Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 13 MARCH 1962

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

GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL

Assent reported by Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS

PIONEER RIVER FLOOD-PREVENTION MEASURES

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. GRAHAM** (Mackay), asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

> "In view of the urgent public demand by the residents of Mackay that some immediate action be taken with regard to flood prevention measures in so far as the Pioneer River is concerned, what action is necessary to have the Pioneer River Trust undertake such works that are necessary to overcome the flooding of Mackay during excessive rainfall periods?"

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

> "It is the view of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply that the Pioneer River Improvement Trust is making sound and satisfactory progress towards the implementation of flood mitigation works for Mackay. As the Honourable Member is aware, the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Queensland has been engaged in model tests of the Lower Pioneer River on behalf of the Trust. The model analysis is nearing completion and the Civil Engineering Department has conveyed some preliminary findings to the Trust. As a result the Consulting Engineers to the Trust are understood to be at present designing flood prevention works and subject to approval of the plans of these proposed works by the Trust and then by the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, it is anticipated that the Trust will include these works in its 1962-1963 Works Programme."

SNAP CHECKS OF VEHICLES FOR SAFETY AND ROADWORTHINESS

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman), asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"(1) How many snap checks of vehicles for safety and roadworthiness have taken place since the inception of this scheme?"

"(2) How many vehicles have been found to be defective in some way or other and the owners been ordered to have them repaired?"

"(3) How many prosecutions have there been as a result of these snap checks and failure to repair vehicles?"

"(4) Can he supply the estimated number of lessened accidents attributable to these checks and, if so, what would be the number?"

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

"I would advise the Honourable Member that snap checks on motor vehicles for safety and roadworthiness are of three kinds, viz.:—(a) Major checks with a number of Police Officers and Inspectors of Motor Vehicles; (b) Checks conducted by Police Officers only; and (c) Patrol checks in which one Police Officer and one Inspector of Motor Vehicles are engaged. The records with respect to (a) and (b) above are kept by the Police Department, and with respect to (c) by the Chief Inspector of Machinery. The answers to the Honourable Member's question under the headings, as shown above, are:—

(1) (a and b) Since March 29, 1961, sixty snap checks of vehicles have been made in the metropolitan area. Seven of these were major checks, with a number of Police Officers and a number of Inspectors of Motor Vehicles, the balance being by Police only. The Machinery Department has inspected 3,694 motor vehicles on road patrol, including 313 in country areas in four years, and 938 in Used Car Dealers' premises, including 291 in country areas in eighteen months.

(2) With respect to (a and b), 185 motor vehicles were issued with repair orders by the Police Department. With respect to (c), on road patrols 3,632 cars have been found defective in some particular. Of these, 891 have been unsafe. In used car dealers' premises, 570 have been found defective in some particular, and of these 201 have been unsafe.

(3) I am advised that, up to the present, it has been unnecessary to prosecute any owner for failure to repair vehicles.

(4) I appreciate the implied compliment, but, although our accident statistics are very accurate, they are not good enough to determine what would have happened, had different circumstances existed. All I can say is that we, in Queensland, have had spectacular success in our drive to reduce road deaths. I have always realised that disciplinary measures are not popular but, for my part, I have always been quite prepared to face criticism in an effort to save lives. As a result, road deaths in Queensland are being reduced to a remarkable degree."

NUMBER OF DEATHS THROUGH ELECTROCUTION

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman), asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"What is the number of deaths in the last twelve months of (1) tradesmen and (2) other persons caused through (a) hand power-tools, (b) electric motor-mowers, (c) washing machines, (d) electric irons, (e) electric refrigerators, (f) electric stoves, (g) electric heaters, (h) electric fans and (i) any other miscellaneous electrical appliance?"

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

"I suggest that this Question be addressed to The Honourable the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity, as these records would be held by the State Electricity Commission."

RAILWAY CARRIAGE CLEANERS

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. BROMLEY** (Norman), asked the Minister for Transport—

"If he agrees that the alleviation of unemployment is desirable, and in view of newspaper reports and complaints from people regarding dirt, grime and the generally unclean condition of suburban trains, will he give consideration, especially with regard to his oft-repeated statement that he is trying to win more custom for rail transport, to employing more cleaners for railway carriages?"

Hon G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"I have already done so."

ESTABLISHMENT OF PARAPLEGICS CLINIC

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

"In view of the fact that Queensland paraplegics have to travel at considerable inconvenience and expense to Perth, Western Australia, for treatment and rehabiliation, will he consider the possibility of establishing a paraplegics clinic in this State, preferably in the North?"

Hon H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"A Paraplegic Unit has been established at the Princess Alexandra Hospital for some time and is doing an excellent job. Patients are transferred from all parts of Queensland to it. Approval has been given for the appointment of a full-time Director to the Unit and this position will be advertised within the next week by the South Brisbane Hospitals Board."

MOTOR ACCIDENTS AND BROKEN GLASS

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) Who is legally responsible for removing, particularly in built-up areas, the broken glass that usually litters the street after a motor vehicle collision?"

"(2) Can any citizen who suffers damage to his vehicle or person as a result of riding or driving into a heap of such broken glass take any legal action for damage or redress and, if so, against whom and in what manner?"

Hon A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1) Regulation 88 of The Traffic Regulations provides that it is the duty of the driver or drivers of the vehicles to remove the broken glass and if they are physically incapacitated the duty devolves upon the person removing the vehicle or vehicles from the scene of the collision."

"(2) It would be contrary to established administrative and Parliamentary practice for me to give an advisory opinion on a matter such as this affecting the civil rights of one person as against another."

ILLNESS OF JUDGES

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) When a judge is unable through illness to continue work, to whom does he report the matter and in what form, and does he have to support his story with a doctor's certificate as is the case with all other Crown employees?"

"(2) If the judge remains off work for what is considered to be a long period or if there is any doubt as to the nature of the illness from which he claims he is suffering, is he sent to the Government Medical Officer for examination and report, as is the case with all other Crown employees?"

Hon A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1) Any such report would be made to the Chief Justice."

"(2) No."

"(1 and 2) As an amplification of the specific answers to the separate questions I may say that generally the illness of a Judge is reported to the Chief Justice by the Judge himself or by some person on his behalf. The report would not be in any prescribed form. If the illness is likely to be prolonged a report and medical certificate would be furnished to me and there would be a further report to the Governor in Council if considered necessary. In the case of a temporary illness, the Chief Justice, after consultation with other members of the Judiciary, is usually in a position to make satisfactory arrangements for the carrying on of the Court work. If the circumstances are such as to require the appointment of an Acting Judge the matter would be considered by the Governor in Council. As a general comment I might say that the office of a Judge is one of responsibility and trust. Appointees to such offices are chosen from counsel trained in the law who are regarded as being persons of honour and integrity, able and willing to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the high office entrusted to them. I would add that the independence of the Judiciary, as distinct from the Executive, is one of the foundations of our British system of democratic government and it would be a matter of grave concern to all of us if public acceptance of the complete integrity and independence of the Judiciary were in any way impaired."

DRAINERS AND PLUMBERS EMPLOYED BY HOUSING COMMISSION

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

"(1) How many drainers and plumbers are employed by the Queensland Housing Commission?"

"(2) What is the approximate number of houses serviced by them?"

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

"Four drainers to which are attached four labourers. One officer-in-charge plumbing, three leading hand plumbers, fourteen plumbers and four apprentices."

"(2) Work cannot be related to the number of houses serviced. The drainers and plumbers have been and are employed in the Metropolitan and Ipswich areas (i.) on drainage and plumbing work on new day-labour construction, (ii.) on sewerage connections to rental houses, and (iii.) attending to complaints on rental houses. In addition the drainers carry out miscellaneous drainage work on the Commission's estates."

RADIO AND TELEVISION ADVERTISING

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) asked the Minister for Justice—

"In view of the spate of advertising, particularly in connection with television, wherein persons purporting to be professional people are recommending the use of certain patent medicines, insect sprays, &c., what steps have been taken to ensure honesty and truth in radio and television advertising?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"The regulation and control of broadcasting and television are matters within the power of the Commonwealth and on which it has legislated. It follows from this that broadcasting and television as such are not matters for State legislation. The question specifically raised by the Honourable Member is, however, only a small part of a much wider problem. There are many laws directed towards ensuring honesty and truth, but however desirable these qualities may be, they are not qualities that can be created or standardised by Government regulation. Improvements are made in our laws from time to time, an example of this being our 1961 Amendment of the Queensland Criminal Code, extending false pretences to include wilfully false promises. The difficulties to be encountered in any form of censorship of advertising are innumerable. The diversity of matters to be dealt with and the extreme difficulties of interpretation of words and illustrations would constitute a serious obstacle to any system of regulatory control of advertising. The rule of 'caveat emptor', which means, 'let the buyer beware,' is of particular significance in relation to the entering into of contracts either for goods or services. Probably one of the best protections in such matters is to deal only with reputable traders or to buy products of a type and quality established by trade mark or trade name. Honourable Members will no doubt recognise from what I have said that the problems associated with this question are both extensive and complex. There is however one encouraging feature. Business experience strongly indicates that in the long run truthful advertising of a good product will always prevail over untruthful advertising of a bad product. Shortly stated then the answer to bad advertising is good advertising, followed up by competitive selling and discriminating buying."

SHIPPING SERVICE BY CLAUSENS COMPANY FROM GULF AND CAPE YORK PENINSULA

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"Owing to the fact that the vessel 'Cora,' owned by Clausens Steamship Company, will commence operations in May, is it the intention of this company to transport general cargo as well as cattle from the Gulf and Cape York Peninsula ports?"

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

"No. The 'Cora' is a cattle ship and present proposals refer to cattle transport only although some goods could be transported if circumstances arise to make such action necessary."

CIVIC RIGHTS FOR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"In view of the fact that the Government is now considering giving the Torres Strait Islanders the same State electoral rights as those enjoyed under the Federal law, will he consider granting these Islanders the same full civic rights as those enjoyed by Islanders from St. Paul's Island?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"Torres Strait Islanders already possess full civic rights with the exception of—(a) the right to drink alcoholic liquor; and (b) the right to exercise the franchise. The Select Committee appointed by the Commonwealth Government to investigate the granting of the franchise to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders has recommended the granting of voting powers to these people. However, the necessary legislation to give effect to such recommendations has not yet been brought down. The granting to Torres Strait Islanders of the right to consume alcoholic liquor and to exercise the franchise at State elections is already receiving very full consideration."

DECLARATION OF ANGLERS' RESERVE, HAUGHTON RIVER

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"As an inspection of the fishing grounds in the lower reaches of the Haughton River were completed by a marine biologist of his Department some months ago, has he yet come to a decision in regard to the application by the Haughton River Amateur Angling Club for the area to be declared an anglers' reserve?"

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

"The Government has reached a conclusion in this matter and a recommendation is being made to this week's meeting of the Executive Council."

IMPROVEMENTS FOR APPRENTICES AT TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"What improvements have been made at (a) the Brisbane Central Technical College, (b) the South Brisbane Technical College and (c) the rest of the Technical Colleges

in Queensland for apprentices in all trades in the way of new buildings and other accommodation for the years ended December, 1959, 1960 and 1961?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"The more important works at Technical Colleges approved by the present Government and completed or in progress during the three financial years 1958-1959, 1959-1960 and 1960-1961, are as follows—

	£
Brisbane Central Technical College—	
Alterations and improvements to power supply	11,808
Converting Motor Mechanics Workshop to Plumbing Workshop	25,386
Conversion of Plumbers' Workshop for Higher Physics Laboratories and Lecture Rooms	7,126
South Brisbane Technical College—	
New Workshop for Motor Mechanics and Allied Trades	57,000
Bundaberg Technical College—	
New Workshop for Motor Engineering Trades	20,870
Gympie Technical College—	
Improvements	3,230
Ipswich Technical College—	
New Workshop for Plumbers	9,735
Remodelling for Plumbing Workshop	5,765
New Mining Machinery Laboratory	1,655
Remodelling for Electrical and Allied Trades	3,875
Dust Extraction System, Woodworking Shop	1,996
Mackay Technical College—	
Workshops Building for Motor Mechanics and Sheet Metal Trades	21,690
New Lavatory Accommodation	4,312
Rockhampton Technical College—	
Engineering and Electrical Laboratories	44,458
Toowoomba Technical College—	
Workshops Building for Heat Engines and Electrical Laboratories	41,303

Since July 1, 1961, expenditure for the following works at Technical Colleges has been approved—

	£
Townsville Technical College—	
Heat Engines Laboratory	129,425
Cairns Technical College—	
Electrical Laboratories and Workshops	49,893
Warwick Technical College—	
Plumbing Workshop	17,286"

WATER CONSERVATION WORKS ON BURNETT RIVER

Mr. WHARTON (Burnett) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"(1) How much of the £16,000 allocated for investigation into the potential for water conservation works on the Burnett River from Monto to Bundaberg has been expended?"

"(2) Are the investigations still in the initial stages or have any decisions been made?"

