

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 21 OCTOBER 1960**

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) took the chair at 11 a.m.

**QUESTIONS****GUN SALUTES IN BOTANIC GARDENS**

**Mr. DAVIES** (Maryborough), for **Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition), asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

“(1) As he is charged with the protection of our native fauna, will he inquire whether it is a fact that the Brisbane City Council has given permission to the Army authorities to practice gun salutes in the Botanic Gardens, such practice to begin next week?”

"(2) If such permission has been given, will he undertake to move for a direction to be given by the Government to their trustees, the Brisbane City Council, to withdraw such permit, the exercise of which would drive away the bird life in the Gardens sanctuary so carefully propagated and protected by the Gardens staff?"

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—

"(1) I am not aware that the Brisbane City Council has given permission to the Army authorities to practise gun salutes in the Botanic Gardens."

"(2) Naval gun and rocketry practice has been conducted regularly closely adjacent to a Queensland coastal island sanctuary, and my expert Fauna Officers assure me that this has had no adverse long term effect upon native bird populations."

#### DECLARATION OF DROUGHT-STRICKEN AREA, SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE

**Mr. GAVEN** (South Coast) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In view of the continuing drought conditions existing in the Electorate of South Coast, will he give consideration to declaring drought-stricken the area from Ernest Junction to Coolangatta?"

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

"The necessary enquiries have been put in hand, and subject to its being proven that it is drought stricken the area will immediately be declared and the 50 per cent. concession in freight rates on fodder consigned to stock owners for starving stock will apply."

#### ALTERATIONS TO GOVERNMENT GARAGE, GEORGE STREET

**Mr. HANLON** (Baroona) asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

"(1) What is the nature of alterations currently being made to the ground floor of premises at 72-74 George Street, formerly used as a day garage for Ministerial and other Government cars?"

"(2) What is the estimated cost of such alterations when completed?"

"(3) On completion of alterations are the premises to be used by the Government or is it proposed to offer them for private business use as shops and such like?"

"(4) If they are to be available to private enterprise, have tenders been called or will they be called for lease of the premises?"

"(5) If tenders have already been called, have they closed and, if so, what tenders have been received?"

"(6) Has any lease or option yet been arranged for the premises and, if so, who are the prospective lessees and on what terms have such leases or options been arranged?"

**Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY** (Isis—Minister for Education and Migration), for **Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS** (Whitsunday), replied—

"(1) Portion of the ground floor of premises at 72-74 George Street, Brisbane, used for the parking of Ministerial cars, is being remodelled to provide one shop in lieu of two shops now existing at 44 and 60 George Street which are to be demolished. On February 4, 1960, the Executive Council approved of the estimated expenditure required to carry out the work. Shopping facilities for luncheons and small purchases are necessary in the area in the interests of the many Public Servants and workers generally who are employed in the area, and it was considered inadvisable to take away this amenity by demolishing the existing shops without providing alternative accommodation."

"(2) £5,165."

"(3) On completion of the alterations the remodelled section of the premises are to be leased for private business."

"(4) Tenders for the lease of the premises have not and will not be invited."

"(5) See (4)."

"(6) The tenants of the shops to be demolished, Messrs. E. & G. Margaritis and Mr. R. Carter, advised on April 1, 1960, that they desired to form a partnership to conduct the new shop and requested that they be accepted as tenants. This matter was raised at a Cabinet meeting on April 5, 1960, by the then Minister for Public Works and Local Government, and it was agreed that the new shop be made available to the partnership of Messrs. R. Carter and E. and G. Margaritis on a leasehold rental basis to be assessed by the Public Curator for a term of five (5) years with option to extend. Rental of £22 per week was assessed by the Public Curator, and as this rental was acceptable to Messrs. Carter and Margaritis, the Public Curator was asked to prepare the necessary lease."

#### INVESTIGATION OF PEACHES AND APPLES DEVELOPED BY MR. HENRY FRANKLIN

**Hon. P. J. R. HILTON** (Carnarvon) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

"(1) With reference to his answer to my question on October 19 regarding new types of peaches and apples developed by Mr. Henry Franklin at Pozieres, Stanthorpe district, will he arrange for the Granite Belt Advisory Committee, mentioned in his reply, to make a complete report on the new types of fruit trees referred to during the approaching fruit season?"

"(2) Has any work in the development of new types of deciduous fruit trees been carried out by officers of his Department? If so, will he give details thereof or indicate any publication in which such information may be obtained?"

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—

(1) "Arrangements will be made to draw to the attention of the Granite Belt Advisory Committee the desirability of obtaining a report during the approaching fruit season on the new types of fruit trees referred to."

(2) "Improvement work on deciduous fruits conducted by this Department has been concerned with phylloxera-resistant rootstocks for grapes, and the testing and encouragement of the use of gnarl-free propagating material for the Gravenstein apple. (Gnarl is a virus disease affecting the stem and branches of the tree.) Both of these measures will greatly improve the crops concerned. Major work for the improvement of apples and pears has been done by C.S.I.R.O. at Applethorpe, and this has been very considerable over the past twenty-five years or more. The actual breeding of new varieties of deciduous fruits has not been undertaken by this Department, and as far as I can ascertain, very little serious breeding of these fruits has been done by any Australian State Department of Agriculture. There has been very little call for such work which would be long and costly. Numerous varieties of all the deciduous fruit types have been grown at Stanthorpe over a long period, and the standard varieties now in use are the result of long-term practical trial by growers. As no new deciduous fruit varieties have been produced by this Department, no publication has been made."

MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE PRODUCTS IN TOWNSVILLE

**Mr. DAVIES** (Maryborough), for **Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North), asked the Acting Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"As all the basic requirements for prestressed concrete products are available in Townsville with the exception of the stressing equipment, will he give serious consideration to setting up in that City under the auspices of the Main Roads Department casting and stressing beds for prestressed concrete girders and deck slabs with a view to: (a) creating a new industry and providing employment and (b) meeting the requirements of the Main Roads Commission, Railway Department and Local Governments in North Queensland for this acknowledged form of construction without the attendant high-freight rates now obtaining when it is hauled from from the South?"

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—

"As the manufacture of prestressed concrete girders and deck units is a highly specialised process, and as there are already several Companies manufacturing concrete products already operating in this field in South Queensland, it is considered that the Main Roads Department which is already short of technical staff should not enter into competition in this field, but should rather encourage Companies already established in North Queensland to manufacture these products. With this end in view, a Conference has already been held between representatives of the North Queensland Local Government Engineers' and Overseers' Association and Engineers of the Main Roads Department at which it was decided to explore the possibility of arriving at a basis for co-ordinating the design specifications and amalgamating the requirements of both organisations so that the combined demand for prestressed concrete products in North Queensland would encourage manufacture there by the present established Companies."

MEALS FOR CONDUCTORS AND TRAIN STAFFS IN DINING CARS

**Mr. DAVIES** (Maryborough), for **Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North), asked the Minister for Transport—

"Is he prepared to allow passenger train conductors and train staff to obtain a hot meal from the dining car at a reduced rate in view of the fact that these men spend a tremendous amount of time away from home with consequent 'sketchy' meals and that no matter how efficiently the dining car is run there must of necessity be a certain amount of food wasted?"

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

"It is not considered desirable to make any departure from the existing practice. Train Conductors and Train Staff are provided with fully equipped quarters and kitchens at places where they are required to rest when working trains which take them away from their home depots."

RAIL CONCESSION FARES FOR PENSIONERS

**Mr. DAVIES** (Maryborough), for **Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North), asked the Minister for Transport—

"As it was the practice of numbers of Pensioners travelling from Home Hill and Ayr to Townsville to purchase a concession rate ticket to Partington and then purchase a full-rate ticket to Townsville, and as this practice has now been upset and the full rate is demanded from these elderly people for the whole journey, what action does he propose to take to see that these pensioners get the full benefit of the 50-mile rail fare concession rate for Age Pensioners?"

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

"The concession is not available for a journey in excess of 50 miles from the station nominated as that from which the concession is to apply. This was clearly stated when the decision to grant the concession was announced and is clearly stated on the pensioner's authority card. It is regretted that an extension of the concession beyond 50 miles cannot be granted at the present time."

#### ACCIDENT INSURANCE FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"Has his attention been drawn to the article appearing in 'The Courier-Mail' of October 20 wherein legal opinion expressed doubts that he was familiar with the Act relating to the entitlement of Parliamentarians to Workers' Compensation? If so, is that opinion correct or not?"

**Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Chatsworth) replied—

"I have the most explicit advice of learned counsel that a Minister of the Crown is not a worker within the defined meaning of that term under the Workers' Compensation Acts. I also have the most explicit advice of the Solicitor-General that a Member of Parliament is not a worker within the defined meaning of that term under the Workers' Compensation Acts. For those Members who are interested in the legal aspects of this matter, I am prepared to make available for perusal a copy of the Opinion of the Senior Counsel and of the Solicitor-General. Now I do not think that this important subject should be dismissed by the quotations which deny present legal authority. This is a matter of interest and concern to all Members of Parliament. Should steps be taken to extend Workers' Compensation benefits to Members of Parliament? On reflection, I do not regard Workers' Compensation as the ideal approach. Members of Parliament do not and must not undertake their duties in any settled place, at any determined hours, or in any determinable manner. Neither is a Member of Parliament subject to any supervision or control or, may I say, direction in the exercise of his duties. Nor should he be. To do so would destroy the whole essential qualities of public representation which are the greatest possible freedom of the Member and his final responsibility to his electors. It is neither practical nor desirable to apply Workers' Compensation to Members of Parliament. No Member should be put in the position of having to account for his detailed movements to establish that he was, in fact, engaged in his duties as a Member. In turn, the normal requirement of an employer's report is utterly unworkable with Members of Parliament. If the need is to be met, the answer must be sought in some form of a general accident insurance—one in

which the cover is related to all accidents and not merely to injury sustained by an employee in the course of, or when proceeding to or from employment. I am examining this possibility."

**Mr. WALSH** (Bundaberg), without notice, asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"Arising out of the Treasurer's reply to the question asked by the Honourable Member for Salisbury—is he in possession of any legal advice from the Crown Law Office or from senior counsel at the Bar as to whether Ministers of the Crown, as Ministers, are entitled to Workers' Compensation as distinct from their position as members of Parliament?"

**Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Chatsworth) replied—

"I have already drawn attention to the extent to which attempts are being made to introduce the practice of asking supplemental questions, but, as the question asked by the Honourable Member was answered in the reply that I gave and as apparently he did not listen very carefully, I suggest that he read the reply more carefully. He will then be wiser."

#### RAILWAY REVENUE FROM BEEF CATTLE, MT. ISA

**Mr. DAVIES** (Maryborough), for **Mr. INCH** (Burke), asked the Minister for Transport—

"What is the amount of revenue received by the Department from the trucking of beef cattle through the trucking yards at Mt. Isa during this season?"

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

"The freight charges on cattle trucked from Mt. Isa for the five months ended September, 1960, amounted to £144,459."

#### CONSTRUCTION OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION BLOCK AT MT. ISA

**Mr. DAVIES** (Maryborough), for **Mr. INCH** (Burke), asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"Is it the intention of the Department to construct a technical block at Mt. Isa? If so, would not the Mt. Isa High School be the most appropriate place?"

**Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY** (Isis) replied—

"A workshop block is included in the 1960-1961 building programme. Yes, that's where it is intended to build it."

#### COST OF CONCESSIONAL FREIGHTS AND FARES GRANTED BY RAILWAY DEPARTMENT, 1960

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) What was the grand monetary total of all concessions in freights and fares granted by the Railway Department for the year ended June 30, 1960?"

"(2) Does the Railway Department bear the full burden of these concessions and, if not, to what extent?"

"(3) If the concessions are borne wholly or in part by the Railway Department, does he consider that it would be more equitable if the burden were shared by the various Government departments, which benefit from the concessions, or that, as an alternative, it be a charge against the Consolidated Revenue Fund?"

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

"(1, 2, and 3) A record is not compiled as to the grand monetary total of all concessions in freight rates and fares granted by the Railway Department, but my personal knowledge permits me to say that such are very substantial. In most cases the Department bears the full burden of the concessions, but there are some cases where debits are made against other Departments, and where such do occur the circumstances under which the concessions are granted are taken into consideration. Where concessions are granted for the purpose of enabling the Railway Department to secure business which would otherwise be lost to some other form of transport, then such could not justifiably be debited to another Department. However, if the Railway Department is to show a true financial result in relation to its actual operations and the services it renders to many industries, then I agree with the Honourable Member's proposal that where such services are rendered at a loss to the Department for the purpose of helping the community or an industry to survive the Department should be recompensed for such loss from consolidated revenue."

#### SURGICAL AUDIT SCHEME

**Mr. COBURN** (Burdekin), for **Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South), asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) Is he aware that in an article published in 'The Sunday Mail' of June 19, headed 'Unnecessary Operations Suspected—State to check on work of surgeon,' he is reported as saying—'The British Medical Association had agreed to the scheme in principle' and 'the system of medical audit probably would be linked with the teaching of medical students in Brisbane hospitals?'"

"(2) If he has been correctly reported, what other inference can the people draw than that they will be protected by the Government from unscrupulous doctors only if the British Medical Association agrees?"

"(3) Did he say, as reported in the article—'Government authorities for a long time have suspected certain doctors in

Brisbane of doing unnecessary operations' and 'one doctor under suspicion is reported to have reduced his number of operations by 75 per centum?'"

"(4) If he has been correctly reported, (a) has any action been taken or is contemplated against the doctor mentioned or any other doctor and (b) is any doctor or are any doctors outside Brisbane under suspicion for performing unnecessary operations? If so, who are they and, if not, why not?"

"(5) Is Dr. Little, president of the British Medical Association, reported to have said in the same article—'Surgical audit is carried out extensively in American hospitals and there was a drop in surgery where it was introduced?'"

"(6) As it is obvious that as hospital surgeons, who have no financial interest in the operations they perform, would operate only if they honestly considered such were necessary, and his reported remarks must therefore apply to private practitioners using hospital operating theatres, what steps have been taken to prevent the use of these public facilities being exploited by the type of surgeon to whom the article refers?"

**Hon. H. W. NOBLE** (Yeronga) replied—

"(1 to 6) 'A serious shortage of trained pathologists has existed in all Australian hospitals. Active steps are being taken to overcome this, but at the present time the additional load imposed by a surgical audit by pathologists could not be carried by the existing staff. So far as is known at the present time there are no unethical practices as far as surgery is concerned.'"

#### CONSTRUCTION OF BITUMEN ROAD FROM ROCKY POINT TO DAINTREE

**Mr. ADAIR** (Cook) asked the Acting Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"Owing to the bad condition of the main road from Rocky Point to Daintree and the importance of this section of road for the transport of cane, timber and cattle, will he have the Main Roads Department carry out an early inspection of this section with a view to the construction of a bitumen-surfaced road?"

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—

"The whole length of this road has been surveyed and officers of the Main Roads Department are well aware of its condition. No funds have been allocated during 1960-1961 for bitumen surfacing between the job now in progress on the Rocky Point section and Daintree, but progressive improvement of this section is envisaged as and when funds can be made available."

CONSTRUCTION OF BITUMEN ROAD FROM  
MT. MOLLOY TO DEVIL DEVIL CREEK

**Mr. ADAIR** (Cook) asked the Acting Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“Is it probable that the construction of a bitumen-surfaced road between Mt. Molloy and Devil Devil Creek will be commenced this financial year? If so, can an approximate commencement date be given?”

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—

“Yes. Possibly about March or April.”

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO  
SEWER DEAGON AND BANYO AREAS

**Mr. MELLOY** (Nudgee) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“Is it possible for the Government to make finance available for the sewerage of such areas as Deagon and Banyo, such as will be made available to the Brisbane City Council for the installation of sewerage and drainage in the State Housing Commission area at Zillmere?”

**Hon. T. A. HILEY** (Chatsworth) replied—

“The provision of sewerage is the function of the Local Authority—in this case Brisbane City Council. The matter of allocation of approved loan funds between various sewerage projects is a matter for the Council. Arrangements being made in respect of Zillmere and other Housing Commission Estates are made by the Government as landlord of those Estates. The Government's responsibility as landlord does not go beyond those Estates.”

PAPERS

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

Report of the Public Service Superannuation Board for the year 1959-1960.

Report of the State Children Department for the year 1959-1960.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland Acts, 1952 to 1958.

Regulations under the Electric Light and Power Acts, 1896 to 1958, the Tramways Acts, 1882-1890, and the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1958.

SUPPLY

COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—  
RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

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

Debate resumed from 20 October, 1960 (see p. 882) on Mr. Hiley's motion—

“That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1960-1961, a

sum not exceeding £1,365 to defray the salary of Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.”

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (11.20 a.m.): I do not intend to go into detail or rehash what was said in the debate, but a perusal of the “Hansard” record for the past week would not give a reader any satisfaction or any great pleasure about the workings of democracy in Queensland. We all saw what happened to a man whom we regarded as being possessed of a very strong personality and who has exhibited courage in debate and in his actions throughout his long term in Parliament. We heard him courageously make charges that I honestly believe. Every hon. member who has known him as long as I have—or even for a shorter period—would honestly believe that he made them in all sincerity in the interests of the State in which he was born, and for which he has done his utmost as a good citizen.

