Recently the Barron River Hydro-Electric Extension Project Bill was introduced because it was said that the water from the Tinaroo Falls dam would not be used to irrigate land for some time. Is the land there freehold? Why cannot it be opened up? Why cannot water be used?

Mr. Muller: The channelling to the land is not carried out.

Mr. LLOYD: In any case, is the land freehold? Why has it not been carried out?

Mr. Muller: They are working on it now.

Mr. LLOYD: Is the land in the area fully productive? If it were leasehold, which I doubt, it could be opened up for closer settlement. Every land ballot attracts several hundred applicants. Hundreds of people want to go on the land but they cannot because so much of the coastal land is freehold.

Mr. Pizzey: How much is the inter-channelling going to cost?

Mr. LLOYD: I am talking about closer settlement. If the hon. gentleman does not want to talk about that subject I am not interested in what he has to say. While the land is held freehold it cannot be opened up, unless the Government resume it. Then it has to revert to leasehold again.

Mr. Muller: Much of it is Crown land that has not to be resumed—land never taken up. Water has not been carried to it yet.

Mr. LLOYD: This illustrates why land should not be held freehold. The Minister must realise the mistakes that can be made. He understands the advantage of leaseholding land in one area and I am sure that before many years pass he will know that land must be held leasehold if it is to be developed.

Mr. Muller: It would not make any difference. It has nothing to do with the argument.

Mr. LLOYD: The report of the Land Administration Board indicates that, since the legislation was introduced enabling landholders to convert their tenure, 169 perpetual town leases have been converted to freehold at an average price of £880 for an average block of 32 perches. It would seem that the only land being opened up is expensive land such as on the Gold Coast.

Mr. Muller: Is your home built on leasehold or freehold property?

Mr. LLOYD: My land would cost me nothing on leasehold except my annual rent. There are many anomalies that the Government are not considering. They are not looking at the legislation from the point of view of the ordinary working man. They offer him a block at an average price of £880 with repayments over 10 years. That means £88 a year as against a rental of about £25 a year for the same block.

Mr. Muller: He is not obliged to freehold. He can please himself.

Mr. LLOYD: The conditions laid down for converting perpetual town leases to freehold are such that no working man can afford to do it unless he wins the Casket. Take the case of a pensioner living in Brisbane. The value of his land on which he built a workers' home has increased from £25 to £500. He has paid off his home. He is paying £15 a year rent, which is too much for a pensioner. He has heavy rate payments to the Brisbane City Council on the valuation of £500. He has to sell out. He could convert to freehold but how can he afford it at £50 a year for 10 years? In addition he has to pay interest on the money borrowed. The legislation which the Minister originally introduced as being a measure of benefit to working families is of no assistance at all. The average price of £880 indicates that the land is not within any of the city areas but land more in the luxury class on the South Coast, bringing high prices in many cases. Therefore the legislation is not of any benefit to working people. The Minister was reported in "Country Life" as having said that he is anxious to extend freehold tenure to 7,000 acres of prickly pear leases and agricultural settlement land. If that were done there would be a very grave danger of land aggregations being established. People who aggregate the land would not make it productive. If the Government are sincere about their desire for closer land settlement any legislation introduced should put the scheme on a leasehold basis because that is the only efficient way a closer land settlement policy can be pursued. He has criticised the Labour Government for failing to take steps to eradicate *Harrisia cactus*. He is reported in "Country Life" as saying that if the cactus were eradicated over a period of 10 years special concessions would be

granted. He has not mentioned how much land would be in the special leases he intends to grant, whether it depends on the amount of infested land or on the amount of productive land that can be utilised. At the same time it must be remembered that this pest originally began its spread because of the carelessness of the landholder or tenant. How much at fault were they for refusing to do anything about it? It is over-simplifying the matter altogether to blame the previous Government because of any failure on their part to control the spread of the pest. Other hon. members will probably have more to say about *Harrisia cactus*. It seems to me that the Minister is trying to capitalise on this subject.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HARRISON (Darlington) (8.13 p.m.): I first of all express my complete confidence in the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation. I have not been in Parliament very long but I have known him personally for a long time. I know that he has the practical knowledge and energy to make a first-class job of his portfolio.