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

"(1) A total of £10,900 has been spent on investigations in the Burnett River Basin to date this year. Of this £1,700 has been spent on investigations in progress on storage sites on Three Moon, Monal and Splinter Creeks. Engineering and Geological inspections have been made and sites on Three Moon Creek at 68.4 Miles and Monal Creek at 21.45 Miles have been selected for further investigation. Surveys are being made to determine reservoir capacities and suitability of sites for construction of dams and their economic value in regulating the stream flow for irrigation and other uses. Stream gauging stations are to be installed on these two creeks. Shortage of technical staff is retarding these investigations. In the Lower Burnett work which was commenced some years ago is proceeding on the underground water investigation of the area between the Kolan and Burnett Rivers, and the Burnett and Elliott Rivers and to the south of the Elliott River. Work is being carried out to determine the availability of water in the area and to enable the Irrigation Commission to provide reliable advice to the farmers who desire to obtain supplies from this source. The expenditure on this work so far this financial year amounts to approximately £9,200 of an amount of £10,750 allotted for the purpose."

"(2) The investigations of Three Moon, Monal and Splinter Creeks are in the initial stages. The investigation of underground water in the Bundaberg Area is approaching completion."

ROYALTY ON BAUXITE EXPORTED FROM WEIPA

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. GRAHAM** (Mackay), asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"In view of the fact that Comalco, at Weipa, will export 600,000 tons of bauxite, valued at £1½ million, to Japan over a three-year period from 1963, what percentage of this amount will the Queensland Government receive by way of royalties or any other charges that may be applied?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"Royalty payable to the Crown on the tonnage mentioned would total £15,000. Whilst the export will also mean increased employment, the important factor is the establishment of a future market for alumina from the alumina plant to be established at Weipa, which will be surplus to the requirements of the Tasmanian and New Zealand aluminium smelters."

SHIPMENT OF BAGGED SUGAR FROM MACKAY HARBOUR

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough), for **Mr. GRAHAM** (Mackay), asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

"Is there a possibility of a certain amount of bag sugar being shipped through the Mackay Outer Harbounr during the 1962 season? If so, what tonnage is expected to be shipped and to what destination?"

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick) replied—

"It is too early in the season to know the total quantity of sugar which will be exported from the 1962 season production, and in what proportions that total will be required in bags and bulk. Plans have been completed for the total quantity of bagged sugar presently estimated to be required by oversea customers to be supplied through the existing 'bagged' ports of Cairns and Urangan. Additional quantities in bags may be required but, at this stage, it is not possible to make further shipping arrangements."

TEACHERS AND TRADE APPRENTICES IN MACKAY

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

"(1) How many apprentices have been indentured in Mackay and district and in what trades in the years 1957 to 1962?"

"(2) How many of these apprentices attend the Mackay Technical College for training?"

"(3) How many teachers of trade subjects and manual training teachers are on the staff of the Mackay Technical College and what are their classifications?"

"(4) How many apprentices are employed in the Public Works Department, Mackay, and in what trades?"

"(5) How many apprentices have been employed in the Public Works Department in Mackay from 1957 to 1962?"

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

"(1) The numbers of apprentices in Mackay and District as at June 30, in each of the years 1957 to 1962 have been:—

—	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
						(To 8–3–62)
Aircraft Mechanics	1	2	2	..	..	..
Baking	6	5	5	7	5	7
Boatbuilding	1	1	1	..	..	..
Building	171	171	187	162	147	129
Coach and Motor Body Building	23	22	24	27	28	27
Electrical Trades	43	49	54	55	49	49
Engineering	172	168	178	160	172	163
Furniture Trades	23	18	21	17	12	12
Hairdressing	12	13	17	18	19	20
Leather Goods	..	..	1	1	..	..
Musical Instrument Making	1	1	2	2	1	..
Optical Mechanics	2	2	3	2	1	1
Printing	14	16	14	11	14	13
Radio Mechanics	3	4	6	6	6	3
Retail Butchering	6	..	2	1	1	1
Watchmaking	1	..	..	1	2	2
	479	472	517	470	457	427

It will be noted that the 1962 totals are incomplete and will be considerably augmented before the end of the year."

"(2) Three hundred and nine, including 29 attending supervisory classes."

"(3) There are four full-time teachers of trade subjects classified as trade teachers. There are no manual training teachers on the staff of Mackay Technical College, but six Manual Training Teachers have been granted part-time appointments at evening classes. Part-time teacher rates are the same for all grades of teachers of trade subjects."

"(4) Carpenters, 7; plumbers, 1; painters, 1."

"(5) Nine."

INSTALLATION OF ACCOUNTING ELECTRONIC COMPUTING MACHINES IN RAILWAY DEPARTMENT

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Is it a fact that the Railway Department contemplates the installation of electronic computing machines for accounting purposes? If so, what effect will their installation have on the numerical strength of the clerical staff in that section of the Department?"

"(2) If, as is believed by members of the clerical staff, a drastic reduction in their number will result, what steps, if any, have been envisaged to protect the continuity of service of these employees?"

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

"(1 and 2) The Department is in the preliminary stages of installing an automatic mechanical data processing bureau for the Northern Division. It is anticipated that these machine operations will require an adjustment of clerical staff in the Northern Division, but it is too early at this juncture to gauge what numbers of employees will be affected. However, the Honourable Member can be assured that in implementing installation, the Government will, subject to economic operation, endeavour to reduce to a minimum the impact upon the clerical staff, but some disturbance will be unavoidable."

MEANS TEST AND TREATMENT AT DENTAL CLINICS

Mr. WALLACE (Cairns) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"As there appears to be some measure of discrepancy in the administering of the means test as between groups of workers as it affects dental treatment at dental clinics, what procedure is or should be adopted, and will he give an assurance that the means test will be administered on a common basis?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"A basis of eligibility is laid down for the guidance of the interviewing officer who in some instances is the Secretary of the Hospitals Board, and it is the responsibility of such officer, on the information available to him, to determine whether or not the patient comes within the scope of such test. If there is any doubt he may refer the case to a higher authority which, in the final analysis, can be the Hospitals Board. Members of the public wishing to ascertain whether they are eligible to receive treatment at a dental hospital or clinic may submit particulars of their circumstances by telephone or letter to obtain some indication of their eligibility before attending personally."

EXPORT OF BISMUTH AND NICKEL FROM BIGGENDEN AND KILKIVAN DISTRICTS

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

"(1) Have any enquiries been made by overseas interests or any negotiations entered into with such interests in regard to the possible export overseas of bismuth from the Biggenden area and nickel from the Kilkivan district?"

"(2) Will he give his Department's estimate of the quality and quantity of these minerals in the respective districts?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"(1) No."

"(2) Before any estimates of quality and quantity could be given, considerable prospecting work would be required to be carried out."

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1961.

Order in Council under the State Housing Acts, 1945 to 1961 and the Local Bodies' Loans Guarantee Acts, 1923 to 1957.

Order in Council under the State Housing Acts, 1945 to 1961.

Regulations under the Racing and Betting Acts, 1954 to 1961.

Order in Council under the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1958.

Order in Council under the Abattoirs Acts, 1930 to 1958.

Regulations under the Hospitals Acts, 1936 to 1955.

Ordinance under the City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1960.

Regulation under the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1961.

CITY OF BRISBANE TOWN PLAN (EXTENSION OF THE PERIOD FOR INSPECTION) BILL

INITIATION

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Public Works and Local Government): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to extend the period during which Brisbane City Council shall keep open for inspection the Town Plan for the City of Brisbane prepared by the Greater Brisbane Town Planning Committee and the report of such committee thereon."

Motion agreed to.

FIRE BRIGADES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Dr. Noble, read a third time.

MAIN ROADS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

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

ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER ACTS AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 to 7, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—Amendment of s. 52; Satisfaction for accidentally damaging lines, etc.—

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (11.41 a.m.): This clause provides that the penalty for vandalism of any regional electricity board property shall be increased from £5 to £100. Of course, it presupposes that in imposing a fine, the magistrate will also order the defendant to make restitution. It is on the question of restitution that I wish to talk. I wish to quote a case that occurred in Townsville so that hon. members of this Assembly will be completely au fait with the way that big and wealthy authorities such as Townsville Regional Electricity Board swing the legal stick over the heads of people who are not in a position to go to law.

This is the case of a young man who was driving a car on Christmas Eve. He backed the car into the kerb, and the car merely touched an electric light pole in Flinders Street West—so much so that there is hardly a mark on the back of the car; there is a small scratch about the size of a two-shilling piece—but the pole was in such a condition of decay and rottenness that it fell over on to the awning of the building alongside. The boy was quite honest. He waited there and he got in touch with the police and with the Townsville Regional Electricity Board. He waited until the Townsville Regional Electricity Board officers came out. They saw that the electric light pole was in such a shocking state that they were not game to allow it to remain there until daylight when the people would see its condition and the type of pole that had been carrying the electric light wires. They immediately instigated a replacement job on the pole. They sent for their various engineers, various polemen, and various workers. Between the hours of about midnight on Christmas Eve and daylight on Christmas morning they had the old pole, or its remains, taken away, and a new pole erected. I repeat that they were not game to allow that pole to remain there until daylight. The young lad, who had acted in complete honesty and good faith, then received an account from Townsville Regional Electricity Board for the replacement of the pole. He said, "It is quite possible that the way in which I knocked the pole might have been responsible for knocking the rotten thing down." I understand that the ordinary cost for replacing an electric light pole is £90, but he got a bill that was closer to £200 than £90, because he was charged with the actual cost of the replacement of the pole. During the hours of darkness on Christmas Day all the workers engaged on the replacement of the pole were paid in accordance with the award, which was double time on double time because they were working in the hours of darkness on Christmas Eve. All the other Townsville Regional Electricity Board employees engaged in the replacement of the pole were also paid double time on double time.

I am speaking now entirely from memory, but I would not be far wrong, as hon. members know my memory is rather retentive. The labour costs alone for the replacement of that electric light pole were £133. The young lad came to me with his staggering bill. I said, "Well, I do not think you are responsible for any damage to the pole and you are certainly not responsible for the replacement, but if you are responsible for the replacement of the old, rotten, broken pole with a new pole, then surely you are responsible only for the cost of the replacement of a normal pole under normal conditions." He offered to pay that cost. He said, "I will pay the normal cost of replacement of a pole, which is round about £90." However, Townsville Regional Electricity Board insisted that he pay the full amount. He said, "What redress have I?" I said, "You could go to law, and I am satisfied that you will win at law; you will win, at least, to the extent that you are responsible only for the normal cost of the replacement of the electric light pole." But I said, "Bear in mind that if you take a wealthy corporation like Townsville Regional Electricity Board to law and you beat them in the magistrates court they will certainly take you on appeal to the Supreme Court, and if you win there they will most assuredly take you on appeal to the Full Court and, in the process, they will bankrupt you in legal costs."

Mr. Rae: Hear, hear!

Mr. AIKENS: That is quite true. The hon. member for Gregory interjects with "Hear, hear!" because he probably has had some experience of it. These big corporations simply swing the big legal stick over the heads of little people who are not in a financial position to fight them.

Mr. Rae: That is quite right.

Mr. AIKENS: Yes, and it is more than quite right; it is horribly true, and it goes on every day. What young worker can afford to fight the Townsville Regional Electricity Board through a series of legal actions, or a local authority or any other body using the people's money instead of their own? I said to this young lad, "The Townsville Regional Electricity Board won't fight you with their own personal money. They will fight you with the consumers' money, the people's money, and you will have to fight with your own." He said, "In view of that, Mr. Aikens,

the only thing I can do is pay up and look pleasant." And the young boy had to sell his car in order to pay the shockingly exorbitant charge levied on him by the Townsville Regional Electricity Board for the replacement of that pole.

If this clause contains, as I assume it does, the right of a magistrate to impose a fine of up to £100 for any act of vandalism—although this was not an act of vandalism; it was a pure accident—I really think the replacement or the restitution should be strictly governed by the Act.

I know the Minister will be shocked to hear this story, but it is quite true. He can check with the Townsville Regional Electricity Board because I wrote to the Townsville Regional Electricity Board and I told them that I had advised this young lad that if he went to law I was sure he would win at least to the extent that he would be held responsible only for the normal cost of replacement of a pole. The attitude of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board was—and they said it quite courteously and nicely; they put the iron fist in a velvet glove—"We do not care what the law is on the position, we are going to demand the full replacement cost of this pole and we are going to see that we get it." And they got it. The young boy had to sell his car in order to pay double time on double time, because, I repeat—and I will finish on this note—the Townsville Regional Electricity Board did not have the guts to allow that broken, rotten pole to stop there until the hours of daylight came round so that the people could see the type of pole that is carrying high electric current in the streets of Townsville.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (11.47 a.m.): In my second-reading speech I drew attention to this matter and pointed out that in all cases, whether it be wilful or accidental damage, the electric authorities demand compensation from those who cause the damage. They send their account for any repairs made as a result of the accident. The Minister in his reply said that one of the reasons for increasing the penalty from £5 to £100 was that he wanted to be able to deal with the case of the drunken driver who damaged any electric construction. He used the drunken driver as an excuse to penalise those who accidentally damage certain electric construction because the clause provides for either wilful or accidental damage. The matter calls for a fuller explanation than merely using the excuse of the drunken driver so that the Minister can penalise those, who, through no fault of their own, cause damage to electric construction.