We heard him make his charges; we realise all the intrigue there has been in the background. When he made his charges we realised there would be a reaction. We who knew him realised that he had the courage and capacity to stick to his guns and, if necessary, to stand by every statement he made. It was quite evident as the debate developed that he had been subject to influence which, I must confess, puzzles me even now, as it does many other people throughout the State. We saw what we must all regard as the sorry spectacle of this man being humiliated, and confessing to actions that we all firmly believe he would not have been capable of. Anyone who has worked with him would realise that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! If the hon. member is referring to the matter that was the subject of the amendment to the motion, I point out that that debate has been concluded, and cannot be referred to again.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I realise that, and I regret that I have had to go so far in my reference to that subject matter to make my point. I am very much concerned, as every thinking person is concerned, about the way democracy is working in Queensland and, no doubt, in a similar way in other parts of Australia. People are subject to brainwashing and threats—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The debate on that subject has concluded. I ask the hon. member to please deal with the Financial Statement.

**Mr. WALSH:** I rise to a point of order. I should like a clear ruling on this matter. Although I was not here when the amendment was moved I understand that it was to reduce the salary of the Aide-de-Camp by £1. Are you ruling, Mr. Taylor, that any subject matter that was discussed during the debate on the amendment cannot be discussed, not only on this occasion but on any other occasion during this session?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The Committee has already dealt with an amendment to reduce an item in a Vote by £1. The amendment centred around a subject to which the hon. member for Port Curtis is now referring. That subject is no longer a matter for discussion on the Financial Statement and I rule that it cannot be referred to again in this debate.

**Mr. HANLON:** I rise to a point of order. As the actual charges to which the hon. member for Port Curtis is now referring were raised by the hon. member for Fassifern in this debate and not in the debate on the amendment, does your ruling stand? The hon. member for Fassifern did not speak to the amendment.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I have given a ruling and I adhere to that ruling.

**Mr. WALSH:** I rise to a further point of order. I think the principle involved in this matter is important. If, for example, during this session some hon. member moved in the House that a select committee of hon. members be appointed for the purpose of investigating the charges made by the hon. member for Fassifern, would you rule such a motion out of order?

**Mr. Hiley:** Such a matter would not be raised in Committee; it would be raised in the full House.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As the Treasurer has said, if such a question was raised, it would not be raised in Committee, and it would be left to Mr. Speaker to give a ruling at that time.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Fassifern spoke in the debate and then an amendment was moved. Are you ruling that any matter raised by the hon. member for Fassifern in his speech on the Budget cannot be discussed any further?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I have ruled that any subject discussed in the debate on the amendment should not again be referred to. Will the hon. member for Port Curtis please proceed with his speech on the Financial Statement?

**Mr. BURROWS:** I accept your ruling, Mr. Taylor, and apologise if I have breached any of the Standing Orders. It is sufficient for me to say that I have no desire to open the wound inflicted on democracy as a result of the intrigue last week. No matter how many Standing Orders there are, or what we do, I do not think we can do anything to rub out that cursed stain on democracy. It is quite evident to the public, irrespective of their political views, that there is something rotten in this State.

I represent an electorate embracing a primary-producing area and covering a great variety of primary products. In my opinion primary producers in Queensland look for-

ward to better treatment from the Government of which a majority of the members represent country electorates, being members of the so-called Country Party. Those primary producers must be very disappointed and disillusioned today.

During the past three years virtually every primary-producing industry has suffered directly as a result of a fall in prices. They have been the victims of inflation, higher taxation and higher Government charges generally. Land valuations have reached astronomical heights. This matter was roundly condemned by Government members when they were in Opposition. Rail freights have been savagely increased and everything possible has been done to force primary producers into the growing army of job hunters. Hon. members representing country districts will confirm my next statement. If a local council is authorised to carry out a main roads job and wants a few men for the work, it is found that the men who seek the jobs are not those who usually do such work but the unfortunate farmers who are in debt to storekeepers and are being pressed by the banks. In desperation they seek main roads work or a relaying job on the railway, or some other job in their district in which normally they would not be interested.

**Mr. Ewan:** And then we hear A.L.P. members speaking about the hungry farmers.

**Mr. BURROWS:** Hon. members have not heard any reference from this side of the Chamber to hungry farmers or the rapacity of farmers. They are genuine workers, and therefore belong to the section of the community in which A.L.P. members are very interested.

**Mr. Ewan:** The hon. member for Nudgee asked for a Royal Commission into the ramifications of the cattle industry.

**Mr. BURROWS:** And so should I. If the hon. member will allow me to proceed he will find that I have a note of that matter and I will deal with it effectively, to the limit of my capacity.

I have already said that rail freights have been increased savagely and that everything possible has been done to force primary producers into the growing army of job hunters. What were once prosperous and solid little country towns are now depressed villages, with storekeepers on the verge of bankruptcy owing to the book debts they carry. I ask any hon. member who represents a country district to deny that statement if he can. Sadly enough, it is only too true. With the possible exception of the cattle industry, it would be almost impossible to find one section of primary production that is not depressed. I do not hear any interjections from Government members in denial of that statement.

Wool growers who a few years ago were the landed aristocracy are now living on credit, fighting a losing battle against falling

prices and rising costs. Through you, Mr. Taylor, I ask the hon. member for Roma if he thinks that is an exaggeration.

**Mr. Ewan:** No, it is true.

**Mr. BURROWS:** It is true, just as it is true that he supports the very people who brought about or contributed largely to this unfortunate state of affairs. The same story applies throughout the length and breadth of the State, but anyone who dares to voice criticism is branded as a communist or a socialist. Some epithet is hurled at him in order to quieten him. If hon. members on this side of the Chamber rise to make a plea for the underdog they are treated in that way. That is particularly so of the Minister for Labour and Industry. His hatred is so intense that it affects his articulation or pronunciation. We often hear him hissing something across the Chamber. We have become so used to it that we know when we hear his hiss that he is saying something like "Communist" or "Socialist." That is the only answer. The only resort for some men who are defeated in an argument is abuse, and that is all we have ever heard from the Minister for Labour and Industry in reply to the substantial and logical arguments we have put forward. As a member of the Opposition I am certain that while the A.L.P. are in Opposition they intend to be the Opposition and to take full responsibility for it. They will not be threatened, cajoled or brain-washed. I invite the Government to look at any of our cupboards. If there are any skeletons there we will not be afraid to have them brought out. There are no locks on the doors. We will not have to ring Mr. Holt and ask him if Jim Burrow's name is mentioned in that dossier.

The Government cannot show one solitary instance of any substantial benefit they have bestowed on any primary industry in this State. On the other hand, there is abundant evidence of how they have explored and exploited every possible avenue in their efforts to extort money from the section of the community that forms the backbone of our economy. We often hear criticism of these people from hon. members on the Government side. They are the very men who are supposed to defend them, yet they are making it very difficult for them to continue in their commendable occupation. The former Minister for Public Lands said it was no longer a genuine Country Party.

Let me quote from the Treasurer's Financial Statement a few examples of how inconsiderate the Government have been to the public and industry generally. The Government and the Premier promised to abolish land tax but last year it yielded £160,000 more than in the previous year. Is that correct, Mr. Treasurer?

**Mr. Hiley:** From half the number of taxpayers. We do not sweat the small man like you did.

**Mr. BURROWS:** If the Minister wants to raise the point, the people who were regarded by Labour Governments as "small" men have now, because of inflation, and measuring them by an inflated yardstick, become the "large" men. If we consider the depreciated value of the £1, for which this Government and their parties here and in the Federal sphere are 95 per cent. responsible, we will find that they are extorting just as much through land tax as we did. Incidentally, we did not, as the Government did, promise to abolish it.

**Mr. Hiley:** We promised to reduce it progressively, and we are doing that.

**Mr. BURROWS:** The Minister said the Government promised to progressively reduce, and finally eliminate, land tax. If these figures show the result of that progressive reduction, I should say that instead of losing weight, I must be heavier than the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry. We have heard a great deal of professed sympathy about succession and probate duty but the Treasurer gathered in a couple of million pounds more from that avenue. Stamp duty and succession and probate duties rose by over £1,000,000.

Ultimately all our wealth comes from the land so who must pay for those increases in the long run but the primary producer? As I pointed out earlier, the primary producer cannot pass on his costs as manufacturing and other secondary industry do, so he is becoming poorer and poorer every day. He has to work longer hours, and he has already exploited every other avenue open to him in an attempt to meet the position. Nearly every primary producer in Queensland today is on the verge of bankruptcy.

**Mr. Hiley:** If the primary producer is becoming poorer and poorer every day, how is it that his estates are becoming bigger and bigger every day so he pays more death duty?

**Mr. BURROWS:** It is the Treasurer who is making him poorer and poorer by extorting money from him. The Treasurer is like the man who killed the goose that laid the golden egg. A few more years of this and the primary producer will be forced out. If the Government fail to realise the fallacy and the foolishness of their policy and persevere with it, they will have all the people starving in Brisbane and nobody on the farms to produce food for their subsistence. The Treasurer has completely ignored that; he has shown complete contempt and no realism in the matter.

**Mr. Hiley:** If I accepted your advice and reduced stamp duty and other collections by £1,000,000 or £1,500,000, whatever it is you want, which services should be reduced?

**Mr. Hughes:** Education?

**Mr. Baxter:** Free hospitalisation would be the first to go.

**Mr. Hiley:** Is that what you are advocating? Do you agree with the hon. member who suggests we should eliminate free hospitalisation?

**Honourable Members** interjected.

The **CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BURROWS:** I do not know whether we are taking time off, Mr. Taylor, as they do in football matches. I am waiting on the side-lines, but I am ready to continue.

The **CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BURROWS:** The Treasurer has asked which services I suggest he should reduce if he abolished some of the taxation he has imposed. We must have revenue, but why did he impose the additional stamp tax on the sale of leaseholds? I admit it is necessary to have money to maintain public services, but why did he not tax the transactions on the Stock Exchange, through which the "city slickers" have been making millions in the last 12 months or so? Why did he so savagely attack the poor unfortunate man who sold a perpetual lease that he had been farming for some years? I have not a copy of the Financial Statement with me, but hon. members will appreciate that if the figures were examined they would disclose that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been collected from the sale of those leases. But the speculators, who sit in easy chairs at the Stock Exchange or at home and ring their stockbrokers, can make thousands of pounds. Hundreds of people in this city have done that, and they have not paid one penny in tax. There are many ways in which revenue could be increased without picking on the unfortunate primary producer; but because this Government are absolutely dominated by what we refer to as the Queen Street influence, the city slicker is immune and the primary producer is an easy victim for any of these impositions. As I told the Treasurer before he left the Chamber, he is going to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. There is nothing more certain than that.

**Mr. Ewan:** Will you deny that the Labour Party consistently advocated a tax on leasehold?

**Mr. BURROWS:** You read "Queensland Country Life" and see—

The **CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member should address the Chair.

**Mr. Ewan:** Don't deny that they consistently advocated it.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I hope you will at least give me credit for the fact that when I rise to speak about half a dozen other hon. members make a speech with me, Mr. Taylor.

The **CHAIRMAN:** Order! As the hon. member has complained of the interjections, I sincerely hope that hon. members on my

right will not interject again and will allow the hon. member to proceed without interruption.

**Mr. BURROWS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Taylor. I did not actually complain about the interjections. What I do deplore is the ignorance of hon. members opposite.

Receipts for services rendered increased by £250,000, and every department, with the exception of the Railway Department, raised its contribution to the Consolidated Revenue Account of the State. Most of this large increase in receipts by the Treasury came directly from primary production during a year when incomes were depressed as a result of reduced prices for commodities or products of the land and when the cost of every commodity or article used in production showed a sharp rise.

That is a point of which any sensible and statesmanlike Government should take notice, because we cannot keep on producing at a fixed price while the price of fertiliser, implements, and every other article used by the primary producer, is being increased. One needs nothing more than a third-grade education to know that if it costs £5 to produce an article, you cannot continue to sell it for £4. I am sorry that the Treasurer has left the Chamber, because I particularly wanted to make that point. I do not think it can be over-emphasised, because it seems that the Government have completely ignored that aspect of the economy.

The recent savage increase in rail freights has hit the producer, and transport to the market of his products in many cases represents a major proportion of his gross receipts. If one goes into the details of farmers' costs, one finds that, unfortunately, that is correct.

Recently I inquired into the economics of growing papaws in my electorate. In the Port Curtis electorate, there is a small area near Yarwun that nature, for some reason or other, has made particularly suitable for growing well-flavoured papaws. Perhaps our agricultural experts could tell us the reason, but that is the fact. For the purposes of this debate, I just want to say that the papaws from Yarwun have a reputation for being very palatable and attractive. For many years farmers in the area have earned a living by growing papaws with a few other sidelines. But they have reached the stage where costs are exceeding receipts. They are hard-working, intelligent men who have the right approach to the problems affecting both them and the State generally. They held a meeting at which I attended. I learned that one-third of their gross receipts was spent in transporting their fruit from farm to market.

**Mr. Ewan:** Rail or road transport?

**Mr. BURROWS:** They have to cart from their farms to the rail head. The main cost is from the rail head at Yarwun to Brisbane. It was costing them £7-odd a ton, but with the 20 per cent. increase it is now £8-odd a

ton. For delivery in Brisbane they are paid £32 10s. a ton for first-grade fruit; for really choice fruit they receive £37 10s. a ton. Apart from transport costs they have all the costs on their farms—cases, packing, fertiliser, together with cartage costs to the farms. They would not get much over 1d. a lb. for their papaws. This year very few farmers will replant. At least 100 farmers will have to turn to something else. A few years ago a railway quarry was opened up in the district, and the ganger is always being asked by farmers for a job. That is only one indication of the drift. Let us forget politics and get down to a commonsense approach. We have enough country members here to be able to say, "We are sick of being the wood-and-water-joeys for the 'Queen Street-ites'. We don't want to be completely dominated by men who have never had any practical experience, men who are concerned only about what won the last race or who won the Miss Queensland competition." Many of them are concerned only about whether Mt. Isa or Broken Hill shares have gone up 1s. I am dealing with the real problems that are besetting us. I have endeavoured to compile some useful information to lay before the Committee.

Unfortunately throughout the State, stock-owners are being forced to buy fodder to keep their stock alive. The present drought is probably one of the most wide-spread the State has ever experienced. In previous droughts usually one or more portions of the State have been favoured, but on this occasion the drought seems to be afflicting the entire State. It has become almost a tradition that every time the State experiences a drought, if a man can get his bank to advance him money to buy feed for his starving stock, the Government grant him a concession on the railways. That is all right. My quarrel with the Government is that they boast of what they have done, but when I approached the Premier for some relief at least three or four weeks ago, I got nothing. I have 14 cows and a creamy pony. I bought a bag of feed for them. The freight represented most of the cost. Most people who intended to hand feed bought their supplies early. Then the Government belatedly makes freight concessions. It is like putting 1s. in a man's pocket to buy him a drink after he has died of thirst. Such action should never be taken belatedly.

**A Government Member:** The drought has not broken yet.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I admit that you cannot start too early to do something towards retaining the condition that a beast already has. You should not wait until it gets down before you start feeding it. Even I, with my limited experience, know that. If you wait until the beast is down, it takes 10 times as much feed and 20 times as much labour to build its weight up again.

However, the Government made inquiries and eventually were satisfied that a drought existed. Of course, the controllers of this Government never go out of Queen Street and they would not know.

**Mr. Armstrong:** The other day you said that the Minister for Labour and Industry was never in Brisbane; now you say he is never out of Queen Street.

**Mr. BURROWS:** It is all right for the Minister for Labour and Industry. He thinks because it was raining in Japan when he was there it was raining in Queensland too. He gets on an aeroplane at Eagle Farm and flies so high that he would not know whether it was raining or not. I have no quarrel with Mr. Morris in going overseas; my quarrel is with his coming back. If he wants to help Queensland he should go to the South Pole and stay there.

Admittedly, the cattle industry is now enjoying top prices but that is characteristic of the cycle of rises and falls in prices to which this industry in particular is subject. In the early 50's cattle men were in the same position as the wool-growers are today. An economist claims that prices for wool will decline over the next three years. The Government are trying to attach themselves to the only prosperous primary-producing industry today and all their attention at the moment is centred on the cattle industry. They are opening areas for cattle fattening that, as the hon. member for Fassifern said the other day, could be more profitably used for other purposes. They are offering that land now to the cattle industry. They want to get on the band wagon because, at the moment, the cattle industry is enjoying high prices.

The point I wish to make—and which I will make as I go on—is that the time to help any industry is not while it is prosperous; help it when it is down. When I have a fiver in my pocket I do not appreciate somebody giving me 10s. but, when I have nothing in my pocket and someone gives me 10s. I feel that he has given me £100.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Don't you think that, with high beef prices overseas, the Government are doing the right thing in increasing beef production?

