

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1960**

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

#### QUESTIONS

##### INCREASES IN BRISBANE MEAT PRICES

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

“(1) Has his attention been drawn to what is apparently a deliberately misleading opinion in the ‘Telegraph’ of Tuesday, November 8, which attempts to place the responsibility for the seven pence increase in meat prices in Brisbane on the control over the supply of meat in the metropolitan area by the Brisbane Abattoir?”

“(2) Is it not a fact that the Cannon Hill Saleyards are merely a facility placed at the disposal of the buyers and sellers of cattle and the Queensland Meat Industry Board has nothing to do with the prices paid for the cattle sold at the Saleyards?”

“(3) Would it not be true to state that the only affect that the operations of the Brisbane Abattoir have on the price of meat to the Brisbane housewife is the charge per head imposed on the slaughtering of cattle owned by meat companies and individual buyers?”

“(4) For the correct information of the Brisbane public, will he outline the charges made for the slaughtering of cattle at the Brisbane Abattoir?”

“(5) How do these charges compare with those imposed by other abattoirs?”

"(6) Has there been any recent increase in the slaughtering charges levied at the Brisbane Abattoir which could affect the Brisbane meat prices?"

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

"(1) This statement has been noted and many others of a similar nature over the past twelve months which I can only regard as humbug and for the purpose of deceiving readers of the paper and Brisbane meat consumers."

"(2) Yes. The Cannon Hill saleyards are a facility provided for the sale by auction of cattle in the Metropolitan Area. They are administered by the Queensland Meat Industry Board and certain yardage fees are claimed where applicable. These charges are considered reasonable and comparable with similar charges in private yards elsewhere. In fact they are generally lower. Other than in respect to these very small charges, the Queensland Meat Industry Board has no influence on the price paid for cattle through the yards which is influenced by the fluctuations of supply and demand. The scale of charges is—Cattle, 1s. 3d. per head; calves (under 8 months), 4d. per head; sheep, 3d. per head."

"(3) Yes. Cattle are killed at the Brisbane Abattoir purely on operators' account with preference being given to those for local supply. Cattle are not in any way purchased by the Queensland Meat Industry Board and the only charge made is for slaughtering and dressing."

"(4) The following are current charges for slaughtering, washing, dressing, chilling and placing in the Meat Hall for delivery—Cattle, £1 7s. 6d. (inclusive of State inspection fee of 1s.); calves, from 8s. 3d. to 19s., depending on weight. These are, I understand, the lowest fees of this type charged at any public abattoir in Australia."

"(5) Charges imposed on cattle slaughtered at the principal abattoir, Homebush—the main Sydney source of supply for cattle—are 56s. 6d. per head, which includes a very recent increase of 3s. per head. Charges at public abattoirs in Victoria and South Australia are in excess of Queensland Meat Industry Board charges. Slaughtering charges for cattle at other Queensland abattoirs where the charges are made public vary from £1 10s. to £2 5s. per head. The saving to the Brisbane consumer when comparing Queensland Meat Industry Board charges and Homebush charges represent £176,000 in the twelve months ended June 30, 1960."

"(6) There has been an increase of six-pence per head in cattle at Brisbane Abattoir recently. In addition, certain credits for fats previously allowed and amounting to some 3s. per head have now been discontinued. It must be obvious to all fair-thinking people that the operations of

Cannon Hill have had no influence on recent rises in meat prices. This fact is well known to the Telegraph Newspaper Co. and therefore it does the paper no credit in deliberately misrepresenting the position to an uninformed public. Its efforts to masquerade as antagonists of monopolism is just as deceptive; in fact the Telegraph's proposal could do no other than thrust the Brisbane meat trade into the hands of monopolism."

#### SALE BY GOVERNMENT OF CONDEMNED MOTOR VEHICLES

**Mr. LLOYD** (Kedron) asked the Premier—

"(1) How many Government vehicles, which have previously been condemned by an Inspector of Machinery, have been sold during the past twelve months through the State Stores Board?"

"(2) In view of legislation covering the sale of used cars and trucks, is it the intention of the Government to discontinue the practice of selling condemned vehicles?"

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

"As I am advised, there has been no sale through the State Stores Board over the last twelve months of any vehicle, as a vehicle, which has been previously condemned by the Inspector of Machinery. However, there have been occasions when vehicles were sold in an unroadworthy condition for spare parts and other such uses under conditions which have been accepted by the prospective purchasers."

#### LIFT DRIVERS, PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL

**Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) In view of his reply to my question directed to him on November 8 that he will not sanction the re-employment of wardsmen to drive lifts at the Princess Alexandra Hospital during the day time, is this because of lack of finance?"

"(2) If not, will he, because of appeals for employment for physically handicapped people, give consideration to employing such handicapped people in the driving of lifts at the Princess Alexandra Hospital?"

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

"(1) No. The Hospital Administration is of the opinion that it is unnecessary to continue with a wardsmen or anyone else on duty as lift driver during the day time other than busy visiting hours."

"(2) The Hospital Administration is conscious of the desirability of employing physically handicapped persons in suitable positions and has recently employed one as a clerk-typist."

**MAINTENANCE STAFF, PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL**

**Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“(1) Is it the Government’s intention now or in the immediate future to reduce maintenance staff at the Princess Alexandra Hospital which has ensured the high efficiency requirements for medical facilities under the control of the South Brisbane Hospitals Board?”

“(2) If any dismissals are contemplated, what departments will be affected and when will those dismissals become effective?”

“(3) If the answers to (1) and (2) are in the affirmative, which I sincerely hope will not be so, in what way can dismissals, contemplated or actual, be co-related to his protestations that the high and efficient standard of public services in Queensland Hospitals will not suffer under his Government?”

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

“I am advised that the Administration of the Princess Alexander Hospital has no present intention of dismissing maintenance workers.”

**INSTALLATION OF ELECTRIC LIGHT, MT. SURPRISE AND GILBERT RIVER POLICE STATIONS**

**Mr. ARMSTRONG** (Mulgrave), for **Mr. GILMORE** (Tablelands), asked the Minister for Public Works and Local Government—

“Further to my approach in connection with the possibility of the installation of electric light at both the Mt. Surprise and Gilbert River Police Stations and my desire to have this very necessary amenity installed with as little delay as possible, has he given any further consideration to my requests?”

**Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS** (Whitsunday) replied—

“Following on the Honourable Member’s several approaches to me on these two matters I instructed my Department to expedite work on these projects. I am now pleased to advise that both projects are almost completed.”

**INQUIRY INTO GRAZING INDUSTRY**

**Mr. MELLOY** (Nudgee) asked the Premier—

“As this is not the first occasion on which Queensland has experienced severe drought conditions, and in view of the often expressed claim by graziers of their specialised skill and expert knowledge of their industry, and as they have apparently failed to take advantage of their experience by taking such measures as would offset the effects of drought conditions, and in view of the Premier’s statement in the press on November 9 that the State Government could not take action on the present high

meat prices, does he not consider it now desirable that the Government should appoint a committee to enquire into the industry, and advise the Government and the graziers on the proper functioning of the grazing industry in the interests of the people and the State?”

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

“I am afraid the Honourable Member is not aware of what is happening in the grazing areas of the State. Despite the fact that Queensland has and is experiencing one of the most widespread droughts on record, stock losses have been lighter than in previous lesser droughts. This has been due to the progressive policy being followed by the majority of graziers of water and fodder conservation, pasture improvement and improved husbandry methods. Careful enquiries made by officers of the Department of Agriculture and Stock have indicated that despite the serious drought adequate supplies of stock fodder, including stored fodder, are available at a reasonable price. As with many other foodstuffs the price of meat is controlled by supply and demand and retail prices are only altered on an accepted formula in conformity with wholesale prices paid at public auction. It is not considered that conditions are so unusual that a committee of enquiry is necessary nor is it considered that the present price of meat is out of line with retail prices in other States; in fact it is cheaper.”

**REDUCTION IN STAFF, BRISBANE GENERAL HOSPITAL**

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“(1) Is it a fact that officers of his Department are at the present time carrying out a survey of the staff required at the Brisbane General Hospital with a view to reducing its numbers to a level dangerous to the efficient operation of the hospital?”

“(2) Is the investigation being directed particularly at the maintenance staff?”

“(3) Have any dismissals been carried out or are any contemplated as a result of the investigations up to this date?”

“(4) Can any dismissals be justified in the interest of efficient operation of the institution and in view also of the increased allocation for hospitals in the recent budget?”

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

“(1) No survey has been made for the purpose mentioned by the Honourable Member. Neither the Hospital Authorities nor the Department would tolerate a reduction of staff to a level dangerous to the efficient operation of the Hospital.”

“(2), (3) and (4) No dismissals have been carried out, nor are any contemplated.”

SALE OF CROWN LAND, ROWES BAY,  
TOWNSVILLE

**Mr. TUCKER** (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“(1) Is it the intention of the Lands Department to open up further land at Rowes Bay, Townsville, in the very near future?”

“(2) Will these allotments be sold on a freehold basis to the highest bidder irrespective of how much land or property that bidder might already own?”

“(3) If so, will he not agree that this encourages speculation and that in the face of this method the average person has little hope of acquiring land on which to build at other than exorbitant prices?”

**Hon. A. R. FLETCHER** (Cunningham) replied—

“(1) There is not at present any reasonable area of land suitable for sale as residential allotments.”

“(2 and 3.) For the information of the Honourable Member, I have to state that arrangements are in hand for the calling of applications under “The Crown Land Development Act of 1959” for the development for residential usage of a substantial area of land at Rowes Bay, Townsville, as soon as advice is received from the Townsville City Council as to its requirements in the scheme of development and also information as to the site to which the Council’s Depot is to be shifted from its existing position.”

DRILLING OPERATIONS, WEST MORETON  
COALFIELD

**Mr. DONALD** (Ipswich East) asked the Acting Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“Is it the intention of the Department to dispense with the service of those employees engaged in drilling operations on the West Moreton Coalfield and stationed at Redbank?”

**Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick) replied—  
“No.”

INVESTIGATION INTO USE OF TROPICAL  
CROWN LANDS

**Mr. ARMSTRONG** (Mulgrave) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

“In view of a statement published in ‘The Courier-Mail’ of November 1 concerning a committee to examine the correct permanent use of tropical Crown lands,—

(1) When will the committee commence its investigation?

(2) What areas will be investigated first?

(3) Is it the purpose of the committee to define what lands should be held for

forestry purposes and what lands should be held for grazing purposes and for agricultural purposes?”

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

“The Honourable the Minister for Public Lands and myself, as Minister for Agriculture and Forestry have collaborated very closely in regard to the development of Crown Lands in the North. In view of past experience any scheme involving extensive clearing of rain forest in North Queensland should be approached cautiously and thoroughly examined before decision is reached. We considered that the formation of a Committee representing the Department of Lands, Agriculture and Forestry to investigate the use of the Northern lands was the best method of approach to this question. Our approach to this matter received wholehearted Government support. Regarding the specific questions the answers are:— (1) The Committee has already commenced work preliminary to field inspections. (2) Field inspections will commence in the South of the area, near Townsville and extend Northwards. (3) The Committee will submit recommendations on the correct permanent use of the subject areas. The Honourable Member may rest assured that it is the Government’s keen desire to have these lands used for the purpose to which they are best suited.”

ISSUE OF CROWN LEASES, TULLY AREA

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

“(1) Is it a fact that a man named Dinan of Tully, and a man named Mackly of Ingham recently were successful in the ballot for the two blocks of land thrown open in the Tully area for cattle-fattening purposes, but that no official approval for the granting of the leases has yet been made.”

“(2) If so, is he aware that, at this time of the year, the delay of a few weeks in the granting of the leases may mean a year’s delay in preparing the land for pasture-sowing and in view of this fact will he expedite the granting of the leases?”

**Hon. A. R. FLETCHER** (Cunningham) replied—

“(1) The ballot for the two blocks in question was held at Innisfail on October 6. The names of the two successful applications were forwarded to Brisbane, checked as to the ability in law of the applicants to hold the land and subsequently were approved by the Land Court on October 26. The local Land Commissioner was advised of this approval on the following day and the formal notices of approval of application to select the lands in question were forwarded by him to the successful applicants on the 7th instant.”

"(2) To enable the issue of the instruments of lease, the successful applicants will be required to enter into bona fide personal residence on the holdings and enclose the leased lands with a stock proof fence. Meanwhile the lands are held by the applicants under License to Occupy which entitles the licensees to possession, and enables them to proceed with the work of timber treatment and pasture improvement."

RELEASE OF S. R. EBERLE BY PAROLE BOARD

**Mr. AIKENS** (Townsville South): Mr. Speaker, before I ask the Minister for Justice Question No. 13 standing in my name, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that paragraph 6 has been deleted. Although I know it was very embarrassing to the Minister, I should like to have your assurance that that was not why you deleted it.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** The hon. member for Townsville South should be well aware that questions seeking an expression of opinion or giving an expression of opinion are not permissible under the Standing Orders. I would also draw attention to the fact that the original paragraph 3 was deleted from the question, mainly because it was asking the Minister, not to give an expression of opinion, but whether he had any knowledge of a private family, and the history of a private family, which I think is entirely out of order.

I think, for the information of all hon. members, I could well draw attention to a ruling on questions that has been quoted on a number of occasions in this House and of which all older hon. members are well aware. This is the ruling—

"The purpose of a Question is to obtain information, and not to supply it to the House. It should relate to public affairs with which a Minister is officially connected, to proceedings pending in Parliament, or to any matter of administration for which the Minister is responsible. An explanation may be sought regarding the intentions of the Government, but not an expression of opinion upon matters of policy. Questions should not contain statements of facts, unless they be necessary to make the Question intelligible, and can be authenticated; nor should a Question contain arguments, inferences, imputations, epithets, or ironical expressions.

"A Question should not be in effect a short speech or convey a particular point of view to which members who hold different views have no opportunity of replying. The expression of an opinion cannot be sought for by a Question; nor is it in order to ask whether certain things, such as statements made in a newspaper are true, but attention may be drawn to such statements if the Member who puts the Question makes himself responsible for their accuracy."

There is more to that quotation but I think what I have read should be sufficient to give hon. members an idea of how to frame their questions.

**Mr. AIKENS:** Now I will ask the Minister my question. I know that there is no need to ask him for his opinion about drunken killers of little kids. He thinks that they should be rewarded—that they should be honoured.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! The hon. member will please ask his question.

**Mr. AIKENS** then asked the following question:—

"(1) Who is the judge under whose chairmanship the Parole Board released Stevan Ross Eberle under a parole order made on October 21, 1960, after Eberle had served only 10 months' imprisonment for manslaughter?"

"(2) When and how was this decision of the Parole Board made public, prior to a question on the matter being asked by me in Parliament?"

"(3) Again I ask on what grounds or for what reasons was Eberle released by the Parole Board?"

"(4) Were the views of the Trial Judge sought by the Parole Board before it reached its decision and, if not, why not?"

"(5) Is he aware that many prisoners, still in gaol, have served more than 10 months for stealing?"

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong): As the hon. member for Townsville South, in the preamble to his question, made a personal reference to the Minister for Justice, I should just like to say that there was nothing in any part of his question that has been excluded that was in any way embarrassing to me.

**Mr. Aikens:** I want you to tell the House what you really think about drunken killers of little kiddies.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! If the hon. member continues to interrupt I will have to deal with him under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr. MUNRO:** But I do feel that the terms that were excluded were such that they should be very, very embarrassing to the hon. member who sought to ask the question.

**Mr. Aikens:** I am on the side of the kids.

**Mr. MUNRO:** Proceeding now to the answer—

"(1) In terms of the Offenders Probation and Parole Act of 1959, the Chairman of the Parole Board is a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland nominated by the Chief Justice and appointed by the Governor in Council. The Honourable Mr. Justice Hanger is the Chairman of the Board."

"(2 and 3) The Offenders Probation and Parole Act of 1959, does not require that decisions of the Parole Board be made public or that the reasons for such decisions be given. To any clear thinking person with a knowledge of these matters it is quite evident that it would not be in the public interest for the names of persons released on parole to be publicised or for reasons to be given publicly for decisions in particular cases."

"(4) The question of whether or not the Parole Board seeks an expression of the views of the Trial Judge in any case is entirely a matter for the Board. I understand that it is not the practice of the Board to obtain the views of the Trial Judge unless there are special reasons for so doing."

"(5) I am advised by the Comptroller-General of Prisons that there are only a very few prisoners in gaol who have served more than ten months for stealing."

#### DISTRIBUTION OF DRAFT MODEL COMPANIES BILL

**Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) Did he distribute copies of the 417-paged draft Companies Bill to various Queensland organisations on Monday, November 7, together with an accompanying letter, as a report in 'The Courier-Mail' indicated?"

"(2) If so, why then did he not make available copies to Parliamentarians for their information and perusal or does he consider those people, charged with the responsibility of the protection of the public and the duty of debating and dissecting legislation, did not warrant a copy?"

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—

"As this question and the question by the hon. member for Baroona deal with the same subject matter, I propose to give a combined answer to the two questions."

**Mr. HANLON** (Baroona) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) With reference to the wide distribution by him of copies of the draft Companies Bill, how many Parliamentary Members of the Country-Liberal Party have received a copy from him?"

"(2) How many members of the Opposition apart from the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Queensland Labour Party received individual copies from him?"

"(3) How many copies were issued all told by him?"

**Hon. A. W. MUNRO** (Toowong) replied—

"As these two questions cover substantially the same subject matter it is convenient to avoid repetition by answering the two questions together. In the first place it is necessary to remove any possible misunderstanding by stating that the document referred to in the questions is not a Bill within the meaning of the Standing Orders of the Queensland Legislative Assembly nor is it a Bill or even a draft Bill proposed to be introduced in this Parliament. This is made clear in the opening paragraph of my covering memorandum of November 7, 1960, addressed to certain organisations in which it is stated—'Forwarded herewith is a copy of a draft of a Model Companies Bill which has been prepared following conferences of State and Commonwealth Ministers, who have met from time to time with the objective of attaining the greatest practicable measure of uniformity in Company Law throughout the Australian Commonwealth and Territories. It is particularly to be noted that the Bill is still in the draft stage and has not been finally considered by the Ministers, who are desirous of having available the views and comments of interested organisations affected by the Bill before making final decisions.' The distinction between this Australia-wide Model Companies Bill and the proposed Queensland Bill is further emphasised in the final paragraph of the covering memorandum from which I quote—'I am sure that you will look at both the Model Bill and the Queensland Bill (when it is available) with broad and tolerant understanding of the content, without unduly emphasising (though of course not excluding) your particular interests and having regard to the basic requirements of simplification, clarity and the attainment of the greatest practicable measure of uniformity throughout Australia.' It will be apparent from the foregoing that the reasons why copies of the document referred to in the questions have not been sent to members of the Queensland Parliament are:—'Firstly, that the document referred to in the questions is not a Bill to be introduced in this Parliament but merely a draft of a Model Bill still under consideration in the course of the work of the Interstate Conferences of Ministers and Officers; and Secondly, that the proposed Queensland Companies Bill has not yet been prepared and printed and therefore is not yet available for distribution.' In addition to this it may be mentioned that it is not the practice of Parliament to circulate copies of Parliamentary Bills before the passing of the customary motions for introduction and printing. To complete the answer to these questions I may mention that the draft Model Bill was printed by the Government Printer in Sydney and limited supplies only have been forwarded

to each State. Approximately forty copies have been circulated in Queensland, these being allocated in the main to those organisations and persons who would be in a position to give an informed opinion on any matters requiring further consideration in the finalisation of the draft and its adaptation to Queensland conditions. As regards Country-Liberal Parliamentary Members circulation has been limited to Ministers and to six Parliamentary Members who are members of the Justice Department Legislation Committee. In addition, purely as a matter of courtesy, copies have been supplied to the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Queensland Labour Party and to one Australian Labour Party Member who had evinced a particular interest in Company Law and had specially requested a copy to enable him to study it during the coming week-end. A copy has also been supplied to the Parliamentary Library."

**Mr. Aikens** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER** Order!

**Mr. Aikens:** —like a mangy dog.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I have already warned the hon. member for Townsville South that if he continued to be grossly disorderly I would deal with him under Section 123A of the Standing Orders, and I now ask him to retire from the Chamber for being grossly disorderly.

**Mr. Aikens:** I just want to repeat that the Minister treats me like a mangy dog.

(The hon. member for Townsville South withdrew from the Chamber.)

**Mr. MUNRO:** The answer continues—

"Finally, I may say that I hope to be in a position to introduce the proposed Queensland Bill at a later stage during the present Sittings and Honourable Members may be assured that if introduced, the Bill will be available in good time for them to study it during the Christmas recess and well before its final enactment which is planned for March or April, 1961."

#### PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply 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.

Sixtieth Annual Report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

#### AUCTIONEERS, REAL ESTATE AGENTS, DEBT COLLECTORS AND MOTOR DEALERS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

##### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

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

Debate resumed from 9 November, (see p. 1344) on Mr. Munro's motion—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Acts, 1922 to 1953, in certain particulars."

**Mr. DUGGAN** (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.35 a.m.): I do not propose to take up a great deal of time in discussing the Bill at this stage. I prefer to have the Bill circulated so that hon. members may study its provisions.

The Minister outlined the chief principles of the Bill. He said that it was intended to have four types of licenses; that it was also intended to tighten up the section of the Act covering the lodging of fidelity bonds, that the amounts of the bonds would be increased and that it was intended to tighten up the requirements for the granting of such licenses.

It will be generally agreed that public opinion is receptive to the idea that there should be some amendment of the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Acts. At present the Act conveys a false impression; unquestionably some who have been permitted to operate under it have offended in some respects. There is justification for Government intervention in a tightening up of the law, in the interests of reputable real estate agents, and, more importantly, in the interests of the general public.

The increase in the amount of the fidelity bonds is desirable. Although the amounts were increased some time ago, the value of money has declined and it is necessary to provide for an upward movement in the amounts. That will be done under the Bill.

I am not quite clear from the Minister's introductory speech as to the precise procedure to be followed for the registration of these people. The Minister said five character references will be required and that a board will review the applications. Is it to be construed that there will be virtually a registration of these people, that is, that the number will be restricted to a given number, or is it that the board will not limit the number, as long as the applicants satisfy the board as to their general qualifications and fitness to discharge their responsibilities?

I think it is desirable that there should be an increase in the number of character references. At the same time I think it is

fair to point out that many people in public life are called upon from time to time to furnish character references. I sometimes have to stretch my conscience a little to indicate that I know a person sufficiently well to give him a reference that will command a great measure of respect by those to whom it is tendered. A person in public life will know that certain people live in his area. As far as he knows, they are quite reputable and desirable citizens, but in actual fact he does not know a great deal about their business operations or other features of their private life which may be of importance to those who need to know such things. For instance, they would need to know definitely whether a person has any alcoholic inclinations, whether he is lazy or intemperate, or whether he has a great deal of trouble in getting on with other people.

There would always be a great degree of disinclination on the part of a public representative to tell a person that he cannot furnish him with a reference because he does not deserve it. Few of us would have the moral courage to say that to a person seeking a reference. My point is that the giving of references becomes more or less a routine procedure. The practice is something that should be examined closely and the giving of references perhaps restricted to those who know the person very well. I hope I have not involved myself or other hon. members in making that statement. Hon. members are approached from time to time by persons seeking character references. We sometimes know the parents of the applicant or members of his family; we may even know the individual, and generally we state that to the best of our knowledge he is a person of good character. I feel that character references should be furnished by someone who has had intimate business dealings with the applicant, such as a banker. I think a banker could be a person who might be regarded if not as a mandatory person, at least as a very desirable person, to give a reference, and there should be provision for some such person to furnish a reference. I am not saying, of course, that I think members of Parliament should be excluded from the privilege of furnishing references for these people, but it is desirable in a general way—and these submissions may perhaps bear examination—that people who have had a number of intimate dealings with the applicants should give references.

Of course, there have been very strong moves by people engaged in industry generally to make for themselves a close preserve. We have seen that in many directions. I know that the Government have been asked, from time to time, to examine submissions from people who want registration on the grounds that there is need to improve the ethical standards of the profession or business in which they are engaged, and they have offered supporting reasons for believing that this protection should be afforded them. I believe the present Government have been

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probably as reluctant as previous Governments to accord registration unless they believed there was very good public justification for it. This has been so, firstly, because in a free enterprise community there should be the opportunity, as far as possible, for people to use their talents in whatever direction they think they may best be exploited or used, and secondly, because the Government think it is undesirable to erect fences around a particular occupation unless there are very strong professional or other reasons for doing so.

Of course, the Real Estate Institute—in the sense perhaps of some of the other professions—so far has not laid down any particular standards of qualification for entrance to the profession. The chief requirement very often is a capacity to sell, and if a person is a good salesman and has a good sales record, invariably the real estate people are anxious to offer him a position. It is true that some of them qualify as valuers, and have to study real estate matters very closely. It is true also that some of the members of, or partners in, leading firms undergo special examinations and possess diplomas or certificates showing that they have made a very close study of real estate generally.

I support the Bill on the basis that there is need for a measure of protection to be given to members of the public against some of the snide practices that have crept in. I hope the Minister is not going to make a close preserve for the people presently in the profession. I do not think that is quite the intention as I did not gain that impression from the Minister's remarks, but I should like an assurance from him that that is not so—I do not think it is desirable at this stage. If at a later stage the members of the Real Estate Institute can convince the Minister that that is a step that should be taken, he may be prepared to take it and we can look into the matter then.

Unfortunately there are a number of people in the profession who, in my opinion, do not conform to the high standards of the Real Estate Institute. I have had a long and happy association with the members of the Real Estate Institute in Queensland. I have been to all their annual functions. They have offered me the courtesy of inviting me to attend their official functions, and have asked me on many occasions to be guest speaker. I have a very lively and warm appreciation of that courtesy from the leading members of the institute in both this city and Toowoomba, and I have a very high regard for the men who constitute its executive. I know they are motivated by the very best intentions in wanting to improve the operating conditions of their profession. I have only the highest praise for those people because on several occasions they have brought to my notice some of the malpractices that have occurred in the profession. The Minister indicated one or two specific examples of that and he is putting a "plug" into certain practices that have apparently been operating in

Brisbane. I know these things are going on, because only as recently as Sunday night my attention was drawn to the very thing that the Minister proposes to remedy—the listing of sales.

The Bill may help to give new Australians in particular confidence in any transactions or dealings they may have with members of the Real Estate Institute. I have on my file details of a case of flagrant misrepresentation in which the court upheld the appeal. New Australians come, in the main, from countries that have been war-torn for centuries; they have seen their land ravaged and destroyed, and the first thing they want to do when they come to Australia is to acquire their own home on their own block of land. At times they are gulled into a sense of false security by the very glowing inducements made. Responsible members of the Real Estate Institute would be the first to join with public men generally in trying to establish a bond of confidence between that Institute and new Australians in particular. It applies, of course, to everybody in Australia, but more so to new Australians because, with their language difficulties and their inexperience, they are not always as conversant with procedures and practices as perhaps the native-born Australian. I hope there will be an improvement in this direction.

Whether there can be some curb on extravagant claims about land I do not know. Some cases concern land that is below flood levels. I do not know what action the Minister can take about that. People buy land in good faith and subsequently discover that it is subject to flooding. Somewhere along the line they should be afforded protection, either by the Institute or by the Department, against misrepresentation.

**Mr. Hughes:** Don't you think it should be noted as an encumbrance on the title deed?

**Mr. DUGGAN:** Yes, that is quite a good suggestion. Many people could easily be misled in the Oxley area, for instance. I go out that way every week-end. The ordinary person seeing the hundreds of houses in the vicinity would naturally assume that the area was a good one for home-building. It is only after a sudden heavy precipitation of water in the storm season of the year that one sees some of those homes under two or three feet of water. I do not mind that if it happens only in exceptional circumstances, but it is different when it is part of the general conditions in the area. So it might be an excellent suggestion to have the fact noted on the title deed.

**Mr. Hughes:** Many people do not know that the Council has proclaimed problem drainage areas.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** That is right. The Council from time to time promulgates those areas but the ordinary purchaser of land does not always know that it is necessary or desirable to go along and seek the particulars from Council.

The Bill is a step in the right direction. There are many aspects of the matter that we may elaborate more on the second reading but we do not want to introduce extraneous matters into this debate. We could open it up for the purpose of making interesting discussion, but I will confine myself at this stage to the general considerations that caused the Minister to introduce the Bill. Because of the protection it affords we think it desirable that some action should be taken along the lines indicated. However, I should like to have some clarification and some assurance from the Minister about the proposed provision for examining particular applications for licences. If the Minister will take us into his confidence on that, we shall more confidently support the Bill.