In speaking on the Estimates of the Department of Public Lands, Forestry and Irrigation I wish to refer particularly to the work of the Co-ordinating Board. The Co-ordinating Board carries out functions of very great importance to the State but unfortunately many of its functions are not fully or adequately understood, at least by the general public. I always like to mention the title of the Act because it indicates its purpose. The title is "Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act." The title gives some idea of the scope of the Act. The responsibility for implementing it was entrusted to the Co-ordinating Board, in some quarters referred to as the Stock Routes Board. It is not generally understood that the Co-ordinating Board does not come directly under the Land Administration Board, but is responsible directly to the Minister. Its members represent a very wide cross-section of interests in land matters in this State. Each member has some specialised knowledge of the problems encountered by land-owners in this State. The Chairman is Mr. Brebner, a very experienced public servant with as wide a knowledge of Queensland, especially in the back country, as any person I know. The Chairman of the Local Government Association of Queensland, Mr. Behan, is also a member of the board. Another member is Mr. Williams, representing the U.G.A. Mr. Naish was the representative of the Selectors' Association, but he died this year. The Council of Agriculture representing all the farming interests of Queensland is also represented. I have the honour to be that representative. Another member is Mr. Sewell, representing the Department of Local Government. Other members are Mr. Mulhearn, Director of Veterinary Services, who represents the Department of Agriculture and Stock. Mr. Boyle, representing the Co-ordinator-General's Department, Mr. Pearce

representing the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, both engineers, and Mr. Fowles representing the Auditor-General's Department.

Mr. Low: How often do you have a meeting?

Mr. HARRISON: Every three months. Neither the general public nor the man on the land fully realise the considerable amount of expenditure from the Stock Routes Fund and the revenue for this is obtained from land-owners. Last year expenditure amounted to £328,000. Revenue is raised by way of precepts on ratable lands, and other charges for services rendered. The only money contribution by the Government is £10,000 towards the cost of administration at Head Office. There is a very urgent need for an improved staff position. There should be an increase in staff with ability to assist carrying out the many important functions of the Board. After the passing of the Barrier Fences Act of 1954 a few years ago, the Board was entrusted with the additional responsibility to enclose the main sheep lands of Queensland with dog-proof netting. That was a very big job. The staff is inadequate to deal with all the work it is expected to do. I am glad the Minister has recognised this, and has made arrangements, I understand, for a more adequate staff in the very near future. That will be greatly appreciated.

As a member of the Board for many years, I go further and make an urgent request that the Board should be created a sub-department of the Department of Public Lands. I make that recommendation because of the ever-growing importance and volume of work of the Board.

Many officers of the Board after years of service have acquired a great knowledge of certain phases of the Board's functions—stock routes, watering facilities, and control of noxious weeds, of which there are a tremendous number in Queensland. Eventually they become experts in their field, but with little prospects of advancement they are forced to seek promotion by transfer or resignation. A completely inexperienced officer is then appointed and he has to begin afresh to learn the job. It would be a great benefit to all interested parties if it was made a sub-department with permanent officers, with reasonable scope for advancement.

Mr. Davies: To which department are most of these officers lost?

Mr. HARRISON: Some retire to accept appointment as shire clerks, and others seek promotion in other sections of the department. My point is that their work is so important that they should be specially classified and kept in this section, just as officers of the Department of Agriculture and Stock are given classifications to keep them in their department. They are specialists in their job.

Mr. Gair: There are not separate parts of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. Those officers are officers of the department, just as these officers are officers of the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. HARRISON: But they should remain in that section.

Mr. Gair: You are advocating a separate department.

Mr. HARRISON: A sub-department, such as the Department of Forestry, if I may draw a comparison between the two. Officers of the Forestry Department are not transferred here, there and somewhere else. They are experts in forestry, just as officers of the Board are expert in their work. After these men have been trained, it is a pity that their special knowledge should be lost.

I think I should mention the scope of the Board's work. First of all, it is charged with the destruction of vermin in Queensland. Control of dingoes, pigs, rabbits, foxes and so on comes within the Board's jurisdiction. It has to decide how to deal with the dingo pest. The hon. member for Gregory spoke of aerial baiting. It is a very controversial subject. Some people think it is a great benefit while others do not. All I can say is that it does not cost a great deal of money and it allows for the baiting of areas very inaccessible by surface effort. It costs only £12,000 and of this sum South Australia pays £3,000. If I had any complaint to make it would be in regard to the employment of doggers. It is estimated that last year 47,000 dogs were destroyed in Queensland. The rate of bonus is £1 a head. There is difficulty in paying anything more than that because New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory pay £1 and if Queensland was to be generous and pay £3 a head all the dingoes scalps would come from New South Wales and South Australia and be paid for by Queensland.

Mr. Muller: You would have to increase the levy to get more money.

Mr. HARRISON: Yes. We had 40 doggers employed who destroyed only 1,362 dogs at a cost of over £9,000, which is a cost of £6.77 per dingo. That is very expensive. I am not sure but I think one-thirty-fifth of the dingoes destroyed cost one-fifth of the total money expended. I know that these dogs might be in difficult places and it is the difficult dogs that the doggers set out to get.

Mr. Davies: Does the killing have much effect on the total number?

Mr. HARRISON: I think so. The hon. member can ask some of my sheep friends how much damage a dog can do and he will learn what damage 47,000 dogs can do. I hope the barrier fence will be a great benefit.