**Mr. BURROWS:** The Government are adopting the wrong attitude. They have reduced primary industries generally to the position they are in today.

**Mr. Ewan:** Do you think we should get more for our wool?

**Mr. BURROWS:** The hon. member for Roma has asked me whether we should do something for the wool industry. I say that we should; that now is the time to help the wool industry. We should not wait for prices to go up to the level of a few years ago before we think of giving benefits or relief. When prices are high and an industry is prosperous we should insist that the wool-grower or the primary producer in the industry should plough back a big proportion of his profits.

The hon. member for Roma will forgive me for recalling an incident that happened

some years ago. I met him at the Brisbane Show. It was shortly after he entered Parliament. Wool prices were high at the time. We saw a grazier who had just bought a very flash motor-car. It was not a Rolls Royce, but it was one of the best cars in the Show. The hon. member for Roma knew the grazier. We were both standing there wishing, I suppose, that we could have bought the car, and I said to the hon. member for Roma, "This fellow must have a few pounds." He said, "Jim, he has bought that car, but if you went to his property you would find that he has not a decent shed to put it in." Some graziers were going to Surfers Paradise and playing up their money instead of building dams and otherwise improving their properties so that they would be able to tide themselves over times of poor prices.

**Mr. Mann:** Surely they did not all do that.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I do not say it is characteristic of all graziers. There are good and bad in all flocks, but some are worse than others. My point is that the Government, in times of prosperity, should take all possible steps to see that those in the industry more or less create a reserve against bad times. The history of all primary industries reveals cycles of high or reasonable prices and periods of depression. A Government should help an industry in times of depression and tax it when it is prosperous.

**Mr. Armstrong:** You would not suggest that the Government should tell a grazier when he should go for a holiday or buy a motor-car.

**Mr. BURROWS:** No.

**Mr. Sullivan:** That is what is being done in Russia. We do not want that in a democratic country.

**Mr. BURROWS:** Far from it, but many of the Government's actions are similar to some that we read about in Russia—for instance, their brainwashing of the hon. member for Fassfern recently. I am glad the hon. member reminded me of that.

**Mr. Ewan:** What do you think of a reserve price?

**Mr. BURROWS:** The hon. member has asked me what I think of something. For his own benefit, I ask him not to ask me what I think of him. Perhaps I should not have said that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Will the hon. member please proceed with his speech.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I want to proceed with it as much as you want me to, Mr. Taylor.

The Government are trying to associate themselves with the cattle industry because of the temporary or periodic prosperity of the industry, and in that way they are making a mistake. Unless the land that they

intend to open in the North, which has never been used for cattle-growing, is developed, and the economics are thoroughly examined, I should say that certain people will enthusiastically undertake beef production, but during a cycle of low prices they will be just as eager to get off their properties. They will have a big debt over their heads, and the situation will be the same as it has been with some soldier settlements and other land settlement schemes in the history of Queensland. If hon. members go back a few years they will find that almost all industries have price cycles, and the greatest blunder we can make is to believe that high prices will last indefinitely. The wool industry has been mentioned, but the pineapple, butter and peanut industries, and even the highly-organised sugar industry, have all left lamenting those who bought in at the peak. I have no wish to be pessimistic, but I am firmly convinced—again history should guide us—that if we have two or three good seasons we shall see a big decline in cattle prices.

I make the point again that the Government have a tendency to cash in on an industry that is currently enjoying prosperity, and to neglect those that really need assistance. Graingrowers have been working on narrow margins for some time, notwithstanding a guaranteed price, and it was not surprising to read over the last few days of the concern that the wheatgrowers are expressing at the increase in rail freights.

I now wish to make what I believe are a few constructive suggestions that will benefit every primary producer. In the ultimate that benefit will be shared by all, including the "city slicker" and the Stock Exchange investor. As I said before, all our wealth comes from the land, and if we look after the land we automatically look after the whole of the State. Firstly, I believe that rail freights, instead of being increased, should be reduced. I will forgive hon. members if they say that was an unconsidered statement, or the statement of a scatterbrain. However, if they go into the matter they will find there is a lot of merit in it. We will all concede that every member of this Assembly gives much thought and consideration to the economy of the State and matters affecting the State generally, and are very concerned about what may happen if we do not take cognisance of the possible consequences of neglect or disregard of these matters.

I do not wish to develop an argument on that feature of the State's finances. The Treasurer will say, "How are we going to overcome the heavy loss in the Railway Department?" There will be a more appropriate time to refer to the heavy losses in that department, but I am firmly convinced that increasing freights will not relieve the Railway Department of its financial troubles. On the contrary, I believe it will only aggravate the position by developing passive

resentment that is referred to generally as buyer resistance. If we continue to put up the cost of any article, the consumer will continuously explore every avenue to see if he can avoid using it.

**Mr. Armstrong:** Unfortunately we are in the same position as the primary producers. Their costs have risen so much in the last three or four years.

**Mr. BURROWS:** Their costs have risen and in my opinion they are a cause for great concern.

For some years the Railway Department has adopted a take-it-or-leave-it attitude. It is time it was realised that the railways are not the only means of transport.

**Mr. Armstrong:** I think you will admit that over the last few years a better service has been given to the public.

**Mr. BURROWS:** The hon. member exhibits a little intelligence one minute and then tears away the good impression he has made. I wanted to approach this matter impartially and from a Queensland point of view. But if he wants to come in with a little snide propaganda every now and again, or to give someone a kick while he is not looking, we will mix it that way with him, too. But let us be big about this. He is only a young hon. member and he will find that if he wants to stay here it will pay him to play the game.

**Mr. Armstrong:** You will not shout me down.

**Mr. BURROWS:** If he plays the game he will be here in 14 or 15 years' time. It is not the big mistakes that Governments or politicians make that destroy them; it is the mean and the miserable and, to use the parlance of the average man, the lousy little things.

I repeat that for some years now the department has adopted a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude and as soon as it shows a heavy loss its administrators take the line of least resistance and increase freights and fares. If any hon. member disagrees with my contention, let me ask him, "How long would the big chain stores or the big department stores last if they conducted their business on the same lines as the railways?" When the business of a chain store or a departmental store falls off, they do not increase their prices; they reduce them and so they keep going, and they retrieve their position. The Railways would do well to consider adopting that course. If they reduce their charges and improve their services, they will find that there is plenty of use for the Queensland Railways for hundreds of years to come.

Secondly, I rate water conservation as something we are quick to forget when it is raining but regret in times like the present. We remember our umbrellas when it is raining but on dry days we do not think of them lying in some cupboard or standing

in an umbrella rack. We adopt the same attitude towards droughts. In my opinion, water conservation should be a first consideration with any Queensland Government. Hon. members would do well to visit some of the country areas. Only the week before last I visited the Monto district—I had not been there for a few years—and I was very happy to see the progress that has been made there with irrigation. I saw men who were getting higher yields from their cows in the middle of the drought than they would otherwise have got in the flush of the season. They had paddocks of irrigated lucerne and they grazed their cows by the use of electric fences. I thought to myself, "Why didn't someone discover this years ago?" and I had to pay tribute to men like Mr. Theodore, who envisaged such things when they made those plans available and opened up the Upper Burnett and Dawson Valley schemes.

**Mr. Hewitt:** Do you say the Dawson Valley scheme has been a success?

**Mr. BURROWS:** Yes, definitely, and the day will come when the Dawson Valley will be capable of feeding the whole of Australia. If Mr. Theodore had been allowed to proceed with the Nathan Gorge scheme, instead of being stopped by Sir Edward Macartney and the Queen Street delegation that went to London, Queensland would definitely have had a greater population today than any other State in the Commonwealth. In spite of his distress and the tense atmosphere in which he spoke, it was pleasing to hear the former Minister for Public Lands express his concern about the big slash that had been made by the Government in the Vote for Irrigation this year.

**Mr. Mann:** That is why they threw him out.

**Mr. BURROWS:** I shall not make any reference to why he was sacked, but I entirely agree with his views, and it is regrettable that his advice should have been treated with so little respect.

The destruction of noogoora burr was mentioned by the hon. member for Logan, who is a member of the Pest Destruction Board. An insect has been discovered to attack this burr, and it is believed that it will be just as effective as the cactoblastis was against the prickly pear. However, for some reason the Federal Government will not allow it to be released.

The hon. member for Mackenzie will confirm that tens of thousands of acres of our best grazing lands are so heavily infested with noogoora burr in the Dawson Valley and other parts of the State as to be almost useless. If we could get an insect to do nearly as good a job as the cactoblastis did, it would make up for the 10 years of bad government that the State is experiencing. I believe that the Premier should ask firmly for the release of the insect in the interests of Queensland.

There are many dip mixtures, and so on, that could be of great assistance to farmers if a more careful watch was kept on the manufacturers and the middlemen who handle them, to see that prices were not exorbitant. Those matters are all worth investigating, because they add greatly to the cost of primary production.

Time will not permit me to enumerate all the recommendations that I have prepared, but I believe that serious consideration should be given to these problems generally. Even if we have to sit in this Chamber till Christmas Eve, Parliament should not go into recess until we have made some progress and reached some understanding on them. I think hon. members on both sides of the Chamber are capable of making a worthwhile contribution if given the opportunity. We should realise that if we only fight and score off one another, as unfortunately we have done too much already this session, Queensland will go backwards all the time. We should try to be statesmen and do something worth while, not continually be half-smarties, trying to score off each other. We only make fools of ourselves. "Let common sense prevail" is the note on which I conclude.

I ask members of the Country Party to assert their rights. They are the bigger of the two parties forming the Government, and they represent the more important section of the community, in my opinion, and it hurts me more than it hurts anybody else to see this domination of the Country Party by the city slickers.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. WHARTON** (Burnett) (12.20 p.m.): It is my pleasure to participate in the Budget debate. I congratulate the Treasurer on the excellent presentation of his Financial Statement. I should say that his job is the most unenviable in Parliament. That applies to Treasurers in both Federal and State Parliaments. Whether it is Sir Arthur Fadden or any other Treasurer, past or present, he has an objectionable task as a tax-gatherer. It is a thankless job. I am sure hon. members on both sides realise the difficult position in which the Treasurer finds himself. From my experience our Treasurer is a clear and precise thinker, a characteristic that is depicted throughout the Financial Statement. His statements are very much to the point. The Financial Statement is a factual document relating to the problems of today wherein the Treasurer demonstrates his ability to tell today's story today.

Even before the Treasurer made his speech I was somewhat amazed to hear hon. members opposite say, "This will be a sad story." In my short term in Parliament I have noticed that many sad stories come from the other side of the Chamber. When one listens to the hon. member for Maryborough, for instance, not only is it a sad story but it is also "horrible."

I do not mind if Opposition members criticise anything they think is right, but at least they should first listen to what is said, and give credit where credit is due. Admittedly there are some exceptions but I notice a great deal of pessimism amongst hon. members on the other side. The Leader of the Opposition said that he would co-operate with the Treasurer in an endeavour to solve some of the State's financial problems. I hope to hear more hon. members opposite criticise what they think is wrong, but let them appreciate what we do to benefit the whole State. The Treasurer has endeavoured to get somewhere near a balanced Budget but I fear that the drought will adversely affect his figures. The drought has already had an extensive effect on the Government's spending this financial year. Even since the introduction of the Budget rail freight rebates have been granted to primary producers. On behalf of those who are benefiting by the 50 per cent. rebate on fodder for drought relief I say "Thank you." The concession is very much appreciated by them. Hon. members opposite are critical of the Government for their drought relief and freight rebates. I am sure that railway workers appreciate it, as well as those who directly benefit. Because of freight rebates more fodder will be carried on the railways, which in turn will create full employment. That is all to the good of the department.

I should like to make some comment on the Financial Statement but only in general terms, because many other hon. members have gone into it in detail and there is nothing worse than being bored with figures.

A glance at the situation will disclose that unemployment figures continued to fall; building activity was at near-record levels; mineral production was remarkably buoyant, and the interest of overseas oil exploration companies augurs well for the intensification of the search for petroleum and natural gas; wool production showed a substantial expansion in quality and value compared with the previous year, whilst tobacco climbed to third place among agricultural crops in the value of its production.

It is very pleasing to me to see the increase in tobacco production, because in my electorate—particularly around Bundaberg and Miriam Vale—there is much interest in tobacco-growing. I believe that that area will one day be the State's top tobacco-producer. It has already shown that it can produce the highest quality leaf in the State which augurs well not only for the industry in general but for the prosperity of the Bundaberg and Burnett areas in particular.

**Mr. Coburn:** Is there irrigation at Miriam Vale?

**Mr. WHARTON:** No, there is no irrigation there but it is used extensively in and around the Bundaberg area.

The Treasurer said that cattle-slaughtering fell below the previous year's level, the

numbers available having been reduced both by drought and the rate of previous killing. The world supply position forced a limitation of sugar production to mill peaks, while seasonal conditions resulted in a reduction in the harvest of winter grain crops, and dairy produce.

There are many pleasing features of the Budget, but I shall not go into them specifically. The hon. member for Port Curtis mentioned land tax. Hon members will be gratified to know that there is to be a reduction in this tax proportionate to the increase in valuations. We all appreciate that such taxes must be levied; it is with much more appreciation that we learn they are to be reduced.

Another pleasing feature relative to taxation is that no new taxes are to be imposed. None of us like taxes although we realise their necessity; but our dislike becomes hate in reference to new taxation.

The main expenditure budgeted for this year has been directed towards education and health. I am sure hon. members will agree that expenditure on education is absolutely necessary as the future of the country depends on the education of our children. Good health is probably the best wish that anyone could extend or receive. If you have good health every opportunity is yours; you will never succeed without it.

One particularly interesting feature of the Financial Statement was the announcement that the Mt. Isa railway rehabilitation scheme would proceed. It is distressing to see any restriction in railway activity, so the implementation of this scheme is particularly welcome. I have heard the opinion expressed that whilst the job is being done the line should be built to Australian-gauge standard. We would then have at least one section of the State conforming with the Australian pattern. That will probably be done eventually, but I point out that in matters of this kind there is nothing worse than having to do a job twice.

It is pleasing to note the building activity on primary and high schools 11 primary schools and 9 high schools together with considerable expenditure on the universities at Townsville and St. Lucia.

The increase in Crown payments to the Public Service Superannuation Fund will please both those who give it and those who receive it. The bulk-sugar loading installation at Mourilyan deserves special mention. I know something about the bulk-loading of sugar because in my electorate there are bulk-sugar loading facilities at Burnett Heads and they contribute substantially to the prosperity of the district.

There is to be a continuation of the work in providing water facilities on stock routes in North-Western Queensland. Hon. members who come from the Far West would realise as I do the value of watering facilities on these routes.

We find in the Budget record provision for local-authority road works financed from Commonwealth Aid, Local Authority Works, Fund. If development is to be progressive we must have good roads or a good system of transport. The achievements of the Government in the building of new highways and roads have been spectacular.

Increased provision is made for farm water supplies, and I commend the Government on this work. I shall refer specifically to water and irrigation later in my speech. The fact that the Vote has been increased to £150,000 in itself indicates the Government's desire to provide water where it is needed most, that is, on the farms.

Further road construction is to be undertaken in the Channel Country. As that matter has been discussed at length, I do not think there is any need for me to deal with it.

I was disappointed in two features of the Budget—the closure of railway lines and the increase in rail freights. For a long time the public have looked on rail services as a facility they could use if they desired, and not use if they wanted to travel or send goods by other means of transport. That sentiment is reflected in the financial position of the railway service. I have always thought that railways were a national undertaking with all of us contributing to the cost and sharing the benefit, but I find that the Commonwealth Government receive the benefit in the form of taxation and the State incurs the loss. For the year under review the loss amounts to £2,500,000 plus interest. It is easy to say we can cover the loss from reserves, but if we have no reserves some action has to be taken to cut the loss, which amounts to 7s. a train-mile. I suppose it can be argued that if we close certain lines the loss will be reduced, but I want to say something about the loss of freight tonnage to the department. I disagree with any sudden decision to close lines in country districts without a close look at the position.

**Mr. Hanlon:** You do not think there was a close look at it by the Treasurer before they were closed?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I think there should be an adjustment of the problems over the whole of the railway system, to be undertaken over a period. If the examination had continued over a long period the picture would have been very clear, but this action was taken quickly. That is what I disagree with.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Did they seek your advice about the line in your district before they brought on this sudden closure?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. Hanlon:** With your experience they should have asked you about it.

**Mr. WHARTON:** I was a new member of the Government. If tonnages are lost to

rail transport with the closure of lines, and those tonnages are handled by road transport, I am sure there is no way that that freight will ever again be handled by the railways. I understand the argument that we will save money by closing certain lines, but the department will lose freight tonnages with closures. I hope in future that aspect will be considered.