Generally the Bill seems to be a desirable one. No doubt many hon. members could cite example after example of unethical practices in the profession and steps should be taken to overcome them. I have indicated in a general way that it has come to our notice that they have occurred in the past and that as far as possible action should be taken either by the Real Estate Institute in disciplining its members or by the department in laying down a general code. The matter is becoming increasingly important as land values increase. In many instances the purchase price of land has risen to astronomical proportions. Some people expect that there will be an increasing tendency to go in for home units because it will sooner or later be beyond the capacity of the ordinary married worker to buy land except at a very high price. His earning capacity and saving capacity are such that he cannot pay these high prices. Consequently, he has to go out some miles from the centre of the city, and this adds to his transport costs.

If we have these high land values, which the Minister no doubt will say are occasioned by supply and demand, I think we should see that the person seeking a title to the land is made aware of the advantages and disadvantages. If he is not, and the disadvantages are sufficient to disqualify it, a heavy penalty should be imposed on the vendor on the basis of general misrepresentation.

**Mr. Hughes:** Most land is sold on low deposit.

**Mr. DUGGAN:** That is another matter for debate. I am not going to canvass it in this particular debate.

In general, I think I can say that the Bill is desirable. The members of the Real Estate Institute in Queensland are men of very high business principles and personal integrity, and I know it is their wish to see that some improvements are made. Provided there is no undue fencing-in in this regard, I am prepared to co-operate with the Minister in improving the standards in this State.

**Mr. BURROWS** (Port Curtis) (11.52 a.m.): I wish to draw the Minister's attention to what I believe is a fault common to auctioneers and commission agents and other people who keep trust accounts.

In examining trust accounts, I have often noticed this fault, an innocent one to a degree. It is in banking money to the wrong account. The mistake occurs firstly because the trust account and the business account of the principal are kept at the one bank, and secondly because the principal does not exercise the supervision that he should. He usually delegates authority to a girl in his office or a junior employee to make up the deposits. A carbon bank-deposit book is used for the trust account that is identical with the carbon bank-deposit book used for the general account. I think all hon. members are familiar with the procedure. If one wants a bank-deposit book, one goes to the bank and blank forms are supplied. The name of the account is then either written in the space available or put in by means of a rubber stamp. The principal of the firm, or the auctioneer or commission agent, thinks he has discharged his responsibility by telling the girl to put the stamp marked "Trust Account" on each page of the book. Sometimes she might turn over two pages at once, or in some other way she might not carry out his instructions implicitly. As a result, money is deposited to the wrong account.

This could be overcome quite easily by an amendment to the Regulations or the Act. The Minister for Justice could insist on the trust accounts being kept at a different bank from the one at which the general account is kept. If that suggestion does not commend itself to him, he could insist that the Government Printer be required to provide a special trust account bank-deposit book, on every page of which the words "Trust Account" would be conspicuously printed and not placed on it by means of a rubber stamp, which is the method used at present. The Minister could prohibit the practice of delegating authority for the signing of deposit slips and insist that only the principal should sign. The principal then would not be able to say that it was the honest mistake of a junior employee who did not know any better. We realise that a principal is responsible for the actions of his servants, but what I suggest would be very safe and would save a lot of bother. In 99.9 per cent. of cases the mistake is discovered immediately and an adjustment is made by the bank, but what is exercising my mind is the difficulty that arises should a trustee either become bankrupt or die. If the trust money had been paid into the wrong account it would be shown as part of the trustee's assets. The whole purpose of trusteeship could be defeated. The money is lost once it goes into his general account. It is all very well to say that the principal could be sued, but what happens if he is either bankrupt or dead? Once the money has gone into his estate it may take a long time before the estate

is finalised and the mistake can be rectified. It is better to take every precaution to ensure that the money goes into the correct trust account in the first place. I have no quarrel with the Bill but I make that suggestion to the Minister, for what it is worth, in the hope that he will be able to prevent a recurrence of this type of mistake.

In the short time available I draw the Minister's attention to the disparity between the commissions charged by various auctioneers. On the sales of stock at Cannon Hill they charge 3½ per cent., but in most country towns they charge 5 per cent. Some agents give their clients what they call a rebate on the commission. The rate of commission is set out in the Act, but with the high price being received for livestock today it would appear that agents could well afford to work on lower commissions.

Progress reported.

*At 12 noon, in accordance with Standing Order No. 30, the House went into Committee of Supply.*

## SUPPLY

### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—SEVENTH AND EIGHTH ALLOTTED DAYS

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

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1960-1961

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CHIEF OFFICE

**Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS** (Whitsunday—Minister for Public Works and Local Government): I move—

"That £233,243 be granted for 'Department of Public Works and Local Government—Chief Office'."

It will be noted that the total amount appropriated under "Chief Office" for the financial year 1960-1961, £233,243, is £32,694 in excess of the amount so appropriated for the financial year 1959-1960, which was £200,549, and £40,909 in excess of that expended in the past year. This increase is occasioned mainly by the fact that additional provision has been made to meet increased expenditure for salaries due to an increase in the number of officers being paid from Consolidated Revenue and also award and basic wage increases granted by the Industrial Court.

Increased provision is also required for the Contingencies Vote—travelling expenses, postages, and incidentals, and fares, freights, printing and stationery.

Before I review last year's Vote I should like to make special reference to my predecessor, Hon. J. A. Heading, who took over this portfolio at a very ripe age and is now living in retirement. I sincerely trust that he will be blessed with good health to enrich

the hours and days of his retirement, which I think every hon. member in this Chamber will agree he so richly deserves. Therefore, when today I refer to what happened during the last financial year I take no personal credit at all, because that was the year of my predecessor. But if there are any brickbats to be thrown they can be thrown at me. I can assure hon. members I will be able to handle them very well and account for anything that they think may not be up to scratch.

In submitting these Estimates, it is appropriate that I should review the work of the department for the past financial year. The total expenditure on buildings, £6,516,917, during the year was the highest on record, being over £1,000,000 greater than the previous highest, which was for the previous financial year, 1958,1959, when the figure was £5,499,123. That is indicative of the heavy programme of building construction undertaken throughout the State by my department.

The activities of my department are concerned with public buildings and extend to the construction of new buildings and additions and improvements to existing buildings, together with the maintenance of those buildings. Once again, due to the large increase in enrolments at both primary and secondary schools the emphasis on spending in the past financial year has been on the provision of accommodation to meet educational requirements. Secondary-school enrolments, now at 26,000, have doubled in the past three years and it is expected that by February next year they will have soared to 32,000. It is also expected that next year will see the peak of high-school enrolments resulting from the high birthrate that followed the war years. After next year high-school enrolments will increase, but not, it is expected, at anything like the rate in recent years. Owing to the increase it has been necessary to give high priority to the provision of secondary-school accommodation in the various centres. A comparison of the expenditure on secondary-school buildings in 1951-1952 and 1959-1960 indicates clearly the rising cost of secondary-school accommodation in recent years. In 1951-1952 £153,000 was spent from the Loan Fund on secondary schools, whereas in the financial year to 30 June, 1960, the amount was £1,500,000. That is something of an achievement. Eight years ago only £153,000 was spent on secondary schools, but for the last financial year the expenditure was 10 times that amount.

To meet expected requirements over the next two years it will be necessary to undertake a record school-construction programme, both in the current financial year and in the following year. At this stage I think it would be fitting to deal with some of the projects that will be commenced or completed during the current financial year. On primary schools we estimate the expenditure will be

£1,470,000. In the Brisbane area we have to complete the Coorparoo Infants' State School, on which £20,000 was expended last year and on which £7,000 has been spent this year. The estimated cost of the new Inala West school is £30,000, and we expect to spend that sum in the present financial year. A small amount will be used to finish the new school at Seven Hills and a sum slightly in excess of £6,000 should bring to completion the Stafford infants' school. We estimate spending about £15,000 or £16,000 for school accommodation on the new site at The Gap. That should allow completion of the project.

In the country, work will be undertaken on a number of primary schools. Unfortunately we cannot complete each school in a single financial year. In an effort to distribute the finances and get the various projects under way, some money is allocated for each. For instance, for a £24,000 or £30,000 project the estimate of expenditure this year will probably be £10,000 or a little more. In most of these cases work will start in the early part of the year, say, about March or April, and by the time the amount allotted has been expended a new financial year will have started and we will thus be able to complete the projects.

There are more reasons than one for doing things that way. Hon. members will realise that we desire to conserve our staff also. We have a particularly heavy period for school construction from September-October to the end of January, and maybe up to the end of February, putting finishing touches on the buildings. Anybody who gives the matter a little thought will realise that it would be impossible to have a complete splurge of spending during those five months, and then dismiss completely our work force for four or five months.

No doubt hon. members will remember that questions were asked in this Chamber as to why a number of building workers were put off round about March this year. That is nothing new; it has gone on every year because of the circumstances I have outlined. There is a heavy building programme over the period I mentioned. It is going on now.

In the past two or three months we have been consistently building up our work force to cater for the heavy building programme we have on hand.

I have here a chart that I instituted on taking over the office, and I have a regular fortnightly statement of the employment return for construction employees. It commences from the end of August. I have the progressive figures for 15 September, 30 September, 15 October and 31 October. During that period the grand total of employees increased from 2,319 to 2,631. It is interesting to note the distribution of this work force. The Brisbane area includes Ipswich and the North and South Coast districts, so it will be seen

that it is not just the Greater Brisbane area; it could almost be referred to as the South-eastern Queensland area. In the central district we had 186 employees in August and now we have 279; in the northern area there were 607; that figure has risen to 617. In the southern area there were 616, and the number has increased to 702. Of course, there is always a certain number of absences due to annual leave, sickness, workers' compensation, and so on. In August there was a total of 114; this number dropped to 78, then to 59, then it increased to 84, and at the present time it is 102.

In the Bundaberg area, which includes centres such as Biggenden, Childers, Eidsvold, Gayndah, Gin Gin and Mundubbera, the figures have remained fairly steady. In August the work force numbered 50; it rose to 53 and at present it is 49.

In the Cairns area, which includes Atherton, Babinda, Cooktown, Gordonvale, Innisfail, Mareeba and Tully, the figure has risen from 108 to 122.

In the Mackay area, which includes Bowen, Collinsville, Mirani, Proserpine and Sarina, the work force has jumped from 64 to 110.

In the Maryborough area, which includes Cooroy, Gympie, Kingaroy, Murgon, Nanango, Proston and Woodford, the work force has jumped from 80 to 82.

In Rockhampton, which covers centres such as Alpha, Biloela, Barcaldine, Emerald, Clermont, Gladstone, Longreach, Mount Morgan and Winton, the figure has risen from 114 to 137.

In the Toowoomba zone, which covers areas such as Charleville, Crow's Nest, Cunnamulla, Dirranbandi, Goondiwindi, Jondaryan, Oakey, Pittsworth, Roma, Stanthorpe and Warwick, the work force has risen from 189 in August to 230 at present.

In the Townsville area, which includes Burketown, Charters Towers, Cloncurry, Hughenden, Mount Isa, Richmond and Ingham, the work force has increased from 191 to 201.

So we have a total work force of 1,700 in the southern area and 931 in the country areas. The Queensland Department of Public Works at present has perhaps the largest building work force in the southern hemisphere. Recently, I had the opportunity of discussing public works with the Ministers and senior officers of the departments in other States, particularly New South Wales and Victoria, and, although in both New South Wales and Victoria the department has many projects tied in with it, together they do not have a building work force as large as ours. Almost all the work on New South Wales schools is done by contract. In Queensland the reverse is the position; very rarely is a school erected by contract.

**Mr. Thackeray:** I hope you are not going to deviate from the present policy.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** As a matter of fact, we have enlarged on the policy, as the hon. member must realise, and what happens will depend entirely on the people themselves. As long as the work force can continue to do the job it is doing, I see no reason whatever for any alteration. But if conditions were different, we would not hesitate to follow in the footsteps of the Labour Government of New South Wales and do this work by contract, if necessary.

I have already dealt with primary schools in the city areas, but I have details of a number of schools in country areas that I should like to include in "Hansard" for the information of people in those areas. First, there is the Cairns Central School. A third section of the brick school is estimated to cost £35,000, of which £10,000 will be expended in the present financial year. At Canungra there is a new school on a new site. We estimated that it will cost £18,000, and it is expected to be completed in this financial year.

**Mr. Thackeray:** Did you start all these, or did the former Minister?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** If the hon. member only had a little bit of brain in that egg-shell blond skull of his, he would realise that I said earlier that I took no credit for anything that happened in the past 12 months. I know it is difficult for the hon. member to absorb that, but if we leave him here till about 9 o'clock tonight, he will suddenly wake up.

At Currumbin we estimate that school accommodation on a new site will cost £30,000, of which £10,000 will be spent in the present financial year. At Dalby the first section of a new school is estimated to cost £40,000, of which £10,000 is expected to be spent this financial year. At Dinmore school accommodation on a new site is expected to cost £25,000, and £10,000 will be spent on it this financial year. At Glennie Heights the school is almost completed, most of the work being done last year. The same applies in the case of Gympie Central Infants' School, where £31,000 was spent in the last financial year and only a few thousand pounds is need to complete it. At Gympie South a new school is estimated to cost £30,000 and it is expected to be completed this financial year, also. The estimated cost of the Hermit Park Infants' School, Townsville, was £34,000, of which £8,900 was spent last year and about £25,000 is to be spent in this financial year. The estimated cost of the Ipswich Central School was £83,000. An amount of £66,000 was spent last year, and a further £17,000 is allowed this year for the completion of the project.

**Mr. Houghton:** You will have to build another new one at Sandgate, too.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** Yes, it will be the third one that we have had to build at Sandgate. It is interesting to note that the fires at Sandgate have cost the Government between £60,000 and £100,000. The rebuilding of the school is a matter of urgency, and it means that somebody else has to go without. It is a great pity that the fires occurred. It is expected that £10,000 will be spent this year on the new school at Lowood to cost £25,000. The new Nambour infants' school is about completed. I had the pleasure of inspecting it a month or two ago when very little work remained to be done. On this school £10,000 was spent last year and about £15,000 will be spent on it this financial year. The new school at Red Hill, Kingaroy, to cost £20,000 should be completed this year. Half of the £30,000 project at Southport will be completed this year. The Warwick Central school, costing £21,900, is expected to be completed this year. In Townsville £10,000 will be spent this year on the new Wulguru school which is expected to cost £24,000.

I think all hon. members will agree that that is a fair programme for primary-school construction, totalling £1,470,000. The figure is much higher for high-school construction. The estimated expenditure this financial year on high schools totals £2,011,000. The schools are being constructed throughout the State. There are several big projects both in the metropolitan area and in country areas. Many were commenced last year. I refer first of all to the new high school at Stafford estimated to cost £150,000, of which £65,000 will be spent this year. The first one on the list in the country is the new high school at Atherton, on which £78,000 was spent last year and on which a further £30,000 will be spent this year to complete it. I inspected it a few months ago, and I should say that from both the point of view of appearance and general facilities it compares more than favourably with any other high school in Queensland. It is in a beautiful situation.

**Mr. Ramsden:** It is probably the best in the State.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** There is no doubt about that. At long last a new high school is being built at Bowen, at an estimated cost of £90,000. Work has commenced. Following the early closing down of the Merinda meatworks the hon. member for Bowen approached me on behalf of 12 carpenters employed there. We were able to use them to expedite the start on the new high school. They have been given employment and construction of the school is going ahead. We had a little difficulty in getting bricklayers but we were able to send some from the south to work on the foundations. Hon. members will realise that with the present type of construction virtually the whole of the brickwork is in the foundations.

Of course, Bremer has been more or less completed. At Caboolture there is a new high school to cost £120,000, £60,000 of

which will be spent this year. There is one at Charleville to cost £150,000, £50,000 of which will be spent this year. At Childers there is a £100,000 project of which £25,000 was spent last year; £35,000 will be spent this year and possibly the balance in the following year.

Then we have £120,000 for the Gatton High School, £55,000 of which will be spent this year. The Mackay High School is to cost £150,000, of which £50,000 was spent last year and £65,000 is being spent this year. Undoubtedly the balance will be spent in the following year.

At Malanda £100,000 is to be spent on a high school; it is expected that we will spend £50,000 this year. Mareeba has a £95,000 project on which half that sum was spent last year. It is expected that a further £25,000 will be spent this year. Another beautiful school in a country area of which I have made an inspection is the new high school at Pimlico opposite the Townsville University. This school is estimated to cost £140,000; £75,000 was spent last year and £55,000 is being spent this year. It is almost completed. I had a look at that also when Cabinet met in Townsville recently.

Then there is the Redcliffe school, which is also almost completed. Rockhampton has a new high school to cost £190,000 of which £75,000 was spent last year and £50,000 is being spent this year. The Stanthorpe High School is a £100,000 project on which £50,000 is being spent in the current financial year.

**Mr. Sullivan:** That is progress.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** It certainly is. £150,000 is to be spent on a high school at Mt. Lofty. £66,000 was spent last year and a further £60,000-odd will be spent this year. Of a total cost of £150,000 for the new high school at Trinity Bay, West Cairns, £45,000 has been spent last year and £70,000 is being spent this year.

I know that listening to figures becomes boring but my idea in quoting them is to show that these moneys are being spent over a very wide area and are not being confined to isolated spots. Of course, hon. members will realise that my department is essentially a constructing department so far as the Public Works portion of its undertakings is concerned and therefore we are the constructing authority for very many other branches of the Government. So it is essential, to my mind, when bringing forward the Estimates for a department like this, to quote figures in this manner. It is almost unavoidable.

It is interesting also to note that we have had considerable difficulty during the past few months in securing sufficient tradesmen to carry out the works that we have in hand. This state of affairs is not peculiar to Queensland; my inquiries reveal that similar difficulties exist in the South.

The majority of employees in the Department of Public Works enjoy continuity of employment to a far greater extent than employees of private enterprise. A firm that is defeated consistently in tendering cannot provide continuous work for its normal employees.

I have read advertisements in Townsville and other places for building workers, in which they are offered work for nine hours a day, six days a week. Many tradesmen are anxious to work overtime and thus get a bigger pay cheque. I personally know many tradesmen—carpenters and plumbers—who do private work at week-ends and earn as much as £10 a day.

But a State organisation must have regard to estimate and price and cannot pay above award rates. It therefore has difficulty in competing for labour with firms that offer the inducement of an extra day every week and an extra hour every day, both at overtime rates. Some employees, however, do not forsake the substance for the shadow and seek employment of a permanent nature in the Department of Public Works.

While on the subject of inducements to employees, I should mention the Townsville University, where we had to adopt much the same practice as that followed by private employers. On Saturday the site is a hive of industry, and employees of the department secure a day's overtime. That project is progressing very well. Without doubt it will be one of the best day-labour jobs ever undertaken. Although the administrative block is slightly behind schedule, the remainder of the building is four weeks ahead of schedule.

To give hon. members an idea of the difficulty in getting labour, on 8 October my Under Secretary asked my permission to advertise for tradesmen. Of course, we had applications in with the several social service departments in the city and in other areas, but we could not pick up tradesmen from those sources. I granted permission to advertise for tradesmen. If my memory serves me rightly, we advertised for 25 or 40 carpenters—I am not sure which—and 12 bricklayers for Brisbane, and 12 carpenters for Toowoomba. I had an officer in attendance on Saturday morning, and we paid him overtime. I did that because, generally speaking, Saturday morning is a particularly good time to interview people who may be considering changing their jobs. A person who is unemployed may come at any time, but Saturday morning is the best time to interview a person who is thinking of changing his employment. There was a large advertisement in the paper, three columns wide, that could not have been missed by anybody who was interested enough to read the "Positions Vacant" column. On the Saturday morning, with the office open from 10 till 12, there were eight applications for employment, and six carpenters and one builder's labourer were engaged. On the following Monday morning another carpenter,

a bricklayer, three builder's labourers and one plasterer were interviewed and engaged. Hon. members will be able to see that the net result of the labour call was the engagement of nine tradesmen in the categories of seven carpenters, one bricklayer, one plasterer, and four builder's labourers.

**An Opposition Member:** When was that?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** That was on 8 October.

By way of interest, hon. members may remember that two weeks or so earlier, quite a big story was run when building tradesmen were dismissed from railway projects, and I had great hopes that we would have no difficulty in filling our requirements of labour on that occasion. Hon. members may see the total result from our advertisement.

A further call for labour was made a fortnight later in "The Courier-Mail" of 22 October. We did much better on that occasion because we engaged 28 carpenters, one bricklayer, one joiner, two painters, one plumber and eight labourers, making a total of 41 building workers. The department has maintained an open call for labour with the Commonwealth service offices at Creek Street, Brisbane, Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane. At present all the labour requirements are more or less met. However, with the projects that have still to be pushed further ahead, it is quite likely that in some of the areas we may require more staff. New high schools are being built progressively, beginning with sub-Junior accommodation to cope with the immediate intake of students, and of the total expenditure of £6,516,917 on buildings during the past financial year, an amount of £3,905,765, or 59.9 per cent. was spent on educational establishments. As the allocation of funds to my department for this purpose amounted to only £3,771,776, it is clear how well we have met the accommodation requirements of the Department of Education.

While of necessity priority has been given to both primary and secondary-school accommodation, the requirements of other departments, particularly Government hospitals and asylums and public and administrative buildings generally, have not been overlooked.

To carry out the building programme of the department, a proper balance of construction work by both contract and day labour was preserved. The maintenance and repair of existing Government buildings continued to receive the closest attention of the department, limited only by the availability of revenue funds for the purpose.

Owing to the urgent need of many departments for additional accommodation, it has been necessary to construct a large proportion of buildings, particularly school buildings, in timber frame. This increases the amount of maintenance work each year for their preservation, particularly in tropical and sub-tropical areas, where regular repairs

and painting must be carried out. Expenditure on the maintenance and repair of Government buildings for the past financial year totalled £879,014 against £764,446 in the preceding year, 1958-1959.

The capital works carried out from loan funds require prior preparation of plans. In this regard my department is still hampered in carrying out its programme of works by the shortage of technical staffs for the planning of new projects. In discussing this matter with the New South Wales Minister and his senior officers I learned that that department paid over £300,000 to outside architects for the year. We, too, are often compelled to use outside architects but our figure would not be anywhere near that. The difficulty has been overcome to a certain extent by co-opting the services of architects, engineers and quantity surveyors in private practice, an action which is not peculiar to the Queensland Department of Public Works.

I have noted with interest in the 1959 Annual Report of the New South Wales Department of Public Works that it was necessary to utilise the services of approximately 100 private architects and engineering consultants in the preparation of working drawings to enable the work of design to be kept up-to-date. With our own work force, we have been unable to proceed beyond a certain stage without completed plans, particularly on some projects. Hon. members will realise, of course, that when tenders are called for a job, all the plans and specifications must be available to enable a firm to tender. If they were not, there would be a great deal of trouble in store for anybody associated with that job. With our own day-labour force, we can sometimes proceed with the work even though the plans have not been fully completed.

I should like now to outline briefly some of the things that have been done in the past year and make reference to some of the very important works that are proposed for 1960-1961.

It will be noted from the figures that I quoted that, of a total expenditure of £6,516,917 on buildings, £3,905,765 was spent on educational establishments—in round figures, a total of £4,000,000. Nineteen new primary schools were completed or under construction during the year, and additional classroom accommodation was provided at 81 other primary schools. A total of 265 primary classrooms was provided in that year, which is a very large number.

New schools, the construction of which was commenced or authorised in the previous financial year, were completed at Humpybong, Serviceton, Nashville, and Ritchie Road. In addition, new schools were erected at Seven Hills, Marshall Road, and Kipparing on the Redcliffe peninsula. I had the pleasure of opening the school at Kipparing as one of my first jobs in my ministerial capacity. The school at Glennie Heights, Warwick, was also completed.

A primary school is now in course of erection at The Gap, and Coorparoo infants' school is almost finished. I have seen the school at Nambour, and it has more or less been completed, as also has the Hermit Park infants' school. A new opportunity school was provided at Toowoomba.

The first sections of new high schools were erected at Mt. Gravatt, Yeronga, Corinda, Mt. Lofty (Toowoomba), Mareeba, Mackay, and Trinity Bay. Accommodation for secondary departments was provided at Clermont, Crow's Nest, Hughenden, Jandowae, Miles, Oakey, and Theodore.

It is interesting to note that there is now a high school at Hughenden, which is in the old Flinders electorate. I travelled quite extensively in that area some years ago, and there was not one secondary school in that electorate, even though it had been represented by Labour members for very many years. All credit must go to the present hon. member for Flinders for the new high school at Hughenden. Unfortunately Mr. Lonergan is rather ill in hospital at the present time, having undergone a serious operation. I visited him last night and I should say that he is well and truly on the mend. I hope we shall see him back in the Chamber in the very new future.

Extensive additions, including accommodation for vocational training, were provided at high schools at Atherton, Bremer, Dalby, Gympie, Indooroopilly, Kedron, Kingaroy, Maryborough Boys', Pimlico, Rockhampton, Salisbury, Sandgate, Warwick and Wavell.

**Government Members** interjected.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** As a matter of fact, we have reached the stage where we almost need an adding machine to ascertain the number of classrooms and other projects that are being attended to daily, monthly, and annually by the Government.

**Mr. Wallace:** Could you tell me what is to be done about the new workshop building in Cairns?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** I shall come to that a little later.

Many projects are going ahead at the present time. Tenders are usually called for the construction of workshops. During the last month alone there were no fewer than 20 tenders for that purpose throughout the State, perhaps more. The total number of classrooms provided at new high schools and/or existing high schools was 196. A new technical college workshop to house motor mechanics and sheet-metal workers was erected at Mackay, and the equipment of the building is in hand. New engineering and electrical laboratories were completed at Rockhampton. A two-storey workshop to provide instruction in heat engines, woodwork and electricity is being erected at Toowoomba.

The increase in the number of students at secondary schools is expected to reach its

peak next year when the provision of accommodation for them will present the department's greatest challenge. With the funds available for educational works my department, in collaboration with the Department of Education, has framed a programme of construction to meet requirements for the 1961 school year.

An amount of £2,039,000 has been allocated during the current year for high schools and technical colleges. In addition to the primary and secondary-school projects of which I have spoken, further key projects in the Department of Education's programme include the £166,000 Townsville University centre, and the £252,000 Teachers' College at Kedron.

I mentioned earlier what a great job is being done on the Townsville University centre. All hon. members no doubt know that this is only a temporary project, and that negotiations are already in hand for securing a considerable area of land at a particularly good site overlooking the weir at Townsville where the permanent University will be built. When that is done the present University building, which will open in the 1961 school year, will be used as a Teachers' College in Townsville. It is also expected that the Teachers' College at Kedron—a £252,000 project, as I have mentioned—will be opened within the next year.

My department has completed, or has under construction, residences for 11 teachers, and in addition a residence was erected for the district inspector of schools at Roma. Residences were also purchased for the Regional Directors of Education at Roma and Maryborough and for principals of high schools at Kingaroy and Nambour. In the Estimates for this year will be seen an allocation of £75,000 for teachers' residences. Of course, a few years ago that sum would have provided for many more residences than it will today; it will now provide for between 15 and 20 residences.

In pursuance of our policy of giving priority, to the full extent of the finance available, to the provision of educational establishments and sewerage or septic installation where there is a permanent water supply and a satisfactory means of effluent disposal, 72 such installations were completed, or were under construction, during 1959-1960. Expenditure on these works at State primary schools was approximately £135,000, compared with the allocation of £125,000, and for the current financial year a further £125,000 is being provided. Works to the value of approximately £135,000 had been committed against this allocation to 31 October, 1960.

In addition to providing the buildings necessary to meet educational requirements throughout the State, provision has also been made to meet urgent requirements of other client departments. New police headquarters will be provided in a building that was acquired for the purpose in Coronation

Drive. Additions are being made to the building and extensive remodelling is being carried out. The new court house at Winton has been completed, and extensive additions to the court house at Mt. Isa have also been completed. A start has been made with the erection of new court house buildings at Coolangatta and Sarina. Work is proceeding on the erection of the new police offices and barracks at Longreach, and it is also expected that in the near future a start will be made on the erection of the main superstructure of the court house at Longreach. A new cell block is being erected at the Cairns Police Station and new police stations at Inala and Magnetic Island were completed under contract.

In Brisbane the conversion of the old railway building to provide District Court facilities and judges' chambers has been completed, and approval has now been given for the erection of additions to this building.

It is proposed during the current year to erect new police stations at several centres and also new buildings at other centres, and the erection of a new court house for Brisbane is receiving consideration. The present Supreme Court building opposite Lennons Hotel faces North Quay, and we are investigating the possibility of a building of six or even seven storeys, facing George Street and Lennons Hotel. A building of that size would meet requirements in the foreseeable future. It will not be undertaken today or tomorrow. It is more in the nature of a long-range proposal, but I thought I should let the Committee know that matters such as that are receiving consideration.

**Mr. Lloyd:** That always happens. You must have a long-range plan.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** That is so.

