

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 1959

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Speaker—

Inspection of Scaffolding Acts Amendment Bill.

Fire Brigades Acts Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS.

MALE COOKS, WESTWOOD SENILE ANNEXE.

Mr. A. J. SMITH (Carpentaria), for Mr. GARDNER (Rockhampton), asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“(1) Is he aware that the Rockhampton Hospitals Board has decided to dispense with three male cooks employed at the Westwood Senile Annexe and to replace them with female cooks as from April 12 next?”

“(2) Is it the policy of the Government to condone such decisions in view of the fact that the male staff to be dispensed with are all married men—one with five children and eleven years' service and one with three children and with years of service?”

“(3) If it is not the Government's policy to sack married men, will he take the necessary action to instruct the Rockhampton Hospitals Board to revoke its decision covering dismissals?”

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“I was not aware that the Rockhampton Hospitals Board had decided to dispense with the services of the three male cooks employed at Westwood. It is not the Government's policy to dispense with the services of married men and to replace them with female labour. I have made enquiries in the matter, and Rockhampton Hospitals Board has been requested to withdraw the notice to the three male cooks concerned.”

DALBY HOSPITAL WARD BLOCK.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon), for Mr. DIPLOCK (Condamine), asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“(1) Does the Department of Health and Home Affairs accept responsibility for the obvious mismanagement which has resulted in the inability to use the Dalby Hospital Ward Block until, at the earliest, the end of April, because of lack of steam for the hospital?”

“(2) Did the Dalby Hospitals Board, which was replaced by him, make an investigation through the Departments of

Public Works and Health and Home Affairs into the relative costs and merits of coal-fired boilers and oil-fired boilers for use in producing steam for the hospital?”

“(3) Did not that Board, at the suggestion of the Department call tenders for the installation of coal-fired steam boilers, equipment, &c.?”

“(4) If one of these tenders had been accepted, would not the hospital have been available for use on completion of the building?”

“(5) Did the present Board delay consideration of these tenders and cause an independent investigation into the use of coal-fired and oil-fired boilers to be made?”

“(6) Did the Department endeavour to speed-up the action of the present Board in this matter in order to have the hospital available for use upon completion of the building?”

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“After studying advice received from the Department of Public Works, the architects, and the consulting engineers, the plans and specifications for boiler equipment appeared to be in order, and to meet the requirements of the Works Department and the Machinery Department. Approval for calling of tenders for the Boiler House and equipment was therefore given on April 15, 1958. This approval was given sufficiently early to allow for completion of all work by the time the new ward block was ready for occupation. The Hospitals Board was informed of this approval in regard to the Boiler House, but, following receipt on April 16, 1958, of a letter from the architects, which is mentioned hereafter, approval for the Boiler House equipment was not conveyed to the Hospitals Board at the same time. The plans and specifications as approved provided for a small oil-fired boiler to provide radiation at night as the main boilers could not economically be used for this purpose. On April 16, 1958, advice was received from the architects that the consulting engineers had been informed by the Machinery Department that the use and manning of the small oil-fired boiler could not be approved as planned. This was contrary to previous advice received on which the approval abovementioned was given, and it necessitated further reference to the Works Department, and amendment of plans and specifications. Re-consideration by the architects—including consideration of a proposal by the Hospitals Board that use of hot oil fuel instead of coal for the main boilers be further investigated—and necessary amendments to plans and specifications which had to be passed as satisfactory by the

Works Department, occupied a period of approximately four months during which calling of tenders was necessarily postponed. From the above, it will be clear that any suggestion of mis-management by my Department in this matter is unjustified."

NEW INDUSTRIES FOR QUEENSLAND.

Mr. DUGGAN (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"In view of the statement attributed to him in 'The Courier-Mail' of February 11, that an encouraging number of industrial concerns, which he had contacted during his overseas visit, had purchased land in Queensland, were building here or were negotiating for the commencement of their industries, is he prepared to provide the House with the names of these concerns, the nature of their businesses and where they are being carried on?"

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) replied—

"I am quite sure the Honourable Gentleman will, on reflection, realise that much of the information sought in this question is of necessity, confidential. Usually, when any business organisation desires to publicise its projected development plans it chooses the most suitable time from its own point of view to make such announcement, and I do not intend to usurp their right in this matter. As he probably knows, the premature publicising of details of negotiations of this nature, without the permission of the parties concerned, could lead to the breaking off of such negotiations and the abandonment of the proposals."

ILLEGAL USE OF WATER CRAFT.

Mr. DUGGAN (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Justice—

"In view of the fact that there appears to be no provision in The Criminal Code enabling action to be taken for the illegal use of water craft and his statement in the press of May 14, 1958, that the matter of making such provision was being investigated, will he inform the House if any decision has been made with a view to correcting this anomaly?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"Section 196 of The Queensland Marine Act of 1958 provides that Regulations may be made with respect to the prevention of the unlawful use of any vessel. I am informed by my colleague, The Honourable The Treasurer, that this Act has been Proclaimed, and the Regulations are in course of preparation. In view of this an amendment to The Criminal Code to cover this particular matter does not now appear to be necessary."

DELIVERY OF DIESEL-ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES.

Mr. DONALD (Bremer) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) On what date have the five diesel-electric locomotives being built by the English Electric Engineering Company for the Queensland Railways to be delivered?"

"(2) Does the contract provide for a penalty in case of late delivery? If so, what is the nature of the penalty?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"(1) Delivery was due to commence on January 29, 1959, and to be completed on May 29, 1959."

"(2) Yes. £100 per locomotive per week or part thereof."

COMMISSION HOMES, TROUT ROAD, STAFFORD.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) In view of his reply to a question which I asked on September 23 last to the effect that the Queensland Housing Commission did not propose to depart from its general standard of construction of homes at Trout Road, Stafford, will he advise whether it is now proposed to erect a more costly type of home on a particular portion of the project?"

"(2) If so, will he advise (a) the estimated cost of construction of the homes previously proposed and the estimated cost of construction with the new plans, (b) whether approval had been given to commence construction with the usual standard plans, and (c) what was the reason for the alteration to the plans?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo) replied—

"(1 and 2) So far, Executive approval has been given for the erection of 35 homes at a cost of £87,984. Twenty-one of these homes have been released for sale and firm contracts have been entered into with prospective purchasers for 20 of these homes. They will be completed to the original design unless a purchaser desires variation in which case he will be asked to increase his deposit to cover any increased financial requirement as a result of such variation. I might say that I am constantly encouraging the Commission to get away from unattractive designs and to use a greater percentage of what is commonly recognised as being the more attractive section of the wide range of designs the Commission has available. However, where houses are being built for sale, the wishes of the prospective purchaser are often influenced by price above every other consideration. If a purchaser of a home, either from choice of design or purely for financial reasons, insists on selecting an unattractive box-type structure, the Commission has no alternative

but to proceed with the application provided always that, from a constructional point of view, it is up to the rigorous standards laid down by the Commission. Might I add that I attach a very real value to anything which adds to the appearance of a housing estate. I think it is generally recognised that, in its very early days, Commission housing estates suffered through too much uniformity of house design, of layout and colour. Every house was to a common frontage and every little house to a common depth. I suggest that honourable members might inspect some of the estates where work is presently in progress. They will find a visit to the Broadwater Estate at Mt. Gravatt quite rewarding. The designs are infinitely variable. The building frontage is staggered. The colour of exterior painting is infinitely varied and in modern pastel shades; there are radical experiments in the types of roof and some quite novel features in the provision of broad nature strips sweeping right back from the kerb to the front of the building. A visit to that estate will convince the most reluctant honourable gentleman that the days of modelling the Commission's efforts on either a prison farm or a military barracks are gone for ever."

FORD-SHERRINGTON, TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Is it a fact that a firm named Ford-Sherrington recently opened up business at Townsville to manufacture and sell travel goods, such as suitcases, etc.?"

"(2) Is it a fact that the firm was forced to close down because the Railway Department freight on similar goods from Brisbane to many northern towns was cheaper than the freight from Townsville to the same northern towns?"

"(3) Is it also a fact that after protests by the firm all the Government would do was to grant the same rail freight from Townsville to northern towns as was charged from Brisbane to the same towns?"

"(4) If Questions 1 to 3 are factual, does this not vindicate my repeated statements that northern industry is deliberately strangled by the manipulation of rail freight charges?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"In 1950, at the request of this firm and to avoid its being placed at a freight disadvantage in the case of goods railed ex Townsville as compared with those railed ex Brisbane, contracts were entered into for special freight rates from Townsville to Cairns and Townsville to Mackay. I am unaware that this firm has been forced to close down and, if so, of the reason for such closing."

PENSIONERS IN SENILE ANNEXES.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"Do patients in senile annexes pay any portion of their pension, if any, to the hospital, as is the case of inmates of Eventide Homes and, if so, how much?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"The amount paid from pensions in senile annexes is the same as fixed by the Commonwealth Government to be deducted from pensions in old people's homes, including Eventides."

CYCLISTS AND CAR DRIVERS.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"(1) Are pedal cyclists now required to have a rear light affixed to their machine if ridden at night and, if so, on what date did the regulation or requirement come into effect?"

"(2) Are applicants for motor car drivers' licences required to satisfy the issuing officers that they have a sound and intelligent knowledge of the 'rules of the road'? If not, why not?"

Hon. K. J. MORRIS (Mt. Coot-tha) replied—

"(1) Yes. The regulation was approved on May 22, 1958, but as it was realised that a reasonable period should be allowed before the regulation was enforced, all police were advised that proceedings were not to be instituted against any person for driving upon any road during hours of darkness on any date prior to January 1, 1959, any bicycle, which is not equipped with a lighted lamp showing a bright red light to the rear."

"(2) Yes."

EXPENDITURE BY BURDEKIN RIVER TRUST ON EROSION WORK.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra), for **Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin), asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) What is the total amount expended to date by the Burdekin River Trust on erosion prevention work?"

"(2) How much of this total amount is represented by (a) Government subsidy, (b) Government grant, and (c) amount contributed by ratepayers of Divisions 1, 2 and 3 of the Ayr Shire?"

"(3) What percentage of the expenditure incurred by the Trust is now subsidised by the Treasury?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo) replied—

"(1) £185,078 1s. 3d. expended to February 23, 1959."

"(2) (a) £73,931 2s., including £22,780 15s. on interest and redemption instalments."

“(b) £12,500.”

“(c) Loan expenditure to be borne by benefited area £121,427 14s. 3d.”

“(3) 33½ per cent. on works at present under construction.”

REHABILITATION CENTRE, MENTAL PATIENTS,
EVENTIDE, SANDGATE.

Mr. HANLON (Ithaca) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“In view of a statement last month by the Minister for Public Works that £47,769 would be spent on the first section of a rehabilitation centre for mental patients at Eventide, Sandgate,—”

“(1) What type of patient will be accommodated there?”

“(2) How many patients will be accommodated?”

“(3) Has consideration been given to the future need for expansion of Eventide itself and will sufficient space be left for this purpose?”

“(4) Will the staff be drawn from the Hospital Employees' Union?”

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“(1) Convalescent Patients who have no relatives and who require guidance and help in returning to everyday life.”

“(2) A maximum of 40.”

“(3) Yes.”

“(4) The important work to be performed will be to help and educate the residents in re-adjusting themselves to everyday life, and this will be performed by trained Social Workers.”

SEA EROSION AT YORKEY'S KNOB.

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Premier—

“Will the Government assist in any way the residents of Yorkey's Knob in their determined effort to arrest sea erosion that is threatening to destroy their homes and property? If so, what assistance will be given and when?”

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

“Some time ago, an investigation of the erosion at Yorkey's Knob was carried out by Mr. W. Hansen, the Acting Director of Northern Development. Last week, my colleague the Minister for Development, Mines and Main Roads arranged for a further inspection of the area by the Main Roads District Engineer and already work is proceeding to prevent further erosion by the utilisation of some thousands of tons of rock fill. This is being quarried from suitable sites and placed where the local people can move it into position. The Main Roads Department will bear costs involved up to about £6,000. The matter is being treated as one of urgency and every endeavour is being made to prevent further erosion.”

PUBLICATION OF MONTHLY ACCOUNTS OF
JOHNSTONE SHIRE COUNCIL.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

“(1) Is he aware that the Johnstone Shire Council at Innisfail has rejected a motion providing for compliance with the request of the Innisfail ‘Evening Advocate’ to be supplied for publication with a list of monthly accounts with all other financial data received by councillors at their monthly general meeting thereby imposing a complete ban or censorship upon the publication of such data?”

“(2) If so, will he now rule and direct the Council that the detailed vouchers of monthly accounts paid by the Johnstone Shire Council, which are the basis of the warrants presented to its monthly general meeting, form part of the minutes of the Finance Committee and thus become automatically available for publication in the Press?”

Hon. J. A. HEADING (Marodian) replied—

“(1 and 2) I am not aware of the matter of which the Honourable Member complains. I will, however, take it up with the Johnstone Shire Council and advise him in due course.”

MEDICAL STAFF, INNISFAIL GENERAL
HOSPITAL.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“In view of resignations from the medical staff of the Innisfail General Hospital will he afford relief by early additional appointments?”

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“There is a shortage of medical officers not only in Queensland but throughout Australia at present and every endeavour is being made to obtain medical staff for all hospitals in the State. The position of Medical Officer for Innisfail has been advertised in the British Medical Journal as well as in Australian papers and every effort will be made by my Department to expedite the transport of suitable applicants from Britain to Innisfail.”

LOCAL OPTION POLL AT PARK AVENUE,
NORTH ROCKHAMPTON.

Mr. THACKERAY (Keppel) asked the Minister for Justice—

“Has the area been defined for the Local Option Poll at Park Avenue, North Rockhampton? If so, what is the area and what is the date of the Poll?”

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

“An area in the locality of Park Avenue, North Rockhampton has been defined by the Licensing Commission and advertisements have been inserted in a local newspaper advising that the Commission will hear objections lodged by qualified objectors to the removal of a licensed victualler's license to that locality and that electors of that locality who desire to petition for a local option vote may lodge a petition with the Commission before 2.30 p.m. on Monday, March 23, 1959.”

“The area is as follows:—

‘Locality of Park Avenue,
North Rockhampton.’

‘The part of the Electoral District of Keppel, Division of Rockhampton City, within the following boundaries:— Commencing on Limestone Creek at the north corner of portion 115, parish of Murchison, and bounded thence by Alexandra Street south-east to the north corner of portion 26 (R. 652, Recreation Reserve), by the north-east boundary of that portion to Moore's Creek, by that creek downwards to the Fitzroy River, by the left bank thereof upwards to Limestone Creek aforesaid, and by that creek upwards to the point of commencement.’

“The date of any local option poll to be taken in respect of this locality cannot be determined at present. A petition must first be lodged and a Certificate is then required to be given by the Commission to me that the requisite ten per cent. of the electors of that locality have duly signed such petition. If a petition is lodged, and the Certificate given, I will then be required to advise the Governor in Council that such a petition has been presented to the Commission whereupon the Governor in Council may issue a Writ for a local option vote poll in that locality and the date of the poll will be stated in such Writ, that date being a Saturday and not earlier than 28 days after the date of the issue of the Writ.”

**COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE TO CONSTRUCT
CLONCURRY-MARY KATHLEEN ROAD.**

Mr. A. J. SMITH (Carpentaria) asked the Premier—

“(1) On what date was the first approach made by the Queensland Government to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance to construct the Cloncurry-Mary Kathleen Road?”

“(2) On what date was advice received from the Commonwealth that that Government was prepared to assist in the construction of this road?”

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough) replied—

“(1) April 26, 1956.”

“(2) The Prime Minister's letter was dated September 19, 1957. The Honourable Member might recall that on October 24, 1957, the Minister for Development, Mines and Main Roads replied to a question on this matter asked by the then Leader of the Opposition. He stated that a verbal request made to Sir Arthur Fadden by a deputation consisting of the Honourable the Treasurer, the Honourable the Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads and myself had resulted in Sir Arthur making immediate arrangements for the Commonwealth Co-ordinator-General to visit Queensland and enquire, on the spot into the Government's submission. Following the report of the Commonwealth Co-ordinator-General, the Prime Minister's advice, referred to above, was received.”

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulations under the Nurses and Masseurs Registration Acts, 1928 to 1948.

**CITY OF BRISBANE (WATER SUPPLY)
BILL.**

INITIATION.

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the transfer to Brisbane City Council of the Somerset Dam, and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

AGRICULTURAL BANK (LOANS) BILL.

INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make further provision relating to the making of loans for the purposes of primary production by the Corporation of the Agricultural Bank, and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

STOCK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

DAIRY PRODUCE ACTS AMENDMENT
BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 2339) on Mr. Madsen's motion—

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

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Stock) (11.28 a.m.), in reply: I was rather surprised at the trend of the debate. Hon. members have every right to make observations and seek information and to question legislation but often charges cannot be substantiated. Milk is such an important food in the homes of most people that their confidence in its quality should not be shaken.

Mr. Aikens: It is better than have the public taken for a ride.

Mr. MADSEN: Yes. I appreciate their observations but every hon. member has an obligation to see that his charges have some foundation in fact. The public are entitled to that. Hon. members opposite have every right to ask questions and to make such observations. The hon. member for Mundingburra was one who sought information but some of his charges were fairly loosely made. The consumers have nothing to fear about the milk supply and that will be the basis of my remarks today.

The fear was expressed that if separators are installed in factories it may lead to a partial removal of fat from milk before it is sold. This matter was referred to by several hon. members including the hon. members for Baroona, Bundaberg, and Mundingburra who inferred that some cream was taken from milk in the factories before it was sold.

I want to assure the House that officers of my department closely supervise the operations of all factories. There is absolutely no ground for the suggestion that malpractices occur in any factory. The beginning is on the farm. They provide a good quality product. Most of the factories are co-operatively controlled. I have knowledge of the farmer, and I have experience as a director of a co-operative and I know that the factories will not put up with any nonsense as far as the quality of the milk is concerned. They carry out their own tests. The farmers' co-operatives are the first to report anything in the case of unhygienic conditions or adulterated milk. Moreover all samples of bottled milk are taken daily by officers from Brisbane milk factories and weekly from country factories for complete chemical and bacteriological examination.

Mr. Walsh: I am afraid that could not have been operating for the cream factor.

Mr. MADSEN: In pasteurisation as hon. members know, the milk is treated with heat, and sometimes it gets a bit cooked. These things happen in all industries. There may

be an omission on the part of an employee. I have had experience of these things. All the same hon. members will agree that there have been very few of these omissions.

Mr. Walsh: There is a top of curdled milk.

Mr. MADSEN: It all comes back to pasteurisation. There seemed to be some doubt as to what I implied yesterday when I said it was possible that we would not have a cream line on the bottle. The general charge is that the people of Brisbane are getting a poor standard of milk. The standard of bottled milk in Brisbane last year showed an average fat content of 3.8 per cent. The minimum standard is 3.3 per cent. Yet there is a general charge that people are receiving sub-standard milk. When these figures were placed before me this morning I was surprised that such an excellent standard could be maintained. After all, as the hon. member for Bundaberg said, in a State like this where we have periodical droughts it is not always possible to supply the milk with the desired standard of quality. When you get a standard of 3.8, which is point five above what is required by law, that is cogent evidence that there is little ground for complaint.

Mr. Power: What about the standardisation?

Mr. MADSEN: These people make charges loosely which may unfortunately shake the confidence of the consumer although they are completely unwarranted and unfounded. I think that hon. members who make loose charges have little to be proud of.

Mr. Power: Who made the charges?

Mr. MADSEN: Nobody made charges more than the hon. member for Baroona.

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. The statement made by the hon. gentleman that I said there was sub-standard milk is entirely incorrect. The statement I made was that there was standardisation of milk in the city of Brisbane. His statement is unfair and untrue. He has attributed a statement to me which I did not make and I ask for its withdrawal.

Mr. MADSEN: I accept the denial of the hon. member who complained about standardisation. How can the hon. member substantiate his claim? One is as bad as the other. I think it is absolutely an outrage that any hon. member should make loose statements involving a food so universally used.

Mr. Walsh: You would not agree that the standard of all the milk supplied is 3.8.

Mr. MADSEN: The hon. member is trying to put the bulking of milk on the same basis as standardisation. The bulking of milk commences on the farm when you mix one cow's milk with another, and again when

it is taken to the factory. That is bulking of milk. I ask any hon. member with practical experience to tell me how it could be avoided with pasteurisation, and the distribution of thousands of gallons of milk. The consumption in this city alone is 50,000 gallons, apart from the thousands of gallons supplied in country towns. Hon. members opposite have referred to bulking as standardisation. To carry their argument to its logical conclusion, each customer would have to be supplied with milk from the particular cow he nominated.

Mr. Walsh: Nobody is arguing against bulking.

Mr. MADSEN: It was thought previously that a home supply of milk from one cow was much safer than milk supplied from the output of a herd. It is now known definitely that it is better to draw milk from a herd than from a single cow, particularly if the single cow is infected with a disease unknown to the owner. In that way the previous conclusion has been reversed.

The hon. member for Bundaberg cannot get away from the charge he has made of standardisation. There must be bulking of milk. It cannot be avoided.

No sample from any factory in Queensland was below the legal minimum of 3.3 per cent., and the fat percentages of the pasteurised bottled milk and the raw bulk milk received from farmers were not significantly different so this shows standardisation is not practised, and confirms the observation of officers who have visited factories that malpractices are not occurring.

Mr. Walsh: If your officers tell you the milk is not standardised, they are misleading you.

Mr. MADSEN: The hon. member can go on making these charges, but I suggest, if he has any evidence to substantiate his charge, that he should make it outside this Chamber. He should be prepared to do that. The matter is of such importance to the public that, if any hon. member has any knowledge of that practice, he is in duty bound to report it.

Mr. Power: We did previously and the firm was closed down.

Mr. MADSEN: The hon. member is referring to something that happened some years ago. But he answered his own suggestion when he said that the company went out of business. That would happen now if any company followed that practice. Hon. members could imagine the tremendous public reaction that would follow substantiation of a charge against a company bottling milk in Brisbane that it was standardising or supplying milk below standard.

Mr. Power: We did not say below standard.

Mr. MADSEN: While I have no brief for these companies, I think we should be proud of the fact that in the southern hemisphere there is no milk treatment plant superior to those of the Brisbane companies. Any hon. member who is interested in this matter should visit these plants to see how they are conducted.

Mr. Power: I have visited them at 3 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. MADSEN: A factory which is exclusively engaged in pasteurising milk is debarred by law from having a separator, but what I intended to point out yesterday is that the industry has reached such a stage that it has to become as diversified as possible. There are factories that are most suitable for the manufacture of many products, and we are encouraging them to manufacture those products. It is desirable in the interests of the State that they should do so.

Mr. Walsh: You will admit that the department advised previously against separators being on the premises?

Mr. MADSEN: I do not know what the department advised previously, but in the light of experience it is desirable that they manufacture as many products as possible. On the other hand I agree that we must have the strictest supervision.

Mr. Power: You are giving them a machine to enable them to standardise.

Mr. MADSEN: The Bill allows such a machine, but there are many regulations covering the position. It will not be simple for a factory to engage in malpractices.

During the term of the previous Government the Act was amended to enable separators to be installed in factories which made products such as powdered milk. At the moment certain factories have separators. I agree this was desirable, and it enabled the most modern milk powder plant in the southern hemisphere to be erected at Gympie. We should be proud of that plant. It is essential that that factory should be allowed to have separators.

Mr. Walsh: It is engaged in a different industry.

Mr. MADSEN: We cannot permanently adopt the attitude of the hon. member merely because some factory did something years ago, when by doing so we would be robbing the industry of millions of pounds that would be received if other products were manufactured.

The intention of the Bill is entirely to enable Queensland factories to diversify the types of products they make and thus to assist our industry to be as efficient as possible. In that way factories will be able to meet and take advantage of fluctuating markets. Most of the plant in this industry is owned by co-operatives, and is a great credit to

them. I have always been pleased at the fact that a great number of factories are producer-owned co-operatively.

Surely it is in the interests of the economy of Queensland to do this. Do we want to prevent our factories from making products that give higher returns than butter, and so force such products to be made by factories in other States? We have seen what has happened during the last 12 months. During that period the butter and cheese industries were at their lowest ebb. Our industry representatives, who we claim are able to make fairly accurate forecasts, were very disturbed. During that period, however, the cheese industry has received much more encouragement on the export market than previously. It is only natural that those in the industry should try to diversify to cheese as much as possible in order to meet the demand and give the producer the highest possible return.

Mr. Walsh: Would you say that the Queensland public are getting high-grade cheese?

Mr. MADSEN: Yes.

Mr. Walsh: You would?

Mr. MADSEN: They are getting cheese of a quality as high as the previous Government would allow. If anybody can be charged with ham-stringing the dairying industry in this State, it is the hon. member for Baroona. When he was Minister in charge of prices, the industry was battling and was desirous of manufacturing cheese of the highest possible standard. However, the hon. member said, "No, you cannot have an increase in price to cover the extra manufacturing and maturing costs. You yourselves must carry them."

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. I draw the attention of the Minister—and I have repeatedly emphasised the fact—that when I was Attorney-General I was not responsible for the price that was fixed for any commodity. That was a matter entirely for the Commissioner of Prices.

Mr. MADSEN: I accept the hon. member's denial. However, I am sure he has not convinced anyone in the House, let alone the general public. Unfortunately for him, we know him too well.

Mr. Walsh: Surely you are not dictating to the Commissioner of Prices, are you?

Mr. MADSEN: No, it is not necessary to dictate to anyone who deals with these matters on a commonsense basis.

The hon. member for Mundingburra asked whether factories were regularly inspected. I assure him, and other hon. members who are associated with the industry, that factories are inspected regularly. Tests are taken not only at the beginning of the manufacturing operation, but at different points as the manufacturing proceeds. What more is required?

The hon. member spoke also about the standards of hygiene in factories. I referred yesterday to the introduction into factories of a good deal of stainless steel equipment, which lends itself to hygiene much more than the wooden equipment that was previously used, such as butter churns. I am very pleased to know that the factories that have installed stainless steel equipment are very satisfied with it.

In Brisbane alone, 120 visits were made by officers of my department last year to inspect milk factories and give advisory help. They take the samples themselves; certainly not samples given by the factory staff, as was suggested by the hon. member for Mundingburra. Just imagine an inspector going into a factory and being handed a couple of bottles of milk, as was suggested by the hon. member.

The hon. member referred also to Malanda milk. For his information, a senior dairy adviser is stationed at Malanda and a laboratory of the Division of Dairying of my department is also situated there. The whole of the operations of the factory are under regular check, and samples of milk are taken for examination in the laboratory. These tests are not only for fat, which the hon. member asked about, but for all aspects of hygienic and compositional quality of milk.

If there is any doubt in anyone's mind about inspections, I have here a very comprehensive list of those that are carried out. For example, for bottled pasteurised milk there are plate counts, coliform tests, phosphatase tests, keeping-quality tests, fat tests, and solids-not-fat tests. For raw milks from country depots there are methylene blue tests, to which I referred yesterday, and fat tests. For bulk tanker samples tested in the laboratory, there are methylene blue tests and fat tests. Similar tests are carried out on raw milk that is produced for vendors. In addition, there are thermoduric counts on raw milk and microscopic examinations.

In the case of bottled pasteurised cream, there are plate counts, coliform tests, phosphatase tests and fat tests. During the year 1957-58, no fewer than 44,945 tests were carried out by my department. In the light of that information, how can anyone suggest that the department is not doing its job?

I point out, of course, that it is not only a matter for the department. I say quite frankly that the factories themselves report any deficiencies very quickly. I know of factories in my own area that take a very definite stand on the quality of the milk supplied to them. In addition to the tests I have mentioned, tests of raw milk made by factories exceeded 500,000 in number.

Yesterday hon. members suggested that some people would be disturbed if they could not see the cream on top of the milk.

Mr. Walsh: I think you let the cat out of the bag.

Mr. MADSEN: If I did I showed that Queensland was following closely the scientific advances made in other countries. If hon. members opposite want to remain in the dark ages they are certainly advocating along the right lines. Most people want to take advantage of the advances made by science and want to see the State taking its place among the progressive countries of the world. That is what the Government are endeavouring to do in everything they bring before the House.

I remind hon. members that in Brisbane and throughout the rest of the State the standards of the buildings and equipment, as well as the processing of the market milk factories conform well with world standards. The pasteurisation plants in Brisbane have been commended by dairy experts from America and European countries as comparing more than favourably with any factory in their own countries. That is something we should be very proud of and certainly not condemn. I do not think anyone can present evidence that we are getting anything but the best in Brisbane and other centres with pasteurised milk. I am sure our western friends will be pleased with the efforts of the Port Curtis factory to supply the central west, Warwick, Toowoomba supply other western areas and that the Tableland factories supply the north and north western. They should be encouraged in every possible way. I strongly resent any suggestion that those people are trying to take down the public in any way.

As there seems to be some doubt about pasteurisation, I should like briefly to explain what takes place from the time milk is received from the milk transport trucks at the factory until it is ready for distribution to consumers. It actually takes place in all factories throughout the State from the smallest to the largest. Naturally the larger concerns have more efficient and more modern equipment, but even in the smallest the standard of hygiene is excellent in every particular. On arrival at the factory the farmers' milk is weighed and a sample taken for butter fat and milk quality tests. The milk then is either directly pasteurised or is cooled to a low temperature, placed in holding vats and held there pending pasteurisation. The pasteurisation process renders it safe from disease-producing bacteria and improves its keeping quality. It would be quite impracticable for large cities to be supplied with a safe milk without pasteurisation. Immediately after pasteurisation, the milk is bottled by a bottle-filling and capping machine. It is then put into crates and placed in a cold room where it is held at a temperature of about 40° F. awaiting distribution.

Apart from the quality, control checks are made by my department for both the composition of the milk and the hygienic conditions under which it was produced by the farmers; the Brisbane pasteurisation plants employ their own laboratory staff. It has been a wonderful boon to the consuming public that

those larger factories have chemists and other laboratory staff to test not only the raw milk but also the manufactured product. Samples of all bottles of pasteurised milk are submitted to quality tests by the trained staff. A qualified chemist is in charge of each laboratory and the equipment is itself submitted to daily checks to ensure that a satisfactory standard of hygiene is maintained. Furthermore, tests are made of samples of milk taken at different points during the processing. I am very satisfied with the method of taking those samples at the commencement of treatment and at different points along the line to check on any deterioration in quality.

A great deal has been said during the debate about the process of homogenisation, which has not yet come into general practice in Queensland. As I said earlier, it is almost universal in the U.S.A. and it is commonly applied in other overseas countries. Yesterday some hon. members seemed to be concerned that the quality of the milk might be affected by the treatment. It consists of putting the milk through a machine where the high pressure to which it is subjected breaks up the fat globules and this prevents the cream from rising to the surface of the milk. The treatment of the milk is such that the fat remains within the milk and does not rise to the surface.

Mr. Dufficy: Would this treatment improve the quality of the milk?

Mr. MADSEN: It would improve it in quality as regards the consumers' taste but not the actual quality of the product.

Mr. Dufficy: There would be a good deal of expense with this machine despite the fact that it will not improve the quality.

Mr. MADSEN: It does improve the quality as regards the consumers' taste. It means that the sale of milk is greatly improved in the countries where it is being used. The fat is uniformly distributed throughout the milk. Homogenised milk has a more creamy appearance than milk that is not so treated, and the flavour is more palatable. The fat content of the milk is the same as that of milk that is not homogenised, and its nutritive value is unimpaired. Nothing is lost but the fact that the fat is retained in the milk and does not rise to the surface means that the whole body of the milk is more acceptable to the user.

Mr. Hilton: No chemicals at all are used?

Mr. MADSEN: No chemicals at all.

The fact that homogenised milk is almost the only kind consumed in the United States of America where milk is so relished by the people shows that it is appreciated by consumers.

Some interest has been shown by Queensland milk pasteurisation factories in distributing milk in cartons. I have a few cartons

here for the benefit of hon. members. They show the type of carton in use overseas. Cartons are used only once. There is no such thing as washing a bottle. On his way to work the working man picks up one of these cartons instead of a bottle. He is not troubled with returning a bottle. Cartons are being used almost universally in America. They are filled with homogenised milk. Hon. members can see that "homogenised milk" is printed plainly on the carton. I have no doubt that within a few years much of the milk in Queensland will be packed this way.

Mr. Baxter: Cartons are being used extensively in the South.

Mr. MADSEN: Yes, they are being used already. Because of the difficulty of cartage and the risk of breakage one would think that bottles would be more costly. But strange to say cartons are a more costly pack than bottles.

Mr. Windsor: Cartons would not be so hygienic as bottles.

Mr. MADSEN: Yes, they claim that they are just as hygienic. I do not know that there is very much more to reply to. I was pleased to have the observations of the hon. member for Ithaca about cream. I assure him that the public is not being taken down in any way. They are getting a cream with a butterfat content of 18 per cent.

Mr. Walsh: At a higher price.

Mr. MADSEN: Price is not a matter that comes within my jurisdiction. I do not know how it is worked out. The industry separates cream into various fat standards. Perhaps consumers do not think that 18 per cent. butterfat content is sufficiently high for the product to be appreciated as cream. I assure the hon. member for Ithaca that I shall put his observations before those responsible for determining the standards. We have not expanded the cream trade to the full. Because of the present economic state of the dairying industry it is important that we sell to advantage every possible product of that industry with a view to giving the producer the greatest possible return, at the same time giving the consumer the product they require. If a fat content somewhere in between is required I shall be only too happy to look into that aspect of the matter.

I believe in the Bill myself. I know that the industry supports it. I realise that some hon. members opposite have fears about the Bill, but I assure them that it will be my desire to ensure that the legislation is enforced in such a way that no malpractices will occur. With all legislation of this nature naturally there are fears, but we shall do our best. Severe penalties are provided to deter people from breaking the law. After all, the cancellation of a licence is a very severe punish-

ment. When considerable funds are invested surely there could not be a more severe penalty than the cancellation of the licence.

Motion (Mr. Madsen) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Repeal of and new s. 20B; Separated milk in factories and depots—

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (12.2 p.m.): This clause gives the right to a factory to have separated milk in the factory or depot. It also provides that the Minister may permit any owner of the factory or depot to take delivery of and keep or deposit at that factory any separated milk. It is questionable whether such a provision is desirable. The Minister must agree that in the past there must have been justification for the provisions of the Act. The departmental officers continued to advise previous Governments that this should not be allowed. This advice was given to previous Governments by responsible officers of the department. It would not be altogether a matter of Government policy. The Government would not direct that these things be done unless they adopted the advice tendered to them by their departmental officers. It could be in this case that the Government and not the department have determined the policy.

Mr. Madsen: Who should determine policy?

Mr. WALSH: The Minister will agree that in regard to such a matter the people who are qualified to advise the Government are those who have had experience in handling these matters.

Mr. Madsen: It is a matter of how you deal with the advice.

Mr. WALSH: That may be. I am pointing out that over the years the provision has remained in the Act. The Minister must concede that the previous Minister had a very long experience and had a very good knowledge of the dairying industry and, acting on the advice of his departmental officers, he recommended to the Government that the policy should be that no separator be permitted on the premises.

Mr. Harrison: If he were here today he would not advocate that.