Increased tonnages and turnover mean lower costs for the railways. People in the country areas, well away from the capital city, are making a great contribution to the development of the State. Many tons of produce are carried on country branch lines and they contribute appreciably to the annual tonnage carried by the State railway system. I emphatically disagree with the system of debiting branch lines with their share of the overall loss. I have always argued that the large tonnages come from the branch lines to feed the main lines. I am afraid that the book work of the Railway Department does not reflect full credit on these branch lines.

**Mr. Baxter:** Are you suggesting that we should revise the system of railway book-keeping?

**Mr. WHARTON:** Yes.

**Mr. Hanlon:** If they do not come in on the branch lines, they will not come in on the main lines.

**Mr. WHARTON:** That is right.

I agree with the principle that if the railway lines are there they should be used, but no Government can keep a line open just for the "honour of Suffolk". I further agree that, if it is to withstand competition, the railway system must be as efficient as any other system of transport. The great advantage attributed to road transport is its ability to pick up goods at the initial part of the journey, and then deliver them to their final destination without at least two unloadings. That is very important and in transport planning we must make our railway system so efficient that it can compete with road transport. That may be difficult, but we cannot afford to have a little siding here and another one there, when with road transport the driver goes along, picks up the goods, and takes them direct to the delivery point.

I am concerned initially with the development and maintenance of the small communities in the country where the railway yards, the sheds, and the houses where the men and women live, help to make up the community. I want to refer briefly to the Mt. Perry and Morganville lines and the people in those areas. I speak as their representative because this is their only opportunity, through me, to voice their sentiments in this Chamber. I willingly accept the responsibility to voice their sentiments. In the little community of Mt. Perry there are one or two garages, a hotel, a bakery, a store, and the railway

with four or five employees. There is only a small number of people there but they make up a little community. The people went there a long time ago and formed the township. When we take away the things that make up a community we destroy it. That is wrong, because we will never develop the State from Queen Street. I realise that the capital must have available to it all the facilities. The progress and development in the past came from the city and went right up to Cape York. We have to keep it going that way; we cannot have it coming back.

In the early days there was a mine at Mt. Perry and the line that went there was once the second-best payer in Queensland. When it was built the capital cost must have been reasonable compared with present-day costs. It must have paid for itself by now and its capital cost could be very nearly written off. Recently a great deal of money was spent on it. That is one of my criticisms. It seems unwise to spend a lot of money on a line and then close it down. While road transport is quite capable of doing an excellent job on good roads, there are some problems in this area, with its winding roads and hilly terrain, that make it very difficult to transport cattle by road.

The closing of the line means the loss to the community of those people who work in the railways and the cessation of the age-old custom of having goods brought in by rail. I suppose we must accept it as inevitable that the Mt. Perry line will be closed, although there is still time to see if something can be done about it, but I certainly hope that the people will at least be given the benefit of an alternative service by a reasonable road.

I refer next to the Morganvale section and say that of the five lines to be closed the one that was held was to a point to Innis Siding to facilitate the loading of cattle. I appreciate that action by the Minister and I know that the people of the area do, too.

The development of this great State is outwards from Brisbane. Queensland cannot be developed properly by restricting the facilities that foster the development of small communities. Roads and bridges become a new force in the essential and progressive development of the State. I have always argued in favour of decentralisation—I know it is Government policy—and I hope that, through it, we will see the extension of those little communities rather than the reverse.

I realise that increased freights are inevitable. We cannot afford to make continual losses without drawing on reserves. However, I suggest that transport facilities should be planned and that roads and road transport should, with the railways, be an integral part of the transport system. I am concerned about the past, but I am hopeful that in the future we will have a better transport policy. I happen to know that the

Government are in the process of framing a State Transport Facilities Bill that will, I hope, meet the situation.

It is well, though, to have a look at the recent increases in rail freights. Over the past three years, the wage has risen by 36s. a week and the effect of that rise—in the aggregate, £4,000,000—without compensating freight increases, has played havoc with the economy of the railways. I lay a great deal of the blame on the system of granting wage increases, which created problems in budgeting that could not be foreseen.

Let me make my points quite clear. During the depression I worked for wages in many humble spheres and I know the difficulties and the role of the workers. At the moment I am an employer; my men give me good service and I appreciate it. I do not blame the workers for trying to get their wage rises but I have no time for those agitators who continually harangue the workers into a wage rise that achieves nothing for them and only adds to the inflationary pressure on the economy. It only boosts the ego of those who claim to be the watchdogs of the interests of the workers, and prices the workers' needs out of their very reach.

I was surprised to hear the hon. member for Barooka move a motion dealing with inflation. I think his motives were worthy but he forgot to add that if wage increases were granted to those for whom he was speaking, they would be penalised by further inflation. His theories on price control are excellent, until one puts them into practice. Price control does not hold down prices ultimately. It merely strangles production until the articles are in such short supply that the law of supply and demand comes into operation and prices become ridiculously high.

Full employment goes hand in hand with the prosperity of employers in both primary and secondary industries. The trend toward wage rises is certainly a matter for concern, because if wages become too attractive, many people will be interested in becoming wage-earners instead of investing their capital in businesses that will provide employment for them. The stage could be reached when everybody would want to be a wage-earner and nobody would want to provide employment. For the love of Mike, do not let us kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

**Mr. Sullivan:** That was Jim Burrows's phrase.

**Mr. WHARTON:** I commend him for using it, but he was looking at the problem from the wrong point of view. The development of Queensland should be left to the individual, spurred on by the desire that is innate in every man and woman to improve his or her asset and to create employment in so doing.

I should like to refer now to rail freights as they affect primary producers. The

primary producer cannot pass these costs on, and the increases definitely penalise the country dweller. He pays freight on goods that he sends to the city and on goods that he brings to the country from the city.

**Mr. Walsh:** Did you get that complaint from the Executive of the Bundaberg Cane Growers' Association about the further increase of 43 per cent. in the cost of fertiliser?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I am coming to that. Fertiliser is used extensively in the sugar industry, and increased freight charges have a considerable effect on the return to sugar producers. They also limit the bargaining power of the industry in regard to the price under the various sugar agreements. The rise was to be 20 per cent.; but before that came into effect it was added to, and the price of fertiliser has in fact increased by 43 per cent. The sugar producers will certainly be affected adversely. I should mention, too, that growers of citrus, small crops, and so on, cannot pass on extra freight charges, and that their return is based on the price paid at auction. Hon. members opposite should remember that the only way to get a better return is by paying higher prices at auction, prices based solely on the law of supply and demand. These industries are high-income, high-cost industries, and increased freight charges have a serious effect on their transport costs and returns.

Whilst butter producers do get some adjustment each year, it is interesting to note that under the equalisation scheme some factories close to the port of Brisbane will pay an additional £1 a ton in freight and others not so very far away—I refer particularly to those in my electorate—will pay £8 a ton as a result of these increases in rail freights.

These things penalise the country dweller and it is little wonder that the population in some country districts in Queensland has decreased by as much as 2,200 in the last 12 months. In spite of that decrease in population, production has been maintained.

I sincerely trust that the Treasurer is looking at the financial position on an overall basis, because I, as a new member, will require him to do so in the future.

I refer now to the reduction of £500,000 in the Vote for irrigation. At first sight I was greatly distressed and disappointed at the reduced allocation because I realise the value of irrigation. I have proved its great advantages on my own property, and I commend its use to all who can avail themselves of it. Everyone realises the value of water. Irrigation will make any crop grow as long as the soil will hold it up. Fertilisers can be added, but we must watch the economics of it. I certainly regret that reduction but the Government have shown a practical touch in their thinking by not cutting down the allocation for assistance under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance

Act. Indeed, that allocation has been increased, which more than compensates for the reduction in the Vote for irrigation.

Huge irrigation schemes are costly programmes of a long-term nature. Many such schemes can be envisaged that would be of great assistance to the State but we have insufficient finance to implement them forthwith. Perhaps next year we will have more money available but meanwhile we can plan, and plan well, for further projects to bring the advantage of irrigation closer to those who are willing to use it. The purpose of these huge works is to hold back surplus water for use in the lower rainfall periods.

The Burnett River and its tributaries lend themselves admirably to irrigation. The Cania Gorge would be an excellent site for a water conservation scheme. There is only a trickle of water along the bed of the stream in dry periods. Further down, the Mundubbera weir helps the people in the Burnett in times of drought. One grower has 250 acres under irrigation at Mundubbera. Irrigation is a great boon in times like these when there is a shortage of water in the Burnett below Mundubbera. A weir at Gayndah will not only serve a large area along the river but it will also spill over, without any additional cost, to bring the benefits of irrigation to the Woodmiller and Reid's Creek areas. It will also preserve the huge citrus industry in the area.

At Gin Gin on the Burnett there is an excellent site for a weir. It is a very dry area. The farmers need security, and we should endeavour to provide them with a weir to give them such security. There are suitable weir sites on the Kolan and Elliott Rivers.

Once irrigation projects become established farmers have to pay £5 or £6 per acre-foot for the water. It is a costly business, because on top of that they need either permanent or portable systems on their farms. It costs between £100 and £150 an acre to establish a permanent system of irrigation. With portable equipment the cost is £50 per acre; it varies according to the acreage to be irrigated. Then there are operating costs of about 5s. per acre-inch for overhead, 5s. to 8s. 6d. for power and 5s. 6d. to 7s. for labour.

Those figures are given only as a guide but I mention them to indicate that it costs approximately £12 per acre foot to which should be added £5 to £6 to cover the cost of installing and operating the average irrigation system. It is costly if the scheme is of any size but in these days irrigation is warranted with crops returning in excess of £100 an acre. It not only brings security to those fortunate enough to use it but it also tends to intensify land usage which, in turn, increases population. It is necessary to water the land, particularly in a State subject to drought as Queensland is, because its fertility depends on fertilising and spelling. That has a rejuvenating effect.

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The use of fertiliser, in its turn, creates a certain amount of employment throughout the State. It also brings additional revenue to the Railway Department by way of freights.

However, generally speaking irrigation gives no economic return to the State Government, so here again the Government should seek Commonwealth aid. We should treat irrigation projects on a national basis, because any increased revenue from its use goes to the Commonwealth Government by way of excise duties and income tax. Of course, I am not suggesting that we should ask the Commonwealth Government to do the actual work; it would be better if we did it ourselves, but we require financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government to do it. I should like to refer briefly to the farm water supplies assistance scheme.

**Mr. Davies:** Were you disappointed with the reduction in the Vote for irrigation?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I have dealt with that matter. If the hon. member had been listening, he would know my views. I shall be referring to it again.

I compliment the Government on the allocation of additional money for farm water supplies assistance. By this method of irrigation water is taken to the crops. I commend the scheme to all those who are in a position to use it. Hon. members opposite know very little about irrigation, although they have had a great deal to say about it. They pick on it as something to throw into the lap of the Government, saying to them, "You have not done this or that."

Those who want to participate in the farm scheme have merely to get in touch with the department and apply for assistance. An inspection is made and a plan is formulated. Irrigation planned in that way obviates such errors as have occurred in the past. The Government advance up to 90 per cent. of the cost of storage, equipment and reticulation of the water. The loan is for a period of 15 years, with interest at normal bank rates. The scheme brings irrigation within the means of all those who are able to use it. In this way many producers are assisted, production is increased and the total production for the State rises considerably. The scheme has a snowballing effect, which is reflected in individual prosperity and security, increased freight, extra revenue, more employment and greater development on a grand scale.

Of course, I am aware of the limitations of the scheme. It cannot be used if soil is unsuitable for the storage of water. The Government are to be congratulated on fostering the scheme. It is indeed a most progressive step.

Irrigation can be used to grow many crops such as lucerne, cotton, citrus, sugar-cane, tobacco and a number of others including

pastures. It brings stability to those on the land, and when they have stability of employment, the people in the city in turn have security and stability. A few acres of lucerne will mitigate the effects of drought and will dispel the fear of it among those on small areas. Irrigation means increased population. It helps in the setting-up of food bowls for the city dweller. The hon. member for Maryborough spoke of people leaving the State. Irrigation may be the answer to that. We want a bigger population which in turn will bring increased tax reimbursements. With additional money, further development on a grand scale could be undertaken and the population would increase to an even greater extent.

**Mr. Lloyd:** That is not much help when we have a net loss in migration.

**A Government Member:** How do you know that?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. WHARTON:** When the hon. members have finished I will continue. I think there is great scope, with irrigation, for the beef-cattle industry. There is a possibility of real shortages now, but with irrigation we would be able to expand our beef production for the market when the price was as high as it is now.

**Mr. Coburn:** Under irrigation.

**Mr. WHARTON:** I was just coming to that.

Irrigation would greatly increase our chances in a drought period of doing the things we are trying to do. If we have some irrigated pastures the grazier can save his breeders in difficult drought times and he can hold his cattle numbers and increase them, so that, in a normal season, once a year the cattle are fat. We have ample cold storage in the State and we can store beef for periods of short supply. It will be economic if we irrigate pastures; more cattle will be turned off and we will be able to build up the beef in refrigerated storage.

**Mr. Coburn:** You are experienced in that line.

**Mr. WHARTON:** I am quite experienced in it.

We are aiming at the production of more baby beef. There is a great demand by the consumer for this class of meat. There are a few hindrances to some of these projects. Today lack of finance is one of the great hindrances. Shortage of water is a problem confronting the increase in production, but it can be overcome in the more densely populated areas within 100 or 200 miles of the coast. We can improve the pastures and increase production on a grand scale.

**Mr. Coburn:** That is what we had on the Burdekin, with the Burdekin Dam scheme.

**Mr. WHARTON:** The hon. member probably has something there, but I want to

tell hon. members that we have something on the Burnett, too. I wish to refer to the drawbacks associated with finance. The shortage of finance and credit restrictions are a bar to progress, and I wish to quote from a booklet I have here entitled "The Banks and Hire Purchase." It says—

"Under national credit policy, lending by the trading banks is firmly controlled by the Central Bank.

"On the other hand there are no restrictions on the amount of money which the finance companies may raise from the public or the rate of interest they may offer to support any expansion of hire purchase operations.

"Central Bank control over the trading banks is designed to regulate the volume of bank credit in the community. One of the main methods by which bank credit is controlled is the system of 'special deposit accounts' which the trading banks must maintain with the Central Bank. In September, 1958, £265M of trading bank deposits was 'frozen' in these special accounts and therefore outside the control of the trading banks.

"Interest rates, too, which banks may offer for deposits or charge on overdrafts, are subject to Central Bank control."

I believe that credit restrictions curb the development of the State by the individual. I have always argued, and always will argue, that development by the individual is best for the State. Individuals can achieve more than a Government authority trying to do the work, and individual development will be reflected in more fully-employed people.

Hire-purchase is taking away from the community some of the funds that should go to the normal banking system. Hire purchase is unrestricted in the interest rates it offers; the interest rate is as high as 8 per cent. compared with 3 per cent. from the banks. A high lending rate, too, is charged. Only recently a company wished to borrow money for building purposes. It was offered £12,000 by a hire-purchase company and the interest rate was 15 per cent.

In all fairness, what business could pay 15 per cent.? It simply increases inflation. I said this morning that increases in wages were contributing to inflation and I couple that with the high cost of hire purchase. It adds to the cost of goods and it adds to the difficulties of the community; certainly it contributes to the inflationary spiral.

**Mr. Houston:** What is the answer to hire-purchase charges?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I will come to that. I am concerned that, through lack of investment funds, the banks could find themselves embarrassed by hire-purchase companies that have funds but charge high interest rates, which primary producers and others cannot pay. We do not want a monopoly of lending power. Those who now pay high rates on many articles will suffer from further inflation.

Even the Agricultural Bank, once termed "the farmers' bank," has changed its terms of lending; it has departed from the fixed advance method and from the fixed interest rate. Interest is now calculated on a fluctuating or daily basis, and it puts the bank in a position comparable with that of trading banks. So we lose the advantage we previously had when the Agricultural Bank, through its policy, helped to control the private trading banks or to keep them on their toes.

I am disappointed to find that even the new Commonwealth Development Bank charges 6 per cent. interest. I had been looking forward rather eagerly to some assistance from that bank. It is no wonder that there is a drift from country districts!

In the interests of the people on the land, the banks must continue to function for the purpose of developing primary industry, and I suggest a move to ensure a closer relationship between bank investment and lending rates and those of hire-purchase institutions. In the interests of employers and employees hire-purchase rates must be reduced.

To summarise, I suggest that a system of adequate finance for individual development of our great State to ensure full and more employment on the basis of relativity of return for employer and employee must be found. When that is achieved, the Treasurer's task in bringing down the Budget will not only be simpler but it should also bring satisfaction to all concerned.

**Mr. HOUSTON** (Bulimba) (2.28 p.m.): I am pleased to be associated with the debate and I hope to contribute some ideas for the development of the State. I am sure the Committee will agree that a dissection of the Budget discloses that it is very obvious that the Treasurer had to do the best he could with the very limited finances available to him. Whether he did the best job possible is another matter. However, I am sure all will agree that if more money had been available the allocations to many departments could have been increased and, if it had, no doubt the Treasurer would have been only too happy to do that.