**Mr. Melloy:** Are you building a new police station at Banyo?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** At the moment I am giving the general picture; I am not picking out individual projects.

To relieve over-crowding in departments in the Treasury Building, approval has been given for the erection of an annexe in the main courtyard. The Contractor has the work in hand and it is not expected that it will take very long to complete. That should relieve the congestion to some extent. As hon. members know, for many years departments of the Public Service have been over-crowded, and there was need for action to overcome this difficulty. For instance, at Harris Court extensive alterations have been undertaken and already one or two offices are accommodated in that building.

Completion of the food-preservation laboratory at Hamilton, at a cost of £130,000, will open new horizons for our major horticultural crops.

The new Institute of Forensic Pathology is nearing completion. Plans are being drawn

up for the provision of a medium-security prison at Wacol and for the establishment of a medium-security area at Her Majesty's Prison, Townsville. This type of building is less costly, and affords a more positive programme of rehabilitation, than normal prisons.

The provision of new accommodation and improvements to existing accommodation at mental hospitals throughout the State was also undertaken, and the expenditure on this during 1959-1960 was £345,939. The construction of a ward building for females at the Ipswich Mental Hospital will be one of the outstanding advances made by my department. Some few months ago I had the opportunity of inspecting this building, and in my capacity as Minister for Public Works I handed it over to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs. This project was undertaken by day labour at a cost slightly in excess of £250,000, and even though we had various increases in wages and so on during the course of construction, which took approximately two years, we were able to absorb most of the increased costs. The department and its officers and employees can be justifiably proud of this job. In the annual report of the department there are a number of photographs just after the commencement of the pictorial section, from which it will be seen that there is a lounge, a hairdressing salon and other amenities in the building. Even though it is a State undertaking, the people of Queensland should be extremely proud that we are looking after the unfortunate inmates in such an able manner.

Alterations are being carried out at the Windsor Rehabilitation Hospital, formerly the Ophthalmic Hospital, which will provide accommodation for delinquent children.

A contract has been let for the erection of three residences for chaplains at the Brisbane Mental Hospital. Plans are being drawn up for the erection of a neuro-psychiatric hospital at Chermiside, and tenders have been invited for the erection of a ward for T.B. patients in the grounds of the Toowoomba Mental Hospital.

The work on the erection of a new maternity block at the Nambour Hospital has been completed, and this is something else that we may be justifiably proud of. I had the opportunity of going through this centre too, and after inspecting the building, which is in the electorate of the hon. member for Cooroora, I was indeed surprised when he advocated recently bringing boatloads of baby migrants to Queensland. With such a beautiful maternity hospital in his area, I would have thought that perhaps they might be able to export a few babies from that electorate.

Before dealing with the sub-departments, I should like to congratulate and thank my Under Secretary, Mr. Longland and his officers, and all the department's workmen, right down to the labourers on the job, for their excellent work during the preceding

year and for the period I have been in control. I have had the opportunity of making many visits but not as many as I should have liked to make. After all, time passes quickly and I have had the portfolio only for the last five months. While I have seen many of the projects and visited many of the people who come under my control directly and indirectly, I have not seen as much or as many as I should have liked to.

The Department of Local Government also comes under my control. It is divided into two broad branches—a general administrative branch and a town water supply and sewerage branch.

The main function of the general administrative branch is the administration of local government law. In Australia local government is the third arm of government, the three tiers of government being Federal, State and local. The department's function is to tender general advice to local authorities and to exercise a general oversight over them to ensure that the law is observed. The department does not attempt to dictate the policy of local government. That, of course, is the function of the representatives elected by the people to control the local government of an area. The department also exercises supervision over the finances of local government. It advises the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works on the financial ability of local authorities to undertake loan-subsidy works submitted in the annual programme of capital works, acts as adviser to the Treasury on questions of local government finance, and recommends the payment to local authorities of subsidies granted for capital water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage and swimming pool projects. The department also exercises the general reserve and over-riding power of the local government law. It is responsible for the issue of proclamations, Orders in Council, and other instruments under the Local Government Act and the approval of by-laws made by local authorities. Another important function is the examination and approval of town-planning schemes made by local authorities. There are also certain miscellaneous functions, the more important being the examination and certification of local government clerks, engineers, and overseers. Examination boards are set up under the local government law to examine and certify candidates seeking certificates of competency as local government clerks, engineers, and overseers.

Then we have the Picture Theatre and Films Commission, the primary function of which is to prevent the over-supply of picture theatres in any locality thus leading to undue competition and economic waste. The Commission is required to investigate and determine all applications for new or additional picture theatres. If a favourable determination is made, the applicant must satisfy the provisions of the local government law and the local authority by-laws

as to the standard of building and the safeguarding of matters of public health and safety in the use of buildings before the premises may be used as a picture theatre. Today some of these things are working in reverse. We read that 85,000 television sets have been sold in Queensland, and at present they are confined to an area within a reasonable radius of the capital city. Without doubt, that has had quite a serious effect on attendances at picture theatres in this area, as it has in other parts of Australia, and in other parts of the world, for that matter, where television has been introduced. In some cases, suburban theatres were showing on, say, Wednesday night and Saturday night prior to the introduction of television, and at their request I have granted them permission to show only one night a week. As the number of television sets increases, I suppose the position will deteriorate still further.

The Plumbers, Drainers, and Gasfitters' Examination and Licensing Board also comes under the control of my department. This Board functions under the Sewerage, Water Supply and Gas Fitting Acts, 1949 to 1951, and is charged with the examination and licensing of plumbers and drainers. The Act provides standard water supply and sewerage by-laws for the State.

A fourth section under the control of my department is the Joint Committee. This committee was appointed under the provisions of by-law 7 (a) of the Standard Sewerage By-laws. The committee comprises representatives of the Brisbane City Council Health Department and the Local Government Department, the chairman of the committee being the engineer in charge of the Department of Local Government. Its primary function is to examine the design of all fixtures and fittings for use in water supply and sewerage. No fixture or fitting may be installed by a local authority unless it has been submitted to and approved by the joint committee.

The main function of the Town Water Supply and Sewerage Branch is the exercise of general oversight over local authorities in connection with water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, and the provision of swimming pools. Under local government law, the local authority is the authority charged with these functions, and the department, with its technical staff, acts in an advisory and supervisory capacity. In certain cases, generally in the more remote areas where the services of an engineer are not available to the local authority, the department also acts as consulting engineer to the local authority.

Whilst the provision of water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, and swimming pools, is a function of local government, the central Government pays a subsidy towards the capital cost of all such schemes

and also guarantees all loan raisings. The Treasury depends on the Department of Local Government to ensure—

1. That each water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, and swimming pool scheme is sound from an engineering viewpoint;
2. That the scheme is economically one within the financial ability of the local authority; and
3. That it is constructed in accordance with the design approved by the department.

Let me give the Committee an indication of the extent to which local authorities have exercised their function in respect of water supply and sewerage. The total number of persons in the State, excluding the city of Brisbane, who are presently served by water supply is 520,000, or 65 per cent. of the total population of the State. When hon. members compare Queensland with the other Australian States they will agree that that is a very big percentage. At present 22 cities and towns outside of Brisbane are served by sewerage, the total population so served being 174,000, or 20 per cent. of the State's population. In addition, a further 11 sewerage schemes are in course of construction. Approved loan subsidy provision made available to local authorities for water supply and sewerage (excluding Brisbane) during the last five years has been as follows:—

Year	Water Supply £	Sewerage £
1955-1956 ..	1,660,000	727,000
1956-1957 ..	1,806,000	852,000
1957-1958 ..	2,564,000	1,171,000
1958-1959 ..	2,931,000	1,559,000
1959-1960 ..	2,721,000	2,061,000

I am not attempting in any way to make any comparison with what was done by a previous Government. I am merely taking a five-year period. Over that period we see a rise in the provision for water supply from £1,660,000 in 1955-1956 to £2,721,000 in 1959-1960. The provision for sewerage has risen from roughly £750,000 in 1955-1956 to £2,061,000 in 1959-1960. I am sure that all hon. members, irrespective of their political colour, will agree that the State has made good progress in the provision of water supply and sewerage over that period.

The amount of subsidies paid to local authorities, again excluding Brisbane, in the past five years has been as follows:—

Year	Water Supply £	Sewerage £
1955-1956 ..	649,000	389,000
1956-1957 ..	713,000	465,000
1957-1958 ..	774,000	525,000
1958-1959 ..	1,027,000	634,000
1959-1960 ..	932,000	852,000

Details of major water supply and sewerage schemes at present under construction are as follows:—

	£
City of Gold Coast, sewerage pump and pipe line augmentation . . . . .	4,278,000
Town of Dalby, improved water supply and treatment plant . . . . .	425,000
Shire of Mareeba, treatment plant Mareeba water supply . . . . .	80,000
Shire of Maroochy, Nambour and Coast towns . . . . .	1,500,000
Shire of Pine Rivers at Petrie, Kallangur and Strathpine . . . . .	1,316,400

So far as sewerage schemes are concerned, I mention the following:—

	£
City of Cairns, catering for Cairns, at an estimated cost of . . . . .	1,433,000
City of Redcliffe Council, catering for Redcliffe . . . . .	1,250,000
Town of Roma, catering for Roma . . . . .	594,000
Shire of Balonne, catering for St. George . . . . .	284,000
Shire of Bowen, catering for Bowen . . . . .	484,000
Shire of Cloncurry, catering for Mt. Isa . . . . .	142,500
Shire of Gatton, catering for Gatton . . . . .	421,000
Shire of Longreach, catering for Longreach . . . . .	500,000
Shire of Richmond, catering for Richmond . . . . .	144,400
Shire of Winton, catering for Winton . . . . .	248,000

In addition to the foregoing major programmes, extensions are being carried out in all the larger cities already served by water supply and sewerage. As a further indication of the volume of water-supply and sewerage activity by local authorities, I mention that new water-supply schemes for which working drawings have been prepared and approved, and for which construction is about to commence, involve an expenditure of £1,373,000.

Major works included in such new schemes are water supplies for Caloundra, Rosewood, Marburg and Millmerran, and sewerage schemes for which plans have been approved and for which construction is about to commence include those at Gordonvale, Mitchell, Biloela, Wondai and North Mackay. Those schemes are estimated to cost £1,354,000.

The North Mackay sewerage scheme is dependent upon the construction of a treatment plant by the Mackay City Council, which plant is to be used to treat the sewage from both Mackay and North Mackay.

The Pioneer Shire Council is to contribute £84,000 towards the estimated cost of the common treatment plant, which is estimated at £205,000. Plans for the latter plant are

being prepared by the department. The cost of the North Mackay sewerage scheme, inclusive of the £84,000 to be contributed to the Mackay City Council, is £367,000.

Major augmentations proposed to existing water-supply schemes presently under design and investigation will involve a further expenditure of £6,150,000. These schemes include major augmentations to the water supplies of the cities of Townsville, Toowoomba and Rockhampton. Similarly, further large-scale expenditure will be incurred in providing new sewerage schemes in many towns where preliminary investigations are at present being carried out or have been completed.

These are the technical officers of the department:—

19 Engineers
2 Engineering surveyors
4 Works supervisors
1 Engineering assistant
12 Draftsmen and assistant draftsmen
6 Cadet draftsmen
10 Materials inspectors

The organisation as a whole is doing a very fine job.

In addition, the department has awarded six engineering scholarships. Two scholarship-holders are in their final year and should graduate and become Division III engineers in January, 1961.

The senior officers of the department are the Director of Local Government, Mr. Sewell, the Deputy Director of Local Government, Mr. Martin McNamara, the Engineer-in-Charge, Mr. R. D. King-Scott, and the Senior Engineer, Mr. E. L. James. There are also four branch engineers who are responsible for the water supply, sewerage construction, and design sections.

I desire to mention that on 17 September, 1960, I had the privilege of opening three water-supply schemes in the local-authority area of Wambo. I was accompanied by the hon. member for Condamine. The areas we visited were Bell, Jandowae and Warra. The schemes were individual schemes. History was created by the Wambo Shire Council in that it was able to complete these three individual schemes and have them opened on the same day. The Bell scheme cost £47,112, on which a subsidy of £23,523 was paid; the Jandowae scheme cost £90,014, on which a subsidy of £44,934 was paid; and the Warra scheme cost £40,501, on which a subsidy of £20,201 was paid. The Bell and Warra schemes are damming schemes, but the Jandowae project is a system of spears, with very expensive electrical equipment located at the spears.

Mr. J. A. Sewell was appointed Acting Director of Local Government in 1948 and a year later was appointed Director of Local Government. During the past 12 years Mr. Sewell has built up a solid reputation as a very able administrator, with a highly specialised knowledge of local government and its problems.

The editor of "Town Planning and Local Government Guide" had this to say of him—

"Queensland is particularly fortunate in having as Director of Local Government J. A. Sewell, one of the most advanced authorities on local government in Australia and a top-ranking administrator who has taken the trouble to think out the basic principles of local government and town planning from a Queensland viewpoint."

I am confident that the opinions expressed by the editor of that publication are endorsed by all people undertaking the task of local government in Queensland.

On 1 March, 1960, Mr. Sewell was appointed Under Treasurer and Under Secretary of the Treasury Department. He has retained his appointment as Director of Local Government, and Mr. Martin McNamara has been appointed to the newly-created position of Deputy Director of Local Government. It will be appreciated that the duties of Under Treasurer and Under Secretary of the Treasury Department are of vast importance and very extensive. Naturally enough, Mr. Sewell has been able to devote only a limited time to matters concerning the Department of Local Government. But, as I say this, I should also like to say that never on any occasion has it been difficult to obtain his advice when I have needed it. During the few months I have occupied this portfolio, Mr. Sewell has done an exceptionally good job. He has had a new Minister to coach, and both he and Mr. McNamara have done a good job. I know Mr. Sewell and Mr. McNamara have worked in close harmony, with the result that the Department of Local Government has continued to give excellent service. This arrangement has resulted in Mr. McNamara accepting and undertaking responsibilities and duties which, under other circumstances, would be those of the Director of Local Government. As all hon. members no doubt would expect, it is proposed in the near future to review the existing arrangements, and the staffing position in the Department of Local Government will be reviewed at the same time.

I pay tribute to the very high standard set by Mr. McNamara in accepting his new duties and responsibilities. I have availed myself of his services on numerous deputations to me during my period of office and I can speak very highly of the job he has done. The community is fortunate to have an officer of his calibre to undertake these duties, particularly following such an excellent officer as Mr. Sewell.

The town water supply and sewerage branch of the department is composed of a team of skilled engineers who have specialised in water supply and sewerage.

The branch was fortunate in the selection of the late Mr. A. F. Sharp, a prominent hydraulic engineer, as the first engineer in charge. He had the responsibility of building up this branch of the department during the difficult period of the last war and immediately thereafter, and it is now recognised as a key engineering department in the Public Service. We have an excellent team now, with Mr. R. D. King-Scott as engineer in charge and Mr. E. L. James as senior engineer. They both have a very high standing in their profession; they have the confidence of local authorities and local-government engineering staffs, and the large volume of work being attended to speaks volumes for their ability. I am quite sure that all the 131 local authorities throughout the State appreciate their work. I had the opportunity of meeting representatives of most local authorities at the recent local government annual conference, and each of them spoke very highly of the Department of Local Government.

Another department that comes under my control is the Department of the Valuer-General. It has a vast job to do throughout the State and it is doing exceptionally good work with the limited staff at its disposal. It has been functioning only since about 1948 but a very fine and very efficient staff has been built up, so much so that often the Federal Government and other authorities take members away from us at greatly increased salaries. The cadets that have been actually trained by the department have turned out to be very good and very responsible valuers.

It has been pointed out in the Chamber and through the Press that while some areas have been valued two or three times others have not been valued at all. Unfortunately that is true, but it is mainly because of the shortage of staff, but the day when every part of the State will have been valued at least once is very close.

My officers have prepared a list of the local authority areas that have been valued. The first list sets out those 17 cities, towns and shires that have been valued three times—

Dalby	Gatton
Toowoomba	Rosalie
Gold Coast	Millmerran
Thursday Island	Chinchilla
Clifton	Wambo
Cambooya	Taroom
Pittsworth	Albert
Crow's Nest	Kolan
Jondaryan	

Many of them were first valued in 1948, a few in 1949 and 1950, whilst most of them had their last valuations in 1958, 1959 and 1960.

A number of local authority areas have been valued twice.

They are—

Cities and towns—

Brisbane	Maryborough
Bundaberg	Redcliffe
Goondiwindi	Rockhampton
Cairns	Ipswich
Gladstone	

Shires—

Mt. Morgan	Gayndah
Murilla	Calliope
Tara	Fitzroy
Redland	Maroochy
Beaudesert	Monto
Kilkivan	Mundubbera
Kilcoy	Murgon
Perry	Nanango
Gooburrum	Woongarra
Caboolture	Landsborough
Kingaroy	Mulgrave
Pine Rivers	Widgee
Moreton	Wondai
Eidsvold	Noosa

A number of cities and towns and shires have been valued only once. The list of those reads—

Cities and towns—

Gympie	Townsville
Warwick	Charters Towers
Roma	Mackay

Shires—

Boonah	Bauhinia
Isis	Emerald
Laidley	Balonne
Livingstone	Hinchinbrook
Miriam Vale	Herberton
Tiaro	Aramac
Allora	Bendemere
Biggenden	Blackall
Burrum	Bungil
Douglas	Etheridge
Glengallan	Ilfracombe
Peak Downs	Mareeba
Banana	Paroo
Woochoo	Proserpine
Rosenthal	Sarina
Esk	Barcardine
Duaringa	Booringa
Nebo	Carpentaria
Johnstone	Croydon
Broadsound	Isisford
Atherton	Jericho
Stanthorpe	Pioneer
Inglewood	Quilpie
Belyando	Waggamba
Eacham	Warroo
Cardwell	

A summary as at June 30, 1960, shows—

	Cities and Towns	Shires	Total Local Authorities
Valued once ..	6	51	57
Valued Twice ..	9	28	37
Valued three times ..	4	13	17
Total ..	..	..	111

A number of local authority areas are being valued, or we hope to value them during the current financial year.

They are—

District	Shire	Number of Valuations
South Western ..	Bulloo ..	65
	Murweh ..	1,004
	Charleville ..	1,406
Central Western ..	Barcoo ..	310
	Tambo ..	365
	Bowen ..	3,380
Townsville ..	Ayr ..	4,535
	Mirani ..	1,870
	Cloncurry ..	3,780
North-Western ..	Cook ..	720
	Cairns and Northern	
	Total ..	17,435

We have every hope of completing those valuations during this financial year. The only one about which I am slightly doubtful is the shire of Cloncurry, and I can assure hon. members that no stone will be left unturned to have it completed, also.

**Mr. Hanlon:** When do you expect that the appeals from the Gold Coast will be heard? You have about 5,000 of them, haven't you?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** The number of appeals on the Gold Coast has already appeared in the Press, but the number is 3,000, not 5,000.

**Mr. Hanlon:** They are still coming in.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** It is expected that the 3,000 appeals on the Gold Coast will be heard immediately after the school year commences, possibly about the first week in February.

**Mr. Hanlon:** How long will it be before they get their decision?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** I do not think it will take any great length of time because I expect very many of the objections to be withdrawn. There appeared to be quite a panic at the time; spurred on by certain people and certain organisations. Whether there was any justification for it is none of my business. At the time some reference was made to the land tax that people would have to pay, but since the introduction of the Land Tax (Adjustment) Bill many of them are satisfied that they will not be affected at all.

**Mr. Bennett:** Is that why you introduced the Bill?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** If a man with the so-called intelligence of the hon. member cannot work it out for himself or cannot understand what is said by a responsible Minister like the Treasurer when he introduces legislation, it would be complete waste of my time to try to tell him something now. It would be like pouring water on a duck's back. Whatever I said would go in one ear and out the other.

If we succeed in the current financial year in completing the 17,000-odd valuations covering the areas mentioned—as I am sure we will—very few will be left to be valued.

The following local authority areas remain to be valued:—

District	Shire	Number of Valuations
South-Western ..	Nil .. ..	..
Central-Western	Diamantina ..	80
	Longreach ..	1,520
	Winton ..	615
Townsville ..	Dalrymple ..	1,680
	Thuringowa ..	1,380
North-Western ..	Barkly Tableland ..	130
	Boulia .. ..	205
	Burke .. ..	107
	Flinders .. ..	1,245
	Mackinlay ..	600
Cairns and Northern ..	Richmond ..	620
	Nil .. ..	..
		8,182

At the end of the current financial year only 8,182 properties remain to be valued. When all the valuations are completed 490,000 will have been made. Those yet to be made represents under 2 per cent. of the State. Naturally we should like to see all areas valued at the same time, but that is a physical impossibility.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Just before an election would be a good time.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** That would be an excellent time! It would be a physical impossibility to value them all at the one time. It would not be humanly possible to do it because all the valuers would be engaged in valuing one big area. For instance, in a big place like the city of Brisbane it takes two years to complete the valuation. All the valuers would be employed for one year and would then have to be sacked or "parked" somewhere for another two, or three or five years until a shire's turn for revaluation came round again. Any reasonable thinking person should realise that this staff of valuable men—and they are hard to retain—must be used systematically so as to keep them constantly employed.

I cannot let the opportunity pass without making a final observation. There has been considerable discussion in different quarters and articles in the daily Press reacting against valuations by the Valuer-General's Department. The introduction of the Land Tax Amendment Bill convinced hon. members that very few of the smaller land-owners will be affected by land tax. It is our intention as a Government to reduce land tax progressively. At present we are unable to do any more than has been done, but since we have been the Government we have reduced considerably the number of people paying land tax. I stress that point.

It does not matter what the individual's valuation is as long as he is not affected by land tax or rates. The Valuer-General's Department endeavours to get equity between property and poverty so that the rates for a particular shire are spread equitably over the

owners of the land in that shire. But we find—and it is usually done quietly, which probably accounts for the stigma that is attached to the Valuer-General's Department and its valuations—that some local authorities are actually collecting more in rates than they were before being valued by the department.

It is only simple arithmetic that if a local authority was collecting £50,000 a year in rates on a rate of 1s. in the £1 and the valuation of the shire is doubled, the rate could be reduced to 6d. in the £1 and exactly the same aggregate rate collected as was collected previously. If the valuation was increased by 400 per cent., exactly the same result could be obtained if the local authority reduced the rate to 3d. in the £1. But many local authorities have not been doing that, with the result that they have been benefiting greatly from the gross amount of rates that they collect. It might look all right on their rate notices to show a reduction in the rate from 1s. 6d. in the £1 to 8½d. in the £1 but the fact remains that they are enjoying a considerable increase in the gross amount of rates.

**Mr Bennett:** The C.M.O. administration did that in Brisbane.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** I can point to the action of other administrations. As an example I shall give one that is not C.M.O., but one of the same kidney as the hon. member—the Ipswich City Council. The old valuation of the Ipswich local authority area was £3,839,167, the general rate being 11d. in the £1. Receipts were £158,881. The new valuation is £6,459,529. The general rate has been reduced to 8d. in the £1, but the amount collected is now £194,473, or approximately £40,000 more than previously. That is not an isolated case. I did not intend to introduce politics, but in view of the statement by the hon. member for South Brisbane I could not resist hitting back.

Take the position on the Gold Coast. The former general rate was 1s. in the £1, the amount collected being £291,107. The new valuation is £27,729,140, having been increased from £6,570,007. The council reduced the rate from 1s. in the £1 to 3½d., but the total receipts jumped from £291,000 to £380,000, an increase of £90,000. The Valuer-General cannot be blamed for the position on the Gold Coast, or in Ipswich, or in many other local-authority areas. The same thing, to a lesser degree, has happened in Mackay. The rate was 1s. 9d. in the £1 when the valuation was £756,315. The revenue was £64,255. The new valuation came into effect as from 30 June. It is now £4,785,393. The council reduced the rate from 1s. 9d. to 4d. in the £1 which meant an increase in revenue from £64,255 to £76,635. I have a list here. The same thing applies more or less to every local authority. I am not tying the can onto any particular tail.

**Mr. Bennett:** If, as you say, the purpose of revaluation is to make comparative values just, why did they have to increase so enormously the overall valuation?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** Increase the overall valuation?

**Mr. Bennett:** You say the purpose of the revaluation was to make comparative values in a shire just and fair. If that was the only reason, why did they increase the overall valuation so enormously?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** I should have thought the hon. member would understand the principles and practice of valuation, which have been laid down more or less from time immemorial. Irrespective of the location of a property, there is only one way of arriving at its value. Officers of the Valuer-General's Department do not decide the value; values are decided by the people outside.

**Mr. Lloyd:** But the speculators should not decide the value.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** If all hon. members were valuers and they were taken out to Longreach, Winton, Hughenden, Julia Creek or elsewhere and asked to value a property—say, a residential property—they would have to proceed according to the principles. The same principles would apply in the valuation of any property. We could get out of the aeroplane and go round with a tape measure or a rule and measure up a building and decide that it had a floor space of 1,200 square feet and immediately say, "We are at Hughenden, 300 to 400 miles from the coast. To build this place in Cairns or Townsville it might cost"—just picking a figure out of the air—"£350 a square; here in this area we could not build it under £400 a square." It is then a simple matter of multiplying £400 by the 12 squares in the building, giving a total of £4,800. We then learn that the building has been erected for about 25 years and that it is badly in need of repair and painting, for which we allow 25 per cent., that is, £1,200, thus reducing the value of the building to £3,600. As I said, if all of us were qualified valuers and did that we would not be far out. But let us look down at our feet and see the ground we are standing on. We would not have a "clue"—not one of us—whether the land was worth £5, £50, £500, or £5,000, until we investigated what people were paying for similar properties in that area. When that is done, ridiculous or abnormal sales are not considered; only normal, average sales are adopted as a basis and they define the value of the property at the time. However, mistakes can be made, particularly at the present time when we are asked to get down to unimproved value. Errors can be made on timber treatment or in the treatment of the land itself. Too often those treatments occurred many years ago.

If we continue with the same type of valuation in the years ahead, I do not know

how valuers in 100 years, 200 years or 500 years will be able to visualise the improvements that have been made, and the gullies, or anything like that which were on the property originally.

**Mr. Houston:** Can you tell me one thing? What in your opinion is the reason for the Land Court's seeing fit to reduce valuations by so much? What factor would constitute the difference between the two?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** After all is said and done, in the Land Court, or any court for that matter, it is one person's word or opinion against another's. We have seen on very many occasions that the opinion put forward by one party is, in the opinion of others, given more credence than it warrants. That is almost the same as saying, "Why does one court convict a man of a crime and another court let him go?" It is a very difficult matter.

**Mr. Houston:** You will see variations of as much as 40 per cent.

**Mr. ROBERTS:** That happens, too. It could be that personally I do not agree with some of the court's judgments, and it may be that if we appealed against them we could have corrections made. It has never been the practice of my department to drag people round the country from one court to another. We have a job to do and that is to determine values. If some higher authority places another value on the land, we cannot help it.

**Mr. Houston:** What I was getting at was this: is there a different set of fundamental values used to determine valuations?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** It is very difficult. I know from my years of valuing that two valuers can go onto a property with different ideas. I had one case recently that I had to attend to. Needless to say, since I assumed Ministerial responsibilities, I have ceased to engage in private business, but there are still one or two problems that I have to clean up from time to time.

**Mr. Bennett:** Were you very often upset on appeal?

**Mr. ROBERTS:** I have never had an appeal yet. But I had an inquiry from the Stamp Duties Office about an allowance I made of £45 an acre for clearing, etc. I was asked the present cost of clearing and I told them it averaged from £35 to £50 an acre. In this case I thought £45 was ample; but another valuer with equal ability might know of a clearing contractor who would do the work much more cheaply in the area and he might allow only £35 to £40. So much is left to conjecture. That is why we always try to engage valuers conversant with the conditions in the areas. It cannot always be done, much as we should like to do it. It would be ridiculous, for instance, to send a metropolitan valuer from Brisbane to value sheep, cattle or sugar-cane areas. A man right up to the mark on sugar-cane lands

might be lost in valuing sheep or cattle lands. No matter who does the valuing, whether in Queensland or elsewhere, you have these variations. We are fortunate in that our people have a whole series of appeals. I do not know that that holds for any other State or under any other Act that this Parliament has introduced. If anybody in Queensland feels that he has not been treated properly he may first of all lodge an objection without prejudice. That objection is heard by the Valuer-General or his officers. If then he is not satisfied, he may appeal to the Land Court. Again, if he is not satisfied, he may appeal to the Land Appeal Court. He has a further right of appeal to a judge of the Supreme Court.

**Mr. Hanlon:** In how many cases would the Valuer-General or his officers alter their valuation after a conference? Very rarely!