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani—Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity) (11.49 a.m.): The hon. member for Townsville South has drawn attention to an exaggerated case. He usually does. Even if that lad, or that youth, had gone before the court, he would have got the protection of the court. After all, regional boards are constituted of people who are elected by the people, and not one person. As for condemning any board and saying its members would go on to the Supreme Court and the High Court—the matter has to come before me first. I can assure hon. members that I will give the matter full consideration, that I shall order a full investigation before I authorise an appeal. If the case was as the hon. member for Townsville South stated, the person concerned had an admirable case on which to go before the court.

Mr. Aikens: Of course he did.

Mr. EVANS: I am telling the hon. member that the question of an appeal has to come before me and that I would have it investigated.

We must protect public property. The penalty of £5 has been operative since 1892.

Mr. Aikens: Will you investigate the case that I have mentioned?

Mr. EVANS: I will investigate it.

Mr. Aikens: It is all on file at the Townsville Regional Electricity Board office.

Mr. EVANS: I will investigate it. I went to a great deal of trouble to point out that the £100 was a maximum. I mentioned drunken drivers as an instance, but I also mentioned vandalism. Vandalism costs us about £40,000 a year on main roads, and the cost to electric authorities would be a similar amount. Magistrates must be given power to impose a higher penalty for damage done. I stick hard and fast to that principle, which is designed to punish not only drunken drivers but also people who quite deliberately destroy public property. It is not an obligatory maximum penalty; it is left to the discretion of the magistrate. I believe that, taking into consideration the damage that is being done to public property by many people against whom legal proceedings should be taken, the penalty is reasonable and the magistrate should be in a position to compensate the persons, boards, or companies who have to pay for repairing the damage.

Mr. Sherrington: Take the case where an account has been forwarded for repairs and has been paid. Will this be in addition to that restitution?

Mr. EVANS: The Bill is very definite. It is up to £100.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 14, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (RATEABLE VALUE ADJUSTMENT) BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (11.54 a.m.): I move—

> "That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced relating to the rateable value of certain lands for the purpose of the making and levying of rates thereon by local authorities, and for other purposes."

The Bill contains two main principles—one a permanent measure and the other a temporary measure. The permanent measure relates to the date on and from which a complete valuation of a local authority area becomes effective for rating purposes. The temporary measure relates to the abatement, for rating purposes, of certain recent valuations made by the Valuer-General.

The permanent measure relating to the date on and from which a complete valuation of a local authority area becomes effective for rating purposes follows representations from the annual conference of the Local Government Association of Queensland and also from individual local authorities.

One very real difficulty that faces many local authorities is that a valuation may be proclaimed in force from 30 June but it may be several months after that date before the local authority receives a complete valuation roll. The local authority has to frame and adopt its budget for the financial year before the end of August in that year and the Government have been regularly faced with the position of having to extend the time beyond the end of August for framing and adopting the budget. Whether or not the time for framing and adopting the budget is extended, the local authority is often faced with the difficulty of receiving the valuation roll very close to budget time. It is often faced with the difficulty of not knowing the extent of objections or of appeal and ascertaining what might be a fair allowance to make in striking the rate for the contingency of likely reduction in valuation. Against this background there has been an agitation for a greater period of time between the receipt of the valuation roll and the date upon which the valuations become effective for rating purposes. The last annual conference of the Local Government Association passed the following resolution—

> "That legislation be brought down to prevent Local Authorities having to adopt new valuations prior to the adjustment of anomalies and/or objections having been determined."

The Government do not feel that it would be feasible to accede to this request. Hon. members will appreciate that certain appeals can take quite a period to be determined, especially where there are appeals against the decision of the Land Court. If, then, the whole of the valuations were to remain in moth-balls until the last appeal was brought to a conclusion, an unnecessary lapse of time would occur. To overcome the problem and to accede to the substance of the various requests the Government have decided to make the following amendments—

> (1) The date proclaimed by the Governor in Council on and from which a complete valuation of an area is effective for rating purposes shall be a day not earlier than 12 months after the date of the gazettal of the proclamation bringing the valuation into force;
>
> (2) A copy of the valuation roll shall be supplied to the local authority at least eight months before the date on which the valuation becomes effective for rating purposes; and
>
> (3) Notice of their valuation shall be given to owners of land at least eight months before the date on which the valuation becomes effective for rating purposes.

To give effect to this decision, the Bill also provides that valuations already proclaimed to be effective for rating purposes from 30 June, 1962, shall become effective from 30 June, 1963.

The Government believe that these provisions give substantial effect to the request of the Local Government Association and, at the same time, do not so defer the use of valuations that they might become stale before use.

Mr. Lloyd: Does that mean that the valuations for rating purposes already announced in Brisbane will not become effective until 30 June 1963?

Mr. RICHTER: All those that have been proclaimed in 1962 will not become effective until 1963.

Mr. Muller: Suppose finality is not reached in 12 months time, that the value is not determined for two or three years?

Mr. RICHTER: I mentioned that before. One cannot hold them up for two or three years. The 12 months' period will give time, in most cases, to have a conference with the Valuer-General.

Mr. Muller: There were hundreds in the Gatton area not finalised for three years.

Mr. RICHTER: I appreciate that. I mentioned it.

Mr. Muller: They are not finalised yet.

Mr. Hilton: Did you say this would be effective from June, 1962, or that those announced earlier would not be proclaimed until 1963?

Mr. RICHTER: If the proclamation is made at June, 1962, they will become effective in June, 1963.

Mr. Lloyd: What about those proclaimed at the end of last year? When will they become effective?

Mr. RICHTER: They are proclaimed on 30 June in any one year and they become effective for rating purposes 12 months later.

The second principle of the Bill is a temporary measure providing for the abatement for rating purposes, of certain recent valuations made by the Valuer-General. Before dealing with these provisions, there are some general observations that I desire to make. All hon. members will appreciate the very real problem arising from inflationary prices paid for land over the past few years. It is an Australia-wide problem and is not one which this Bill can set out to cure. In stating this, I want to assure the Committee that the Government are not unmindful but, indeed, are most concerned at the consequences which flow from this inflated pattern of land sales. The Government appreciate that many and diverse factors influence fluctuations in values and by no means all of these factors are inflationary. Growth and development are important factors which should properly be reflected in valuations. However, such is our concern at the pressures which inflationary land prices have on valuations, that the Government have a committee of senior officers working on this problem and are hopeful that a permanent solution might be found.

However, pending this permanent solution the Government feel that some temporary measures are required and one of the purposes of the Bill is to enact some suitable temporary measures. Let me say here and now that it is not feasible to adopt temporary measures which meet the circumstances of each individual case and give precise justice to all. The measures in the Bill are drawn on a wide general basis to give substantial justice. Hon. members will appreciate that the measure could be drawn on no other basis. Even with this limitation, which the Government freely recognise, they feel that the overall virtues of the measure make it worth while.

Generally speaking, the measure is based on the principles in the Land Tax Adjustment Act. Increases in valuation are halved for rating purposes and special provision to deal with land subdivided between rating assessments and land previously non-rateable is enacted on the same principle as in the Land Tax Adjustment Act. I will not attempt to explain the detailed formulae here as I believe they are well known to hon. members.

The approach is briefly, this—

(1) In respect of complete valuations of areas made by the Valuer-General and proclaimed in force from 30 June, 1960, or 30 June, 1961, the abatement in values applies for rating purposes for the financial year 1962-1963 and will continue to apply until a fresh complete valuation of the area is made and comes into operation; and

(2) In respect of complete valuations of areas made by the Valuer-General and which will operate, under the provisions of the Bill, as a basis of rating from 30 June, 1963, the abatement on values applies for rating purposes for the financial year 1963-1964 and will continue to apply until a fresh complete valuation of the area is made and comes into operation.

As I have already stated, the Government are earnestly seeking a permanent solution to the problems of valuation arising from inflated land sale prices. I am hopeful that such a solution will be found and, in saying that, I do not under-estimate the difficulty of this vexed problem. Until that solution is found and can be brought into operation and effect, the temporary relief granted by the Bill will, we believe, afford some respite.

Mr. Hilton: Do you mean the local authorities will be able to levy rates on the full amounts of valuations proclaimed in 1960-1961? Did I understand you to say that?

Mr. RICHTER: No. The Bill merely brings them into the category, and it will only apply for the financial year 1962-1963.

Mr. Hilton: For two years they will have levied rates?

Mr. Muller: That means in effect that it only applies to the City of Brisbane and the country people will have to pay?

Mr. RICHTER: No.

Mr. Muller: Yes it does. Will it apply to Gatton and Boonah? That is a straight-out question.

Mr. RICHTER: It will apply to Boonah. It will not apply to Gatton because Gatton is being revalued.

Mr. Hilton: It will not apply until the financial year 1962-1963?

Mr. RICHTER: It will not become operative until the financial year 1962-1963.

There is one other provision in the Bill which calls for comment. In accordance with an undertaking given to the House last year by my colleague, the Hon. the Treasurer, provision is made to give the Queensland Housing Commission a right of objection to and appeal against Valuer-General valuations of land let or leased by the Commission to tenants. In accordance with that undertaking, the right of objection and appeal applies retrospectively to all valuations, notice of which was given on and after 1 July last.

Mr. Sherrington: Power is given to the Commission, not the lessee?

Mr. RICHTER: Power is given to the Commission.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (12.7 p.m.): At times I have difficulty in following the Minister. I may not be intelligent enough to do so, but I am sure my confusion on those

occasions would be shared by the great majority of hon. members. This subject is one of great political moment to the public, and from what he has said this morning apparently he is attempting by some complicated method to get over the problems without losing too much money for the Government. The fact that the great majority of land in Brisbane will not be rated according to the new valuations until the 1963-1964 rating year indicates very definitely that the Government have in mind the election next year and are endeavouring by piecemeal methods to avoid some of the political odium with which they are confronted at the moment.

The rise in valuations in recent years has been such that definite action by the Government was called for. It has been said in this Chamber from time to time that the present position has resulted from the legislation introduced by a Labour Government. We accept that the legislation was introduced by the Labour Government. In 1944 the valuation of Land Act brought into effect a uniform policy of land valuation for the whole of Queensland. Prior to that time some 150 local authority areas each had a different method of assessing values. After the passage of the Act a uniform policy was adopted. That action had the full concurrence of Government members who were then in Opposition.

In later years the Act was amended to give definite rights of appeal to those who felt they were exposed to hardship because of that policy.

I believe that 1951 was the year when all new valuations had to be proclaimed on a uniform basis, that is, after a 7-year period. From 1951 onwards we saw the upsurge of speculation in land development, and subdivision of land, with estates being cut up for use by speculators and land development companies. A different type of land development took place after 1951. Instead of land being purely and simply cut into allotments, and sold at auction, all this land was subdivided and local authorities insisted that certain improvements should be undertaken by the subdivider. This happened in many cases in country districts. Water channelling, and sometimes sewerage and bitumen roads, had to be supplied by the subdivider, and then he had to recoup himself for this expenditure. In other words, the land was no longer sold as unimproved land, but as improved land. Many of the people who purchased that land paid for the improvements demanded by the local authority, and also for the construction of public works and services by the Government. The cost of these services was included in the price of the land. Having paid for these improvements they were then assessed by the local authority, for rating purposes, on the price they paid for the land. That price became the criterion by which the Valuer-General assessed any neighbouring lands. The people who were paying for the land paid for the improvements, for the public works and services created by the local authority and the Government, but they were paying double. Not only were they paying for the improvements carried out by the land subdivider, but through the rating charges on the high valuation of the land, they were paying twice for the improvements on the land. A complete change in the system of land sales took place between 1951 and the present time. There was a sudden upsurge of investment by the large finance companies and large retail organisations. In many cases the people were paying a high price for the land because they wanted it for a specific purpose. But that, in turn, had an effect on the price of land.

Mr. Muller: That applies to everybody, even in the country.

Mr. LLOYD: Yes, but more so with the process of speculation that took place. Between 1950 and 1960 we had this sudden upsurge of purchasing by large companies. In many cases the finance companies were also purchasing grazing properties at high prices for that gave them some outlet for taxation purposes.

Mr. Muller: They have to pay the market rate, or go without.

Mr. LLOYD: Yes, that is correct. That should not be a fair valuation of what it would bring on the market as unimproved land. We cannot take into consideration the inflation that occurs every four or five years. In Miami, in America, there have been periods when there has been a sudden inflation of land values. On three different occasions in the last 30 or 40 years there has been a sudden inflation of land values, as there has been on the South Coast, and then there has been a levelling off for a period, and then, in four or five years, there may be another sudden upsurge bringing prices to a further inflated level. In recent months we have seen the fluctuating market from land speculation. We have been given an indication of that because of the Federal Government's Credit squeeze. Land at Everton Park in the Alfred Grant Estate that previously had been selling for £1,000 for a small allotment became available at £300 to £400 less as a result of the credit squeeze. It fell to a reasonable level. In many cases land values in Brisbane were inflated by speculation. It was considered by the Valuer-General, on the basis of our legislation, that the prevailing prices were a fair market value.