The second of the main purposes of the Co-ordinating Board is to attend to stock routes and water facilities, and that is of

major importance to the stock industries. The next main duty is in connection with noxious plants. It would be difficult to calculate the enormous loss caused by noxious plants in agricultural and pastoral country. When a plant is declared a noxious plant, the first question is, is it noxious in itself or poisonous, and then whether it invades useful land. If the Board knows of no effective remedy, it does not take the step of declaring a plant to be a noxious plant. The Co-ordinating Board works in co-operation with local authorities, and is thus able to build up a means of dealing with declared noxious plants by simultaneous destruction by the local authority and the landholder. Schemes are operating for the control of Noogoora burr and Bathurst burr, two of the worst scourges in the noxious weed field. There are also simultaneous destruction schemes for groundsel, hemlock, saffron thistle, clockweed, blackberry, and giant bramble. All those schemes are operating very successfully. There is also a special scheme in the case of giant sensitive plant, which has become such a menace to the sugar-cane lands in North Queensland. The Minister also has a special scheme on *Harrisia cactus*, which is not the responsibility of the Co-ordinating Board.

There are difficulties in the way of eradicating groundsel, about which all hon. members know something because it grows round the Brisbane area. Although it is easily killed, tremendous amounts of it are growing on worthless land. I do not know how we can get over the difficulty unless we can provide for some basis of assistance. We cannot expect the conscientious and responsible landholders and the local authorities to keep their lands clear of groundsel, and at the same time leave large areas of worthless land to remain as seed beds.

The Co-ordinating Board always keeps its eye open for the possibility of the biological control of noxious weeds. Some years ago it brought from Mexico the stem gall fly for the control of Crofton weed. It did a fair job, although it was not as good as we had hoped. Last year two searches were made for insects to control Noogoora burr. Mr. John Mann was sent to India. He brought back an insect called *Nupserha antennata*, while Mr. Smith, an entomologist from the Department of Agriculture and Stock, who was sent to North America brought back an insect called *Mecas saturnina*. Both those insects are in quarantine in the laboratory at Sherwood at present, and we have hopes that they will be of great help in eradicating Noogoora burr. Likewise, insects have been brought from Central America, which are now being liberated and it is hoped that they will help in controlling lantana.

The Co-ordinating Board is always on the lookout for new noxious weeds. It takes action to eradicate them promptly before they can spread and become a menace.

I should like to say a word of praise for the biological section, under Mr. A. P. Dodd.

It does much valuable work for Queensland especially in determining effective measures to be taken for controlling noxious weeds.

I should like also to commend the Lands Department for its practice of making available to landholders at cost price and freight free, hormone weed killers and spraying equipment. £36,000 was spent in that direction last year.

The story that I am telling shows the tremendous importance and the scope of the work of the Co-ordinating Board. To my mind, it is a very important section of the Department of Public Lands.

I should like to commend also the work of the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply and make a short reference to the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act. That measure was introduced only last year, but it must prove of immense value in areas of unpredictable and variable rainfall. I hope that it will be the means of ensuring continuity of production and that it will do much to safeguard all primary industries. I hope, too, that it will avoid the repeated losses that must occur unless provision can be made for water storage on individual farms. Admittedly the new scheme will be slow to get going just as it was in New South Wales. They made a success of it and I see no reason why we should not do so here. If it becomes necessary to ease some of the financial difficulties associated with the scheme I am sure the Government will take appropriate action. The Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act initiated by this Government, a valuable piece of legislation, will do a great deal of good for the State.

Mr. FOLEY (Belyando) (8.36 p.m.): I was very interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Darlington. He gave us a very fine picture of the work of the Co-ordinating Board, sometimes known as the Stock Routes Board. The Minister is very fortunate in having the board to advise him on matters affecting rural land. Mr. Brebner, the Chairman is a man of commonsense; he has had a very wide experience in the State and is almost indispensable in the job. He is supervising one of the biggest tasks the department has ever tackled, namely the erection of the dingo barrier fence right round the pastoral areas of the State. From what I have read, he is giving it his full attention and steady progress is being made. The Minister's next big task with that project, as the fence nears completion, will be to clean out the breeding pockets inside the fence to reduce the annual depredations on the flocks to a minimum. Properly maintained, the fence will prevent the annual invasion of dogs from South Australia and the Northern Territory into Queensland. If the Minister studies the amounts expended by New South Wales in the areas adjacent to the fence they constructed some years ago he will realise what a great saving the fence will mean. They paid £300 a year for scalps whereas we pay about £30,000 a year.

The Minister is fortunate, too, in having such officers as Mr. Bergin, Mr. Muir and Mr. Matthews on the Land Administration Board to advise him. Mr. Bergin has had many years experience as a land commissioner covering a large part of the State and naturally he became conversant with the problems of the graziers. Then he worked for 10 years or so on the Bureau of Investigation, which gave him a great insight into the problems that beset the farming communities and the graziers of the State. I do not suppose any many in Queensland would have a better knowledge of the Land Act and the precedents associated with land administration than Mr. Matthews. Mr. Muir has come up through the ranks to be an inspector in rural districts. He has a thorough knowledge of land valuations and other land matters. With their combined wisdom these three officers should be to make sound recommendations to guide the Minister in the future.