Mr. WALSH: It is all right for the hon. member for Darlington to say that but I do not know that the hon. member can speak for the ex-Minister. If there are loopholes that will permit of the adulteration of food there is always some who will take advantage of them.

Mr. Madsen: I suppose that would be possible in hotels and so on.

Mr. WALSH: Exactly. It has happened in hotels, and prosecutions have been launched. The Minister knows that a warm milk vendor would not be allowed to carry a drum of water on his vehicle. The Minister knows the meaning of the term "bulled-milk" and that prosecutions have been launched against those who indulged in that practice. It cannot be argued that a company would not resort to the same thing. The Minister engendered a great deal of heat this morning in his fight on behalf of the companies, and he said that hon. members on this side of the Chamber had accused companies of selling below-standard milk. That is not the case at all. The companies can add to bulk milk other milk from which the cream has been separated. Although the Minister would say that under this clause that is an offence, that in itself would not stop that practice. The companies would have to be caught. Taking into account his experience, the Minister's attempt to convey that milk has not been standardised is merely a reflection on the intelligence of the Committee. Even if the average test is 3.8 per cent., the Minister must know that the actual butter fat content of some milk was probably as high as 6 per cent. when it reached the factory. (Government laughter.) I am probably being just as ridiculous as the Minister, but he will agree with me if I put it in another way. Individual cows would produce milk containing that percentage of butter fat. Although that is put in the vats with the other milk, the bulk supply is of a lower standard.

The Minister could not truthfully deny that the companies extract a considerable proportion of cream from the milk to be sold, to bring the milk down to a standard of 3.8 per cent.

Mr. Madsen: What evidence have you to prove a damaging statement such as that?

Mr. WALSH: Then I ask the Minister to tell me where companies get the cream they sell.

Mr. Harrison: From the surplus milk, over-quota milk, and they purchase cream from other factories.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member has now got himself into a bit of a mess. The Minister should give figures for the excess milk, or over-quota milk, and the quantity of cream sold to the public, tinned or bottled. We would then know whether that amount of cream could be extracted from milk over the quota.

Mr. Madsen: Those figures have been available for years.

Mr. WALSH: I know certain figures are available, but the hon. member for Darlington, a man engaged in the industry, has tried to convey the impression that cream requirements are obtained from the excess quota of milk.

Mr. Harrison: And it is also turned into powdered milk.

Mr. WALSH: I know that separated milk is turned into powdered milk, and that the real food is probably in the separated milk, the proteins and other solids, but that does not overcome the fact that the housewife wants milk of the proper standard.

Mr. Madsen: And she is getting it.

Mr. WALSH: When milk poured from a bottle or a glass runs cleanly down the sides of the container, it is not of the proper standard, and the Minister knows that. Milk, whether in a glass or a bottle, clings to the side of the glass or bottle, but if a little water is added to it or separated milk particularly added to it, it will run cleanly off the sides of the glass or bottle.

The hon. member for Darlington has to put up the case for the companies and the factories, but we are trying to put up the case for the consumer. If he has no interest in the consumer and his rights, at least I have. Similarly, the hon. member for Ithaca referred to the lower grade of cream that is being supplied.

Mr. Harrison: That is provided for under Health Department regulations.

Mr. WALSH: It might be provided for in the regulations, but the housewife does not know that she is now getting cream containing 18 per cent. of butter fat instead of over 40 per cent.

Mr. Harrison: It is branded on it.

Mr. WALSH: In milk bread, the quantity of bread comes down and the price goes up, and that is what now happens in the case of cream.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) (12.11 p.m.): I wish again to voice my protest against the inclusion of this clause. Previously, during the debate, I referred to the standardisation of milk and I said that that would occur again if separators were allowed in the same premises. I want to make it quite clear that never at any time did I say that the milk was sub-standard. I said that it was standardised, and I repeat it.

Mr. Madsen interjected.

Mr. POWER: It is all very well for the Minister to say, "Make that statement outside." I have been invited before to make statements outside and I have made them. When the Labour Government took action to prevent standardisation of milk it was because one firm was standardising milk. Why give firms the opportunity of reverting to a practice that officers of the Department of Agriculture and Stock condemned before?

Mr. Harrison: The supervision was not good enough.

Mr. POWER: I am satisfied now that it will not be possible to supervise it properly. Queensland is a very big State, and I am not talking only of what occurs in Brisbane. Many parts of the State are inspected only periodically, and we know what took place in Brisbane. Pipes were carrying the separated milk to a part of the factory that contained the warm milk. This clause will reopen the door to that practice. Separating machines will come in again and separated milk will be allowed on the premises. The Minister says that in the new plant, cream will be kept in the same part of the factory as milk, which will make it still more difficult to police the Act. What value will it have? Under this Bill the milk factories are getting all the cream and the workers and consumers are getting the curds. There can be no justification for the measure. What harm has the present legislation done to the milk companies?

Mr. Madsen: What has the producer lost?

Mr. POWER: The producers are losing quite a lot as a result of the two prices for milk. The Minister led with his chin in asking that question. The sooner we make an investigation of the activities of a number of companies and the dairy farmers who supply them, the better it will be for the consumers. In some cases we found evidence that the producers were sending adulterated milk to the factories and prosecutions were launched.

Mr. Harrison: We are severe on that, too.

Mr. POWER: The hon. member says that they are severe on that. However, it did occur, and it was discovered only when tests were made. What is the justification for placing an instrument in the hands of people who can use it to the disadvantage of the consumers? After all, the consumers are the people who must be considered. The producer is being paid a price by the factory for standardised milk. My assertion is that milk today is standardised. I have never said that it is sub-standard. It is about .5 per cent. more than is required, although in some cases the butter-fat content of the milk would be very much greater.

The Minister tries to destroy our argument by saying that the milk is pooled. He made the remarkable admission that sub-standard milk was being mixed with standard milk. He is prepared to allow producers to send sub-standard milk to the factories so that it can be mixed with standard milk. What a remarkable admission!

Mr. Harrison: That is something that occurs very infrequently.

Mr. POWER: I say there is no justification for the provision in the Bill that opens the door to dishonest practices. Such practices were discovered on a previous occasion and the door had to be closed. Now it is being opened again.

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Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Stock) (12.17 p.m.): The hon. member for Bundaberg spoke about a factory keeping milk on its premises. I point out that the Minister will have to issue a permit, and naturally he will not do that unless the circumstances warrant it.

Mr. Power: You may not always be the Minister.

Mr. MADSEN: That is so, but we must take it for granted that any person who is elected to the office of Minister for Agriculture and Stock would administer the Act. The keeping of milk occurs mostly where one factory gets separated milk from another. Not every factory with separated milk goes in for manufacturing, and it may sell the separated milk to another factory that is engaged in manufacturing.

The change of policy has also been mentioned. I do not know what the previous advice was but on this occasion, taking all the circumstances into consideration, the departmental officers regard as advisable the step that is now being taken. However, certain reservations have been made and severe penalties are provided. I point out, too, that it would be very difficult for a factory to engage in malpractices. In large concerns where numbers of men are employed, it would be virtually impossible to switch quickly over to dishonest practices without that fact becoming generally known. As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Baroona himself said yesterday that he had received information from an employee in a factory that was standardising milk. It is impossible to have a number of men working in a factory without publicity being given to the fact that something improper is taking place.

I assure the House that the conditions applying to separated milk will be very stringent. It is ridiculous to suggest that it should be stored across the road from the pasteurising plant, which is equipped with steam and all the other requirements. Surely it should be enough to say that the separated milk must be kept in a different room from other products and to lay down stringent conditions. I point out that a good deal can be done by regulations.

Mr. Power: You said that inspectors will be there while the separating is being done, but there is nothing to stop the factory from doing something wrong after the inspectors have gone.

Mr. MADSEN: I assure the hon. member that we will take very good care of that.

With regard to milk that comes into Brisbane for the purpose of supplying cream, I point out that large quantities go to the ice-cream trade. The industry, of course, has never been very happy about the two prices. Rather than the consumer getting the benefit at the expense of the producer, the latter should be getting a price based on the production costs of milk. If, for example, he

is producing 120 gallons of milk and his quota is only 90 gallons, he allows the extra 30 gallons to come in as manufacturing milk. We have not been very happy about that. It is something that grew up when hon. members opposite were in Government, and they now make so much noise about it.

Mr. Aikens: He treated every suggestion with contempt.

Mr. MADSEN: That is the position. It is all right to criticise us but he carried a tremendous responsibility in regard to this very matter.

Mr. Power: In what way?

Mr. MADSEN: I remember that when we went along asking for a price based on cost for whole milk he was the first to tell us that instead of getting the raw milk price we should be getting the manufactured milk price. I know I must not develop that line of argument but that is what happened.

Mr. Power: I never made that statement.

Mr. MADSEN: I remember being on a deputation to the Minister at the time and I will swear before anybody that we had numerous discussions on this subject. Nevertheless that does not make the argument any better and we are out of order in discussing the subject now.

There is no incentive for the producer to supply under-standard milk. After all, he is paid on the butter-fat test. It must be in his own interests to supply milk of the highest possible fat standard.

Mr. Aikens: I have been informed that that is not quite true. If some milk is low in fat standard and they have other milk above the required fat standard, they mix the two and payment is made on gallonage. They merely drop a letter to the farmer who sent in the under-standard milk.

Mr. MADSEN: I am not aware of that in any factory. It would impose a definite penalty on the producer of high-quality milk. I could not imagine anyone agreeing to that basis of payment. It would encourage the production of a great volume of milk without regard to quality and I am sure it would not be done.

Mr. Aikens: I have seen the returns the dairy farmers get and there is nothing about the test of the milk in them, merely the gallonage.

Mr. MADSEN: Different companies have their own methods but for the most part the basis is determined by the producers themselves. If that is the way they determine it, it is not for us to interfere; but I know—and I am sure the hon. member for Darlington will agree—that the milk is mostly paid for on the butter-fat basis.

Mr. Walsh: Why not separate the low-grade milk and use it for the cream requirements and give the consumer the benefit of the higher-grade milk.

Mr. MADSEN: Does the hon. member suggest we should pick out all the Jersey herds in the district?

Mr. Walsh: It would be a good idea.

Mr. MADSEN: With the standard laid down at 3.3 and the people having the very high-quality milk—

Mr. Walsh: That is the minimum.

Mr. MADSEN: If the hon. member for Bundaberg thinks the consumers would be prepared to pay a premium for milk testing much higher than the standard, the industry would be quite prepared to oblige. After all, standards have been laid down for milk, as they have been for other products. Considering the quantity of milk that comes into Brisbane and other cities in the State we should be really proud that there are so few complaints. After all, how many complaints do we get? Not many. I think that on the morning after Christmas when he found the bad milk the judgment of the hon. member for Bundaberg might not have been just as sound as it would be on most occasions.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 and 7, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

AGRICULTURAL BANK (LOANS) BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (12.29 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make further provision relating to the making of loans for the purposes of primary production by the Corporation of the Agricultural Bank, and for other purposes.”

The purpose of the Bill is to extend the limit of loans that will be permissible to individual owners and occupiers of farm land, and also to streamline the lending procedure. Because of the nature of the Bill I think it might help the Committee if I were to make a brief historical survey of the development of the Agricultural Bank procedure since it was first introduced.

In order to promote the occupation, cultivation, and improvement of farming land in Queensland the State commenced its advances to farmers with the inception of the Agricultural Bank of Queensland in 1902 under a Board of Trustees.

The Acts governing such advances were subsequently amended and liberalised from time to time. Prior to the passing of the Agricultural Bank Acts Amendment Act in 1914 the position briefly was that advances might be made for any of the following purposes:—

(a) Payment of liabilities already existing with respect to a holding or the balance of any purchase money in respect of the holding or of any stock machinery or implements therefor.

(b) Agricultural, dairying, grazing, horticultural or viticultural pursuits on the holding.

(c) Adding to the improvements already made on the holding.

(d) The purchase of stock machinery or implements.

Advances could be made up to 12s. in the £1 of the fair estimated value of the holding and the improvements made or proposed to be made thereon, after allowing for any advances previously made and then owing.

In addition advances to the full value of the undermentioned improvements and for the separate amounts set out against each class of improvement could be made:—

(a) Buildings £40

Seeing that that included a farmer's home, the £40 limit in those days must impress everyone as having been almost impudently low.

Mr. Windsor: With a Labour Government.

Mr. HILEY: No. They did not improve it as the hon. member will see—

(b) Ringbarking, clearing, fencing, draining or water conservation £200

I mention those limits for a purpose. The picture will be that the administration has limited itself to many narrow limits in its operation. One of the characteristics of the new approach is to terminate all these sectional classifications and narrow limits, and to say, "Here is a certain new limited value; it is up to the bank to administer it on that figure according to its assessment of the needs of the farmer."

The maximum amount which could be advanced to any one person was £800, and priority was given to applications for advances not exceeding £200. All loans were repayable over a period of 25 years during the first five years of which interest only, at the rate of £5 per cent. per annum, was payable. In order to give effect to this provision, power was included, in the case of advances on the security of mortgages over grazing homesteads or grazing farms, for an extension of the term of the lease or the issuing of a new lease for a period equivalent to that for which the advance had still to run.

On 23 October, 1914, the Acts were again amended and the following further provisions were added:—

(1) Power to make an advance up to £200 for unspecified purposes to a bona fide settler working the holding for the purpose of agricultural, dairying, grazing, horticultural, or viticultural pursuits, subject to there being sufficient security in the value of the holding.

No advance for unspecified purposes could be made on the security of a mortgage of a prickly pear selection unless the selection was entirely free from prickly pear at the date of the application for the advance.

(2) The rate up to which advances could be made was increased from 12s. in the £1 to 13s. 4d. in the £1. The period of advances remained the same with the exception of advances on a grazing homestead or a grazing farm, which now were required to be repaid within the period of the lease, the provision giving the power to have the term of the lease extended being repealed.

The Queensland Government Savings Bank Act of 1916 dissolved the Board of Trustees of the Agricultural Bank and handed the business over to the Corporation of the Commissioner of the Savings Bank created under the 1916 Act.

The provisions relating to advances to farmers were further liberalised in that measure which was introduced by the then Labour Government. The principal increased benefits were—

An increase of the maximum amount of advance to any one person from £800 to £1,200; an increase in the rate of general advances from 13s. 4d. in the £1 to 15s. in the £1 on the fair estimated value of the land and the improvements made or proposed to be made thereon, after allowing for amounts already advanced and still owing; the removal of any priority to applicants.

Previously applications for advances not exceeding £200 received priority. A further benefit was the increase in advances to the full value of improvements. Buildings increased from £40 to £80. I repeat it still was impudently low as a rate for the purpose for which it was directed. For well or bore and lifting power, £150, were added. The previous maximum amount allowed under this section was £20, which amount was increased to £300.

The limit of advances for unspecified purposes was lifted from £200 to £400. A new limit was introduced for the purchase of approved dairy stock, £100, if 35 acres of land was cleared, fenced and under Rhodes grass or other approved grasses. Losses on advances on certain prickly-pear lands were to be made good from consolidated revenue.

It was considered by the Government at that time that the assistance given to beginners without capital under the even

more liberal provisions of the Queensland Government Savings Bank Act, was insufficient. Consequently the Government of the day amended and liberalised the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act of 1914 so that certain settlers with little or no security to offer for long-term loans under the Agricultural Bank and Savings Bank Act could obtain short-term loans from the Department of Agriculture and Stock for the purchase of dairy cattle, sheep and pigs and for the erection of silos. In an effort to liberalise advances, a fresh lending department was set up, the Department of Agriculture and Stock, but experience since has shown that even this did not go far enough and that the practice of two departments making advances for similar objects was unsatisfactory.

Mr. Walsh: That was in 1914?

Mr. HILEY: The Act was introduced in 1919.

The Act was consolidated in 1923, and the purpose of the Amending Act of that year was the consolidation of the provisions of the State Advances Act of 1916, in so far as it related to advances to settlers, and of the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Acts, 1914 to 1919, and in addition the liberalising of the provisions for advances already made under those Acts. The 1923 Act made provision for the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock and his successors in office, representing the Crown, to become a corporation sole by the name of the Corporation of the Agricultural Bank and generally advances by the State to co-operative companies, associations, and to farmers and others were made by that bank. The new bank also took over all the functions in connection with existing advances to settlers by the State Advances Corporation under the State Advances Act, and by the Minister under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Acts. Advances for workers' dwellings and advances in relation to the Clermont flood relief were not interfered with. Also the advances to discharged soldiers, the provisions of which were administered by the Department of Lands, were not affected, although the bank continued to act as agent for the Minister for Lands in that connection.

The Act was further amended in 1929 and 1931, to provide that the bank would not be liable either directly or indirectly for the payment of any rates and other dues or for the payment of any arrears of rates or other dues levied or which may hereafter be levied by a local authority. It will be noted when I outline the Bill that that provision has been dropped.

Moreover, should the bank in the exercise of its powers enter into and take possession of the mortgaged land and improvements concerned, such land shall be deemed to be absolutely freed and unencumbered of any rates or other dues which may be owing, provided, however, that such arrears of rates

or other dues shall remain owing by such mortgagor and be recoverable from such mortgagor by process of law accordingly.

The effect of that amendment was to divorce the local authority from the subject land, the ratable land. In effect the local authority was told, "You can no longer attach that land for your rates. Recover it from the mortgagor if you can, out of his other property and estate, but you cannot enforce against the bank the rates liability against the ratable land."

Mr. Duggan: Rates on bank property?

Mr. HILEY: No, the rates on property mortgaged to the bank.

Authority was given to the manager of the bank or any inspector or other officer of the bank, or other person appointed by the manager to conduct sales of property by public auction. That principle is being continued.

The Act was again amended in 1934, primarily to provide for the creation of the Rural Assistance Board which had power to inquire into and consider applications for advances and to recommend or refuse applications.

A further amendment in 1938 provided mainly for the co-ordination of Bank Acts and the creation of a Bureau of Rural Development, which made the Agricultural Bank Board the controller of bank activities.

In 1943 the Act was further amended. Apart from machinery amendments, advance limits under the Act were raised to a new aggregate of £5,000.

In 1944 a further amendment co-ordinated various lending Acts administered by other departments and made the Agricultural Bank the sole State lending authority.

In 1945 a further amendment provided for the establishment of ex-servicemen on their own properties and granted them a three-year interest-free period on advances on land mortgaged.

In 1946 a further amendment provided for the Commonwealth Re-establishment Loans, and in 1947 a still further amendment altered the definition of "company" to include co-operative societies. Then again, in 1951, the limits, which up to that time had been raised to £5,000, were raised to £7,500.

From this it will be noted that the present Act embraces a long history of amendments, of which there are 13 since 1923. The present structure is a rambling one, and the intention of the Bill that I am bringing forward is to streamline the functions of the Agricultural Bank as a lending authority and remove a good deal of the sectional restrictions with which that policy has been hedged.

To give the Committee an idea of the restrictive limits over all advances, under Section 18 advances to companies were limited to two-thirds of the cost (or the total

cost under special conditions) over 16 years. The Bill removes the limitation on terms but retains the two-thirds limit.

Section 22 of the existing Act provides a limit of £1,700 to co-operative companies for agricultural objects. Section 27 applies a general limit on the aggregate advance that is possible either by advance on first mortgage or in any other way, and at the moment imposes a top limit of £7,500 at 16s. in the £1 on the value of the security.

Mr. Hilton: Do you propose to increase that?

Mr. HILEY: Yes. Section 27 (3) provides for advances up to a limit of £1,250 on the full value of the security for improvements. Section 28 provides for special advances on security other than first mortgage, and gives the following limits—

Dairy cattle	£800
Separator and dairying plant ..	£500
Agricultural machinery and plant	£2,000
Pigs	£200
Sheep	£2,000
Beef cattle	£2,000
Farm horses	£200
Grass and fodder crop seed ..	£100
Pineapple and banana suckers, etc.	£300

Section 29 provides advances for working expenses but limits those to £1,000. Section 29A provides for £750 for irrigation purposes, and Section 29AA provides a limit of £2,000 (not exceeding two-thirds of the cost) for plant for agricultural contractors. Section 29AB is a special provision with a limit of £3,000 to companies for fodder production purposes.

I outlined all those separate detailed qualifications and limits to give the Committee an idea of how the discretion of the Bank Board in administering the Act involved a tortuous study of a whole series of Acts passed over many years and a very careful measuring under the appropriate sections of what could be lent for what purpose. But the real essence of the matter was that, no matter how you qualified sectionally, £7,500 was your limit. It meant that the administration of the Bank was made much more difficult because it had to make separate advances under separate sections and, in addition, often had to keep separate accounts. The customer of the bank who borrowed under perhaps four or five sections, instead of getting one account that told him exactly where he stood when he asked the bank for a statement of his position, had to be given a copy of as many as five ledger accounts, and I understand even more than that on some occasions.

Mr. Walsh: Would you agree that some of those limits would have to be related to the total available funds?

Mr. HILEY: There must be a broad control over lending policy, related to the available resources of the Bank. Whether you exercise that control broadly within a total limit or break it up into a whole host of limits, you must finish at the same end. In one case you get there with a broad jump, while in the other you get there with a hop, step and jump.

Mr. Power: Which is the better?

Mr. HILEY: In my opinion, the broad jump.

Mr. Lloyd: You want to help the greatest number of people possible with the available funds.

Mr. HILEY: That is so. We do not propose to make the sky the limit.

The first principle of the Bill covers the advance limit. The present limit of £7,500 will be replaced by a figure that can be fixed by the Governor in Council from time to time, but it will start at £10,000. While the Governor in Council, according to how he measures the available funds, can increase or reduce the figure, he cannot reduce it below £10,000. As I say, the present limit of £7,500 is increased to £10,000, and whether the figure goes above that will depend entirely on the available funds. The Governor in Council will have authority to increase the lending limit, so that new limits can be prescribed.

Mr. Walsh: Don't you think there is some danger in that principle?

Mr. HILEY: Why?

Mr. Walsh: Don't you think Parliament should have some say in these matters?

Mr. HILEY: An Order in Council has to be tabled in Parliament, as the hon. member well knows, and Parliament can then deal with it.

Mr. Walsh: But introducing the principle into a measure such as this is dangerous.

Mr. Lloyd: Wouldn't it be possible to have a specific case?

Mr. HILEY: No.

Mr. Walsh: You would not bring in an Order in Council for every case in which you exceeded the limit?

Mr. HILEY: No. If, for example, the limit was £10,000 and the Agricultural Bank Board thought that the available funds allowed for a higher figure, and if I recommended to the Governor in Council that the limit be lifted to £15,000, an Order in Council would go through. That would then be the individual limit applying to all future borrowings. The Bill will in no way allow limits to be fixed for individual cases.

The new limit of £10,000 applies to applications by individual owners or occupiers. In the case of co-operative companies, commodity boards and contractors with plant and machinery who have firm contracts, there

will be no limit. Even under the existing law, the limit does not apply to many loans of that nature. The only limit that will be apply—and the only direction that will be given—is £10,000, or as varied upwards by the Governor in Council from time to time.

By the next principle of the Bill, instead of a man having three, or four, or five accounts according to the sectional purposes for which he requires the money, he will have only one account; the advances will be aggregated. That will mean a great simplification of the work of the Agricultural Bank. Clients of the bank are often bewildered by the series of statements rendered and have difficulty in interpreting or deciphering them. Their task, too, will be greatly simplified. They will be put in exactly the same position as a client with an overdraft at any other bank, who is given a slip showing one total.

Mr. Duggan: Would a man with, say, five accounts receive the statements at different times of the year or at the same time? Could that happen, or does it happen?

Mr. HILEY: It could. So I am inclined to think that the reducing of statements to half-yearly periods, to regular balance periods, is a great advantage. Under the present arrangement, if a man wants to know how he stands at any time and asks the bank for his statement up to date, the bank will ask him to come back, say, in an hour, and then he will be given five separate pieces of paper. I can assure hon. members that some farmers have been hopelessly bewildered when trying to find out where they stood with the Agricultural Bank. Under the Bill, they will be given one piece of paper setting out their position in the aggregate.

At the moment the bank operates on fixed interest rates the amount depending on the time each loan is entered upon. Whether interest rates go up or down the clients pay the fixed rates contracted for. The Bill provides for flexible rates of interest to be fixed from time to time. It is the intention of the Government to work at the level of margin that we are now following—the present rate, which has been in operation all the time we have been in power and for some time before we came into power, namely 5½ per cent. on new advances and 4 per cent. on War Service Land Settlement advances. Unless there is a vast change in the cost of loan money we will continue to work at that level. If money becomes cheaper the rates should go down; if it becomes dearer, necessarily they will rise. However, we intend to preserve as long as we can the present rates consistent with their correct relationship to the cost of money to the Government, which they in turn use and lend.

Mr. Burrows: What about existing loans?

Mr. HILEY: There will be no interference with any existing account.

Mr. Walsh: That is a contract.

Mr. HILEY: That is a contract and it will be honoured. Interest is now being charged at contracted intervals and reductions operate only at those intervals.

A new principle is being introduced in terms of which clients will pay interest on the daily balance. If a man harvests a good crop and it suits him to pay in money more quickly, he will reap the benefit of reduced interest. Charging interest on the daily balance is the fairest method and it also gives an incentive to reduce the debt. The client will know that if he pays today instead of tomorrow he will save a day's interest. The present system gives no such incentive.

Mr. Lloyd: What was used previously—a yearly balance?

Mr. HILEY: Reductions would take place only at periods determined in the negotiations; interest would not otherwise be adjusted. If a man paid a fortnight early he did not get the benefit, whereas under the new provision he will.

Mr. Walsh: That will mean much more detailed work.

Mr. HILEY: With machine accounting it is quite simple to deal with the fractions. On the whole the saving with aggregated accounts will far outweigh the little extra work entailed in daily balances.

Mr. Burrows: You will get the benefit of the man paying the money in.

Mr. HILEY: That is right.

I repeat what I said earlier; there will be no sectional advance limits. Under the Bill the Bank will make advances by fixing limits within the top limit allowed as it measures the property and the stock. On that measurement, it will give the applicant a limit and he will work up to it. There will be no question of so much a pig or so much a horse or so much a cow or so much for grass seed and niggardly separate section approaches.

Mr. Duggan: What is the maximum—how many shillings in the £1?

Mr. HILEY: We leave that entirely to the bank administration. There is no direction and no limitation on that.

The Bill cancels the privilege the bank enjoyed with rates, liens and judgments. I mentioned rates earlier. In one or two areas in the State—and I believe Nambour was one—the finances of the council were sadly dented in one area in which rates were owing on a number of properties secured to the Agricultural Bank. The council could not enforce its powers to collect against the subject land. We think that it is undesirable to establish a Government lending institution in a privileged and protected position that allows it to go beyond what would normally be a prudent lending basis and then to rest on its privileged position for rates, etc. The non-payment of rates is a factor in the credit

situation of a borrower that a prudent lending institution should be compelled to take into account. The Bill will deny any further excusing of rates on loans made under the Bill. Existing loans will not be affected but there will be no protection for rates with new loans.

Mr. Walsh: Will that put the Agricultural Bank in the same position as private banks?

Mr. HILEY: Yes, exactly the same position as the Commonwealth Bank or the private banks. Strangely enough there has not been a howl about one or two other matters. For example the Agricultural Bank was protected against liens. If a customer did not pay a tradesman for building work and the tradesman exercised his workman's lien to recover his wages the bank was protected. It was protected against liens and even judgments of the court that normally would take priority over a mortgage.

Mr. Burrows: In the event of bankruptcy would not the wages take priority?

Mr. HILEY: Not as against the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Burrows: Notwithstanding the Commonwealth law of bankruptcy?

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member might have a point there. The previous law presumed to give the bank complete protection against rates, liens, judgments, etc. These privileges will not be given under the Bill.

Mr. Walsh: The protection may have been given on the principle that it should not apply to the Crown.

Mr. HILEY: We do not think it was a good principle and we are taking it out of the Act. All existing advances can continue unaltered. If a man has a loan from the Agricultural Bank, its term, rate of interest—every feature of his present contract—can continue, if he so desires. We propose to deal with all new applications under the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Burrows: If the terms are more attractive would he have the right to transfer?

Mr. HILEY: I was coming to that. Transfers will be permitted but not enforced. A man with three or four accounts might say, "I am bewildered by all this, I would rather come under the new Bill and have all my loans consolidated, having interest charged on the daily balance." That will be permitted administratively. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent a customer from going to the bank and asking, "Can I switch from three or four old accounts to one new account?" I am sure that the bank would readily say, "Yes." Nobody will be forced to do it. We take the view that if the bank has made a contract with a customer and the customer wants to work it

out, that is his just right and no-one should interfere with it. There will be no enforcement about it.

Mr. Burrows: How would he know?

Mr. Duggan: You would need to circularise all the clients.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. The word will be spread around sufficiently. We hope that we will be able to work our way out of this tortuous accumulation of 30 or 40 years of horses, cows, grass seeds and all the rest of it and get to a basis that really is modelled on the lending authority of the Commonwealth Bank. The main purpose of the Bill will be to simplify the administration within the Agricultural Bank itself, and simplify the picture presented by the accounts statement to the customers, and provide that extended limit which we feel, having regard to the changed features of agricultural development, will be needed to give assistance to people engaged in agricultural production. Since its inception the bank has played a very important part in assisting the development of new areas. As a recent example, hon. members will remember the number of farms opened in the St. George irrigation area. I asked the manager to let me know what percentage of those irrigation settlers sought Agricultural Bank assistance, and he told me that at least four out of every five were customers. That repeats what has happened in many other parts of the State, whether it be new sugar lands, new dairying areas, or tobacco farms somewhere else, the Agricultural Department has played an important part in its early development, whereas some trading institutions have been more inclined to sit back and wait to see how the place developed before they committed themselves. The bank has been a useful instrument on the odd occasion that arises when it is a great advantage to have some experienced institution. I remind the House of what happened as a result of the cyclone at Bowen last year. Through the Agricultural Bank we were able to get small-crop growers quickly back into production. The bank has been a very useful instrument and it has done a very useful job. The same applies to drought relief. When the drought hit the dairying and sugar areas last year the bank acted as the instrument of the State for measuring the need and collating it and working in collaboration with the sugar mills or the dairy companies to organise drought relief. More recently much work has been done in the development of small-scale irrigation areas as a result of the Act brought in 12 months ago, and now popularly known as the Act dealing with farm water supplies. The bank has been a very useful instrument in administering that development.

Mr. Hilton: It is a pity that it has not a few more million pounds at its disposal.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, indeed. The bank has advanced an amount totalling £13,000,000 and the limiting factor is what share of the

State loan funds we can afford to give to it. Over recent years the bank has been receiving in loan money each year from £1,000,000 to £1,500,000. The one regret I have is that it does not look likely that in the near future we will be able substantially to increase that figure. We could do it only by stopping other developmental work. While we want to keep going with big irrigation development and Public Works programmes and hydro-electric projects, it makes it impossible to supply more than £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 for Agricultural Bank development. Those other pressures, limit what the Government can give to the bank, and the pressures from many farmers prevent a lifting of the amount above £10,000 at this stage.

Hon. members who have read the Payne report will note that Mr. Payne detected the need for heavier advances, particularly for those holding green brigalow blocks. He measured the need to be as high as £15,000. We should like to lift it to that limit, but the Government recognise the point made by the hon. members for Kedron and Ithaca that it is not the purpose of the bank to serve very well only a few people and to leave the great number without help. It will remain at that figure until a survey of the financial position reveals that it is convenient to raise the limit. That is the Government's approach.

I must mention a further point, which is to the credit of the bank. At the moment it is charging 5½ per cent. on new advances and 4 per cent. on advances to war service land settlers with a concession of interest-free advances in some of the earlier years. Because of that and because of administration cost, the bank is able to return to the Treasury about 3½ per cent. on the money made available to it, which is not as much as the Government are obliged to pay for loan funds.

Mr. Duggan: Have you a figure for the appropriations to the bank last year?

Mr. HILEY: I have the figure here. I shall get it for the hon. member. From the 1958 report it will be seen that the bank received £1,550,000 in loan money, including loan money that comes in debenture form through savings bank deposits, and £300,000 for war service land settlement loan.

Mr. Duggan: Returns are flowing in all the time.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. The return to the Treasury that year amounted to £289,000. The loans to the bank require repayment over a period, and are not static. The returns to the Treasury amounted to £289,000, so that the net gain to the Agricultural Bank that year in extra working capital was about £1,500,000.

Some hon. members may feel that the performance of the Agricultural Bank is not good in that it loans money at ½ per cent. margin over the long-term bond rate, and can return only 3½ per cent., but I point out that

not all the money is loaned at 5½ per cent. Much of it is loaned at 4 per cent., with certain concessions. The bank itself is administered for only 17s. 6d. per cent., and that operating cost is without parallel in Australia. From what I have been able to discover, the Agricultural Bank in Queensland is run at a cheaper cost than any comparable institution in Australia, which is to its credit.

Mr. Duggan: It has no ornate head office.

Mr. HILEY: No.

I have given a fair outline of the history and development of this exceedingly useful institution. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. DUGGAN (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (2.24 p.m.): With some reservations, I think we can give the Bill our warm approval. I am indebted to the Minister for his very interesting survey of the developments that have occurred in the establishing of the banking institution, and the board of trustees which was established for the purpose of promoting rural development. The survey in very convenient form indicates in chronological sequence the developments over the years, and, because of the deteriorating value of money in the last 50 years, the need for periodical amendments of the law to increase the limit of advances. The limit has grown from £200 to £10,000. Certainly during some of these periods cognisance has been taken of the need to extend the bank's opportunities for lending to fields not previously covered.

I think the Minister is to be commended upon his approach to simplifying the procedure. I have advocated in this House that when legislation is being introduced we should try to avoid, if possible, coming back later to amend the law merely because of some administrative necessity. That has been recognised in the Bill by giving to the Governor in Council the power to increase the advance from £10,000 to a higher amount. When we give approval to that, we must see that there is some qualification of it, but personally I approve of that principle. I think it is unwise to deny to people in necessitous circumstances the opportunity of fair and sympathetic consideration by the Government because of the inability of the Government in power to fit into its legislative programme a small amendment that may be necessary, and that does happen on many occasions. If the Bill is introduced mainly because of circumstances that are known to all serious-minded people, it seems to me to be wrong that we should have to wait for the sanction of Parliament to do it. When I make that observation, I should qualify it by saying that if we do give these increased powers to the Governor in Council, there may be a lessening of interest in parliamentary discussion and in the general administration of the State, and it has been said outside this House that the decline of parliamentary institutions throughout the

Commonwealth of Nations is due primarily to the increasing power of the Executive. I remember saying, as a very enthusiastic member of the A.L.P., that the place of a member in the House was merely a sounding board for promotion to Cabinet rank. I was reprimanded for that and obliged to listen to a long exposition of the powers of Parliament, and I was also informed privately that I was off the rails on that occasion.