The point I wish to make most definitely is that this general upsurge of land speculation and land development since 1950 has brought to light many anomalies in the Valuation of Land Act. Last year I pointed out in the Chamber that there had been an altered basis of valuation of land used for commercial purposes. The basis of land valuation under the conditions that have obtained over the past 10 years has been

completely anomalous. It had the effect on the South Coast of forcing people out of their homes and out of business enterprises and it will have a similar effect in Brisbane unless definite action is taken. What have the Government done about it? They have been in office since 1957, when land speculation and a sudden upsurge in valuation began. They have completely ignored the root of the problem, that is, the question whether the legislation is right or wrong. The very conduct of the matter by the Government indicates that there is something wrong with the legislation.

What was the first thing that happened? Because of public resentment on the South Coast the Treasurer introduced a complicated and panicky formula covering the valuation of land for land tax purposes. He did nothing to tackle the problem at its base. He did nothing to rectify whatever anomalies were created by the very process of land speculation and land development.

Then we found public resentment in Brisbane at the proclamation of the valuation of land in three separate parishes in the city. The Minister accused me of queer thinking about the matter. Subsequently he must have felt that something was wrong because he said there would be no further announcement about the valuation of the balance of the city lands. What happened with the valuation of the three parishes that had already been valued? He said those valuations will stay. We have this Bill introduced—something temporary as he called it, something panicky as I call it—instead of their tackling the problem correctly by introducing a completely new basis for valuation.

I intend to repeat the details of some instances that occurred on the last valuation. Last time I was accused of stating matters that were covered by our own legislation and I was told that the Valuer-General was purely and simply operating under legislation that we had introduced. The last amendment we made to the legislation was in 1953 when we realised the effect of allowing the Valuer-General to value land used for residential purposes inside an industrial zone on its industrial potential. People who suffered hardship through living in a home in an industrial area received relief from the amending Bill we introduced. Their land was not valued on its industrial potential but purely on its unimproved value. That was a good amendment and it was the only one introduced, in 1953, prior to the present Government's coming into office.

I now wish to give the Committee some figures to indicate that the Minister should have taken more definite steps in the matter and introduced, in conjunction with the local authorities, a completely new and uniform formula for revaluing land in the State. As against the argument that it was our responsibility, there has been a completely altered basis of valuation of land for commercial purposes in the suburbs of Brisbane from 1956 to 1961. The instances I shall cite will indicate irrefutably that I am right.

In 1956 a shop owned by a Mr. Olsen in Blackwood Street, Mitchelton, was valued at £295. In 1961 the valuation was increased to £3,950. Next door to the shop was a residence owned by a Mr. Lever. The valuation of that land in 1956 was £240, compared with Olsen's valuation of £295. In 1961 the Valuer-General assessed the new valuation at £760, an increase of a little over 200 per cent. In Olsen's case, in 1956 the shop was about 10 years old. The valuation was then £295, and in 1961 it was increased to £3,950.

Mr. Houghton: Did he appeal against that?

Mr. LLOYD: Naturally he has appealed against it. Surely the hon. member does not think he would "cop" that. In the case of Mr. Dittman, whose property is on a corner in Blackwood Road, the valuation in 1956 was £495. Mr. Dittman was using the property as two or three shops, and in 1961 the valuation increased to £5,345. There are many other instances that I could give, but I shall not waste the time of the Committee now because they are already contained in "Hansard".

There we have a definite indication that in 1956 no industrial potential was included in the valuation by the Valuer-General. But in 1961 some potential, whether industrial or business potential, has been included in the valuation. These people, who are not wealthy people, who are running small local businesses in what is not a very busy shopping area and whose income from the businesses is not great, will be asked to pay land tax on £5,345 and the Brisbane City Council rating on that same figure.

I was not quite clear on this point before, but valuations in the three parishes that have been proclaimed already by the Government are to be assessed for rating purposes in the 1962-1963 year at only half the increase in valuation. The Dittman case and the Olsen case still indicate a very sharp increase in the rates that will be paid, and this will impose a very severe hardship upon these people. The difference in the valuation on the Dittman block is £4,800, which means that the rating will be on a valuation of £2,895, whereas previously it was on £495.

Mr. Houghton: That would not alter until the whole of Brisbane has been revalued.

Mr. LLOYD: That was information that I could not get from the Minister. He has made a real mess of this. Instead of withdrawing all the valuations that have been announced in 1961 and handing the problem to the committee of experts that he has set up to find a basis for a new system of valuation, the Minister said that the valuations already announced for the three parishes will stand and the remainder will be withheld.

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

Mr. LLOYD: The Minister said that in a Press statement not long ago.

Mr. Richter: They will all issue in the ordinary way.

Mr. LLOYD: The valuations for three parishes were announced in about November last year, and it looked as though the remainder of the parishes would be announced in a very short time.

Mr. Richter: They will be.

Mr. LLOYD: Then the Minister decided to withhold the announcement.

Mr. Richter: Of what?

Mr. LLOYD: The Minister announced in the newspapers that the valuations on the remaining parishes would be withheld.

Mr. Richter: I did not say that.

Mr. LLOYD: The newspapers must have been wrong.

Mr. Richter: They were merely to be delayed.

Mr. LLOYD: When will they be proclaimed?

Mr. Richter: They will be proclaimed in June, 1962.

Mr. LLOYD: What about the three parishes that have been proclaimed?

Mr. Richter: It is the one proclamation for the 20 divisions. The whole of Brisbane is proclaimed as at June, 1962.

Mr. LLOYD: They have been more or less withdrawn.

Mr. Richter: No. They will all come into the same category.

Mr. LLOYD: The Minister withheld the valuations for the other parishes.

Mr. Houghton: There is an election coming on next year.

Mr. Richter: They will all be proclaimed in June, 1962.

Mr. LLOYD: It does not alter the fact that the whole system of the valuation of land in Queensland has been thrown out of gear, more or less into chaos, by——

Mr. Muller: Just why has it been thrown out of gear?

Mr. LLOYD: By the very fact that there has been an upsurge of land speculation in the last five or six years. It started with the finance companies commencing to speculate in land. Land speculators followed the finance companies without any definite intention of holding onto the land permanently. Individuals and companies bought land for the sole purpose of reselling it. Local authorities imposed certain improvement conditions upon land subdividers—and rightly so—which in itself has had a very big effect on land values assessed by the Valuer-General.

I have already made my other point in part. From 1956 to 1961 there has been an alteration in the basis of valuing land utilised for commercial purposes in Brisbane. The figures I gave the Committee indicate that that is correct. Why was land with a shop on it, valued at £295 in 1956, valued at £3,950 in 1961? Why was land utilised for the same purpose in 1956, valued at £495, valued in 1961 at £5,345? It is all because of the wild surge created by the Government in their chasing of revenue, regardless of whom they taxed. That has been evident in the Government's history in the last four or five years. We have seen panicky temporary measures included in their legislation. It is indicated by the very fact that they are halving the increase under the Valuation of Land Act for land tax purposes and rating purposes. The whole thing should be thrown into the melting pot. As far as I can see there is nothing wrong with withholding all the announcements or the proclamations of the valuation of land until the matter is settled. Why should we impose upon the local authority a complicated formula for the valuation of land for rating purposes? The local authority is quite happy to continue as it has done since 1956. The people of Brisbane would be very much happier were they to know that the Government intended to review completely the basis upon which land will be valued, when they would introduce some further amendment to the Valuation of Land Act, instead of this piecemeal sort of legislation.

No doubt to a great extent the purpose of the Bill is to overcome some of the political pressure that has been applied to the Government, regardless of whom it is going to benefit and whom it will hurt. What I have to say is important to any hon. member representing a local authority area in Queensland, particularly in Brisbane, on the South Coast and nearby local authority areas that have been revalued since 1960. Can there be any alteration to the rating in the £1 on the basis of this legislation? When introducing the Bill the Minister stated that for rating purposes the increase in value between 1956 an 1961 will be halved, and that that must be taken by the local authority for rating purposes. He is going to expect every local authority to accept some mysterious basis upon which they can adjust their own rating. It does not matter to people at what figure their land is valued so long as they do not have to pay more in rates.

Mr. Hughes: That is up to the local authority.

Mr. LLOYD: The only worry people have is whether it will cost them more money. That is the basis on which this problem must be tackled. The Minister has drawn up some complicated formula taken from the Land Tax Adjustment Act, that provides

that one-half of the increase in valuation can be used by the local authorities for rating purposes. The local authority must adjust its rate in the light of the increased valuation or it will cause hardship to everybody.

Much of the land in Brisbane might be increased in value by 200 per cent. That increase will be halved and the local authority will fix the rate on such increased valuation necessary for its budgetary purposes, but what relief will be given to people whose increased valuation exceeds 200 per cent.?

Thousands of people all over Brisbane whose valuations have been increased not 200 per cent. but up to 1,000 per cent. will be affected. The parish of Enoggera is not the only parish that will be affected in this way. Every parish in Brisbane will be affected and virtually every suburban storekeeper will suffer not a 200 per cent. increase in valuation but 1,000 per cent. increase. All he will receive by way of abatement is half the increase. If the increase is £4,000 the valuation for rating purposes will be increased by £2,000.

Mr. Richter: He will have the right of objection and appeal.

Mr. LLOYD: How are all the appeals going to be handled? How long will it take to handle all the appeals that have been lodged already in only three of the twenty parishes in Brisbane? It will take years to handle appeals lodged as a result of this altered basis of valuation.

Mr. Richter: There have not been any appeals yet.

An Opposition Member: There have been plenty of objections.

Mr. LLOYD: The point is, is the legislation right or wrong? It does not matter by whom it is introduced, if it is wrong then let us do something about it.

(Time expired.)

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (12.33 p.m.): I desire to make a few observations on this very important Bill. To my mind, when one poses the question as to whether the legislation is right or wrong, so far as sound principles of government are concerned, it is definitely wrong. It is really something in the nature of a humbug Bill designed for political purposes only and to meet certain criticism. I think the Government should face up——

Mr. Richter: It is similar to the 1953 Bill that you introduced.

Mr. HILTON: I will accept that interjection and be happy to do so. That Bill was introduced because the President of the Land Court delivered a very far-reaching pronouncement in regard to valuations in Brisbane, and the Government of the day immediately appointed, by statute, a Board of Review to examine in every detail all the complications that arose because of that decision, and to examine also all the protests that had been put forward. There was nothing underhand about that. It was sound procedure and we did not hesitate to put into operation the recommendations made by that expert Board of Review.

This legislation has not been preceded by any board of review other than the Liberal Party, who are apprehensive as to what fate is awaiting them at the next State elections in approximately 12 months time.

I do not mind a Government's running for cover so long as they do not, as it were, destroy sound principles. If they can skilfully get out of a position without destroying sound principles, good luck to them, but they are destroying sound principles with this Bill. It is a special measure. It does not set out specifically to amend the Local Authorities Acts or to amend the Valuation of Land Acts. It is a special measure introduced by the Government on the ground of expediency to meet the position that confronts them. If the Valuation of Land Act is a good Act, and I believe it is, if valuations are arrived at on a sound basis, if all the persons involved have the right of objection and appeal, and if all anomalies that may arise in valuations can be satisfactorily ironed out, I submit it is wrong in principle to introduce legislation that will destroy the effective and sound working of the Act. I think every hon. member will agree with that argument. We listened recently to a convert in the person of the hon. member for Roma to the principle of valuations by the Valuer-General. He argued very strongly in favour of it. If the Act is a good Act and is administered as it should be, and I believe it is, why introduce legislation calculated to destroy it? The Act is functioning to bring about equity between land holders, local authorities and the Government. If it is not to be scrapped immediately, no action should be taken to impair its proper function.

I do not raise any objection to the permanent measures referred to by the Minister. I realise that local authorities can be placed in a difficult position if they fix their rates on a certain valuation plane at the commencement of the financial year, only to find later that the valuations have been upset greatly, after objection and appeal. Budgets are thrown out of gear. There would be a logical reason behind a request by them that, say, 12 months or thereabouts should elapse before they have to take cognisance for rating purposes of new valuations. I do not quibble with that aspect of the Bill, but we find that the temporary provisions are not in the same category. They certainly will suit landholders in the city of Brisbane who are clamouring against increased rating and increased valuations, but in other municipalities and shires we find the ridiculous

position that for two years increased valuations proclaimed as at 30 June, 1960, and 30 June, 1961, have applied. Local authorities have levied rates according to those valuations, but for the financial year 1962-1963 they will not be able to levy on the valuations determined by the Valuer-General. If that is a sound principle of government, I do not understand what is meant by a sound principle. I think the Government have adopted a foolish attitude. If they are going to cater for the people of Brisbane by saying that for 12 months the increased valuations will not affect their rates, they should be consistent and say to the local authorities, "Refund the money collected from people over those two years, because in the year 1962-1963 we are not going to allow you to take the valuations on which you have been working," valuations which have been the subject of appeal and objection to the Valuer-General, valuations which have been proved to be sound. Those local authorities are not to be allowed to take those valuations into consideration for the financial year 1962-1963. Why are they not being allowed to do so? They are not, solely because the Government, in order to meet pressure in the city of Brisbane, could not in conscience allow the city of Brisbane to be so favourably treated for the financial year 1962-1963 and not give the same treatment to other centres outside the metropolitan area. I ask the Minister to admit that that is true. He will agree that that is the basis behind the temporary measures to which he has referred.