The Minister made an interesting speech about the general ramifications of the various sub-departments that he controls. As Minister for Lands I adopted a similar practice of making as big a review as I could. Naturally I kept contentious matters behind the scenes that I did not want to convey to the Committee at the time. I believe the Minister has done the same today. He did not touch on some matters at all, one being the rumour prevailing throughout the State that he will follow up his freehold policy by giving away the public estate, as it were, to those holding larger areas than those prescribed in the Act today. At present the provision applies to residential areas and perpetual leases up to 2,000-odd acres. The rumour is that the Minister will eventually apply it to prickly-pear selections, grazing selections, etc. If that is done the Government will have to face up to the fact that they will be cutting very deeply into the £4,000,000-odd that the Government receive in revenue from land under pastoral, grazing and perpetual leasehold. The Governments of the future would find themselves in difficulties because of the lack of revenue from that source, and naturally they would have to get it from some other source to enable them to carry on the various phases of administration. I certainly hope that what is rumoured will not come about.

I take the opportunity to point out that from the reports I have received from various grazing districts there is a good deal of discontent about increased rents. When I was in charge of the department it was the policy of the administration to charge a fair economic rental for the lands under the control of the Crown. Naturally departmental officers would take into consideration the prices paid by prudent men in various areas in different parts of the State when assessing the rental of a new selection being opened by the Department of Public Lands. From what I hear, the main complaint today is about inconsistencies in rents charged in the same area. In other words, one man is

paying a low rental while another man who considers his land is no better may perhaps be paying two or three times as much, yet the two men are neighbours or occupying land in the same district. If the rents in those areas were similar it would eliminate much of the dissatisfaction that now exists. The Minister referred to certain lands that came under the 1952 Amending Act. Under that Act provision was made for owners of leases nearing expiration to surrender their area then for two blocks of the area after subdivision and the Crown would take the other. The object was to get the land at an earlier date and make it available for selection.

The Minister referred to the elimination of the cultivation clause in some instances. That clause was inserted with the object of increasing the amount of cultivation in the State thereby increasing the amount of fodder that would be available in the form of ensilage or hay. It was considered it would be no hardship to impose such a condition in a rainfall area of 20 inches or more, and it would provide a greater drought insurance. If the Minister examines the stock figures before and after the 1902 drought he will find that it took about 23 years to recover the losses in stock. The next drought was not quite as severe; it took 20 years to recover the losses. That indicates the need for further cultivation in areas where it is possible so that fodder will be available for use in drought periods. Recently I met one of our University men who is an agronomist in charge of a number of plots in various parts of the State. He told me that at Dundee in the Longreach district they had a field day. A selection of about 8,000 to 10,000 acres had several thousand tons of ensilage buried and when it was opened up it was in a perfect state of preservation. The owner mentioned that it would carry him through a two-year drought. The same thing is being done on another property in that area. In various parts of the State progressive men are cultivating land that is not generally considered to be cultivable. A grazing friend has admitted to me that at Julia Creek, Tambo, Blackall and on that magnificent downs land cultivation can be carried out and thousands upon thousands of tons of ensilage made. He said it is not done, because the areas are such that the graziers with big numbers of sheep can afford certain losses in bad periods. Graziers generally are not conscious of the need to cultivate and store fodder to protect their flocks in times of drought.

The time allowed for a speech in this debate does not allow me to mention all the subjects I should like to traverse. Opinions have been given about living areas. Labour administrations with which I was associated for a great number of years have since 1915 adopted a policy of closer settlement. In the early stages the Government may have erred by subdividing properties into areas below living areas as they are classified today, but that error was rectified in time. Instead of

settling a certain area as a living area, the basis now taken is the number of sheep or the number of cattle a certain area can carry. That policy has been favourably received and has worked satisfactorily. The maps of the department, one of which is in the latest report of the Land Administration Board, show what was done in the Longreach, Hughenden, and Winton districts, down to the borders of the State, near Goondiwindi. The map is marked in very small squares. Outside that area, in the isolated areas, as they are described by the department, the subdivisions are larger. Eventually, with improvement in technique and progress generally, those holdings will suffer the same fate and will be divided into reasonable living areas.

Hon. members have mentioned the number of sheep for living areas in various districts. The department, for a number of years, has laid down as a basis, the number of sheep and cattle that would constitute a living area on which a man can make a decent living for himself and his family. Those living areas are designed to ensure a degree of comfort. I understand that in the Goondiwindi district the number of sheep is set at approximately 3,000, the figure increasing in the Charleville, Quilpie, and other districts. The same thing applies to the Longreach district—3,000 sheep around Emerald and Springsure, as compared with the lower rainfall areas, with 6,000, 7,000, 8,000 and 12,000 sheep as you go towards the marginal areas.