Increasingly I think we have to remember and acknowledge that the administration of the country is carried out by the Executive side of the Government and less and less by the parliamentary side, because that is so in fact. The strain of our other parliamentary duties, particularly when we are in Opposition, makes it difficult for us when Parliament is in Session to examine with care all the administrative actions of the Government. True it is that, under the powers of the Governor in Council, the Orders in Council must be tabled and opportunity given to debate any substantial change in the policy of the Government. But we must ensure that we are given ample time to consider these Orders in Council when they are tabled, and if we feel that the Executive have taken what we think is an imprudent step. I think that is a reasonable opportunity under the Standing Order for debate. Although I am not automatically in favour of surrendering in any way the powers of Parliament—I do not believe in that at all, because I believe that at all time Parliament must retain control—I believe that I should be wrong if I criticised the Treasurer for embodying in a Bill a proposal that has much to commend it. On many occasions we are obliged to amend the law because of some demonstrable administrative requirements. We maintain a Parliamentary institution and staff which, with the cost of printing Bills, is increasingly large, and I think if possible we should avoid some of the cost if we can.

I heartily applaud the proposed simplification of accounts. I was surprised to learn that, because of the dissection within the department, it was necessary to send out as many as five separate accounts. Consequently, I believe that this provision will be of benefit to the Bank and its clients. Whenever money is required it is channelled into a particular fund, and it matters little to the recipient from what account it comes. The same remarks apply to repayments to the Bank. Irrespective of whether it is an advance for, say, improvements or the acquisition of additional land, all that the borrower is concerned about is knowing the extent of his financial obligation to the Bank.

The provision increasing the limit from £7,500 to £10,000 immediately and giving power to the Governor in Council to increase the amount, brings me to the next point. We have not been told that there will be a corresponding increase of 25 per cent. in the volume of loan money available to the Bank, so that I should like to know whether

the increase in the limit will reduce the number of people to whom the Bank's facilities can be made available. We should not increase the limit if its effect will be to limit the number of people who can use the Bank's facilities. I do not think it can be denied that the Bank will exercise its prerogative and provide advances in accordance with the increased limit, but unless it has additional funds available to it it must be restricted in the field of its operations. I should like the Treasurer in his reply, to tell us whether it is proposed that the Bank shall receive additional funds from some source to cope with the increased demand.

Another matter with which I should like to deal is the general response to this measure of people engaged in industry. How far can we be expected to go in providing help such as this on a subsidised basis? After all, that is what it amounts to. The Treasurer has said that the funds are earning only about 3½ per cent., so that we are subsidising every borrower by the difference between what the money costs us and what we charge for it. When we get up into large amounts, we should ask ourselves whether it is the function of a State to channel a disproportionate amount of its funds to people who could probably get credit through the usual bank channels.

A man engaged in primary industry will be entitled to an advance of perhaps £10,000 or, by Order in Council, up to £15,000; the Treasurer has said that in certain circumstances there is no limit. Consequently, if people engaged in primary industry are permitted to use amounts of £10,000 or more on a subsidised basis, people engaged in other forms of industry may think they have some claim on the Government and are entitled to similar assistance. I know that it has not been the purpose of this legislation to do very much in that direction, except perhaps in assistance rendered by the Secondary Industries Division and Government guarantees to help new enterprises.

The same principle is enunciated by the Federal authorities in their Repatriation Act. They give people very large sums for land settlement purposes while other people who have made exactly the same physical sacrifice while serving in the armed forces cannot hope for the same help if they are not engaging in farming pursuits.

That brings me to my next observation that there is an obligation on the trading banks to accept a greater share of the responsibility in helping in the development of the country. The Treasurer made a very interesting observation when he said that recent inquiries elicited the fact that four out of five settlers in the St. George area had been helped by the Agricultural Bank. When we consider that the total funds available to the Agricultural Bank are less than £2,000,000, it is wrong for the trading banks to adopt the attitude that it is the State's responsibility to provide most of the funds

required for this purpose. Public attention should be directed to the obligation of the trading banks to help in the development of industry. Whether the Government are Labour or Liberal, predominantly commerce is conducted by private enterprise in Queensland and in Australia and it should not be the obligation of the Agricultural Bank, and of the taxpayers, to keep on financing it. The responsibility is primarily one for the trading banks to discharge.

The trading banks have, to an increasing extent, interested themselves in hire purchase by the acquisition of shares in various organisations. The charge is being made—and I think it can fairly be made—that they are channelling more and more of their funds into those activities.

I do not think it would be wide of the mark to say that the inquiry that was approved by the Treasurer and his colleagues into the ramifications of hire purchase in the State may have been triggered off by discussions within the Country-Liberal Caucus about the inability of farmers to get all the financial help they needed through the trading banks for the purchase of tractors and other earth-moving equipment. If my memory serves me correctly, when the Premier announced the institution of the inquiry, he said that caucus had considered the difficulties farmers had in securing finance for their purposes. I understand that during my absence the report of the inquiry has been circulated. I have not read it yet but I shall do so later with a great deal of interest.

No doubt the trading banks consider the provision of finance for new farming development purposes to be outside their normal function, and they enjoy some protection under the Commonwealth Constitution and the relevant Acts of Parliament. They are given certain rights and privileges. Their numbers cannot be increased willy-nilly. You cannot go along and get a charter to establish a new bank. It is perhaps unfortunate that we in Queensland have not the opportunity to establish a Rural Bank, which New South Wales has demonstrated can profitably operate in competition with the trading banks. Given that opportunity we could give far greater financial help to more people.

The measures outlined by the Treasurer seem to be commendable except that, in my view, they limit the number of people who can be helped in the future because of the increased provision of funds in particular advances. I have already pointed out that we have not had demonstrated to our satisfaction yet that there will be an injection of additional funds for land purposes.

No-one can deny that Agricultural Bank has given very fine service. The Treasurer omitted to mention—and I suppose he assumed we all knew it—that the Agricultural Bank has had a very small percentage of foreclosures, which would indicate

that, generally speaking, it has adopted a prudent lending policy. People are becoming more and more inclined to transfer their indebtedness from trading banks to the Agricultural Bank. I do not suppose we can blame them for that if it is to their advantage.

Mr. Ewan: Name one instance.

Mr. DUGGAN: I can name many instances where applications have been made.

Mr. Ewan: But they have not been granted.

Mr. DUGGAN: Going back for some four or five years, I can recall some names but I cannot remember the details well enough to answer the hon. member's interjection.

Mr. Herbert: They would be very rare.

Mr. DUGGAN: The applications have not been rare but approvals may have been. However, I cannot say. Obviously the Treasurer will be able to answer that. What I am concerned about primarily at the moment is that the tendency to transfer funds indicates sympathetic and advantageous treatment received from the Agricultural Bank as compared with the trading banks. I agree that the State has an obligation—and the previous Labour Government admitted it—to help the primary producers because they contribute to the national wealth. I have no quarrel with helping them by some protection; but, in the overall discharge of our responsibility to the taxpayers of the State we must maintain a reasonable balance. A man who borrows £10,000 undertakes a fairly substantial obligation. The attitude of the Government generally should be that their primary responsibility is to the weaker and smaller sections of the community. If because of the magnitude or ramifications of his business a person is able to make arrangements privately he should be encouraged to do so. The Government should concentrate on helping deserving cases with very limited funds. The Treasurer will probably say fairly accurately that there is no substantial difference between £10,000 being made available in 1959 and £7,500 in 1951 or 1952. Perhaps the Agricultural Bank could give a lead. Up to a point I might be contradicting myself, but a couple of years ago some of the banks became concerned about the inflationary trend in land values. Properties were being sold at figures above what the banks considered to be the true economic value of the land, particularly pastoral properties. As recently as last night my attention was drawn to the fact that in many instances trading banks were not making money available to people on pastoral holdings to pay even rates. With declining wool prices and heavy commitments in provisional tax some landholders are falling into arrears to the local municipal council for rates. Some of the banks are not prepared to help people over that difficulty. I asked this gentleman I was talking to what was

the effect of the declining price of wool on the value of properties. He said, "Strangely enough, there has been no obvious indication of a lessening of value of pastoral properties." He said that a couple of properties had changed hands recently at a price that he considered was in accordance with the true value on current wool values. He said that based on the assumption that wool had reached bedrock price the properties would be a good investment. It seems to me that if an artificial value of land is set up, associated with the Country Party policy of determining a price based on the cost of production, the whole price structure is adversely affected and it will mean tremendous difficulties for the State ultimately. I cannot speak with any authority about what the Agricultural Bank does but I hope that as far as possible the bank will see to it that a person who is interested in the purchase of a property has his attention drawn to the true value of the property. We do not want to encourage inflated values of properties for speculative purposes. There has been too much of that in some areas. I do not know how we can reverse the trend. The Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation has been on the land in his area for many years. He would know that in the past the general practice of the man on the land was to work his property and bequeath it to his family. Properties were under the control of one family for generations. I do not know whether farmers are adopting the "city slicker" attitude or what has caused the change, but the tendency today is for the farmer to work his property for a period and then sell it to get the benefit of the capital appreciation. The Agricultural Bank does not want to become a party to that trend. At the same time, we do not want to take away from any owner the right to dispose of his property at the true value. I hope that the bank will exercise a very prudent control over these matters.

We would all be happy if additional funds could be made available to assist primary industry. We have heard already from the Minister for Agriculture and Stock how difficult it is to open up new markets for new industries in North Queensland—pine-apples, tobacco, cotton, and the like. If it were merely a matter of transferring from a private trading bank to the Agricultural Bank it would not necessarily mean increasing primary wealth. People may be attracted to the Agricultural Bank in the first place, but we are not necessarily increasing primary wealth. The purpose of the bank is to give encouragement to men with land experience. I think that represents the views I have on this matter. Except for the amounts being rather high, the other benefits of the Bill seem to be reasonable, and we can give them general approval.

I am not certain on the point about the amount available for tractors and other farm equipment. I do not know whether it is possible for people to get an advance from

the Agricultural Bank to provide all this earth-moving equipment at the same rate of interest. If people purchase it for carrying out contract work they should be prepared to pay a high rate of interest. The Treasurer might consider that there should perhaps be a higher rate for a different type of investment risk.

Mr. Windsor: Sometimes they group together for the purpose of establishing a machinery pool.

Mr. DUGGAN: I know there are some co-operative societies who own valuable machinery that is sent out on a pool basis. If a private person wants to build up a large-scale road-making equipment organisation, and wishes to get the advantage of better terms from the Agricultural Bank, it may be that we should impose a restricting limit or a higher charge on the amount advanced. I do approve of the idea of a flexible interest rate. The advance is subject to the normal procedure that operates in trading banks. It is only reasonable that interest on overdrafts should be based on what it costs the authorities.

If there is a measure of prosperity and a high demand for money, that generally connotes a fairly buoyant position, and if that is the case the person borrowing the money, the owner or farmer, can command reasonably high prices and should be in a position to meet high interest rates. It would be wrong to have a low interest rate for loans with 20 or 16 years' repayment period in an era of inflationary prices, such as we had till a year or so ago. They should not expect to pay lower interest when other people are obliged to pay a higher interest to other banks.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (2.49 p.m.): I was interested to hear the outline of the history of the Agricultural Bank by the Treasurer. It is always useful to have these particulars in the records of Parliament showing the history of the Agricultural Bank, Harbour Boards, and similar organisations. Frankly, I cannot see much in the Bill to criticise, nor can I see much that I think is of very great value. The Treasurer used a term in favour today. He said he was streamlining the existing legislation. I suppose that term could be applied appropriately to the Bill. In that respect it contains many useful provisions, and to that extent I am in entire agreement with it, but in looking for the real plums what do we find? They amount to very little. As a matter of fact, they could have a retrograde effect on small farming communities.

The Treasurer has admitted that the funds available to the bank are limited. As the Minister administering the Act for nearly six years, I realise that only too well. The limit is to be lifted from £7,500 to £10,000. As the Treasurer has admitted that there is no likelihood of extra loan funds being made available, how will it be able to accommodate

the normal number of applicants for advances? I wonder what will happen when the Agricultural Bank is flooded with many applications in the near future, as it must be, because of the present tactics and policy of trading banks.

Mr. Aikens: Like a fellow who says, "You can borrow £5 or £10 off me, but I have only £1 to lend."

Mr. WALSH: That may be an appropriate analogy, although I can say other things.

In his historical survey the Treasurer dealt with many things. He referred to an amendment of the Act which provided that the bank should not be responsible in any way for local authority rates if the property fell into the hands of the bank, or when the owner of a property under mortgage to the bank failed to pay his rates in any year. Earlier the hon. member for Fortitude Valley endeavoured to make a little political capital out of the Treasurer's reference to an advance of £40 for buildings in 1902. He asked if that amendment was introduced by a Labour Government. For that hon. member's information I point out that this amendment was brought in by an anti-Labour Government. The hon. member for Carnarvon has asked me what amendment I am referring to. I am referring to the amendment mentioned by the Treasurer which provided that the bank would not be responsible for rates owing on a property under mortgage to the bank. He referred also to the substantial number of cases in the Nambour area in the bad years. If my recollection is correct, the Government subsequently amended that section to give priority for one year's rates. Even if 10 years' rates were owing, local authorities had priority only for one year's rates. If it was good enough for a Government who claimed they were looking after the interests of local authorities, producers and settlers generally to introduce an amendment of that type, there was no good reason why a Labour Government should delete it.

Having regard to its history over the years, I think it can be claimed that the bank has performed a very useful service in the State. It has not been given credit for its part in the development of many new areas, particularly those along the coastline, development that meant so much not only to the settlement of land but also to the economy of the State and to employment. One of the things of which Labour Governments could boast was that not only did they acknowledge the necessity for an industrial policy that gave protection to workers in industry but they also recognised that there could not be security in employment on the industrial side unless the various primary producers had some security in their callings, and much legislation was brought down under Labour Governments giving primary producers the security that enabled them to set up their own organisation for marketing and many other things.

The Agricultural Bank was set up in 1902, as the Treasurer said, long before a Labour Government took office. But the substantial amendments that have been made over the years giving relief by way of increased advances have all been in accordance with the policy of Labour Governments.

I do not think I should make excuses for the Agricultural Bank; but having been Treasurer for so long, I know the criticism that has been levelled at officers of the Bank and the administration generally. A thing that is often overlooked is that the trading banks refuse to undertake the development of new lands in this State, which is part of their function, and have frequently forced their customers to come to the Agricultural Bank at a stage when the Bank was finding it very difficult to finance new development. There was a time when, because of prosperity in industry generally and the high prices for various commodities, the trading banks were prepared to accommodate many of the applicants. So many primary producers had credit balances in their accounts because of the policy of Labour Governments in that period that the trading banks found it necessary to be a little more generous. When the screws were on with the assistance of the Menzies-Fadden Government in 1952 and farmers and producers generally were being turned away from the doors of the private banks, the Agricultural Bank received a great number of applications for assistance. It was asked to take over existing mortgages that were due to private banks, and it did give considerable relief in that way. However, when funds available to the Bank were limited, they had to close their doors and tell clients of private banks that no longer could they find the necessary finance to assist them, and the Bank came in for criticism because of that. As I said, that must not be overlooked. After the properties have been developed, and after the community has in some way or other subsidised the development of these new areas, whether they are on the coast or elsewhere, the private banks are then prepared to come in and get their pound of flesh because they have greater security. Having got to the stage, say, where the land is producing a commodity that has a ready sale on the market, they are prepared to take the risk of making a further advance.

Mr. Aikens: They will not take any of the initial risk.

Mr. WALSH: That is what I said, they will not take the initial risk. Only in very few instances would they do so. This part of the legislation was introduced by Labour Governments, and the Treasurer is not altering it. An applicant to the Agricultural Bank can get up to 80 per cent. of his asset value as an advance. No doubt in examining the application the officers take into consideration the ability of the individual farmer to meet his indebtedness to the Bank. I have

no doubt that the private banks would also do that, but very few farmers can go to a private bank and get an advance to the value of 80 per cent. of their assets. Of the 50,000-odd farmers in this State, the number who could approach a trading bank and get an advance of 80 per cent. of their assets would be small indeed.

Mr. Ewan: They would be very foolish to ask for it.

Mr. WALSH: I think the hon. member for Roma will agree that in most cases where financial accommodation is made available by a trading bank, it does not exceed 50 per cent. of the asset value.

Mr. Ewan: It would not want to exceed 50 per cent. That is the economic basis.

Mr. WALSH: Under Labour's policy over the years, in the interests of the community generally and to help new settlers, the Government have been prepared to advance up to 80 per cent.

Mr. Ewan: That is excessive.

Mr. WALSH: If it is excessive for the private banks, then the hon. member is suggesting that the risk should be borne by the whole of the community.

Mr. Ewan: What I am saying is that it is unwise for the farmer.

Mr. WALSH: It is not unwise for the farmer. I can speak on this matter from practical experience, as I can on many other matters. There was a time when I applied to the Agricultural Bank for a loan. I had to find 8 per cent. for the man who backed me, when I could get an advance from the Agricultural Bank at 6 per cent. In addition, I was offered more generous terms and received more sympathetic consideration than I could expect from the man who was looking for 8 per cent. I do not speak without experience in these matters, and I realise the value of a policy that enables a settler to get an advance under those conditions. I did not need 80 per cent. of my asset value, nevertheless it was forthcoming. After I had made the application a man from one of the private banks said to me, "Why didn't you come to us?" I did not want to have anything to do with them; I never have. I have never been in debt to a private bank.

Mr. Herbert: You don't know anything about them.

Mr. WALSH: I know more than the hon. member for Sherwood. The fact that he may have written out a few vouchers in a bank does not qualify him to speak about financial policy generally. If he wants to debate the matter, let him quote figures showing how far ahead of the private banks the Commonwealth Bank is in its advances and deposits. This so-called expert from Sherwood who seeks to advise us on the

policy of the Agricultural Bank knows little or nothing about it. He is merely a member of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Ewan: Your experience of the trading banks may have been unfortunate.

Mr. WALSH: The trading banks are not in a very unfortunate position when they can invest up to 40 per cent. of the capital in hire purchase transactions. That means that that money is not available for the development of the real assets of the State. The struggling farmer cannot get help from the trading banks. People must come to the hon. member for Roma, as they come to me, and tell him about their difficulties.

Mr. Low: How were you going to set up a State Bank as outlined in your policy speech?

Mr. WALSH: The obligation is now on the hon. member for Cooroora—another expert in the financial world—at least to investigate the possibility and the practicability of setting up a State Bank if he thinks it would be of advantage to settlers in this State. I am not here to explain to the hon. member how it can be done, although I have some knowledge of the difficulties involved. Many people quote the Rural Bank of New South Wales. It is a deposit bank and has to be helped by considerable sums of money from the State revenue. That goes for the State bank in Western Australia, too. It does not follow that the Government should not start a trading bank or savings bank controlled by the State. If the Queensland Government have any sympathy for the primary producers it may be that they will investigate the possibilities and take the initiative away from the Labour Party by instituting within the structure of the Agricultural Bank a branch to provide for hire purchase or to make available finance for farmers and others to buy the goods that are now available under hire purchase. There is plenty of scope for the hon. member for Cooroora and his colleagues to do that if they really want to help the primary producers. Let them go ahead and start something for the benefit of the people.

Mr. Ewan: Some of your unwise administration forced people into that position.

Mr. WALSH: It is strange that the difficulty with farmers and hire purchase arose only after the present Government came into power. The Minister for Education knows full well all the complaints they got from Rockhampton, where the landholder was going along to the bank for an advance to purchase farming machinery and at one end of the counter he was told the money was not available at the normal overdraft rate of interest, whereas at the other end of the counter he was told he could get it at 10 per cent.

A Government Member: Similar complaints have been made in New South Wales with your friend, Mr. Cahill.

Mr. WALSH: I am not concerned at the moment with New South Wales or with Mr. Cahill.

Mr. Ewan: You made it mandatory for them to purchase their plant in that way.

Mr. WALSH: Nobody laid down any directions for the farmers. They applied to the bank for moneys to purchase machinery or whatever it might be and they made their purchases from the advances given.

Mr. Ewan: To carry out the conditions you put on their blocks of land.

Mr. WALSH: I hesitate to think that even the present Government will not continue to impose some conditions on land. They do not want people like the hon. member for Roma to come in and have the benefit of Crown leases and leave it to somebody else to do the real work of the country. I do not think the Committee would agree with that. Even by his own side, developmental work is expected to be undertaken with moneys advanced by the bank.

I very strongly object to the principle of giving power to the Governor in Council to alter the maximum rate of advance by the Agricultural Bank. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition I am not prepared to accept the principle. If it is accepted in this case it will have to be accepted in every other case. The other day the Treasurer introduced a measure increasing the maximum amount that could be expended without authority from £250 to £500.

Mr. Aikens: The Local Government Act?

Mr. WALSH: No. another. On the other hand, the Government lay down a specific limitation in the Local Government Act on the extent to which a councillor shall be entitled to be interested in sales or transactions with the Council. If we accept the principle here of a limit of £10,000 and the Government next year say the limit should be £12,000, that is taking away something from the Parliament that is their right in the ordinary way. It is all very well for the Treasurer to say that the Order in Council or the regulations will be tabled. That is quite true. Anyone who understands parliamentary proceedings knows that that must be. Likewise we know that Standing Orders specifically limit the time for debate on a motion for the disallowance of any such Order in Council or regulation. Consequently although the Committee could have taken up the best part of two days debating whether the amount should be increased from £10,000 to £12,000, the fact remains that we would not be given the same scope on a motion moved by any hon. member for the disallowance of an Order in Council.

Mr. Duggan: I made the point at the time that the time for debate could be extended.

Mr. WALSH: I am not arguing that we should so use the Standing Orders as a medium to extend the debate on every Order in Council that might be submitted. I think that was agreed upon after a great deal of experience in handling these matters.

The Treasurer referred to separate accounts. The way he submitted the proposal to the Committee suggests that it has a good deal of merit. It probably has. But the Treasurer recognises the necessity for retaining within the Act the right of the client of the bank to decide whether he should have a separate account or several accounts. Those of us who have lived in the wilderness and submitted our own income-tax returns realise that very often a separate account can be very useful when making out income-tax returns. Money may have been spent under a certain heading that would attract an income-tax deduction or rebate. However, the Bill permits separate accounts being continued if the client so desires.

I realise that the bank will have greater difficulties in the future than it has had in the past because the State's agricultural economy is so changing. Years ago the western and near-central western part of the State was settled with graziers and pastoralists. Today the interior of Queensland and the brigalow areas are being used for grain-growing and the growing of various crops. There is the distinction between the small settler on the coast and the big grazier or pastoralist. Generally speaking, of course, the Agricultural Bank did not cater for them as there was no way in the world they could because of the money that would be required. That is generally left to the wool-broking firms and people like that who charge anything up to 7 per cent. or 8 per cent. or even more—probably more than the banks.

The amount to be expended on machinery these days is much greater than what was necessary in the past for horses, harness and ploughs. We realise that settlers are entitled to be given greater consideration in the amounts to be made available to them for assistance in their new undertakings. But that will not be of any benefit at all to the administrative side of the bank if the Government cannot make any further funds available. If the Treasurer thinks that he is going to be limited to £1,500,000 next year, he is telling us in advance that after the raw deal they got following the other conference with the Commonwealth Government they are also going to get a raw deal on tax reimbursement.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (3.14 p.m.): I did not propose to speak at this stage of the Bill but I was interested in an interjection by the hon. member for Cooroora when he questioned the hon. member for Bundaberg about the setting-up in Queensland of a State bank. I have been very reliably informed that following the

sickening exhibition of slobbering, back-slapping that leaders of this so-called Liberal-Country Party Government have done recently with the top rank Commos. at Broadbeach—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: The quaffing of cocktails with them, the genuflecting and grovelling before them—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: I have no doubt in my mind that the Commos. have sold them the idea—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MULLER: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Mundingburra in order in making such a statement which is definitely untrue?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I listened to the hon. member developing his argument and I was about to rise and tell him that a discussion on the establishment of a State Bank would not be permitted, that the Bill deals with the Agricultural Bank. The hon. member's remarks regarding the State Bank are out of order.

Mr. AIKENS: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Taylor. You can see what is happening as the result of the association of this Government with top-ranking Commos. at Broadbeach.

Mr. Muller: They are gentlemen compared with you—the worst of them.

Mr. AIKENS: There is an example from the so-called Country Party. He reckons any Commo. is better than I.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. AIKENS: Anybody would know—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to obey my call to order. My request is that the hon. member speak only on the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. AIKENS: Now we know who the fellow travellers are. I will not pursue the matter any further. I could say something but—

MEMBER ORDERED TO RESUME SEAT.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to resume his seat.

Mr. AIKENS: I move—

“That I be further heard.”

These are real Commo. tactics.

Question—That the hon. member for Mundingburra be further heard (Mr. Aikens's motion)—put; and the Committee divided.

Resolved in the negative under Standing Order No. 148.

AGRICULTURAL BANK (LOANS) BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (3.20 p.m.): The Bill is a step in the right direction. Although it may not achieve all that we desire, it is a progressive step.

The Agricultural Bank has done a considerable amount of good over the years, particularly in sugar areas. But for the assistance of the Agricultural Bank, many farmers would have experienced great difficulty. In the Tully district the large advances it made to farmers have been of tremendous assistance.

The Bank will go on to even greater success if its funds are not limited. The limit of the advance has been increased from £7,500 to £10,000. In certain circumstances more than that would be available. I trust that the Bank will be able to accommodate all those who seek its assistance.

In recent years the tendency among private trading banks has been to limit or curtail advances and their clients have been greatly inconvenienced. On occasions I have been asked to make representations to the manager of the Agricultural Bank to take over overdrafts of certain people. The Agricultural Bank, however, does not take over the overdraft or mortgage of another bank for the reason that that would be merely a transfer of liability from one bank to another.

Farmers experience great inconvenience when a private bank reduces their overdraft, and so they then have to seek assistance elsewhere, perhaps from the Agricultural Bank or a private money-lender. We are entitled to ask why should it be so difficult to arrange these loans. But the answer is to be found in the advertisements in the daily newspapers which show how the capital of private banks is being used by hire purchase companies with which they are amalgamated. The E.S. & A. Bank is one.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I trust the hon. member will not develop the subject of hire purchase.

Mr. BYRNE: I am merely mentioning it as a reason for the curtailment of advances by private trading banks, but I shall not pursue the point.

The Agricultural Bank has an obligation to assist primary producers who seek loans to the greatest possible extent. Many private money-lenders are starting to operate in the community. Many finance companies have come into being and they are lending money to primary producers at excessive interest rates. There is no doubt that private money is being used in primary production to a far greater extent now than ever before, simply because of the high interest rates charged. Every second businessman in

the sugar industry has become either a money-lender or an associate of a finance company.

Many of the amendments to this legislation are desirable. For instance, a person can transfer his account from one section to another so that his interest is calculated on a daily basis. I realise that there is difficulty in getting away from the present policy in regard to the payment of rates, liens, and judgment. I know that in the past the Agricultural Bank has had difficulty in getting sufficient money, and I know that my own representations have been successful at times and unsuccessful at others. I believe that the officers of the bank are doing a very good job; but they cannot get blood out of a stone, and if money is not available for advances to primary producers, they must carry on to the best of their ability without it. I hope that the bank will continue to look after the sugar farmers in North Queensland, who provide a better security for the bank than any other primary producer, and I hope that a greater amount of money will be made available.

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (3.28 p.m.): This is an important debate, and I was very impressed by the well-reasoned speech of the Leader of the Opposition. I thought that he dealt with the subject excellently, and I should like to compliment him upon his speech.

I believe that this amendment to the Agricultural Bank Act is in the best interests of primary producers and the development of Queensland. When we listen to the hon. member for Bundaberg, with his usual muddled economic thinking, it makes us wonder why he occupied such important posts in the previous Government. He said quite unequivocally that he could not see that the amendment would provide any great benefits to the primary producers and settlers in this State.

Mr. Walsh: I can confirm that, too.

Mr. EWAN: There it is again, without any equivocation.

Mr. Walsh: Your own Treasurer confirmed it when he limited the total advances to £1,500,000.

Mr. EWAN: The economic experts telling us what we ought to do! What did they give us when they were in office? I suggest that the Honourable the Treasurer never made the statement that it would have only a very limited benefit. I believe that it will be of great benefit and that it will correct many of the anomalies and injustices inflicted on primary producers by the unwise legislation of Labour Governments in the past.

Let us consider the proposed amendments to the legislation. One thing that stopped many wise primary producers from approaching the Agricultural Bank was the fact that it did not adopt day-to-day balancing. Anyone who borrowed from the Agricultural Bank had to pay interest from year

to year on the amount borrowed. Anyone who knows anything about primary production knows that once a primary producer has established himself to a reasonable degree, he may have a credit balance with his trading bank for a certain period of the year. I refer particularly to the grain-grower, the wool-grower and the cattle man, all of whom receive most of their income when they dispose of their commodities. In those circumstances, the primary producer may have a credit balance in the bank for a period, but after meeting his liabilities he is again indebted to the bank.

Under the provisions of the Bill, a primary producer will pay interest to the Agricultural Bank on a day-to-day basis. I know what I am speaking about, because in my early days I borrowed from the Agricultural Bank and later on I borrowed from a trading bank. I admit that the Agricultural Bank interest rate was very much lower than that of the trading bank, and that in other ways its terms were more advantageous. But after I became established in a small way, I discovered that in reality I was paying the Agricultural Bank a higher rate of interest overall than I was to the trading bank.

Mr. Walsh: Not if you had an overdraft without a credit account.

Mr. EWAN: That is the position that the hon. member for Bundaberg will always occupy if he is a primary producer. I am speaking now of progressive primary producers, and the Bill seeks to endeavour to make a much greater percentage of primary producers progressive than was the case during Labour's administration of this State.

We heard criticism from the hon. member for Bundaberg about the increase in the borrowing limit from £7,500 to £10,000. It was because of the actions of men such as the hon. member for Bundaberg and his colleagues, apart altogether from the inflation in currency values, that made this measure necessary. In their usual control-mad way, they sought to impose controls that made it essential for a settler to borrow a great deal of money during the initial stages of his occupancy of a block of land. Let us consider many of the soldier-settlement schemes and the provisions of this Act. If a returned serviceman bought a property, the Agricultural Bank tried to help him over a considerable period. Under the War Service Land Settlement Act, however, a settler was exempted from the payment of redemption for, I think, three years. After that, he had to pay redemption.

Mr. Walsh: That was purely State Government policy, not Federal Government policy.

Mr. EWAN: I am not talking about Federal Government policy; I am confining my remarks to State Government policy.

What happened on that occasion? The Government settled these men on the land, and I refer particularly to those at Wandoan.

The Minister for Public Lands and I went there and listened to the evidence of 50 practical men who had done an excellent job as far as the conditions imposed upon them would allow. They were given agricultural farms of from 1,280 to 2,000 acres, and they had to put so much under crop within a certain period. Despite the criticism of hire purchase by the hon. member for Bundaberg, the previous Government's policy meant that those men had to buy plant on hire purchase to enable them to fulfil the conditions imposed upon them. Many of them had to borrow at least £5,000 to buy the necessary machinery to carry out the iniquitous conditions imposed on them. What happened? If the good Lord was kind to them and the season was good they harvested a crop and were able to meet their commitments; but if the season was bad and they failed with their first crop and with their second crop, as many did, they could not meet their indebtedness to the Agricultural Bank because of the very conditions the Government imposed, and that prevented the Agricultural Bank from functioning as intended.

We have heard so much from the hon. member for Bundaberg about what he called the unwise policy of the trading banks in comparison with that of the Agricultural Bank. The Leader of the Opposition said that, from speaking to some people in the city who should be in a position to give him sound advice, he could not see that there had been any fall in land values. That might be so. Sales are so few that it would be very hard to express an opinion; but neither the Agricultural Bank nor the trading banks carried out an unwise policy in over-advancing to enable people to buy land at an uneconomic figure. During 1953, 1954 and 1955, right up till wool prices began to slide, many people bought land at what they thought was an economic figure but they would sell it at a huge discount today if they could. We have to thank the policy of the trading banks for even keeping the position in check. Had they advanced 80 per cent. of the asset value as the hon. member for Bundaberg advocated, with falling wool values many of the people would be bankrupt today.

Mr. Walsh: In other words, you say the rate the Agricultural Bank is giving is too high?

Mr. EWAN: I say no such thing. The hon. member for Bundaberg is noted for his ability to mislead the community and to lead a person off a well-reasoned line of thought, to distort his reasoning for purely political ends. It behoves me to ignore completely any interjection from him.

I believe the provisions of the Bill will be administered sympathetically and that, with other legislation that will be brought down later by the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, they will help many of the young ex-servicemen settled at Wandoan and Taroom under the War Service Land Settle-

ment scheme. Some of those great lads have got into a great deal of trouble, through no fault of their own; but with sympathetic help in increasing the borrowing limit to £10,000 all of the inequities and injustices imposed on them will be corrected. I want to place on record how proud I am to be associated with a Government and a Cabinet that are prepared to give the people the sympathetic consideration they justly deserve. I am sure it will bring success out of chaos in a very short space of time.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (3.40 p.m.): I have a few brief observations to make on the Bill which, although not far-reaching in import, is still very important. Before commenting on the provisions of the Bill I find myself compelled to query some of the arguments put forward by the hon. member for Roma. If I understood him correctly he argues that the policy of the Agricultural Bank in the past in making advances up to 80 per cent. of securities was unwise and unsound.

Mr. Ewan: I do not know if they ever did. You give me an instance.

Mr. HILTON: I know of instances where advances were made up to approximately that percentage. If the hon. member would analyse the records of the Agricultural Bank he would realise the magnificent job it has been doing for primary producers, particularly when advances were liberalised by past Governments. He would also find that the number of failures has been very small indeed. Every reasonable person will admit that the Agricultural Bank has made a magnificent contribution towards the development of primary industry in Queensland. It has helped the struggling man over the stile. The hon. member for Roma implied that the private banks pursued a wider policy. They would not lend more than 50 per cent. of the value of securities. Obviously they were out to protect their own interests.

Mr. Ewan: Follow your argument through. Because of the actions of your Government they had to borrow more money.

Mr. HILTON: I think the hon. member for Roma was very much astray when he started to criticise the administration of the Agricultural Bank, or the Government by medium of the Agricultural Bank, in respect of soldier settlement. Despite any Commonwealth scheme the scheme advanced by past Labour Governments to assist ex-service men to acquire their own properties, giving them an interest-free period, was responsible for much successful settlement of ex-service men on the land. Nobody can deny that in any way. The scheme was without parallel in Australia. No other State offered the same generous terms for advances as the Agricultural Bank in Queensland did.

I commend the Minister for the provisions of the Bill. They are in consonance with amendments made to the Act in the past,

amendments calculated to ensure that the Agricultural Bank did an efficient job of work as far as its limited finances would permit. As the Treasurer and everyone else admits the limited amount of funds is the retarding factor. Apparently banks associated with the much-heralded bank in the Commonwealth sphere will act as agents for it. Would it not be a fair proposal to suggest that the Agricultural Bank be permitted to act as an agent for the Development Bank? It might be possible to get some additional revenue in that way.