**Mr. ROBERTS:** In most cases. I should say in 50 per cent. of the cases. The objections are mainly on minor matters. The people concerned know that an area was once a swamp land or something of that nature, whereas a valuer new to the area could not be expected to know that. I think—and this is purely my personal opinion; I am not saying this as a matter of Government policy or as Minister in charge of this department—that the time will come when we shall have to give further thought, perhaps, to site valuation. That procedure is followed in other parts of the world.

For example, there might be three adjoining allotments in one street, each a-quarter of an acre, each one chain by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  chains, in which there is no apparent variation in any way. Let us assume that each of them has a market value of £1,000, disregarding anything that may be erected on them. Let us assume, also, that the centre allotment at one time had a big gully running through it that had to be filled, and that the allotment was then levelled off and made the same as the others. It may have had 10 different owners since the gully was first filled, and the person who originally filled the gully probably did so at virtually no cost because prices were so low when he had it done. Possibly he got the people of the community to tip their rubbish into the gully for 12 months or two years and then had some sawdust or soil put on top of it to complete to filling. I think that allotment must now be looked at under present conditions and bearing in mind present prices. Under the present system, the end allotment would be valued at £1,000, the one in the middle at £700, and the one at the other end at £1,000. The man who did the filling has been paid for it, because that would be taken into account in fixing a price when he sold it, and although it has been sold several times since then, the man now owning it is paying only seven-tenths of the rates that the people owning the other allotments are paying. That does not appear to me to be fair or just. As I said, that is a personal opinion,

not a matter of Government policy, but it is something that may have to be looked at in the future.

**Mr. LLOYD (Kedron)** (3.39 p.m.): I always thought that a filibuster was a lengthy speech made by an hon. member who might wish to avoid criticism of his department or who wished to carry on a debate until it could no longer continue. I know that this is the first occasion on which the Minister has introduced the Estimates for his department, and hon. members on this side of the House compliment him on his elevation to the Ministry. But if we look at the clock, we see that it is now only 20 minutes short of a full day—

**Mr. Roberts:** If I had my other lung, I may have gone longer.

**Mr. LLOYD:** Unfortunately, we will have little time to express our thoughts on the Department of Public Works, the Department of Local Government, and the Valuer-General's Department, and it is perhaps fortunate for hon. members that the Minister has not got his other lung back.

I have already complimented him. I wish also to refer briefly to the work done by the former Minister for Public Works, Mr. Jim Heading. I also compliment him on the work he did during his three years in control of this portfolio. I think he was a champion of the use of day labour on public works constructions throughout the State. From what we understand, he had some very bitter opponents in Cabinet who were endeavouring to ensure that most of the school construction work should be handed over to private contractors. However, he withstood all those challenges.

That the present Minister is able to say that he has in the department the largest day-labour force in the southern hemisphere is due not only to the former Minister for Public Works and Local Government but to Labour Ministers who preceded him. Mr. Heading greatly appreciated the fact that by day labour he was able to carry out a great deal of work throughout the State much cheaper than it could have been done under private contract. He took a great deal of pleasure in telling the Committee on one occasion about a contract that had been let to a private contractor in the North. When the work was discontinued by the contractor the job was carried on by the department's day-labour force. Employees were flown to the town, where they were maintained and paid living-away-from-home allowance. At the completion of the job they were flown back again. Even so, the job was completed for much less than if the private contractor had finished it. The former Minister held the opinion that the day-labour force of the Department of Public Works was one of the finest organisations in the State Public Service. I am sure the present Minister will agree with his predecessor.

I realise that the Minister has many difficulties. Today he detailed at great length the work that his department is doing throughout Queensland in the construction of primary and secondary schools. It is a great compliment to Labour planning in the past that we have been able to maintain a school-building programme to cope with the increasing number of school children. It is only natural that the Minister and the Government should endeavour to claim much of the credit. At least we pay them the tribute that they have maintained Labour's plan so that at the present time they have a programme of school construction to cope with the demand. In the past three years the number of children attending primary schools has increased by almost 12,000; in secondary schools the numbers have almost doubled.

**Mr. Coburn:** It is only because they built schools in places where they could attend them.

**Mr. LLOYD:** What nonsense! In 1946 the Labour Government undertook a plan regionalising education in Queensland. The plan envisaged that by 1963 we would reach the peak demand, but that in the intervening years there would be a constant demand for additional high schools because of the increased number of children graduating from primary schools—children born immediately after the war. What is happening now has not happened overnight. It was all planned. Undoubtedly there are marvellous high-school buildings throughout the State. Naturally the plan had to be designed by somebody, and it was not designed overnight. Today the Minister admitted that there has to be a long-range plan for all building development in future years. We must make more plans now. We shall have to find a location for a new Supreme Court, even though it might be years before it can be built. And so there had to be a long-range plan for the construction of additional primary and secondary schools.

The Minister has indicated that next year or the year after there will be a maximum expenditure on State primary and high-school buildings. We shall have to meet another challenge when the tailing-off comes. Increased numbers of children will be graduating not only from primary schools to secondary schools but from secondary schools to universities.

We must plan ahead to ensure that, at the time when there is a big intake, or an acceleration in intake, into our universities we have adequate university buildings to enable those children to receive the higher education. It is not a matter of doing it overnight. In five years' time we will need a university not only at Townsville, but also at Rockhampton, perhaps, or in some other part of the State, to enable us to cope with the demand for higher education at that time.

Things are not as simple as hon. members opposite would have us believe. These plans were established by the Labour Government.

The regionalisation plan has been one of the greatest factors in enabling the Government to formulate these higher plans in the educational sphere.

**Mr. Beardmore:** In many cases this Government has had to purchase land in order to build schools because no provision was made by the previous Government.

**Mr. LLOYD:** Exactly. That has happened not only in the hon. member's electorate, but in mine. I have had to search in my electorate—as no doubt many other hon. members have at some time or another—for land on which a school could be built. As soon as land was available in my electorate the school building was started.

**Mr. Houghton:** For many years your Government refused to build a high school at Redcliffe.

**Mr. LLOYD:** The hon. member would not know. He has been here five minutes and he knows everything!

**Mr. Houghton:** If I did not know as much as you I would not be here.

**Mr. LLOYD:** Maybe that is so, but we have had the proud boast in this State—and I think we are entitled to have it recognised—that at no time since the end of the war has any child been refused educational facilities in Queensland because of a lack of school accommodation.

**Mr. Houghton:** You cannot say that of Redcliffe.

**Mr. LLOYD:** Immediately following the war there were occasions when we had to take over temporary buildings—usually Army huts—to enable us to cope with accommodation demands, but no child has been refused educational facilities. Things that have happened in other States, particularly Victoria, have not happened here. In Victoria, children were refused educational facilities because there was no accommodation for them. That has never happened in this State, as I think any hon. member with any degree of common sense will admit.

The Labour Party has always recognised that the high cost of school construction must have a savage impact on the Budget. I will grant the Minister that point. The cost of Government buildings in the 10-year period since 1950 has increased by £6,000,000. That includes hospitals, schools and all other classes of Government buildings. During the same period the total governmental expenditure on Government buildings has increased only to the extent of £13,000,000. We can understand the savage impact that the cost of school construction is having on Government expenditure in this State.

I have not a great deal of time. The Minister spoke for two hours 40 minutes, but members of the Opposition are limited to 25 minutes, and there are one or two points I should like to make in that time.

The first is in reply to the Minister's statement on the Valuer-General's valuation throughout the State. I believe that the embarrassment that has been caused to this Government—and there is no doubt that the Government have been embarrassed by revaluations in various centres—is caused by the Valuer-General's practice of revaluing certain areas time after time whilst apparently neglecting to value other areas once. An examination of the figures given by the Minister reveals—and these figures confirm those given by the hon. member for South Coast the other day—that 17 local-authority areas have been valued three times, 37 have been valued twice, 57 once, and 21 not at all. The Government's embarrassment arises through the impact of local-authority rates or land tax on the people of those areas. The difficulty could be overcome if all local-authority areas were revalued at the one time and amending legislation introduced for the purpose of lifting exemptions or reducing the rate of land tax. No complaints could then be made that at a time when some local authorities have not been valued at all, others have been valued time and time again.

**Mr. Armstrong:** Take the Gold Coast with its savage upward trend in values.

**Mr. LLOYD:** The same thing will happen in Brisbane next year.

**Mr. Armstrong:** That is something you cannot get around.

**Mr. LLOYD:** I do not know that that is so; there may be good reason for it. But I suggest that better co-ordination between Government departments would be of benefit. The state of affairs to which I have referred is not peculiar to this Government's period of office. It existed in the past. If there was close collaboration between the Valuer-General's Department and the department dealing with land tax, it would be possible to value the State as a whole at the one time, and so overcome the present position. A sliding scale of land tax may be the solution.

The Minister has said that the city of Brisbane takes two years to value, yet next year a third valuation of the city will be undertaken. Other local-authority areas have not been valued once.

The next matter I raise is a serious one. I have received information about the origin-and-destination survey that is being undertaken by the Brisbane City Council. I raise the matter because of its possible impact on the people of Brisbane and eventually on the finances of the State. I ask the Minister for Local Government to investigate the matter. Some months ago the Brisbane City Council announced its plan of a ring road to bring about easier flow of traffic into and out of the city. The matter has been discussed for some 18 months, but within the last six months the Lord Mayor and his council announced that they intended to engage a private company to undertake an origin-and-destination survey and compile statistics so

so that they could be examined and a plan formulated for a better flow of traffic into and out of the city. The plan of the Brisbane City Council would involve the expenditure of from £10,000,000 to £12,000,000. The origin-and-destination survey is part of the Town Plan and therefore attracts a Government subsidy of 20 per cent. Originally the survey was to cost £18,000. My information is that the work has been extended by the Brisbane City Council and will cost £60,000. It may cost even more, if the work is further extended. The original idea was that a private company should undertake the survey and then report to the Brisbane City Council so that the council could plan for the easier flow of traffic into and out of the city, but in the meantime it had prepared its own plan for the construction of the ring road. It has extended the activities through its own officers and has interfered with the origin-and-destination survey by the private company. It has introduced figures taken out by its own officers and adjusted the report simply to enable it to match its ring-road plan with the result of the origin-and-destination survey.

My information is that the report following the origin-and-destination survey will show statistical returns that will add to the contention that the ring-road plan is completely satisfactory, yet many of the figures that have been reported in that survey show that there is no true indication of where people originated or what was their destination. In other words, if the plan that is being designed at present by the Brisbane City Council is completed—at great cost to the people of Brisbane, and possibly to the people of Queensland—in many ways it will be useless. The roads and expressways that will be built will not receive the traffic for which they were originally designed.

**Mr. Beardmore:** It is the general practice in America.

**Mr. LLOYD:** In America the practice is for the local authority not to stand the burden of the full cost of these expressways. A separate authority is established to undertake the vast expenditure needed to build the expressways, and to build ring roads such as the one envisaged for Brisbane. This plan could become the responsibility of all the people of Queensland, and not simply the ratepayers of Brisbane. Because it will facilitate the movement of all traffic into Brisbane from outside, the rest of Queensland may be asked to bear some part of the expenditure.

The main point of my argument is that whereas the origin-and-destination survey was asked for by the council to give it an idea of the flow of traffic into and out of Brisbane, it has been distorted by the council administration to enable the result of the origin-and-destination survey to coincide with its already established ring-road plan. In other words, there has been a manipulation of the result of that survey.

I am informed that if the final returns of the origin-and-destination survey were correct, they would give an entirely different result, and would possibly indicate that many

of the ring roads and expressways that are to be built under the plan, which envisages the resumption of large properties and buildings in the city, will be redundant. I understand that part of the showgrounds and many other places in the lower parts of the city are involved.

If the report that I have received is correct—and I am assured that the complaint that the council officers or administration have manipulated the results of the origin-and-destination surveys to suit themselves is made on substantial grounds—it is essential that the Government should act to protect the people of Queensland in this very serious matter. I believe it is a matter in which the Minister and the Director of Local Government should take a very deep interest to ensure that the proposed expenditure of large sums of money within the city area will not be money wasted, and that the numerous resumptions of property are really necessary in the interests of a free flow of traffic into and out of the city.

Sometimes the veracity of statements may be challenged, but my information comes from the city council and is of sufficient importance to enable me to think that if this survey is manipulated to coincide with the ring-road plan that the Council has had on its books for some 18 months, then it is very necessary for the Minister and the Director to take an interest in the matter.

The only other matter I have time to deal with is to query some figures the Minister gave of expenditure on water supply and sewerage in the City of Brisbane.

**Mr. Roberts:** I did not mention the City of Brisbane.

**Mr. LLOYD:** The Minister spoke of all local authority areas?

**Mr. Roberts:** Excluding the City of Brisbane.

**Mr. LLOYD:** I misunderstood him. He had been speaking for so long that it was rather difficult to follow him. I noticed the hon. member for Condamine having quite a number of big yawns. However, the Minister did mention that in 1955-1956 £1,060,000 had been spent on water supply.

**Mr. Roberts:** £1,660,000; that is right.

**Mr. LLOYD:** And £727,000 on sewerage.

**Mr. Roberts:** Excluding Brisbane.

**Mr. LLOYD:** Same difference. The figures for 1959-1960 show a considerable increase. That reflects merely the greater availability of money for local authority purposes and loan raisings in Queensland. I believe that has occurred during the past few years, so it is only natural that more should be spent in those areas. It is all very well to make claims that might be taken to be the result of good government.

After all, the amount of loan moneys available is limited by the allocation from the Loan Council and by the ability of the local authorities to raise those moneys.

I am sure the hon. member for South Brisbane will be able to give figures of water supply and sewerage for the City of Brisbane. The Minister spoke of water supply but we heard nothing from him on this occasion about the proposed construction of the Pine River dam, in which we are all rather interested. We want to know whether that dam will be as valuable as was suggested when it was first proposed. If, as the hon. member for Redcliffe and others have said, it will not be capable of satisfying the demands of Brisbane, Redcliffe and Petrie, then the Minister should have enlightened us about it. It is of some importance when we consider that water supply is irrevocably linked with the sewerage of Brisbane. Without an adequate water supply we may never have enough for sewerage reticulation, so it is of great importance that we extend our water supply at some time. If the scheme for the Pine River dam is to be taken away from Brisbane, we want to know whether an alternative proposal has been put forward by the Department of Local Government.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. EWAN (Roma) (4.4 p.m.):** I want to pay a tribute to the former Minister, the Hon. James Heading, for his magnificent work during his term of office. I think it can be truthfully said that he ushered in a new era of co-operation and enthusiasm among departmental employees. From the head down they realised that they were to have justice meted out to them with no thought of the victimisation that they had known over a period of years, so they gave of their utmost and created a new spirit in the department. The present Minister, who succeeded to the portfolio on the retirement of Mr. Heading, has in the few short months since he took office, given a very good indication of his capabilities and of worthily upholding the best traditions laid down for him by his predecessor. We on the Government benches have a tremendous admiration for his courage, realising, as every one of us does on this side of the Chamber and as perhaps many hon. members opposite do, that only two-and-a-half years ago he underwent a very serious operation. It is to his credit that today he is restored to health. Only his inordinate courage has made it possible for him to serve this State with the distinction that has been in evidence during his short period in office. I am sure that other State departments must be pleased with the co-operation they are receiving and very satisfied with work that is carried out on their behalf by the Department of Public Works.

When hon. members on the Government benches travel throughout the State and see the results of the operations of the Department of Public Works, they are very proud

of them. It makes me wonder why the Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke for 25 minutes and refused to give credit where credit is due. He referred in a somewhat derogatory way to the fact that the Minister had spoken for 2 hours and 25 minutes in introducing his Estimates. The Minister covered at least 90 per cent. of the activities of his department, and hon. members on this side of the Chamber were very interested in what he had to say. However, it was apparent to us that hon. members opposite were quite uninterested. The hon. member for Kedron made derogatory reference to the length of the Minister's speech, but let me tell hon. members opposite that I listened to a Minister in a Labour Government speak for 2 hours and 45 minutes, and his speech was not nearly as interesting as the speech made by the Minister today.

In dealing with secondary education and the establishment of secondary schools, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition seemed to me to put the cart before the horse. He tried to make out that the very big increase in the number of students in our secondary schools was caused by the increased birth rate at the end of the war. The fact is that we have more students attending high schools and secondary schools today because this Government and the Minister have provided more schools for them. The young people have been encouraged to attend these schools. They do not have to live away from their homes to do so and this, in turn, has enabled their parents to live within their means.

I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was somewhat embarrassed in dealing with this subject because hon. members on this side of the Chamber and many other people in Queensland have very vivid recollections of the Leader of the Opposition saying at a Labour Convention in Toowoomba some years ago that it was inadvisable to provide secondary schools and so make it easy for people to have a secondary education because they would ultimately be educated away from Labour principles along snob lines. That is why the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was somewhat embarrassed when he dealt with that subject.

When one travels throughout Queensland and the other States, as I do, one thing stands out like a beacon light—the difference between the present educational buildings in Queensland and those that existed years ago. It does not apply only in isolated places. One can travel to the farthest inhabited point in the North, to the western border, in fact throughout the State, and find very few schools that have not had something done to them since this Government took office. In many instances, slight alterations have given schools adequate ventilation and lighting. In most cases the work has been carried out by the department. No matter what one's political affiliations are, if one has any understanding of fair play or a desire to give credit where credit is due, it

must be given to this Government and to the Department of Public Works for carrying out such an extraordinarily successful building campaign in such a short time. You will remember, Mr. Taylor, that as you travelled throughout the State you saw those drab-coloured, uninteresting-looking schools. Today they have been beautified with bright, interesting and attractive colour schemes which must create a better and calmer atmosphere for primary and secondary school students. Look at the number of school residences that the Government have provided throughout the State. These attractive, beautifully painted, well kept residences are an incentive to the teachers, and they give them more than a reasonable amount of comfort.

From the department's annual report we learn that expenditure on education establishments for 1959-1960 amounted to £3,905,765 or 59.9 per cent. of the total building programme, and that 461 classrooms at 136 schools were completed for either primary or secondary purposes. In the 10-year period 1950-1951 to 1959-1960, 3,354 classrooms were provided, of which 1,378 have been completed in the past three years—in other words about double the average in the Labour Government's regime.

Let us consider school residences and the number that have been provided. Let it not be thought for one moment that I have been particularly favourably treated because the Minister has indicated that residences and school buildings have been built all over the State. I have had three school residences completed in Roma and two in Miles.

**Mr. Davies** interjected.

**Mr. EWAN:** They were for the Regional Director of Education, the Inspector of Schools, and headmasters' residences. As a schoolmaster the hon. member would understand what that means!

Take the Condamine school at that famous historical place on the Condamine Highway. It is only a small school but the Government saw fit to install a septic system there. Septic systems should be installed in all schools throughout the State. At the Miles State School and High School additions costing £12,698 were made. At the Roma State School additions amounted to £11,050. I have already told my friend in the Opposition about the school residences. Apart from the three police residences provided in the previous three years a further six have been built in Roma. Local members of the Police Union claim that they are the best catered for residentially of any police anywhere in the State. When I made my maiden speech from the Opposition benches in 1950 I stressed the importance to the then Government of providing residences for senior Government officers who are subject to transfer from time to time. When the Hon. V. C. Gair came out to Roma on a goodwill tour on one memorable occasion, I was able to convince him of the necessity to provide

a residence for the manager of the State Government Insurance Office. When he returned to Brisbane he put through an Order in Council enabling the Insurance Commissioner to buy the residence that we had shown him.

This Government have carried out that policy in most areas. I know that in my own electorate, and in others held by Labour members, provision has been made for residences for senior officers in various fields of Government activity who are subject to transfer from time to time.

**Mr. Tucker:** What about the audit officers?

**Mr. EWAN:** That will come in due course. A start has to be made somewhere. Many people subject to transfer refuse it because they have reasonable residences in the towns in which they work and they know that if they go to another town they might lose their life's savings in the purchase of another residence.

**Mr. Tucker:** I said that some weeks ago.

**Mr. EWAN:** The hon. member for Townsville North should remember that his party was in power for 25 years and we could count on the fingers of our hands the residences then available for these officers. His party did very little in that time, but we have done a lot in the short time we have been on the Treasury benches.

I should now like to speak on the maintenance of Government buildings. In my own electorate there are some beautiful old buildings, one in particular being the court house at Roma. It was a beautiful old building, in a shocking state of neglect.

**Mr. Bennett:** Do you go there often?

**Mr. EWAN:** The hon. member for South Brisbane would no doubt have an eye for its architectural beauty if he had a case in the court house at Roma.

**Mr. Bennett:** I have been there for a week.

**Mr. EWAN:** Then the hon. member will know that it is a beautiful old building spoiled by neglect. In accordance with this Government's policy of sending officers out to inspect these maintenance jobs that were neglected during the years of Labour Government, we had a responsible officer out there to inspect that building and they are now attempting to restore it to its pristine glory. Those responsible for its creation would have been very dejected had they seen the condition it was in.

The Minister mentioned the amount of money spent outside the metropolitan area on sewerage works. I think I speak for the majority of people when I say that they appreciate this Government's administration in that respect. For many years under Labour administration efforts were made to have the town of Roma seweraged, but to no avail. When this Government came to

office our plans for sewerage in Roma were approved at a total cost of £440,000. That comprised an amount of £225,000 from loan funds and a subsidy of £215,000. Today that scheme is virtually completed, the amount of money expended to date being £414,748 including a subsidy of £207,461. We are on the verge of turning Roma into a modern town because of the sympathetic understanding shown by this Government for the particularly important problems of country towns.

In accordance with that same policy the Bungil Shire Council is undertaking the sewerage of Injune and so far planning funds of £3,839 and a subsidy of £1,865 have been made available. The total cost of the scheme will be £35,533, towards which the Government will provide a subsidy of £17,763. This much-needed amenity will be available to the people at an appropriate time in the history of the town. I have always thought it was wrong to wait until a town had become large with houses spread widely throughout the area before sewerage work was undertaken. When land is cheap, the residents want to occupy large allotments.

**Mr. Sherrington:** Land hungry.

**Mr. EWAN:** They are not land hungry. I am speaking of residents of the town. They will not be getting everything they want for their comfort, but at least they will be getting a measure of justice which they were denied for 25 years until this Government took office.

The stage when sewerage work should be undertaken is when a town is small, a town the size of Injune. The sewerage mains can be installed and, when unoccupied land is built on, they can be extended to that land. In that way the sewerage installation is in a compact area, and sewerage can be provided at half the amount involved in installing sewerage in place such as Roma and Brisbane. If the city forefathers of Brisbane had proceeded in that way, Brisbane would not have its present sewerage problem. The city of Brisbane has been allowed to sprawl outwards. For the reasons I have given, I suggest that sewerage schemes should be undertaken in small towns so that extensions when required can be carried out at a low cost.

I conclude by saying that we of the Roma electorate extend to the Minister and his officers our deepest thanks for their many courtesies. We collectively wish the Minister good health and a long tenure in office to carry on with the good work he has started.

**Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS** (Whitsunday—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (4.23 p.m.): It is not my intention to "bob up and down" during this debate, but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the proposed ring road for Brisbane, and his suggestion in essence was that the results

obtained from the origin-and-destination-survey now being conducted by the council are being distorted to support a case for the ring road. The matter is of such importance that I think I should lay his suggestion by the heels as early as possible.

Certain allegations were made to my colleague, the Minister for Labour and Industry, on Monday last in the course of an interview and a record of this interview was made and referred to the Lord Mayor. The matter is at present the subject of investigation by the Town Clerk. It is true that certain errors have crept into the work. Indeed, with such a volume of information being processed, it would be remarkable if it were otherwise. There are, however, a number of cross checks and balances which disclose these errors and they are corrected as discovered. Let me state that the whole sampling procedure was very carefully examined by independent expert staff of the University of Sydney and the Queensland University before the contract was let. A pilot survey was also conducted. The council also performs an independent test audit of results. Indeed, every precaution has been taken to ensure the propriety of the basis of the survey and the accuracy of the results. I must state that a preliminary investigation does not support the hon. members' allegations. There is a suggestion that the contractor's staff has made certain errors in assigning traffic movement. It is my understanding that assignment of traffic movement has nothing to do with the contractor. The council assigns traffic movement and it is for the contractor to collate information on the basis of that assignment. If there is anything invalid in the basis of assignments it must clearly show up in the table of results. It could not be hidden.

The contract price for the work is £27,910. I am advised that the contractor has been paid £16,650 to date. I am advised further that the contractor has lost money on the contract, and I am also advised that he expects his loss on the contract to be between £2,000 and £3,000.

I am advised that the person who interviewed my colleague had his employment terminated by the contractor after a series of warnings, because of the unsatisfactory nature of his services.

I give this preliminary advice to the Committee to dispel any disquiet that might arise in the matter. I will make a fuller statement at a later date when the present investigations have been completed.

**Mr. NEWTON** (Belmont) (4.27 p.m.): It is obvious from being in the Chamber when the Minister introduced the Estimates for the Department of Public Works that although he has only recently taken over this office he has been very active in seeing what makes the department tick. Already the Minister's reply to a matter that was

raised has been satisfactory, but the future will show just how he will handle this very important department.

With the retirement of the previous Minister, Mr. Jim Heading, we lost a man who was proud of his department, his officers, and the day-labour men on the various undertakings under his control. He never hesitated to point out that a previous Speaker of this Assembly had given great praise to the men for the work they carried out on this building. It showed that the men employed by the Department of Public Works took a great interest in the job they were doing and turned out tradesmenlike work.

We on this side of the Chamber express our appreciation to those Building Trades Union workers who did a good job over the period of time when we were in Government, and now, with the present Country-Liberal Party Government, are still doing a good job for the State, not only in the metropolitan area, but in the country areas also. As I have said before, I can speak with authority on this matter because I have seen these men in what we call "one-horse" towns and in some of the larger towns in the western, southern, central and north-western areas of the State doing the same job as they do in the provincial cities and the metropolitan area.

The Minister spoke of his recent tours down south and the checks he made in Victoria and New South Wales, and said he was very concerned as to why the contract system is preferred to day labour. Over the past three years we have seen a bigger proportion of the work in the State being undertaken by private contractors. I might add that in the main those contracts have been for manual-training schools. In the manual-training schools that have been built, some shocking messes have been made mainly because the contractors, as they mostly do, have sub-let a great deal of the work. Here in the metropolitan area, in the main, I have seen some shocking messes made of the foundations of state buildings.

**Mr. Hooper:** Whereabouts?

**Mr. NEWTON:** The Balmoral High School is one that comes to my mind. The mess was rectified all right, but it was rectified at the expense of the day-labour men on the project. The same applied to the building. Some of the building was done by the contractor and some by the Public Works Department. The contractor erected the frame and then officers of the Public Works Department moved in and put in the windows and doors. As a carpenter by trade and as one who worked for a contractor, I know that, when I have to keep my head down and go my hardest, I am not very concerned about who follows me; I have to get the job done for the contractor. That is what happened with these contracts. The men have not been concerned about who

followed them. Again, the employees of the Public Works Department have carried the burden of straightening out the messes.

**Mr. Hooper:** Were they supervised by private architects?

**Mr. NEWTON:** No, by officers of the Public Works Department. That is how most of the messes have been discovered. I am sure the hon. member knows as well as I do that the Queensland Public Works Department has always been regarded as having a very high standard of work. Members of my own union, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, preferred to work elsewhere than in the Public Works Department because they knew that their work was regularly inspected by the department's inspectors. The inspectors do a good job in the interests of the Government and of the department, and of course they do a very good job in the interests of the people by seeing that the money put into the projects is not wasted. That applies to day-labour projects as well as to contract work. Another one that comes to my mind concerns the changing over from timber to light steel structure. The project was the Stafford infants' School. The steel structure included the columns, the frame of the building and the roof trusses ready to take the timber purlins. I understand that this new idea of building came from Naco Ltd. It is a very sound idea, but unfortunately, as with most matters, it seems that the Government were used as an experiment. I just cannot recall who erected the buildings, whether it was Naco Ltd. or sub-contractors, but when Public Works Department employees came to take over their part of the building they found that the structure was out of square, and it took them some time to get it somewhere near square. It was necessary to do a certain amount of camouflaging to cover up the effects of being out of square.

I recall recently the building of our great Public Library with the use of aluminium window frames. Over 50 per cent. of those windows were found by the inspectors of the Department of Public Works to be faulty and had to be replaced by the contractor.

In comparing the contract system and the day-labour system, we must look to the future. I am sure that anyone who knows anything about building will agree that once a contract is signed with a contractor, if the plan is altered in any way at all the particular job can become a cost-plus job that could cost the department a very large sum of money. I have seen jobs of this type, as I am sure other hon. members have, and I have first-hand knowledge of the extra costs that may be involved.