A living area has already been determined but the Minister has appointed Mr. Payne, the President of the Land Court, to advise him on this matter. The Minister has officers in the department to assist him. It looks as if the Government are passing the buck to Mr. Payne, asking him take the abuse of the pastoralists and graziers of the State after he submits his report to Parliament. The Minister has men in the department, on the Land Administration Board, to advise him. He can bring in every land commissioner from every pastoral district and with his higher administrative officers get down to reasonable living areas in the various parts of Queensland. There was no need to give Mr. Payne a special brief. I am not saying that he has not the qualifications to do the job; no man in Queensland is better fitted for it than Mr. Payne. The Government are passing the buck to him. He is to take the umbrage of the selectors if his report is unfavourable to them.

Mr. Hewitt: Have departmental officers always followed Mr. Payne?

Mr. FOLEY: In some cases they follow his advice based upon experience in the department.

I shall have something to say when we get to the Vote on irrigation, and here again there is a body of men capable of advising

the Minister. It is regretted that the Government have decided to scrap the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area and the land settlement scheme associated with it. The district will suffer as a result. Some 1,400 farmers and their families would have been gradually established in the area with the water stored at the Tinaroo Falls dam. It is of no use saying that the land will not grow tobacco, cotton, fruit and irrigated pastures because it can. All that is required is the application of labour and water to the land but instead of that the Government are diverting the water to other purposes.

Naturally the Minister's influence will carry some weight with the Mt. Edwards scheme. It is a prosperous farming area at present. We want irrigation and further settlement in the Nogoa River and Dawson River areas. That is where the Government should concentrate on their irrigation projects for in so doing not only will they increase settlement and population in those areas but they will also cut down the risks of drought losses.

I commend those few thoughts to the Minister and the Government for their consideration. This is one of the most important departments of the State, and the way in which it is administered can either make or mar its progress. The exercise of a little wisdom could overcome many of the present-day problems.

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (9.1 p.m.): I am sure that every hon. member realises the importance of land administration in Queensland. As this is a primary producing State, it is only natural that improper land administration can greatly retard its development. I was very interested in the views expressed by the Minister. While I appreciate to the full the present Government's policy on land matters, I am at a loss to understand why they should condemn the policy of successive Labour Governments that resulted in so much progress. In other words, the Government are condemning a policy that has resulted in much of the State's development.

Land administration has a definite effect on the welfare of the State. As the hon. member for Gregory said, unless the Government follow a realistic and positive policy the State must be adversely affected. It has been obvious during the past year that the Government are following an unrealistic and negative policy in land administration. As Queensland is mainly a primary producing State, the Government must help all sections of primary industry so that production may be increased.

As Queensland depends to a great extent on the production of wool and meat, and on the grazing interests, it is only natural that those interests should receive more consideration from the Government than perhaps other sections of primary industry. As the Government consist of many representatives of the grazing interests, it is again only natural that they will try to force the Government to take

a line of action that will please the graziers, whether or not it is for the general benefit of the State. The Minister has said that he will not be stood over or pushed round by the grazing interests, but I am afraid that they will gradually wear him down. After what has happened in such a short period, it seems that the grazing interests will get what they want from the Government to the detriment of the State generally.

Mr. Rae: That is absolute rot!

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member for Gregory himself said that the grazing interests were demanding certain things and that they were likely to get them. For many years Labour resisted those demands. If the present Government give way, it will be to the detriment of the State. If we want proof of what is happening and of the Government's intention, we have only to examine their freeholding policy.

A Government Member: What is wrong with that?

Mr. GRAHAM: What is right with it? It has been said that only 5.8 per cent. of the 429,000,000 acres of land have been alienated and that whilst it is policy to alienate the small quarter-acre allotments that the average householder desires it is evident that it is the Government's intention to grant the bigger areas to the grazing interests on a freehold basis.

Mr. Dewar: Four square miles—2,500 acres!

Mr. GRAHAM: If that would not run counter to the policy of closer settlement, I do not know what would.

Mr. Hiley: Weren't you in the Chamber when we passed measures to authorise the freeholding of allotments?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes.

Mr. Hiley: Why do you say it is not the Government's policy to allow the freeholding of allotments?

Mr. GRAHAM: I did not say that. I said it was the policy.

A Government Member: You did say it.

Mr. GRAHAM: If I did it was a slip of the tongue. I know it is the policy of the Government to freehold small allotments—household allotments.

Mr. Rae: A good move.

Mr. GRAHAM: It might be a good move. I am not opposed to it. But I am opposed to any policy that would deny the right of a child yet unborn to his share of the land of the State. The policy will snowball and hon. members opposite would be the first to take advantage of it if they could freehold thousands of acres in favourable areas. I say it would run contrary to any policy of closer settlement. Throughout the years Labour Governments have appointed successive Royal

Commissions to try to determine a land policy to develop the State as it should be developed. They have accepted the advice tendered on living areas and so on, yet today we find conflict among members of the Government on what should constitute a living area. I have not sufficient knowledge of the West to form an opinion of what a living area should be but I am surprised at the conflict amongst the men who are supposed to know.