Previous speakers on both sides of the Chamber have clearly shown that the trouble lies in the first instance with the Commonwealth Government. After all, if they refuse to make the moneys available to the State, the State Government cannot carry out the work that they should. No-one realises that more than the Premier. In "The Courier-Mail" of 22 September last appears a report of the Premier's reply to the statements made by Senator Wood in the Federal Parliament. The Senator had claimed that the Queensland Government were not facing up to their responsibilities. In particular, he said, the Government were not policing their road tax laws and prosecuting border hoppers and transport operators.

This was the Premier's reply—

"Australia had a central Government rolling in money and States existing on crumbs from the rich man's table, the Premier (Mr. Nicklin) said last night."

I entirely agree with that, and I believe that every other hon. member agrees with it. The report goes on—

"Mr. Nicklin said Senator Wood would be better occupied in directing his energies to getting moneys urgently needed for the State's development.

"Senator Wood should know that Queensland was the only State in the Commonwealth that had not received any substantial assistance from the Commonwealth."

I mention that point, and I think it should be stressed, because if this Government are honest and sincere—I believe the Premier was when he made those statements and that he has the backing of members of the Government Parties—when the next Federal election is held Liberal-Country Party members should not be out advocating the return of the present Federal Government. If they are returned, I think it will be a sorry day for Queensland. They are treating Queensland very savagely now, and if they are returned for another three years I am sure the State Treasurer will be forced to bring down a budget cutting drastically the allocations to departments that cannot afford, even at this stage, to receive one penny less.

**Mr. Hughes:** We are receiving delectable crumbs now, but we would be on a starvation diet under a Federal Labour Government.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The hon. member for Kurilpa knows all about these things! If he could deal with the finances of the State as well as he dealt with Mr. Connolly, we would be much better off; but I think he would be well advised to confine his remarks to subjects that he knows something about.

It is obvious that the Government have allocated a considerable sum of money for education, and I have no quarrel with that.

**Mr. Smith:** Your Deputy Leader had some quarrel with it yesterday.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** He quarrelled with the amount allocated, but no-one is going to quarrel with an increase in allocation over previous years. The hon. member for Kedron said that more should have been allocated, and I join him in saying that we would like more if possible. However, we have no quarrel with the increase in the Vote.

Increases were also granted in other directions, but it is a tragedy that we have had to cut down on national development works. It is also a tragedy, I believe, that we have had to spend so much money in subsidising the railways. Money used to cover losses in the Railway Department, or any other Government department, for that matter, is

money that should be used for other projects, and I think the activities of the department concerned should be scrutinised closely to see what improvements can be effected. I shall refer to the Railway Department later on in my speech and to what could or could not be done to improve its financial position.

The Treasurer is also in charge of housing. I think he is fully aware of the need for more money for housing projects. As I said earlier, I agree that the Treasurer had a hard task in bringing the Budget down; but I do not agree that he has used the money available to the best advantage, nor do I agree that he has administered the Housing Commission to the best advantage. In my opinion, he has made some fatal errors in his administration of the Housing Commission. The establishment of new flats is his pride and joy. Under certain circumstances, flat life has advantages, and there are people in the community who wish to live under such conditions. But there are many thousands of people who do not like living in flats, and as I have said on other occasions, the people of Australia, and particularly the people of Queensland, prefer to have their own allotments and their own backyards.

**Mr. Nicklin:** I do not like flats much myself but I think you must admit that there is a demand for them.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I said that there was a demand for them. The idea of building flats has been ill-conceived, as I hope to show later on. The Queensland way of life is to live in your own home with your own backyard.

Just prior to the war many people sold their 16 perch allotments and shifted to suburbs where they could get larger allotments. At the bottom of my electorate, and in the electorate of Belmont, which I know very well, just prior to the war and immediately after it, many people were buying 2½-acre blocks because they wanted to occupy their own homes with plenty of land surrounding them. The Queensland people want homes of their own with their own land surrounding them.

**Mr. Hughes:** You must admit that it is uneconomical to house aged and newly-married people in three-bedroom and four-bedroom homes when they themselves want accommodation in flats.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I accept that interjection because it brings me to my next point. The administration of the Queensland Housing Commission is such that newly-married couples and the aged cannot get into Housing Commission homes or flats. The priority system has certain advantages, but it also has its weaknesses. It allows only those who are in dire need of homes to obtain rental homes—people with eviction orders. Even those living under bad, crowded or unhealthy conditions cannot get a rental home because the Government have seen fit to adopt a policy

of building homes for sale rather than for rental. How can the hon. member suggest that there is room for newly-married couples and aged people in these flats? I agree that we should help them, but the present priority system does not allow it.

I believe that the Minister introduced the scheme of building blocks of flats in a sincere attempt to overcome the housing shortage, and to overcome the cost of providing the necessary services for a large number of individual flats. At the present time a block of 99 flats is being constructed. Naturally the cost of services and maintenance will be reduced. Some people prefer to live in a flat, people who have reared their families and like to spend their week-ends away from home, people who do not worry about having an attractive garden. In reply to a question, the Treasurer and Minister for Housing said that the flats would be allotted on the existing priority system. How can young married couples or others who wish to leave their present homes get one of these flats if the priority system is applied? In reply to a question from the hon. member for Belmont, the Treasurer said that pensioners possibly could occupy some of them, particularly the one-bedroom and two-bedroom flats.

Probably all hon. members have seen the sketch plan, drawing and report that appeared in "The Sunday-Mail" of 11 September. Some remarkable features are revealed. Probably the two-bedroom flats would be quite suitable for young families, but the one-bedroom flats have the bedroom, kitchen, eating quarters, and laundry all in one big room. That is what happened years ago. Surely people are entitled to privacy in these enlightened days. If we are building these units let us try to overcome the bad aspects of existing conditions. I can instance families who have blocked up their front doors so that the whole family can sleep on the floor on makeshift beds, quite often in the lounge room. If we build these units as depicted here we are making such conditions a permanent feature of our community. The housing shortage will be overcome in years to come. What will then happen to these buildings on which we will spend thousands of pounds? It would be a simple matter, and would not involve much extra cost, to put up a permanent structure between these rooms.

I do not want to go into detail on what could happen in these buildings, but can hon. members imagine a man bringing a friend to his house and his wife wanting to change her clothes? What would she do—go behind a silk curtain with a light behind it? I do not think this type of structure should be persisted in and I suggest to the Treasurer that even at this late stage the plans be altered and a permanent structure erected between the various rooms. The Treasurer might say that some people living there may not require them but we do not know what types of families will be occupying them. We must provide for all types.

**Mr. Hughes** interjected.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The hon. member for Kurilpa cannot forget that he is the local alderman. He cannot run the city council yet he is trying to run the State Parliament. I do not care whether these projects have been approved by the council or not. In my view, it is not in the public interest and, at very little extra cost, the people who occupy these places could be afforded much more comfort.

I understand the rentals have been fixed at £3 8s. for a single room and £4 5s. for the double flats. Those were the approximate figures given by the Treasurer the other day. I take it that they will be the minimum amounts charged and I can visualise a most distressing set of circumstances arising in relation to an aged couple should one of them die. If an aged couple should occupy one of these flats—probably leaving their former home for their children to occupy—from their joint pension of £10 a week they will be paying £3 8s. a week rent. Should one of them pass away the other would be left with a pension of £5 a week and be required to pay £3 8s. rent. That is something the Government should look into. It might be suggested that such a case could be examined when it arose, but that would not eliminate the period of intense worry which must be occasioned to an elderly person in that position. Even if justice is done eventually, that is something to which these elderly people should not be subjected.

I suggest that the Treasurer and the Government have a look at these charges, keeping in mind the possibility of such cases. It would be entirely wrong to allow such people to occupy these flats and then should one of them die, ask the one who is left to vacate and find other quarters.

I imagine that the only flats that will be offered to elderly people will be those on the ground floor. I cannot imagine a top-floor flat being offered to elderly people, or people in ill-health, particularly in the face of this report, which states that there are 57 steps. The article states that the flats consist of one and two bedrooms, each with its own balcony. I do not know whether the Minister made the suggestion, but the writer of the article featured the fact that the balconies would be very suitable for sun-baking. I cannot imagine that elderly people would worrying about sun-baking.

**Mr. Hooper:** I think it is possible they would.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The balconies are open. There is no protection from the weather. I do not think elderly people would use them for sun-baking.

**Mr. Hooper:** The sun is the greatest cure for many ailments.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is so, but all aspects of the matter have to be considered. I am

not criticising the idea, but I am considering it from the viewpoint of the people who may require these small flats.

**Mr. Nicklin:** I suggest that the writer of the article introduced the aspect of sun-baking.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That may be so.

**Mr. Duggan:** The Deputy Premier may have come up with that idea.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I intended to mention that at a later stage when I will have something to say about the Deputy Premier.

Housing is one of Queensland's greatest problems, although I think the Government are trying to get more money from the Commonwealth authorities for this purpose. Inadequate housing creates many difficulties. Those who live in sub-standard accommodation find on inquiry that they cannot get rental homes but that they can get a home if they have a deposit of £300 or £400. In those circumstances a mother may decide to work to get the money. In some instances that is all right, but in other cases we find that children are left in their own environment and other problems arise. I do not think that state of affairs is desirable from a national viewpoint, and the only answer to the difficulty is to get additional money from the Commonwealth Government so that adequate housing can be provided for all who need it. Good accommodation leads to contentment and contented people are a progressive people. The Commonwealth Government are allocating to projects in Canberra large sums of money that could be diverted at the moment to the more important task of providing houses. I urge the Government to use every argument available to them to get additional funds. Federal Country and Liberal members should be asked to use their influence with the Commonwealth Government.

We know the only alternative to a Government housing loan. Those who need a home must go to a hire-purchase company, and we have seen articles from time to time about the hire-purchase rackets in housing finance. Many hire-purchase companies charge a flat interest rate of 7 per cent. on housing loans. They are able to do that because they have no competition. Housing loans cannot be obtained from any other source. I say definitely that the banks and the banks alone are to blame for the present situation. The following statement by the Queensland chairman of the Australian Hire-Purchase Conference, Mr. McB. Bryan, is rather strange—

"Finance companies have eased the burden on banks by taking the borrowing outside the banking structure."

What a lot of rot to say they have eased the burden on the banks! What are banks for? They were created originally to lend money. The idea was that they would help

develop the country, and now the hire-purchase companies say they have come to the assistance of the banks.

It is common knowledge that the banks have created the hire-purchase companies. People go to a bank and are told, "We cannot give you finance." But then they go down the road and get as much as they want at 7 per cent. interest, or more. Unless some drastic action is taken—and I believe the Federal Government, or the Premiers' Conference, should take the lead—people will be so tied up with hire purchase that the least extra taxation, unemployment, or national trouble will upset the whole economy, and crush it very quickly. There will be nothing to give the extra little bit when it is so necessary. Because the hire-purchase companies are offering such high interest rates on borrowed money they are affecting the loan programme. At this stage I do not intend to develop that theme. The Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader and other hon. members in the Chamber have developed this line, and it is well known to all hon. members that the hire-purchase rates of interest have greatly decreased the money available to local authorities and Government institutions.

I wish to refer to a statement by the Treasurer that was reported in yesterday's "Telegraph" concerning financial assistance for those who wish to buy land to build their homes through another source. Although the other source was not referred to, I take it that the Treasurer had in mind assistance from some recognised institution that has the support of the Government. I will not elaborate on that, because I believe that was in his mind. However, I am troubled by the whole land finance and land purchase problem. Many people have worked hard and saved a few pounds and would like a home on their own land. For their own reasons they do not want to go to the Housing Commission, and they buy their own land.

The price of land today is so exorbitant that it is years before they get possession of the deed and it is even longer before they can build a home. That means that the people who decide to go on their own and build are kept in temporary accommodation and overcrowded conditions for many years more than they should be. This overcrowding has repercussions on every section of the community. Immediate action should be taken to reduce the price of land. It makes me wonder whether the Government should endeavour to get from the Commonwealth Government a special grant for the sole purpose of purchasing land for re-sale to home-builders. I think the Treasurer would be very well advised to go a little farther than he did in his suggestion the other day to see if he can get assistance from the Commonwealth Government. The finance companies, or these land development companies, are getting the money at 5 per cent. and 5½ per cent., and in many instances 8 and 9 per

cent. and higher, and it makes me wonder whether it is wise to continue the practice of having the land subdivider putting in roads, gutters and sewerage.

It is all very fine to go into a home in an estate that has all those amenities—I know that if they are provided by the developer, the City Council or the local authority does not have to do the work—but I am concerned about the increased cost of the land. In putting in those amenities, the developer uses capital and naturally he expects some return. Therefore the price to the purchaser includes a sum for the cost of the road, the footpath, the gutter, the sewerage and drainage, together with the developer's profit.

**Mr. Hughes:** Might I point out to you that the average cost of those services to each block of land is between £150 and £220, and it seems to be generally acceptable to the public, or the purchasers. They desire to have those works and services.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The hon. member has already had the opportunity to make his speech and he will have many other opportunities later. I am perfectly happy to have interjections but in this case I do not propose to say more than that the public are accepting what is given to them, not because they like it, but because it is forced onto them; they have no option. They are being regimented so much by the Brisbane City Council, under the Groom administration, that an upheaval will come early next year. I suggest to the hon. member that he will then have the complete answer to what the public think about it.

Either the hon. member has forgotten, or he does not wish to see, that when the young couple buy the block of land they pay for all those improvements and then they pay rates on both the land and the improvements for absolutely no return.

**Mr. Hughes:** I have some sympathy for your argument.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The hon. member can have his say later.

**Mr. Hughes:** I said I had some sympathy for your argument.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The point is that the people are paying and paying forevermore for those improvements. I am well aware that the added cost is between £150 and £220 a block but if that sum were subtracted from the cost to the purchasers, they could have the block at least 12 months earlier.

**Mr. Hughes:** Without roads, drainage, kerbing, channelling, or water?

**Mr. Ewan:** Do you suggest they could acquire it from the Crown cheaper than they could acquire it from the subdivider?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** The home purchaser should be able to obtain the land cheaper

from the Crown than from a private company. There should not be any argument about that; we have proved it time and time again. I do not want to go back through history but the hon. member may recall that about three years ago I raised the issue about land in my electorate that was formerly held by the Commonwealth for War Service homes. After going through the hands of Keperra Developers it sold for from £900 to £1,100 a block. Before development it could have been bought for a song. I asked the Treasurer why it was not handled by the State Government, because I believed then, as I believe now, that it was a criminal shame for the Commonwealth or anyone else to let that land go to the public through the developers and not through the State Government. Our main interest—our only interest—should be to make the land available for houses, not for the profit. After all, housing is not like the railways or other services; it is necessary for the people and we should do everything we possibly can to help them to get their blocks at a reasonable figure.

**Mr. Hiley:** I do not know whether I caught your attention but I made the statement that where we do it through the Queensland Housing Commission the cost to the public is in some cases half, and never more than two-thirds of what comparable blocks are selling for through private hands.

**Mr. Newton:** That is when you subdivide yourselves.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is what caused me to raise this matter. So that it is quite clear, I shall repeat what I said. I am quite happy with the idea, if I have to go through the building societies and not through this one and that one. If people need financial assistance to build, they have to build through the societies or the associations approved by the Government.

**Mr. Hiley:** We have to tie it up in such a way that a man does not get a cheap block from the State and then sell it at a profit.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Yes. I think the Government should extend it further, if possible, by getting the Commonwealth Government to make available special loan funds so that, instead of subdividers making big profits, the land would become available at the correct price.

It is obvious, of course, that some of the money that should be available for home-building and for the provision of other amenities for the people has been lost because the railways have failed to pay their way. I believe that the function of the railway system is primarily to provide a service to the people, but I do not agree that we should divorce the railways from all other forms of transport. When considering transport in Queensland, we should not say, "That is the railway service: that should be owned

by the Government. That is the road transport service: that should be owned by someone else, and the airways by someone else, and the steamships by someone else." The purpose of transport is twofold: firstly, the development of the State; secondly, the provision of amenities for those who live in it. Some years ago a Federal Labour Administration saw that the airways were going to play a major part in the development of Australia. As a result, the National Airlines Commission was set up and Trans-Australia Airlines came into being. Later a Federal Labour Government also saw the need for international and interstate trade to keep pace with the expansion that was taking place. Because they believed that goods should be landed in all States as cheaply as possible, they established the Australian National Shipping Line.

By comparison, the Queensland transport system seems to have slipped back. No attempt has been made to allow for the change in conditions over the years. The railways were established and developed to take the place of bullock teams and horse-driven carriages, and they were used only because in those days the railway system was thought to be the most economical one. If motor vehicles or aeroplanes had been invented at that time, possibly not one railway line would have been laid in Queensland and other forms of transport would have been used. However, the railways were established, and I believe they did a wonderful job in assisting the development of Queensland and its many industries. But I think a mistake was made in not introducing modern methods of transport years ago, when it became obvious that the railways were being superseded. Previous Governments could easily have set up a Transport Department instead of only a Railway Department. The same number of men would have been employed, because instead of firemen, drivers, guards, and so on, being required, truck drivers, truck attendants, truck-loaders, and so on, would be required for the transport system. It is still not too late to introduce that system. If we are going to close down unprofitable branch lines and leave it to private enterprise to carry on the service previously given to the people by the Railway Department, it makes one wonder why the Government should show a loss when private enterprise can serve the same people and the same area at a profit. Private enterprise would not come in unless there was a profit to be made.