**Mr. Windsor:** A reputable firm should give you a better deal than you could get on a cost-plus basis.

**Mr. NEWTON:** In the main, the big builders today are not interested in these "semi-big" jobs, as we call them in the building industry, and they are done by a builder who is between what we call the "humpy" builder and the big builder. He is a man who is inclined to have a go at this, that, and everything. These builders face the very problem to which the Minister referred. They lose men and they never have a permanent gang. If they have no permanent foreman, who knows what type of work will be turned out?

**Mr. Hughes:** The Labour Party fostered the cost-plus system during and after the war.

**Mr. NEWTON:** I am not fully aware of that. In the main, my experience of cost-plus has been on big contracts outside that have been done by Hornibrooks and others, and I know that they can prove very costly to the person or the Government for whom the work is being done.

The Minister also said that it was very difficult to get labour at certain periods of the year. Knowing the building industry, I should say that from July to November would be one of the most difficult periods in which to get building workers, whether carpenters, painters, bricklayers, or labourers. In the North many building-trade workers leave the trade to go cane-cutting, because they can make more money cutting cane than they could working in the building trade for the same period. That also applies when the meatworks are in operation.

**Mr. Hooper:** That is mainly in North Queensland.

**Mr. NEWTON:** Yes, but it applies from Maryborough north. Once one gets into the big sugar-growing areas such as the Bundaberg area, this applies.

**Mr. Wharton:** They would have to work a lot harder for the bigger money.

**Mr. NEWTON:** The hon. member says that they would have to work harder. If he is under the impression that one can "bludge" in the Department of Public Works, I can assure him that he is on the wrong track. The Government, being an employer, expect a fair day's work from their employees. Since taking over the administration of this department, the present Minister has written to his employees stating that provided he gets the return he expects from the men employed by the department, there will be no retrenchment as far as he is concerned. While on the subject of employment in industry, I say that I should like to see a bigger Vote for the Department of Public Works. That is one way in which more employment could be found for workers when the seasonal work has finished. If more money was made available to the department it could utilise the services of unemployed workers when the various sugar mills and meatworks closed down.

In this way it could provide more primary and secondary schools and residences for school-teachers and police officers. That additional money would be of great assistance to any Government, irrespective of its composition. As most hon. members are probably aware, the worst part of the year is between November and February. To use the Minister's own words, I say that that is when the Department of Public Works will be having its "big splurge". Irrespective of the Minister in charge of the department or the Government in office, that has been the time of the year when most work has been carried out by the Department of Public Works in an endeavour to have school facilities ready for the children at the start of the new school year.

Although some building workers may disagree with me, I say quite honestly and openly that I think the Government should give a lead to contractors—and all employers of labour, for that matter—by indicating that it is preferable to work 40 hours a week with continuity of employment rather than a six-day week with long lay-offs. I am glad to see that both the Minister for Education and Migration and the Minister for Public Works and Local Government are in the Chamber. I know that what I am suggesting will not overcome the position for months, but it could possibly overcome it for a couple of weeks. In the first half of the year, about Easter-time, it is very difficult for building workers to get another job if they are dismissed, because of the number of public holidays falling in that period. Because of the Easter holidays, Anzac Day, May Day and other public holidays, employers—the Government, too, for that matter—would not put anyone on unless they badly needed him to complete a job. That has been the experience of a number of building-trade workers.

**Mr. Windsor:** The holidays would not make any difference if they had the work for them to do.

**Mr. NEWTON:** If they had the work it would be all right. I do not deny that in the last 2½ years the Government have made a big splurge. It is true that over the last Christmas period a great deal of overtime was worked. Overtime was worked on the University building at Townsville and on the Seven Hills school. It may have been worked elsewhere but they are examples that come to my mind. Workers were brought in from various schools to get the Seven Hills school finished in time for its opening in the New Year.

**Mr. Windsor:** I think every workman likes a little overtime—except John Egerton.

**Mr. NEWTON:** I must be a second John Egerton, because I do not favour it. I am an advocate for continuity of work rather than big splurges of work. I realise that many people like to work a certain amount of overtime. That is all right; if they put aside the money they get in overtime for

the time when they are out of work it would assist, but they do not. Whatever most workers receive for the week becomes their weekly pay and it is on that that they balance their budget. Experience has proved that beyond doubt; that is why I advocate on this occasion continuity of work rather than working overtime.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Do you think your building workers would be happy to work a 40-hour week in Townsville when private industry nearby is working overtime?

**Mr. NEWTON:** If they knew the position thoroughly, they would. If they knew there would not be full employment in the industry they would be very glad to accept a 40-hour week.

**Mr. Pizzey:** I do not think they would.

**Mr. NEWTON:** I think they would be glad to. Anyway, it is our responsibility, and that of the unions to give leadership to these people and show them that it is far better to have continuity of work than to work overtime and then, in the long run, be weeks without employment, thus creating hardship for themselves and their families?

**Mr. Hooper:** What happens when they move on to the meatworks and other seasonal industries?

**Mr. NEWTON:** When that happens there is a shortage of tradesmen, as the Minister pointed out this morning. He said he could not get carpenters and bricklayers. That is one of the things that must be considered in the overall picture.

**Mr. Pizzey:** It will be a lot easier when we get to the stage of being a year ahead of ourselves in our work.

**Mr. NEWTON:** That would possibly be of great advantage, but we will never get to that position until the Commonwealth Government grants the States more money to do the work necessary in the field of education.

I should like to touch on two further points and I hope the Minister will give me some indication whether the rumour will become the fact. The first relates to the replacement of old classrooms at schools that in my opinion should be pulled down and new ones built in their places. Rumour has it that there will be no replacement of old schools until all the new classrooms and schools required are provided. I hope that it is not so. I see the Minister for Education shaking his head.

The other matter about which I am concerned is that it is strongly rumoured that a policy that is adopted now to a certain extent will in fact be finally adopted. It is that of building classrooms both upstairs and downstairs. At present it seems to be the policy that, if a wing is put onto a school to provide six classrooms, two of them are provided downstairs. I suppose it does no harm if it does not take the shelter space

that is required in summer-time and during wet weather. It is rumoured that the department is considering building more schools with rooms underneath in order to save extra expense.

As hon. members opposite will say, it would probably be a step towards overcoming the present bad position which, I will admit, was not so prevalent when this Government came to office, and it would be probably quite all right if the necessary precautions were taken to make sure that it did not encroach on the shelter area. In modern schools the shelter sheds that were common in the old days do not exist. There are still one or two in my electorate. There is one at the Dutton Park State School and another one at Belmont, but there are not many about today.

I hope this matter of upstairs and downstairs classrooms, if it is to become the policy of the Government, will not preclude the shelter area, which is necessary to the health and welfare of the children in summer-time and in wet weather.

**Mr. WHARTON** (Burnett) (4.50 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to speak on the Estimates of the Department of Public Works. I compliment the Minister on his lengthy outline of the work undertaken by the department. With a full explanation of activities of the department, much time is saved in debate and useless repetition is avoided.

**Mr. Windsor:** You would be speaking for a week if you went through all that was said.

**Mr. WHARTON:** The Minister has done a good job. I commend him on the time he spent in giving us the whole story.

**Mr. Sherrington:** You admit he was telling stories.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Not the sort of stories you tell.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. WHARTON:** It was a story of great progress, and an indication that Queensland has a progressive Government. It has indeed been pleasing in the last three years since the Government took office to see greatly increased building activity throughout the country districts. By their work the Government have given encouragement to people to live in those areas.

**Mr. Sherrington:** That is why they are leaving the State and going down south.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Hon. members opposite would not realise the great amount of building being undertaken throughout Queensland. I have been in a country district for many years, and the great spurt in building work since this Government took office has been very evident to me. Prior to that time it was rare to see a new school or a new building in country areas. The present

Government have built a great number of modern schools, and in turn the people of those districts have been encouraged to build to a similar standard. I compliment the Minister on his work and the work of his department.

**Mr. Houston:** How long have you had glasses?

**Mr. WHARTON:** I do not need glasses. I will take the hon. member through the country districts and show him what has been done there. Even in the city much building work has been undertaken, but hon. members opposite would not know what is happening even in their own electorates.

The expenditure of £6,000,000 this year is a great achievement. I was pleased to hear the tribute paid by an Opposition member to the previous Minister, Mr. Heading, who had the honour of starting this work. The Minister for Education must be linked in any tribute paid to the previous Minister for Public Works and the present Minister. A progressive policy in education has gone hand-in-hand with a progressive policy of building construction.

**Mr. Houston:** When was the Cavendish Road High School started?

**Mr. Pizzey:** It has to be rebuilt because it was so shabbily built by Labour.

**Mr. Houston:** Have you had a change of administration?

**Mr. Pizzey:** We are rebuilding the job you did.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. WHARTON:** The expenditure this year on schools and other educational establishments was £4,000,000. Four hundred and sixty-one classrooms were completed. If the future generation is to be virile and progressive it must be educated, and the educational environment must be such as to inspire a progressive outlook. I travel through my electorate quite frequently, although I doubt whether Opposition members have seen much of their electorates.

I am proud of the work of the Department of Public Works in my electorate. Very fine schools have been constructed at Bargara, Biggenden, Gayndah, Gin Gin and Alloway, and a very fine school-house is to be erected at Alloway. The smaller schools have been kept in repair and it will be my constant endeavour to advance the standard of the buildings in some of the smaller areas in my electorate. In South Kolan and the Sharon area there is a need for some improvement to bring the schools up to the standard that is necessary for students in country areas. Staff rooms, library rooms and such things are necessary to improve the lot, not only of the school teachers, but also of the pupils in those

areas. I do not wish to criticise the Minister unduly but I think there is a little lack of activity—

**An Opposition Member:** You will be out.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Hon. members opposite always talk like that, but we on this side frequently make constructive suggestions.

The architectural branch is sometimes a little slack in its work for the smaller schools. It does an excellent job on the bigger projects, but on some of the smaller works, in the classrooms and so on in the smaller schools, it seems to be a little behind the times. Perhaps the Minister may be able to speed up the architectural branch so that the little schools get the attention they deserve. If we give them that attention we will achieve something substantial throughout the State.

The expenditure on schools for the future is very essential. There are some schools that will be closed down because road transport will make them redundant. However, it will be for the good of the community when central schools are established. Children can receive a better education at the larger schools.

Many unused buildings and schools are empty and idle, and the schools have been closed. I urge that these school buildings be sold. When one leaves one's house empty it soon deteriorates, and when a school is closed down it deteriorates in the same way. It would be wise to offer these schools for sale when they are at their optimum to those who want them. There is a fair demand for school houses for youth projects and clubs and so on, and people buy them to make use of them. It would be wise if the department sold them at the first opportunity, not only so that the department will get a higher value, but that they will be of greater value to those needing them.

The spending of money on the Gatton Agricultural High School and College has a good effect on the whole of the State. Quite a few young people from my electorate attend the college and receive education, and I am sure that the spending of £43,000 on Gatton College is in the interests of the primary producers of the State. Not only do the students receive further education, but they receive education that will play a vital role in scientific food production in the State.

Then we have the university, where we are spending large amounts of money. While I am on this subject I should like to mention Townsville. Even in the first year £166,000 has been spent on the university college there.

**Mr. Tucker** interjected.

**Mr. WHARTON:** The hon. member has always a lot to say, but it does not achieve a great deal.

Apart from the schools all the other buildings, particularly in my own electorate, are a credit to the Minister. There has been considerable expenditure on hospitals, police

stations, court houses and so on. These go hand in hand with schooling in bringing about an uplift in the standard of the community. A good deal of money has been spent on renovations. That is very necessary.

I appreciate the purchase of a house at Gin Gin for the clerk of petty sessions. I appreciate, too, the purchase of a house in Gayndah for the agronomist who works on Brian Pastures. He lived at Gayndah, but the house he was renting was sold and he was faced with the prospect of having to leave his work. He spent five years at the university and not only did good work at Brian Pastures in the interests of the department, but loved his work. So I was very glad to note that a house was bought for him to keep him in that employment. It means that we retain a happy departmental officer and a good citizen while the department has an asset in a very good house. There is a shortage of homes in Gayndah, but I am pleased to see that the Housing Commission has taken the matter in hand and that further houses will be built there. Later I will tell hon. members something about the Brian Pastures research station, but I have not time to do so in this debate.

I shall close by dealing with the subject of valuations. It is rather a touchy subject but I will make one point and I hope the Minister will study it.

**Mr. Sherrington:** You seem touchy about it.

**Mr. WHARTON:** Hon. members opposite make it touchy.

We seem to be going along with a lack of objectiveness. We have a band of valuers to value certain lands, including lands not sold or not up for sale, and later we amend certain legislation in accordance with revaluations. Similarly local authorities re-assess rates so that ratepayers will not have to pay more. We seem not to be very objective about it and I ask the Minister to study the matter.

**Mr. BENNETT** (South Brisbane) (5.3 p.m.): It rather amuses me to hear some of the Government speakers refer to the work that has been done since they took office. If they were perfectly honest and fair they would agree that most of the work was in the process of being done when they took office, or, if not, it was at least on the drafting board. They have merely carried on work that was conceived by the Labour Government and that would have been completed, only in a much better fashion and more efficiently, by a Labour Government.

**Mr. Pizzey:** Most of your plans were still-born; that was the trouble.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I should have thought that remark would come from the Minister for Health and Home Affairs, but apparently he has been coaching the Minister for Education, too. While most of the work

that has been completed was commenced by a Labour Government, there is still much more crying out to be done.

I was heartened at one stage when the Minister spoke of the proposed construction of further Supreme Courts in Brisbane. That is a crying necessity. The shortage of accommodation is interfering with the proper administration of justice and it prevents judges from fully occupying themselves in disposing of litigation in Queensland. Very often they cannot find courts in which to sit. Much has been said from time to time about the build-up of listed cases that remain unheard from year to year. One of the main reasons for that is that we have not enough court rooms for the Supreme Court judges to sit. The position becomes absolutely impossible during the visit of the High Court judges to Brisbane. They occupy not only the courts, but also the chambers of the Supreme Court judges and they bring virtually to a standstill litigation in this State. I was rather disappointed when the Minister said that the provision of further Supreme Court accommodation was another long-term project. With many of the desirable schemes he had in mind and referred to, after mentioning them in a salutary fashion, he disappointed us by saying they were only long-term schemes. In other words, he is going to become a typical Minister of this Cabinet by doing the Kathleen Mavourneen act—conceiving some ideas but never putting them into practice.

**Mr. Windsor:** Where there is no vision, there is no hope.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I am speaking on these Estimates.

The Minister said that it was proposed to build a new court building behind what is regarded as the front of the existing Supreme Court building. May I remind him that the traffic noise already makes hearing very difficult in the second criminal court in the building, and that in extremely hot and humid weather all doors and windows must be closed in an endeavour to exclude the noise made by trams and other traffic travelling along George Street. Any new building erected on the George Street frontage will have to be air-conditioned and sound-proofed.

I have had experience of cases involving sums of money up to £20,000 being heard in judges' chambers because no courts were available. The judge who sits under those conditions is to be highly commended for his devotion to duty and for putting up with the inconvenience and annoyance of having in his chambers council, solicitors, litigants, and any members of the public who may desire to be present. Justice cannot be administered adequately under those circumstances, and it is a crying shame that once again the Minister has adopted the procrastinating attitude of his predecessor and put off the construction of a proposed new Supreme Court building.

I have even seen the Chief Justice being subjected to the indignity of walking fully-robed across the lawns in the Supreme Court grounds, through the corridors of the old railway building and into what is now referred to as the District Court because no court was available in the Supreme Court building for him to deal with the litigation that is at present listed. I think the Minister should give further consideration to the proposal to build a new Supreme Court, which apparently is being shelved.

Magistrates courts and courts of petty sessions throughout the State are sadly in need of maintenance, repair, alteration, and, in many cases, reconstruction. It is not necessary to go to the country centres to prove this. Some of the country magistrates who are transferred to Brisbane are shocked and amazed at the barbaric conditions under which they have to work in the courts of petty sessions and magistrates courts in Brisbane. These courts are in the old railway building, which was designed to provide offices for railway purposes.

Turning to country courtrooms, at Kilcoy, for instance, I wondered why everyone was scratching himself. Then I, too, commenced to scratch myself, and I had to ask somebody what was the cause of the irritation. I was informed that bird lice were falling from the manhole in the roof of the courtroom. Those are the conditions under which justice is dispensed in this State.

**An Honourable Member:** What year was this?

**Mr. BENNETT:** That was within the last two years.

The legal fraternity and the magistrates in Brisbane are forced to endure the indignity of working in what is virtually a bird cage because one person in the last half century vaulted over the railings on the veranda outside the courts. Incidentally, that was at a stage when he was supposed to be in custody, although I am not blaming anyone for his escape. The Minister immediately panicked and had all the verandas enclosed with K-wire. It gives one the impression that one is in a bird-cage or concentration camp. Certainly it is not conducive to an atmosphere of freedom and justice for magistrates, litigants or legal men. Immediately accused persons get into that restricted atmosphere they must feel that they are already in the watchhouse. From my conversations with magistrates who use these courts it is obvious that they regard it as an absolute insult to their jurisdiction to be so enclosed. It is as if one is in a prison compound before sentence is passed. The building is so antiquated that it cannot have a lift. Elderly litigants either have to walk up stairs, at considerable jeopardy to their health, or be carried up. On some occasions, when ambulance cases are brought in the court has to adjourn to an unofficial room downstairs for the hearing because the building is too old to carry a lift. No doubt there was a great deal of justification for

parliamentarians to install a lift in this building, but there is no possibility of a lift ever being installed at the Magistrates Court building.

Brisbane's future traffic problems have been increased by the fact that the District Courts have been constructed at the top end of Adelaide Street, thereby depriving the city for all time of the possibility of extending Adelaide Street through to any bypass road, access road, or new bridge over the river to replace the present Victoria Bridge. The Minister no doubt could give the correct figure but I should guess that about £50,000 has been spent on the District Courts. To some extent the renovation has improved the frontage to the old building, but the new courts are still only makeshift; they are still only part of an old decrepit white-ant-eaten building. I was disappointed to learn that the Government intend to convert this old building further to provide for two more District Courts, thereby making more permanent the closure of the top end of Adelaide Street. The money already spent on the conversion of the old building and presently being spent on the two new courts could have been used on a brand-new, architecturally-attractive building, with all the necessary amenities for the comfortable enjoyment of a new building. It is a pinch-penny attitude for the Government to adopt in an endeavour to save a few pounds. Apparently they have not even saved that much by converting the old building.

Let me turn to the construction of schools in Queensland, particularly in Brisbane. Most of the work completed in the last three years was commenced by the Labour Government. I disagree wholeheartedly with the Government's policy to remove all the inner-city schools to the outskirts of the city. It will prove to be a great disservice to children now living in and near the inner city. In any case, it will be of no advantage to many people living on the outskirts of Brisbane.

There has already been a proposal to close the Industrial High School, which is centrally situated and meets the requirements of children from many suburbs, on both the north side and the south side of Brisbane. I feel that if it is removed to any particular suburb it will cause more expense in tram fares, and in many instances will require longer travelling time and cause greater inconvenience by students having to change trams.

Where it is presently located, West End children can attend it at reasonable cost by simply embarking on one tram there and one home. If it is shifted to any suburb other than West End—and, of course, there is no suggestion of its being shifted to West End—no matter to what suburb it may be shifted the West End children will have to pay two tram fares and be subjected to the hazardous risk of changing trams in the inner city, or alternatively to changing trams at night-time in the West End area immediately adjacent to the south side of Victoria Bridge. That is not desirable for children

attending school at night-time and I sincerely hope the Government do not persist in their intention.

A couple of years ago the Government announced their intention of disposing of the South Brisbane State School. That, too, was a very unwise and impetuous decision and was made without giving the matter any serious thought or consideration. Since that decision was made attendances at the school have increased. The head master has made a painstaking effort to see that the children are happy, well-trained and well-educated, and he has effected a marvellous improvement in the atmosphere and tone of the school.

The attendances are increasing each year, or each month, and they are healthy, happy children, no doubt enjoying the privilege of attending school in their own suburb, a school that is readily accessible from any of the south-side areas. This school serves a good purpose and I should say that the standard there is better than that of many other schools, even on the outskirts of the city. I should say it would be a very sorry thing for the city, and particularly for that area, if that school was abandoned to other purposes.

In any case, as I said, the proposal was announced some years ago and I sincerely hope that the Government will clarify the position one way or the other so that parents will know what their children's future will be, and those in the immediate neighbourhood of the school can frame a definite policy in the education of their families.

I should like to make brief reference to migration. I know that there is not sufficient time at my disposal to deal adequately with the subject and I know also that migration has been removed from the Estimates of the Department of Public Works—rather unfortunately, I say, because migration is one of the most important problems confronting this State. It is unfortunate that we will be deprived of the opportunity to refer to it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind the hon. gentleman that migration cannot be discussed on these Estimates. It is covered by the Education Department Estimates.

**Mr. BENNETT:** I realise that. I dismiss the matter with the observation that it is most unfortunate that we will be deprived of the opportunity to discuss it at all because the Estimates for the Department of Education are not on the list.

One building that this lack-lustre Government have constructed I refer to very rightly as the annexe in the courtyard of the Treasury Building. The best that can be said of that building is that it is an "abortion" of a building.

My so-called colleague is still boycotting me—he gets the sulks like a schoolgirl—but the hon. member for Windsor said that Government buildings along the George Street frontage should be reconstructed. With

that statement, I entirely agree. This six-storey building to which I refer—under construction obviously at considerable cost—is hidden in the courtyard of the Treasury Building. It is an absolutely outrageous proposal that could be introduced only by men who are not fully aware of, or alive to, their responsibilities in the expenditure of public money. If the taxpayers of Queensland are called on to bear the cost of a building of that magnitude for Government purposes, they should be provided with a building of architectural beauty, a building that appeals to their aesthetic senses, a building that is readily accessible and of which they can be proud.

It should be built where it can be easily seen and admired by the people of Queensland and visitors to the capital city. In the courtyard of the Treasury Building it will not be seen by anyone; it will merely interfere with light and ventilation, and the comfort of those who work in the Treasury Building.

**A Government Member:** That is where they will file their secret reports!

**Mr. BENNETT:** Perhaps that is where the Deputy Premier will send the reports to which he refers in Parliament but will not table.

The Treasury Building was erected in the early days of Queensland. We can show our gratitude to the architects responsible for its construction by at least ensuring that its architectural beauty will not be altered, that it will remain as a symbol of the era in which it was built. It is now being mangled merely for the purpose of providing more space for Government offices. The Treasury Building is being despoiled by the Government, with the building of this humpy in the courtyard. That is the only way in which the new building can be described. I hope the Government will get above their pinch-penny attitude of spending money on the conversion of existing buildings and construction of other buildings behind existing structures.

There is no shortage of land. It could not be said that the Government do not own sufficient land in the city on which to erect a decent building. Why on earth are they ruining the architecture of the Treasury Building by erecting a monstrosity in the courtyard? Whoever conceived the idea certainly cannot be proud of himself, and the Government should be ashamed of themselves for endorsing it.

Land tax and land valuations have been referred to in the debate. A valuation is merely the hypothetical amount a purchaser would pay for a particular block of land. Officers of the department value large parcels of land, at times, but not always, using actual sales of land in the area as a basis for the hypothetical amount they decide a purchaser would pay for the land.

By way of interjection during the Minister's speech I referred to valuations in Brisbane. I did not ask my question without giving the matter some thought and consideration. Since the end of 1956, that is, mainly during the period of office of this Government, valuations in Brisbane have increased from £63,200,000 to £70,128,000, an increase of approximately 10.89 per cent. The Valuer-General and the Minister should give some reason for such an astronomical increase. Surely a unit of valuation could be struck. I agree with the Minister that the purpose of revaluation is to make a just and fair comparison between parcels of land in a local-authority area. I cannot see that the purpose of a revaluation is to increase astronomically the overall valuation in a local-authority area, nor do I see the necessity for so doing. I wholeheartedly disagree with the Minister's statement that we have to take the particular land values at the time. After all, under the Landlords and Tenants Act we do not work on the sale, or marketable, value of the land; we take the artificial valuation that applied in 1948, or some such year. We adopt an artificial valuation, or what may be termed a unit of value.

**Mr. Roberts:** Why not go back to William the Conqueror?

**Mr. BENNETT:** The only reason is that we like to be reasonable and sensible, not to be ridiculous or reduce arguments to absurdity in this Chamber. I sincerely hope the Minister does not do that in the administration of his department.

I submit that the purpose of a revaluation is to make a just finding, not to increase the overall value so that the unit of valuation struck by a local authority has to be varied accordingly.

(Time expired.)

**Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (5.27 p.m.):** I rise very gladly to speak on the Estimates for the Department of Public Works and Local Government, and I congratulate the Minister on the manner in which he has presented them. I also congratulate the Opposition on the way they have accepted them.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Kedron, said that the Minister spoke at excessive length. It may be that was because he had so much to tell. When we realise that he has under his jurisdiction the portfolios of Public Works and Local Government it is obvious he has many things to talk about. The interjection by the hon. member for North Rockhampton was quite uncalled for. At the outset, the Minister outlined to the Chamber that he was not saying that the work had been performed in the short space of time he has been Minister, but was undertaken under the Ministerial leadership of the Hon. James Heading. I thought he made that very plain, and I feel therefore that the hon. member for Rockhampton's interjection that the

Minister had been blowing his own trumpet for the last 20 minutes was quite uncalled for.

In congratulating the Minister, although he has had the stewardship for only five months, I feel—and I think that all hon. members feel—that by now he has picked up the threads and is performing his job with a great amount of vigour. As most of his colleagues have said, possibly his greatest attribute is his capacity for hard work.

I pay tribute to the Hon. James Heading, who has retired from Parliamentary life. As the newly-elected member for Condamine I wish to say that we did not see much Public Works development in our area for a very long time, but after the Hon. James Heading assumed control of the department we saw things get really under way.

I am very grateful to the Minister for the assistance he has given me as a new member. Naturally I was very keen to find out what work was taking place within my electorate and I told him one day that I would appreciate it very much if he could give me a list of the work being done. Very soon after that, his very efficient private secretary handed me a list of work to be done in the financial year. I have it here and, if I want to know what is going on in a certain place, I simply refer to it and can see at a glance. If anyone wants to know what is going on in a particular locality, I have it here. Incidentally, the estimated expenditure over the whole of the electorate is £43,694. To some hon. members that may sound a great deal of money while to others it may sound very little. I should like it to be bigger, but I realise that Queensland is a big State with 78 electorates and, though there is room for much more spending, if we continue as at present we will gradually have our requirements fulfilled.

I do not want to criticise previous speakers, and I think it would be much more worth while if I used the time at my disposal in outlining to the Minister our requirements and pointing out what has been done in the period under review.

Public works, particularly in country electorates, are very closely linked with the activities of the Education Department. While the Estimates of the Education Department will not be debated this session, its activities will become apparent from my outline of what is being done by the Public Works Department in my electorate. Very shortly after taking over his portfolio, the Minister for Education made a quick survey of the area and saw the need for many works to be carried out. As a result of that first survey and of later getting down to the task of allotting priorities, the two departments, after three years in collaboration, have got under way a great deal of work, which will be of colossal advantage to the people in my electorate. Possibly the best job they have done there is the establishment of a

high-school top at Jandowae, one of the main centres in the electorate and very centrally situated. Chinchilla, a bigger centre, already had facilities for secondary education before this Government took office. That is something I very much appreciate, of course, but Jandowae did not seem to be able to get recognition. However, today it has a flourishing high-school top. It is only in its second year and already some 40 children receive secondary education there.

During the period that I refer to the Department of Public Works has expended £11,000 in providing new buildings for high-school accommodation. Because it is the Government's policy to establish high schools in small country towns and to bring the children in by school-transport services, the Public Works Department will be called upon to provide more accommodation at those centres. As the transport services are established, I hope the department will be in a position to accede to any requests made of it.

In years gone by there has been opposition to the practice of bringing children to central schools. I suppose that is natural, because getting away from one-teacher schools would be somewhat revolutionary to some parents. But I think most parents in country areas now realise the advantages of central schools where children can be better cared for in classes, with one teacher to each class, keener competition in the classes, and keener competition in sport. The extension of this system will call for greater expenditure, of course, and small schools that have served their purpose will be left idle. I am confident, however, that the Minister and his department will be able to meet any demands that are made on them.

I should say that within two years the whole of the Condamine electorate will have secondary-school facilities at area schools or central schools. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition claimed that these projects were under way before this Government took office. Perhaps they were in certain areas, but they were not in my electorate. I do not know the reason for that. This Government have tackled the problem courageously and, as I said, in two years I am confident that these bigger schools will be established. I think it will be a wonderful advantage. Three kiddies are sitting for Scholarship this year at the little school where my children go, and I know that their parents were not in a position to give them a secondary education. Now that a high-school top has been established in Jandowae these children will receive a secondary education, and I think it is most important that our children should receive that education. The children of today seem to finish their primary education much younger than we did when we were at school. Possibly they are smarter than we were, or possibly it is because they start school at a younger age.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with school buildings rather than with education.