Mr. Rae: Free thinkers.

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be so.

Mr. Rae: No direction, no control.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member was at variance with members of his own party on that matter.

A Government Member: Right or wrong, wise or unwise.

Mr. GRAHAM: We can accept all that. It is only a matter of time before the Government's policy will catch up with them. Eventually the people will revolt against it because they know that if the Government are going to bow to the dictates and wishes of those in a position to take full advantage of the policy—and they will do so and are doing so—the people will be deprived of their rights.

Mr. Hiley: How do you account for the fact that, when we gave the people in your area the option of freehold or leasehold, 100 per cent. of them said freehold?

Mr. GRAHAM: Why would not they in those circumstances, when they got the land for nothing?

Mr. Hiley: Why wouldn't they in any circumstances.

Mr. GRAHAM: For leasehold they would have paid a rental. If they had not accepted the Government's offer of freehold they would have been fools and the Minister knows it.

Mr. Hiley: If you read the Bill you will see that it was a peppercorn rental.

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be so. I know it is the wish of the average person to have the freehold tenure of his land but does that justify the Government in freeholding thousands of acres in a way that will in time deny the right of an unborn child to any land?

Mr. Dewar: Where is that? Four square miles—2,500 acres!

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister has not denied the statement of the hon. member for Kedron that the Government intend to freehold larger areas.

Mr. Ewan: Why should he deny it?

Mr. GRAHAM: Then it is the policy of the Government to freehold larger areas.

Mr. Ewan: It is not being given away; it is being sold.

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course it is being sold—to the highest bidder. When my grandson wants a block of land he will have to pay through the nose to buy it from hon. members opposite and that is what I am opposed to.

Mr. Hiley: Do you know any country in the world apart from Communist Russia where the State keeps its finger on all the land?

Mr. GRAHAM: Have they not done it in Queensland to pretty good effect? No-one can point the finger of scorn at the Labour Government's land policy because Queensland has developed under that policy. Some hon. members opposite should be the last to criticise the Labour Government's land policy because they became rich under it. Despite that they want to condemn the Labour Government for their policy. Past Labour Governments have endeavoured to retain the land for the future generations of the State, as they had every right to do. Not only have they implemented the land policy which has been for the betterment of Queensland but other schemes to assist such as irrigation which is complementary to an effective land policy. It is distressing to find that the present Government have some idea of restricting the use of irrigation facilities.

Mr. Pizzey: What do you use Marian Weir for?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am glad the hon. gentleman raised that point, because it emphasises the need for a thorough investigation into where weirs should be erected, or they can be erected, as Marian was, for little or no purpose.

Mr. Hiley: And the Jones Weir too.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know much about the Jones Weir but I know something about the Marian Weir. I would be the first to admit that perhaps much greater investigation should have been made into the erection of the Marian Weir before it was started.

A Government Member: Nobody uses it.

Mr. GRAHAM: No, perhaps they do not because Mackay with a heavy rainfall does not have the same need for irrigation as other areas. Had it been built in the right place, perhaps we could have made use of it for a water supply for Mackay.

Mr. Hiley: Do you think that the weir on the Alice River was put in the right place? Nobody uses that.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know where the Alice River weir is. There should be a thorough investigation before these schemes are developed. While it might be said that the Marian weir should not have been built, at least it will be admitted that the Mareeba-Dimbulah area has received great benefit from the irrigation project up there. Let us hope

that at least that scheme is developed to the fullest because it will bring great wealth to that part of the State.

Mr. Low: Most of them were built for political purposes.

Mr. GRAHAM: When the hon. member's Government go out they will have a clean sheet because they will not have done anything during their regime for political purposes! Is the freeholding of land being done for political purposes? Of course it is, so that the Government will keep faith with the people who pull the strings and play the tune to which they dance.

Mr. Dewar: We will not build white elephants.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Government might build pink ones!

It was refreshing to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Gregory. He seemed to have the right approach to the development of Queensland's western areas. He realises that under past Government large areas of land were allowed to be taken up by the big pastoral companies that did nothing to improve them.

Mr. Pizzey: Who were the past Governments in the last 40 years?

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. gentleman took the words out of my mouth. I was going to say that it was wrong, but two wrongs never make a right.

Mr. Hodges interjected.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have seen progress, so has the hon. member if he would only admit it. Although the Labour Government were responsible for progress in this State that does not get away from the fact that there were some things we should not have done. The hon. member for Gregory mentioned that pastoral companies held large tracts of land without developing them. That is something that should be rectified. If this Government continues to allow that to operate, that does not make it right. We want to see this Government do the right thing and take some of that land away from the companies and make it available for closer settlement. Let us see how honest this Government are in that regard.