Mr. Richter: I will agree that you must be fair to all.

Mr. HILTON: If the Minister is sincere in saying that he wants the measure to be fair to all, he should make the temporary provision apply as far back at least as the current valuations. It will apply to valuations for the city of Brisbane, valuations that will be proclaimed at the end of June, 1962, but it will not apply to valuations that were proclaimed in the middle of 1960 and 1961 in country areas. The Government are not being fair to all with current valuations. They are bringing in a false principle to upset the local authorities in the next financial year merely to cater for the desires of the people of Brisbane because a State election is looming next year. It is entirely unsound and wrong in principle to bring down legislation that is calculated to achieve such ends.

Mr. Ewan: Would you not agree that Brisbane and the Gold Coast were subjected to more speculation and increased value by speculation, whether wise or unwise, than any other centre or area in Queensland?

Mr. HILTON: That question poses the whole subject of valuation. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to it. We could argue the question of valuation at length. We know the basis of the considered opinion of the highest legal authorities and valuers throughout Australia in arriving at land valuations.

Mr. Ewan: The basis is laid down.

Mr. HILTON: I do not know what other basis could be applied. If we have another basis it is merely an arbitrary valuation and it opens the way to corruption in local authority valuation. I recall the position in the olden days when they kept the valuations at a very low level in certain shires controlled by some landed men. I go so far as to say that because of the valuations in some local authority areas corrupt practices were followed in those areas. It was Rafferty rules in many cases. I do not say that all local authrorities did not have a sense of responsibility, but when certain local authorities, or portions of them, were amalgamated, we found there were glaring inconsistencies and anomalies in valuations and the Act was designed to abolish those practices. If an amendment can be brought down to strengthen the Act and make it more effective I will be all for it. I cannot see that there has been any departure from the basis of sound valuing. I appreciate that in a city that is growing rapidly a site that may have little commercial or industrial value at one period, five or 10 years later may be worth 10 or 12 times as much. That is due to the particular circumstances concerning the development of the city. We all know that the Gold Coast was advertised all over Australia, and abroad, as the Mecca for all. The publicity was without parallel in Australia.

Mr. Ewan: You would agree that although that existed 12 to 18 months ago, it does not exist today.

Mr. HILTON: I recently read of an extraordinary land sale down there. Admittedly, when the credit squeeze is on, there may not be so much activity, but I have yet to learn of any parcel of land on the Gold Coast that was bought at a certain figure in the last 10 years being sold at a figure much less than the last purchaser paid for it. There may be some cases, but I have not heard of them. By and large, these values have been created, and have been sustained, although there may not be a great deal of activity while the credit squeeze, and other factors are in operation. As has been pointed out it is inevitable that the value of land will increase when there is a demand for land in certain places. The law of supply and demand will operate even if there are land sales controls and restrictions. It will be found, as we found prior to 1950, that when the law of supply and demand operates people will find a way to get round it. We had the spectacle in Queensland of people from the South coming up here and looking at our cheap land in wonderment and buying it up. They offered increased prices to get it and ways were found for making the extra money available for the sales. The Victorians and New South Welshmen played a big part in forcing up

land values for primary industry and also on the Gold Coast, in the City of Brisbane and other parts of Queensland.

Mr. Ewan: We had never been subjected to such a boom in speculation in previous years.

Mr. HILTON: There has been speculation in many other phases of the economy. The whole enonomic level has risen year after year, particularly since 1949. There is no end in sight yet of the inflation that has been going apace. Some call it speculation. Some call it creeping inflation. The whole cost of living has gone up. The level of the economic structure has risen each year and obviously land values must rise accordingly.

The whole trouble in this matter has been brought about by the attitude this Government adopted when they were in Opposition by decrying the Valuation of Land Act and by indulging in a lot of politically dishonest propaganda. Their chickens have come home to roost. In 1959, when the Act was amended to permit of appeals to the Land Court and the Land Appeal Court, the then Minister, the Hon. J. A. Heading, said quite definitely that great pressure had been put on the Government to appoint a royal commission to inquire into the valuation of lands but because the Government had found that there was no warrant for appointing such a commission they refused to appoint one. Despite the fact that they arrived at that decision a few short years ago, and despite the fact that in order to try to appease the landholders in the Lockyer district and elsewhere they made the Land Court the venue of appeal, the propaganda the members of this Government whipped up in years gone by is still coming at them hell, west and crooked, and they cannot appease the wrath of those people whom they set out to inspire against the Government of the day some years ago. Now we have these very unsound principles being introduced in an attempt to meet the position. If the Government want to be consistent they could introduce a measure amending the Local Government Act to limit the amount of rating of a local authority more than at present. Let a local authority be told, "You can raise only so much in your shire this year." At least that will be consistent.

Mr. Coburn: The rates are the crux of the whole matter.

Mr. HILTON: Of course, and the local authorities have to find sufficient revenue for their purposes. We hear demands for increased amenities in local authority areas. Obviously with increasing costs local authorities need more money. Whether some of them can wisely and prudently handle their money is another matter. But on the broad principle of local Government finance we find that local authorities are in a more difficult position now than ever before on account of the greatly decreased subsidies being paid compared with those paid a few years ago. That has been a big consideration for local authorities. These days there is a clamour for all sorts of amenities from local government and with increasing costs how can a local authority charge overall the same rate as it charged four or five years ago to bring in a certain amount of revenue and meet present-day costs? It simply cannot do it. The Government cannot do it. So why have this camouflage of telling the people of Brisbane, "For the next 12 months we will not allow the local authority to levy the rates that normally it would levy on you"? But elections will be over by that time.

This talk of an expert committee operating to try to effect amendments to the Valuation of Land Act is all eye-wash.

Mr. Aikens: Aren't you missing the point? Irrespective of the valuation, the local authority will still take the same amount of money out of the pockets of the ratepayers.

Mr. HILTON: I have made that point very clearly. I said that, in order to carry on, the local authority must still have a certain amount of revenue. This proposal is eye-wash because, although it tells local authorities that they will be able to take only half the increased valuation into consideration, it will not prevent them from increasing the general rate by the requisite amount. In the past certain local authorities have tried to put the blame on former Governments for the unsatisfactory way in which the valuation of lands has operated and local authorities have tried to shelter behind the Valuer-General's Department. Perhaps this is a studied effort on the part of the Government to try to throw the blame back on the shoulders of the local authorities.

Mr. Hanlon: Of course it is. It is a "get out from under".

Mr. HILTON: It is a "get out from under". It is humbug.

Mr. Aikens: 1957 was when you got out from under.

Mr. HILTON: I never got out from under. If one has to grasp a nettle, it will not sting if one grasps it firmly. I venture to say that when the full implications of this legislation are realised by the ratepayers of Brisbane and the ratepayers throughout Queensland and when the local authorities realise that it is a lot of humbug, the overall political repercussions against the Government will be greater than they would have been had the Government allowed all the legislation wrapped up in the Valuation of Land Act and the Local Government Act to function in its normal constitutional way. That would have been the wisest course for the Government to pursue. I know that, because of the propaganda that has been whipped up, there will be some delay in dealing with all the

objections and appeals. I sympathise with the Valuer-General and his officers, because many of the objections that have been received and many of the appeals that will eventually be heard would not have seen the light of day if there had been honest, candid talking by the Government over the last few years instead of the humbug and hypocrisy that they have indulged in.

Because of the whole background of this legislation, although there are certain permanent principles with which I agree, I believe all the other temporary principles are unsound. It is all eyewash to say that an expert committee will iron out this question in a few years to the satisfaction of everybody. At this stage, although I have not read the Bill, I must oppose it with all the vigour at my command. I do so accordingly.

Mr. COBURN (Burdekin) (12.53 p.m.): Since the discussion of valuations and ratings was introduced, I have thought that there has been a good deal of confused thinking. To me, the valuation that is set on a property, provided it is a real and equitable valuation, cannot act unfairly against a landholder. If the Valuer-General's Department is not competent to establish a fair and reasonable value for every property, then it should be abolished. Its officers have to be competent to give the landholders of Queensland a fair deal, and nobody who has taken part in the discussions has come forward yet and said that the officers of the Valuer-General's office who are making the valuations are incompetent men. Therefore we must accept that if we want comparable values throughout the State we must have a department making the valuations throughout the State. If the formula on which those valuations are being made is wrong, it should be altered.

Take my own case. The Ayr Shire has just been valued. Prior to the valuation, the piece of land on which my home stands was valued at £180. Under the new valuation it was increased to £540.

Mr. Aikens: And would you sell it for that amount?

Mr. COBURN: I would not. Under the scheme proposed in this legislation, I would be asked to pay rating on £360. It does not matter whether my property is valued at £180, £540 or £360 as long as the Ayr Shire Council requires only the same amount of money to carry on its services that it required previously, based on a rate of 2s. 2d. in the £1.

Mr. Bennett: From you.

Mr. COBURN: Whatever applies to me applies to every other person in the community.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. COBURN: If the value of my land has increased at a greater rate than the other fellow's I should in all fairness pay a greater amount than he is paying. That is something over which I have no control. If my land has become more valuable because roads have been put down, drainage systems have been put in and amenities have been provided, which have improved my land without any additional expense to me, it is only fair and reasonable that if the value of my land has increased by a greater percentage than the other fellow's, I should pay that extra percentage in rates over him. Under the old scheme my rate was 2s. 2d. in the £1, which meant that I paid £19 10s. a year in rates. If the £540 valuation applied and the Ayr Shire Council did not require any more money than it required before, the rate should be reduced to 8¾d., when I would still pay £19 10s. a year. Under the Government's present scheme on a figure of £360 a rating of 1s. 1d. in the £1 will make me pay £19 10s. a year. Although the valuations differ the amount I pay will be exactly the same in every case as long as the rate applied by the Ayr Shire Council is a fair and reasonable rate and the Council does not dishonestly want to use the Valuer-General's valuation to rake more money into its coffers and blame the Valuer-General's valuation for it. All the Valuer-General does is to place a value on a person's land. If the valuing is done by competent men and reasonable and fair valuations are made, nobody can have any argument against that department. The Department then steps out of the picture. If nothing else happened subsequent to that nobody would have been hurt at all. There would have been no need to complain. Therefore it must be conceded that the Valuer-General's Department is not in any way responsible for greater land tax and rates being paid by the people of the community.

Mr. Hanlon: If it makes an unfair valuation, one against the other, it is.

Mr. COBURN: I said that. The only argument can be against the incompetence, dishonesty or unfairness of the Valuer-General's Department. If that is so the Valuer-General's Department should cease to exist. If it is not able and competent to make fair and comparable valuations throughout the State it is not fit to be a department of the State. But I have never heard anyone say that the department is incompetent or that its valuations are wrong comparably. Therefore, if people are going to suffer because of the imposition of higher land tax or higher rates, the fault does not lie with the Valuer-General but with the other authority that imposes rates beyond what are reasonable and fair. If the Ayr Shire Council wants more than £19 10s. a year from me to carry out all the services required, it will take it in any case whether the valuation is £180, £540 or £360. It decides first what amount of money in the aggregate it requires to carry on the work it has to do. It strikes a rate in the £1 that will give it the required amount of money. Accordingly, it does not matter to anybody whether the rating is on a higher

valuation or lower valuation. It was said this morning that one of the main reasons for setting up a Valuer-General's Department was to obtain uniformity in valuations throughout the State, but this proposed scheme is destroying the very reason for which the Valuer-General's Department was created.

Let me again refer to the valuations in my own area. I take three persons, A, whose previous valuation was £100, which was increased by the Valuer-General's Department to £500; B, whose valuation was £180, increased to £500; and C, whose valuation was £400, increased to £500.

The rate of 2s. 2d. in the £1 would have produced revenue in that area of £150 10s., but under this proposed legislation, A, instead of being rated at £500, will be rated at £300; B, instead of being rated at £500, will be rated at £340; and C, instead of being rated at £500, will be rated at £450. The result is that A will pay £41 15s. 10d., B will pay £46 15s. 10d., and C will pay £61 18s. 4d., a difference between the lowest of those ratepayers and the highest, of £20. That is done in relation to what the Valuer-General believes to be three pieces of land of the same value. There is no equity there. Because we have tampered with the relative values imposed by the Valuer-General we have brought about this injustice to some of the ratepayers in various areas.

We have to admit that the officers of the Valuer-General's Department are quite competent to establish values that are correct and, if we admit that, we must accept those values. I cannot see where anybody can benefit to any great extent under this legislation except those who had big increases in valuation, and they are only benefiting at the expense of others who are being asked to pay more than they should pay according to the Valuer-General's valuations.

Because of that and the other matters mentioned by me I think the Bill is not a wise one. It is not going to benefit anybody except at the expense of somebody else and will interfere with the relative values placed on the land in this State by the Valuer-General's Department.

Mr. HANLON (Baroona) (2.19 p.m.): From the brief and rather confusing explanation that the Minister gave when introducing the Bill one point stands out very clearly, that the Government are interested in one thing only, in endeavouring to extricate themselves from the political results of re-valuations made under the Valuation of Land Act. They are not interested in any logic that might be put forward or in the consequences of some parts of the Bill. They are not likely to be influenced by the examples of inconsistency given by the hon. member for Burdekin and other speakers. They are purely and simply concerned with trying to secure a means of escape from the political reaction to the re-valuations carried out recently and in the process of being carried out under the Valuation of Land Act.