**Mr. SULLIVAN:** I was expecting to be called to order. I was leading up to pointing out the extra work that would be thrown onto the Department of Public Works as small schools were closed down and extra accommodation was required at the larger ones.

I look forward to the day when we have a new high school at Chinchilla. The land is available. I have talked the matter over with the Minister for Education and Migration, and I understand that a high school to cater for about 150 children would cost between £120,000 and £150,000. Since I have been elected to Parliament the people of Chinchilla have approached me with requests that a high school be made available. I hope that if not this year, then at least next year the department will have sufficient finance to proceed with this project.

Another responsibility of the department that is very important to people throughout the State is the provision of hospitals. For some reason or other the Jandowae people were never able to make successful representations to the previous Government for a new hospital. My predecessor, Mr. Sparkes, was very mindful of their need, and he brought it before the Government on many occasions. But we still did not get a new hospital; we were told that we were close enough to Dalby. With the change of Government, and with Mr. Heading as the Minister for Public Works, it was not very long before the hospital was under way. I congratulate departmental officers for the magnificent job they made of the first wing of the Jandowae hospital. The hon. members for Bowen and Hinchinbrook recently inspected it, and I am sure they will agree that it is a splendid little hospital. One wing has been completed but now we are pressing for the second. Originally the first wing was intended to be a maternity wing, but the Department of Health and Home Affairs has decided that it should be used as a general hospital, with the maternity wing to be built in the near future. Since we have had the first wing there has been no trouble with nursing staff. Previously no-one would come to Jandowae to nurse; I do not know why, but possibly it was because of the conditions under which they had to work. Ever since the new wing was opened we have had a full complement of matron, sisters and nurses, and they are all working very happily. When the request is made for the second wing I hope that the department will have the necessary finance to get on with the job without any delay.

I should now like to make reference to the Minister's administration of the Local Government portfolio. He referred to his visit to the Wambo shire, where he created history when he opened three water supplies in the one shire on the same day. He congratulated the Wambo shire on its very fine achievement and I, too, should like to

express my congratulations to the shire council for the job it has done, in collaboration with the Local Government Department, in providing water supplies for the three small townships of Bell, Jandowae and Warra.

It is sometimes hard for people living in cities to realise just what value country people place on these amenities. A simple way to explain their position is that in the recent drought there was no shortage of drinking water in those towns, whereas in previous droughts of not very long duration the people had to purchase their water. With only a couple of tanks for drinking water, a family of five or six does not take very long to exhaust the supply. The provision of a water supply in each of these three towns has overcome that difficulty.

Perhaps one of the things that is most appreciated is the fact that once a water supply is provided in a country town it is possible to give the people one of the amenities enjoyed by people in cities—the provision of a swimming pool where the children can be taught to swim and the general public can cool off in hot weather. I maintain that swimming should be taught in our schools. I hope that matter will be taken into consideration and eventually made available throughout the State.

And so I express my appreciation, on behalf of the Wambo shire, to the Local Government Department. The dealings I have had with the officers of the department in my short time as a member of Parliament have always been on a very happy note. I have found them very keen to assist me in every way possible. I have three shires in my electorate—Chinchilla, Wambo and Kingaroy—and I know that my sentiments are shared by those three shire councils and their clerks, that is, that the Local Government Department are most helpful in their dealings with them. I feel that, under the guidance of the Minister for Public Works and Local Government, that very happy relationship will continue and prosper.

I should say that the Minister, on his visit on the occasion I mentioned, created a very good impression on the people of the Wambo shire. He came out there as a very new Minister. We were two of a kind—he was a new Minister and I was a new member—but apparently we blundered our way through the job very efficiently. At least the Minister did, because afterwards, on numerous occasions, people spoke highly of the manner in which he performed his duties on that occasion. On behalf of the people of the Wambo shire, I thank the Minister very sincerely for the job he did on that occasion. As the representative of the Condamine electorate, I look forward to working in close harmony with the Minister for Public Works.

**Mr. INCH (Bourke) (5.50 p.m.):** I commend the Minister on a most comprehensive survey

of departmental activities. I express appreciation of the work of the department on the State schools at the Mt. Isa mine and the town of Mt. Isa. While I express appreciation of that work, I make a plea for the construction of three extra classrooms at the Cloncurry State School. The Minister may recall that two of those rooms were taken last year from the primary school for purposes of secondary education, and I understand a further room is to be taken this year, so that the primary school will be short of three rooms. I suppose that, as usual, most of the children in the primary grades will be accommodated under very trying conditions in classrooms beneath the school. I referred to that matter in my maiden speech in this Chamber.

The Minister had much to say about the augmentation of water supplies in various towns and cities. This matter affects portion of my electorate. I draw attention to the dire necessity of a dam on Slaty Creek, in the Cloncurry shire, to provide an adequate water supply for the residents of Cloncurry. For a great many years they have had to rely on soaks in the bed of the Cloncurry River. That state of affairs dates back to 1922, but the supply has gradually worsened from year to year. During the past six years the shire council has spent thousands of pounds in an effort to augment the town water supply, by trying to bring in new soaks—and their efforts have met with some success—and by carrying out investigations into the proposal for the construction of a dam in the Slaty Creek area.

We have reached the stage when these soaks can no longer meet the demand for water in Cloncurry. The position is very acute. Recently the soaks failed suddenly and the town was without water.

I have with me a copy of the "Mount Isa Mail" of 18 October, 1960, containing an article on the shortage of water in Cloncurry, and a report by the Cloncurry Shire Council's engineer on the construction of the Slaty Creek dam. The newspaper article reads—

"Cloncurry Without Water When Supply Failed

"Will Petition State for Money for Dam

"The precarious water supply to Cloncurry brought crisis to the town on Sunday when residents were without water for nearly five hours in the evening.

"The townspeople will petition the State Government for money to be made available as a matter of urgency for the building of the proposed dam on the Cloncurry River.

"Soaks Fail

"The Shire Clerk (Mr. A. Birtwell) said today that sudden cessation of the water supply was brought about by the failure of the soaks in the Cloncurry River from which supplies are pumped.

1960—2x

"Dempsey's soak is not quite unreliable and none of the soaks at present pumped can cope with the demand put on them by the pump.

"It is simply that the water in the soaks will no longer flow in at the rate we pump it out, Mr. Birtwell said.

"It was unfortunate that the soak should fail so suddenly and catch everybody unprepared. We had to cut off the supply of water again on Monday night but sufficient warning was given on this occasion."

From that article, hon. members can see for themselves that these soaks are rapidly losing their supply of water and things are in a very precarious state at Cloncurry.

The article continues—

"There was £12,000 made available on the current year's estimates of the Shire Council for investigations into the scheme for a dam on Slaty Creek, Mr. Birtwell said.

"It is a costly job to plan and a considerable amount of investigation would be necessary to find out if sound bedrock is available for the foundations of the wall. Conveyance of the stored water to the town would also be a major financial consideration apart from the cost of the dam itself.

"Meanwhile the work to bring in water from the new soak is proceeding steadily in spite of difficulties in the supply of some materials.

"The need for the dam to be built now becomes urgent more than ever because work has begun on the ore-treating plant of Copper Concentrates Limited.

"The industry consequent on the completion of this plant will provide much needed employment in the town and also require a considerably greater amount of water than is now available to the town.

"About 10 men are engaged on the site of the Great Australia mine constructing foundations for the plant."

In a further edition of the "Mount Isa Mail," dated 25 October, 1960, we find this article—

"Report Recommends Dam to be Built at Slaty Creek

"Ten Years' Study of 'Curry Water

"The Cloncurry Shire Council yesterday received a report on increased water supply for Cloncurry recommending a dam on Slaty Creek which will provide water to a town with 5,000 population.

"The report was tabled by the council's consulting engineer (Mr. J. A. McIntyre) in a bound booklet that represented a summary of investigations stretching back over ten years.

"Mr. McIntyre told the council that the capacity of the aquifers (soaks) in the bed of Cloncurry River would never be able to fulfil the water requirements of the town entirely.

"He said the proposed dam would impound about 6,000,000,000 gallons of water, which would supply a flow of 2,500,000 a day.

"The dam would cost about £632,000 and would attract a Government subsidy of £316,000; the other half would have to be raised by loans floated by the council.

#### "Irrigation

"The Slaty Creek dam site is 15 miles from the town.

"Investigations over a long period have shown that dams could be built on the Cloncurry River in two places, also on Fig Tree Creek and Slaty Creek.

"It had been shown by detailed investigations that the dam giving the most water for the least outlay of capital was that on Slaty Creek.

"Mr. McIntyre told the council that his report envisaged a water supply for Cloncurry that would cope with population up to a peak of 5,000 and having a major meat industry as well as the copper industry that was at present being revived.

"It also allowed for a reasonable development of irrigated farming about the fringe of the town."

"£36,000 a year

"A dam of this type normally has no spillway and an outlet for the overflow would be necessary at a saddle in the rim of the lake about a mile south of the dam site.

"A concrete spillway would be constructed at this point.

"In his address to council, Mr. McIntyre said the present annual cost of water to Cloncurry was about £22,000. The annual cost of the Slaty Creek scheme would be about £36,000.

"Council received the report for further consideration.

"It was also decided to send copies of the report to various government departments to inform them on the urgency and extent of Cloncurry's water supply problem."

I do not know if the various Government departments have received copies of the engineer's report as yet, but I suggest that the Government, in their deliberations on the report and the proposal for the construction of the dam, take into consideration that, like many of its western counterparts, the very existence of the town, which is the centre of a rich and vast grazing, pastoral and mineral area, is dependent on an adequate water supply. I urge the Government to do everything possible to assist the Cloncurry Shire Council to ensure that the dam will be constructed and so aid the further development of the North-west. In low-rainfall areas such as this, the construction of a storage dam is of vital importance to the people and, as a means of further development, must command the immediate approval of the Government.

The estimated cost of the dam is £632,000. This would necessitate a loan of £316,000 and would attract a subsidy of £316,000. The interest and redemption payments would impose a burden on the people of Cloncurry, and to alleviate it I urge the Government to make a straight-out grant of £25,000 to assist the project. I stress the need for straight-out grants of financial assistance to councils in rapidly-expanding areas such as Mt. Isa and Cloncurry. In Mt. Isa especially, the rapid growth of the town has far outstripped the financial resources of the council, and when important works such as water reticulation, sewerage, and the reticulation of electricity have to be carried out, the officers of the authority have to go cap in hand to the financial institutions begging for the necessary funds. Again, the interest and redemption payments on the loans impose a further burden upon the ratepayers, which could be alleviated to some extent by the Government financial assistance I advocate.

The Minister mentioned rates and land valuations. I should like to give hon. members some idea of the rates that we have to pay in my electorate.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The hon. member may refer to land valuations, but rates are not a matter for discussion under this Vote.

**Mr. INCH:** I realise that. I mention it only because we pay £57 a year out there when we live 2 miles outside the town of Mt. Isa, which illustrates that loan moneys are the cause of the heavy rates that the people have to pay. These high costs are understandable in some measure when the costs of major works are taken into consideration. For example, the approximate cost of the pipes used to convey water from Mt. Isa Mines reservoir to the town reservoir at Mt. Isa was £11,000, but the freight on this material was in the vicinity of £13,000. That emphasises the necessity for freight concessions on goods and materials carried to the far north-western towns. To these costs must be added labour costs of installing the pipes. The figures are approximate, but they serve to highlight the vast difference between the cost of a project in the city in which no freight charges are involved and a similar project in a western town. This is only one instance of how the long haulage by rail and high freight costs impose a further strain on the already over-taxed financial resources of councils throughout the western shires, and here again the position could be alleviated by generous freight concessions.

I was pleased to receive advice from the Treasury on the second of this month that a freight rebate had been granted on materials for the proposed augmentation of the Cloncurry water supply. However, more than this is necessary. The north-western line has proved profitable and people in that part of Queensland should not have to bear a 20-per cent. increase in freight rates to assist in the maintenance of less profitable lines.

Costs of channelling, kerbing, roadworks, and other essential services carried out by the local authority, also impose heavy financial commitments on the Cloncurry Shire Council because of the rapid expansion that has taken place over the past 10 years. A great deal of work has been done, but a far greater amount must be done before the people in these areas gain the benefit of services to which they are entitled and for which they are contributing so heavily by the payment of high rates, which are the result of excessive costs.

Added costs brought about by high freights on materials, and to some extent by the very rocky nature of the terrain throughout the Cloncurry and Mt. Isa areas, have seriously curtailed the amount of work that can be carried out with the funds available. Consequently, there can be no comparison between the essential works that can be carried out by councils in the coastal and southern areas and those that can be carried out by councils in the western areas on the finance that is made available to them. That is why I suggest that straight-out grants of financial assistance should be made to councils in these rapidly-expanding areas. They are growing so rapidly that councils are unable to undertake all work that has to be performed by them with the money made available by way of loans and subsidies. The Government can do their share in the development of these areas in the manner I have urged, particularly by making an effective effort to control prices.

Finally, I urge that a larger allocation of the Main Roads Fund be made available to the western shires to enable them to carry out works of a more permanent nature on the main roads within the areas controlled by them. I would emphasise the fact that at present the allocations are far too small, and allow of only patch-work jobs to be performed. In a sense the money is wasted, particularly when repair work is carried out on creek and river crossings in the western shires. Because of shortage of funds repair work of a temporary nature only can be carried out and, as the creeks and rivers are subject to flash floodings, the whole of the work is washed away in a matter of minutes, and many thousands of pounds are wasted annually on this type of work. If larger allocations were made to these shires the wastage could be avoided by the construction of roads and crossings of a more permanent nature.

When the report comes to hand from the consulting engineer of the Cloncurry Shire Council I ask the Minister to give every consideration to the construction of the dam in Cloncurry, which is a rapidly expanding town with the township of Mary Kathleen more or less on its outskirts. With the construction of the D.C.A. buildings and additional railway personnel in Cloncurry, the population is increasing very rapidly. The mining company will require a great

deal of water to operate its plant as it comes into full operation. Unless the council is given financial assistance for the construction of the dam the town of Cloncurry will stagnate. Without water, western areas cannot develop.

**Mr. RICHTER** (Somerset) (7.28 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the introduction of his first Estimates, and for the enthusiasm with which he is approaching his Ministerial duties. I express my appreciation to the officers of the department for the prompt manner in which they have dealt with requests made of them. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

The Department of Public Works has had a tremendous amount of work to do in the last three years to make up the leeway that existed when we came into office. Changed conditions in the Department of Education brought about by the Government's policy on education have increased considerably the demand for school buildings. Consequently there has been a huge amount of work to be done. The department has dealt with an ever-increasing volume of work in a very efficient way. Expenditure on public buildings has almost doubled in the last three years—from about £3,500,000 to almost £6,500,000. This has entailed a great deal of planning by the responsible officers, and they are to be congratulated on the splendid job they have done.

It is very pleasing indeed to see that the Public Works Department is adopting modern architecture. By doing this it is providing greatly improved ventilation and lighting in both schools and school-houses. The modern schools and school-houses that are now being constructed are very well planned. They are fitted with all modern conveniences and painted in very attractive colours, and I should say that this departure from the hide-bound attitude adopted some years ago, when all school buildings conformed to a uniform pattern, is very welcome.

A remarkably good job has been done by the department in renovating and remodelling school buildings. I mention especially the school at Minden, in my own area. It was an old school building, built many years ago. It was of solid construction, but it lacked ventilation and the lighting was very poor. I should say that the timber in the old building was possibly better than any that could be obtained today. It was of exceptionally good quality. The department did a great job remodelling that school. The building was raised, the wooden stumps were replaced by concrete pillars in the centre; there is a wall around three sides and the underneath section today makes a very convenient room. The small narrow windows in the old school were taken out and replaced by spacious glass louvres. The ceilings have been lowered and the school has been converted into a modern structure with good lighting and splendid ventilation.

I believe that a considerable amount of work of a similar nature could be done throughout the State. There are some very solid, sound buildings—

**Mr. Sullivan:** You are speaking of the Minden school?

**Mr. RICHTER:** Yes.

**Mr. Sullivan:** They did a lovely job.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Yes, beautiful. I believe that that could be done throughout the State. There are some very solid, sound buildings that could be renovated in exactly the same way. The cost would be comparatively low.

I should also like to refer to the new school-houses that are being built; they are very good indeed. There is a school-house at Benarkin, near Blackbutt, also in the Somerset electorate. It is painted in attractive colours, the lighting is exceptionally good, and it is modern in every respect.

Many teachers' wives in country areas make a very big sacrifice. They are transferred to country areas and they are very often denied the amenities that city people enjoy. It is only reasonable to expect that school teachers and their wives in country areas should be well housed. I believe that houses supplied for all Government employees in country areas should be of a high standard.

As I suggested before, quite a lot of country school-houses could be modernised and improved. They should be made fit to live in. I know it is a big job and a fairly costly one, but it has been neglected in the past and there is much leeway to be made up.

I believe that everything possible should be done to attract and encourage a better type of teacher to serve in country areas. The least city people with all their amenities can do for country people is provide them with the best teachers that are available. I know that many teachers resent going to country areas if the amenities are not there. I am quite aware that the cost of providing these things is very great, but it is quite unreasonable to expect a teacher's wife who has lived in an area supplied with electricity for 10 years or longer to do her cooking on a worn-out wood stove, which is what is happening in a number of country schools. This matter requires our immediate attention.

A considerable strain is being placed on the Department of Public Works in the transition period that we are passing through in country areas. In saying it is a period of transition, I mean that many small country schools have been closed and the children are being transported to central, or area, schools. It follows, of course, that the central schools have to be altered and increased accommodation provided. The department is under a great strain in coping with the extra amenities required in these schools.

In addition, the demand for high-tops in country areas means that the department must provide extra accommodation. Enrolments in secondary departments of country schools have increased tremendously. In one case in my electorate the enrolment three years ago in the secondary department was 24, and it is estimated that it will be 100 next year. Children in country areas are taking full advantage of secondary education. While it is most desirable, quite a number of these secondary schools are suffering from growing pains, and the department is called on to meet a very difficult situation.

I congratulate the department on the splendid arrangements made by it during the Centenary celebrations. The decorating and illuminating of Government buildings were very well done. The work was a credit to the officers responsible for it, and they are to be congratulated on the job they did.

I draw attention, however, to what I think was lack of planning in the improvements to, and painting of, the interior of Parliament House during the recess. The work was started in very leisurely fashion, with very few men on the job, but a few weeks before the opening of Parliament there were so many painters in the corridors that they were falling over one another. I think that was bad planning and that that type of thing could be avoided. I realise there was a desperate rush to finish the job in time for the opening of Parliament, but better planning could have obviated that state of affairs.

I draw the attention of the Minister to the two fans at the rear of the Chamber, and suggest that the Public Works Department could provide something better for the convenience of hon. members. Hon. members on the back benches get a cold blast of air on their necks, which is not very pleasant, and the noise of the fans is such that they cannot hear the proceedings in the Chamber. I should think the department would be able to replace these fans with more suitable fans.

The Minister has dealt at length with the work of the Valuer-General's Department. I was very pleased to hear that he expects the valuation of all the shires in the State to be completed in the very near future. It is very necessary that that job be completed because the aim and objective of the Valuer-General's Department is to bring about uniformity in land values. If that is not done the purpose in setting up the department will be nullified. We realise the importance of that when we remember that the first valuation by the Valuer-General increased the valuations in Mackay by over 300 per cent. I forget the exact figure.

**Mr. Roberts:** It was 560 per cent.

**Mr. RICHTER:** I thought it was 360 per cent.

That just proves the injustice that exists when land tax is applied to those valuations. Land values have increased progressively and it must be agreed that those local authorities that have not been valued for 12 or 15 years have had a decided advantage over those that

have had their valuations brought up to date, sometimes on three occasions during that period. Land tax has been assessed on those high values. The exemption figure for land-tax purposes has been raised, which has exempted from land tax many properties in the local-authority areas that have not been valued. The Minister gave us some figures. He said that 17 local authorities had been valued three times, 37 twice, 57 once, and the remainder not at all.

A very interesting situation arises in local authorities such as Gatton, and possibly the Gold Coast, but I refer particularly to Gatton. I believe that 12 per cent. of the ratepayers in the Gatton shire appealed against their valuations. A cross-section of them were taken as test cases and I understand they were granted a reduction of approximately 30 per cent. I should like to ask the Minister—I should like him to answer my question when he replies—whether this 30 per cent. reduction will apply to all the properties in respect of which an appeal was lodged. If it will, does he not think it would be good business for every ratepayer in the Gatton shire, and every other shire, to appeal, because the 88 per cent. who did not appeal will be at a decided disadvantage. If the 12 per cent. that appealed get the reduction, what about the 88 per cent?

**Mr. Hilton:** That is because they thought their values were correct.

**Mr. RICHTER:** I do not think they thought their values were correct.

This could lead to wholesale appeals by all landholders every time there is a valuation. They might as well be in the swim.

The Bill passed by the last Parliament made it very much easier to appeal against valuations, and it was much appreciated in country centres. Many country people did not appeal previously, because if their properties were over a certain valuation they had to appeal to the Supreme Court. This deterred quite a few of them from appealing.

I should like to refer briefly to local-government finance. There is a very interesting article in today's "Telegraph" referring to the Local Government Association of Queensland and a resolution that it is submitting to the Australian Council of Local Government Associations in Hobart, which is sitting from 21 November to 24 November. The Queensland Association will suggest to the Australian Council that the burden of local-government expenditure should not be borne only by ratepayers, but that a reasonable proportion should be borne by the general body of citizens.

**Mr. Davies:** Will you elaborate on that point?

**Mr. RICHTER:** Yes. They are urging that the whole burden of financing local government should not fall on ratepayers.

**Mr. Davies:** It does not fall on the ratepayers now.

**Mr. RICHTER:** Most of it does in country areas. It may not in the city, but it does in country areas; the bulk of the burden falls on the ratepayers in country areas. They are going to recommend that a levy be collected from the Federal Government on the same basis as social service charges. It will then be distributed to local bodies on a formula based on ratable capital value, rates collected, and population. I do not know if that is the solution. It seems to me to be a rather good suggestion. I do know that the ratepayers in country shires are expected to bear the whole burden, which is very unjust.

**Mr. Davies:** Who would be some of the people in the country areas—say, in your area—who would not be bearing the burden?

**Mr. RICHTER:** They share it in a very small degree. I can see what the hon. member is getting at. Every person who pays rent or board shares a little of that burden but he does not do it to such a great extent. I refer the hon. member to the country people. The primary producer, for instance, has a big block of land, but that land represents his tools of trade and he is being taxed on it. He is being taxed on a high figure. That is very unjust and I think something should be done along the lines suggested. This might not be the solution, but the burden should be made very much easier on the ratepayers in country areas.

**Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (7.47 p.m.):** My remarks will be rather brief. As the Minister has been in office only five months, it would not be right for us to criticise him unduly; but I think he is very fortunate in having so many capable officers in his department. I have a great knowledge of this subject because as a lad I was first appointed to the accounts branch of the Department of Public Works. Since then, I must say, I have been a great admirer of its officers. Many of those I worked with at that time now hold high executive positions in the department. Especially is this so in Townsville, where Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Payne, Mr. Wilson and others are especially good officers, and are carrying out their duties in a highly efficient manner.

However, what I want to speak about tonight briefly is the amount of money that has been spent in Townsville. I claim that Townsville has not had its proper share of the department's allocation for the year ended 30 June, 1960, and I propose to prove it by using the figures in the annual report. Time and time again Townsville has been held up to us as a perfect example of what the Government have done in the North, what they are doing, and what they intend to do. I intend to expose that claim and to show exactly what has not been done for Townsville. I have taken the figures from Appendix V. in the report. This entails a certain amount of addition, but hon. members may check the accuracy of my calculations later. I am sure they are quite correct. Last year 39 primary schools in Brisbane had something done to them and £575,000 was spent

on that work. In the same period only three primary schools in Townsville had something done to them and £51,800 was spent on them. An amount of £660,744 was spent on high schools and technical colleges in Brisbane, and £84,015 in Townsville.

**Mr. Ramsden:** What proportion of the population of Queensland would be in Townsville?

**Mr. TUCKER:** I will come to that.

**Mr. Ramsden:** I am just asking a question.

**Mr. TUCKER:** I will answer it in a moment.

An amount of £18,895 was spent on the university in Brisbane, and in Townsville, where the amount is exaggerated on this occasion because the building of the university centre has just begun there, £166,000 was spent. I ask hon. members to note that because that is the one item that inflates the amount spent in Townsville. Hon. members will see the point I am making, I am sure. On courthouses and police buildings, £438,042 was spent in Brisbane and, according to this report, nothing was spent in Townsville. An amount of £204,621 was spent on Government hospitals and institutions in Brisbane, while nothing was spent on similar buildings in Townsville. Taking other buildings, £1,888,035 was spent in Brisbane and £12,142 in Townsville. In Brisbane, up to 30 June, 1960, £3,777,443 was spent, and in Townsville £313,956. Dissecting those figures further, the amount spent in Brisbane represents 60 per cent. of the total of £6,516,917 spent by the Department of Public Works, and the population of Brisbane represents only 39 per cent. of the population of Queensland.

**Mr. Ramsden:** What does the population of Townsville represent?

**Mr. TUCKER:** The amount spent in Townsville represented only 4 per cent. of the total amount spent by the Department of Public Works. With the predominance of city members in the present Government, one does not have to look very far for an explanation of why the money was spent in that way.

As I have mentioned previously, the primary schools in Townsville are bulging at the seams. Townsville is progressing. Perhaps it is not progressing quite as fast as some people would like to make out, but, in spite of seasonal unemployment and other difficulties, it is pushing ahead.

**Mr. Davies:** Despite the Government.

**Mr. TUCKER:** That is so, despite the Government.

Although the headmasters of these primary schools have been advised of record enrolments next year, the schools are already

lagging far behind in the number of classrooms that could, and should, be built. At the Kurrajong State School at Townsville, which is in the centre of a mushrooming suburb in my electorate, they are already short of three classrooms, and they expect another 100 pupils next year. They really need two or three more classrooms to cope with this increase. At the beginning of the coming school year, instead of being three classrooms down, they will be five down. I asked a question about this, and I was assured that something would be done. But it is now the middle of November and nothing has been done about it. The Christmas holidays are not far away, and the school year commences at the end of January with another 100 children coming into the school.

It does not matter how much money the Minister says is being spent on schools throughout the State, our problem is a very critical one. It is no use his quoting figures, because we still have a critical situation in Townsville, particularly when it is realised that that city is growing at such a fast rate, which he will not deny. The figures show what could be done if our rightful share of the money was spent in the North. Additional classrooms at the Central State School are almost finished, but that is only catching up the lag. The same difficulty applies there. Belgian Gardens State School is faced with another 80 children this year. The Government have seen fit to erect 96 flats in Bundock Street, Belgian Gardens, so it must be expected that the school will have to cope with more children from the flats. Most of them are two-bedroom flats designed as family units, so that next year or the year after there will be a tremendous influx of children. Already we are lagging. The State school at Garbutt is faced with the same difficulties. Young couples move out to the fringe areas to try to buy cheaper land on which to erect their homes. The schools on the fringe areas are the ones that will receive the big increases in attendances, but they are already bulging at the seams.

A certain amount of money has been spent on the Pimlico High School. It is certainly a very attractive school but much remains to be done to provide it with the normal high-school amenities. I have no argument about that school, although there is still a lot of work to be done. My main argument lies with the Townsville High School, which is badly overcrowded. It has been mentioned that a third high school was to be constructed in Townsville in the area known as Monkey Island. It is a peculiar name, and the Mayor of Townsville suggested that it should be called Pizzey Park. We do not know how long it will be before that additional high school is erected, but meantime the Townsville High School is in the same position as the primary school. The principal has had to make do with what he has. Classes are conducted in grossly

overcrowded rooms. The home science classes are held in what are little better than sheds. Girls are expected to equip themselves for later life and get their inspiration from domestic science rooms, most of which are war time sheds. Some of them are dangerous because the floors are almost worn through. It may sound far-fetched but it is true when I say that they have to be careful that they do not fall through the floors. The home science rooms at the Pimlico High School are an excellent addition, but the Townsville High School should receive similar treatment very quickly.

At the present time work is being carried out on the Townsville Police Station. Nothing was done last year but I have seen the work now in progress. In a fast-growing city like Townsville a completely new police station is warranted. The present one is being patched up again. There are a number of additions on the building and I do not think it is in keeping with the city. It is not the kind of building of which we will be proud in a few year's time. Patching and adding is perhaps necessary at times but if a wider view could be taken of the matter, someone should make a decision and say, "On this occasion we will cut our losses, get rid of this building and put up a new police station that will be an asset to the city of Townsville."