Because of the grave restrictive practices of the trading banks many primary producers are in dire circumstances. We know that it has been and is the policy of the Agricultural Bank not to take over liabilities from other financial institutions. They would need millions of pounds to do that. I heard of a case recently in which the owner of the property was indebted to a bank to the extent of £5,000. His property was valued at £20,000 to £25,000, and he was asked to sell portion or all of it in order to liquidate his debt which was incurred because of drought. He cannot restock his property and he cannot go forward. He is the victim of the drought and the hard policy of the bank. I know of many similar cases. Most hon. members representing rural areas have knowledge of many such cases. It is important that overtures should be made as soon as possible to get extra funds for the Agricultural Bank so that the primary producer who is experiencing difficulty can be assisted to overcome it. In my own area a disastrous hail-storm occurred the other night. Many orchardists, especially those who commenced in recent years, have received a very severe set-back. Many had not harvested half the crop, and everything was knocked down over a wide area. Where will the funds come from to keep them? The Agricultural Bank carried out effective work after the Bowen cyclone. I am sure that there will be many applications for assistance from those who have lost their crops as a result of the recent hail-storm in my area. I think that a sound policy should be developed for the assistance of primary producers not only in my area but in the other areas that have been affected, just as local authorities are assisted when their area is affected by cyclones and other acts of God. If that is done and there is a favourable response from the Commonwealth Government, this legislation will do much to ensure that many primary producers receive substantial help. Without additional funds being made available and with the increase in the amount of advance there is a possibility that not quite so many people will be assisted in the future as in the past. We must guard against that. The Treasurer has said that the Bank will try, under ministerial guidance, to strike a more generous policy overall. I hope that a special effort will be made, in addition to the limited advances under the Act, to help those people for whom I put forward a plea today.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (3.49 p.m.): On the surface the Bill seems to be quite sound. There are one or two small matters which I think the Treasurer should clear up. One matter relates to the aggregation of accounts. It seems that there are a number of headings under which people can secure an advance from the Bank to develop their property. A primary producer may approach the Agricultural Bank for an advance on stock mortgage to enable him to build up his herd, and at the same time he may have an overdraft or mortgage held by a private trading bank. I gather that in the past such advances have been made so that settlers on properties could obtain money beyond the limit set by trading banks for advances on mortgages. A trading bank may advance only up to 60 per cent. of the security. This amount may be insufficient to carry out the necessary developmental work. Having secured an advance of 50 or 60 per cent. of the security from the trading bank, the primary producer could then approach the Agricultural Bank for a loan for re-stocking or other purposes, and the Agricultural Bank would hold the stock or crop lien as security. That procedure will now be abolished with the aggregation of accounts. I ask the Treasurer to indicate whether in future primary producers with properties will be able to approach the Agricultural Bank for advances on stock or crop mortgages. If not—and this may be a desirable result of the legislation—they may have to transfer mortgages and accounts to the Agricultural Bank in order to get the limit allowed by the Agricultural Bank, 75 or 80 per cent. of the security. On the other hand, other primary producers may suffer hardship. I refer to those who are benefiting under the present scheme in that they have obtained loans from trading banks up to 50 or 60 per cent. of their security, and further additional loans from the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Hiley: They cannot.

Mr. LLOYD: They cannot now?

Mr. Hiley: Not at the present time.

Mr. LLOYD: I understood that was possible.

Mr. Hiley: Many years ago.

Mr. LLOYD: I was under the impression that the Agricultural Bank would take a lien over stock on the property. I accept the Minister's assurance.

The principle of daily balances is an excellent one. It will enable the Agricultural Bank to secure additional funds in that it will reduce the period of repayment of loans. Those who are in a position to repay more than they are obliged to repay will do so in order to reduce interest charges. It is unfortunate that we cannot go further, and allow primary producers to open current accounts with the Agricultural Bank. It would be of great advantage to primary

producers if the Agricultural Bank could in that way extend its activities into the realms of private bank trading.

With the passage of time it was apparent that the limit of advances would have to be raised. I understand the last increase was in 1951, when the limit was fixed at £7,500. Since then the commitments of the bank have gone from approximately £2,000,000 to almost £3,500,000. The need for constant increases in loans by this and other institutions over the years has become apparent.

The question whether the Government should have power to increase by Order in Council the amount of an advance has been raised in this debate. In many cases where Government instrumentalities have power to lend money—for example, for housing or primary production—I think it is essential that the Government should have this power to keep pace continually with costs and values. How many times has it happened, particularly with housing, that costs of construction have increased very rapidly and it has not been possible to introduce legislation for 12 months? Because of that, people have been unable to secure the needed advance and have been unable to proceed with the construction of their home. The same position could arise here, and I do not think there could be any objection to the Governor in Council's having the power to increase the amount of an advance on a general basis when that becomes necessary because of increased costs.

A great deal has been said during the term of office of this Government and when Labour Governments were in office about government by regulation, and the tendency to government by regulation was continually under attack by the Opposition in the previous Parliament. Although I believe it is very dangerous, I think that some people may be exaggerating the danger. In some Parliaments of the Commonwealth an all-party committee is set up to deal with the regulations that are brought down from time to time, and I think it is a truly democratic way of dealing with them. It would make it easier for this Parliament if we received reports on the regulations from an all-party committee.

Other matters have been covered adequately by the Leader of the Opposition, and I thank the hon. member for Roma for his complimentary remarks about the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. I think all hon. members will agree that he made a very well considered and reasoned approach to this problem.

I believe that this Bill will make it easier for primary producers to secure advances, and I sincerely hope that it does. On the other hand, I hope it will not prevent primary producers from accepting the advances available to them. I accept the Minister's assurance that it has not been possible for a primary producer who received an advance

from a trading bank to apply for a further advance from the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (3.58 p.m.): In the six years that I have been in Parliament, I have made many representations to the Agricultural Bank on behalf of cane farmers and returned servicemen. Whenever I have asked Mr. Cameron for assistance for farmers whose farms have been damaged by cyclones, he has always listened to my arguments and given me a sympathetic hearing.

I believe that in some cases it would not matter whether we increased the maximum advance from £7,500 to £10,000 or £15,000. There are some men in the Wandoan area who will never be graziers, and in some cases a man will never make a success of his property no matter how much money you give him. The same applies to some returned servicemen. I was successful in getting an advance of up to £7,000 for a man who had no intention of working his farm; he tried to sell it at a profit. One finds that type in every walk of life.

Several farmers in the Mossman area were badly hit by a recent cyclone, and they approached the trading banks with whom they were dealing for loans to carry them over until the following crop was harvested. However, many of them were refused loans by the trading banks. Although it is not the policy of the Agricultural Bank to take a mortgage from a trading bank, in this instance it granted assistance to the farmers to whom I have referred.

When the manager of the Agricultural Bank is lending money, he must take all steps possible to ensure that it will be repaid. On one occasion I sought a loan for a pineapple-grower in the Cooktown area. I said to the manager, Mr. Cameron, "This man has eight acres of pineapples." He said, "But he has no home on the property. There is no security other than the pineapples." I replied, "Isn't it better for him to have a pineapple crop from which he will get some return, than a home worth £3,000 or £4,000 from which he will get nothing?" He promised me that when he went to the area he would inspect the property, and when he returned he told me that he was very pleased with what he saw. He lent the man £1,500 or £2,000 and money to buy a tractor and he has not looked back. He has repaid the advance and is now firmly established.

I am hoping that in the very near future the tobacco industry will prosper in the Cooktown area. Two farmers are growing tobacco at the present time, and I firmly believe that it will eventually become a very important industry in the district. When that happens, I hope that the Agricultural Bank will come to the help of those who want to establish themselves in the industry.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Coorparoo—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (4.4 p.m.), in reply: The way in which the Committee has received the measure makes my

task very easy. However, I should like to deal with a few of the points that have been raised.

In the first place, there was a very interesting discussion on whether it is wise parliamentary practice to take from Parliament the task of amending some of the administrative details of legislation. The point has been raised whether it is a satisfactory procedure to act by Order in Council, which, of course, provides at least a limited opportunity for debate.

With the ever-increasing complexity of matters that come under parliamentary notice, we must be careful not to get too much straw mixed with the wheat. In other words, there are so many important matters of principle that call for our consideration and demand our attention that we must guard against allowing ourselves to become so cluttered up with administrative details in legislation that we have not sufficient time to devote to the important challenges and principles that surround us.

Mr. Aikens: We have to guard against what you frequently complained about—government by regulation.

Mr. HILEY: The principle that Parliament has laid down is varied in its administrative detail by Order in Council, which must come before Parliament, and if any hon. member thinks it is warranted he has an opportunity to provoke a debate about it.

Mr. Hanlon: Your colleagues in New South Wales suggested a parliamentary committee to “vet” Orders in Council.

Mr. HILEY: Personally I think there is an argument for that. It may be that the hour that is allowed for a motion dealing with the examination of an Order in Council or regulation is not enough. It may be that the speaking time allowed under Standing Orders is not enough. Apart from the mover of the motion, speakers are allowed five minutes. For some that is not enough to get out of a trot; they cannot get their argument into full flow in five minutes.

Mr. Aikens: I made a speech a few minutes ago and got “haimed” out in two minutes.

Mr. HILEY: That would have been one minute 58 seconds too long.

It may be that Parliament should look at its forms and procedures and ask itself whether an hour, broken up into a collection of five-minute cameos is the wisest approach. Fundamentally the opportunity is there for Parliament to examine the Order in Council or regulation. Moreover, let us not forget that once the matter becomes recognised in its proper facet as one of administration, at least every second year in the course of the Estimates there is abundant opportunity for Parliament to examine it.

Mr. Burrows: By that time it has been changed again.

Mr. HILEY: Maybe, but every two years is a fairly frequent opportunity. While it sounds well to say that Parliament must keep all these powers narrowly to itself, if we keep on cluttering it up with what I regard as the administrative details of Government we will so confuse the proceedings that some of the great issues and some of the great principles that we should debate not for a few minutes or a few hours but at times for days on end will not get the attention they deserve.

Mr. Power: Then you believe in government by Order in Council?

Mr. HILEY: On administrative details, yes. As a matter of fact, my attitude towards using Orders in Council to deal with administrative detail is exactly on all fours with what was practised by the hon. member's Government in all the years they were in office.

Mr. Power: Oh no.

Mr. HILEY: Oh yes.

Mr. Aikens: You were a very bitter opponent of it.

Mr. HILEY: Was I?

Mr. Aikens: My word! Look up “Hansard.”

Mr. Power: Not with regard to finance; we did not do that by Order in Council.

Mr. Hanlon: Do you propose to give unlimited power to extend the limit or just, say, between £10,000 and £15,000 or something like that?

Mr. HILEY: No.

Mr. Hanlon: That would make it safer.

Mr. Walsh: It could be £20,000.

Mr. HILEY: The way the Bill is drawn there is no top limit. I am hoping this will function for a long time but who can say what the time will be? I am anxious that there should be an expansion in the limit and for that reason it starts at £10,000. The Governor in Council cannot reduce it below £10,000. Apart from that, I repeat my conviction—and I know the outlook of the bank management—I am certain that whatever Government are in power they will recognise the principle that it would be hopeless and foolish to use the money in a few big directions. That is not the purpose or the tradition of the Agricultural Bank. I think it can be safely left to the administration of the day to adopt a balanced approach to what is a safe limit having regard to the funds available and the purchasing power of money at the time.

The second point raised by the Leader of the Opposition was a basic one. He questioned the function of the State in helping private persons on a basis that amounts to a State subsidy. It is hard to quarrel with the fundamental assumptions

behind that comment to the extent that this money is provided on a basis which is less than the cost to the State providing it. It virtually means that the general taxpayer is making to that extent money available to those who benefit by it. I think the best answer is to say, "Look at the record of the Agricultural Bank. Look what it has done and what could have been done only by it in pioneering settlement." While there is inherent in the whole operation of the Agricultural Bank the thought the hon. member gave expression to, our duty is to measure the possible danger against demonstrative results. I think the demonstrative results justified our predecessors and justify this Government in reasonably developing the activities of the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Aikens: If the Agricultural Bank assists in the establishment of a successful farm it is to the benefit of the country.

Mr. HILEY: Yes. That is where I think the repayment can justify what otherwise could be a point of criticism.

Mr. Burrows: And the impetus it gives to decentralisation.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, that is another factor. The other half of the hon. member's argument was, "Is it not the obligation of the trading banks to do this? Why should this duty fall so heavily on the shoulders of the State?" Although we may quarrel—and many of us do—with some of the orientations of the use of trading bank credit in this country nobody would say that the banks have locked away idle funds that are not employed. My whole apprehension about the banking situation in Australia is that this continent with its industries and people is growing faster than its total available bank credit facilities. At the moment we have an indigestible demand for bank credit facilities. While it may be said that some trading banks should do more in this direction and less in that, there are not sufficient total bank credit facilities available for the total needs of this rapidly expanding community. It is something that happens in a community with a sharply rising population and with a host of new industries springing up around the expanding population.

Mr. Foley: Do you think it is because of the low values of primary products?

Mr. HILEY: No. I think inherent in what I say is a great measure of criticism of what I regard as the rather repressive outlook of the Central Bank. I have expressed my opinion on this before. The Central Bank in Australia is a little too fearful of inflation and consequently is holding back £250,000,000 locked up in frozen deposits. I think that the credit demand in Australia at the present rate of growth of Australia is such that there is a strong case for more of that money to be made available

so that the total credit needs of the community could be met in greater balance than at the moment.

Mr. Burrows: Then you have the inflationary angle.

Mr. HILEY: Again my opinion would not be acceptable to some but if a country wants to grow—heaven knows we must in Australia—it should be prepared to risk a little more inflation as long as it gets the growth.

It is obviously inherent in any proposal that increases the limit of lending capacity to any single borrower that there is danger that fewer people will be served. On the other hand, let us also be clear that too low a limit operates as a disservice to the borrower. If a customer of the bank wants to develop his property in the interests of the State, if he wants to clear scrub to bring about increased production, it is no help to him to say, "We can lend you only sufficient money to clear one-third or one-half of your property. We cannot give you the rest because of the limit of £7,500."

Those of you who have read Mr. Payne's report will have observed the emphasis which he rightly places on the need to bring the green brigalow blocks into production not possibly in 20, 30 or 50 years' time, but with all possible speed.

Mr. Burrows: You will not bring them in by increasing the areas.

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member has not read the report.

Mr. Burrows: Haven't I?

Mr. HILEY: One of Mr. Payne's recommendations is that the Government should consider increasing the advance limit in such cases to £15,000.

Mr. Burrows: In the case of green brigalow he recommended 1,500 acres more.

Mr. HILEY: We are not talking areas and tenders, we are talking about advance limits. It would be a disservice to the development of primary production to keep lending limits too low, thus preventing the development we desire to see.

The question was raised concerning the Agricultural Bank's taking transfers from other banks. I am told that years ago it did, but for many years, Mr. Cameron informed me, the policy of the bank has been to refuse the accounts of the other banks for two reasons: first it would be utterly swamped with the present shortage of credit.

Mr. Burrows: It is the common practice for the private banks when they do not want the business to send people to the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. The accounts that would tend to come from the existing banks to the Agricultural Bank on transfer would

not be the best accounts; they would be the ones about which there was difficulty. Consequently, as a matter of prudent lending policy with present money availability, it could not cope with it. The bank has adopted a policy for several years of refusing to take transfers of mortgages from other banks. I say it is quite right.

Mr. Power: Why should they accept a risk which the other banks will not accept?

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. The Agricultural Bank has always preferred to develop a new property and bring about new production. I believe that the policy of the bank in this respect has been, and is, correct. It has been said that the bank may have inflated land values. Whenever there is a big rise in the price of primary products, the land agent, shrewdly recognising the economy of the industry as promising, will sell land at what appears to be a high price. He comes in and makes a kill. You, Mr. Taylor, know that sometimes a whole area has changed hands in a few years because of the action of agents in selling out at inflated prices to new owners. Some moneylending institutions have facilitated the work of the agents by lifting their advance limitation, and that has led to an inflation in land values. I do not think there has been any money lending institution that has done less to inflate land values than the Agricultural Bank. It has been exceedingly careful and conservative in the assessment of land values.

Mr. Burrows: It shows that the manager of the Agricultural Bank did not get something on the quiet.

Mr. HILEY: That is not a very nice thing to say. I should not put it on the low basis that his judgment was not influenced because he was not paid. I pay a tribute to him.

Mr. BURROWS: I rise to a point of order. I am not putting it on that basis at all. The Minister should not misconstrue my remark. To suggest that I am casting a reflection on the manager of the Agricultural Bank is entirely wrong. Every hon. member, particularly those representing northern electorates, can state that it is a common practice when unfortunate foreigners up there want to obtain money, to share the commission on the sale with the private bank.

Mr. HILEY: I understood the hon. member's statement. I did not feel for a moment that he was seeking to besmirch the character of the manager of the Agricultural Bank. On the contrary, he was out to besmirch the character of every other manager of every other bank.

Mr. Burrows: Not every one of them.

Mr. HILEY: All I can say is that those nefarious, dirty smears are unworthy of the hon. member.

Mr. Burrows: You can ask them.

Mr. HILEY: If the hon. member has evidence of that practice, he should produce it. That general, nefarious smear of bank managers is not worthy of the hon. member.

The hon. member for Carnarvon raised a point in which I think there is a great deal of merit. He dealt with the recent development of the new branch of the Commonwealth Bank known as the Development Bank. He reminded the Chamber of arrangements made with other banks, and my impression is that they are trading banks, to act as agents for the Commonwealth Bank, and he suggested the Government might give thought to the Agricultural Bank's acting as an agent of the Commonwealth Bank, thus securing additional funds for the benefit of primary producers in this State. The suggestion appeals to me. The matter will be discussed and examined, to see whether it is possible for the Agricultural Bank to so act. I cannot prophesy the basis, or for that matter, whether it will be possible, but, if it is and the basis is fair, it could be a benefit to the people of the State. I shall examine it.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the transfer of existing mortgages, with which I have dealt, and the case of a primary producer who has a loan from a bank and wants a loan from the Agricultural Bank on mortgage of livestock. I am informed by Mr. Cameron that years ago that was possible, but in recent years the bank found the situation, which it describes as a situation of split securities, so unsatisfactory and so conducive to administrative trouble that the policy has been changed, and the bank is against that practice, except in time of disaster through flood, or cyclone.

Mr. Burrows: Drought relief.

Mr. HILEY: Yes, when relief is necessary. In those circumstances it does not pay regard to the bank holding the account. The general policy of the bank is against split securities, and has been for some years past. Frankly, that impresses me as a wise policy.

The hon. member for Cook dealt with the problems experienced in the North. Among other things he said, and his statement was correct, that some customers of a bank, irrespective of the quality of their properties, the fortune of the industry in which they operate, will not succeed because of personal factors. This is never out of the mind of the officers administering the bank. No legislation can overcome the personal factors of the borrower. If a man is idle, or has poor commercial judgment or farming ability, a good property or good industry will not save him. If he is a loafer or a messer, he will fail. I get instances of it in letters from hon. members. I get such statements, "The bank will not loan any money to Mr. So-and-so, and his property is worth X thousands of pounds. Why cannot he have the small loan he desires?" The fact of the

matter is that these are the things that can never be written or explained. They are dealt with according to the personal judgment of the experienced people who have been charged with the responsibility of lending the State's money. The best evidence is to go to the record of the Agricultural Bank and see what bad debts it has incurred. It can hold its head high against any bank operating in Queensland.

Mr. Burrows: With the type of business they do, they should have had more bad debts than any other bank.

Mr. HILEY: Because of its dangerous field. That has been completely offset by the great skill and judgment of the officers of the Agricultural Bank, and I should refuse to lift my hand, as a Minister of the Crown, with anything savouring of a direction to the bank and say in a particular case, "You should lend" or "You must lend." They are the people who have to judge the hazard. They measure the security, and they measure the personal ability of the borrower.

Mr. Burrows: And they are very good judges.

Mr. HILEY: I believe that the wise and proper approach for me, as a Minister of the Crown, is not to interfere in any way with the judgment of the Board that is set up for the management of the Bank.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (4.29 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1958, in certain particulars."

In the first place I should remind hon. members that in April of last year the Liquor Acts were extensively amended after the Government had given consideration to various aspects of the liquor problem.

Many basic policy matters connected with the Liquor Acts were then considered, and the terms of the 1958 amendment were agreed upon. I wish now to make it clear that we are not at the present stage re-opening any of the matters that were considered at the time of the 1958 amendment of the Act.

The broad purpose of the Bill is to make legislative correction or amendment of some limited matters that either have merited con-

sideration in the light of further experience since the amendment of 1958, or have become necessary to meet new conditions that have since arisen.

The Bill deals with four separate subjects, and it will help in a ready understanding of its nature if, at this stage, I outline in brief headings the four subjects dealt with. These are as follows:—

1. Provision for the diversion to Consolidated Revenue of certain amounts that otherwise would be credited to the Liquor Acts Trust Fund.

2. Extension of the provisions for the removal of a licensed victualler's licence to a new location to cover cases where the premises are liable periodically to damage by substantial inundation by flood waters or by action of the sea, or are rendered uninhabitable or are likely to be rendered uninhabitable by reason of erosion, either by the sea or otherwise.

3. A modification of the present Act to make it clear that there is no prohibition of the showing of television on the premises of licensed victuallers and wine-sellers.

Mr. Duggan: There is no provision for that now?

Mr. MUNRO: There could be a prohibition under the existing law. It is a matter of interpretation, but it probably would be prohibited. I shall explain that matter later.

Mr. Coburn: If you remove a licence to another area, will the people in that area be able to have a local option poll if they so desire?

Mr. MUNRO: That is a matter that we can deal with at a later stage.

The fourth subject matter covered by the Bill is—

4. Provision for increases in the statutory maximum aggregate number of club licences, other than bowling club licences and golf club licences.

There are, of course, quite a number of other matters in respect of which further amendment of the Act might be considered from time to time. The fact that the Bill is of only a very limited scope does not indicate that the Government have finally decided against further amendments of the Act. On the contrary, it may be taken as an indication that the Government are cognisant of new conditions and new needs as and when they merit corrective action. It may also be taken as an indication that governmental action will at all times be tempered with a due sense of responsibility, particularly when any seemingly simple suggested alterations of the law could have widespread effects involving the lives, homes and ultimate well-being of our people, both young and old.

The first subject of amendment that I have mentioned is that of the diversion to Consolidated Revenue of certain amounts that

otherwise would be credited to the Liquor Acts Trust Fund. That fund was established under Section 47 of the Act broadly for the purpose of facilitating payment by the Licensing Commission of compensation for any cancelled or surrendered licences. The fund has been in operation since 1 July, 1936, and as at 30 June, 1958, 22 years after its commencement, the amount at credit of the fund was £397,493.

Receipts by the fund comprise amounts received from the sale of cancelled, forfeited or surrendered licences, plus one-sixteenth of the licence fees payable by licensed victuallers and wine-sellers. Disbursements comprise compensation paid for cancelled or surrendered licences, and possibly some amounts expended on advertising.

Mr. Aikens: How much is in the fund at the present time?

Mr. MUNRO: I can give the hon. member that figure later, but I should prefer not to confuse the issue because we are in the course of a financial year and the provision will be effective as from the commencement of this financial year. The amount to the credit of the fund at 30 June, 1958, was £397,493. The credit balance at that date is considered to be substantially in excess of the amount required for the purposes for which the fund was instituted.

The main source of accretions to the fund is one-sixteenth part of the licence fee payable by licensed victuallers and wine-sellers and the general purpose of the provision is to give legislative authority so that as from 1 July, 1958, credits to the fund from this source will be paid only to such extent as may be necessary to maintain in the fund a credit balance of not less than £300,000. Consolidated Revenue will benefit to the extent that the payments to the fund are reduced.

Mr. Duggan: Can you give me some indication of the annual amount now paid?

Mr. MUNRO: The annual receipts at present would be about £50,000. It is a changing figure and that is only an estimate but it would be fairly close.

The second provision relates to Section 49A of the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1958, which deals with the procedure for the removal of subsisting licensed victuallers' licences in certain limited circumstances. The provisions of Section 49A of the Act at present are brought into operation if, but only if, the Licensing Commissioner is satisfied that any licensed premises of a licensed victualler are no longer capable of meeting the convenience of the public and the requirements of the locality in which those premises are situated by reason of the fact that any road, railway, or navigable waterway, in or in the neighbourhood in which the premises are situated, has been diverted or otherwise re-routed. Hon. members will realise that those are very

limited circumstances. The Commissioner may approve of the removal of the licence to other suitable premises in the same locality.

The hon. member for Burdekin asked a question by way of interjection. It will be noted that the provision does not relate to the grant of a new licence but to the removal of a licence to a new site in the same locality so the question of local option does not arise.

It is found, in the light of experience, that there are some few cases which merit the application of this procedure for removal of a licence but which do not come within the terms of the provisions of Section 49A because of the extremely limited scope of the reasons for removal as at present prescribed.

The purpose of the provision is to give legislative authority so that the removal of a licence may be approved by the Commission in any case where the premises are liable periodically to damage by substantial inundation by flood waters or by action of the sea or are rendered uninhabitable, or are likely to be rendered uninhabitable, by reason of erosion either by the sea or otherwise.

Mr. Duggan: Are there any specific places where this problem is noticeable now?

Mr. MUNRO: A place in Mackay has been brought under my notice. Because of flooding there is the threat of premises becoming uninhabitable. At another place in North Queensland there is the threat of erosion by the sea.

Mr. Aikens: Would that be at Queen's Beach?

Mr. MUNRO: I think it is Yorkey's Knob.

The third proposed alteration to the law deals with television. Consideration of this particular amendment becomes necessary because it is expected that television will be in operation in Brisbane and surrounding districts at or about the end of the present calendar year.

Section 91A of the Liquor Acts, 1912 to 1958, contains provisions prohibiting the exhibition of films on a licensed victualler's or wineseller's premises. I have no doubt that at the time of the drafting of this section the operation of television in Queensland was not envisaged. However, there is contained in the section a very wide definition of the term "film" to the effect that for the purposes of Section 91A the term "film" means a film exhibited by use of a cinematograph or any other similar apparatus or any reproducing equipment to produce a moving picture or other optical effect. I am sure that it was never intended to prohibit the use of a television set and I am equally sure that it would not be desirable to do so.

Mr. Hanlon: What would you say was the original reason for banning films even before television was thought of?

Mr. MUNRO: If the hon. member makes inquiries from his colleagues possibly he will get a better answer than I could give.

Mr. Hanlon: It is just that I thought the same thing might apply to television.

Mr. MUNRO: No. The broad and fairly obvious reason is that if screening of films were permitted in a hotel it would become virtually a place of public entertainment. Television can be viewed by only a more limited number. Films in the ordinary sense are currently shown in public places whereas television is associated primarily with the home.

Mr. Aikens: It would be only a short step from moving pictures to a vaudeville show in the hotel.

Mr. MUNRO: That might be so too. I am not able to say what were the reasons originally for the prohibition but I expect there were good reasons for it.

With that background it is proposed by this amendment to make it clear that Section 91A of the principal Act will not apply to television programmes transmitted by means of wireless telegraphy from a national broadcasting station or a commercial television station.

The fourth and final subject to be dealt with in the Bill relates to the statutory maximum aggregate number of club licences other than bowling club and golf club licences as specified in terms of Section 114 of the Act.

The Liquor Acts Amendment Act of 1954 provided for three new classes of club licences—an ex-servicemen's club licence, a workers' club licence and a principal sporting club licence—and fixed a maximum number of club licences, including the then existing 35 registered club licences, at 102.

Mr. Aikens: All in Brisbane.

Mr. MUNRO: The hon. member's persistent interjection, "All in Brisbane" is completely unjustified because many of these club licences have been granted outside Brisbane. And this amendment will be just as effective in the areas outside Brisbane as it will in Brisbane.

Mr. AIKENS: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman either did not hear my interjection or he is misinterpreting it. What I said was all the club licences for principal sporting clubs are held in Brisbane and none in North Queensland or in the country centres.

Mr. MUNRO: I accept the assurance of the hon. member that his interjection referred to principal sporting clubs. I point out for the information of the hon. member that the total number of allocated licences issued up to the present is 100 and two of those are principal sporting club licences. So the hon. member is quite correct in stating that all of those two are in Brisbane.

Since 1954 the Licensing Commission has issued 65 additional licences, making a total of 100, thus leaving two only available for issue.

It appears to be desirable that the Commission should have authority to grant a limited number of club licences in appropriate areas. The Commission should not be placed in the position of having to refuse an application for the grant of a licence merely because of a statutory maximum limitation fixed several years earlier.

After a full consideration of the existing position and the probable requirements over a term of years in the future it is proposed to correct this anomaly by making two alterations in Section 114 of the Acts.

The first alteration proposed is to increase the existing statutory maximum aggregate number from 102 to 112 and to provide that the statutory maximum shall remain at this increased figure up to 30 June, 1959.

The second alteration is to give the statutory limitation some degree of flexibility in its future operation by empowering the Governor in Council to further increase the statutory maximum by not more than two in any financial year starting with the year commencing on 1 July, 1959.

Mr. Windsor: Does that mean that they will last five years?

Mr. MUNRO: No.

Mr. Windsor: Two a year?

Mr. MUNRO: No. One part of the amendment increases the number from 102 to 112. That increased figure of 112 applies only to 30 June, 1959.

Mr. Aikens: It goes up two to the year from then on.

Mr. MUNRO: From 1 July 1959 onwards the Governor in Council has the power to make an increase not exceeding an increase of two in any financial year.

Mr. Windsor: Would that be in keeping with the population?

Mr. Aikens: If that is the case all club licences will go down here.

Mr. MUNRO: Quite a number of factors must be considered in arriving at an appropriate number, but, as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has pointed out, an increase by two per year of a number in the vicinity of 100 would broadly be in conformity with the increase in population. It would be slightly less than the rate of increase at the moment.

Mr. Aikens: As all the population increase is taking place in Brisbane, the increased club licences will go to Brisbane.

Mr. MUNRO: I remind the hon. member for Mundingburra that this Government do not legislate only for Brisbane, but for the State of Queensland and these provisions

apply completely, equally and impartially to the whole of the State, even to the electorate of Mundingburra.

I should also like to make it clear that the Governor in Council is not given any power to reduce the statutory maximum and is not bound to exercise the power to make an increase in any particular year.

Thus, and I stress this, the net effect of the proposed amendment will be that the statutory maximum aggregate number is automatically increased from 102 to 112, at which figure it will remain up to 30 June, 1959, and in any succeeding financial year the statutory maximum may be further increased by not more than two.

Mr. Windsor: Does that mean you will issue those whether they are wanted or not?

Mr. MUNRO: No. I have covered that. Those are the four matters covered by the terms of the Bill.

Mr. DUGGAN (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (4.53 p.m.): On this occasion we propose to co-operate with the Minister by confining our remarks to the purposes of the Bill. Generally, a discussion on the Liquor Acts opens up a very wide field of debate. I agree on this occasion that we very properly should confine ourselves to the four principles of the Bill.

It seems to the Opposition that the proposals are necessary and desirable, and with some reservation should be supported. We think that one should be supported unequivocally. No useful purpose seems to be served by storing up indefinitely in trust funds sums of money not required for that purpose, and if provision is made temporarily for the allocation of a sum sufficient to maintain the fund at £300,000, which represents, according to the Minister, approximately six years' contribution to the fund, that would seem to be a reasonably prudent safeguard. I do not think we could fairly attack that provision very strongly. Better use could be made of the fund, in Consolidated Revenue, but that raises the point whether this is not the first indication that the Government's financial policy is coming home to roost, that they are finding increasing difficulty in financing some of their proposals, having failed dismally at Canberra to convince Mr. Menzies and Mr. Holt of the validity of their claims, and they are now beginning to make further encroachments on remaining trust funds.

The Treasurer in the Financial Statement indicated that they were virtually closing up the trust funds of the State in order to prove to Commonwealth authorities just how bare is the Treasury of this State. I know from the grumbings I have heard by hon. members of the Opposition and the Government that very grave concern is being felt as to the financial capacity of the Government to undertake their policy, not that this particular fund in itself is either going to help the Government out of their dilemma, or is going to have any great

bearing on the general finances of the State. But at least we can sound a warning here that this seems to be the first definite indication of the Government's inability to finance its programme in orthodox and conventional ways and of their intention of using these funds later on.

The proposal to permit the removal of a hotel that is being undermined by erosion to a more suitable site, subject to the restrictions that are proposed in the Bill, seems to be a very wise one. We know, of course, that a great deal of controversy sometimes develops when it is proposed to transfer a hotel from a so-called uneconomic site to a more remunerative one. It could put into the hands of some people very dangerous powers indeed, and we have had evidence of the desire of some people to place that power in the hands of the Licensing Commission. In the past there have been powers of transfer, but transfers have been made to strictly contiguous areas. However, there have been cases in which the encroachment of chain stores has restricted the possibility of a hotel's expanding.

The Minister pointed out that where there has been a truncation of a corner of a road, or where there has been a determination of a new State highway, particularly in country areas, there has been abundant justification for the approval of the transfer of a hotel from a site that has been virtually useless to the travelling public to a clearly defined new area. That must apply in the case of a major highway, and it must obviously apply, also, where erosion or something of that sort is undermining the foundations of the hotel.

Mr. Aikens: It could apply also to the pulling up of a railway line.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes, as long as the reason is there, as has been outlined very fully by the Minister. I have no objection if it is clearly defined. The Minister was good enough to indicate the particular areas where this problem has arisen, and we know that it does occur at both Mackay and Yorkey's Knob, and we certainly think that is sensible and reasonable.

The reservation I have is in regard to the right to install television sets in hotel bars. The Minister said that he was not very well informed on the reasons why the existing provision was applied. There may be several reasons, but I am not going to enumerate them. There is no obligation on me to state why the present prohibition was placed in the Act. It is sufficient for me to know that the Minister thinks it desirable to maintain the prohibition upon the screening of films, and I do not wish to go into the argument further than that. If the installation of television sets is to be permitted, from my knowledge of television I should think that its main appeal will lie in the presentation of news, some of the do-it-yourself sessions, and sporting events. From what I have seen in Sydney, most of the films used

in television programmes are very old, and I was not very favourably impressed with many of the programmes. But I was impressed with the news sessions, in which a pictorial representation of some of the places in the news is given while the news cast is being made. I found that tremendously interesting and very informative. I also found that some of the cooking demonstrations and hints to carpenters who do jobs in their own homes were very interesting and helpful. It is also true that in many instances you can see sporting events with greater clarity and in much more detail on television than if you were present at the event. That is because of the excellent photographic equipment that the television companies use, and the fact that their cameras can be placed at the best vantage points. What I am saying applies particularly to boxing events. When I was in Japan, where television sets are relatively cheap, I was particularly struck by the excellence of television for watching wrestling and boxing events, and other sporting events, which attracted huge television audiences.

I am not a drinker, but I know that many people are. I know also that if they can watch a sporting event on television and combine it with the consumption of liquor, they will elect to do that rather than go to the sporting event itself, or merely go to the hotel to have a drink. I am not going to be a spoilsport and say that I oppose the provision of television sets in private or public bars as an added inducement for people to go there, but it is very likely that many more people will go to hotel bars and remain there than would otherwise be the case. It is quite probable that that will constitute a problem similar to the one that arose some years ago when the screening of films in hotel bars was prohibited.