Mr. Coburn: If those valuations had been left alone, they would have hurt nobody.

Mr. HANLON: I do not say that, but it must be remembered that whenever there is a revaluation, whether it is well done by the Valuer-General according to some people or not well done according to other people, there is tremendous political reaction among those whose properties are given a valuation substantially higher than the previous one, mainly because they face the possibility of a substantial increase in rate assessment over the average.

While it is true to say that the amount of rates paid by a person is largely determined by the rate in the pound struck by the local authority, it is not possible for the Council or local authority to differentiate in the rate between householders. Local authorities are bound by the valuations placed on respective properties and, as the hon. member for Burdekin pointed out, if a householder thinks his land has been unfairly valued or that he is paying an unfair amount of rates because of the fact that he is paying the same rate in the pound as his neighbour whose land in his opinion has been undervalued, or that his own land has been overvalued in comparison with his neighbour's, he has certain legal rights, but inevitably there is a good deal of political odium and there has always been some measure of buck-passing between local authorities and the Government on responsibility for valuations. The Government of the day would say, as this Government have said, that valuations are fixed by the Valuer-General and accordingly it is up to the local authority to fix a rate in the pound in order to get its revenue, but they know that the local authority in turn will say to a person who feels he has been treated unfairly, "We cannot do anything about it. The Valuer-General has put a valuation of £1,000 on your allotment and we are obliged to impose a rate according to that valuation. If you have any complaints, you have your processes of appeal to the Valuer-General's Department under the Act, but as a local authority we have nothing to do with it." In that way the local authority passes the buck to the Government.

The Government in this instance are endeavouring to get out of the position virtually by putting over a confidence trick on the people of the State, by bringing in legislation that shows a great deal of inconsistency as between the city of Brisbane on the one hand and country areas on the other that were valued some little time ago. If anyone complains about rates or anything else in the period after the Bill is passed, the Minister for Local Government and the Government will say, "Do not blame us. We introduced legislation to reduce your valuation." Take the case of a person whose property was valued at £400 and was revalued at £1,200.

If he complained about an increase in his rates, the Minister would be able to say to him, "Do not blame me. I introduced legislation which reduced your valuation to half of the difference between £400 and £1,200, so that your valuation now is £800. I took steps to reduce your valuation for rating purposes from £1,200 to £800." If he wants to have a political dig at some local authority, he will be able to say, "Your local authority did not decrease your rates by one-third. I, the Minister for Local Government, reduced your valuation by one-third, but your local authority did not give you the same reduction in rates. They have asked you to pay the same rate or they have increased your rates." In that way, of course, the Minister hopes to escape any political consequences among people who feel aggrieved over the valuations brought in by his own Government.

Mr. Duggan: All he has done is to run away from the problem.

Mr. HANLON: That is true. He has run away from the problem. The Government's action is typical of them. They do not care about some sections of country people who will be adversely affected by reason of the fact that their valuations were made some time ago. He does not care whether there is discrimination between the city and the country. He does not care whether he is hoodwinking people in the Brisbane area about the benefit of this legislation so long as he can escape any odium that may flow from the actions of his department before the elections next year. He said the first amendment was fairly straight forward and that it had been requested by the Local Authorities Association. That amendment referred to the local authorities not being obliged to bring in the new valuations for rating purposes until 12 months after receipt of the valuations roll. I suppose there is a very strong argument for that if it has been put forward by the local authorities. At the same time, it has been very convenient for the Government not to have them come into effect at this stage when the State elections are coming on in 12 to 15 months' time.

Mr. Coburn: It was a good thing, in any case.

Mr. HANLON: That may be so. That would be something the local authorities requested. If they requested it I cannot see any objection to it. However, it is very convenient for the Government, and if it had not been convenient they would not have agreed to it. Because it happens to suit their convenience, they decided to throw that in at the same time.

In my opinion, as this Bill deals with the rateable value of certain lands and the levying of rates thereon by local authorities, instead of bringing down measures of this nature that are misleading and discriminatory in many aspects, the Government should be making some conscious effort to support the local authorities by joining the local authorities in a conference calling on the Commonwealth Government to get more revenue for the local authorities to carry out their function without adding to the burden on the ratepayers whether in Brisbane or in any other part of the State. We have had the local authorities complaining continually and bitterly against this State Government—as over the years, this State Government have complained about the Commonwealth Government—that the State Government do not care about the local authorities and do not give them a fair allocation of revenue to carry out their functions. It is all very well for the Minister and the Government to complain about not getting enough money from the Commonwealth Government. That has changed only recently thanks to the electors of Queensland. The Government have complained bitterly about the treatment from Canberra. Surely they must agree that the local authorities get a very poor deal from Canberra and even the State Government themselves. Just recently this Government severely reduced subsidies to local authorities.

Mr. Houghton: They cannot give it away if they have not got it.

Mr. HANLON: No, I agree. But they could take action to try to get more for local authorities. The Government have deliberately avoided taking any measures to join with the other States to get additional revenue for the local authorities because they are frightened that the Commonwealth Government may take away some of the State revenue and give it to the local authorities. I might have some sympathy for them in that way, but I do not think that justifies their evading their responsibility. Only last week in the Federal Parliament—last Thursday I think it was—the Prime Minister was asked whether the Commonwealth Government would agree to convene a conference of local authorities, and the State Governments, to meet the Commonwealth to study the position of local authorities to see if some arrangement could be made, by way of distribution of revenue, to give local authorities more revenue to carry out their functions adequately, without putting any greater burden on the ratepayers. It is very obvious that the ratepayer has reached the limit of his capacity to contribute any further revenue by way of rates to most local authorities. The only way that anything may be done is by some rearrangement of revenue disbursement to take place between the respective spheres of Government to give recognition to local authorities for the tasks they are called upon to undertake. The Prime Minister pointed out that he had received this request from Mr. Heffron, the Premier of New South Wales, as far back as May, 1961. He had also received a request from the Australian Council of Local Government Associations; but he said the Commonwealth believed that, as local authorities work under State legislation, any action in this regard should originate from the State. I suggest that this Government would do better if they endeavoured to

get concerted action by the various States to bring pressure to bear on the Commonwealth Government. I do not necessarily suggest that the money be taken from the State but such a conference should seek the granting of additional revenues to local authorities from the Commonwealth Government.

During the debate on the Financial Statement I pointed out that today it is almost impossible for the average worker to pay more rates. In Brisbane, where the rates are higher than in some country areas, a man earning £800 a year, with a wife and two children and with normal deductions amounting to £200 over the statutory deductions for his wife and children, pays about £7 18s. 4d. in income tax. He is regarded as having the capacity to pay no more than that but he receives a rate assessment requiring him to pay perhaps £30 or up to £50 a year. At that his allotment would not be a very highly priced one for the ordinary worker in Brisbane. It is obvious that much more will be required than this Government propose to do. The people of Brisbane will not be hoodwinked by the Minister into thinking that he is doing something for them. Naturally country people will complain that he is doing more for the people of Brisbane than he is doing for them.

Mr. Richter: You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. HANLON: The Minister cannot expect to have it both ways either. Does he suggest the Bill will be of real benefit to the people of Brisbane? I say it will not unless he can arrange to get additional revenues for the Brisbane City Council so that it will not be called upon to seek more in rates from the people. If he claims it will be of great benefit to them he must concede the argument that has been put up by some speakers already and that probably will be elaborated by others who are interested in the plight of people in some country shires that have already been valued and have had rates levied on those valuations. If it is going to be of value to Brisbane—and he insists that it is—he must acknowledge that he is being unfair to those who are not being given the same benefits under the legislation, those people in other shires who have been going on in the last year or so under the increased valuations and will receive no allowance for the fact that they have had the extra burden for that time.

The Minister says I cannot have it both ways. I throw it back at him and say that is the very point I am making. He cannot have it both ways, either. He must go down on one count. Either this is a lot of political eye-wash in an endeavour to convince the people of Brisbane that this Government are taking measures which should lead to either a reduction in their rates or at least to their not being increased, or, if that is not true, he is denying to some people in country shires something that he is prepared to give to the people of Brisbane. Actually he is not giving very much to the people of Brisbane.

The Bill is based wrongly in principle in that the same principle is being introduced in relation to rates and to rateable values of land as was adopted for land tax. Rates and land tax are two entirely different matters and the Government have been inconsistent in bringing in this supposedly temporary measure to deal with rates, using the same method as they tried, to cushion the effects of the revaluation of land on land tax. Land tax was acknowledged by the Labour Government, and by this Government, to be a tax designed to discourage large aggregations of land. Rates are different altogether. Local authorities do not impose rates to prevent people from getting large aggregations of lands throughout the State. Admittedly, if a person has more land than the average householder, he may be called upon to pay more rates. But, generally speaking, rates are a basic instrument of revenue for local authorities. They cannot be compared with land tax, in my opinion, which is something altogether different. Therefore, I think that the Government are acting on very weak premises in bringing in a measure to deal with the rating problem similar to the measure which they brought in to deal with the land tax problem.

Mr. Armstrong: Are you happy about the present valuations

Mr. HANLON: No, I am not happy about the present valuations, but I say, as the hon. member for Burdekin said, that if the Minister is not happy about them he should have the courage to say so. He should have the courage to say that there is something wrong with his own department, he should have the courage to say that the system is wrong, and he should withhold all the valuations and their effect and give some allowance to the people who have been affected by them already by saying that the Government are going to sit tight until they know where they are going. Of course, the Government do not know where they are going on this matter any more than they know where they are going on many other matters. But this is one political front on which they are running for cover, and the elections next year will prove that certain of the foxholes for which they are diving are worse than the position from which they are trying to extricate themselves.

In April 1958 the Government introduced an amendment to Section 13 of the Act, I think it was, to permit of the extension of the period of valuation from five years to eight years. Under that amendment introduced in 1958 the Government have power to suspend the valuations and their effect for another three years. I know that they will not be able to make up their minds in twelve months, but certainly Mr. Duggan and the incoming Government will be able to get down to this problem quickly next

year and be fair to all sections of the community, both in the country and in the city, and also do a great deal for local authorities.

Apart from big valuations this will be only a very marginal sort of benefit for a certain number of people in Brisbane. As the hon. member for Burdekin said, if a person has been paying, say, £50 under the old valuation and would be called upon to pay £60 under the new valuation, and a neighbour who had been paying £50 would now be called upon to pay only £40, frequently the man who would be paying the £10 more will be adjusted down £2 10s. and the man who would be paying £10 less will be adjusted up £2 10s. This is the proposal that the Government are introducing as some sort of magical formula to make an adjustment between the householders. The Minister is certainly not fooling the Opposition about what he is trying to do, and I do not think he will fool the people of Brisbane, either.

Mr. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) (2.39 p.m.): I wish to voice my disapproval of the introduction of the proposed legislation. I believe that it is a vote of no confidence in the Valuer-General's Department, and I do not subscribe to it or support it in any way. In my opinion, the Valuer-General's Department is being used as a cat's paw in this game of politics. Furthermore, I firmly believe that the Government would be assisting the people of the State if, instead of tampering with the legislation, they did nothing about the valuations. I should say that the dissatisfaction that now exists in regard to the contentious subject of valuations has arisen from interference with the Valuer-General's valuations. I firmly believe that the Valuer-General has done a good job but until such time as there is no political interference with his department he will never be able to operate in the manner for which the department was originally established.

The Bill has been introduced only because of the hue and cry on the South Coast—from the golden sands of Surfers Palestine—and on the North Coast where the hon. member for Cooroora is singing to the Valuer-General, "Stay away from my door." I think it will be agreed that values have increased appreciably everywhere. The part I strongly object to is that the local authorities that were re-valued prior to 1960 are not receiving any compensation for any adjustment that the Government see fit to make in the Bill. If they were sincere in their approach to give relief all local authorities would benefit from it, not just the few selected. The hon. member for Burdekin already has stressed the anomalies. The information he submitted proves conclusively that the areas where valuations have increased greatly are those that will derive the benefit from the formula to be adopted. The Government have not gone back far enough. If the Government believed in the formula they would go back to the last valuation in all local authority areas. There was a re-valuation in the Gatton local authority area where rates have been paid on the Valuer-General's valuation that was thrown out after approximately three years. There has been no readjustment. They now have an opportunity for a re-valuation that should overcome the difficulty there. Until such time as the Valuer-General is allowed to operate in the role for which he was first appointed, there will always be dissension.

The Bill has been introduced specifically because of the election next year. Furthermore, the Brisbane City Council are faced with the dilemma of increasing rates, as are all other local authorities. They have not faced up to the problem this year but they will have to face up to it next year. The Bill is a political move to stymie them in their approach to the problem. Local authorities have used the Valuer-General's valuations in an effort to overcome their misgivings about increasing rates. Local authorities have had insufficient funds to carry out the necessary works that are their responsibility. They have not been getting a fair share of the taxpayers' purse. The Valuer-General's valuations have been used by the local authorities in an endeavour to embarrass the Government who try to hide and cloud the whole issue. It is the responsibility of both the State and Federal Governments to see that local authorities get their fair share of the taxpayers' purse. They have not been prepared to face up to that responsibility. Until such time as there is a ready realisation of the whole situation the problem will always be evident. I am a valuer myself and, in fairness to the Valuer-General, I consider that he has done a good job strictly in accordance with the Act and as he is required to do. His values have been comparable with the sales that have taken place within the local authority areas.