**Mr. HERBERT** (Sherwood) (8 p.m.): I should like first of all to compliment the Minister on the presentation of his first Estimates and to express the hope that he is long spared to present many more.

I should like to make a few comments mainly on the work that the Department of Public Works does in the school sphere. There has been a tremendous change in the attitude of the Department of Public Works towards school colour-schemes. In the past, when a Public Works painter had a pot of brown paint he was fully equipped. Brown paint was used for everything; not only for schools, but for every building maintained by the Department of Public Works.

Today many of our schools are pictures; some of them are even somewhat bright pictures. The Surfers Paradise school has a colour scheme that fits in with the general surroundings of the area. We have a generally brighter outlook towards school colouring and towards the amount of paint used. By that, I mean the number of times our schools are painted.

Travelling through the country today one feels proud of the way in which our schools are maintained. In the long run, that saves money because lack of paint can cause much trouble to timber-framed buildings in later years.

**Mr. Davies:** These colour schemes were in vogue prior to 1957.

**Mr. HERBERT:** I am making no reference to dates; I am making general reference to the change that has taken place

in recent years. I would be the last to claim that this Government were responsible for the change in attitude towards the colour of school buildings; it is a change that has occurred. But this Government can certainly lay claim to praise for the amount of paint that has been used to make the buildings look attractive. More paint has been used in recent years than for many years.

Apart from the buildings themselves, I should like to make some comments concerning school grounds. At Corinda the Department of Public Works has built a very fine high school and has done a lot of work on the grounds. That high school building is much the same as high school buildings elsewhere, but it makes a particularly pleasing picture because of the trees that the department left in the grounds when it was built. If hon. members would like to see a school with character right from the start, I suggest they look at the Corinda High School. The character is gained because of the trees that were left standing in the grounds when the school was built.

If some of the predecessors of the present Public Works people had got hold of that ground, they would have run a bull-dozer over it and knocked every tree down. Unfortunately, that is something that has taken place generally in Queensland and is probably a legacy from the pioneering days of our forefathers who knocked trees down to get the grass growing. Unfortunately for Queensland, too many trees have been knocked over in the past. They can be knocked over in a day, but it takes many long years to replace them. At the Corinda High School they were not destroyed, and they are now a picture. At the back of the annual report of the department there is a photograph of the Corinda High School. It gives an indication of what the school will be like when completed. The plan has been drawn to allow full use of the trees on the ground.

I should like to suggest that all lands reserved for education purposes that will be eventually handled by the Department of Public Works should now be prepared by planting suitable trees, and that suitable action be taken within the next few years to clean up areas that are being reserved for education purposes to turn them into areas that could be used by the local people as recreation areas prior to their actual use for school purposes. A number of instances where that work could very well be done could be mentioned. I know the hon. member for Salisbury will excuse me for referring to the Sunnybank High School reserve. If the Department of Public Works cleaned away the small growth, as it will have to do eventually, and left the larger trees, the reserve would be an acquisition to the area.

The department could draw up schemes of beautification for other areas now held for education purposes. Those schemes will eventually have to be instituted, but the trees could be planted now. Trees take a long time to grow, and if they were planted now the ultimate effect in the matter of a few years would be very different. In many instances the department has plans for the beautification of school grounds. In 20 or 30 years the grounds of those schools will be a picture, but, if we could get in some early work on areas held for schools, and for other purposes, the future generation would reap the benefit. Such work could be done on land held by the Government for other than school purposes. Beautification of reserves is the work of the Department of Public Works. If the planting of trees was undertaken now we would be so much further ahead when the land is built on.

I mention now a problem in my electorate that has recently received quite a deal of Press publicity. I refer to the difficulties at the Corinda State School in the installation of a septic system. The Department of Public Works has direct responsibility for this work. The Brisbane City Council proposes to build a swimming pool in the area. The school has an enrolment of 600, but it has not a septic system and there is no likelihood of one for some time as the ground is unsuitable. If a septic system was installed, the department would have to provide an electric pump to take the effluent over a hill to the nearest stormwater drain. That would be extremely expensive, and in view of the state of Government finances the department could not see its way clear to spend on a septic system at the Corinda school a sum that would provide three times the number of services at schools where this problem does not exist.

The council decided to build a swimming pool in Dunlop Park, directly opposite the Corinda school, and provision was made to connect the Corinda school septic system to the septic system of the swimming pool. We thought the problem had been solved, but when the council engineers looked into the matter they suggested that the pool be built on another site. I have already made representations for the provision of extra funds for the council to enable it to build the swimming pool on the original site in Dunlop Park so that a septic system can be installed at the school; otherwise, the Corinda school will have a pan system for many more years.

The council has not made a firm decision, but when a sum such as £130,000 is involved it naturally has a responsibility to ratepayers and, if the pool can be built somewhere else for a much smaller sum, naturally it will decide on the alternative position. Local residents collected just under £10,000 for the pool on the understanding that it was to be in Dunlop Park. If it was built there, it would be of benefit to the Department of Public Works as it would overcome the problem of providing a septic system for the school.

**Mr. Houston:** Could the council put a septic system in that park?

**Mr. HERBERT:** The council, I understand, encountered drainage and foundation problems in Dunlop Park. Drainage would have to be into Oxley Creek, and the cost would be much greater at that site than at others where stormwater drains are close and could be used to take away both the effluent from the septic system and the normal run-off from the swimming pool.

We have a problem there on which I hope the council and the Public Works authorities can co-operate and eventually solve. I do not know whether there is any possibility of an extra Government subsidy that would allow the pool to be built on its intended site and, at the same time, solve the serious health problem at the Corinda school. There are not many schools with over 600 pupils in attendance that still rely on pan services. A septic system would be a tremendous advantage in a school of that size.

I should like to make a few remarks about the department's activities at Goodna. Some few years ago there was a disastrous fire at the Brisbane Mental Hospital at Goodna that destroyed the store, and a new one had to be built. However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, because the new store at Goodna is a credit to the men who designed it and those who built it. Some of us may think it should have been built a little quicker, but now that it is completed—there is a picture of it in the report—it will serve Goodna's needs for all time, particularly as it was pointed out previously that the number of inmates in Goodna is decreasing and that it is not expected that they will increase in the future.

The Department of Public Works has done a tremendous amount of work in brightening up the mental hospital. This has been long overdue. Comfortable accommodation has been provided for the psychiatrists and other people who have to live in at the hospital.

In my electorate I have the somewhat unique experience of having large sums of money spent on places that have no electoral significance. The mental hospital comes into that category, as also does the new gaol at Wacol, on which a good deal of money has been spent by the Department of Public Works. The time is fast approaching when there should be a Parliamentary visit to Wacol so that hon. members may have a good look at what has been done at the new gaol. There has been much discussion about it, but I doubt if any hon. members have been out to look at what has been done. It is a magnificent forward step in the prison service and I think that any hon. members who see what is being done will be impressed. There is only one unfortunate aspect to it, and this harks back to my original comments on trees. When the approach road was built, one of the finest stands of gum trees in the Brisbane area was wiped out. However, that has been done and there is no redress. A visit to

Wacol in the near future would benefit many hon. members who care to make the trip, and I hope to persuade the Minister for Justice to arrange an inspection at a suitable time.

Normally, in a debate of this nature hon. members give lists of the various projects they should like to see carried out in their areas. I have made a few complaints of a minor nature, but on the whole I should like to compliment the Department of Public Works.

I turn now to the general standard of the schools in the Sherwood area. They are now better than they have been in my memory, and many residents have complimented the department on the general appearance of the schools and the money that has been spent on them.

On two occasions last year the previous Minister, Hon. James Heading, visited the Graceville school. With the co-operation of the department and the school committee a full oval was built that should have been built when the school was first started. Now, through the co-operation of the department, the oval has been built at the rear of the Graceville school, and the school committee has expressed its gratitude to the Hon. James Heading, and to his departmental officers for their co-operation. I have no complaint about school buildings and I sincerely hope that the good work carried out by the Hon. James Heading, and being carried on by the present Minister, will continue.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON** (Salisbury) (8.15 p.m.): As this is the first occasion on which I have spoken on a Bill or Estimates introduced by the Minister, I congratulate him on his election to Cabinet rank. As one of the previous speakers said, to all intents and purposes he is yet untried and we should not criticise him unduly.

He said in his speech that fewer teachers' residences are being built now because of increased costs. That indicates an inflationary trend, which is reflected in the Estimates, as a comparison of the figures for 1958-1959 with those of 1959-1960 will disclose. In 1958-1959 a total of £3,451,926 was spent on educational buildings and for that sum the Government were able to provide 483 classrooms. In 1959-1960 the allocation was increased to £3,905,765. To the casual observer it would appear that the State could reasonably expect to get more classrooms for the extra £500,000. Unfortunately, that is not so. In 1959-1960 only 461 classrooms were built despite the increased expenditure. So, although the Government claim they are spending more on education, they are not making more facilities available. It reflects the increases in prices and the definite inflationary trend under this Government.

**Mr. Ewan** interjected.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I see that I have my friend the hon. member for Roma with me. Whenever I speak he seems to enjoy the privilege of interjecting. I can only assume

that he adopts the line, "When you are on a good thing, stick to it." As a matter of fact, I listened to his speech and it consisted mainly of a lot of backslapping of the Minister and a lot of praise. He advanced the opinion that it was only because the Government were building more schools that we had more pupils attending high schools.

**Mr. Sullivan:** He may be right. Go out to the country areas. They could not go to a high school before.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I have never heard such a ridiculous claim in all my life.

**Mr. Sullivan:** If you went out past Ipswich Road you would know.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** The only thing I can say about the hon. member for Condamine is that at least in his speech he did not refer to the officers of the Department of Public Works as a lot of loafers, which he implied railwaymen were.

To resume my comment about the provision of more schools, the hon. member knows full well that this Government are flat out to keep pace with the demand for school accommodation. To say that the Government are providing more schools paints a rosy picture and implies that the Government are well ahead in their school programme; but in fact they are not. I am not blaming the Government for that, and I am not blaming any person in particular. It has been caused by an influx of children into the schools over recent years, and the hon. member knows full well that the Government are continually adding to these schools to keep pace with their requirements.

**Mr. Windsor:** £20,000,000 spent—£2,500,000 more than in any other year.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** The hon. member for Ithaca always makes his best speeches by way of interjection.

The hon. member for Roma spent most of his time praising the Minister. At no stage did he praise the work of the staff of the Department of Public Works, and he did not mention the good work done by the architects. Our modern school buildings are a direct result of their ideas, and I appreciate their good work. The Government cannot claim to have improved the standard of school design; that has been done by the architects.

We heard no word of praise from Government members of the working staff who build the schools. I have 11 primary schools and a high school in my area, and in the short time that I have been a member of this Chamber I have visited many workmen who are carrying out alterations or additions to those schools. I have found that the men are really interested in the job they are doing, but they have two complaints. The first is that in most instances construction is held up because material is not supplied and is not readily available to them. Their

other complaint is that, because they have no guarantee of permanency of work, there is a tendency on their part, not to loaf—I would not imply that for one moment—but there is no incentive for them to put their best into it. I think that it is one of the great arguments for retaining the day-labour force in the Department of Public Works.

**Mr. Ewan:** You think it is better than contract?

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I think it is far better. I think one gets a far better standard of work from a day-labour force. As the hon. member for Belmont said, where you have Public Works staff under the supervision of engineers of the department, the standard of work is much better than if it is farmed out to private contractors whose only aim is to make as much profit as they can out of the job.

**Mr. Windsor:** It has to be up to a certain standard.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** If I were the hon. member, I think I would stick to chasing magpies.

I believe that my contention is borne out by the annual report of the Department of Public Works for 1958-1959, in which it is stated—

“The erection of six new high schools in various parts of the State for the commencement of the 1959 school year was entrusted to contractors with disappointing results as in only one instance was the accommodation ready for the re-opening of schools and then in part only.”

There is the positive proof that day labour employed by the Department of Public Works competes more than favourably with contract work, both in cost and time.

The men in the day-labour force have a keen interest in their job. If we could guarantee them permanency of employment it would give them an incentive to complete a job in keeping with the high standards required by the engineers and architects employed by the Department.

Although I realise it does not come within the ambit of the debate, I should like to refer to a small section that carries out work in conjunction with the Department of Public Works. I pay tribute to the staff of the Department of Main Roads who carry out work for State schools in bitumenising parade grounds, constructing stone retaining walls, and projects of that nature. They are quite happy to assist school committees by laying tennis-court surfaces. Here again is proof that day labour, properly applied, can compete more than favourably with anything farmed out to contractors. I am president of one of the school committees in my area and we called tenders for the construction of two tennis courts. We found that it was going to cost us between £1,250 and £1,400. I spoke to an officer in the

Department of Main Roads—I think his name was Rowton—about bitumenising the tennis courts, and I was astounded when he told me that they could provide the surface for two tennis courts for approximately £650 or £700. Even with the addition of the wire fences, schools can obtain tennis courts by this method much cheaper than by farming the work out to the contractors.

**Mr. Windsor:** I received a quote of £400 each from the Department of Main Roads today for two tennis courts.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I am talking about 6 months ago. No doubt under this Government the price would have increased by £50. Those in charge of that section of the Department of Main Roads are really interested in their job. They are very helpful with their advice and are doing a great job not only in carrying out work for the schools, but they are also prepared to help school committees.

The Minister can feel very proud that the day-labour force in Queensland is the largest in the southern hemisphere. He should do everything he can to make conditions attractive for employees in this phase of public work. He should endeavour to give them permanency of employment. I feel they are equally entitled to the same treatment and the same wage justice as the higher bracket of white-collar workers in the Public Service.

**Mr. Hodges:** Where are all your mates?

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** That is all right. They know I can handle the whole of the Government on my own.

Since my election I have received a request from a mother whose child is, to a certain extent, sub-normal in that he requires psychiatric treatment. Unfortunately, because of certain tendencies and the lack of facilities for in-patients to receive this treatment, he has been confined to Westbrook Home. I have spoken to Dr. Phillips on the matter and he is quite satisfied that, with proper psychiatric treatment, this child could be rehabilitated. However, he would recommend his release from Westbrook only if he was able to obtain treatment as an in-patient.

I asked a question about when the work of establishing the psychiatric clinic at the old Wilson Ophthalmic Hospital would be carried out. As the Minister for Health and Home Affairs has assured me that this work is contemplated, I ask the Minister for Public Works to give it priority because I feel there is a need for it in the community. It would be of great value in these days of juvenile delinquency.

At this stage I should like to make an appeal to the Minister on behalf the electors of Salisbury to provide a police station at Coopers Plains. The land for such a station

has been set aside for many years and I was assured by the Minister for Labour and Industry on 27 June this year that it had been provided for in the Estimates for the coming year. He concluded, however, by saying—

“The question of whether this work will be proceeded with in the next financial year will depend on the Loan finance made available for the police works programme.”

My interest in requesting that priority be given to the establishment of this police station is engendered by the fact that in that area there is a large school of some 600 pupils, 30 per cent. of whom are forced to cross the main arterial highway between Ipswich Road and the main South Coast Road. The volume of traffic has been such and the number of accidents so great that the Minister for Transport has erected boom gates. Unfortunately, he has not yet completed that crossing. I have been asking for action for six months.

The safety of these children depends on adequate supervision when they are crossing the road. I have made repeated requests to the Police Department to provide a policeman to see them safely across the road, but I have been told indirectly that I cannot hope to get that service unless a police station is established in the area.

At present the area is served by the Moorooka Police Station, which is a considerable distance away. Apart altogether from the safety of children, many benefits flow from a police station in a district—electoral matters, and so on. A drive-in theatre is near the road to which I have referred. Over a period of some months many accidents have occurred, and if a police station was situated in the area the problem could be overcome. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to my suggestion.

I should like now to give a further “plug” for the Salisbury electorate.

**Mr. Wharton:** You have been doing pretty well.

**Mr. SHERRINGTON:** I ask the Minister to give first priority next year to the building of the high school at Inala. A high school there would reduce greatly the burden on the Corinda school, which is in the Sherwood electorate. Inala is one of those suburbs with a great number of young children requiring education. As the hon. member for Sherwood knows, the Department of Public Works is hard pressed to keep pace with the demand for school accommodation in the district. I admit that the Inala West school was a temporary building, but at the present time 80 children are accommodated in a classroom that has provision for only 42 seats. The department is under constant pressure to provide extra accommodation, but I urge the Minister to give top priority to the building of the Inala High School and its opening for the 1962 school year.

**Mr. SMITH (Windsor) (8.37 p.m.):** At the outset I add my congratulations to the Minister, not only for the way he has presented his report but also for the way he has discharged his duties since accepting the portfolio at the beginning of this Parliament. Undoubtedly he is vigorous and forthright in his methods and is able to grasp all the problems—and they must be many—that confront him and the department he administers. It is indeed refreshing to look through the annual report and read the many items mentioned therein. Money has been expended on many things that are absolutely necessary, and on others that are highly desirable, but in all instances it has been spent for the purpose of improving the various facilities and functions of the department.

It is consoling to me, on looking through the report, to find references to many matters affecting my electorate and about which I made representations to the Hon. James Heading when he was Minister for Public Works. I pause at this stage to express my appreciation of the way in which Mr. Heading received and accepted submissions by hon. members about matters affecting their electorates. I express the hope that he is spared many years to enjoy a very happy retirement.

Coming back to the matters referred to in the report, there is one matter on page 6 that I wish to mention, and I am sorry that the hon. member for Salisbury is not in the Chamber at this stage because it touches on something he raised.

**Mr. Nicklin:** He has joined our party. He is sitting at the back of you.

**Mr. SMITH:** He has come onto the right side of the Chamber.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. Hanlon:** He is practising for three years hence.

**Mr. SMITH:** I do not know which of the Labour people we will take into our ranks in three years' time, but no doubt we will have approaches from some of them.

The hon. member for Salisbury referred to the rehabilitation hospital for juvenile delinquents which is to be established in the old Wilson Ophthalmic Hospital. He cited a case—one of many—that would be aptly fitted for admission to that hospital when it is completed, and I hasten to tell him that it is virtually completed. It is not far from being opened, and those sad cases such as he has cited will now have somewhere to go. I am very happy indeed that he has had the good sense to say what a worthwhile adjunct to our medical service this hospital will provide, and in a very short time it will prove its worth.

**An Opposition Member:** It did a marvelous job years ago.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. SMITH:** Well, of course, it will be used now for the purposes for which it is intended to be used. Years ago it was used for a totally different purpose.

The establishment of that hospital shows the insight of the Minister for Health and Home Affairs. It is a fine building and I have no doubt it will turn out equally fine citizens.

There is, however, one work for which I looked in vain in the annual report. It is a matter of great distress to me that I do not see some provision for expenditure on the removal of the school stores from the Windsor State School grounds. Those stores occupy a very large portion of the playground. I have mentioned this matter before. Even some of the relatively new hon. members will have heard me mention it. I mention it now because I feel it is particularly important. The provision of playgrounds for the school children at the Windsor school is very important. It is the female scholars—the young girl students—who are deprived of their playground. There is a playground for the boys, which contains a cricket pitch and a practice wicket, but there is no playground area for the girls. It is a very large school with a very large attendance of girls, and we should make every endeavour in the next financial year to ensure the removal of these stores.

There are now coming into the possession of the Department of Public Works, or into the possession of the Government, various buildings that are being vacated as departments move into new or modified buildings. It is my fond hope that, as early as possible, in this financial year, we will see the removal of these stores so that we may give back to the Windsor school for a playground this very large area that rightfully belongs to it. You will be aware of the situation, Mr. Taylor, because the school bounds the western area of your electorate. You will be familiar with the large buildings that take up this valuable playing field. I sympathise with the department, because I realise there are other demands for schools to meet the ever-increasing population of the State. However, this matter is urgent.

Another matter that I feel constrained to mention is highlighted by the photographs at the back of the annual report. In one of the batches of photographs we see the remodelled District Court and the inside of one of the courts, and as we turn over two pages we see the interior of the Industrial Court. I have said this in this Chamber on previous occasions, and it highlights the need for a new approach to building by the State. In the case of the Industrial Court we are looking at a new construction in a new building, built and designed for that purpose. There is a spacious court with adequate seating accommodation, well lit, and with all the necessary space for a Full Bench and for people to sit and hear the cases, and plenty of seating for advocates at the table.

On the other hand, when you turn the page and look at the photograph of the District Court, you find much more limited seating accommodation, no accommodation for a jury—even for a jury of four in a civil case—and a very cramped area for counsel conducting a case. There is very little room behind the seats at the Bar table for anyone to pass between counsel and the table at the rear. While those courts are very comfortable in themselves—and they will be more comfortable when they are air-conditioned as the report presages—the position is that it is a remodelled building, and I have long been in opposition to the way in which we in this State take an old building and remodel it. Old buildings, particularly of the age that the District Court building was, should be demolished. I have in mind of Harris Court on the next corner to Parliament House. I draw some solace from the fact that a couple of days ago the Leader of the Opposition said that in his opinion the Supreme Court building would be an ideal bait to attract someone like Hooker Rex Corporation, or one of those large unit trust organisations, to build a multi-storey building on that site. He was, of course, in effect restating the suggestion I made in the Chamber only a couple of weeks ago that the Government should consider very many of the plots of ground it owns around Brisbane and sell them with the idea of congregating all their administrative buildings in one straight section, be it the section from here to Queen Street or a section up and down Alice Street, but somewhere among the less valuable sites. We should sell the valuable sites, although I do not for a moment suggest that we should sell the Supreme Court. I did suggest that we should sell the Taxation Building when it becomes available.

**A Government Member:** That is a good idea.

**Mr. SMITH:** Unfortunately I could not sell the staff in it, but I would be prepared to destroy the records if that would help any hon. members. As well as from the Leader of the Opposition, I did get some support from the bifurcated political gentleman from South Brisbane on the matter of the alteration of existing Government buildings.

**Mr. Davies:** Didn't you suggest pulling Parliament House down?

**Mr. SMITH:** No. I suggested we build a new Parliament House, and I still say we will have to do it.

**Mr. Davies:** I am pleased you made that much clearer.

**Mr. SMITH:** This building is totally unsuited to the needs of a modern Parliament. One of these days we will have to do something about it. My idea was that we should plan. One big defect of the annual report is that in looking through it

and studying the various sections of the Department of Public Works we look in vain for what might be called a planning branch. We find the architectural branch, divided into various sections, but it does not appear that we have any particular section that makes a full survey of the available land in Brisbane and a full survey of the needs of the Government in Brisbane, and then decides which part of Brisbane the Government will use to establish their various offices. The sooner we get one of those sections the less waste there will be in the Government's expenditure on buildings, such as the money spent on the District Court building and on Harris Court, and judging from the signs of activity one sees behind the Bellevue Hotel, I take it that Government money will be spent on some land there which the Government own. Unless they use ground to advantage—unless they build multi-storey buildings thereon—I submit they are wasting the land and wasting the money being put into buildings on it.

**Mr. Gaven** interjected.

**Mr. SMITH:** I thank the hon. member for South Coast for interjecting because it is the unimproved value of these lands that should be considered by the Department of Public Works. We do not have to have our buildings in the main street. We can use low-value land, such as you find down here near Parliament House and in Margaret Street or Alice Street. Those low-value lands do not attract the speculator. We can build on them and if we have valuable land we can sell it to a speculator and make money on the transaction. The money made from those transactions could be put towards building an administrative block, housing, as far as possible, all branches of Government within one steady step—something that I believe is a necessity in this State.

To give force to my suggestion, I suggest that we look at a picture in the annual report that is a condemnation of our present policy. I refer to the picture of the Centenary building project, the Public Library. Looking at it from the river, one sees a building some three storeys high, and over the top of it an unsightly further storey of an outmoded and outdated building.

**Mr. Davies:** Have you found out who is responsible for that awful design facing William Street?

**Mr. SMITH:** I am not familiar with the particular awful design to which the hon. member refers. I do see a colourful mosaic at times when I walk that way.

I am speaking of the buildings that obtrude themselves over the top of this relatively low Public Library building. We have not made the best use of that land. We should build not two- or three-storey buildings but multi-storey buildings. The District Court also stands condemned on the same grounds. It has only two storeys, but that is probably just as well because I do not think it would

carry any more. I suggest that we should make a survey, see what land we have, see what land we can dispose of, and bring all our public buildings into the one area.

I noticed in "The Courier-Mail" one day last week an article on the city of Toledo in the United States of America pointing out what steps were being taken there to provide malls and to ban traffic from certain sections of its main thoroughfares. I suggest that our town planning committee could well provide for no traffic in the main part of Queen Street.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Couch grass!

**Mr. SMITH:** It is not to be derided. If we could achieve such a place in the heart of the city, it would be a wonderful thing for Brisbane. The potentialities of this city are being stifled because we are doing nothing to make the city the thing of beauty that it should be. We have a beautiful river winding round this part of the city. What have we done with it? We have hidden it from view with a lot of unsightly buildings that were built at the turn of the century, or somewhere about that time, small buildings with no architectural grace and of little use. We have in the heart of the city a sand and gravel-crushing plant.

**Mr. Armstrong:** We know it. We hear it every night.

**Mr. SMITH:** Of course the hon. member knows it. Any Government wishing to make the most of their capital city should recognise the tourist potentialities of this part of the river. We know from articles that we have read in "The Courier-Mail" this week that a distributor road, or a ring-road, is planned to skirt this part of the river and go under Victoria Bridge by an underpass. If that is so, I suggest that we, as a Government, should play our part in beautifying this part of the city as soon as we possibly can. In all cities of the world, those parts devoted to administrative and government offices are tourist attractions. No-one who goes to London fails to see the House of Commons, and a person in any city of the world who goes to see government buildings or Parliament House retains a recollection of that building long after he remembers a little coffee house or something of that sort. The Government should do all they can to ensure that Brisbane, under the new Town Plan, becomes a city of beauty.

**Mr. Hanlon:** Do you think the Government put the morgue in the right place?

**Mr. SMITH:** I do not think the morgue in any way detracts from the beauty of the river. Buildings of that type have to be put somewhere, and the building that has been erected is quite graceful. There is nothing ugly about it.

**Mr. Davies:** The Lord Mayor did not like it.

**Mr. SMITH:** That does not change its architectural appearance. It is no use quarrelling about new buildings. What I

am quarrelling about is old buildings that we do not have to keep. There are a few on the northern bank of the river that could be demolished without loss to the city. The accommodation required to house all the officers in them could be made available in one multi-storey building. In America the junior executive is given a 12 ft. by 10 ft. office; the senior executive rates one twice as big. In rooms of that size American executives of concerns far bigger than we have here—it is no use kidding ourselves otherwise—do all their work. If they can do it, surely we can.

**Mr. Thackeray:** That shows how good we are. Four of us do it in a room 12 x 12.

**Mr. SMITH:** I am constrained to say that maybe the accommodation provided for the hon. member is in direct ratio to his executive ability.

I hope that in the department's next annual report we can read about the planning branch I have referred to. It need comprise only one or two men with architectural and town-planning ability. They would need to be men of vision. We have people of that type in the Public Service. If we have not, we can go outside and get them, because they are not unattainable. When they are allowed to put their plans into operation, if we continue to publish photographs at the back of the report, we shall see photographs of buildings rising right up into the sky and utilising to the best advantage the land on which they stand.

I have seen for myself what is being done, but the report refers to the improvements being made to the Longreach police station and the Longreach courthouse. The police station is a credit to the Force. It is a very fine building that was well received by the people of Longreach, who are very appreciative of what is being done for them in that area. I only wish that the hon. member for Gregory was in the Chamber so that I could pass on to him some of the commendations that I received on his behalf. My concern is about the courthouse building. The foundations of the front section are completed, but the rest of the work is lagging. If anyone disagrees with the argument I have advanced about the District Court building in Brisbane, he should have a look at the courthouse building in Longreach.

**Mr. Inch:** You should see the one at Cloncurry.

**Mr. SMITH:** It is no worse than the one I am talking about. It is an old wooden building. If the plan is to carry right through with a new building I wholeheartedly endorse it, but if it is merely to improve the front and leave the back portion as it is—the sort of thing we see in cheaper cafes with an attractive front—I do not think that we are doing justice to the Department of Public Works.

**Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (8.59 p.m.):** I rise mainly to impress on the Government the need to continue the day-labour method of constructing schools and other public buildings. I am sure that the Minister agrees that over the many years that the day-labour system has been in operation it has proved of great benefit to the State, and has had the effect of keeping down the cost of public buildings. When a public building is being erected, if any criticism is levelled at it the public should be informed of the position. If the price is acceptable to the public, it can be taken as a fair indication that it is right for that particular type of building. I believe that the price being paid for that building acts as a brake on exorbitant prices that may be charged by private contractors for similar jobs.