The Opposition supports the proposal to increase the number of club licences. The Minister is doing it in a reasonable way, which brings me once again to the powers of the Governor in Council. I do not intend to develop the subject very much, and I am not going to place myself in the position of having to defend the Opposition's point of view in this matter. This morning, when I had the opportunity of dwelling on the matter at some length, I said it was undesirable to introduce frequent legislation merely to improve the administrative efficiency of a particular department. As long as a clearly defined principle is laid down in the Act and the Governor in Council does not exercise power inconsistent with the principles of the Act, I can see no real reason for bringing down legislation, particularly when Parliament always has the right to discuss any decision that is covered by a regulation or an Order in Council.

There should be, however, a clear distinction on the general application of government by Order in Council. The principle referred to this morning applied to advances and would be applicable to almost everyone,

and no great social problem was involved. It was more or less the result of the deteriorating value of money. If it is merely a routine requirement, why waste the time of Parliament by the introduction of a measure?

In the case of club licences, however, the matter is entirely different. As a very important social principle is involved, there should be a strict measure of control. In the case of the Offenders Probation and Parole Bill, of course, we intend to support the principle that power should be given to the Governor in Council rather than to some outside body. There is no inconsistency about that. We want to be sensible in our approach to the application of the powers of the Governor in Council. With clubs a very important social consideration is involved because we know from the New South Wales experience of the tremendous use of poker machines and the like. So far we have opposed their introduction in Queensland and I hope we will continue to do so. It is a very undesirable development in Australia's social life that so many people should so display the gambling urge. There are abundant facilities available for those who want to exercise their gambling propensities. The individual is a completely free agent. If he wants to bet or engage in other forms of gambling he can go onto the racecourse or to other approved places. It is not my purpose to try to restrict that right or privilege. But because of the economic effect clubs have on the wage structure and on so many homes in Australia, I do not think it is desirable to encourage the provision of fruit machines and poker machines.

I was absolutely amazed at the number of fruit machines operating in certain entertainment centres in Tokyo. I saw no fewer than groups of 500 or 600 people in a whole series of gambling places packed to the doors. They remained alongside the machines for half-an-hour at a time incessantly pushing marbles in and I do not suppose 10 people of the 500 left them in that period. Within half a mile there must have been 40 or 50 such places operating. If a private operator owned them he would be a millionaire in no time.

If we gave the Governor in Council administrative power to license a great many more clubs and permitted the use of poker machines we would have no real opportunity to voice strong protest. The Minister has wisely laid down terms for increasing the number of licences so that if we think public interest demands more clubs we can do it legislatively rather than by Order in Council.

I hope I have made the attitude of the Opposition clear. We are not wavering all over the place. We want a sensible application of the principle to make Parliament work and to safeguard the rights of Parliamentarians and of Parliament itself. We who take this stand are in the main people who have had a fairly long experience of

such matters. Because we express a view when debating a certain matter we do not want it to be used as an iron clamp or to put us in a straightjacket for all occasions. We have to deal with each case on its merits.

From my observation it seems to be necessary with the growth of population from time to time to consider the desirability of granting extra licences. Since the Act became operative many people with the financial resources have been able to take advantage of the provisions and apply for a club licence; but others have not been able to satisfy the requirements of the Licensing Commission. It would be wrong to prevent an organisation, wherever it may be, if it is carrying out a useful function for a substantial membership, from ever holding a club licence. The Minister has given 12 months' notice of the fact that at least 10 extra licences can be granted. The proposal to restrict further increases to two a year is justified. If in the future reasons can be advanced to justify an increase in the number, action can be taken legislatively.

I have endeavoured to be relevant and helpful by not raising all sorts of contentious issues that could be raised. The Labour Party consider that there is need for possibly a completely new approach to the problem of liquor reform in Queensland. We have many ideas that we think would be useful to the community about the control of hotels, the manufacture and distribution of beer and alcoholic beverages, but I do not propose to take advantage of the privilege given to me of outlining that programme now. I wish to confine myself very strictly to the outline of the Bill given by the Minister. I want to be helpful and co-operative and accordingly we welcome the provisions as outlined by the Minister.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (5.11 p.m.): From the outline given by the Minister the Bill apparently contains provisions that would be acceptable, bearing in mind the experience of the Licensing Commission in administering the Liquor Act and the various problems that have come under notice. But there are one or two matters that demand very severe criticism of the Government's policy. Here is another instance of a raid on trust funds. Irrespective of the Minister's explanation, certain moneys extracted from the liquor trade through the licensees are in turn being extracted from their customers. In the main it is the workers who are contributing towards the payment of licence fees and other charges inflicted upon the liquor trade. Just as it applies to excise duty on tobacco or liquor under Commonwealth laws, licence fees and other charges determined by the State Government must in some way be included in the charge made to the customer for the liquor he consumes. Therefore, let us say that this is another means of extracting from the great body of workers of the State who patronise clubs,

hotels and probably even sly grog "joints"—if there are any these days—the charges that are made on the trade.

The Government are making some excuse why it should be transferred to Consolidated Revenue. There might be some justification for an adjustment of the accounts of the State, but that does not mean that we should accept a proposal of this nature without some criticism and a demanding of the Government that the practice will not grow. It is a dangerous practice. Many years ago there was a great deal of criticism when, for purely budgetary purposes, the Government of the day sought to make transfers from a particular fund to consolidated revenue. The Labour Government were severely criticised by the then Opposition, who now constitute the Government. It is only reasonable that we should keep our eyes on all moves by the present Government to transfer money from trust accounts to consolidated revenue.

The Minister spoke about television. I would be amazed if any great body of licensed victuallers in Queensland tried to encourage the screening of television in hotels. If anything, I would say that it would be a considerable handicap to them. Of course, it might be considered that it would attract people into hotel premises to watch the screening of sporting fixtures, etc., but on the other hand, the licensees might find their premises cluttered up with people who had no intention of drinking.

Mr. Herbert: That happened in Sydney.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. WALSH: Hon. members seem to know all about what has happened elsewhere. Apparently it has happened already in Sydney. There could be advantages and disadvantages. It is the prerogative of the licensee to determine the matter.

There can be no objection to the principle of the transfer of licences within limits. Some time ago there was an amendment of the Act to provide that where there was a deviation of a main road—it is referred to as de-maining—the Licensing Commission had power to deal with the matter. If the Main Roads Department diverted a road running past a hotel the Licensing Commission had power to deal with the matter. In the electorate of the hon. member for Cook the hotel at Yorkey's Knob was affected. The Queen's Hotel at Bowen was affected by the erosion which threatened it. There may be other instances. It could happen to premises on the South Coast and in other areas. I do not think that the Minister has made it wide enough. Provision could be made to deal with matters other than the diverting of a main road or erosion in order to obviate the bringing down of further amendments in the near future.

Provision is made for the Governor in Council to nominate the number of clubs after 30 June, 1959. I am concerned about the principle of giving the Government the right to determine the matter without consulting Parliament. There is the old argument about the Order in Council having to be tabled in accordance with the Act and the limited time allowed for the disallowance of an Order in Council. In accordance with Labour's interpretation of democracy, it was necessary to bring down an amendment of the Liquor Acts in order to grant a licence to a club.

Mr. Munro: A very cumbersome procedure.

Mr. WALSH: I am not going to disagree with the Minister on that point. I am saying that there has been a substantial deterioration because previously before any licence could be granted, Parliament had to approve. It could be argued, as the Minister said, that under existing conditions it would be perhaps stupid to have to bring every application before Parliament. We went a little further and set up a statutory body clothed with limited powers. Even though the Licensing Commission had power to grant a licence to a club, there was still a very definite limit on the jurisdiction of the Commission.

The Government, by this Bill, have taken a further step which is not necessarily endorsed by Government members, as it is obvious from his remarks that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was not well aware of the provisions of the Bill. I am sure he embarrassed the Minister on a few occasions by asking questions.

Mr. Windsor interjected.

Mr. WALSH: If that was the hon. member's intention, I am very thankful, but we certainly did not get very much out of the Minister in response to the hon. member's questions.

The Act gave some control over the granting of licences by the Commission. The position is now out of hand. It could be argued that, if we are going to concede the right to the Governor in Council to nominate two clubs a year, there is no reason why at some future date the figure could not be raised to 20 clubs a year. Again, could we not give the Governor in Council power to increase the number of hotel licences by Order in Council? If we accept the principle of granting club licences by Order in Council, what could be wrong with giving the Government the power to increase the number of hotel licences by Order in Council? As the Minister knows, the Act specifies the limit for hotel licences, and within that limit licences may be cancelled and new licences granted. The Minister would not deny that that is so. Although Parliament placed a restriction on the licensing of wine saloons, why should we not, if we accept this principle, give the Governor in Council power to increase the number of licences for wine

saloons? I am not prepared to place that power in the hands of the Governor in Council, because I do not know where it would end.

Mr. Munro: What is the statutory limitation on the number of wine saloons now?

Mr. WALSH: Off hand, I am not prepared to say.

Mr. Munro: I thought not.

Mr. WALSH: The Minister knows there was a definite restriction on the granting of such licences.

Mr. Munro. Carry on.

Mr. WALSH: I should hate to think that the Minister is of the opinion that the Commission has power to grant any number it desires.

Mr. Munro: I shall deal with that.

Mr. WALSH: I now come to the effect of the intrusion of clubs on the liquor trade. I do not think any argument can be advanced against the licensing of certain social clubs that is, bowling clubs, golf clubs, and so on. That has been conceded for a long time. I think of the average hotel in this city or other parts of the State as a workers' club, where a worker has the right to go for his drink, and where he will not be molested unless he fails to conform to the standards of good behaviour. A licensee has the right to take action if a customer is objectionable. Under a system that has operated for many years, we have insisted that licensees shall provide certain facilities, accommodation, meals, and so on. If the available business is to be split between clubs, hotels and other licensed premises, it is hardly fair of any Government to insist on hotel-owners or licensees' committing themselves to huge expenditure on accommodation. In some cases it costs as much as £2,000 or £3,000 a bed to provide the standard of accommodation demanded by the Licensing Commission. The hon. member for Cook says that it is £4,000. It could possibly go higher than that in certain hotels. I do not know what the cost of each room was at the Broadbeach hotel, but the great body of workers would not be interested in accommodation of that standard because it is far beyond their means. I think the Minister and the Government must agree that it is futile to ask hotel-keepers to continue expending large sums of money in providing up-to-date accommodation if there are to be many other avenues for the consumption of liquor, on which the hotel-keepers say they depend. It is very easy to get into arguments about this, and experts will come and tell you how much can be earned in the bar and how much can be earned in the house. There is no doubt in my mind that if a hotel has over 30 beds and they are fully occupied throughout the year, it can make more profit on the house than it can in the bar. I have argued this question with licensees who own their own properties and who have gone to the trouble

of showing me their books. I am not speaking of hotels in the metropolitan area. Those licensees have convinced me that the percentage they were making on their house accommodation was in some cases nearly double what they were making in the bar.

I think we are justified in insisting upon a certain standard of building, accommodation, beds, rooms, and all other facilities, and I am not arguing against the standards that have been laid down. They should apply in the ordinary residential areas that do not have a liquor franchise. Places such as the "Canberra" provide suitable accommodation without depending on liquor and make very substantial profits, and there are other private hotels not far from this building that provide good accommodation and do not sell liquor. However, I think it is unjust to the majority of hotel licensees to insist on these improvements being made if the Government willy-nilly increases the number of other licences from time to time.

I make no apologies for any of the publicans who might be compelled to provide a proper standard of hygiene and accommodation in their premises. They are making profits out of those places, and they should not expect their customers to put up with conditions that might have been good enough 30 or 40 years ago but are certainly not good enough now. There are still places of that sort in many parts of Queensland. There are difficulties there because in some instances they cannot make sufficient money to enable them to make these improvements. No doubt many people who owned the licences previously made their pile out of them and passed on the old dilapidated buildings. The new licensee has to get finance to meet the demands of the Licensing Commission. I made reference to the hon. member for Gregory's territory the other night. Looking back, there must have been publicans in those western areas who extracted thousands and thousands of pounds from the shearers and pastoral workers. The same thing occurred in the cane areas, the mining areas, and so on. It is only reasonable that some attempt should be made to improve the standards in those places. Nobody can question that. These days, of course, it is almost beyond the capacity of the average licensee who owns only one hotel to do very much. However, large syndicates with the finance to buy chains of hotels apparently have some method of mortgaging them and getting enough money either to reconstruct or renovate them in turn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is quite a few minutes since the hon. member said anything about clubs. I hope he intends to relate his remarks to them.

Mr. WALSH: I am making the point that while hotels are expected to do all these things, clubs are asked merely to combine a comfortable bar with suitable drinking facilities. In some instances they may be required

to supply meals, but that provision will not be enforced very rigidly. It has not been enforced in the past, and I do not think the Government would want to enforce it.

There are quite a few long-established clubs in Brisbane with no possible chance of extending their amenities because their membership is too small. Many people want clubs merely as meeting places where they can discuss matters of mutual interest. I have no objection to that type of club. If they want a club for professional men only, that is their business. Of course, it should be nominated as such a club.

We have heard a good deal of argument in the past about discrimination by clubs in accepting members. That raises the matter of whether the Government intend to continue to grant licences to such an extent that the real workers' clubs—the hotels—will have to close because they cannot make a profit. That is what is happening in New South Wales. If it happens here, we will reach the stage where the average worker will have to pay a fee to join a club so that he can get a drink.

I have stated my views on some phases of the legislation. I still say that the provision giving the Governor in Council power to increase the number of licences will not have my support. I see the danger that the principle will be extended. Both the hon. member for Kurilpa and the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt—as well as some of the other legal luminaries on the other side of the Chamber—during their short term in Parliament have demanded that we get away from control by executive authority. They have expressed the opinion that more power should be placed in the hands of Parliament, and that less authority should be given to the Governor in Council to bring in amendments. They are matters that should be discussed in Parliament.

Mr. ROBERTS (Whitsunday) (5.34 p.m.): I have heard the hon. member for Bundaberg speak in this Chamber on numerous occasions, but I have never heard him flounder more than he has done during the last 20 minutes or so. It must have been evident to everybody that he was dealing with a subject about which he knew nothing at all. He commenced by saying that the Bill represented a raid on trust funds. I was almost paddling in his crocodile tears as he spoke about the great body of workers. It is not long since the Government of which he was a Minister increased licence fees, which affected the great body of workers. How can it be wrong today if it was right before? The Government have enough funds in hand to cover compensation for licencees. The Leader of the Opposition was probably being facetious when he said it was the first indication of the Government's financial policy coming home to roost. On the other hand it is perhaps the first indication of sane and sensible government in the State.

The hon. member went a shade further and suggested that club licences should not be increased without bringing them before Parliament. What sort of an unholy mess would we be in if every application for a club licence had to come before Parliament? The Cairns Club comes to my mind as one that was discussed during the course of the debate.

Mr. Duggan: They were specified by name in the Act.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is so. We should be in a sorry mess if we had to bring before hon. members the name of every hotel and every club. We know what happened when it was necessary every six months or every 12 months to bring in a measure to increase the coal and oil shale mine workers' pension. That could have been done as it is now. The Government's approach is very sensible.

Hon. members will find it in "Hansard" that I wanted to know from the previous Government why the number of registered clubs was fixed at 102, but nobody would let the secret out. Why was it not 100 or 120 or 150? The Government must have had something in mind at the time, but they kept it a close secret. Providing for the number to be increased by not more than two each year, if required, is sensible. It is not a case of the Governor in Council nominating two clubs a year as the hon. member for Bundaberg suggested. The applications will go to the Licensing Commission in the normal way, as in the past, and it will be for the Licensing Commission to make the recommendations and for the Governor in Council to approve.

Mr. Walsh: Cabinet will know where they are going to be before they issue the Order in Council.

Mr. ROBERTS: What does it matter if the Cabinet know? We on this side of the Chamber are democratic. Not only will the Cabinet know, but also the rank and file of the Government parties will know, because they take an active interest in the Government. That is demonstrated by the sensible legislation coming forward.

The hon. member for Bundaberg went on with a lot of tommyrot generally about what the hotels had to provide while the clubs had to provide nothing. He knows exactly what the clubs have to provide. They must comply with the conditions laid down by the Licensing Commission and provide amenities, too. Bear in mind, too, that none of the clubs are privately owned. They are 99.9 per cent. owned by the workers, by the people themselves, as a community effort.

Mr. Power: What about the Queensland Club?

Mr. ROBERTS: It is a community effort, too. As a matter of fact, they tell me that the latest addition to the membership of the Queensland Club is the hon. member for Baroona.

Mr. Power: Oh no, they put the black marble in there.

Mr. ROBERTS: The hon. member puts the black rooster in. Talking of clubs, they tell me it has been the arrangement over a number of years that the only poultry supplied to the Queensland Club is supplied by the hon. member for Baroona.

Mr. POWER: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member may be facetious—I am sure he is—but I want it recorded in "Hansard" for the benefit of the people who read "Hansard" that what he said is entirely untrue and I request a withdrawal of it.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to accept the denial of the hon. member for Baroona.

Mr. ROBERTS: Yes. That was a "fowl" statement to make in any case.

The hon. member for Bundaberg spoke about increasing the number of hotel licences. He knows as well as I do that the number of hotel licences at present is 200 or possibly much more below the number prescribed in the Act. I very much doubt that either he or I or anybody else in the Chamber will ever see the full number of licences issued.

In various parts of the State we expect great development. Take Weipa, for instance. No doubt many returned soldiers will go into that area as the development proceeds. Should they not be entitled to have a club? As a Government for all the people, not one section of the people, should we not bring down legislation under which these people of the future will find it easier to get a club than they would under the type of legislation envisaged in the remarks of the hon. member for Bundaberg?

Mr. Walsh: Do they conduct a local option poll for club licences?

Mr. ROBERTS: The hon. member for Bundaberg is trying to be facetious. He knows as well as anybody else in the Chamber that local option does not apply to any of the club licences.

I thank the Minister for his approach to the transfer of licences of hotels. The Bill has been introduced mainly because of an approach I made to the Minister about the Cremorne Hotel in North Mackay. North Mackay has a population of about 5,000 people within a radius of two or three miles. The Cremorne Hotel is the only hotel in the area. The hotel adjoins the Forgan Bridge that connects Mackay with North Mackay. The area between the Pioneer River and Barnes Creek is subject to constant flooding. I have been one of 40 people on the second storey of the hotel when flood waters have been swirling eight or ten feet deep down below. I have seen flood waters up to a height of about three feet in the bar of the hotel. Almost opposite the hotel on the other side of the road and adjoining the Forgan

Bridge the Buffalo Lodge building, a structure of 2,000 to 3,000 square feet, once stood. It was a big building that was used as a dance hall. Today there is not one board left. The building went down the river holus-bolus. It meant an enormous loss to the Buffalo Lodge at the time. But what a greater loss there could have been if the Cremorne Hotel—an old wooden building—had been swept down the river with possibly the loss of 40 or 50 lives. That could have happened in any flood in recent years. The Pioneer Shire Council has seen fit to prohibit building in the area. The Government have made land available to the people whose homes in those areas were affected by the recent floods. The Cremorne Hotel is owned by the executors of the Taylor Estate who are anxious to erect a new building on the other side of Barnes Creek, where it will be above flood level.

Mr. Graham: Where is the proposed site?

Mr. ROBERTS: On the Harbour road, about 100 yards after it joins Evans Avenue. I understand that it is the intention of the Council to see that the building is well back from the road so that there will be no traffic hazard. I do not know whether the present old wooden building was erected before the 1918 cyclone.

Mr. Graham: Owned by whom?

Mr. ROBERTS: The Taylor Estate, as I said before. They intend to build a modern hotel costing £30,000 or £40,000 in this new area and it will be more central for the people of North Mackay. Under the Act the licensee would have to forfeit the licence and then the new licence would be subject to public tender. That would not be fitting treatment for people who have given an efficient service over a period of years. I remember when legislation was introduced permitting licensees of hotels near main roads that had been re-routed to apply for a transfer of the licences to another site. The Bill gives the licensees the right to apply for a transfer of a licence from an area subject to flooding.

Mr. Graham: In this case it will be in a much more central position.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is so; and one that is not so hazardous. As the hon. member for Mackay and the Minister for Mines know, in the present position the lighting is bad. Between the Pioneer River and the Barnes Street bridge there is a narrow road where many accidents have occurred. The community as a whole will benefit by the change of site.

Mr. Evans: They will build a new hotel.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is so.

I have seen television in most of the bars in Sydney over a period, and although it was a novelty at first I do not think that much notice is taken of it now. When it is put into operation in Brisbane many people will

go to see it before deciding to purchase a set. I think it will be many years before we will have television in country areas in Queensland.

I sincerely thank the Minister and the Government for their sympathetic treatment of this matter.

Mr. GAVEN (Southport) (5.50 p.m.): The need for amendment of the Act in the four directions covered by the Bill became apparent, and the Government have approached the task in a common sense manner. As a debate on all the ramifications of the Liquor Act could last a week, I shall with other hon. members deal mainly with the four principles of the Bill, and then refer briefly to one or two other matters.

The first provision allows the diversion of money from a certain trust fund, a sensible move that would be taken by any Government, irrespective of their political colour.

The second principle is based on common sense, and allows the removal of a licence from a site subject to flooding or erosion to another site where those dangers do not exist. While I am not conversant with the position in Mackay, I have visited Yorkey's Knob and I know the circumstances of that case. Any Government that refused to allow the removal of that licence to another site would be failing in their duty.

Mr. Walsh: They would not be justified in allowing the license to be shifted to a position two miles away.

Mr. GAVEN: No, but to a safer place.

Similar erosion could occur at any spot on the coastline where the Pacific Ocean was not as pacific as its name implies.

Because of river siltation, a hotel built a few years ago may now be in a flood area, and guests at the hotel may have to run the gauntlet of a flood and risk death by drowning. Common sense dictates that the licence should be removed to a safer place.

The right given by the Bill to use television sets in licensed premises is sensible to a marked degree. At many hotels in New South Wales and other places I found that guests and tourists at those hotels gathered after dinner in a big room usually set aside for this purpose to enjoy the television programme. It could be described as a place of amusement or entertainment. Varying types of entertainment are provided in hotels, cabaret shows, floor shows, dancing, and other amusement for guests and tourists who visit the hotels.

Mr. Walsh: I wonder if they will exclude them if they come along in pyjamas.

Mr. GAVEN: They can be excluded under the Act if they drink in the vicinity of a dance floor, or dance in the vicinity of drink. Section 166A of the Liquor Act makes it an offence. That is a provision in which I am particularly interested, but I shall not raise it at this stage, as I am

confining my remarks to the four clauses of the Bill. Amusement and entertainment constitute a wide field for discussion. I could never understand how a person could be said to be breaking the law merely because he has a drink with a meal and dances on a floor nearby, or vice versa. That aspect will have to be considered at a later date. I have nothing further to say about it at the moment, but I hope to have much to say about it later.

The Bill provides for an increase in the number of clubs from 102 to 112, and gives the Government power if they so desire to grant up to two licences in each succeeding year. The Act of 1954 limited the number of club licences to 102. Since that time the population has increased tremendously. If 102 licences were warranted in 1954 during the regime of the previous Government, I cannot see why the number should not be increased by 10 in five years. The increase in population would probably justify it. I had 8,000 constituents in my area in 1950; today I have almost 20,000. There are two club licences in my area, and on a population basis we are a long way behind the city of Brisbane. If 102 licences were necessary in 1954, I can see very little wrong with having 112 licences five years later when one considers the tremendous increase in population. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that he believed that this was sensible, common-sense legislation, and I agree with him. But he said he had some fear that gambling might take place in these clubs to which we have given licences. In most of the clubs that I have attended, I have found that a happy community spirit prevailed. The R.S.L. clubs come to mind immediately. They have their billiard-rooms and indoor bowls; they play cards; meals are provided, and entertainment is also provided from time to time. A similar spirit prevails in golf clubs and bowling clubs. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that while we are the Government of Queensland there will be no casinos, no one-armed bandits, and no gambling in night clubs in Brisbane or in any other part of Queensland. We believe that they will have a bad effect on family life, and we will strongly oppose the introduction of the things that his counterpart Mr. Cahill has permitted to the detriment of the people of New South Wales. They will not be allowed here.

Generally speaking, when we examine this legislation we see that it is sound, it is based on common sense, and it is in the best interests of the people of Queensland. I commend the Minister for introducing it.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (7.15 p.m.), in reply: I appreciate the restraint of the Leader of the Opposition in confining his remarks to the subject matter of the Bill. That is very desirable at a time like the present, when we have such an extensive legislative programme. If the debates are kept relevant

to the provisions of the Bills, it necessarily enables us to give them much better consideration than otherwise would be the case. That example was followed also by subsequent speakers.

The Bill covers only four subjects, and in my brief reply I think I can deal with them most conveniently by referring to them in the same order as in my introductory remarks.

The first principle relates to the diversion of certain revenue amounts from the Liquor Acts Trust Fund to Consolidated Revenue. I think that principle was generally accepted, but with some qualifications. It was suggested, for example, that to some extent it savoured of a raid on the Trust Funds, which might be attributed to the fact that we have not received a greater measure of financial assistance from our friends at Canberra.

Mr. Walsh: You wouldn't call them your friends now, would you?

Mr. MUNRO: Yes. I would still call them our friends.

If we view this matter in its proper perspective, criticism of the Bill is not justified. Trust Funds are established and carried on for a specific purpose, so that we can accumulate in any particular Trust Fund an amount that is adequate for that purpose. When a Trust Fund is built up to a figure that is sufficient for that purpose, nothing can be gained by continuing to add to it. If we did, we should only be creating what is known in business and accounting circles as a secret reserve.

Mr. Mann: We did not argue on that point.

Mr. MUNRO: It was mentioned during the debate. The principle that is guiding the Government is merely that of using all funds available to the best advantage of the community generally.

The second principle of the Bill deals with a slight extension of the power to remove a licence. It was generally accepted as reasonable, and no further comment from me should be necessary.

Mr. Walsh: One would expect that there would be some limit on the distance.

Mr. MUNRO: Seeing that that point has been raised, I admit that it is rather difficult.

Mr. Walsh: It is very pertinent.

Mr. MUNRO: It is an interesting point, and I shall refer to the relevant section of the Act. To view the matter in its proper perspective, it is necessary to refer to Section 49A of the principal Act. When the requirements of that section are met the Licensing Commission may approve of a transfer within the terms of the section. Subsection (1) of Section 49A indicates

that after all the preliminary requirements have been met the owner may—

“remove that licence to such other premises in the same locality as will, having regard to the aforesaid diversion or re-routing, in the opinion of the Commission best meet the convenience of the public (particularly the travelling public) and the requirements of that locality.”

We are extending that to cover the circumstances set out in the Bill. There is implicit in the subsection a limitation on the distance.

The third subject dealt with was the removal of a technical prohibition in the law against the use of television in hotels. That was generally accepted but with some qualifications that call for explanation. In the debate references were made to fruit machines, poker machines and “one-armed bandits.” Let me make it abundantly clear that there is nothing in the Bill about fruit machines, poker machines or “one-armed bandits.” I sincerely hope we will never have them.

Mr. Walsh: I am sure you know a lot of two-armed bandits, too, don't you?

Mr. MUNRO: I would not say that. The hon. member for Bundaberg might know some; but there is nothing in the Bill about those matters. The clause simply deals with television. The subject was discussed as though the clause related to television in public bars. Let me make the reason for the provision clear. I am quite sure there was never any intention to prohibit television in the circumstances set out in the section. Again I find it necessary to refer to the context. The prohibition relates not merely to public bars but to any showing in licensed premises. Section 4 of the Act defines “Licensed Premises” as—

“The premises in respect of which a licence is granted.”

The definition of “premises” is very lengthy and I shall not bore the Committee by reading it in full but by it the term includes “house or place” and extends to every room, including billiard room, cellar, yard, stable, outhouse, and “any other place whatsoever of, belonging, or in any other manner appertaining to such house or place.” If we had not introduced the Bill we should have the anomaly that guests in hotels could not have a television set in their bedrooms. I think I would be interpreting the section correctly if I said there would be a prohibition against even the licensee of a hotel who lived in the hotel having a television set.

Mr. Burrows: Are you going to allow television in the public bars?

Mr. MUNRO: There will be no prohibition against it. There is no prohibition of wireless sets in the public bar. We do not think there is any need to prohibit television in public bars.

Mr. Jesson: Not 10 per cent. of the hotels in Sydney would have them in the bars.

Mr. MUNRO: I am not interested in whether they have them in public bars or not. The amendment to the Act was necessary because were it not amended there would be a very severe prohibition, a quite unnecessary restriction of the rights of these people.

Mr. Walsh: It is probably more to meet the requirements of guests in the hotels.

Mr. MUNRO: I would have that more in mind. Even if there is a television set in the public bar I do not think there is anything very harmful about it. When television is introduced into Queensland many people will not be able to afford television sets. If they like to watch television in a public bar, or in any other part of a hotel, in a shop window or any place in Queen Street I do not think there is anything harmful in it. I do not think the Government should restrict it. There has been no restriction in the past because there has been no television in Queensland.

The fourth and final point concerns the alteration in the statutory maximum aggregate number of club licences. I think that it was generally accepted that the Government's approach was a fair one. But the hon. member for Bundaberg took exception to the fact that in addition to making a moderate increase in the statutory maximum aggregate number that applies at present provision is made for some flexibility in the future. He rather held up his hands in horror at the thought that Parliament should give the Executive Council the power to increase by two the statutory maximum aggregate number that applies to three principal classes of clubs. It applies to ex-service men's club licences, workers' club licences and principal sporting club licences. The hon. member for Bundaberg asserted that that might be a very dangerous provision. What he overlooked is that if he holds such great moral objections to a power of this kind being vested in the Governor in Council he should have expressed objection to other parts of the Liquor Act long ago when he was a member of a Government. Let us compare the provision with the provision covering licensed victuallers, wine sellers and other types of clubs. For all practical purposes there is no statutory figure in the Act in respect of licensed victuallers, but the number cannot be increased beyond 1,342 which was the number in operation in 1935 and for a few years after.

Mr. Walsh: It is still a limitation.

Mr. MUNRO: With only that general limitation in the Act the real limitation is in the control by the Licensing Commission. The number of existing licenses has in fact been reduced year by year and on 30 June, 1958, it had been reduced to 1,188. It is going down every year. For all practical purposes there is no statutory limitation.

Mr. Walsh: The real limitation is the local option polls.

Mr. MUNRO: That is another thing. These statutory limitations are not important and it might not make a great deal of difference if we abolished the statutory maximum aggregate limitation altogether.

The matter of wine-sellers' licences was dealt with in the same way. It is true, as the hon. member for Bundaberg pointed out, that there is a somewhat similar limitation on those also, tied to this figure in 1935-1936.

Mr. Walsh: You cannot increase it.

Mr. MUNRO: No. In this case also the action of the Licensing Commission has been such that the number has been steadily reduced and as at 30th June, 1958, the licences are only 24 compared with what would be the limitation figure of 32.

Mr. Walsh: That has not met the point I made about the Governor in Council's power to increase those if necessary.

Mr. MUNRO: The point made by the hon. member was that he was completely shocked that the Governor in Council should have the power to make this limited increase.

I now come to the final point in regard to bowling and golf club licences. In these cases there is no limitation at all. There is none in the Act nor in the Bill. Surely in those circumstances one would not regard it as being in any way unreasonable for this Parliament to approve of this, in my view, quite moderate approach to the subject of giving the Governor in Council this limited power.

I greatly appreciate the general tenor of the debate.

Motion (Mr. Munro) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

CROWN LAND DEVELOPMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. A. G. MULLER (Fassifern—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (7.34 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced relating to the development of Crown land and land reclaimable from the sea.”

The primary purpose of this Bill is to permit of the Government's leasing Crown land above or below high water which may be too costly for the Crown to undertake the development thereof so as to enable private enterprise to develop the land for manufacturing, business, industrial, residential, tourist or recreational purposes.

In return for the expenditure required to realise the potentialities of such land, private enterprise may be permitted to purchase and sell the freehold of the developed land in subdivision.

The Bill is designed to provide for those major developmental schemes which involve not only the development of Crown lands for any of the aforementioned purposes but also involve the construction of works or things including bridges, viaducts, or roads, to provide or improve access to or through or in the vicinity of the Crown land proposed to be developed.

A great deal of interest has already been shown by private enterprise in the development of coastal land suitable, after development or reclamation, for subdivision into seaside residential allotments, and some of the schemes envisaged entail expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds in real estate development.

I would mention just a few that are proceeding at various stages to illustrate the magnitude of the work involved and the type of proposals the Bill is designed to authorise—

(a) Negotiations are proceeding with the Hooker Rex Coy. Ltd., who propose to develop South Stradbroke Island into a tourist resort up to international standard. Reclamation, filling, levelling and stabilisation of sand dunes has to be undertaken, not to mention road and canal construction. To provide access to the island the company proposes to build a bridge over the Broadwater which bridge alone is estimated to cost £750,000.

A hotel of international standard is contemplated and in all this scheme if proceeded with may ultimately involve an estimated expenditure of £10,000,000.

(b) Applications have been called for the development of an area of some 2,000 acres at Bribie Island. This scheme also entails the construction of a bridge from Toorbul Point to Bribie Island, estimated to cost £680,000. Applications close on 4 May next.

(c) A link in the proposed coastal road north of Brisbane is to be undertaken by T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd. to connect Coolum and Noosa. This involves the construction of 5.7 miles of bitumen road to Main Roads Class A specifications. The road will provide many scenic views of ocean and mountains, as well as opening up for seaside residential development 530 acres of land presently unused.

(d) Applications have been called for the construction of another link of the North Coast Road between Caloundra and Mooloolaba. This proposal involves the construction of about 7 miles of bitumen road as well as three small bridges, and the Landsborough Shire Council has joined

with the Crown in making land available for development by the successful applicant.

Mr. Jesson: How wide will these roads be?

Mr. MULLER: They must be to Main Roads standard.

This Bill will give the Governor in Council all necessary authority to enter into leasing agreements to implement such development schemes.

The legislation is not, however, designed to cover the development of small areas, particularly those adjoining freehold lands already held by the proposed subdividor. Such small schemes can more appropriately be dealt with under the existing provisions of the Land Acts, and, where land is tidal, the Harbours Acts.

To obviate the necessity of operating the provisions of the Harbours Acts in those cases where land below high-water mark is included in Crown land proposed to be developed, this Bill provides that such land may be included in any developmental scheme authorised by the Act subject to the prior consent of the Minister administering the Harbours Acts being obtained.

Adequate provision is made in the Bill to ensure that the Crown receives a purchasing price for the land which is made available for development, and it is fully intended that a fair price only will be agreed to at the time negotiations for a lease are being conducted.

It must be remembered that the Crown is providing the main asset, namely the land itself, and is therefore entitled to a fair share of the potential value of the land. It would not be in the public interest to leave the way open for any lessee developer to become enriched to the disadvantage of the State because of a loophole in the new Act.

The principal provisions of the Bill are:—

(1) The term of a development lease will not exceed 20 years.