I suggest to the Government that there should not be any further revaluation until the whole of the State is valued and everybody is put on an equal basis of valuation. Admittedly, the period has been increased from five years to eight years if it is so desired, but there should not be any concession to one section. That is where the Government have fallen down. They have endeavoured to select certain people within the State for concessions to which they are no more entitled than is the man in Cape York Peninsula or anywhere else in the State.

Consequently, this legislation will not only crucify this Government but would crucify any Government. The law should apply equally, fairly and justly to everybody, and not sectionally.

The other important factor is the formula that has been adopted in relation to this matter. Hon. members can rest assured that, when this formula has been adopted for rating purposes for local authorities, it will be adopted for land tax purposes as was pointed out by the hon. member for Baroona. Those are the matters that disturb

local authorities in respect of cost of maintenance and the conduct of the Valuer-General's Department. All in all, I think hon. members will agree that they have done a good job. On comparable sales and valuations, I do not think anybody could fault them. Anomalies creep in from time to time. That would be so with any valuer whether it be the local authority valuer or the Valuer-General, but the Valuer-General will heed any anomalies that are brought to his notice. That has been my experience over the last 10 years in my association with them, and as I say, being a valuer, I consider that they have done an excellent job. As I said before the fault does not lie with them but with the local authorities who use the Valuer-General's valuation to escape from their responsibilities in the matter, and with the State Government who condone the situation that confronts them simply because it is political so to do.

One gets one set of valuers for probate and succession duty purposes, a different set for Department of Public Lands purposes, a different set again for Taxation Department purposes, and so on and, until such time as the Valuer-General's Department is the sole body for determining land valuations for the whole of the State, without any interference from any Government, these anomalies will arise, and he will not be able to operate successfully for the benefit of all.

The hon. member for Burdekin has instanced the sort of anomaly that can arise through interference by the Government in not allowing the Valuer-General's Department to function for the purpose for which it was created. I object to any interference in that direction and I oppose the Bill.

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (2.49 p.m.): I have studied this measure with mixed feelings because, to some extent, I believe that it, as the Minister has said, affords temporary relief.

Mr. Newton: To whom does it give relief?

Mr. HUGHES: Because certain anomalies exist, as hon. members surely know, there will be a levelling-up process by the lopping of the top valuations whilst at the same time those on the lower valuations will certainly not be hit as hard as they would be if the present valuations were to apply in toto for rating purposes by local authorities.

The Minister has said that the Government are earnestly seeking a solution to the problem. I was particularly happy to hear that observation. On that basis I am prepared to support the Bill. The problem is a very vexed one and the Bill is purely a temporary palliative. I support it because I think it will do some good. If hon. members opposite were as sincere as I am in their desire to give ratepayers some temporary relief, I think they too would support it. The Minister did not suggest that the Bill was the final solution of the problem. Although I have some misgivings about it, I support it on the basis that it is a temporary measure of relief.

Mr. Aikens: You ought to know better than to try to defend the indefensible.

Mr. HUGHES: I have some misgivings about it because it does not solve the problem. It does not put the onus where it rightly belongs, the point so ably made by the hon. member for Burdekin. The onus should be put fairly and squarely on the local authority. The ratepayers of the city of Brisbane, and to a lesser degree, ratepayers throughout Queensland are subjected each and every five years to a propaganda campaign about the bogy of the Valuer-General in order to justify the taking by local authorities of greater amounts of revenue from already over-burdened ratepayers. The onus for increased rates should be placed fairly and squarely on local authorities, but that position will never be achieved until such time as local authorities by legislation are given the right to carry out their own valuations.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member for South Brisbane has heard this argument in the Brisbane City Council. He has heard aldermen say, "We want to carry out our own valuations." The Brisbane City Council in its budget allocates £17,000 to £19,500 a year to pay the cost of valuations by the Valuer-General's Department. The Brisbane City Council has its own valuers. Brisbane City Council aldermen, both Labour and C.M.O. have voiced the opinion that the local authority should carry out its own valuations. I repeat that the Brisbane City Council has the staff and the aldermen think their valuers with their knowledge of local conditions can do the job at least as well as the valuers in the Valuer-General's Department. At the moment the Brisbane City Council is paying £95,000 every five years for this work. I frankly think it is an administrative task for local authorities.

In consequence of the campaign of propaganda of local authorities when drawing up their budgets in the year of revaluation the ratepayers and property-owners become fearful of savage increases in rates. I think the people of Brisbane are concerned about the savage increase in rates levied by the present Council. No denial of an increase has been issued by the Lord Mayor or the Council. He has been quite open and honest with the public in that regard. The ratepayers are concerned about the likelihood of savage increases in a sectional tax levied by the local authority in order to provide services and requirements of the municipality. The savageness of the increase which they have been led to expect is causing a state of chaos and confusion, and the public are incorrectly relating their problem to the values set by the Valuer-General's Department. The hon. member for Maryborough interjects to say, "It has been said to be all supposition."

I hope the hon. member who interjected will convey to his colleague, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, that he, and possibly a number of his misguided Labour colleagues, think it is all supposition. I ask him to come out in public and say that he will rate justly and fairly on the valuations that now apply. I challenge him to say to a questioning public that the rates that are now charged on the basis of a calculation of 1s. in the £1 will be reduced by a comparable amount when the valuations have been increased by 200 per cent so that the ratepayer will pay only the same sum of money that he is now paying. If he does that, the public will know whether they are to receive any relief from the authorities. They consider the ratepayer to be a good milk cow and they expect from it not only a fair share of the milk but also the cream, and buckets of it at that. The Lord Mayor will retain the high rating, and through the increased valuations will take the opportunity to increase considerably the revenue he receives in rates from the public. That is their policy for upholding their socialistic empire, and that has never been denied. This is the peculiar form of municipal government that is singular to this part of the world and, because of it, he will hold on to the transport system which, I believe, should be in the hands of private enterprise. If he were to dispose of the transport department the local authority could then concentrate on the health, road construction, water supply and sewerage services, and the administrative departments of the Council, and he need not take anything further in rates. He could administer the city without increasing the burden any further on the ratepayer and, if the new valuations came in, the rating amount could be reduced in comparison with the percentage which is now paid.

The Council should review its administrative setup. This is overdue. This is the only way that it can get this revenue. The time is long overdue when there should be a stocktaking in relation to its taxation powers, and investigate whence the other cities in the world are able to get their revenue. The Council should look into that rather than overburden the ratepayers.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. HUGHES: I hope that one of the first taxes the Council brings in will be a tax on magpies, and if that is the case, the hon. member for South Brisbane and many of his colleagues on my right will be the first to be taxed.

The burden falls heavily on property owners. The Minister has said this is temporary relief and of course, I believe that presupposes there will be further measures. That is the real crux of my concern. Whilst temporary relief is being afforded, it should not be left at that. The Council should be doing everything to give some relief to the over-burdened rate-paying public. The relief may not be in the immediate future, but in the more distant future. I believe that the Minister himself, and other members of the Government, with officers in the public service, should be prepared to consider seriously bringing in measures at the earliest possible opportunity that will let the local authority and all the people of Queensland know exactly where they stand in this hotchpotch of confusion and chaos.

An Opposition Member interjected

Mr. HUGHES: I am talking about this as a State-wide matter. I am not like some of the midget-minded morons I could name who speak parochially. Throughout my speech I have made it clear that I think this is a matter that should be dealt with State-wide. That is one of the reasons why I think the Minister may have a justifiable claim to a time factor on his side. It is better for him to hasten slowly and to devote time to the preparation of measures that will provide a permanent solution that will be just and fair and in the best interests of all than to rush in for political expediency with a measure that might ultimately prove to be detrimental. Sound legislation along those lines will be introduced in the near future.

To my mind the only possible complete solution would be the abolition of the Valuer-General's Department. The local authorities must be given time to put their machinery into gear so that at a given time in the future they will be in a position to take over. They should be allowed to carry out their own valuations. Many local authorities have openly supported that view. It has been said that there should be some form of new assessment. The Government do not prepare town plans. The Government do not dictate the terms of city development. They do not provide civic services and the like. That is the autonomous duty and responsibility of the local authority. Therefore the Government should not intrude into a specifically local authority matter—so the whole matter of valuations should go back fairly and squarely to the local authority valuer.

Mr. Bennett: You said that before.

Mr. HUGHES: I know I said it before but I have to repeat it in order to impress it on some people.

The hon. member for Kedron said a formula should be worked out in conjunction with the local authority to arrive at a new basis of assessment. Any scheme will attract all the critics in the world. It is very easy to criticise but it is not so easy to offer a solution. While the Opposition have advanced some hollow criticism, they have not put forward any solution, any formula, or any long-term basis. They have not been prepared to say whether the local

authorities should carry out their own valuing. To use an Australianism, they want their "two bob each way".

Mr. Davies: Did the hon. member say he wants the abolition of the Valuer-General's Department?

Mr. HUGHES: I have said so, as I believe the task of valuing should go back to the local authority. I am supporting the Bill on the basis that you cannot wave a magic wand and do all these things overnight. They must be viewed in their proper perspective. Surely the hon. member for Maryborough would not suggest that legislation framed in a matter of weeks will be watertight and in the best interests of all the people of the State! Surely, as a responsible member of Parliament, he would not suggest that a stop-gap measure dashed off in a hurry would not be subject to all the frailties of rushed legislation!

Mr. Davies: Did the hon. member say this was a stop-gap measure?

Mr. HUGHES: I have quite clearly stated, as I believe the Minister himself did, that this is a temporary measure. It is a palliative designed to allay the fears that are being put into the minds of the public by the propaganda campaign launched by local authorities. It will also give temporary relief to property owners who, in this time of inflation, have become the victims of speculation in land and other things. It is a formula, I believe, that will assist to overcome hardships and allay the fears of the public.

The recent valuations have shown some anomalies. As you, Mr. Gaven, as the representative of the Gold Coast in this Assembly, have told hon. members, many of the anomalies have been created by speculators in the land boom. If hon. members on my right have any sincerity, they will be prepared to support the small property owners, because people on fixed income who occupy a 24-perch allotment in a suburban area are the people to whom the Bill is designed to afford a measure of relief. This legislation will test not only the sincerity but also the principles of hon. members opposite. It will show whether they are prepared to give relief of this kind while the overall vexed problem of valuations is dealt with on a wider basis for the good of the public generally.

The Bill should receive the support of all hon. members. I know that many of the 5,000 property owners in the Kurilpa electorate have expressed their concern about the valuations. I am completely in favour of affording some relief to them, and I would be even happier if I could be certain that the Brisbane City Council would get the message from members of this House about the amount of rates that should be levied on already overburdened property owners. Because I do not trust the present Brisbane City Council in this regard and because I am fearful about the amount of rates that the Council will call upon small property owners in the suburbs to pay, I express the hope that it will not be in excess of what they are paying at present. I put forward that plea because, whatever the figure in the formula, the Council will still go to the public and say, "We are going to take from you more money because we need it for the upkeep of this socialistic form of civic government. We are going to subsidise losses on public transport. We are not going to use the loan money. The Council must find £4,000,000 for electricity, to the detriment of sewerage, and so on." The answer is in the Council's own hands. It could divest itself of these undertakings. It is not prepared to do so because to some extent they are a justification for the aldermen's salaries. If the aldermen were to tackle this problem conscientiously and sincerely, there would be no need to instil in the minds of the public the fear that more money would be taken from them.

In my opinion, taking the long-term view, the Valuer-General's Department should be abolished and local authorities should carry out their own valuations. I believe that this would save money for the taxpayers. The department costs about £400,000 a year to run, and what is the value of it? In the main, the department is there to value local-authority areas for rating purposes. Therefore it values so that the council can take that figure from which it will then levy its rates, but councils do not necessarily adjust them accordingly. The only other way in which the Valuer-General's Department can provide some form of worth-while service is with regard to rabbit tax, but that is infinitesimal. The right of the people should prevail. With the valuations carried out by valuers drawn from a panel of valuers of the institute, and with valuations made on just and true principles, not only would the local authority be carrying out its own valuations and rating on those valuations, but the general public would have the fundamental right to throw it out at the triennial elections if the local authority was showing gross stupidity. They cannot get to the Valuer-General. That fundamental right should lie where it belongs. Nothing but a tremendous amount of good should emerge from the Bill. It should allay any fear in the public mind. The public will know that the Government stand for a measure of fairness and justice. We know the anomalies that existed in the past. There has been a lopping of the anomalies with a realistic fairness and sense of balance. There is only one question that no hon. member can answer, and that is to what extent, by some insidious and devious means of propaganda, will the local authorities fleece the ratepayer. The real question and the real answer to the problem lies with the local authorities. It all depends on how much they are going to fleece the over-burdened property-owner for the purpose of supplying the services they provide, or whether, like the Government, they are prepared to adopt a realistic approach and adjust their rate in

the pound so that in the balance the ratepayer will be paying very little more. Naturally, in any case, there will be slight increases or decreases, but they will be ineffective if they are so slight. Therefore, the answer lies with the local authority in the test of their sincerity whether they are prepared to take from the public only the amount they are taking now by adjusting the rate in the pound to suit the valuations on the new formula provided in the Bill.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.13 p.m.): The Bill contains two principles, the first, of a permanent nature, with which I thoroughly agree. I think it is only right and proper that there should be some time elapse from when a valuation is made until it applies. The proposal is that that period be 12 months. My only complaint with that principle is that perhaps 12 months may not be long enough. I have some figures to show how hardship can arise because of the period between the time a valuation is made and appeals are determined. Perhaps that time should be a little longer. On the other hand, if the department would undertake to see that the appeals are dealt with more expeditiously, perhaps 12 months would do. If an appeal is made to the Valuer-General's Department considerable time elapses by the time the round table conference is held. If it is decided to carry the appeal further to the court it takes more time to get it through the court. In the Gatton case they extended over a period of five years and considerable hardship resulted from that delay.