**Mr. Ewan:** Didn't you hear about the State stations?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Unfortunately the hon. member did not learn his lesson a few years ago. I have read speeches of his when he was in Parliament on a previous occasion. He has not changed. In those earlier days he was constantly referring to years gone by. He was defeated at the polls and then he got

in again, but still he is on the same theme. We must progress. I do not ask the hon. member to agree with me—that would be the last thing I would ask him to do—but at least I ask him to give my suggestion some consideration. I realise that with State shops, State this and State that, there were certain failures and certain weaknesses, but just because weaknesses were shown in years gone by is no reason to assume that under good administration there would be weaknesses in the years to come.

I suggest that when the Government curtail a rail service they could introduce a more modern means of transport to cater for the area. It is logical to assume that the person using road transport does so for his own personal convenience. If he requires an article to be transported and it is more convenient and cheaper to use the railways he forgets about the road operator and goes to the railways. In other words, he uses whatever form of transport is most suitable to him. We also know that the road operator refuses to carry certain types of goods; if he does not refuse to carry them he makes the freight rate so high that it is uneconomical for anyone to use road transport. Obviously road operators, and the airways in certain instances, have picked the eyes out of the services that were created and developed by the Railway Department. That is mainly what I object to. Once it becomes obvious that the railways were not paying in an area, other means of transport should come in to assist them. The profits from road transport would offset the losses on the railways in that area. The railways could be used for the carriage of heavy commodities when bulk-loading facilities were required; road transport could cater for lighter articles and commodities that needed quick transport.

I am sure that the hon. member for Roma will agree with the use of road trains, because on many occasions I have heard him speak about the need for them. We need to be able to shift cattle and sheep quickly and efficiently. Instead of waiting for private enterprise to come in, would it not be much better for the Government to get the road trains operating?

**Mr. Ewan:** Private enterprise wanted to do it eight years ago.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I am not concerned about what happened eight years ago; I am concerned about what has happened since I have been a member of this Parliament. If the Government operated road trains they would pay, and pay handsomely. We would not have the spectacle of certain sections of the grazing industry running to the Government with requests that they be allowed to use the railways to get their produce out at cheap rates. When times are good, those same people use other means of transport. I do not think there is anything fair and honest about that. In one sense, of course, these people cannot be criticised, because every man today tries to do the best he can for

himself. I suggest that the best means of overcoming the problem is for the Government to consider establishing these services, using road trains for goods transport and bus services for passenger transport.

**Mr. Ewan:** Do you want the Government to run those services?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Definitely. I have never seen any evidence that would prove to me that the Government could not run a transport service, whether it be by rail, air, sea, or road, more efficiently and cheaply than it could be run privately.

**Mr. Ewan:** History does not support you.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I do not agree with the hon. member. There are many instances of public enterprises and national development schemes being successfully run by Labour Governments. That is evident from the fact that, at the first opportunity, supporters of this Government have sold undertakings that have proved their worth to private enterprise, which is always only too pleased to take them over as going concerns.

I interjected while the hon. member for Burnett was speaking with a query on the three-man delegation that waited on the Minister for Transport. I asked him the result of that deputation, but he refused to answer. The result is obvious as no action has been taken; they were told that the line would be closed. I agree with the hon. member for Burnett that that was a hasty decision. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it was not a unanimous decision of the Cabinet. I believe that the Treasurer was the man who decided on Government policy, and my opinion is shared by many others.

The intention to close these lines was announced at the same time as the Government announced increased rail freights, two actions that are diametrically opposed. The Government say, "We are going to increase rail freights to make the lines pay," and at the same time they say, "We are going to close these lines because they do not pay." They do not wait to see the result on these lines of the increased rail freights.

I am sure the hon. member for Burnett would be as interested as I am to know how the heavy articles previously carried on these lines will be carried when they are closed.

**Mr. Ewan:** What heavy articles?

**Mr. HOUSTON:** Heavy machinery, for instance. It will be also interesting to know at what rates they will be carried. The hon. member for Logan dealt quite well with the closure of the Cleveland line. He takes the view that I am advancing. Road operators carry only the goods they want to carry. With the closure of the line they will be able to dictate their own terms, including the goods they will carry. If a person wants them to handle other freight, he will be forced to pay through the neck for the service.

The increases in freight rates will have a very serious effect on the price of commodities. Every article now carried by rail will be affected. I cannot imagine that the producer, wholesaler or retailer will carry the cost. It will be passed onto the consumer or in other words the worker, and I use the term in a general sense. The cost of living will rise and the vicious circle will be perpetuated. The prospect frightens me. The Treasurer should have searched for another way of improving railway finances. If the department's Estimates come before the Committee, we will have an opportunity to deal with these matters in more detail than we can in the Budget debate when we want to deal with a number of subjects. I hope the railway Estimates come up for discussion, because some good can come even from criticism, and the Government have heard criticism not only from this side of the Chamber but from their side of the Chamber as well. Constructive criticism can be helpful, if it is accepted in the correct way. I hope freight increases do not get out of hand. In regard to the commodities that are controlled either directly or indirectly through boards and so on, I trust the Government will see that the whole burden is not placed on the workers. If it is, it will be reflected in many ways. There will be increased cost of living and industrial trouble as well. At this stage we cannot allow industrial trouble to arise from matters that can be held in check.

I was disappointed with the concluding remarks of the hon. member for Burnett. In the earlier part of his speech he spoke in a constructive way and dealt with matters from his viewpoint, but he concluded by saying that freight increases were brought about by increased wages. He mentioned the increase of £1 16s. 0d. in wages. He is completely off the track. He endeavoured to prove that the increase of £1 16s. 0d. was the sole cause of increased freights. That is not the position. If he cares to consider the matter, he will find that increases in wages on all occasions lag behind the increases in cost of commodities that form the basis of increased wages. In other words workers receive increases three months or more later than increases in the cost of commodities.

Increased wages are not the only cause, although they did play a part. Naturally if expenses go up, revenue must be increased by way of compensation. Freight increases are tied up with the overall running of the service and a departure from the original programme of development. I believe that competition from the road-transport hauliers was the main reason for the increased charges. Those who are affected by the charges should be very careful before they pass them on right down the line.

I was very surprised when the hon. member for Burnett referred to the agitators as the only ones causing industrial unrest. Here again he was off the ball if he thinks that the agitators are causing all the industrial

upheavals. If he thinks that every time a union has anything to say on any industrial matter—whether the men go on strike or not—such as seeking an increase in wages or better conditions for its members, it is agitators who are causing the trouble, we will never get to the bottom of our industrial problems. I do not think anyone will deny that most industrial disputes are caused by something outside union control. Very often it is the fault of the employer and it is in his power to diminish or rectify it. Both sides must get together on every occasion, and unless we can get them together to discuss their differences we cannot hope for industrial peace in this State. Conciliation should be the main theme for industrial peace.

I am pleased that a committee has been set up to examine the State's industrial laws. I am a firm believer in industrial conciliation and arbitration. I want the laws to be as good as they possibly can, and I want them to operate to the best advantage of all. However, we cannot expect them to operate as they should when some people deliberately go out of their way to incite industrial trouble. If the Communists are doing it, I am opposed to them. Make no error about that! However, they are not the only ones creating industrial trouble.

In his speech yesterday the hon. member for Belmont mentioned Mr. Grounds, the secretary of the Metal Trades Employers' Federation, who played a part in the famous Rocklea dispute. He did nothing at all to help settle that dispute by conciliation. When he was appearing before the Industrial Court he said, "Fight fire with fire!" Those were the words of a man who is an industrial advocate and whose sole aim should be to maintain industrial peace in this State. His idea of industrial peace is that the more industrial trouble there is, the more work there will be for him and more money he will make out of it. That is his attitude to industrial trouble. The Metal Trades Employers' Federation would be well advised to bring in another man as a conciliator, because conciliation is the most important aid to industrial peace. If we have conciliation we will come to a basis where the workers will feel that they are obtaining justice for their labours and the employer will know that he can plan for the future. He will know that he has a certain wage bill to meet every week, and that with normal supplies of materials he can turn out the work to a schedule. That will come only when everyone is satisfied with the way things are being run.

We have certain industrial laws and regulations in this State that provide for certain amenities for employees. In the trade-union-movement—and I was actively associated with it—we found many instances where union organisers had to spend hours with employers in order to get justice for their members—justice on awards already granted. We were not asking for anything new. In some workshops the amenities were

not as the Department of Labour and Industry required. We found cases where correct wages were not being paid. Last year there were 61 wage prosecutions and the unions, through their efforts, obtained the return of £56,912 to employees. Is it right that employers should endeavour to get away with £56,000? That is only those who were caught and forgetting all about cases where only small amounts were involved—where the members did not go to the union for assistance or where the unions did not think the sum involved justified the legal costs.

Every time there is any industrial trouble the first cry from some member of the Government is, "It's the Coms.!" Earlier the Liberal Party took the lead, but now, unfortunately, it is followed by some Country Party members. Do hon. members opposite honestly and sincerely believe that every time any section of the community applies for an increase it is led by an agitator? Shortly the Committee will be asked to consider legislation to increase the salaries of top men in the State. I hope to goodness it will not be suggested that they are being led by some agitator.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. RICHTER** (Somerset) (3.28 p.m.): The Treasurer is to be congratulated on the presentation of the Budget. Irrespective of political beliefs, all hon. members must respect his ability and capacity.

I intend to deal with several matters raised by the Treasurer in his Speech but I shall first reply to some of the comments of the hon. member for Bulimba.

**Mr. Newton:** He made a very good speech.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Yes, I believe he made some very good points on the Commonwealth-States financial relationship; but it is unfortunate that he used them as a political attack on the present Federal Government. He implied that a Labour Government would have done a far better job.

**Mr. Newton:** That's right, too.

**Mr. RICHTER:** That is typical of hon. members opposite. They seem to be incapable of approaching a subject from a truly Queensland point of view.

The Treasurer said—

"The Public Debt of the State at 30 June last stood at £332,424,113 as compared with £303,470,019 at the end of the previous year."

He added that the servicing of the debt was becoming an ever-increasing charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Interest on the public debt, he stated, amounted to over £12,000,000. The cost of Public Debt Services has averaged 11.21 per cent. of the revenue in the last 10 years.

It is very interesting and enlightening to compare the interest paid on the Commonwealth Government's Public Debt with that

paid by Queensland. The interest on Queensland's Public Debt was £12,000,000, or slightly more than 11 per cent. of the total revenue, whereas the interest on the Commonwealth's public debt amounted to 4 per cent. of the total revenue of £1,432,000,000. The Loan Council borrowing programme for State Works and Housing in 1959-1960, which the Commonwealth Government undertook to support, was £220,000,000. Then, at the meeting in June, 1960, borrowing approval was given for the Commonwealth to provide an additional £20,000,000 to be advanced to Queensland for the rehabilitation of the Townsville-Mt. Isa railway. These amounts, together with approximately £7,000,000 required for financing advances to the States for War Service Land Settlement, made the total borrowing requirements for the year almost £247,000,000. The loan proceeds for the last year were almost the same as the Budget figure of £190,000,000. With the addition of £2,275,000 available from loan fund balances, an additional £55,000,000 was needed to meet borrowing requirements, and this was provided by the Commonwealth Government from the Loan Consolidation and Investment Reserve.

In 1959-1960, as I said before, the borrowing programme was £190,000,000, and that amount was raised. But Mr. Holt told us in his Financial Statement that he did not expect the loan raisings to be above £150,000,000 in this financial year. Consequently, there will be a shortfall in loan raisings of about £40,000,000 compared with the amount raised in 1959-1960. However, the State wants £230,000,000, and the Commonwealth Government have agreed to support that submission; yet at the same time Mr. Holt estimates that only £150,000,000 can be raised. A sum of £80,000,000 will have to be found from Federal revenue to fill the gap.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Not necessarily Federal revenue, because they are collecting it on our behalf.

**Mr. RICHTER:** But it is their revenue. Let me put it this way: it is revenue collected by the Federal Government.

**Mr. Hanlon:** But it is on our behalf too.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Yes. I shall come to that.

This money will be taken out of the Loan Consolidation Investment Reserve which at present has a credit balance of £208,000,000. That money was taken from the people as Federal revenue and put into this fund. This state of affairs is not peculiar to this year; it has become an established practice. The Commonwealth Government pay for their capital works out of the revenue that they collect annually. This year they expect to spend £140,000,000. The States, however, are required to pay interest on loans and also to repay the principal.

If we look at the public debt of the Commonwealth and the public debt of the States, it is obvious how the Commonwealth benefits. In 1946 the Commonwealth debt was £1,809,000,000, while the State's debt was £905,000,000: this year the Commonwealth debt has dropped to £1,650,000,000, while the States' debt has risen to £2,400,000,000—more than two-and-a-half times as much. The Commonwealth Government's interest Bill is below the figure for 1946, immediately after the war, but the States' interest Bill has grown by £70,000,000-odd, and a considerable amount of this sum represents interest payable from revenue collected by the Commonwealth Government and lent back to the States with interest. Surely this position calls for some review! The Commonwealth Government tax the people of the States to receive money, which in turn it gives to the States in the form of tax reimbursement, the States in turn using that money to pay their interest bill to the Commonwealth. Last financial year Queensland paid an interest bill of £12,000,000. This money was received in the first place from the Commonwealth Government in the form of tax reimbursement. It then was used to pay interest on loan money that the Queensland taxpayer had helped to provide in the first place in taxation.

It is argued in some quarters that this is only a complicated method of accounting and has really no adverse effects on the States. But out of the total of £103,000,000 available last year Queensland has earmarked £12,000,000 for interest. This ever-increasing interest bill leaves just so much less for other things. No-one can get away from that. It is very pleasing to note that the Treasurer is one of a three-man committee appointed by the Loan Council to make a full survey of the problems of loan raising. As money is readily available for private investment some move must be made to encourage greater interest in the Government's borrowing programme if development is to proceed.

I mentioned before that year after year the Federal Government finance their capital works out of revenue. This year the figure will be £140,000,000. Amongst the various items there is an amount of £18,500,000 for the Snowy Hydro-Electric Authority. The actual expenditure on this project last year was £28,500,000.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Last year they paid out of revenue for the Snowy River scheme more than the cost of the whole Mt. Isa project in Queensland, or approximately the same. It is close to £30,000,000.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Last year they paid £28,500,000 for the Snowy River project. An amount of £4,750,000 is allocated for the Albury-Melbourne rail standardisation project. Expenditure on this project last year was £3,750,000. A further amount of £1,000,000

is being provided this year for the development of the northern part of Western Australia; £500,000 was provided last year.

Then we see a figure of £13,000,000 for the Australian Capital Territory. In addition, special grants have been received by Western Australia and Tasmania in addition to the total under the new financial agreement that came into operation in 1959-1960. Those grants amounted to approximately £8,750,000. Until the new agreement came into operation last year South Australia was the recipient of £32,000,000 over a period of about six years. That sum was paid as special grants over and above its share under the previous quota system.

**Mr. Hanlon:** That was carried on because they used past figures as a basis.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Queensland did not receive any special grants during that period, which is probably our own fault or possibly the fault of previous Governments.

Since the 1920's the Commonwealth have made annual payments to New South Wales for tick-control and irrigation measures. Commonwealth expenditure on this scheme since 1953-1954 has been as follows:—

	£
1953-1954 .. .. .	53,000
1954-1955 .. .. .	250,000
1955-1956 .. .. .	552,000
1956-1957 .. .. .	675,000
1957-1958 .. .. .	536,000
1958-1959 .. .. .	578,000
1959-1960 .. .. .	477,000

The estimate for 1961 is £272,000.

Since the 1920's many millions of pounds have been spent—that is, given as a hand-out to New South Wales—on the control of ticks. The idea was to eradicate and control the ticks. I do not think that scheme has been successful. I have spoken to a number of people in the Northern Rivers area and it does not seem to have paid off. But it has saved those people a considerable sum in tick control. Queenslanders have to foot the bill.

Under the Railways Standardisation Agreement Act of 1958, which affects New South Wales and Victoria, the Commonwealth agreed to finance the construction of a standard-gauge railway line between Albury and Melbourne at an estimated cost of £10,750,000. Each State is to pay 15 per cent. of the cost by instalments over a period of 50 years. Expenditure to 30 June, 1960, totalled £5,750,000, and an amount of £4,750,000 is required in 1960-61 to cover the major part of the work outstanding. The line is scheduled for completion at the end of 1961.