(2) A development lease may be subject to such conditions to secure the development of the land as the Governor in Council thinks fit and may include, *inter alia*, conditions providing for—

(i.) The purpose for which the land comprised in the lease or any part thereof is to be developed;

(ii.) Roads, bridges, viaducts and other works to be constructed whether within or without the boundaries of the leased land for the purpose of providing and/or improving access to or through or in the vicinity of the leased land;

(iii.) The levelling, topdressing, draining or other works and things to be constructed for developing the land for the purposes specified in the lease;

(iv.) The standard of material and workmanship and the time within which works and conditions are to be performed;

(v.) The purchasing price or the method of determining or calculating the purchasing price to be paid to the Crown for the freehold of the whole or any part of the developed land as approved by the Minister.

The object of providing a method of determining or calculating the purchasing price is to enable the Minister to specify that the Crown shall be paid a percentage of the gross selling price received by the lessee on the sale of approved subdivisions of the leased land or payment in accordance with any other method which may be agreed upon.

(3) Subdivision of a development lease may be effected only with the prior permission of the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation in accordance with a plan approved by him and conforming to the requirements of the relevant local authority.

Before permitting subdivision the Minister may require, according to circumstances, any of the conditions of the lease to be performed in full or to the extent determined by him.

(4) Provision is also made to ensure adequate reserves, parks, etc., are set aside for public use.

(5) No deed of grant for any subdivision will issue unless the lessee has performed any and every condition of the lease which the instrument of lease specifies must be performed prior to the issue of a deed of grant.

(6) A lessee shall be entitled to purchase the fee simple of any approved subdivision from the Crown upon payment of the agreed price or the price as calculated according to the method specified in the lease, when he satisfies the Minister that he has bona fide contracted to sell the subdivision in question to a buyer at a price not less than the reasonable market value thereof.

(7) A lessee may purchase for his own use any subdivision provided the Minister approves of the purpose for which he proposes to use the subdivision. In this case the purchasing price shall be as agreed between the Crown and the lessee.

(8) Provision is made for persons authorised by the Minister and the relevant local authority to enter upon and make such inspections or examination of works being performed in accordance with the conditions of lease, and for the lessee to maintain and keep fit and ready for public use for such period as may be specified any road, bridge, viaduct or other works constructed pursuant to the conditions of lease.

(9) The provisions of the principal Land Acts as regards payment of rent, forfeiture, mortgaging and bankruptcy are made to apply to development leases.

(10) To meet those cases where tests or experiments are first necessary to determine the potentialities of any Crown land for development for manufacturing, business, industrial, residential, tourist or recreational purposes, the Governor in Council is empowered to enter into an agreement with any person either after or without inviting applications to grant such person a Development Lease subject to that person complying with the terms and conditions of the agreement, including any specified tests or investigations.

Mr. Mann: Do you mean to say that you can enter into an agreement with a private individual without calling any applications?

Mr. MULLER: We are taking the power to do so in certain cases where we think it is necessary. We have not done it so far, and it is not likely that we will in very many cases. Where the Crown enters into an agreement with a sub-divider or a road-constructing authority or reclamation authority, we are taking power to do so if we consider it necessary.

The Bill provides considerable scope for development. Thousands of acres of low-lying mangrove swamps that at present are merely breeding mosquitoes have been awaiting development for years, and the Government have decided to take positive action so that they may be developed. I should like to mention a few in addition to those that I have already outlined.

Work is at present in hand at Tallebudgera Creek. It has been proceeding for some months, and it is expected to be completed within the next three or four months. It was introduced to the Government by the hon. member for Southport, and the department took the matter up with a number of constructing authorities. In that instance we sought applications and the successful tenderer is now on the job. He is reclaiming and improving the land, and has agreed to pay the Crown a certain price for it. Of course, he has to comply with the conditions laid down by the local authority governing roads and recreation reserves.

The hon. member for Nundah introduced another scheme at Cribb Island, where there is an area of about 160 acres of low-lying land that can be reclaimed very cheaply. Under the old system of perpetual lease, it was impossible to have these works carried out. The work that I am referring to has been made possible only because of the Government's policy of giving people the right to hold freehold land.

Mr. Foley: That is not so. Bill Rankin reclaimed a large area of land at Southport and got rid of the lot of it.

Mr. MULLER: You could not handle these schemes in the same way as Rankin's was handled.

Mr. Foley: Why not?

Mr. MULLER: If the hon. member does not like it, he will have to take it. The schemes that I refer to are such that no company would be prepared to undertake the work under the conditions that applied previously. After it had outlaid a large sum of money, it would have had to hand the land back to the Government.

Mr. Walsh: That is not true.

Mr. MULLER: The hon. member can protest as much as he likes. The fact remains that the work was not done.

The hon. member for Nundah was approached by the people of Cribb Island, who pointed out that building space there was so limited that something would have to be done. They came to me and said, "If you will give us permission, we will find a company and the money to do the work." The swampy area merely requires building up about two feet to make it a beautiful building site.

The hon. member for Murrumba has a similar proposal in the Redcliffe area, where a company is prepared to do reclamation work. The area affected there is about 1,200 acres or 1,500 acres of mangrove swamp, which at present is simply a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Under this legislation, as well as being possible to reclaim it, it will be economical. That is the important point.

The hon. member for Belyando does not seem to realise that, while some reclamation work has been done in the past, it has not been economic for any big constructing authority to engage in it.

Under the Bill we will provide access to beautiful beaches on the North Coast that were almost unknown in the past because they were inaccessible. The hon. member for Cooroora, who is Chairman of the Maroochy Shire, and the Premier, introduced a scheme that will open tremendous possibilities. One has only to inspect the area, as I did at the invitation of the shires, to find that there are thousands of acres of beautiful building sites, Crown land, without access. Bridges and roads are being built and we have interested private enterprise so much that it is now engaging in the work. The Shires of Maroochy, Noosa and Landsborough have come into the picture and are co-operating. We hope in the next few years to have a seaside road from Caloundra to Noosa Heads.

Mr. Walsh: Like the Brisbane line?

Mr. MULLER: Never mind about the Brisbane line. There is no Brisbane line with me. What I say will go and I have the Government behind me in this. It is the

most progressive development that has taken place on the coast in the history of the State. If any hon. member doubts it, let him go and see for himself. I give full credit to the shires who blazed the track so that the Government might be induced to take up the work. They have spent a considerable sum of money, the Maroochy Shire in particular, in building bridges and roads to make the scheme possible. It has been followed up by applications called by the Department of Public Lands for a subdivider to take an interest. I was really amazed at the potentialities of the area. I do not care what hon. members opposite say to the contrary; it has been possible only under the system of freehold tenure.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. MULLER: Nevertheless it is true and hon. members cannot deny what has happened in the past. I repeat that it is only through our freeholding legislation that it has been made possible.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. MULLER: Hon. members opposite will have their opportunity to reply and I will be with them all the way; make no bones about that. We called for applications from subdividers who were prepared to undertake the work. I mentioned earlier in reply to the hon. member for Brisbane that in the Bill we reserve the right in certain cases to negotiate directly with a private subdivider or private contractor. So far we have not done so. On the North Coast we have let a contract to T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd. who are actually engaged in the work. We called for applications and invited people who were interested in this class of development to submit a proposal. Some submitted a cash price for the land, others a percentage of the gross sale price and others different ways. The contract has been entered into with T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd. on condition that they build the road and bridges at an estimated cost to them of £80,000. We have made an area of land available that they can subdivide and sell. They will get a grant of 75 per cent. of the gross proceeds of the sale,

Mr. Walsh: We saw that in the paper long ago.

Mr. MULLER: I know that the hon. member did. If he does not like to listen he need not worry his head about it.

Mr. Jesson: What is the minimum size of the blocks they can sell?

Mr. MULLER: I will tell the hon. member that later. Adequate provision is made in the Bill to guard against any sharp practices. They cannot pass the land on to a "dummy", sell it at any price, and then re-sell it later. The Crown will receive 25 per cent. of the proceeds. I am not trying to say that will happen in every case because some schemes are more profitable than others. Instead of the Crown paying the contractors

with money they compensate them with land. Another reason why this work has not been done before was that the Crown did not have the surplus money for this type of development work. It is true that if the councils had hundreds of thousand of pounds available they could engage in this work, but they have not the necessary finance. By allowing private contractors to do the job they are providing the money and the labour and we compensate them on a fair basis in return.

I mentioned before that they must first of all take out a special lease limited to 20 years. It does not necessarily follow that they will take anything like 20 years to do the job. T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd. signed the contract only a few months ago but the work is well in hand. They assure me that the job will be completed about September or October when the land will be opened up for sale. When the land is subdivided they will be given a freehold title to it.

We have not bargained away all the land in the area. Only a limited area has been given away and after it has been subdivided there will be still a large area of land available for subdivision. When roads are built and the land is subdivided the Crown will be able to subdivide more of it which will be sold to their advantage. We certainly shall be in office for the next five or 10 years. Only an accident could upset that prediction. If such an accident occurred I know perfectly well that the first thing a Labour Government would do would be to repeal our freehold legislation. But as we are sure to remain in office I will be very disappointed if within the next five years we cannot sell £5,000,000 worth of land on the North Coast, land that previously was lying idle. We are inviting people to take an interest in this work. A number of private contractors have shown a good deal of interest. Applications for tenders have been called for another section on the North Coast, and shortly we will be calling for tenders for a third.

There is another very bright feature of this legislation. We also contemplate making land available which will be within the reach of the working man.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members to refrain from continually interrupting and making a noise.

Mr. MULLER: Every time I put up anything worth while hon. members opposite attempt to drown my voice so that people will not hear me. However, the Press will hear what I say and therefore the workers will know about it. As a result of auction sales within the last couple of years everyone knows what has happened—the price of land has reached such a high level that it is almost impossible for a working man to buy one of these blocks. We do not think of only handling hundreds of acres, but thousands of acres; and when it is subdivided the working man will be able to buy a home site. I

look upon that as one of the very important parts of the Bill. In addition to that we are inviting outside capital to come to Queensland. I am sure that when the hon. member for Coorooora speaks he will tell the Committee something about what the American firm, which has just become established on the North Coast, is going to do. This firm is very anxious to engage in more work of this nature. We are providing for a wide space between the road and the beach. Our policy is beaches for the people—for the poorer section of the people.

Another very important factor which I emphasise is this:

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If hon members persist in interjecting I shall have to deal with them.

Mr. MULLER: The whole of this work is carried out with the co-operation of the shires. In other words, we have taken them into our confidence. The three shires on the North Coast and the shire on the South Coast have a plan of what is contemplated, and they are entitled to raise any objection they may wish. The work must be carried out to their satisfaction.

We are also providing for the future. In order to speed the development of the North Coast we have provided an airstrip of a few hundred acres in order to make it possible to reach the area by air. There has been no legislation in my time that has been the subject of greater consideration and thought before being placed before Parliament. Let me say in conclusion that this is the class of work which the Government are interested in. We feel that it will lift Queensland upwards and onwards.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUGGAN (North Toowoomba—Leader of the Opposition) (8.4 p.m.): The Minister for Public Lands expressed confidence that his Government would be in power in five years' time. I want to say that if the hon. gentleman proposes to put through, with the assistance of his Ministers and the support of his back-benchers, legislation of the type before us now, he does not deserve to be in office for five minutes. He is treating Parliament with contempt. We have been discussing all day the application in its various forms of power by the Governor in Council. Whether we agree or disagree on that form of administration, at least Parliament retains the right of some control, but in this instance the Minister blatantly, boldly and arrogantly states that he entered into an agreement for work amounting to £10,000,000 without the authority of Parliament.

Mr. Foley: Why come to Parliament now?

Mr DUGGAN: Why come to Parliament when he has entered into an agreement with T. M. Burke and others on projects

some of what will be completed in September or October this year? All his nonsensical utterances about the working man have been made in an attempt to take the sting out of our attack. What are the Government doing for the working man? The working man cannot get a house, even on a rental basis. He cannot get accommodation, yet the Minister speaks about providing him with an opportunity to get a house at some luxury resort on the South or North Coast. He spoke about providing an airstrip for southern tourists who visit those areas. It is a pity the Minister does not honour his election promise and build the roads for which some of the western people are clamouring, instead of building airstrips at luxury resorts in order to allow the State to dispose of its land not to workers but to others who will use these luxury resorts. The working man will not be travelling by air to those areas. He will be lucky if he can go there in a jalopy. Does the Minister suggest that the working man is going to fly from Brisbane and Toowoomba to the North Coast? Of course he is not. Why all these crocodile tears about what the Government are doing for the working man by opening up these estates.

Mr. Muller: Do you resent our doing anything for the working man?

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. gentleman has never done anything for the working man in his life. The Minister knows only too well how many workers in Queensland will be flying to these resorts in their Tiger Moth or Cessna aircraft so that they can take advantage of the opportunity provided by this beneficent Government of enjoying these facilities on the North and South Coast. It is utter nonsense to talk of the workers in that respect. Why does he not boldly and courageously say, "We have entered into a deal to sell the assets of the State for some miserable immediate advantage?" The Minister is deliberately misleading the Chamber by saying that no-one would undertake this work other than the people who are undertaking it. I, with other hon. members, know that interests were pressing the Premier for permission to carry out large developmental works on a leasehold basis, a perpetual leasehold basis. Some of the members of Cabinet repudiated some of these things, to this extent: While some men had spent money on developmental works, in an engineering survey, contour planning and all the other things required in such projects, the opportunity was given to other people who had not spent a brass farthing.

Mr. Muller: Why did you not do this work a long time ago?

Mr. DUGGAN: I made recommendations to Cabinet on the Toorbul Point project. The Minister makes much of the fact that these things are only being tackled now; they were being tackled then. Thiess Bros. and the Hornibrook company had discussions on that project and the matters were submitted to

Cabinet. The projects would have been developed if we had been returned as the Government and the asset would have been retained by the Crown. What was wrong with giving a special lease for 10, 15 or 20 years to people interested in utilising their finance, or their earth-moving equipment? All these schemes are the result of an effort on the part of two, three or more interests, engineering, financial, earth-moving and building interests. The hon. member for Southport would know the directors of Equimat, which had some land in that area. One of them was connected with the timber industry, Mr. Bishop, of Kauri Timber in Victoria. Another man Luke was connected with gas stoves, electrical stoves and electrical equipment. I have nothing against any of these gentlemen with business acumen of a high order; I merely mention their names to show the type of representation in these various groups that undertake these schemes. It is an aggregation of know how and finance in these particular projects. What was wrong with offering proposals of this type to these people on a special lease basis? When they developed them in accordance with the developmental conditions imposed by the Minister, those people, with the authority of the Lands Department and through the instrumentality of the Lands Department, could have arranged for the disposal of the blocks on a perpetual lease basis. We hear all this talk about what they have done for the wage-earners down there. We read in the paper not very long ago about some men, who probably were possessed of business acumen of a high order, who paid £13,000 or more for a building block on which a payment of £390 was necessary on the tender. They were then able to convert that property to freehold and sell it, and the Lands Department took into account the value of the rental for the first year in determining the freehold price for that land. What is the Minister talking about? What working man can go down and purchase property on which the yearly rental, without any possibility of conversion to freehold, reaches the staggering total of £390—nearly £8 a week? What working man could afford to erect a home and pay £8 a week rent?

The Minister said that none of these things went on. To a point he might be right, because this demand for seaside land has only come about in the post-war years. Building materials were unobtainable until the revocation of the building control regulations, and that was one of the reasons why many people who had made money during the war years and could not find an outlet for it in consumer goods after the war were in a position to build a second home at the seaside. The hon. member for Southport would know that there was probably a limited amount of freehold land still left on the South Coast. A person might have wanted to hold it for family reasons, or perhaps he believed that it would be better to pay rates in the meantime and reap the benefit of the capital increase in due

course. It was sold only because the land was available and there was a lack of other suitable land for purchase.

I want to draw the attention of the Chamber to the statement of the Honourable the Treasurer in dealing with the Harbours Act. He made a dramatic gesture and said, "Under no consideration will we permit the reclamation of land on the attractive foreshores of the harbours." He said, "Why develop the valuable foreshore land of one of the harbour board trusts to sell it for a factory site? Under no circumstances will we do that." They get around that by another Minister coming here and saying, "I don't know what the Treasurer said. I have nothing to do with that matter." It abuts on the seashore, because if it is swampy land it must be very close to the seashore. If it were not close to the seashore it would hardly be practicable to develop it by dragging in silver sand from the sea-bed for that purpose. I am very disappointed in the Minister when he speaks about the Council's having the control. I think merely because he demonstrated that at his age in life he could outwalk many of these shire engineers and Press photographers when he went to the North Coast and was given some tropical papaws by the hon. member for Cooroora and other people, he said, "I will not worry about Parliament at all. Now that I have demonstrated my physical fitness, now that you have given me a good lunch at the Council's expense, I will not be worried about parliamentary authority. I will give you authority here and now to go ahead." The Minister has been completely contemptuous of Parliament. If the matter was so urgent, surely the Minister could have brought down a Bill during the earlier part of the Session before Christmas. If this scheme has the appeal that the Minister says it has, surely it had the same appeal five or six months ago. His action is wrong and the Minister is deserving of the strongest criticism for entering into these agreements. He has for all time alienated valuable lands that could have been developed by other people under different conditions.

I say quite frankly that nobody could come forward today with any prospect of obtaining large-scale finance on a perpetual lease basis when it is known that other projects are available on a freehold basis. Had the perpetual lease basis been laid down from the beginning, I know from contact with men who are prepared to carry out projects of this kind that they would have been prepared to do it on that basis. I go even further and say that some of the people mentioned by the Minister were prepared to go ahead on a perpetual lease basis until they ascertained his reaction. Then, naturally, they wished to transfer to a freehold basis. The Minister knows that they were prepared to carry on on a perpetual lease basis, but he was trying to sell the Country Party's policy to them and has no desire to preserve the assets of the State for the people.

It is obvious that the Government are embarking on a policy of bankruptcy. They are trying to get funds in now to pay for the promises that they made. They are leaving it to us, when we are returned to power, to make up for their dissipation of the people's assets.

Mr. Muller: We are simply telling the people the truth.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Minister could not tell the truth on this matter. He has adopted a very unworthy attitude. I am very disappointed in him. Generally he is very straightforward and courageous, but politically he has gone down a good deal in my estimation.

Mr. Muller: Aren't you the man who said, "Right or wrong, wise or unwise"?

Mr. DUGGAN: There is an old story that if you go to a pig farm and throw a stone into the sty, the pig that squeals is the pig that is hit. When the Minister replies in the way that he did just now, he must be feeling my remarks. This is a matter that should transcend individual views, whether those views are held now, six months ago, or five years ago. This is something bigger than the individual. Valuable lands of the State are being surrendered to freeholders and in most cases will not be available for workers. The Minister said that these schemes were important mainly because of their scenic value—because of the mountain scenery and the lovely seascapes, particularly on the North Coast. How many workers are likely to build houses there merely to get employment?

Mr. Muller: That is their business. The fact remains that they want them.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Minister cannot tell me that they are workers. They may be retired people, but they are not workers. How many workers could go up to the Caloundra-Mooloolaba area? There would be a few banana workers, a few Main Roads workers, and probably a few others, but they would be there already. No-one will go up there and pay a fantastic price for land on which to build a home, and then find that after about 7½ miles of road have been built his services as a road worker are no longer required. Once the conditions laid down by the Minister have been complied with, there will be no obligation on people like T. M. Burke and Hooker to do anything else.

Mr. Knox: Give us your views on Cribb Island.

Mr. DUGGAN: Cribb Island would be merely a question of degree. Hookers were in consultation with members of the previous Cabinet on the development of that area, knowing full well what the previous Government's policy was. No-one can deny that. If the Minister goes through his files he will find confirmation of what I say.

Indeed, I had lunch with one of the representatives of the Hooker organisation. I was not primarily interested except that I knew one of the directors of Hookers in Sydney and this man was asked to do me the courtesy of calling on me, and perhaps on the previous Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, the previous Premier, and perhaps the previous Treasurer. Discussion took place even with this very organisation—Hooker Rex Investment Ltd.—and they were prepared to do that.

As a matter of fact I have on my files a letter from a New South Wales Minister introducing one of these gentlemen to me in connection with Toorbul Point, and certain other areas. I also got the Commissioner for Main Roads, Mr. Williams, to give me, I think from memory, a proposal for a deviation somewhere near where the Petrie Hotel is at present. We all know of the bad approach or outlet north of Petrie. We resumed land 3 to 5 miles in length linking it with the Bruce Highway. The Minister for Development, Mines, and Main Roads will be able to confirm that. I put up a proposal that we should erect a toll highway in the area for a limited period. At one stage we were of the opinion that it might conflict with our party policy and I went to the trouble of checking on the policy laid down by our Conventions and our party over a period of years and I found that there was nothing in the constitution and rules and objectives of the Australian Labour Party to prevent our proceeding with that. Therefore it is quite wrong for the Minister to say that no-one was prepared to come forward as they were prepared to come forward then. They would come forward with greater strength now because in the interim most of the freehold land that has been referred to has been taken up and naturally when there is not an outlet for that sort of thing they have to come forward and try to get one. So the urgency for land would be greater now than it was 12 months or two years ago.

Mr. Knox: You admit there is a great demand for it?

Mr. DUGGAN: There is a great demand. I say quite definitely that some of these people will have their fingers burnt eventually if the land is developed on the scale mentioned. I do not think there is a demand in Queensland or Australia at this time for the purchase of land upon which £10,000,000 is to be spent in development. I do not know what sum the allotments are expected to realise but with £10,000,000 spent on development and taking into account losses due to the non-sale or the slow sale of some blocks and other matters the overall expenditure will be very great. I express the opinion now that it will be very many years before all the allotments will be sold. I know that population increases have to be taken into account but most of the people in the South who are interested in having a place in Queensland have already elected to buy

it. Admittedly we will still get some of them from year to year; we will still get people with surplus money who are able to put down large sums for properties on the South Coast; they will continue to do so for some time; but in the main the people interested have already done so.

I have a great regard for the hon. member for Southport. I commend him for the enthusiasm he shows for the development of the coast. I have heard him describe it as being a second Miami. How many years will it be before we have a chain of hotels like that in Miami and Florida—hotels like the Fontaine Bleu, which cost something like £20,000,000 or 20,000,000 dollars!

Mr. Gaven: You are very proud of it, too.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes I am very proud of it. I am not "knocking" it but we have not the population or the wealth to sustain many luxury buildings. A country with a population of 180,000,000 can do that sort of thing but not a country with a population of 10,000,000.

So the Opposition view is that the measure is very untimely. We think the Minister has been completely contemptuous of Parliament in entering into an agreement whereby £10,000,000 will be spent without ever doing Parliament the courtesy of asking it for authority for so radical a departure. It is deserving of the strongest censure and I should like it to be recorded in "Hansard" that here we have for the first time a responsible Minister of the Crown saying quite openly and with a full realisation of what he has done, "I do not care about Parliament. All I am concerned about is that I think this should be done and I have done it."

Mr. Muller: Private enterprise is spending that £10,000,000.

Mr. DUGGAN: And the Minister is giving them the means of doing it and not caring one bit. Why does he not go on with the other 92 per cent. of Crown lands? Why does he not go along to the Indonesian Government or the Japanese Government or somebody else and say, "Come down here and spend £50,000,000 in North Queensland or somewhere else and we will give you that land?" Why not go the full hog and give some more of our land away? The Minister was making forecasts for the next five years. In the unhappy and extremely unlikely event of the present Government's being here in 15 years' time there will be so little Crown land left that they will not have to worry about this problem for many many years. I think it is a very retrograde step for one Minister when he is talking about harbours to give Parliament a solemn assurance that the Government do not propose to develop the foreshores at all, only for another Minister in another sphere to say that the Government are going to do that very thing. It is very

wrong and deserving of the strongest condemnation. I am not making any criticism of the firms concerned. They are very reputable organisations for whom I personally have a very high regard. I do not want my remarks in any way to be construed as a criticism of these organisations. In accordance with the provisions of the agreement that the Minister has made outside of Parliament these firms merely are carrying out a normal business operation. But we disagree with the method adopted by the Minister in dealing with this matter because of his contempt of Parliament and his violation in our opinion of a fundamental economic law. He is jeopardising the prospects of future Treasurers to get an adequate return from the increased value attaching to this land as development increases. We intend to show our displeasure and criticism by voting very solidly against the Bill in the second reading stage.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (8.27 p.m.): While the Minister was outling the provisions of the Bill I made the observation that apparently the Government had taken unto themselves the right to enter into various types of contract without even consulting Parliament. This is the third occasion today that there has been an attempt to by-pass Parliament completely. I can understand why the Premier was so anxious to delay the introduction of the Bill of Human Rights. We are getting nearer and nearer to the dictatorship. (Government laughter.) There is enough evidence of it here today. In the amending legislation already submitted greater and greater powers have been placed in the hands of executive government. On the Minister's own admission he has by-passed Parliament and entered into contracts involving huge sums of money.

Mr. Muller: Not Crown money, private enterprise.

Mr. WALSH: It does not matter. When the Minister says that it is not Crown money I suggest that he have a good look at the principles of the Bill. As I understand it, the main principle of the Bill indicates again how the Government intend to hand over a very large part of the public estate to land speculators. They indicated quite openly to the public that they intended to introduce a freehold policy if they were returned to office. But never would the electors dream that the Government intended to handle the public estate in this way: handing over such a large and valuable part of Queensland's coastline to land speculators.

Within the next few weeks the Premier will attend the Australian national titles of the surf lifesavers. In looking after people who go to the seaside lifesavers have done a very worthy job. As I listened to the Minister, the thought came to me that the lifesavers will have some competition; it looks as though another body will have to be

formed in order to save the humble community from the sharks on the land. Probably the Premier will no doubt be appointed the patron of that organisation.

Mr. Muller: I never saw the hon. member so hard-up for an argument.

Mr. WALSH: I have not got to it yet. I intend to put the Minister on the spot right now. The Minister wants to convey to the public that these are entirely new proposals which have been initiated by his Government, and that no thought was given to matters of this nature during the period of office of the previous Government. I make this challenge to the Minister through the Premier as head of the Government: I challenge the Minister to lay on the table of the House all the reports and documents relating to the discussions, negotiations and investigations by departmental officers relating to schemes of this nature.

Mr. Muller: You were asked to do the same thing when you were a Minister.

Mr. WALSH: I have thrown a challenge out, and if the Minister wants to stick to the statement that the Government have initiated these proposals the Minister may say that there was never any negotiations or investigations and these matters were never considered by the previous Government. Let me say that if the Minister produces those reports it will be seen that there was a special committee appointed by the previous Government. For the information of hon. members on both sides of the House, if the reports of that committee are tendered they will show the nature of the proposals made. It is a fact that representatives of the same companies—one particularly—interviewed the Premier, the Minister for Lands and myself, in the Premier's office in this building, and produced sketches and maps of the location with coloured areas of land which it was intended to reclaim. They were prepared to go ahead with the proposals on a perpetual lease basis. That refutes the Minister's suggestion that these companies were not prepared to do so.

Mr. Muller: What did they do about it?

Mr. WALSH: We were no longer the Government. Hon. members have been there two years now and have only started to wake up about what the previous Government initiated three years ago. I do not propose to speak at length now. In the Committee stages I shall have much more to say on the matter of perpetual leasehold tenure as against freehold tenure. All the other conditions laid down are the normal precautionary provisions that one would expect any Government to incorporate in a Bill of this nature. The vital principle is that the Government desire to hand over a large part of the public estate to land speculators on a freehold basis. The Minister may say that no Crown money is being spent

on these projects, but he and his Government must agree that they are handing over a large part of territory that is really valuable because of its position.

If the Government wanted to provide employment in all areas of Queensland rather than to confine it to localities represented by Country Party members, why not initiate schemes along the whole coastline. Why not develop some of the northern parts of the State for which they are always boasting that they will do so much, an area where population is needed from a defence viewpoint.

Mr. Gaven interjected.

Mr. WALSH: Bundaberg will look after itself. It is not asking for any of these reclamation schemes. I feel sorry for the hon. member for Southport, because he must realise as time passes that the Gold Coast as we know it will disappear. It would appear that the Government are trying to shift the boom from the South Coast to the North Coast. The Government are acting in a similar manner to the Menzies Government in war days. They have decided on a line tantamount to the Brisbane line and have said that north of that line no little schemes are to be undertaken. The Minister will not deny that he said no little schemes are to be undertaken. The schemes dealt with by him are large schemes to be undertaken by land speculators such as Rex and the Hooker Company. They will probably use American capital and will eventually try to sell the blocks to the hard-working people of this State, if those people can find the money to buy them. Does anyone think the workers will have the wherewithal to buy this reclaimed land if this Government remain in office? Most of them will be humping their swags. The reports today indicate that more people are humping their swags and jumping the rattler than at any time since the depression years. The Premier is not being kept up to date in the same way as hon. members who mix with the community. Those who travel on the road can verify my statements. How can the Minister say he is doing anything for the working class?

I have indicated my objection to the particular principles and to the fact that Parliament has been ignored in this matter. This is a damaging attack on democracy and democratic control by Parliament.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (8.38 p.m.): I listened very attentively to the Minister's introduction of the Bill, the hysterical outburst of the Leader of the Opposition, which rather surprised me, and the statements of the hon. member for Bundaberg. When any legislation of a progressive nature is introduced we have the usual bunch of knockers who attack it.

This is a very sound Bill, progressive in every respect, a Bill that will be of benefit to every citizen of the State and others who

live interstate and overseas. The people we are trying to help are the people the Opposition claim to represent—the workers of the State. I am sure the North Coast will be set aside as a worker's paradise and that fancy prices will not be asked for that land.

Hon. members have indicated their displeasure at the Minister's entering into an agreement prior to the introduction of the Bill. The hon. member for Belyando, however, said, "This is similar to what we did before," and the hon. member for Bundaberg said, "The very same thing."

Mr. Walsh: No, we did not enter into any arrangements.

Mr. LOW: I can tell the Chamber that this is similar in character in every way to the Rankin Estate that was developed in Southport some years ago. It goes a little further. The Crown land being developed then was on a leasehold basis this is on a freehold basis, and that is why it is necessary to introduce this legislation to put it in order. No disrespect was intended to this House, and I can assure hon. members that the margin between the two issues is so close that possibly a sheet of tissue paper could not be put between them. The Minister and the Government have acted honestly and in the best interests of this State.

I shall now continue with the speech that I have prepared, and I hope to be able to show hon. members how the near North Coast is affected by the provisions of this measure.

I sincerely congratulate the Minister on the introduction of such a progressive piece of legislation. It is very sound and will produce far-reaching and beneficial results to the State, the local authorities, and the people of Australia. It is designed mainly to make better use of waste and unused Crown lands along the coast, and it will set the pattern for well-planned seaside development in this State.

It is fitting and welcome legislation during the centenary year, because it will certainly make history and bring with it a tremendous flow of new capital—State, interstate, and overseas—and big works and unlimited development. It will also provide useful employment, in addition to providing seaside allotments for all sections of the community.

This is going on record, and I wish to say definitely that as the march of progress goes on, hon. members will see that my words are correct. We want to give employment to the workers of Queensland. If we are not receiving sufficient funds from the Commonwealth Government and have insufficient resources of our own, here is an opportunity to provide work for many men over the next five years. Surely we can all combine in trying to solve our unemployment problems and carry out useful developmental schemes.

As a son of a pioneering family on the near North Coast, I have been trying for many years to bring into being a coastal

road from Teewah Beach, north of Noosa—that is where the coloured sands are—to Caloundra, a distance of approximately 40 miles along what I can say without fear of contradiction is a coastal strip of outstanding scenery and natural beauty. The coastal road, when completed, will provide a magnificent and breathtaking tourist drive, one of the best in this country.

The Minister recently visited the near North Coast, and as a result of that visit, this is the report of what he had to say in the Brisbane "Courier-Mail" of Saturday, 10 January, 1959—

"Minister: N. Coast will have State's best scenic drive.

"The Lands Minister (Mr. Muller) yesterday walked seven miles through rough, virgin, North Coast country to help plan the route for an unbroken Caloundra-Noosa coast road.

"And afterwards he said: 'This is going to open up the finest scenic drive in Queensland and the best beaches in Australia.'"

He has certainly made a sound assessment of the situation.

To make the position quite clear, I have here an enlarged map of the Noosa-Caloundra coastline showing the location of the proposed road. I want to emphasise that there is no secrecy about this business. Here is the plan, and anyone can have a look at it. As a matter of fact, I should like hon. members to investigate it thoroughly, because we certainly want everyone to join this progressive scheme.

This very promising and fast developing tourist area of the near North Coast has a network of rivers, lakes and streams and a number of well known popular mountain resorts, backed by an expansive rural hinterland of primary production known as "The Garden of Eden" or "The Salad Bowl" of the near North Coast, where almost everything worth while is produced from the rich soil.

The three local authorities concerned are: Maroochy in the centre, Noosa in the North, and Landsborough in the South.

I make it clear to the Opposition that there is nothing secret about this proposal. It is only a matter of time before many hon. members opposite will have a seaside allotment in the area that I speak of. The average price of an allotment will be about £500. The proposal means that land will be available for whoever wants it now, and not in 20 or 30 years' time.

In the Maroochy Shire the work of bringing into being a coastal road within the shire boundaries, between Mooloolaba and North Coolumb, has been under way for the past five years and the council has been, and is, using its limited financial resources in trying to do a section of road each year. With the help of the landholders and the Moreton Central Sugar Mill, it constructed a large

pre-stressed dual-purpose tram and traffic bridge across the Maroochy River at Bli Bli at a cost of £70,000 for the bridge and approaches.

This well-designed and well-built bridge, the first of its kind in Queensland, will provide access for a large number of cane-farmers and others, and will provide for future expansion of the sugar industry. It will also open up a considerable area of Crown land along the coast at Mudjimba. In addition, it will allow for the development of the Maroochy airport, which is so urgently needed to develop fully the tourist industry and the fruit and vegetable industry in the Maroochy district.

Although I sought no recognition for the effort that I made to bring the bridge project to a successful conclusion, the shire, backed by my local authority colleagues, proposes to honour me shortly by naming the new bridge across the Maroochy River at Bli Bli the "David Low Bridge," for which I thank them very sincerely.

The hon. member for Bundaberg was Treasurer when the building of the bridge was under consideration, and he approved of a 20 per cent. subsidy for the project. I appreciate his effort to the full. In addition to opening up a huge area of agricultural land, the bridge has provided access to 10,000 acres, mostly Crown land, that had been locked in and would never have been of any use.

This legislation will mean the opening up of Crown land that otherwise would have been no use for 30 years or more. Therefore, we are doing something that is well worth while.

In December, 1958, the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation told me that after looking through the files in his office, he was very much impressed with the progress already made in the coastal road project and the self-help that had been displayed by the Maroochy Shire Council.

Mr. Dufficy: Is it a low-level bridge?

Mr. LOW: It is a high-level, dual-purpose bridge. It will serve agricultural development as well as seaside development.

The Minister further said he was fully convinced that the scheme was very sound, and that it was in the interests of the Crown and the local authorities. He offered to make a personal inspection of the route for the coastal road between Noosa and Caloundra and would be prepared to make the trip early in 1959. His offer was readily accepted and suitable arrangements were made accordingly.

The local authorities of Maroochy, Noosa and Landsborough are right behind me in this matter. The Premier himself realises what it means, as a large part of the proposed road is in his electorate. At this stage I should like to thank him for his co-operation and support. The balance of the road

goes through my electorate. The project is one of the most progressive that has been considered for very many years and it is long overdue.