Mr. Ewan: We are correcting your mistakes.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is the function of the Government at present. If the Government think that a previous Government made a mistake they have a right to correct it; but that does not give the Government a licence to do things which are entirely wrong. It is our job to try to see that the Government do not do things which are detrimental to the well-being of the people of this State.

Mr. Low: It will be the day when they can stampede the present Minister.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister may be firm, but when those supporting him are endeavouring to stampede him the hon. gentleman may weaken under the pressure. The hon. member for Roma was shedding crocodile tears on behalf of the graziers. Because of a drought, the hon. member thought they should have all the privileges in the world. The need for a progressive policy is very urgent. We would like to see the Government do what they said they would do in their policy speech when they promised to make everything in the garden lovely for all those engaged in primary industry. Let us hope that they do these things. Present indications are that they will not live up to their promises.

Mr. Low: The primary producers will get a decent surprise in a couple of days.

Mr. GRAHAM: Will they? They have been saving it up as an election promise. I do not think it will save them from the wrath of the dairy farmers. The hon. member for Port Curtis can tell hon. members of his experience recently when the dairy farmers in his area were not so wrapped up with the policy of the Federal Government. This Government should do the right thing in regard to our land policy. They should come down to earth and realise that the land in this State belongs to the people collectively and not to individuals. It is not sufficient to be concerned with the problems of today; it is necessary to keep in mind the problems of tomorrow. If the Government dispose of large tracts of land now the Government of tomorrow may have to buy it back for closer settlement purposes.

Mr. Beardmore: Would you say that Victoria is at a disadvantage?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes. You cannot compare Victoria with Queensland. There is no analogy between Victoria and Queensland in the matter of land settlement. Victoria is a pocket handkerchief State compared with Queensland. How could Queensland be expected to develop if the same percentage of land was freehold here?

Mr. Ewan: Victoria has more sheep than Queensland.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is all that could be said for Victoria. Can the hon. member say that Victoria has any cattle?

Mr. Ewan: Yes.

Mr. GRAHAM: Comparable with Queensland's cattle numbers?

Mr. Ewan: No.

Mr. GRAHAM: Does Victoria produce the same amount of wool, meat and sugar and other primary produce as Queensland? Of course it does not. Because of the difference in area, the States cannot be compared.

Until the Government come back to earth in regard to their land policy, I can visualise the State being retarded, rather than progressively developed.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (9.21 p.m.): Bearing in mind the pressure on the Minister by unscrupulous speculators and landlords, I congratulate the Minister on his stand, but I think a forthright statement by the Minister and the Premier on land policy is overdue. It is needed to dissipate the widely-held fear that the Government intend to sell out to the big landlords and speculators.

In the hon. member for Roma we have the Deputy Minister for Public Lands. I challenge the Minister to comment in his reply on the statements of the hon. member for Roma, as printed in the bible of the Country Party, "Queensland Country Life." I have here a copy of that newspaper. I ask the Minister to state whether he delegated to the hon. member for Roma authority to make these statements, and the extent to which he endorses them.

We have heard protest that four square miles is to be the absolute limit, but what is the opinion of the Selectors' Association? It is not by any means an anti-Government organisation, but recently the members of that association expressed fear as to the possibility of big aggregations of freehold land. The association carried a resolution on all fours with statements by hon. members on this side of the Chamber when the Act was amended, that the legislation should contain a provision to prevent big aggregations of freehold land. It is all very well to say that a person can acquire only four square miles, but after he has acquired that area he can then purchase another four square miles or 40 square miles. Some men in Queensland have already acquired many thousands of acres under freehold tenure. Taking freeholders by and large, they are the worst landholders in Queensland. They are the biggest nuisance to the Co-ordinating Board. They do more to retard development and prosperity than any other section, having in mind co-operation in the constant war to eradicate noxious weeds and animal pests.

Mr. Low: You are making an attack on dairy farmers, who hold most of the freehold land in Queensland.

Mr. BURROWS: When the hon. member for Cooroora utters those inane interjections, I often wonder how the Creator could endow a man with such a splendid physique, such a beautiful body, and such an inferior mind. As my time is limited, I shall ignore those interjections and address my remarks to the Chair. I have been in this Chamber for 11 years, but have never heard the hon. member for Cooroora make an intelligent interjection or statement.

Let me get back to the self-appointed Deputy Minister for Public Lands, the hon. member for Roma. This is what he said—

"Landholders in the drought-stricken area west of Cunnamulla and around Quilpie should be given land freehold rights or 40-year leases with living areas of not less than 8,000 to 10,000 sheep."

Let me do a little bit of arithmetic. In order to arrive at the acreage, you have to take the carrying capacity. This is not my estimate. The self-appointed Minister goes on to say—

"In my opinion this area—west of Cunnamulla and around Quilpie—has no agricultural potential and its stock carrying capacity is about 1 sheep to 12 acres, with nothing less than 8,000 to 10,000 sheep as a living area."

He wants 100,000 acres to be given to these people and let them do what with it? They would do as the hon. member for Gregory said that the Kidman group did with the land further out.