The Commonwealth is also providing funds for rail-gauge conversion work in South Australia under the Railway Standardisation Agreement Act of 1949. Under this scheme

the State Government will pay three-tenths of the cost of the work by instalments over a period of 50 years.

Under the Western Australia Grant Water Supply Act, 1948 to 1957, the Commonwealth is, within specified limits, assisting Western Australia to finance the cost of constructing comprehensive water-supply schemes. The scheme involves the reticulation of water to townships and homesteads in the wheat-belt area of about 4,000,000 acres near Perth, and also the reticulation of water to towns along the Great Southern Railway and to increase the supply of water to the eastern goldfields area of that State. During 1959-1960 payments to the Western Australian Government under this legislation amounted to £609,000, making a total payment by the Commonwealth in respect of this scheme of £4,500,000. The limit of Commonwealth contributions under the legislation is £5,000,000 and it is estimated that the balance of £578,000 will be paid this financial year.

I spoke previously of the assistance that had been given to Western Australian development. Under the Western Australian Grants Act (Northern Development) 1958-1959, provision is made for the payment to Western Australia, during the period of five years commencing 1 July, 1958, of financial assistance of £5,000,000 in respect of developmental expenditure by the State in the area of Western Australia north of the 20th parallel of latitude. Under the scheme Commonwealth assistance is provided in respect of projects, nominated by the State, which the Commonwealth is satisfied will contribute to the development of the area and which could not reasonably be expected to be carried out during the period of five years without Commonwealth assistance.

I have looked for some corresponding grant to Queensland, and the only one I can find is special assistance given to Queensland and Western Australia under the States Grants (Encouragement of Beef Production) Act of 1949-1954. This provides for a payment of little more than £2,000,000 to the States of Queensland and Western Australia for the construction of new and improved facilities for the movement of cattle.

**Mr. Hanlon:** They did give something for the road into Mary Kathleen, I think.

**Mr. RICHTER:** I did not see it in this particular year.

**Mr. Coburn:** They gave £300,000 towards the reconstruction of the roads damaged by the cyclone in North Queensland.

**Mr. Hanlon:** That was not developmental work.

**Mr. RICHTER:** This year the contribution to the States under this meat production Act will be the grand sum of £8,000. That will be the final payment. Over the last three years only £30,000 came to Queensland

for this purpose. Appeals for further assistance for the construction of new and improved facilities for the movement of stock have so far not met with success, but I am very hopeful.

I am not criticising the Federal Government, nor am I criticising Queensland members of the Federal Government. I think they are doing everything they can, and I give them full credit.

**Mr. Hanlon:** It does not say much for the rest of the Federal Government.

**Mr. Mann:** Who are you criticising?

**Mr. RICHTER:** I will tell the hon. member in a moment. It is to be hoped that the Federal Government and Federal parliamentarians generally will realise the importance of the meat industry generally not only to Queensland but to the whole of the Commonwealth. Development of the Australian beef industry is of national importance, and I think the work should be treated as a national project.

The founders of the Commonwealth Constitution did not envisage the state of affairs that has arisen. They could not foresee that Australia would become as industrialised as it has and that its population would be concentrated in a few large industrial cities. They could not foresee that the majority of the people would be living in those cities. I think we are fast losing our Federal system, and it is something of which we must be careful. It is not a matter to be considered on a party-political plane. We are losing our Federal system.

**Mr. Mann:** Tell that to Mr. Menzies.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Not Mr. Menzies alone. It should concern us all. This state of affairs came about because we handed over our taxing powers to the Federal Government. We lost the right to tax the people.

**Mr. Mann:** Do you want the taxing powers back?

**Mr. RICHTER:** Nobody at that time could foresee that by handing the taxing powers to the Federal Government we would never be able to get them back.

**Mr. Mann:** Do you want them back?

**Mr. RICHTER:** I will tell the hon. member in a moment.

**Mr. Hanlon:** The Treasurer said you did not want them back.

**Mr. RICHTER:** I won't duck the question. Sir Arthur Fadden put it in a nutshell when he said, "You can't put back the feathers in a plucked fowl." Neither can you return the taxing powers to the State.

**Mr. Mann:** Because you don't want them back.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Whether the hon. member wants them back or not, he cannot get

them. He knows jolly well that he does not want them back, and he cannot have them back.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Why?

**Mr. RICHTER:** For many reasons. We have got into the system of loans and borrowing programmes. Has the hon. member ever tried to work it out?

**Mr. Hanlon:** It is not the system that is wrong; it is the discrimination against Queensland.

**Mr. RICHTER:** We will have to learn to live with the system that has been adopted of handing over taxation powers and other powers to the Federal Government.

While in the last 10 years our population has grown tremendously in the large industrial cities, it has not increased in the country and in the North. Australia's balance of payments in overseas trade still depends on our ability to produce primary products and, if we are to maintain our economic stability, production in these industries must be quickly stepped up. Mr. McEwen told us the other day they would have to be stepped up to the extent of £250,000,000. That is a pretty steep order. However, as more than half the Federal members of Parliament regardless of party, depend for their political existence on the votes they receive in the industrial cities, it is understandable that the development of the vast rural areas should be forgotten.

That is the crisis of the whole question. If the voting strength is in the large industrial cities the members representing those areas are naturally influenced by the opinions that come from their constituents. Regardless of party politics, whether an hon. member belongs to one side of the House or the other, the same thing applies; he tries to please his own constituents. As the greatest numbers are concentrated in the large industrial cities they are not at all concerned with the problems of Australia's north. I can see no solution to the present unsatisfactory state of affairs unless all of us—on this side of the Chamber and the other side, together with the Queensland members in the Federal Parliament—bring to the notice of all Federal members as forcibly as we can the necessity to develop our open and vulnerable north. We must do this as speedily as possible. We must induce these people to see the light, if for no other reason than that the North must be developed to defend and protect them from invasion. There is a real threat to our security from the underprivileged Asiatics, who for many years have had a real grievance and a feeling of jealousy towards Australia, with its high standard of living, wide open spaces and vast resources. It is a threat to our security and we must do something to develop and populate the North.

These are real threats and are much too serious for party politics. All members on both sides of the Chamber, together with all Federal members from this State, should

bring them to the notice of every member of the Federal House. It concerns our future and that of our children.

Recently the Federal Government appointed a committee known as the Commonwealth Government Food and Agriculture Committee. The secretary and spokesman was Mr. Bate, who perhaps is known to some hon. members. He issued a warning. The newspaper report said—

"Mr. Bate and 23 other members of the committee have just finished a 4,000-mile tour of northern Australia. The week's tour took in cattle country in Queensland's north-west. Members also studied methods of pasture improvement in the North Coast of the State.

"Mr. Bate said that, with proper fattening pastures on the coast and feeder roads from the inland, the north should be able to fatten cattle at two years of age instead of four at present. The possibilities that would follow this expansion were enormous, he said.

"Population in the north would increase, and Australia could increase greatly its meat exports."

'Wistful eyes of China'.

"Senator G. Branson, of Western Australia, a committee member, said Australia could not morally defend the north from people who wanted to settle it if the Australians left it unpopulated.

"China had cast wistful eyes on the north, he said."

In addition to that, another committee has been appointed, of 20 Federal members and Senators comprising the very committee I have just spoken of and a mining committee. They are making another survey.

**Mr. Davies:** They appointed a dairy committee about three years ago and we have not had the report yet.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Many committees have been appointed and many surveys have been made.

**Mr. Davies:** No results.

**Mr. RICHTER:** There have been many trips into that area and I believe we have quite sufficient plans and reports. I found very interesting a report in "The Courier-Mail" of 11 July by Dr. E. M. Hutton. He was very outspoken about the possibilities of the North. He said—

"The pressure to produce more and more beef and milk products will gradually intensify during the next century as Australia's population approaches 50 million.

"Most of the increase will occur in the north, where vast land resources await development.

"It has been estimated that in Queensland there are about 100 million acres which receive sufficient summer rainfall for the development of improved pastures.

The greater part of this important area is covered by a band of country up to 200 miles wide, running parallel to the coast, from Brisbane to Cairns, and receiving an annual rainfall greater than 22 to 25 inches. The rest is covered by Cape York Peninsula and country in the Gulf of Carpentaria with an annual rainfall of 30 inches or more.

"At present all this potentially productive area feeds a little more than 5 million cattle, but there is no doubt that pasture research and improvement will eventually result in at least 25 million cattle being carried here by 2060. This is twice the cattle in the whole of Australia at the present time.

"In the shorter term there is an urgent need to get out of the pioneering stages and adopt a bolder and more dynamic approach to pasture research and improvement in Queensland.

"By 1975 Australia's human population will reach 14 million. This means that if the present per capita domestic consumption of beef is to be maintained as well as the present level of export beef, Queensland will be expected to carry 10 million cattle, or nearly twice the current numbers, within 15 years. It is apparent that we can't be complacent about pasture development, either on the experimental station or on the graziers' properties."

There is a further interesting article by Mr. Graham of the Department of Agriculture, who tells us how we can improve the State, how we can develop it, and how much there is to do. Then we have the various reports on the beef industry by eminent authorities.

**Mr. Coburn:** You have the master plan submitted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of North Queensland.

**Mr. RICHTER:** That is right. We have quite a number of plans.

As I said, this urgent need for the development of North Australia, not only Queensland, cuts right across party politics, and I agree with some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition when speaking in this debate. He said, "We must increase production or lose many of our amenities." That is true, I think. He said there was a need for an informed and impartial assessment of Australia's financial and economic problems in the interests of the country and that there was far too much party politics made out of these things. That is the statement of the Leader of the Opposition, and I agree with him.

**Mr. Davies:** You stop calling the Labour Party "Commos" and we will get down to business.

**Mr. RICHTER:** I did not say the Labour Party were Commos.

Apart from the present drought, the Leader of the Opposition said that Queensland has long-term problems with regard to

growth, and that there was a lack of desire in the Commonwealth sphere to lay the foundation of an economic and financial plan to help Queensland out of its financial difficulties. I could not agree more. I think he is quite right.

**Mr. Mann:** He is blaming the Federal Government.

**Mr. RICHTER:** He is blaming everyone in the Commonwealth sphere. The hon. member is playing politics, and the statement of the Leader of the Opposition is that we should not play politics.

It must be quite obvious to hon. members that Queensland's interests are neglected by the majority of Federal politicians living in the southern States, regardless of their political alliance. The majority of Federal politicians come from Victoria and New South Wales. Their interests and those of the constituents they represent are in those States. Queensland's representatives are very loyal to Queensland and are fighting very hard. Over the years, South Australia has had a remarkably good "crack of the whip," but only because of the persistent advocacy of the South Australian Government during the last 20 years. They have done very well indeed. I believe that we in Queensland will get recognition of our need and a fair share of Federal capital works only if we are prepared to persistently bring before the Federal Government the urgent need to develop Australia's unoccupied northern areas.

**Mr. Mann:** What has Mr. McEwen done?

**Mr. RICHTER:** Hon. members opposite are playing politics again. Despite what their leader said, they cannot help it. Federal members of both parties who represent electorates in the southern States give lip service to northern development. They will get up on platforms and make statements in the Press stating what should be done, but they know it is not their responsibility. As I said, they give only lip service to the development of North Australia. Their enthusiasm disappears very quickly when it is put to them this way: Give the development to the North but take it from your pet schemes in your own States. When the turkey is being carved up we see the Federal politicians of New South Wales and Victoria lining up with their State Governments and insisting on getting the lion's share. Their claims are well known to us. Take the Federal Aid Roads Grant, for example. Victoria demands, and very successfully demands, a formula based on population, area, and number of vehicles. The argument favouring the formula seems fair enough and some day Queensland will possibly benefit from it. But I believe that greater provision should be made for Queensland and Western Australia at the present time because these two States have vast areas of land to develop. This argument does not apply to the other

States to the same extent. Roads have to be built into these open spaces, and we require more money to do it.

An article in "The Sunday Mail" of 16 October last drew attention to the neglect of the defence highway between Mount Isa and the Northern Territory. The Acting Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity, Hon. O. O. Madsen, has replied to the article, saying that £11,700 has been granted by the Commonwealth Government as a contribution towards the cost of repairing that road. I have not been on it for a long time but the article states—

"The vital defence highway linking Mount Isa with the Northern Territory is in danger of breaking up.

"Pick-and-shovel methods are being used to repair the road which was built at a cost of millions for strategical purposes during World War II.

"Unless urgent repairs are completed before the wet season closes in, long stretches of the road will become impassable 'bog holes', said truck operators.

"They said bridges were not being maintained; one was so weak they were afraid a truck would plunge through it.

"The Barkly Highway is the only all-weather bitumen road crossing Northern Australia from Queensland to the Northern Territory.

"About 75,000 head of cattle will be transported along the highway this droving season.

"There is serious disrepair on the 120-mile stretch between Mount Isa and the Territory border near Camooweal. A transport operator said: "Traffic along the highway has undergone a tremendous increase with the coming of cattle "road trains" and co-ordinated transport from Alice Springs. However, maintenance and repair methods are entirely inadequate and outdated'.

"He said that unless one badly potholed stretch was repaired before the 'wet' set in about Christmas, a long section of the road would lift and crumble when the rain got under it.

"Once part of it is 'bog hole' the road will be impassable and useless. It would cost millions to rebuild", he said."

The Federal Government have taken upon themselves the responsibility of providing the money necessary to develop the Northern Territory, but we must never forget that the whole of Northern Australia represents a threat to our security, and neither Queensland nor Western Australia can cope with their problems without assistance from the other States and the Commonwealth. They have not the necessary funds for development on such a large scale. Moreover, no defence system is complete unless it embraces the whole of Australia's unoccupied North.

Mr. Whitlam, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House, speaking in

the debate on the Estimates of the Department of National Development and the C.S.I.R.O., offered a suggestion the other day. He said that if the work on the Snowy Mountains scheme was commencing to tail off, the Federal Government should transfer much of the manpower and resources to the North and start a scheme similar to the Snowy Mountains scheme. I am quite sure that Mr. Whitlam made that suggestion without giving it any thought, because, in the first place, much of that manpower might not wish to go to the North and, secondly, as there is no fixed plan for the development of Northern Australia, the manpower now working on the Snowy Mountains scheme would have been absorbed and dissipated long before such a plan could be evolved.

**Mr. Coburn:** A northern newspaper sold him that idea.

**Mr. RICHTER:** That is possibly so. There is no reason whatever why a national planning authority should not be set up without delay. There would have to be agreement between the Western Australian, Queensland and Federal Governments on what should be done and on the order of priorities to be established for the many projects that have been suggested. Those projects vary greatly and I believe a planning authority should be set up to co-ordinate them.

**Mr. Coburn:** That has already been done for the Burdekin Dam scheme but no action has resulted.

**Mr. RICHTER:** That is all right for a particular development but I am talking of the development of the whole of Northern Australia—Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland. Many of the suggested schemes are open to dispute. There has already been argument about them and many are not acceptable to everyone concerned. These disputes must be settled before there can be any successful solution. It is reasonable to suggest that a planning committee should be constituted to co-ordinate the various ideas.

The Commonwealth Government are already pursuing their own policy in the Northern Territory, but there is no co-ordination between the work they are doing and that of the Queensland and Western Australian Governments. I suggest that a planning authority comprising representatives of the Federal, Queensland and Western Australian Governments should be set up immediately to consider the many reports and plans already available with the object of submitting to the Governments concerned a co-ordinated plan for the development of Northern Australia.

**Mr. HOOPER (Greenslopes) (4.15 p.m.):** I should like to congratulate the Treasurer on the introduction of his fourth Budget in this Parliament. I should also like to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Taylor, and to Mr. Speaker on your election to your

offices, to the Premier and the members of the Cabinet on their elections, to previous members on their re-election and to new members on their election to Parliament.

I was disappointed that I could not speak in the debate on the Address in Reply. As a matter of fact I am still suffering a throat complaint that has prevented me from speaking for some time.

**Mr. Duggan:** We will give you a sympathetic hearing.

**Mr. HOOPER:** I am not looking for that; I mentioned the matter merely to explain the condition of my voice.

At the outset, I should like to pose one or two questions to the hon. member for Bulimba on remarks that he made in the early part of his speech this afternoon. The hon. member for Bulimba condemned the Treasurer's housing policy and the building of flats and home units. He also attacked the points priority system. Many of us at times are not particularly happy about the priority system, but I should like the hon. member for Bulimba to consider who introduced it. It was introduced by a Labour Government but I am not condemning them for it. All Governments are tied to the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement and the priority system for allocation of rental homes. The hon. member's criticism of the Treasurer was unwarranted. The Treasurer has applied a very humane policy. He has issued instructions that the maximum points priority should be given when it is certain that an application for eviction would succeed in a court. I do not think anything could be fairer than that, and the Treasurer is to be commended for his decision.

I should like the hon. member for Bulimba to say—I do not think he did—why he condemns the home units or flat system introduced by the Treasurer. The Government parties, prior to their election in 1957, pledged that they would do away with the horrible housing camps at such places as Victoria Park. Such camps were the breeding grounds of juvenile and other forms of delinquency. I know that the housing camps were an emergency measure to meet the needs of men who served in World War II. and their families. The Treasurer got on with the job of building houses, flats and home units, and the housing camps were removed.