The Minister visited Noosa early in January and was met by local authority representatives and myself and I have with me photographs taken on the day of the visit. I can assure the Committee that we appreciate to the full the fact that he inspected low-lying land around Tewantin and Noosa which by public tender will be put to very good use. It will also overcome the mosquito and sand-fly menace and return revenue to the local authorities concerned. They certainly need it.

Mr. Graham: What will be the return to those who develop it?

Mr. LOW: Applications were called for the section between Sunshine Beach, just below Noosa, and North Coolumb. To the best of my knowledge and belief two tenders were received. The successful tenderer was T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd., which is receiving a special lease over 550 acres of land for the construction of a through road to the value of £100,000.

Mr. Dufficy: When was that entered into?

Mr. LOW: About three months ago.

Mr. Dufficy: Why introduce the Bill now?

Mr. LOW: The Bill is supplementary to legislation that almost did the job when the hon. member for Belyando was Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation.

Mr. Walsh: No, you are wrong.

Mr. LOW: I say I am quite right. I examined it. From the 550 acres, which will be split up for seaside development by T. M. Burke Pty. Ltd. under special lease in return for £100,000 worth of road works, the Crown in addition will receive 25 per cent. of the sale price of the land, which will then be freehold, plus Crown rental of £1 per acre until actually subdivided and further a guarantee has also been given that a large number of allotments will be offered for sale annually. As one who took a very keen interest in the matter, I can assure the Committee that the Government and the Department of Public Lands will see to it that the Crown get every penny they are entitled to. As a matter of fact, their share was so great that the scheme was almost "scrubbed" because it would not be economically sound. If a block is sold for £300 the Crown gets 25 per cent.; if it is sold for £500 the Crown still get 25 per cent. And remember, the Crown get the first 25 per cent. even though the allotments may be sold on terms.

Mr. Dufficy: Who gets the other 75 per cent.?

Mr. LOW: The contractor who has built the road.

Mr. Dufficy: I see.

Mr. LOW: Not only does it give access to the 500 acres but also there are 2,000 or 3,000 acres of Crown land beside it that will benefit.

Mr. Graham: That will be given away later.

Mr. Dufficy: When are you giving that other land away?

Mr. LOW: I am quite certain hon. members opposite are not sincere in their interjections; they are just asking stupid nonsensical questions.

Mr. Graham: That is a very relevant question.

Mr. LOW: It is about time they woke up to themselves and spoke reasonably on the subject.

I said before that I had photographs taken on the day the Minister visited the Noosa area and I invite any hon. member to inspect them. The first one shows the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation leading the inspection party looking for road locations. It describes the Hon. A. G. Muller as leading his chosen people along the coastal fringe at Noosa Heads, adjacent to Alexandra Bay, looking at the land for suitable road locations to develop Crown lands in the Noosa Shire. They are beautiful photographs. There is no-one more pleased than I am that I brought them along. They show the Minister trekking up and down the coast on foot, by Land Rover and also by boat. I assure hon. members that everything is fair and above-board and a credit to a most energetic and enthusiastic Minister of the Crown. The photographs are there for them to see. There is a map there that shows where the roads are going. If hon. members want to buy a good piece of land I suggest that they get up there as quickly as possible.

Another firm, Pacific Paradise Developments, is carrying out big works. They are a southern firm with American backing that has purchased a very considerable area of freehold land.

Mr. Graham: Are you a shareholder?

Mr. LOW: It makes me sick to hear that sort of thing from the hon. member for Mackay. I do not own a speck of land along the coast, the main reason being that there are so many people like the hon. member for Mackay who have a foul mind when land is owned by members of Parliament.

Mr. Graham: I am only asking a reasonable question.

Mr. LOW: It is offensive to me.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Graham: Why don't you ask for a withdrawal?

Mr. LOW: I am above that sort of business.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LOW: I thank the Minister for his representations to the Minister for the Army to arrange for the military authorities to vacate the Noosa Range. The new coastal road will go through the range and continued military activities could have caused a hold-up. The Minister for the Army advises that in view of the projected developmental work in the Noosa-Cooloolah area no further manoeuvres or firing practice of any kind will be undertaken on the Noosa Range. Applications have been called for the Caloundra-Mooloolaba link. They close on 31 March, 1959. I am hopeful that we will get a suitable applicant. It is also proposed that applications be called for the remainder of the roads and bridges. I am sure that this will be regarded as one of the most progressive steps towards opening up the near North Coast. We cannot expect the Department of Main Roads or the local authorities to build roads and bridges as they have many other responsibilities. The work to be carried out will be of benefit to the Crown and very helpful to local authorities because they will get rates from land that is now non-revenue producing.

Mr. Mann: How much will the company get?

Mr. LOW: I do not think that T. M. Burke will get very much out of this lot. They will get experience.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. LOW: That's all right! They have to build roads and subdivide. By the time they construct subdivisional roads and pay survey fees, selling fees and everything else they might get only experience out of it.

The hon. member for Bundaberg mentioned the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships that are to be held at Mooloolaba over Easter. They will be an added attraction to the North Coast and we expect anything up to 100,000 people to be present. That is an indication of how the North Coast is progressing.

I should like to have made a longer reply to the criticisms of the Bill but my time has almost expired. I shall have more to say at the second reading stage.

I thank the Minister very much for his co-operation and assistance. I thank him on behalf of the Maroochy, Noosa and Landsborough local authorities for the well-considered plan for coastal development. We appreciate the assistance of our Premier, and thank the Minister for doing something for which we would have had to wait for 20 or 30 years.

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) (9.1 p.m.): I have in my hand a photograph circulated by the hon. member for Cooroora. It is an extremely interesting one. It has written on it, "Minister for Public Lands, Hon. A. G. Muller, M.L.A., leading his chosen people

along the coastal fringe at Noosa Heads looking for the most suitable tourist road location to develop Crown land." I draw attention to the fact that the hon. gentleman is out in front—leading easily, as though he were just coming into the straight. The Minister is followed by some Country Party member who is on the other side of the tree in the picture, and lagging rather badly in the rear, appear to be members of the Liberal Party. But there is no sign of any workers at all. That is rather disappointing in view of the statement by the Minister that the Bill was designed to assist the workers. I am grateful to the hon. member for Cooroora for passing that photograph around because it shows that the Minister has a bit of pace after all. The hon. gentleman was well in front leading his chosen people—the Country Party—and behind him, the Liberals, who were lagging considerably. But the workers are not in the picture at all, not in the race.

It appears that it was not necessary for the Minister even to extend this courtesy to Parliament at this late stage. If I understood the hon. member for Cooroora correctly, he said that T. M. Burke was granted something like 500 acres of land on a special lease in the hope that he would perform certain work.

Mr. Low: £100,000 worth of road work.

Mr. DUFFICY: After all, the Minister gave 500 acres of Crown estate to somebody in the hope that certain things might come about. I presume that what the hon. gentleman is doing now is asking Parliament to verify what has already been done, and seeking authority for future similar acts.

Mr. Low: To put it beyond doubt.

Mr. DUFFICY: He put it beyond doubt in the first place because when a thing becomes an established fact it is then beyond doubt. He did not seek the authority or permission of Parliament; he has stated merely that something has already been done, and that it is his intention to enter into further agreements. He has stated in effect, "I have done it, anyhow, and you have to approve it." That attitude was demonstrated by his reply to an interjection from this side of the Chamber. He said, "You can sit back and take it." Of course we must sit back and take it, because the Minister has the strength of numbers. Very belatedly he has paid us the courtesy of introducing something that is already an established fact.

Mr. Muller: That is not right.

Mr. DUFFICY: According to the hon. member for Cooroora it is right. He spoke in support of the Minister. It is an established fact. The Minister has said that this was done three or four months ago. He added that the policy is to be continued in the future. As the Government have the numbers, we must sit back and take it.

Mr. Roberts: The same as we did for years.

Mr. DUFFICY: That is the attitude of Government members. At least when we were the Government we paid Parliament the courtesy of seeking approval before taking action, more particularly when we were dealing with the most vital legislation to this State, land legislation. Many Acts such as those covering price fixing and other subjects can be changed by an incoming Government, but it will not be as easy after this Government are thrown out of office in the near future for the new Government to correct their misguided land policy as it will be to correct their misguided policy on other matters. The reason is obvious. If the State wishes to repossess land held in fee simple, considerable compensation must be paid for it. That is why I maintain that all land owned by the Crown should remain under the jurisdiction of the Crown. I greatly resent the fact that the Minister treated Parliament with absolute contempt. He has said, "We have done certain things. We shall continue to do them, but now we want you to ratify them."

I have very little further to add. I could speak at length on the disabilities of freehold tenure, a point I have raised in this Chamber on many previous occasions. I am a realist in regard to politics. I am a realist to this extent: I know that the policy of the present Government is to hand over Crown lands to private speculators and give them freehold tenure of it. I know that for the moment the Government have the numbers and nothing that hon. members on this side of the Chamber can do will alter that unfortunate fact. Even the Tories who occupied the Treasury benches of this House long before the advent of the Labour Party adhered to the leasehold system. The history of the development of land in Queensland will show that. Successive Labour Governments since 1915 have also adhered to that principle, with the result that today over 90 per cent. of the land is still directly under the control of the Crown. We had to wait until 1959, our Centenary Year, to see a Government who were prepared to dispose of the lands belonging to the people. No Government during the 100 years of government in this State—and I challenge anyone to contradict me on this—has ever adopted the attitude now adopted by this Government.

In conclusion, let me say that the people of Queensland will live to regret the day they elected a Government who were prepared to dissipate the lands and put what belongs to future generations and to the present generation into the hands of speculators and private individuals because they think they might get some slight political advantage by doing so.

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (9.13 p.m.): The remarks of hon. members opposite amazed me, because a calm assessment of the introductory remarks of the Minister will indicate conclusively to any intelligent person that the intention of this Bill is simply to provide, in accordance with existing Acts and Statutes,

the right to grant development leases over a 20-year period. This will enable certain firms to reclaim and develop what at present could be regarded as completely waste land and to provide means of access to enable that land to be subdivided and made available to the people at no cost to the State or the local authorities. The Minister has outlined to the Chamber the lands mentioned in the scheme, but he did not refer to the huge areas of Crown land that are at present virtually unused. After the demand has been created by a handful of speculators, these vast areas will be subdivided and will help to satisfy the present undue demand for seaside allotments that has caused prices to rise beyond the reach of the working-man's pocket. The provisions of the Bill will overcome all the difficulties that the Leader of the Opposition spoke about.

The people who speak all this drivel about selling the assets of the State and denying unborn generations the right to share in the God-given assets of this country are deluding nobody but themselves. There is virtually no asset in the lands covered by the Bill; they are not even accessible. However, they will be made accessible following the passage of this Bill and will become an asset of the State. They will be the subject of development leases for 20 years, the lessees being the people who will find the finance. It is quite probable that money for the proposal will come in from all over the world. During the 20-year period of the lease, the Governor in Council will determine the conditions under which the land will be sold and the payment that the Crown will receive for it.

Mr. Mann: The Minister has already said that the Crown will receive 25 per cent. of the gross proceeds.

Mr. Ewan: That was in relation to one scheme only. The Minister dealt with many schemes in his introductory remarks.

No more ridiculous argument could be advanced than that of the Leader of the Opposition, ably supported by the hon. member for Bundaberg, who had the audacity to describe the Minister as a dictator. We all know that the hon. member is a reader of "Mien Kampf." He believes that if he tells often enough a lie that is big enough, he will get someone to believe him. He stands condemned when he makes statements such as he did. He is quite conversant with the Act. He handled the Rankin estate and imposed such ridiculous conditions that the sponsors of that scheme went bankrupt and the receivers had to complete it.

Mr. Walsh: That is not true. I was not a member of the Cabinet at that time.

Mr. Ewan: The hon. member for Bundaberg knows all about it, and so do the hon. member for Belyando and the Leader of the Opposition.

In reply to those who seek to cast reflections on the Minister's probity and say that he cannot be trusted, let me quote Section 179 of the Land Acts—

"The Governor in Council may issue a lease of any portion of land to any person for any manufacturing, industrial, residential or business purposes, or for any racecourse or recreation purposes, such term not exceeding thirty years and upon such conditions as to rent and otherwise as the Governor in Council thinks fit."

That provision was enacted when hon. members opposite were in power. Let us go further—Section 33 (8) of the 1958 Amending Act says—

"With respect to land in the opinion of the Governor in Council abnormally costly to develop by reclaiming or filling or by other works thereon, the Governor in Council, without limiting the conditions that he in his discretion may impose, may issue with or without competition a lease in pursuance of this section subject to special conditions providing for—

(a) The specific development of the land in order to render it fit for manufacturing, industrial, residential or business purposes;

(b) The time within which the development work shall commence and the rate of progress which must be observed by the lessee during each year of a specified period of the lease;

(c) The tenure under which the land or part thereof may be subsequently granted to the lessees after its development and compliance with any other conditions of lease, and the purchasing price to be paid for the freehold thereof or the capital value to be charged under Perpetual Lease, whichever may be granted."

Mr. Walsh: Who put that in?

Mr. Ewan: We did.

Mr. Walsh: You are not blaming the Labour Government?

Mr. Ewan: It is in the statutes and the hon. member tried to mislead the people by saying the Minister was acting like a dictator, filching the powers of Parliament and denying parliament the right to debate the matter fully.

Sub-section (9) says—

"Notwithstanding anything in this Act or any other Act, upon satisfactory development of the land or any part thereof and upon surrender of the existing Special Lease either wholly or in respect of the part in question of the land, as the case requires, the Governor in Council may—

(a) Sell the land or the part thereof so developed"—

just as the Minister outlined in his opening remarks. It goes on—

“(a) Sell the land or the part thereof so developed to the lessee at the purchasing price set out in the conditions of the Special Lease and, if no purchasing price has been specifically set out in the conditions of such lease in respect of the part developed and proposed to be sold, then at a sum fixed by the Governor in Council as a fair proportionate amount of the total purchasing price so set out; or

(b) Issue to the lessee of the Special Lease a Perpetual Lease under section one hundred and twenty-one of ‘The Land Acts, 1910 to 1958’ at the capital value set out in the conditions of such Special Lease, and, if no capital value has been specifically set out in the conditions in respect of the part developed and in respect of which a Perpetual Lease is to be issued, then at a sum fixed by the Governor in Council as a fair proportionate amount of the total capital value so set out.”

There you are. Hon. members opposite set out unfairly to discredit the Minister for Public Lands.

Mr. Lloyd: Succeeded, too.

Mr. EWAN: When I listen to the remark of the hon. member for Kedron I realise that some people have an extraordinary assessment of factual events. I think he is so punch-drunk, so deluded, and so shocked at the way in which he has been misled by his Leader, ably and dishonourably supported by the hon. member for Bundaberg, that he just cannot see which way he is going.

So, having successfully exploded the myth that the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Bundaberg sought to create, I conclude by saying that the Government will be judged by the people in accordance with their actions and in accordance with the progress the State has already made during their tenure of office, and at the end of their three-year term they will receive as a mark of appreciation for the development that has taken place in that short period an overriding and overall mandate from the people of the State to continue the good work. Such actions as we have been discussing and such legislation as the Minister has introduced tonight, with the support of the hon. member for Coorooora, and the hon. member for Southport, will go down in the annals of the history of the State as some of the great steps towards the advancement and development of Queensland.

Mr. FOLEY (Belyando) (9.25 p.m.): I think it will be agreed by all hon. members that there can be no objection to the objective of the various schemes or proposals outlined by the Minister. No-one could object to the opening up of new beaches, no-one could object to the reclaiming of swamp lands adjacent to seaside resorts, no-one

could object to the reclaiming of land to be used for recreation purposes by this and future generations. But we can strongly object to the way the Minister has entered into contracts or agreements affecting the public estate—contracts covering developmental work costing millions of pounds—and agreed that private individuals who undertake these contracts take over the land and reap a revenue from it during their lifetime, the land to be passed on to their beneficiaries. And so it will go on in perpetuity in the hands of private individuals. Because they can command capital to do the work they will reap immense benefits. Having done all that, the Minister now submits the whole scheme to Parliament for ratification.

Some of the proposals mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition are not new. They were under consideration by the Labour Government prior to their defeat. Had they continued in office possibly many of the schemes would have been put before Parliament. I can assure you, Mr. Taylor, that no Minister of a Labour Government would have entered into a contract running into such huge figures until Parliament had given permission.

Mr. Duggan: We came to Parliament first with the Powell-Duffryn report.

Mr. FOLEY: That is so. Every big scheme or proposal handled by a Labour administration was put before Parliament. All our irrigation schemes came before Parliament. In many cases we were reclaiming thousands upon thousands of acres of land, using money belonging to the people of the State. Before anything was done the whole proposal was submitted to Parliament for ratification. But today Cabinet is governing Queensland. Certain proposals are brought before Ministers who have them investigated, but no reports are submitted to Parliament. They are put before Cabinet. Cabinet agrees to the proposals and at a later stage Parliament is consulted. In other words Cabinet is ruling the State per medium of the Governor in Council—a method that is objectionable to people who understand the meaning of democracy.

Some of these schemes are not new. The hon. member for Bundaberg mentioned that one of the principals of Hooker Rex Company of Sydney consulted the then Premier, the hon. member for South Brisbane, the hon. member for Bundaberg and myself. He outlined a scheme under which they were prepared to build a bridge across to Stradbroke Island, just above Southport. All they asked in return was to get certain lands at peppercorn rentals on which they intended to build a modern hotel and recreation grounds and homes for people whom they hoped would be attracted. They did not ask that the lands of Queensland should be alienated. They did not ask that the public estate should be cut up in such a way, but they were prepared to spend a large amount of money in carrying out the project. A number of years ago

when the late Percy Pease was Minister for Public Lands he entered into an agreement with the late Bill Rankin, and Rankin was able to raise sufficient money to install a small dredging outfit in the Nerang River and remove sand to reclaim land near the Jubilee Bridge at Southport. This land was eventually sold to the public. The arrangement was that the land was to be put up for auction and the purchasers would receive a lease in perpetuity for a certain payment each year. In view of that and the offer by the Hooker Rex Company some similar arrangement could have been made by this Government and the land would have been retained for the people and would have earned revenue in perpetuity. The people's estate is now being handed over to private enterprise. Nobody could complain about the objective of developing and opening up new lands. Where individuals are prepared to do it there is no harm in the Government's entering into a contract, provided they do not dissipate land that they do not own. The Government are the trustees of the public estate of Queensland. As Mr. Payne pointed out, it is a heritage that belongs to the whole of the Queensland people. Yet this land is being alienated from the people and handed over to individuals who will reap the revenue that should go to the State. I object to the method being adopted. I reserve further comment until I see the Bill.

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) (9.35 p.m.): I do not oppose developmental work in any area of Queensland. Those who live in the Far North are pleased to learn of it, as they know it is in the interests of Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition replied brilliantly to the statements of the Minister that the previous Government had done nothing to reclaim or develop the areas covered by the Bill. The facts submitted by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Bundaberg prove that the contrary is the case. Further proof is provided by the fact that the Minister refused to accept the challenge of the hon. member for Bundaberg to lay on the table certain reports received by the previous Government. His refusal indicates that he accepts the statements of the hon. member for Bundaberg. The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Bundaberg have thrown into the ring something the Government hoped would be kept out of it. Those hon. members refuted the Minister's claim that the previous Government did not envisage the developmental schemes covered by the Bill. In those circumstances there is no need for me or any other hon. member on this side of the Chamber to speak at great length. I am concerned at the fact that assets of the State are being given away without reference to Parliament. Such action should never be taken by any Government. I am concerned also about the declared intention of the Government and the Minister not to proceed with the development of the greatest part of Queensland,

and indeed of Australia, the Far North. Government members have made repeated statements on the need for greater population of North Queensland from the viewpoint of defence. Before the Government encourage the spending of millions of pounds on developmental works of this nature, they should fulfil their promise to develop the North and so bring about an increase in the population of that area. There are many places in North Queensland equal to those that have been described tonight. It is all very well for the hon. member for Southport to throw up his hands and say "No", but everybody knows that if the Government were willing to spend in North Queensland some of the money that is being wasted in this part of the State, Queensland could develop and protect itself and become the asset that it ought to be to the Commonwealth of Australia.

Mr. Roberts: Who is wasting it?

Mr. WALLACE: I believe that it is being wasted.

Mr. Roberts: I am asking you, who is wasting it?

Mr. WALLACE: The present Federal Government, who are people of the same political beliefs as members of the Government parties. It is a Liberal-Country Party Government who are wasting the best part of Australia. They have declared on numerous occasions and in no uncertain terms that North Queensland is possibly the only part of Australia that can stand full development, yet they do nothing about it. If some of the money that is to be expended on these projects was used in reclamation work on the creeks and mangrove swamps in the North, it would produce a better asset for the State and the Commonwealth than anything that can be done on the North Coast or the South Coast. I am not suggesting that development should not take place in those places, but I wish to impress upon the people of Queensland that the greatest need is for development farther north.

It has been suggested that certain things will be done—about £10,000,000 will be spent, aerodromes will be built, and so on.

Mr. Low: By private enterprise.

Mr. WALLACE: That is all very well. The Government are encouraging private enterprise to spend the money in these areas when they know they are doing the nation a great injustice. This Government and their colleagues in the Federal Parliament have no intention of proceeding with the development of any large undertaking in the northern part of Queensland.

Mr. Low: What about the Mt. Isa railway?

Mr. WALLACE: The Minister said that they were not going to finish the great Tinaroo Falls dam scheme and that money intended for use there was to be diverted

to the south. Some of the money that the Labour Government intended should be used for the development of North Queensland has been diverted for use in schemes such as these on the North and South Coast.

Mr. Walsh: Spent in the Minister's own electorate.

Mr. WALLACE: I am not going to suggest that he is going to spend the money in his own electorate.

Mr. Walsh: He is.

Mr. WALLACE: It will be spent in the southern part of Queensland, to the detriment of the State. I say that very definitely.

Mr. Low: By getting private enterprise to spend this money, more money will be available for the North.

Mr. WALLACE: It is possible that private enterprise could have done certain things in North Queensland.

Mr. Low: I agree with you.

Mr. WALLACE: Private enterprise wanted too great a cut out of the things that they were prepared to do.

I referred recently to the piece of land running from No. 1 wharf in Cairns to Barron Point. I was very disturbed at the thought that the Bill that was brought down by the Treasurer the other day would give private enterprise the right to reclaim that area and sell it as freehold. I understand that many years ago an American firm made overtures to the Cairns Harbour Board or the Government for permission to reclaim that area. As their price for doing the work, they wanted the whole of the area. If the work is done now, I am sure that the people who do it will want the same price. If that area was reclaimed it would be worth millions. However, it would also completely obliterate the present Cairns city area. Very few people could afford to buy a block of land there, and it would be utterly ridiculous to suggest that a worker could buy one.

The Treasurer agreed the other day that if the Cairns waterfront was reclaimed it should never be used for industrial purposes. He said that the council and the harbour board should get together on the matter. Under this Bill, however, private enterprise will be given the right to reclaim any land that is below high-water level. I know that the people of Cairns will be very disturbed to hear the contents of the Bill. Despite the Treasurer's assurances, it looks as if it will be possible for the Cairns waterfront to be reclaimed and sold. That applies also to other parts of the State.

I should like to refer now to certain projects that are in the process of completion. We have been told that the Government do not intend to put the Tinaroo Falls Dam to the use for which it was originally intended. I believe that it is their intention to use

the impounded water solely for the generation of electricity. They have no intention of going on with the building of the Flaggy Creek Dam. It has been intimated to me by Government members that because of the lack of markets, it is not thought advisable to go on with the scheme.

Mr. Muller: Who told you that?

Mr. WALLACE: It has been intimated to all and sundry by speakers on the other side of the Chamber. The Minister himself said at Tinaroo Falls that the scheme would not be completed.

Mr. MULLER: I rise to a point of order. I do not mind the hon. member's making his speech in his own way, but he has referred to something that I am supposed to have said when I poured the last bucket of concrete at the Tinaroo Falls Dam. His statement is untrue, and I ask him to withdraw it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dewar): Order! I ask the hon. member for Cairns to withdraw the statement.

Mr. WALLACE: In deference to you, Mr. Dewar, I withdraw.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I remind the hon. member that there is nothing about the Tinaroo Falls Dam in the Bill.

Mr. WALLACE: I suggest that the Tinaroo Falls Dam has a great deal to do with land in Queensland.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The Bill deals with land that is reclaimable from the sea.

Mr. WALLACE: I think the title says, "and land reclaimable from the sea."

I accept the Minister's denial, but the people of North Queensland understood from his remarks that the Tinaroo Falls Dam scheme would not be completed, and that money that should have been spent in North Queensland would be channelled to the southern portions of the State for the building of small dams and other projects. It was intimated that no grand schemes would be proceeded with.

Mr. Muller: You produce evidence of that statement.

Mr. WALLACE: All the people of North Queensland will back me up without any shadow of doubt. Another country hon. member on this side and probably two or three of the Country Party members opposite will confirm it. The people of the North completely believe that it is not the intention of the Government to proceed with any further great development of the lands of North Queensland.

Mr. Low: Two million pounds will be spent on Mourilyan Harbour shortly.

Mr. WALLACE: That is purely in the interests of the sugar people; it has nothing to do with the development of the land. I will be happy to see it. I should like to see all the other ports developed to the full. But I am very much perturbed at the gross mis-spending of public funds instead of spending them for the correct development of Queensland as a whole in the best interests of Australia. In view of the repeated statements by members of the Country-Liberal Party, both State and Federal, I reiterate that the money could and should have been spent to populate and develop Far North Queensland so that Australia will be able to hold the land against peoples of the north that we are warned against so often. Unless the State and Commonwealth take definite steps to populate and develop the North we stand in danger of losing it. If they do not, who can blame anybody for trying to take it from us? If we do not use the land we are not entitled to hold it. I urge the Minister to review very seriously the way public funds are being spent.

Mr. GAVEN (Southport) (9.53 p.m.): The Bill to reclaim lands for tourist, recreation and other purposes is to my mind splendid legislation.

Government Members: Hear! hear!

Mr. GAVEN: I commend the Minister wholeheartedly for taking this step to develop land that today in my opinion is waste land and to bring it into use for the benefit of the people. I say without equivocation that he has acted fully within the statutes of the Parliament.

Government Members: Hear! hear!

Mr. GAVEN: And nobody can challenge him. Legislation of this kind is of use to the people and to the State. I have never before listened to so much eyewash and poppycock in all my life as I have tonight from hon. members opposite. They have been blowing hot and cold from the first speaker to the last. They are all in wholehearted agreement that it is good legislation to reclaim land and eliminate mosquito-breeding grounds and low-lying areas at estuaries, in harbours, and other parts of the eastern seaboard. Even the hon. member for Belyando, the former Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, said it was ideal for the State and a good measure. All that hon. members opposite disagree with is having the land that is reclaimed taken over by private enterprise on freehold tenure. That is the only bone of contention. With that exception they can see nothing wrong with the Bill. What is the difference? Does not the Crown control freehold land if it so desires? Can it not by legislation at any time resume freehold land? Can it not tax the people out of existence if it so desires?

We have heard a great deal about the protection of the working man. It has been said that with leasehold tenure he will have cheap land and some protection. I have had some experience with this kind of thing.

When the working man buys leasehold land he first of all pays for it. In the Rankin Estate that we have heard so much about he paid up to £1,200, £1,500 and even £2,000 a block. He first of all pays through the nose to acquire it. Once he acquires it he has to pay rates on the local authority valuation. Because it is leasehold he pays rent to the Crown. When he begins to pay the rent to the Crown the valuation is reasonably low but every seven years the Crown has the right to re-appraise it and very often, following the re-appraisals, he is called upon to pay through the nose in rent to the Crown. In my area many lessees are being called upon to pay such a high rental that they are faced with the prospect of having to get out. I cannot see how the working man is any better off, or as well off, with the leasehold land as freehold land. The hon. member for Belyando said the previous Government did excellent work on the Rankin Estate by reclaiming Shark Bay. No-one will deny it. No-one will take away any of the credit for good work that Labour Governments did in the past, but why stop at the Rankin Estate? Why did they not develop the land as the present Minister is proposing to do? Why stop with the small Rankin Estate? What was the cause of the full stop? The hon. member did not tell us that. Because the Minister is going ahead and carrying out this good work he is to be commended and the Government are to be commended too.

Recently the New South Wales Minister for Lands, a fine old gentleman, Mr. Gollon, came to the South Coast of Queensland and saw what private enterprise had done in the area. He addressed a Rotary Club meeting one night and said, "I have been a member of Parliament for many years but I had to come to the South Coast of Queensland to have my mind altered about the leasehold policy in New South Wales. I can see what has been done in this area by private enterprise. I am going back to my Government to tell them to throw open the land in the Tweed area in northern New South Wales as freehold." He referred to it as the Diamond Coast. He said, "I want it developed on the pattern that free enterprise and private enterprise have developed the South Coast of Queensland." He went back to his Cabinet, put the proposal to them, it was agreed to, but subsequently Cabinet met again and refused to go on with it. He said that after all his years as a member of the Labour Party in New South Wales, as Minister for Lands and a member of the Government for many years, he had to come to Queensland to see what free enterprise and private enterprise could do on the coast. He wanted to follow that pattern in his own State. That proves that a wise man changes his mind but a darned fool never does.

The Minister has introduced a splendid piece of legislation. Since 1952 every year private enterprise and free enterprise have

spent more money on the South Coast of Queensland than the Department of Public Works has spent in the whole of Queensland. A State as big as Queensland with so few people can never be developed unless it is developed with private and free enterprise. That has been proved time and time again. Work is in progress at Tallebudgera Creek, Burleigh Heads, to reclaim an area of stinking, mangrove-ridden, mosquito and sandfly breeding grounds. The area will be converted into a beautiful residential area or excellent camping site.

Mr. Houston: The workers cannot afford it.

Mr. GAVEN: The workers can and do buy land. Let me inform the hon. member that land, freehold or leasehold, can be bought on the Gold Coast from £200 to £10,000 a block. I and the hon. member for Hinchinbrook are both working men and we have been able to buy blocks. Are we not all workers? It is not only the chap who has a shovel in his hand who is a worker.

Mr. Graham: The man on the small income.

Mr. GAVEN: Is not the hon. member's income and my income small? The hon. member is telling me that he is worth more money than he is getting and I believe he is. So am I. We are all workers. Hon. members opposite have a mania that it must be leasehold land. In my area I could take hon. members to 1,000 homes built by people on leasehold land and many of them are providing the money to make it freehold. The homes are built on land over which they have no security of tenure. Every seven years the Government can squeeze them for a higher rental. The first thing any government do when they are short of funds is to squeeze those who have leasehold land. It is all right for hon. members to say the land belongs to the people. It does not belong to the people until they have a title with their name on it. The hon. member talked about leasehold in perpetuity. It is not leasehold in perpetuity; they never own it; it is never their own. There is no security of tenure. Their homes are built on land owned by the Crown. My heartiest congratulations are extended to the Minister and the Government for introducing this legislation that will play an important part in the development of the State. I hope the Minister continues with the good work.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARRISON (Darlington) (10.3 p.m.): We have heard of the Government's plans to enlist the services of private enterprise in developing certain types of land in this State. We have been told about the possibilities on the near South Coast and North Coast areas. Let me at once remove the impression that we are only dealing with particular areas. This legislation will assist in the development of all areas, in the South or in the North of the State.

Let me introduce an area that is not as well known as it should be, but an area that will eventually become known as the East Coast of Australia. I refer to North Stradbroke Island, a large island roughly 20 miles long by 10 miles wide, which shelters Moreton Bay, and has on its ocean side the most magnificent surfing beaches in Australia. It can be brought within 35 miles of Brisbane by road, and travelling time to the island from Brisbane could be reduced to 100 minutes.

Mr. Houston: What about development in a local area such as Victoria Point, rather than the scheme you suggest?

Mr. HARRISON: I represent this area, which is a very important part of Queensland. Approximately 1,000 people live on the island at the moment, but better access is badly needed. If developmental work under this Bill was undertaken on the island, the people of Brisbane and our tourists would have the opportunity of visiting these marvellous places. It would be the handiest ocean seaside resort to Brisbane. Why should private enterprise not be allowed to undertake the work? The first thing needed is a connecting link with the mainland. A viaduct has been discussed for many years, and is a distinct engineering possibility. Connecting roads across the island would be required. There are three small townships, Dunwich, which faces the mainland, Amity Point at the northern end, and on the north-east corner the magnificent resort of Point Lookout. Water and electricity would have to be reticulated. The job could be tackled by private enterprise in return for certain concessions. Large tracts of the island are waste, swamp land which at the moment is useless, but a company could turn this land into a beautiful area for subdivision into residential blocks. It would be a simple engineering job. The swampy land is backed by magnificent hills with grandstand views of the ocean.

Various suggestions have been advanced as to the route of the connecting link, one being via Peel Island, the leper settlement which is soon to be vacated by that Branch of the Department of Health and Home Affairs. That island will then be ready for similar developmental work. Another route would be from the lower end of the island, with a magnificent tourist road running the full length of the island, which would be an added attraction. I cannot see what is wrong in asking private enterprise to undertake this class of work in return for land which I am perfectly sure will never be used by anyone else. In that way the assets of the State would be improved. Much land is available on the island. Parcels of it are being opened up from time to time, but development is not nearly as fast as it would be if good access roads were constructed. There are probably not less than 5,000 acres of land there suitable for subdivision into building allotments,

and I believe that they could be made available at very low prices. Many hon. members opposite have asked, "How will the workers be able to buy these blocks?" Quite a number of the people who have land on Stradbroke Island today are workers who go down there to do their fishing.

Mr. Mann: How much a block do you think it will cost them?

Mr. HARRISON: I do not know, but I think the upset price is £70 to £100 and you would not call that dear.

The arguments put forward by members of the Opposition are not very real. My colleague from Southport asked, are we not all workers? Are not all members of the public service workers? Development of a vehicular link with North Stradbroke Island will also relieve a lot of the traffic congestion that occurs when workers and other people use the roads leading to the seaside on the South Coast and the North Coast because it will provide a direct route. You, Mr. Chairman, know the attractions of this area and you have built a home everlooking it.

The Government and Cabinet have already called for a report on the best way of developing North Stradbroke Island and Peel Island, and the Co-ordinator-General, Mr. Holt, has the job well in hand. The islands come under the jurisdiction of the Redland Shire Council, a comparatively small rural Local Authority. Most of the people in that area are small-crop farmers who supply Brisbane with fruit and vegetables, and it is quite impossible to leave the responsibility for this development in the hands of that local authority. It is a job for the people of Queensland because of its potential as a tourist attraction, and this legislation will enable it to be developed. It is the only practical and commonsense way of getting the money needed to do the job. The previous Government said that they had proposals and had looked into plans but they did nothing about them. This is the first positive step that has been taken to attract private enterprise to assist with this work.

Hon. members may think of Stradbroke Island only as a tourist resort, but the biggest mineral sands company in Australia operates there. It has a capital of over £1,000,000 and up to 200 employees on the island, and it has conducted a most successful business there.