Mr. Ewan: Have you ever seen the country?

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member cannot tell me about that country. I saw it before the hon. member did, in the days when I carried my swag. This area represents approximately one-twelfth of the whole area of the State. According to the theory put forward by this specialist or self-appointed specialist or authority on land matters how many graziers would it support? I have worked the figure out. It would support fewer than 400 selectors if each is given 100,000 acres. Let me carry his theory further and my authority is the report of the Land Administration Board. If we are to accept the basis of 100,000 acres the Government should, according to this hon. member, confine the whole area of the State to 2,500 selectors. That shows how absurd, ridiculous and how ill-thought the argument of the hon. member is. I should say that a man like him in his caucus would continually aggravate the caucus just as the fox terrier with his barking causes other dogs to fight. Hon. members can understand the sympathy we have for the Minister. I honestly and sincerely say that if we have to have an anti-Labour Government I hope that the present Minister is spared for many a long day to hold his present office. I shudder to think of what might happen if some irresponsible such as the hon. member for Roma was elevated to the responsible position of Minister. He has made the front page of a very influential newspaper that has a large circulation. The Minister and the Premier should deny categorically the statements made by the irresponsible hon. member for Roma.

Getting on to other matters connected with land settlement, we must remember that the rentals of these holdings are re-assessed every 10 years. The price of wool was relatively low in 1948 but the last 10 years

has been a period of great prosperity. If a man's rental was fixed at a relatively low rate in 1948 he has enjoyed that benefit for 10 years. With the present decline in prices, he will probably be fortunate enough to have a relatively low assessment again this year.

Many problems confront the Minister and the Land Administration Board. We should be temperate in our attitude towards these men and realise that theirs is a very difficult job. They have to decide, for example, on living areas. I am not being critical of them.

A Government Member: I should hate to hear you when you were being critical.

Mr. BURROWS: I am not being critical of the Land Administration Board or the Minister's administration over the last 12 months. I honestly believe that he is the people's last bulwark in carrying out his duties as their trustee.

I have here an advertisement covering land that is being thrown open in the Dawson Valley. There are no good roads in that area and the land in question is 25 miles from the railway line. I am sure the hon. member for Mackenzie will admit that there are no good roads in the Dawson Valley. I should say that the Mackenzie electorate is more in need of roads than any other electorate in Queensland. Under the terms of selection, the landholder is required to cultivate 100 acres within a reasonable time. Many hon. members opposite will know that to cultivate 100 acres, it is necessary to have £7,000 or £8,000-worth of plant. In my opinion, it would be preferable and much more sensible and realistic to lay down a condition that the landholder must make facilities available for storing fodder. In good seasons it would be much cheaper for him to buy his fodder from farmers in other areas than to grow it himself. Except for fodder purposes there would be no attraction in the cultivation. The Minister knows better than I that, with £7,000 or £8,000-worth of plant lying idle once the hayshed is filled except when a drought comes along, the interest would be more than sufficient for the farmer in good years to buy hay ready baled. So he need not spend time on cultivation but could spend it on dairying if he cares to. Some of the areas are too small for that, perhaps. On 5,000 acres a man would have a reasonable chance of making a living from grazing in this area. However, I suggest to the Minister that the cultivation provision is too harsh nowadays. It may have been desirable earlier but times have changed. There is no need to preserve something that is bad simply because it was good a few years ago and the time for it might come again.

The hon. member for Roma said that some people need relief. Maybe some forms of relief should be given, but a good case can be spoiled by exaggeration and he definitely exaggerated. I read "Country Life" every week and if hon. members study the details of properties listed, the sale prices and

apportionment, they will see that in many cases up to £8 per acre over the value of improvements is asked. Even in the Charleville area and the area the hon. member mentioned, I will challenge him; I will give £5 to a hospital if he can show me a property that is up for sale out there where the owner wants only the value of the improvements. I am sure he will not be able to do so. Analyse any sale. Anyone who has anything to do with them will know that £2 an acre is the minimum premium for the goodwill. Drawing 100,000 acres out there is as good as winning £200,000 in a free casket. That might sound a huge figure, but the Minister has the opportunity to examine more sales than I would have and I will wager that if he gave figures on the apportionment of sales—and I am sure he would give us them truthfully if he gave them to us at all—hon. members would be staggered. If a man is given 100,000 acres, what is he going to do with it? When his term is up and he can sell or transfer, he will do so at an exorbitant figure to an unfortunate purchaser who will not be able to pay the interest and redemption.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. BURROWS: I cannot hear the hon. member but if I were in his position I would remain silent for the rest of my life.

Mr. Ewan: Not while I listen to your drivel.

Mr. BURROWS: If ever there was an exhibition of ignorance, it was that given by the hon. member tonight, and more particularly in the extract that I quoted. After the next elections if he likes to see me I shall give him a copy of that Press cutting which he can keep as a reminder of the cause of his downfall.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.42 p.m.