**Mr. Baxter:** They were removed before you went in.

**Mr. HOOPER:** Housing camps were in operation in Victoria Park and New Farm, but by November, 1959, the last units in those camps were removed from Victoria Park. The Treasurer is to be commended on his very fine job. Nothing could be fairer than his decision to concede a priority of 100 points to people served with notices to quit whose eviction orders would have

been granted by the court. In that way they were saved legal expenses. Some people have been, and are being, put to tremendous expense in an effort to evict tenants; on the other hand, many tenants have been put to great expense in fighting unfair landlords.

The hon. member for Bulimba was quite unworthy in attacking the Treasurer on this matter. Although he condemned the Treasurer he said later in his speech that he was in favour of the home-unit system. I should like to know where he stands. At Holland Park, under the supervision of the Treasurer and the Housing Commission, 99 home units are nearing completion. We heard this afternoon from the hon. member that there are not enough one-bedroom units. One-bedroom and two-bedroom units are being built there. I agree with the hon. member that one-bedroom units are very desirable for old people.

**Mr. Ramsden:** They are an urgent necessity.

**Mr. HOOPER:** Yes, they are an urgent necessity. The Treasurer believes that when two age pensioners jointly occupy one of these units and one of them passes on, the other should be allowed to continue the tenancy. I know that a sympathetic approach will be made to a happening such as that, just as it has been in the past.

**Mr. Baxter** interjected.

**Mr. HOOPER:** I should like to point out that there is nothing to prevent a single age pensioner from being a tenant in one of these flats.

**Mr. Baxter:** I thought you were saying that you were giving a reasonable rebate in rent.

**Mr. HOOPER:** I did not say that.

**Mr. Baxter:** I thought you implied that.

**Mr. HOOPER:** I did not say that. I said that the hon. member for Bulimba suggested—although he did not say it would happen—that he would not like to see an age pensioner lose his flat after his partner had passed away. I agree with him.

**Mr. Hanlon:** How many pensioners do you think will get into these 90 flats?

**Mr. HOOPER:** I think there will be quite a few. Where else will they find such good accommodation for a rental as low as we predict? The hon. member for Bulimba quoted £3 8s. for a single unit and £4 8s. for a double unit.

It is a pity that hon. members opposite who have attacked the Treasurer do not live in present times. There is modern architecture in the units at Holland Park and in the houses built by the Commission.

Anyone who knows anything about building must realise that building trends are changing rapidly. I should like to ask hon. members whether, if they were purchasing a new home, they would buy one that was built under the conditions that prevailed many years ago. Of course they would not. They would want something modern, with modern conveniences. That is what the Treasurer and the Housing Commission are offering the people of Queensland.

Now I turn to a subject of very great importance to the nation and I make an urgent appeal to the Treasurer to set aside a fund—not a large fund by any means; it need be only very small—to put a civil defence plan into operation in Queensland. We have seen in various parts of the world—and not very long ago in New York—indications of what could happen in the future. May God help us that it never does come. I refer to atomic attack. Some people have the idea that civil defence concerns only defence against air attack, whether it be atomic or otherwise. I do not look at it that way. I think any civil defence programme that is inaugurated in the State should be in the form of a national disaster programme, such as for floods, bush-fires or cyclones. I remember only too well that not long ago the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. were approached to see whether they were interested in assisting with Queensland's civil defence programme. As an ex-serviceman yourself, Mr. Taylor, you will know that any ex-serviceman who has the welfare of the country at heart will well and truly support such a programme, and it was supported by the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. But there are others who should assist—clubs such as Rotary, Lions and Apex, local authorities and civic leaders. They could help in organising a campaign to deal with national disaster.

It might be said that it would be costly. I do not believe that. We do not need a lot of expensive equipment. We need an organisation to regiment, or organise, the active people into a team that can be ready to deal with disaster at any moment. That might sound too much like a system of domination; I do not think it is. For some considerable time many Australians—and particularly those who saw the effects of the atomic bomb—have been asking for something to be done, and those who have seen the effects of cyclones, bush-fires and floods, too, are looking for something to help in time of need.

To return to the subject of atomic attack—we must be prepared to defend the country against such an attack. I am well aware that at Mt. Macedon in Victoria a series of civil defence schools have been conducted under the auspices of the Commonwealth Government. I know, too, that a number of Queenslanders have attended these schools and have been greatly impressed by what they saw and heard. But I am confident that many of those who attended have returned

with a feeling of frustration because of the lack of activity in the States, and I am not referring only to Queensland.

There should be no extensive duplication of the services carried out by the Army or the State. The implementation of these plans for civil defence is a task mainly for State Governments. State hospitals would be used for both service and civilian personnel, and repatriation hospitals would be available for Service personnel. If they are available in time of war, I believe they could, and should, be made available in time of emergency. The States control the Police Forces, which would have a most important part to play in such a programme, and they also control fire brigades and ambulances, which would also play very important roles. They would be needed continuously during any period of disaster.

The States carry out most of the work of health education, and I think that is very significant. There are two main jobs to be done. The first is to work out a basic plan of civil defence—I repeat that because it is important—in which each organisation that could be used would have a part to play. I recall that mention was made of a small committee that was to devote its time to this task. I regret that nothing of any consequence has been done. We have heard very little from the committee. I do not know whether it has even met—I do not know whether any other hon. member knows—and I certainly have heard no reports of the results of its deliberations. It is my belief that an all-party Parliamentary committee should be set up to examine the whole subject of civil defence, using all the facilities available to it, and to prepare a basic overall plan for the civil defence of Queensland. I think representatives of all parties and the Independents in this Chamber should be on that committee. I am confident that the committee would recommend what I regard as the second important step—the education of the public. Already we have a number of organisations in which the young and not-so-young are taught first aid, and first aid is very important in a time of disaster. This course could simply be enlarged to include the action to be taken if an attack occurred. I do not want to be an alarmist, but it is obvious that our main cities are open to attack if war is declared suddenly. I do not deny what Australia's defence forces are doing, or what they could do to protect us, but they have a tremendous area to cover in our continent of 3,000,000 square miles. If there were a sudden attack without even a declaration of war—it has happened in the past, we saw it at Singapore and Pearl Harbour—many lives could be saved if we were ready. Pearl Harbour is a story that all Queenslanders and all Australians should remember. Let us be ready to help the civilian population in a time of emergency. What I have in mind would not be costly. At least in the initial stages it would not

cost a great deal at all. The need might arise for an expansion later on, but I want to see a start made in this direction.

At this stage I should like to tell the Committee something of what I saw in Japan. As many hon. members know, during World War II. I was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese, for most of the time in Japan. Possibly I may be the only one in the Chamber who has seen the effects of an atomic attack. Thank God I did not have to sacrifice my life with the thousands who did. One had only to see what happened there to know what could happen here. Admittedly in Japan they were getting near the end of the war as far as resources were concerned. But they did not expect the attack. The civilian population were not ready in any way at all. Before the atomic attack on Japan we had experienced many raids by aircraft dropping H/E and incendiary bombs. I saw Osaka flattened in two very big raids. There was a tremendous loss of human life even though the Americans had taken the very humane action of warning the Japanese to remove the civilian population from the city. They gave that warning on every occasion, but it is almost an impossible task to clear a Japanese city. I was in Kobe when that city was flattened. Again because of the complete lack of organisation before the raid, and with no plan to follow, the population were massacred. As a prisoner-of-war in Kobe I was with some Australian, British and American servicemen who had been trained to know what an order meant. They knew where to go and what to do in an emergency. Although we were prisoners-of-war, when Kobe was flattened we did not lose a life. We knew what to do because of the basic training we had received in our early days in the Army. Many of those fellows had you to thank, Mr. Taylor, because you had trained them. Too often do people say, "When the time comes we will do something about it." I know that ex-service men in the Chamber will agree that basic training is what helps the serviceman throughout his service. Although we were prisoners in Japan we were able to accept an order; we knew what to do and when to do it. On the other hand, our captors were a rabble; they did not know what to do. The civilian population did not know what to do, and they were massacred. They did not know how to help the other fellow when he was injured; we did. I make this urgent appeal to the Treasurer to assist in conjunction with the Premier, to have established a national disaster fund, and a scheme so that a Civil defence plan can be put into operation. As State president of the Queensland Ex-Prisoners of War Association I know that my association, in conjunction with other returned servicemen's bodies, would be happy to lend its assistance.

Passing from civil defence, I should like to congratulate the Minister for Labour and Industry and the officers of his department on the splendid work being carried out by them, particularly in the operation of the

Shops and Factories Act as it applies to chemists' shops both in the metropolitan area and the State generally.

I especially mention the Minister as the administrator who lays down the policy, the Under Secretary, the Assistant Under Secretary and the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops. They have done a mighty job. They have bent over backwards to sort out the problems confronting the department in relation to day-and-night pharmacies, and to supply the people of Brisbane, and those in country areas, with the service they require.

I believe the Minister's main concern is not so much with the chemists as with the service for people who are in urgent need of drugs outside the ordinary shopping hours. Prior to the advent of the present Government there were five after-hours pharmacies in Brisbane. I should like to name them: Drysdale Ltd. at Petrie Bight, 'Gabbra Day-and-Night Pharmacy, Stone's Corner Day-and-Night Pharmacy, Ira and John Lister at Albion, and Roma Street Pharmacy.

While it was the general policy of the previous Government to ratify agreements for the establishment of day-and-night pharmacies on a co-operative or partnership basis, that privilege was extended to two partners only in the 'Gabbra Day-and-Night Pharmacy. Incidentally, that pharmacy is now conducted by one person only, as is the Albion after-hours pharmacy. The last day-and-night pharmacy approved by the previous Government was the Roma Street after-hours pharmacy.

Approval was given in that case on the understanding that the pharmacy would be conducted on a co-operative basis. It was to be conducted by the chemists in the Toowong, St. Lucia, Indooroopilly, Kenmore, Taringa, Rosalie, Paddington, Bardon, Red Hill, Ashgrove and Kelvin Grove areas. While several individual applications for permission to conduct after-hours pharmacies were rejected by the Government earlier, they approved of such pharmacies being operated by two persons at Woolloongabba—now operated by one—and by one person at Albion. The first application received by the Deputy Premier was in respect of the establishment of the Everton Park Day-and-Night Pharmacy, situated at South Pine Road, Everton Park.

This pharmacy at Everton Park was approved by the Minister on the understanding that it was to be conducted as a co-operative partnership. However, it commenced with only three partners, all other chemists in the area having turned down the idea. Later some of the chemists who had previously turned it down made a move to establish a day-and-night pharmacy at Alderley. They had had the opportunity to go into the Everton Park Pharmacy, but had turned it down. They made an application to establish a day-and-night pharmacy at Alderley which would have operated in

direct opposition to the Everton Park pharmacy. Inquiries revealed that the co-operative conducting the Everton Park business was still open for the admission of new members, and for this reason and in view of the proximity of the proposed pharmacy to the Everton Park pharmacy, the request was refused.

Applications were received from individual chemists for permission to establish after-hours' pharmacies, all of which were rejected. The Minister then established the firm policy whereby day-and-night pharmacies whether in Brisbane or in the country were only to be approved subject to such pharmacies being conducted on a co-operative basis, and all chemists located within the district being given the opportunity to join it. That is important. I shall repeat it. All chemists in the district must be given the opportunity of joining the co-operative.

**Mr. Hanlon:** You would not say that for the ordinary chemist the 7 to 8 trading should be abolished, would you?

**Mr. HOOPER:** I refer the hon. member to the answer the Minister gave recently to his question on the subject.

The policy was later extended to provide firmer control over the establishment of after-hours' pharmacies, whether by modification of existing agreements or as a result of new agreements, by requiring that a survey of the district be made by an industrial inspector to ensure that all chemists therein were given the opportunity of joining the co-operative. In addition, as a measure of protection, the co-operative was required to submit to the department a copy of its deed of indenture or partnership for approval.

The particular points in which the department are interested in regard to the deed of indenture is the provision that all chemists presently located in the area be given an opportunity to join the co-operative in its initial stages, and that all chemists who at some future date commence business within the area should be afforded the opportunity of joining the co-operative. When I refer to the initial stages I point out that the department has laid down that the initial stages include the initial financial basis of the establishment of the pharmacy. I think that policy is right in every respect, because if an application is made by a small group of chemists to establish a day-and-night pharmacy, they should and must approach every chemist within a two-mile radius to join the pharmacy. If they do not do that, they have not carried out their agreement with the department, and it has been the practice of the department not to go ahead with the franchise unless it is complied with.

The indenture is closely examined to ensure that provision is made for the admittance of new chemists on the financial basis that is applicable to retiring chemists, or to the estates of deceased chemists, and that all

chemists in the formative stages of the co-operative are able to join on an equitable financial basis. The value of the business is assessed and they must go in on the same financial basis as the retiring or deceased chemist. I particularly draw the attention of hon. members to that provision.

A firm policy has been laid down for the Factories and Shops District of Brisbane. It decides that unless some sound reason is advanced, approval to establish a day-and-night pharmacy is granted only to sites situated at least two miles from an existing day-and-night pharmacy. All chemists located within a two-mile radius of the location of the proposed pharmacy are to be given an opportunity to join the partnership, as must also all chemists who might establish themselves in the area at some future time. That has been carried out in almost every case. Unfortunately, in some areas chemists have not carried out the agreement they made with the department, according to the instructions set down by the Minister and his department. The Minister and his officers have worked untiringly to get them to comply with the instructions. It is only in a very few cases that it has not been done. I suggest to those chemists that they carry out the instructions, which are fair in every respect. It is only right that every chemist in the area should have an opportunity to join the proposed pharmacy and, if there are more than 20 chemists in the area, take part in a ballot to select those who should operate it.

Since the Government instituted this system, the Minister, in the public interest, has approved that the following day-and-night pharmacies be established:—

Sandgate & District Day-and-Night Pharmacy, 53 Rainbow Street, Sandgate.

Lutwyche After-Hour Chemist, 459 Lutwyche Road, Lutwyche.

Nundah All-Night Dispensary, Sandgate Road, Nundah.

The Day-and-Night Pharmacy, Inala, Lilac Street, Inala.

Torbreck Day-and-Night Pharmacy, Dornoch Terrace, Highgate Hill.

The Wynnum & Manly District Day-and-Night Pharmacy, Council Chambers, Bay Terrace, Wynnum Central.

Prudential Day-and-Night Pharmacy, Prudential Building, Queen Street, Brisbane.

1179 Day-and-Night Pharmacy, 1179 Logan Road, Holland Park, Brisbane.

Taringa Day-and-Night Pharmacy, 200 Moggill Road, Taringa.

Chermside Day-and-Night Pharmacy, Corner Gympie Road and Norman Drive, Chermside.

Fiveways Day-and-Night Pharmacy, 782 Stanley Street, Woolloongabba.

Chardon's Corner Night Dispensary, 639 Ipswich Road, Annerley.

Balmoral Fiveways Dispensary, 2 Riding Road, Balmoral.

Coorparoo Junction Day-and-Night Pharmacy, 332 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo.

Although approval has been given, final arrangements for the last four on the list have not been made. I know that in the interests of the public it is important that those pharmacies and others operate in Brisbane, but, until the chemists realise that it is the service to the public we are interested in and that they must comply with the Department's instructions, they will not be helping the people who need their services.

Since the present Government assumed office day-and-night pharmacies have either been established or their trading hours extended, at nine country centres, namely, Cairns, Coolangatta, Dalby, Innisfail, Mackay, Redcliffe, Rockhampton, Southport and Toowoomba. Of those, Cairns, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Coolangatta were obliged to lodge their deeds of indenture for examination whilst a complete survey was made, following the Redcliffe application, to ensure that all chemists located within the area were given the opportunity of joining the co-operative.

The establishment of these co-operative day-and-night pharmacies ensures that the interests of the public are preserved and at the same time enables chemists to have some respite and recreation, some time off, at night, which was previously denied to them or seriously restricted by the trading hours applicable to chemists' shops in their respective areas.

It is stressed that, notwithstanding the establishment of these day-and-night pharmacies, it is still legally competent for a chemist to supply at any time medicine or surgical appliances that are urgently required. Many people do not know that. The Minister pointed that out in his answer to a question by the hon. member for Baroona. The Minister's interests in this matter are that the needs of the public will be protected and not interfered with and that all chemists who are, or who may become, established in the prescribed area are treated fairly and equitably in the establishment and trade of the day-and-night co-operative.

The Minister for Labour and Industry in particular has for many months given his time to this problem. It can easily be sorted out. I appeal to the chemists of Queensland to assist by doing what some of the chemists that I have been associated with and that I have introduced to the Minister have done. They have said themselves, "We will comply with what the department asks because it is fair." They have done this, it is fair. I appeal to all other chemists to do likewise!

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 5.2 p.m.