Some hon. members have spoken of delays caused by letting work on contract, particularly for schools, and there has been some criticism of the quality of the work involved. One school—the Balmoral High School—was mentioned by the hon. member for Belmont. He said the brickwork in the manual training block was a disgrace to any contracting firm. It was disgraceful to think that work of that quality on the foundation should have been the basis of somebody else's work. In that case the department had to almost demolish a wall and replace it. My concern is the extra cost involved in having to re-do work and the fact that that extra cost could possibly be used against workers' interests in the future. It could be argued that that building cost so much to erect and in future years, when the history of the job is forgotten, it might be said that it was a day-labour job that was so expensive. It is also a disgrace to think that tradesmen who take a pride in their work should have to work on a foundation with which they are not happy.

I condemn the method of building under the two systems—day labour and contract—and I think it should cease immediately. It should be either one system or the other. I have a definite bias against the use of the contract system, but if it is to prevail let it be all contract or all day labour. Let it be one or the other.

It is obvious that when a firm is in business working under the contract system its object is to make a profit. I have no quarrel with a profit being returned to investors or those responsible for running a firm—that is only natural—but I believe that the Government have officers, engineers, tradesmen and other people on the job, such as clerical workers and outside staffs, who are just as efficient as those employed by contractors. I can see no reason why a contractor should be paid a price higher than the cost for which the work could be done by these departmental people.

It is often said that men working for contractors work harder than they do for the Department of Public Works, but I do not believe that. I have worked with many men

and on quite a number of jobs, and on every occasion I have found that if men are led correctly they will work hard for you, irrespectively of who you are.

**Mr. Duggan** interjected.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is quite true. I could cite many other cases if time permitted. I have heard it said on various occasions that a certain job is not progressing as it should and I have seen men standing around when they could perhaps be working. In fact, in the period since the war I have often been sitting in a tram and have listened to conversations around me and the impression I have gained is that everyone is a loafer except those having the discussion. If you ask them how they work, and for whom they work, they will tell you it does not matter, that they work conscientiously irrespectively of whom it is for.

The Department of Public Works has a fine body of workers. One has only to look at the schools that are being built and the other work being done to see that these men are fine workmen with a pride in their work.

Whilst on that subject I wish to congratulate those responsible for the work in my own area since I have had the privilege of representing it. We would not be in such a happy position in regard to high schools and primary schools but for the splendid work done by employees of the Department of Public Works.

At times hold-ups occur in completion of a job, not through the fault of the administration or the foreman on the job, but because material has not been supplied by an outside firm. I refer particularly to steel work. The number of firms handling steel work, such as railings and plates, is small, as there is not a great deal of profit in sub-contracts for this work. There is not a great deal of it in each town or city, and therefore the firms doing that work are not greatly concerned about making punctual deliveries or doing work of first-class quality. I have given a great deal of thought to this matter and after a keen and thorough investigation into the amount of engineering work in public buildings and schools I suggest that the Department of Public Works should set up its own engineering shop. The Minister has said that the department is the largest employer of building workers in the southern hemisphere. I think those were his words, and he can correct me if I am wrong. If it is the largest employer of building workers, I am surprised that it has not its own engineering shop. Any firm of any size engaged in building construction would have an engineering shop to construct metal railings, frames, and so on.

The department would not have to employ a great number in the engineering shop, because the designers of schools and buildings decide what materials should be used and

the type of structure. The engineering shop then has the job merely of making up the metal work. I believe a departmental engineering shop could make the articles much cheaper than they are supplied today, and there would be the further advantage of co-ordination with other work, so that the job could proceed smoothly without stoppages through shortage of supplies.

**Mr. Windsor:** They would have to shift farther out to get space.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is so. I am not suggesting the present workshops are large enough. On that point, I believe the day is not far distant when the department will have to set up workshops away from the present situation. Factors such as land values and traffic problems may compel the department to build a new assembly establishment and workshop in a different area.

I now want to touch on the work resulting from the efforts of school committees. It has been said on different occasions that the Government subsidise school committees in the provision of amenities and improvements. I disagree with the statement. I think school committees subsidise the Government. If hon. members consider the matter logically they will agree with my contention. Who owns the school? Who owns the article when it is purchased? Who gets the benefit of the work? If a school committee assists in the purchase of something, or in the performance of certain work, the article and the work become the property of the Department of Education. If there were no school committees, the improvements would have to be effected by the Department of Education or the Department of Public Works. Therefore, I am greatly concerned with the carrying out of this work. Where the school committee requires the work to be carried out, and then applies for it, once the Department of Education agrees to the work being performed it should then be passed on to the Department of Public Works.

I want to take this opportunity of thanking the Minister for his assistance in a problem I brought to his notice. I am grateful to him and his staff for the progress of the work and the way that it has been carried out. I mention this not as a criticism, but as a suggestion that it could be carried even further. As I have said previously, I believe the Department of Public Works can do the work much cheaper than anyone else. I believe this is quite natural. I do not advocate that it should become a close preserve, because other people will say that if we kill private enterprise entirely, that is so much of our work force that we put out of work.

**Mr. Windsor:** I think there is room for them both.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** That is right; I think there is.

Where a school committee has the money—all hon. members know how hard it is to get, and as time goes on it gets harder and harder—that money has to be spent wisely so that the most can be got for it. There is another factor concerning particularly our high schools. The money that has been raised must be spent quickly so that it may benefit the children of the parents who helped to raise the money. It is no good raising money this year and saying, "We will spend it in four years' time." The children of the parents who helped to raise the money will have left school by that time. There must be a quick raising of money and a quick and effective spending of it. If the Public Works come in and do the work we make sure that the best possible return is obtained.

As was mentioned previously, at this time of the year there is plenty of work for our tradesmen and other workers. In fact, there are not enough to do all the work that has to be done. That is why overtime is worked on occasions. This has come about because the men whom we might get into the Public Works Department are not sure of continuity of employment. Just before the end of the financial year it was necessary to pay off a certain number of employees. That has been going on for years. I am not saying that this is the only Government that have ever done it. I believe if we must have a rush building programme at a certain time of the year, we should then let these men carry out the school committees' works during the slack period. We would thus give them continuity of employment and the security that is so necessary to get them to stay in the industry.

**Mr. Windsor:** It is pretty hard to organise that.

**Mr. HOUSTON:** I do not think it would be hard to organise. I have had a little experience in that direction as I once organised for a private firm. These things can be organised. I have a very high regard for the organising ability of the clerical and administrative staff of the Department of Public Works.

This leads me to another point. I do not know whether the decision was made by the Education Department or by the Department of Public Works. I have tried to separate it but the more I have looked into it the more confused I have become, and I have come to the conclusion that perhaps I should let it "hit the deck" and crave the indulgence of the Chairman if I am breaking away on this matter. It concerns the decision by either the Education Department or the Department of Public Works to have electric light meters installed in tuck shops to ascertain how much electric current is used. Whether that decision is right or wrong I do not intend to debate now—I believe it is a matter affecting education—but the responsibility for installing the meters should not be thrown entirely on to school committees. I can cite a case in point. A small tuck shop at a small school averages £2 a week net profit. Very

few children attend the school but quite a few ladies work there because a great deal of work has to be carried out. At present the tuck shop has one light point and one power point and it is necessary to have installed an extra power point. They could get by with a temporary measure but, for the safety of the women working there, they want the power point installed. Do you know what it is going to cost that school committee on the estimate of the Department of Public Works? £44! How can anyone expect any school committee like Mayfield, functioning on £2 a week net profit, to pay £44 for one extra power point only six inches away from an existing point? It has all come about because the Department of Education or the Department of Public Works wants an electricity meter installed. I have no quarrel with that requirement—it might be a good idea—but when rules are altered the Department of Public Works should be responsible for carrying out the change at no cost to the school committees.

I am taking up a good deal of time on this because I think it important. It will put the school committees in an impossible position if some action is not taken. It will affect many schools. If it has not done so already, it will immediately the school committee decides to put in one extra light or one extra power point. I ask the Minister to investigate the matter and I suggest to him that, in the interests of all concerned, he should have the electricians of his department carry out the alterations. He can find out what they are because they have been listed by the engineers of the Department of Public Works. I will be quite happy—and I am sure the school committee will be—to have it charged for the extra power, but we think that all work that becomes necessary for the installation of electricity meters should not be charged to the committee. As I mentioned to the chairman of the school committee the other day, it is just as well that the tuck shop happens to be near the main switchboard; if it had been at the other end, the cost of the job would have been well over £100. That is how ridiculous it can become.

There is another matter that I have already raised with the Minister. He may not have had a chance to study it yet but I mention it now because it is very important. It concerns the quality of some of the timbers sent onto Department of Public Works jobs, particularly for school buildings. Where the trouble is I do not exactly know. That is why I am raising the matter. I believe it is wrong and against the interests of all concerned to have sent out onto a job timber that is not fit to use. I am not talking about the quality of timber in the tree but of sawn lengths of 15 or 18 feet with two bows in them. They could be used for a bow and arrow if one had the strength. There is no sense in it. Other timber sent out for window sills has splits right down its length and great pieces missing. Timber of that type should never leave the mill in the first

instance to go to the Department of Public Works stores. If it does arrive there, it should never leave the stores to go to a job. I have no fear that the foremen on the jobs would use it—I have too much faith in their ability as tradesmen and in their pride of workmanship—but it is a waste of time because the timber has to be loaded, unloaded, stacked, sorted, and put back into the store, and more has to be taken out. Whether it comes from the timber yard or from the Public Works store, it would pay the department to have one of its foremen or leading hands on the job to sort the timber, or at least to supervise the sorting.

I make that suggestion because I have seen the timber. It is something that must be overcome because it adds to the cost of the jobs. The men do not take a pride in their work when they see this timber. Knowing the men and having worked with them, I know that their morale is affected every time something is allowed to happen to which they object. I believe that this problem could easily be overcome to the advantage of all concerned.

The hon. member for Sherwood mentioned the installation of a septic system at one of the schools in his area. I have mentioned this problem for the last three years, and I think a solution of it must be found. Two schools in my area are affected. I believe the problem can be overcome at the Murarrie school, which is a small school. I think intensive tests would show that there is an area in the school grounds that would be suitable for the installation of a septic tank, and I would appreciate it greatly if the Minister had an investigation made so that it could be installed as soon as possible.

The school at Cannon Hill, which has an enrolment of 1,200, is the one that worries me most, because there are many problems to be overcome. The suitability of the ground for the installation of a septic tank is a major problem, but I am led to believe that ground nearby is suitable. If that is so, I believe that the Government should take the necessary action to obtain some of this ground. I understand it is council land at the moment, but I am not prepared to argue on that point. Tests would show whether or not it is suitable for the installation of a septic system. Even if the pipes had to run for some distance, I believe some action should be taken to protect the health of the children. If one goes to country areas that are being developed as tourist resorts, one sees that a great deal of money and trouble is taken with the installation of septic systems. How much more important it is that the health of young Australians should be cared for by the installation of these systems.

**Mr. ANDERSON** (Toowoomba East) (9.24 p.m.): In speaking on these Estimates, I first of all congratulate the Minister on his elevation to the portfolio of Minister for Public Works and Local Government. He said this morning that he was a "one-lunger." That

one lung is working at full power, and I congratulate him on the effort he is making and the good job he is doing.

We are very satisfied with the wonderful progress made on buildings built by the Department of Public Works in Toowoomba and the work that the workmen have done on them.

Much has been said about contract work and day labour. In my opinion there is room for both systems, because they both work very well. Very often jobs have to be done in a hurry, and they can be done only by contract. However, the day-labour force is doing a very good job, and I commend them, also. We have heard many complaints about incompetency, but those difficulties have now been overcome and the men are doing a really good job. A new opportunity school was opened in Toowoomba recently, and the people were amazed at its low cost. This excellent job was carried out for £21,912. At Middle Ridge £1,669 was spent on the State school, and £5,800 was spent on additions to the Newtown State School. A sum of £64,230 was spent on the new high school at Mt. Lofty. Additions to the Harristown High School cost £4,174. At the Willowburn Mental Hospital £21,000 was spent. An expenditure of £39,000 was incurred on a new workshop building at the Toowoomba Technical College. These figures are contained in the appendix to the annual report of the Department of Public Works, but they do not tell the full story. I knew there were other improvements and additions carried out in the Toowoomba area, so I asked the Minister why they were not included. He told me that the appendix contains details of only the more important jobs. The smaller jobs are not listed because there would not be enough room for them.

The hon. member for Townsville North spoke about what had been done and what had not been done in his area. I would remind the hon. member that the appendix does not tell the full story because many other jobs have been completed. Most State schools in Toowoomba have had work done on them in the last 12 months. Work on hospital buildings is mainly done by outside contract, and again those details are not included.

I am very jealous of a photograph in the back of the report of the new maternal and child welfare centre at Innisfail. That building would look very attractive in Toowoomba. Plans were drawn up about 10 years ago for a centre in Toowoomba, but so far they have not been proceeded with. We were hoping that the foundation stone would be laid this year, but unfortunately it has had to wait—only until next year, I hope. When the Department of Public Works is designing the building for Toowoomba, provision should be made for the welfare and guidance centre in the same building. The building in Innisfail is on the same type of site as the Toowoomba land—they are both corner blocks. The work of welfare and guidance centres

is coming into greater prominence. A committee has been formed in Toowoomba and the maternal and child welfare centre would be an ideal place to accommodate the welfare and guidance centre.

In the last 12 months most of the public buildings in Toowoomba have been repainted. I commend the department for the many improvements that have been effected in Parliament House.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Especially the broom cupboard.

**Mr. ANDERSON:** I am more concerned about the Lodge. Much has been said about the needs of Parliament House, but the provision of a new Lodge building is very necessary. I have spoken previously about the facilities in that very old building. I know that the Government approve local authority by-laws, but the Government themselves do not observe them. I have previously mentioned the inadequate ventilation in the toilet and bathroom. Many minor improvements have been made to the Lodge, but I think it is wasteful to spend a great deal of money on that old wooden building. I suggest the building of a motel-type Lodge for country members of Parliament. More use could be made of Parliament House itself because many of the bedrooms here could be put to other use and the necessary bedroom accommodation provided in the motel. Most of us arrive in motor-cars, but at the present time we cannot park them near the Lodge. A motel-type of building would be the answer, rather than spending too much money each year on maintaining the old Lodge building. If we cannot see our way clear in the near future to do that, let us have some improvements in our toilet facilities and have wash-basins in the bedrooms. That would be a great improvement. I suggest also that power-points be installed for electric razors. Power-points have recently been installed behind the beds for reading lamps. I commend the many improvements carried out in Parliament House itself.

I should like now to congratulate the Local Government Department for the excellent liaison that exists between the Director, the Deputy Director and the various local authorities—town clerks, shire clerks, councillors and aldermen of the various councils. It is wonderful to have such excellent co-operation between the councils and the Director of Local Government. We are always received cordially and everything is done to assist in the many requests for information concerning local government.

This year is the centenary of local government in Toowoomba. On the 19th of this month we will be holding a grand parade in Toowoomba and all hon. members are invited to attend. On the 21st His Excellency the Governor will be laying the foundation stone of the new administrative

building, which is estimated to cost £200,000. On the 19th he will officially open the new Milne Bay Olympic Pool.

We appreciate the work done by former aldermen of the city of Toowoomba, especially their foresight in planning the tree-lined streets. Many improvements have been made throughout Queensland by local authorities in the different areas.

I should also like to commend the hon. member for Roma on his suggestion relating to the planning of country towns and cities, which was that the local authorities inaugurate sewerage schemes very early in the piece, and not wait till the town grows, as has been the case in the past. This lack of foresight in councillors and aldermen in Toowoomba was mainly the result of their not believing in doing these works with loan money. They tried to run everything in Toowoomba out of revenue and found it could not be done. We could not sewer our city but, with advanced thinking these days, much progress has been made in the last 10 years. Nevertheless, as a result of this lack of foresight, there is always a certain amount of work dragging. I commend the hon. member for his suggestion that all these towns consider the implementation of sewerage schemes in their early stages, when it is much more economical.

It is getting late and I know the Minister will want to comment on many things. I commend the department, its officers, foremen of works, and Mr. Longland, the Under Secretary, for the excellent work they are doing, and I trust that the Estimates this year will result in work as successful as that in the previous year.

**Mr. HANLON (Baroona) (9.29 p.m.):** I want to speak very briefly in these Estimates by referring to the Valuer-General's Department. I say for a start that I think the Government, in the administration of this department, have been politically dishonest. I do not think that can be denied.

**Mr. Ramsden:** What makes you say that?

**Mr. HANLON:** I will tell the hon. member what makes me say it. I refer to the fact that prior to the election—and this is information I secured from questions addressed to the Minister on 21 September—for a period of at least three months and maybe longer no valuations were issued by the department for various local authorities. I asked the Minister about it and he went into a long explanation on that day—21 September—which can be seen in "Hansard." I will not waste time going through it now but he pointed out, particularly in relation to the Gold Coast, that it was not practicable to issue valuations prior to that date, which I think was 20 July, 1960. My point is that, by some strange coincidence, in that period of three months before the election no valuations were issued, particularly the very "hot potato" valuation of the Gold Coast. But in the period

between the election and 21 September, when I addressed questions to the Minister, 19 valuations had been issued. Then we find the hon. member for Merthyr asking why I say the Government have been politically dishonest in this department. Surely that is an illustration.

**Mr. Ramsden:** You are only making wild statements.

**Mr. HANLON:** I go further. On the same day I asked the Minister to give figures for overtime worked in the Valuer-General's Department. That part of my question reads—

"What has been the total cost of overtime (including meal allowances applicable), if any, incurred by the Valuer-General's Department—(a) for the financial year ended June 30, 1960 . . ."

that is, for the full financial year,

“ . . . and (b) from July 1, 1960, to date?”

that is, to 21 September, 1960. The Minister in his reply said that overtime and meal allowances for the financial year up to 30 June, 1960, amounted to £1,633 16s. 6d., and overtime and meal allowances from 30 June to 21 September amounted to £1,428 17s. 4d.

Considering the matter even charitably, how could anybody say there is not something very suspicious about the fact that in the three months prior to the election no valuations had been issued and that in a period of a few months after the election departmental officers received in overtime nearly as much as the amount of overtime paid in the full financial year to 30 June? If all this overtime was necessary after the election why was it not worked before the election? Why this sudden surge of valuations immediately after the election? Obviously in the opinion of the Government the period after the election was the stage to hop in and get out all these valuations so that they would be forgotten before the next election. The Government said to themselves in the three months before the election, "We could not have any valuations going out now. We could not interfere with Mr. Carey's chance or Mr. Gaven's chance on the South Coast." I must admit that those two hon. members had a bit up their sleeves, but notwithstanding the fairly large majorities they obtained I think both would concede that their position would have been difficult if Gold Coast valuations had been issued a couple of months before the election. For that reason I say the Government were politically dishonest. This has nothing to do with the officers of the department. I do not say they are in any way to blame, because they merely carry out the policy of the Government. If the Government decide that valuations are not to be issued, naturally the officers of the department do as the Government require them. That is as it should be. They

are not governing the country; they are only carrying out the administrative work of the Government.

**Mr. Smith:** You say the Government were quite alert in Albert?

**Mr. HANLON:** If the hon. member takes pride in that type of alertness, and the type of alertness displayed in the offering of a certain portfolio, he is quite welcome to do so. It is the alertness of a Government that set themselves up as a Government whom the people can trust.

**Mr. Wharton:** So they can.

**Mr. HANLON:** Their record, particularly since the last election, has certainly not proved it.

The Government cannot deny the charge I have made, because their action was so blatant. There was a sudden surge of revaluations after the election. The whole matter of valuations under this Government has a very decided political flavour.

We know there has been a great deal of controversy in the Gatton area. We know of the influence brought to bear by the Minister for Transport in an effort to placate the people in that district after their outcry about valuations. We find this article in "The Courier-Mail" of 30 September, 1960—

"Big Gatton Wins over Land Values

"Sixteen of 18 appeals against valuations in Gatton Shire were allowed yesterday by the Land Court President (Mr. P. F. Wright). The appeals were test cases and the court's decision means that 292 Gatton farmers will have their valuations lowered by thousands of pounds.

"Mr. Wright allowed reductions of up to one-third of the Valuer-General's valuations.

"Objections against valuations put on their land by the Valuer-General (Mr. E. Smith) came from 292 Gatton landholders."

The biggest reduction was in the case of a property owned by Mr. Ryan. The Valuer-General placed a value of £11,884 on the land. It was a fairly large property comprising 144 acres, and the valuation was reduced to £6,950.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Who did that?

**Mr. HANLON:** Mr. Wright, the newly-appointed President of the Land Court, heard these appeals.

**Mr. Ramsden:** That was a right of appeal they did not have under your Government.

**Mr. HANLON:** The hon. member knows a lot about it, I suppose. I am not going to waste my time trying to argue with him over these matters. According to his speech yesterday, he is carrying the whole of the Government on his shoulders. Everything the Government have done in the last three years

has been something he has suggested during that period. It is not much good trying to tell him anything about these matters.

I say—and I think Mr. Wright said—that obviously the cases for the Valuer-General and the appellants showed considerable disagreement on the values to be applied to land and improvements. Particularly with Mr. Ryan's property, the variation concerned timber and the value that had been put on the timber as against the value of the land itself.

**Mr. Smith:** Don't you think that would be sub judice? Those appeals are only part heard.

**Mr. HANLON:** This is a real cover-up Government, and here is the hon. member for Windsor wanting to cover up more. When are we going to get away from these things? The idea that because somebody takes an action somewhere Parliament has to wait five years to discuss it is not a very practical application of the parliamentary principle. Sixteen of the 18 appeals have been dealt with, and how on earth I am going to prejudice anybody by reading an article that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" almost two months ago is beyond my comprehension. Even if the hon. member for Windsor—or the junior barrister, as the hon. member for South Brisbane refers to him—can see that it may, I am afraid I cannot. Mr. Wright said that the cases for the Valuer-General and the appellants showed considerable disagreement on the values to be applied to land and improvements. It seems that either the Valuer-General's Department is operating on a completely different principle from that considered correct by the President of the Land Court, or else the President of the Land Court is completely out of step in the decisions he arrived at.

I should say that if we from this side of the House had a committee to consider the deliberations of Mr. Wright in the Electoral Boundaries Commission, we would make substantial alterations to his decisions there, just as he has made them to the Valuer-General's decisions.

**Mr. Ramsden:** I'll bet you would.

**Mr. HANLON:** I'll say we would. Anybody can be wrong.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. HANLON:** This valuation problem is one of the most difficult questions for any Government to deal with, particularly in times of inflationary land values, and so on, but I am at a loss to follow the reasons advanced by the Minister for some of these local authorities not being valued more than once. He said it is very difficult to get a valuer to go from Brisbane into the Far West to value those areas. Doubtless it is difficult to get a man to go from the city into these areas, and no doubt it is difficult to get people with a particular local knowledge of areas in the

various parts of the State. You just cannot send any valuer out to a pastoral area, or a sugar-cane area, and so on, but I cannot for the life of me see why the city of Mackay could not have been valued earlier.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! When I relieved the Temporary Chairman I understood that the hon. member for Toowoomba East and the hon. member for Barooka would each speak for ten minutes and allow the Minister ten minutes to reply before the sitting ended, so if the hon. member has concluded I will call upon the Minister.

**Mr. HANLON:** I did say that I was going to speak for 10 or 15 minutes and I appreciate the Minister's desire to reply to those hon. members who have spoken today, but as the Minister spoke for about 2 hours 20 minutes this morning there is no need for Opposition speakers to be pulled up. I did say I would endeavour to confine my remarks to that time but I understand I can seek leave to continue.

**Mr. Roberts:** I am quite content to let the hon. member continue.

**Mr. HANLON:** I have almost concluded. I do not want to be unfair to the Minister, but I think that, if we get into a discussion on some of these matters, we do not want to be pulled up, irrespective of whether we had said earlier that we would try to limit our speech to 10 minutes. We get onto these subjects, the discussion goes on, and we have inane interjections from the hon. member for Merthyr, for which we are given no accounting in time, which all makes it hard for us to confine ourselves to 10 minutes.

In the Treasurer's explanatory notes on the Land Tax (Adjustment) Bill, he sets out that the city of Mackay has had its first valuation whereas other areas, such as the Gold Coast, have had three and Brisbane's third is coming up. Other shires have had three valuations, too, but the city of Mackay has just had its first, with an increase in values of 552.72 per cent. I cannot see why it could not have been valued before. Admittedly it is a sugar-producing area, but there would be valuers in the district who could have carried out the valuation before other areas had been valued three times.

In introducing the Estimates, the Minister said that any disparities or anomalies in land tax through long delays in valuations would be cleared up by the amending measure introduced by the Treasurer the other day. That is not necessarily so. I will not go into it now but when we have further opportunity of debating the Bill we will be able to show that it does not necessarily clear up all the anomalies arising from long delays in valuations. I think we are entitled to some explanation of the failure to value the city of Mackay earlier.

**Hon. L. H. S. ROBERTS** (Whitsunday—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (9.49 p.m.): I do not intend to reply to the hon. member for Barooka

tonight. I will deal adequately with the matter raised by him on the next day that these Estimates are debated.

In the main, there are not very many matters for me to refer to arising from the various speeches we have heard today.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that I commented on the number of employees we had on day labour. He said that, although much credit had to be given to Mr. Heading for that, a considerable amount of credit had to be given to former Ministers in Labour administrations. I should like to refer to Toowoomba East. Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307—

Year	Employees
1953	1,218
1954	1,704
1955	1,938
1956	2,030
1957	1,742

I draw your attention, Mr. Taylor, to the drop of 300 in 1957. You will no doubt remember that only a few months ago there was a howl and a whinge from hon. members opposite when there was a reduction in the number, and I explained this morning how that came about. But today the figure is at an all-time high—2,605.

He also mentioned that 17 shires had been valued three times. That is a matter to which the hon. member for Baroona also referred, so I shall deal with it later.

When the hon. member for Roma was speaking, an Opposition member queried the number of school residences provided by the Government. In 1957-1958 the Government provided 18 residences, in 1958-1959 it provided 34, and in 1959-1960 it provided 16, making a total of 68. The hon. member for Salisbury said in his speech that I stated that there were fewer teachers' residences today because of the increased costs. I said nothing of the sort. I commented on the fact that £75,000 had been allotted this year for teachers' residences and that, because of increased costs, possibly 15 to 20, or thereabouts, would be built. Let me remind the Committee that in 1955-1956 a previous Labour Government provided 17 residences, which was almost an all-time record for them. In the year prior to our taking over, in 1956-1957, they provided the grand total of three residences in the State! Septic systems and sewerage installations were referred to by the hon. member for Roma. In 1957-1958 we installed 49; in 1958-1959, 66; in 1959-1960, 72—a total of 187.

The hon. member for Belmont stated that a greater proportion of work was going out to contractors. That is not so. It is relative only to increased costs, and the department still reserves the right to use either contract or day labour, whichever gives the better work progress for the finance provided. Even if the hon. member says that it is

expected that there will be difficulty in getting building workers from July to November, that did not prevent the party's claim that dismissals from the Railway Department would bring considerable distress to dismissed employees and their families. That is why my department stressed at the time the search for labour. There are many matters I want to touch upon but I shall reserve comment on them until the next day of sitting.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Before reporting progress, I should like to state to the Committee that when I resumed the chair from the Temporary Chairman, Mr. Dewar, I was informed that an agreement had been reached by the hon. member for Toowoomba East and the hon. member for Baroona that they would speak for ten minutes and allow the Minister to come in. The hon. member for Toowoomba East resumed his seat at the expiration of ten minutes. Had I known that the hon. member for Baroona did not intend to resume his seat at the expiration of ten minutes I would not have called him, thereby not curtailing the speech of the hon. member for Toowoomba East. Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307—

**Mr. LLOYD:** I rise to a point of order. I do not know if there was any necessity for an announcement about a breach of any agreement. This, I believe, is most irregular in this way, that if any hon. member—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr. LLOYD:** I have asked permission to speak.

**The CHAIRMAN:** There is no point of order.

**Mr. HANLON:** I rise to a point of order. In so far as you suggested, Mr. Taylor, that I continued to speak contrary to an arrangement with the Opposition Whip, I want to say that the arrangement was that the hon. member for Toowoomba East would speak for 10 minutes and that I would follow him, and I said I would endeavour to confine my speech to 10 or 15 minutes if there were no interjections, which there were, and I understood that the hon. member for Cook was going to speak after me. I was informed later by the hon. member for Maryborough that the hon. member for Cook had withdrawn and accordingly, if I wanted to, I could continue for 25 minutes.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I rise to a point of order.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I protest that there was no breach of any agreement at all.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.