I do not think people know enough about Stradbroke Island, and I am trying to help them find out more about it. I have a map of Moreton Bay and its islands here to show hon. members that what I am saying is correct.

In addition to Stradbroke Island, I believe there is an excellent opportunity for development of roads in another part of my electorate. I refer to Tamborine Mountain, which could be made an excellent addition to the attractions offering to people who visit

the South Coast. In a relatively short drive of about 20 minutes, they could leave the beach on a hot morning and spend the afternoon on that beautiful mountain resort playing golf or walking through the wonderfully cool rain forest areas. As the South Coast develops, so must Tamborine Mountain and Springbrook develop. They will become dual attractions for visitors to the South Coast. None of the New South Wales coast resorts are backed by the same wonderful attraction of mountain resorts. I commend that thought to the Minister, because there is already a proposal to subdivide land on Tamborine Mountain.

Mr. Jesson: Alfred Grant is up there now.

Mr. HARRISON: That is so. He is at present doing a big subdivision job up there.

I compliment the Minister on having the foresight and the courage to bring down this type of legislation. Despite what the Opposition have said about leasehold land and their assertion that we are dissipating the assets of the people, the Bill will bring in a good deal of revenue and create much employment. I can see nothing wrong with it.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (10.17 p.m.): When I was listening to the Minister's introductory remarks, I was trying to ascertain what all the hurry was about. However, the hon. member for Darlington has made it clear why the legislation is being brought down. There are only 12 months to go before the next State election, and if the Government are to honour their promises they will have to show that they have developed something. I venture to say that if the facts were known, the Government are almost bankrupt. They have no money of their own with which to carry out any developmental work, and in order to show some progress they are letting out work to private enterprise on the barter system. In effect they are saying, "You do some work for us so that we can gull the people. In return, we will give you land out of which you can make money."

I am satisfied that the Government have no thought about development. If that was their idea, why did not the hon. member for Darlington mention Cleveland, Victoria Point, and Wellington Point, all of which are in close proximity to Brisbane? Each of them has become an absolute disgrace. Instead of talking about grandiose schemes on Stradbroke Island, the Government should make those places worth while for the people to visit. Conditions at Cleveland, for example, are so bad that the general public have to camp on private land. There is nowhere else for them to go. If the Government are so keen about developing Queensland, let them start with places that are already in existence.

I fully support what the Leader of the Opposition has said about the Minister. During the short time that I have been here

this is the first time I have heard a Minister say, "No matter what you say, the legislation will go through." I know that the weight of numbers will tell, but, as I say, this is the first time I have heard a Minister say, "Whatever you say, you are simply wasting your time." He should take a leaf out of the Opposition's book in his approach to this matter. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber have been constructive in their criticism. That is clear from the remarks of the hon. member for Warrego and the hon. member for Cairns. There is much meat in the suggestion of the hon. member for Cairns that the real development of the State should take place in the North. It makes me think that this is only a handout to the Country Party members on the North Coast who are jealous of the development on the South Coast. It is an attempt to bring about equality. "The South Coast has done all right, so let the North Coast do all right."

I thank the hon. member for Murrumba for letting me have a look at the plan.

Mr. Nicholson: I did not let you; you just came for a stickybeak.

Mr. HOUSTON: It does not matter how I came to see it. What I was interested in and what I wanted to mention was the fact that the plan shows no thought has been given to the needs of the ordinary people. The hon. member will agree that along the foreshore not one piece of land is set aside for campers. The allotments go right up to the foreshore. If we are to look after the working people that the Minister spoke of, let us look after those who want to take their kiddies away camping. We have already seen how successfully the South Coast has got rid of campers. Now apparently the idea is to open up special beaches, not for the ordinary folk who want to take their children away on a camping holiday, not for the people who cannot afford to pay the high rents they would be forced to pay, not for the working people but for those who can afford to pay the high prices. Otherwise, why not make provision for park lands along the foreshore? Why all the ridiculous talk about the interests of the ordinary man? One hon. member referred to the area as a workers' paradise. In the next breath he quoted £500 for a block of land. I ask you, Mr. Taylor, how many men on ordinary wages, that is, tradesmen's wages or lower, could find £500 for a block of land? Every day of the week people come to members of Parliament asking for help to find a rented home in Brisbane. They cannot find a £250 deposit to build a home to live in the town, let alone have a country home or a country estate, too. It might be all right for those who consider themselves workers and then vote against the workers' party and those who legislate in the interests of the ordinary man. The suggestions of hon. members opposite are all eyewash.

If the Minister and his colleagues are really sincere about reclaiming swamp land there are plenty of other areas that could be reclaimed to help workers get a home site. What happens to those workers now when they try to get a home? They are sent to Inala. Many of them I know have lived in Bulimba and Hawthorne and worked at the wharves all their lives, and their children work there, too; many of them work at the abattoirs, or at the powerhouse, and so do their children. When those children marry and apply for a home they are sent to Inala. Why not develop some of the swamp lands around Hemmant and Murarrie for housing estates?

A Government Member: We are going to do it.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Bill will not help.

Mr. Muller: You come in and offer to do the job.

Mr. HOUSTON: We will be behind the Minister if he does that but not if he lets speculators in to do it. The land is worth developing. I do not know whether the Minister knows it, but I do, and the hon. member for Wynnum knows it well, too. Let us be really serious about this. I will support anything if it is sincere. Why do the Government not say, "We are bankrupt. We cannot do any reclamation work. We must do it this way so that we can show the people in the long-run that we have done developmental work." I am sure that the people are not so foolish as to fall for that.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (10.25 p.m.): Listening to the hon. members opposite one would think that the introduction of the Bill meant a sudden wave of development throughout Queensland, that the construction of small lengths of roads by T. M. Burke meant a great change in the whole face of Queensland. But the Minister has given us no indication of any one vista of development that will open up following the passage of the legislation. He said that it will give the workers an opportunity to purchase land for holiday homes. What ridiculous nonsense! It has always been the worker who has pioneered seaside resorts. The worker went where he could get cheap land. Therefore he had to go where the land was undeveloped. Would it be possible for the working-man to purchase a piece of land at a reasonable price on Bribie Island if it were completely developed with a bridge from the mainland? Working people have homes there now only because the land is cheap. The Bill gives speculators an opportunity to develop gradually. By development of subdivisions the value of the land subdivided is enhanced. The land will not be cheap for the working-man. The hon. member for Cooroora said it would be priced at approximately £500 a block. How many working people are able to afford £500 for land for a holiday home? Very few working people

can afford a holiday home. The hon. member for Southport said that he was a working-man. Certainly he is. I agree with him, but he is not a poor working-man or a low-wage working-man.

Mr. Mann: A share-farmer.

Mr. LLOYD: He is a share-farmer amongst many other things. A working-man is a man who works for a wage. He is unable to pay the high price asked for land that always follows the increase in valuations that follows in the track of the speculator. The small-mindedness of the Government towards land matters is marked in the speeches of hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Southport said that it is splendid legislation. He stressed what private enterprise has done on the South Coast. Certainly private enterprise has played its part but the initial impetus given to development on the South Coast came from its natural resources—its weather, its beaches, and other attractions. Private enterprise exploited these natural resources for profit. Development has followed. Certainly we must admit that private enterprise has done a considerable amount but it has done it under a Labour Government.

Mr. Herbert: In spite of the Labour Government.

Mr. LLOYD: Never mind about that. It has been done in a period of Labour Government when the Labour Party were not afraid and private enterprise was willing to accept the leasehold tenures offered to enable it to develop land on the South Coast. The hon. member for Southport will admit that much of the land on the South Coast is still held under leasehold tenure. The argument of hon. members opposite falls completely to the ground. Leasehold tenure versus freehold tenure has been stressed by hon. members opposite but it has not been pointed out that there is no difference between leasehold tenure in perpetuity and freehold tenure.

A small piece of paper indicates that a man is the owner of the land, but as far as value is concerned there is no difference. The only difference there lies in the fact that the State retains rightful ownership. The hon. member for Cooroora mentioned the Rankin estate. In that case land was reclaimed and developed. The people did in fact purchase leasehold land. From the time it was first developed the community effort has increased the value of the land and at present the people through the public estate are receiving a considerable revenue, much more than they would have received if the land had been transferred to Rankin on a freehold tenure. The hon. member for Roma endeavoured to refute the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition who referred to the contempt the Minister showed towards the Opposition and Parliament in carrying out this arrangement before introducing the legislation. The hon. member for Roma quoted legislation which he stated would enable the Government to carry out the agreement already entered into

without bringing down this legislation. If the hon. member for Roma is correct what is the reason for this legislation? Are we wasting our time? I think it is necessary that the legislation be introduced. I support my Leader. There is no doubt that there has been a tendency during the period of the present Government towards bureaucracy—a very marked tendency. Various legislation introduced by the Government provided for additional powers by means of regulation. There has been taken away from the Governor in Council some of the administrative rights which have been jealously guarded over the years and handed over to public servants. No doubt we will find similar clauses in this legislation.

Mr. Nicklin: Name one.

Mr. LLOYD: The Harbours Act was one. The words "With prior approval of the Governor in Council" were omitted from the Act by the Harbours Bill. I have no doubt that there will be a similar provision in this legislation. If powers continue to be taken away from Parliament we shall gradually reach the stage of government by Executive Council or public servants. Arrangements have been made by the Minister and then the Minister comes before Parliament and tells us that it is a fait accompli. Is Parliament to be a mere figurehead? Are we here simply to validate the actions of the Government? I agree with my Leader who pointed out the necessity for the democratic rights of the people to be jealously guarded in the face of the tendency towards bureaucracy by the Government. The hon. member for Cooroora made the statement that T. M. Burke would make very little money, if any, from this land he was improving. I do not know Mr. T. M. Burke. He is probably a real estate agent, or a member of a firm. If the hon. member for Cooroora is correct, he will be the first man in business who has ever undertaken such work in a spirit of benevolence. As I understand it, he will be receiving 500 acres in exchange for road work costing £100,000.

Mr. Low: And 25 per cent. of the sales.

Mr. LLOYD: I shall come to that. There are approximately four allotments to an acre, which means that 2,000 building allotments will be available. The hon. member for Cooroora said that the average for an allotment would be about £500. That being so, this is a £1,000,000 project, yet the hon. member for Cooroora expects us to believe that there will be nothing in it for this firm.

Mr. Low: He has to build the roads.

Mr. LLOYD: That still leaves £900,000, and even with the payment of 25 per cent. to the Government a considerable profit will be made by Mr. Burke. I should not think that it would take very long to construct a road 7 miles in length.

Mr. Low: You should study economics.

Mr. LLOYD: We are not against private enterprise. We freely concede the right of anyone to profit from his own effort and initiative, but we do not think profit should be obtained at the expense of the people by the handing over of the public asset.

The legislation could lead to wholesale alienation of the land by the granting of developmental leases which allow the transfer of the land on a freehold basis in return for certain work by private individuals. The Minister, the Government or Cabinet will in future be able to hand over any portion of land in that manner without the approval of Parliament or the people. We will reach the stage when no land on the coastal area will be owned by the Crown. We know what has happened in the past. The Minister knows that the only portions of land held on a freehold basis in the State are in the near coastal regions. Men are desperately trying to obtain land on which to settle, but are unable to secure the allocation of any of that land which is held on a freehold basis. The owners of it jealously retain it. It is undeveloped, unused and unproductive. That is the position because the predecessors of the present Government many years ago alienated the land to large companies. This land is sought by potential settlers from Queensland and other States, but it is jealously guarded by the freeholder in an unused and unproductive state. In many instances it is not even wanted by the owner. At Foleyvale in Central Queensland certain land was held on a freehold basis. When the Labour Government told the owner that they wanted the land, he said it was useless, but opposed its resumption. When it was taken over by the Government, it proved to be very productive. That area of 200 or 300 acres before being taken over by the Government was unused and unproductive. The same can be said of freehold areas in the near coastal regions, whereas in other portions of the State land held on a leasehold basis is in production and flourishing townships have been established in the areas of closer settlement.

Government members have indulged in a lot of nonsense in an attempt to glorify action which will be of very little benefit to the State. Queensland is crying out for development, but not the sort of development to be undertaken under the Bill. This money could be diverted into more useful channels. The Minister knows that in many areas people are unemployed. If roads were built in those areas for the carriage of goods and the marketing of produce, unemployment would be relieved. I see this Bill as an attempt to develop certain areas that will be of no practical advantage to this State. I am not suggesting that that is being done because Ministers represent those areas, but we ought to concentrate on the responsibilities of Government and undertake works in areas where development is really necessary. If to relieve unemployment we must use money that we have not

got, let us do that. It is proposed to introduce a Bill of Rights in Queensland, and I believe that in the Declaration of Human Rights in the United Nations there is some guarantee of full employment. Let us do something about it.

I believe that the Government have put forward no case for us to answer. As I understand it, development will not have to be completed before land is subdivided and sold. In other words, if £100,000 is to be spent by a private company, they have not to spend the full £100,000 before exploiting the subdivision of the land. They can proceed with the development to a certain stage and then subdivide part of the land, sell it, and use the money to carry out their original undertaking. If a private company can do that, I can see no reason why the Government should not do the work on a similar basis. Labour Governments have shown in the past that development is possible under leasehold tenure, and I can see no reason for giving the speculator an opportunity of making high profits from the assets of the people.

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (10.43 p.m.): This is a very interesting debate. The legislation before the Committee is legislation that we might expect from the present Government. They are true to label—a Queen Street Government. As I mentioned in my speech on the Address in Reply, their choice of Ministers clearly indicated that, because there was not one Minister from farther North than Mackay. Since they have been in office it has become clear that the Brisbane line still exists.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will speak about reclaimed land.

Mr. ADAIR: I am coming to that. Mr. Chairman. Every three or four years a city as large as Cairns is added to the Brisbane metropolitan area. I do not blame the hon. member for Southport or the hon. member for Cooroora for this legislation. Probably if I were in their position and a member of their party, I would do as they have done. I blame the Government, because the development of this land will mean that thousands more people will live in Southern Queensland. How can we expect people to go to the North when the Government are doing so much to attract them to the South? I point out that there will not be one worker on land that is being developed round this area. The workers will not be able to buy it.

Mr. Low: What nonsense!

Mr. ADAIR: The hon. member for Cooroora does not want workers living on the land that is being developed in his area. He wants people who will vote for his Party. He wants only the class of people who can afford to buy expensive land. Nobody can tell me that he is anxious to see workers going into that area, or that the land there will be sold for £200 an allotment. When

the racketeers get control and start to sell the land, it will bring from £500 to £1,000 an allotment.

I agree with the statement of the hon. member for Cairns that just as much country is available for development in the Far North as round the metropolitan area. As a matter of fact, there is probably more. When the Treasurer was introducing his Bill dealing with reclamation, he said that Cairns would probably have more reclaimable land than any other city in Queensland. Thousands of acres there are crying out for reclamation, and there is an acute shortage of building sites. Every four years a city as large as Cairns is being added to the Brisbane area, thus increasing the number of parasites on the people of the out-back.

As I have said, this is legislation that can be expected from the present Government. The land of the State should remain the property of the people; it should remain leasehold. This Government are a Queen Street Government and have done nothing for the North. All that they have done in my area is to create ghost towns.

The hon. member for Cairns has spoken about the Flaggy Creek hydro-electricity scheme. It must go on whether the Government like it or not. That is the only place where they can get the power that they need.

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (10.49 p.m.): Never in my experience in this Chamber have I heard such slobbering hypocrisy as I have tonight, particularly from the hon. members for Roma, Southport, and Cooroora. We on this side of the Chamber are not unmindful of the responsibilities of government. For many years the Labour Party controlled the Treasury benches and gained a good deal of experience in the affairs of government. Members of the Australian Labour Party are quite conscious of their responsibility in developing the State. Sitting in Opposition as we are today, it is our duty to criticise any legislation that in our opinion will be to the detriment of the State.

While we recognise that the Government have the right to introduce such legislation as befits their policy, whether Liberal or Country Party, I think the Bill is being introduced under pressure from such men as the hon. member for Cooroora and the hon. member for Southport. In the short period of two years since the Government took office—or, as the hon. member for Chermiside said, 18 months—we have seen them endeavouring in all possible haste to give effect to their policy of alienating as much Crown land as possible because they know that if they do not within their first three years they will never get the opportunity to do it in a second term. So tonight we have the Minister introducing legislation that perhaps is unnecessary because of certain action the Government took by Order in Council and that provides for handing over to private

enterprise areas of land that could be developed by the Government if they so desired.

Mr. Muller: What did your crowd do?

Mr. GRAHAM: Never mind about that. The present Government are in power and they have introduced legislation to hand over large tracts of Crown land to private enterprise mainly for the exploitation of valuable areas.

I am not unmindful of the responsibilities of Government. No-one would wish to see the State retarded by the failure of the Government to develop coastal land. We have seen what has happened already on the North and South Coast. We know the North Coast has wonderful potential for development but I have yet to see why the Government took unto themselves the right to hand over the responsibility to private enterprise. The North Coast has some wonderful beaches, and areas of the South Coast are as yet undeveloped. Areas adjacent to Southport, Coolangatta, Bilinga, and so on, have seen great development in recent years through private investment. As the hon. member for Bundaberg pointed out, the development of the South Coast was well on the way before the present Government took office and under a policy that had been designed by the Labour Party over many years. The happenings of the last 12 or 18 months cannot be put to the credit of the present Government. They came about through the potential of the area and the large amount of capital made available. Despite the development that took place under the Labour policy of leasehold, immediately the new Government came into office they put into effect their freeholding policy and the man on the small income was prevented from getting land on the South Coast. The Minister knows perfectly well that at Bilinga a few weeks ago land was sold freehold at £1,500 or more an allotment with improvement conditions of £1,500 within two years, yet, with all the hypocrisy man is capable of, he says the Bill will allow the working-man to get land. If similar conditions apply to the North Coast what chance will the ordinary working-man have of getting land there?

Mr. Low: It will be a workers' paradise on the North Coast.

Mr. GRAHAM: When the hon. member for Cooroora was asked a question about what American capital was available for the North Coast he cleverly side-stepped it and said nothing about it.

Mr. Low: £2,000,000.

Mr. GRAHAM: It will be something like £10,000,000—the £10,000,000 for 10,000 jobs that the Moore Government talked about. My fear is that within another 18 months the Government will have disposed of all the Crown land they can.

The State should be developed but it is the responsibility of the Government to develop it. If the Government accepted their responsibility they would try to develop the land instead of passing it over to private enterprise. Will private enterprise undertake development only for honour and glory or for the benefit of the State? Of course not. The Minister knows as well as I do that there is only one purpose why private enterprise will invest capital in development and that is profit. The hon. member for Cooroora said that possibly allotments in the area will be available for £500. It will depend on the companies that develop the area. They will decide what is to be paid for them. The Government are getting into such financial straits that they are exploring every avenue to get an extra shilling. It is all very well to say that the Government will get 25 per cent. of the value of the land that will be sold, but who will determine its value and who will buy the allotments when they are developed? Not the working class but the wealthy class. The Government are not concerned whether the average working man can buy the land. They are introducing the Bill in the interests of big profits for their wealthy friends. The whole principle is wrong. The alienation of the Crown lands of Queensland purely at the dictatorship of private investors is wrong in principle. It is wrong to allow foreign capital to take advantage of the potential of this great State. The Government have a responsibility to protect the interests of the people instead of handing over the public estate with little or no concern for future generations. The hon. member for Southport more or less pooh-poohed our contention about future generations.

Mr. Low: Don't you believe in progress?

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course I believe in progress—a darned sight more than the hon. member does. But I believe in protecting the interests of the people too. The Government are prepared to allow the potential of the State to be exploited for £ s. d. Their only concern is what the Government will get out of it. They are not so much concerned with the development of the State as the return the Government will get from the investment of companies that are given the privilege of undertaking the development.

Some of the areas would not take much development. If it is possible for private enterprise to do the job why cannot the Government do it? Why have the Government got to hand over to private enterprise the responsibility that lies at their door? It is quite possible that some hon. members who are so keen to hand it over to private enterprise may be beneficiaries because these people undertake the development. That might be worth investigating.

Mr. Heading: You don't believe it.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do believe it. The responsibility lies at the door of the Government but they are running away from it.

They are handing it over to private enterprise who will be able to exploit the potential of this State. The Government will get a return of 25 per cent. from the development of this land but they are prepared to let private enterprise exploit the purchaser of our coastal lands. Our population is under 2,000,000 and 10 or 15 years hence would be ample time to carry out some of the improvements. There are numerous areas like Maroochy and the South Coast with good roads to help development to take place.

Mr. P. R. Smith: Have you been there lately?

Mr. Jesson: Shut up you mug.

Mr. P. R. SMITH: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Hinchinbrook called me a mug. That is offensive to me and I ask for its withdrawal.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member for Hinchinbrook made that remark, it is decidedly unparliamentary and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. Jesson: I withdraw under your instruction.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Government who now claim to have done so much to develop the State are now handing their responsibility to somebody else. Who is doing something to the detriment of the State. If the Government hand over vast areas of land to private investors what will be the result? As I said before, the alienation of Crown land is wrong in principle. While I admit that there are areas of the North Coast and the South Coast that could, and should, be developed, it is the responsibility of the Government to undertake the development. This Government have failed in their duty by allowing these lands to pass into the hands of private investors who will use them for exploitation. It is humbug and hypocrisy for the Government to say that they are actuated by the desire to make it possible for the man on a small income to purchase a block of land at the seaside. It is virtually impossible for a man on a small income level to buy a piece of land in these areas.

Mr. Rae: The hon. member's party had the best 20 years in Queensland to do something for the worker but it did not do anything.

Mr. GRAHAM: It was owing to the good work of Labour Governments that the worker enjoys his present standard. Your Government are doing their best to destroy the conditions built up by Labour. As the hon. member for Warrego said, there is more unemployment in Queensland now than ever before. There are more unemployed in my electorate.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the question of reclaimed land. I should like to point out to the hon. member that his remarks are becoming tedious repetition.

Mr. GRAHAM: I shall try to make my remarks relevant to the question. I was answering the hon. member for Gregory regarding what the Labour Party had done. I repeat that this Government are failing in their responsibility to the people. If this Government had followed the policy of the previous Government, the laud would not have been alienated. I am more than surprised at the fact that the Government have handed part of the asset of the people to private investors.

Hon. A. G. MULLER (Fassifern—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (11.6 p.m.), in reply: I know the hour is late, and I shall leave my main reply until the second reading stage but a few grave charges, however, have been made against me, and I shall reply to them now.

I have been charged with being contemptuous. If that is so, I apologise to you, Mr. Taylor. If I did say to hon. members opposite, "You have got to take it," I said it at a time when I was justified in saying it. I found great difficulty in hearing my own words above the interjections from the other side of the Chamber. I said to those hon. members, "Now you have got to take it," and I do not think there was anything wrong with that. I have been charged with being a bureaucrat. If this legislation savours of bureaucracy, all I have to say is that it is a pity that Queensland had not had a bit more bureaucracy.

The only thing I resent is the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition who challenged my right to stand up for the working man. I do that unconsciously. I was reared among working people, and my sympathies are always with the working man and the poorer sections of the community. I claim I am a working man. Despite all their statements about me, I challenge the Leader of the Opposition and the 20 other hon. members on the Opposition benches to come out tomorrow morning with me, and I will dig 20 postholes before any one of them. (Laughter.) And I ask you, Mr. Taylor, to bring a rule to see that they are dug correctly. If they do not want it that way, I will split 50 ironbark posts with any one of them. (Laughter.) If they want to go a bit further, I will get Wally Rae to get three unbroken colts and give each of us a rope, and I will bet £20 to £5 that I catch my colt and ride him before any hon. member opposite. (Laughter.) I make those statements in view of the nonsense we have heard from hon. members opposite about the working man. I stand up for the working man on all occasions.

I can only assume that the Leader of the Opposition did not follow my statements closely. He charged me with bureaucracy, and the Government with undertaking this class of business before consulting the Opposition.

Mr. Duggan: I said Parliament.

Mr. MULLER: Well, Parliament. We have not spent any public money, or any money at all. We have encouraged private enterprise to do this work, and the legislation is introduced merely to validate the job we have done.

The hon. members for Belyando and Bundaberg said that similar work had been done previously. Did they at that time seek the approval of Parliament? Of course they did not. In my second reading speech I shall tell hon. members a little more about reclamation work. This work is now being carried out on a much bigger scale. Under the leasehold system that has been referred to, we could not get anyone, either a company or an individual, to build roads and bridges. These contracts to which I have referred are being carried out on the land that is being subdivided, and the roads and bridges are being built. It is not a bit of good members of the Opposition saying that we have no right to do these things. It is in keeping with our policy of encouraging private enterprise and encouraging people to come to Queensland and engage in works of this type.

Let us be realistic about it. If T. M. Burke & Co. or Hooker Rex are going to carry out this work, they must employ people. Who gets the benefit of that? The workers. It builds up the economy of the country and opens up land that is lying idle. Listening to the hon. member for Bundaberg, one must come to the conclusion that he prefers to see kangaroos in that country instead of people.

A great deal has been said about the profit that T. M. Burke & Co. might show on their contract. I want hon. members to see what the position really is. T. M. Burke & Co. have entered into an arrangement with the Government to do that reclamation work, build the roads, build the bridges, subdivide the land, and provide all the recreation space required by the local authorities. The ground will be sold and the Crown will receive 25 per cent. of the gross proceeds of the sale. Suppose, for example, a block of land is sold for £100; the Crown will receive £25. If a block of land is sold for £1,000, the Crown will receive £250. The difference between the two is that on the block sold for £100 T. M. Burke & Co. would receive £75, whereas on the block sold for £1,000 they would receive £750.

Mr. Evans: And it is not worth 2s. today.

Mr. MULLER: That is correct. I do not know what it will realise, but it seems to be a case of sour grapes with hon. members opposite. If private enterprise is prepared to undertake work and shows a profit on it, what is wrong with that? Why did not hon. members opposite object to Allan & Stark Ltd. building their store at Chermide? Why did not they object to any other person engaging in private enterprise? If a man

leases 1,000 acres or 20,000 acres, do you think he takes up that lease to lose money? He takes it up to show a profit, and in the course of showing that profit and carrying on his usual business activities, he employs people and keeps the wheels of industry turning. That is why this policy has become so popular. People are coming from southern States and from overseas to engage in this work, and we are encouraging them.

Mr. Graham: If Burke & Co. can provide £100,000, could not the Government provide £100,000?

Mr. MULLER: Why did not your Government do it? We have been in office for 18 months and we have introduced this progressive policy. Why did not the Labour Party introduce it? The previous Government did not have the money to do it, and I am going to be quite honest and say that we have not the money to do it. There is such a demand for the available loan money that we cannot provide it. We ask people to accept the responsibility of carrying out the work, and if they show a profit, I say "Good luck to them."

A great deal has been said about spending £10,000,000 without consulting anyone. As a matter of fact, we have not spent a "razoo". These people are coming here and doing the work and providing employment. For years and years the Labour Party condemned the policy of immigration. They said that nothing could affect the working man more adversely, but they were quite wrong. Hon. members opposite talk about protecting the rights of the working man! Labour's policy has kept the working man down. I stand up for the rights of the working man whenever I get the opportunity.

The hon. member for Bundaberg challenged me to table the papers in connection with some work that was done.

Mr. Walsh: I challenged you to table the reports on these schemes.

Mr. MULLER: The hon. member challenged me to place before the Committee information about something that was done when he was Minister. I do not know what it is. If he knows, let him table it.

Mr. Walsh: I told you what it was—the reports on these schemes.

Mr. MULLER: Let the hon. member table it.

Mr. Walsh: You have it in your department.

Mr. MULLER: In his usual fashion, the hon. member tried to convey the impression that he was doing something and that I was not prepared to tell the Committee about it. If he has done anything in the interests of the State, I know nothing of it. If he does, it is his job to bring it to light.

Mr. Walsh: You can't get out of it like that.

Mr. MULLER: I have nothing to get out of. The hon. member for Bundaberg is the one who is in the tin and it is his job to get out of it. If he is not careful, I will put the lid on the tin.

Opposition Members: Who let the cat out of the vat?

Mr. MULLER: It is typical of hon. members opposite to bring up muck of that kind.

The hon. member for Warrego, for whom I have the greatest respect, at least kept his head. I cannot say that of the Leader of the Opposition, who almost jumped over the table when he was squealing about the Bill. The hon. member for Warrego did object to my manner, but I repeat that I had cause to be somewhat concerned and excited and I had to reply in the same strain as that in which the interjections were fired at me.

The hon. member for Warrego said, "You have the numbers to get the right to sell this land on a freehold basis, but wait and see what happens." I point out to the hon. member that we have the numbers not only in the Chamber, but outside it. Among them are many working-class people who not only say that they believe in the freehold system but are actually applying to convert leaseholds into freeholds. If the hon. member wants me to table papers in support of that statement, I shall be happy to do so.

Challenges have been thrown out by the Opposition. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Bundaberg to tell the Committee whether their homes are built on freehold or leasehold. Let them be honest in this matter. As the hon. member for Southport has said, in effect the Labour Party says to the people, "Keep on with your leasehold property. We will be able to suck the blood out of you. Every year we will increase your valuations and your rents." And then they tell us that they stand for the working-man!

Not one hon. member of the Opposition was prepared to say what it is that we are doing wrong. We have done nothing "under the bush." We have called for applications from people who are prepared to engage in this type of work. We are taking power to enter into a private contract, if necessary. We make no apology for that. We are also taking power to use any reclaimed land that we may want for our own purposes.

Cribb Island has been mentioned, and the hon. member for Nundah will bear out what I am about to say. He introduced to me a deputation of representatives of the Cribb Island Progress Association. They came to me almost in tears asking me to have a look at the place. They said they had been asking for years for something to be done. I went down and had a look at the place and I ask you, Mr. Taylor, or any other hon. member, to go down and see it, too. The land suitable for building purposes is very limited and surrounding it is a big salt swamp. It

has even eaten its way into the school grounds. It seems to me and to surveyors attached to my department that it will require about 2 feet of filling to build up the area and then it will make an excellent sea-side resort. The people were so thrilled that they entertained Mr. Knox and me at morning tea. They were delighted to know that at last something would be done. That is similar to what the hon. member for Southport said had been done at Tallebudgera Creek. That work is actually in hand. Previously the area was a bed of mosquitoes and mangroves. We are bringing it up to the required level. All those areas will be suitable for residential sites.

Mr. Mann: One of the sites brought £900 whereas previously it was bringing in a rental of £4 a year.

Mr. MULLER: If it is dear it must be good. If we reclaim the land and the people pay more than its value we cannot help it. As the hon. member for Darlington said some time ago, we cannot help it if we open up land at an upset price and in competition people pay four times the amount. All we can do is make more land available.

It is no good people saying the land on the North Coast will not sell. The hon. member for Cooroora can confirm that private subdividers have already cut up land not as conveniently situated as ours. I went out there with him and saw it. One subdivider cut up 200 blocks and he sold 200 blocks. He is cutting up some more. We have all this land on the coast that is barren waste. This is the only way we can see to develop it.

The hon. member for Belyando expressed concern that someone might make something out of it. Heavens above, that is how we live. For anything that we do we expect a return. These people take a risk. They may not get anything out of it. I hope they will. The more they get out of it the better I will like it. Any money they make out of it they will spend here and undertake more work. They do not eat the cash. They do not even haunt the bar and guzzle it as some others do. They provide work and wages for the people. The alternative to encouraging them is stagnation.

I know of nothing that the Government have done that has gone down in such good grace as this and we want the people of Queensland to know it. What is more, we are getting their co-operation. The further we go the greater the support we are getting.

The hon. member for Cairns said I refused to accept a challenge. I have not refused to accept any challenge. He said something had been thrown into the ring and I was not prepared to take it up. I am prepared to table any papers concerning my administration.

Mr. Walsh: You table those reports under the previous administration.

Mr. MULLER: Let the hon. member for Bundaberg table them.

Mr. Walsh: I haven't got them; you have got them.

Mr. MULLER: Tell us all about them.

Mr. Walsh: I told you about them.

Mr. MULLER: I will throw back the challenge to the hon. member. He knows all about it. Let him tell us and if it is not true I will refute it. I think it is a fair statement.

I gathered from the hon. member's remarks that he thought the scheme was a waste of money. He followed that up by saying we are not doing anything in North Queensland. Both statements cannot be right. If it is a waste of money, why should we do it in North Queensland? But we are going to do it in North Queensland and we are not going to encroach upon harbour boards' rights or marine rights either. The Treasurer and I have a reciprocal arrangement and it is not our wish to encroach upon their rights. They have certain rights. As has been already admitted, there are thousands of acres that we do not need to touch.

The hon. member for Cairns attributed a statement to me about the placing of the last bucket of cement at the Tinaroo Falls Dam. I deny saying that we were not going to complete the job. I did say that there might be some delay, that other work would have to be carried on beside that. There was reason for the delay. We have already built the dam at a cost of £7,000,000. We have spent all last year's and this year's loan allocation on that work. I throw that nasty statement back in the teeth of the hon. member. All the Government's loan allocation has been spent, yet the representative from the district will say that we are not going to complete the work. Of course we are going to complete it, but everything we do is in a businesslike manner. We do not spend £20,000,000 and then wonder what we are going to do with what we have spent the money on. We try to make use of the water as we provide it. As we extend the channels we have to open up the land. It must be done piecemeal. When the Government took office I was asked to make an inspection of the area. I made the inspection and reported back to the Government. They accepted my recommendation to carry on with the work and make the best use of the water. We have not delayed, we have not wasted any time. I repeat that all last year's and almost all this year's loan allocation has been spent on the scheme. All the thanks we get is, "You are not doing anything in North Queensland." We are not parochial or sectional. We do not think of one part of the State as against another. The legislation I have submitted for the consideration of the Committee concerns the whole of Queensland, not one part of it. What is more, it is receiving the good grace of the people of Queensland.

Question—That the motion (Mr. Muller) be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 27.

Mr. Anderson	Mr. Müller
“ Beardmore	“ Munro
“ Bjelke-Petersen	“ Nicholson
“ Connolly	“ Nicklin
“ Dewar	“ Pizzey
“ Evans	“ Rae
“ Harrison	“ Roberts
“ Heading	“ Smith, P. R.
“ Herbert	“ Tooth
“ Hodges	“ Windsor
“ Knox	
“ Lonergan	<i>Tellers :</i>
“ Low	
“ Madsen	Mr. Ewan
“ Morris	“ Gaven

NOES, 18.

Mr. Adair	Mr. Lloyd
“ Baxter	“ Mann
“ Byrne	“ Smith, A. J.
“ Donald	“ Thackeray
“ Dufficy	“ Walsh
“ Duggan	
“ Foley	<i>Tellers :</i>
“ Gair	
“ Graham	Mr. Houston
“ Hanlon	“ Wallace
“ Jesson	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Ahearn	Mr. Davies
“ Sparkes	“ Davis
“ Hart	“ Keyatta
“ Richter	“ Clark
“ Ramsden	“ Diplock
“ Watson	“ Gardner
“ Gilmore	“ McCathie
Dr. Noble	“ Power

Resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

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

The House adjourned at 11.36 p.m.