The other principle, that is the one of a temporary nature, I can only say must be regarded as a reflection on the intelligence of those people who represent us in local government and also of the ratepayers of this State. I do not believe that a large percentage of the people are foolish enough to think that the Government can control rates.

If any hon. member did not read a statement made by the former Valuer-General, Mr. Richardson, a few weeks ago, I counsel him to read it. In that article, Mr. Richardson said, and I agree with him, that we have either to accept the Valuer-General's work in principle, or reject it. If we accept it then we have to accept it as it is. We cannot accept it in part and we cannot have a piebald show because, after all, I feel that this legislation will place the local authorities into greater confusion than ever.

Anyone who has worked on local government bodies will realise that, with our system of budgeting, if a local authority budgets for £100,000 or £200,000, it has to get it and the only adjustment this Bill can make is to rob Peter to pay Paul. I will presently show how that robbing will be done.

I do not agree with all the work of the Valuer-General's Department. I can be as critical as anyone else and as ready to give credit where credit is due. In this Chamber only a few months ago I made reference to the Valuer's General's work in the Boonah Shire where I said he had done a reasonably good job. I did not make that statement because the increase was only 2 per cent., but what happened in that case was that adjustments were made. Where values were considered to be too low they were lifted to what he considered to be fair and reasonable. After all, we have to realise the fundamental point on matters of rating for local authorities purposes, that whether our values are high or whether they are low we desire them to be uniform because they must compare one with the other. If they do not it will mean that one person will pay an unfair proportion of the rates and others escape their responsibility.

Another remarkable feature about this legislation to which I want to draw the attention of the Chamber is that whilst this great hardship was created in the Gatton Shire and continued for over five years I, their member in the House, could not get anything done about it but because it has now arisen in Brisbane, the Government see fit to amend the Act. While it applied in the country and the farmers were carrying the load it did not matter to the Government. In other words, they could not care less, but as soon as it applies to the city of Brisbane, something has to be done about it.

They bring down this Bill which, after all, does not mean anything. It means, in effect, if I understand the Minister correctly, that if the value has been increased from £10 to £20, the new value will be £15. Has anyone ever heard of such a hotch-potch arrangement? I do not know whether it is introduced as a direct vote of censure on the Valuer-General's Department, but, if one thing has arisen from the argument today it is that the Valuer-General's Department should be abolished. If it is not going to be abolished and if we accept it as a department, we have to accept its work. What is the Valuer-General's Department going to do in face of the sales made from time to time? Under the system in the Act he has to lift the values and someone is going to be hurt in the process, but there is a simple way of getting over the difficulty. I know that this matter has nothing to do with land tax but another Bill will be introduced by the Treasurer within the next week or two, I hope, bearing on the Land Tax Act, and one cannot examine the value of land for local authority purposes without taking into consideration the effect it will have on land tax at the same time. We have to realise that local government bodies have to obtain more money to meet increased costs. There can be no getting away from that. I think all hon. members will agree that local authorities if they are going to carry out the work contemplated by them, must get extra money. If the Government want to give local authorities some assistance, why not vacate the field of land tax and

give it to local authorities? The Auditor-General's report reveals that last year £1,750,000 was collected in land tax. The cost of collecting it was £450,000. In other words the activities of the Valuer-General's Department and the cost of collection amounted to approximately £450,000, and part of the cost of running the Valuer-General's Department is contributed by local authorities. If the Government vacated the field of land taxation, it would not matter two hoots——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not want the hon. member to develop his argument on land tax. I ask him to confine his argument to local authority valuations.

Mr. MULLER: It was said this morning that an attempt is being made to get out from under. I do not know whether local authorities are trying to get out from under or whether the Minister is trying to get out from under. That has nothing to do with me, but I do say that local authorities must have more money and, if the Government are sincere in their desire to give local authorities some assistance, what is wrong with my suggestion. If it were adopted, the Valuer-General's Department would not be required. At one time I agreed with the principle of valuations by the Valuer-General because it was necessary to have uniformity not only in the shires but throughout the State. Uniformity is essential for the purposes of land tax and probate and succession duties, but if my suggestion were adopted local authorities could work out their own salvation and we would not have this howl about local authorities throwing the baby into the lap of the Government and in turn the Government throwing it back into the lap of local authorities. Local authorities could then work out their own destiny.

It must be admitted that the subject of land tax is a most contentious one. It has been and will always be so. The valuers in the Valuer-General's Department are not machines. They cannot be perfect. They are appointed. Some are competent and some are not. Some are young and have a great deal to learn. A valuer who goes into a strange district would not be as close to the mark in values as a person with an expert knowledge of the district. All those factors have to be taken into consideration. As long as the valuers of the department are honest in their assessments, I have no fault to find, but because of human weaknesses rather severe hardship has been caused, and I shall mention some instances to show how the principle has operated. I had a reason for asking the Minister this morning just when the provisions of the Bill would operate. I asked him in order to find out whether any relief would be given in some districts. I merely mentioned the case of Gatton because when the Gatton people found themselves in trouble no-one was prepared to listen to them. They came to me and asked me what I would suggest. I said, "You will have to do something. You will have to take advantage of the legislation, lodge appeals and take them to court if necessary."

I certainly disagree with the policy of having two valuing authorities in the State, one valuing for the Department of Public Lands and the other for the Valuer-General's Department. We should have one valuing authority and one court of appeal. The Government have adopted the policy of one court of appeal and that is some relief, but while we have two valuing authorities we are going to be in trouble. I shall mention a few of the many Gatton cases to show the unfairness of the present position. I have here some rate notices. Although you have ruled that I must keep to local government matters, Mr. Taylor, I do not think you will deny me the opportunity of making a comparison between rates and land tax. I have here particulars of the case of Mr. James G. Byrne, in the Gatton district. I think his property is on the Grantham Road. He has 81 acres and his rates are £294 14s. 9d. This notice is dated November 1959 and this has been the rate charged ever since. However, he took the matter to the court and a slight adjustment was made. His land tax is £115 10s. Then, I come to the case of his wife. She has 120 acres, her rates are £271 14s. 10d., and her land tax £120 17s. 5d. I know that hon. members of the Country Party will be interested in this. This partnership of a man and his wife own 201 acres, and on J. G. Byrne's property £401 5s. 7d. is paid in rates and land tax, and on his wife's property £392 12s. 3d., making a grand total of £802 17s. 10d., plus exchange of 2s. 6d. The hon. member for the district will agree that this is no more than a living area. I mention this case to show what hardship is being created.

The people in the area took advantage of all the avenues that were open to them. They went to the court and fought it through the court and of 243 appeals, 17 or 18 were heard by the Land Court, two were rejected and 16 were adjusted. In one case there was a reduction of 40 per cent., and in another case a reduction of over 30 per cent. The average reduction on all those appeals was 29.6 per cent. One would have thought that after the court had heard those cases the balance of the appeals would have been heard on the same basis, but that did not happen. The Valuer-General's Department again commenced to bargain and some of the remaining appeals were adjusted by 5 per cent., 10 per cent. and 20 per cent., and some went to the Land Appeal Court. This has gone on over the years and no adjustment has been made. I am very concerned about it. I am concerned also about what the people in the Gatton district did. They formed a Gatton Landowners' Committee and fought these valuations through the court. They spent their own money. The point is made, "After all, what about the others? You only had 243 appeals in

the Gatton Shire." We must remember that there are not many farmers or householders in Brisbane who are game to go to court. Firstly, they hate to think of court procedure and secondly they cannot always afford it. It is important to remember that the amount of money these people spent protected their own interests and also protected the interests of the rest of the farmers in Queensland.

The Laidley Shire valuations followed a year or so later. When those valuations were released they were equal to only about half the Gatton values.

An Opposition Member: You are still in the hon. member for Lockyer's district.

Mr. MULLER: He did not do anything about it. I do not think there is any doubt about that.

The Laidley Shire valuations were released, but before they were released properties sold in the Laidley Shire were used to justify what had been done in the Gatton Shire. I have not the time to go into all this at this stage of the Bill, but I intend to speak at greater length during the second reading. In one particular case, £94 an acre was given as the value to justify values in the Gatton Shire. When the valuation of the Laidley Shire was brought out some time later that figure was reduced to £42. In other words there was a reduction of roughly 50 per cent. We got the benefit of what happened in that district when the Boonah Shire's turn came. Beaudesert would have followed next year and would have got the axe in exactly the same way. The values were brought somewhere into line with common sense.

We have evidence of that sort of thing happening. I do not say any of it was done deliberately. Every officer in a job becomes jealous of his job and if he thinks he is right he is perfectly entitled to stand on his feet and try to justify his action. Some of the valuations were fought in court but most people are not willing to go to court. It would be very much better if we adopted the local valuer today and dropped the other side issues that I have referred to. Then there would be no need to maintain all the costly machinery that we have at the moment.

It does not matter what you do in matters of this kind, you will never satisfy everyone. If a man has a place up for sale he puts one value on it. If he is buying it, he puts another on it. Most of the high values put on properties in Brisbane were based on prices that were actually paid. The only guide the Valuer-General's Department has in determining the actual value of a place is the sale price less the value of improvements on the land. It is an easy matter to get down to the valuation in that way.

I know this has become a political hot potato. It would not have done so if we had followed the lead of some of the other States. We must acknowledge that high land values have come to stay. Perhaps the whole of the economy could be changed and there might be a great drop in land values but it is not likely. If the Government wish to have farmers and property owners, let them do something similar to what has been done in New South Wales. New South Wales had an old exemption of £10,000 on rural lands and £5,000 on other land, that is to say, building sites, business areas, and so on. Only a few months ago those exemptions were increased to £15,000 for rural lands and £10,000 for other lands.

Mr. Richter: Are you speaking of land tax?

Mr. MULLER: Yes, in that case, but it comes to a question of rates. The same could be done to provide relief in this State. Whether it is land tax or rates, the Government should not be so greedy as to keep all this land tax. The local authority should have more money.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MULLER: Quite right, Mr. Taylor. I agree with you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to refrain from referring to land tax.

Mr. MULLER: I agree strictly with your ruling but the Minister introduced the subject of land tax. It is a question of relief in order that the local authority may get the money. The Brisbane City Council is likely to blame the Government if values have been increased. That is not fair. It is not fair to say that the Minister is anxious to keep down rates. He has no say in what rate is struck in Brisbane. It is entirely a matter for the local authority. It might be possible to afford relief to some people but the load must then be transferred to others. If the Valuer-General's Department is working on a system giving uniform values throughout Brisbane, that is the most it can do. I remember that when Mr. Heading, the former Minister for Public Works and Local Government, was in office, he carefully refrained from discussing rates or land tax. He said, "Our job at the Valuer-General's Department is to fix values." After the department did its job, then the rates were fixed."

The Government cannot have it both ways. They cannot say, "The rate has been lifted from £100 to £200, but in the case of Bill Jones we will make it only £150." Do not the Government realise that this will get local authorities into a greater tangle than ever and that it will get the Government into a greater tangle than ever? It is unfair and unjust. If the Valuer-General fixes a value, that should be the value. If it is not the correct value, we should get rid of the Valuer-General's Department and throw the job back to the local authorities and say to them, "You can do the job yourself. You say you can do it for less." If a local authority

appointed its own valuer, it would have to accept responsibility for what he did, and it could then strike its own rate.

The hon. member for South Coast told the Assembly on another occasion that values on the South Coast had soared from £7,000,000 to £27,000,000. As a result of his activities, this legislation will probably cut those values in half, which will mean a reduction of about £10,000,000 in the value of properties on the South Coast. It was either that or Mr. Gaven's neck, and we could not blame the people down there for that, either. If the Act is to be amended for political expediency, we will never be out of trouble. I dislike class legislation introduced as a matter of political expediency. The Government are saying, "We will not take the Valuer-General's valuation in full; we will take it only in part. We will only intervene in cases where we either win or lose a few votes."

When we come to country districts and justice for the farmers, this could go on for years without the Government doing a damn thing about it. I speak with great feeling about this because I saw what happened right through. I watched the Gatton cases go to the court. I remember the morning when four or five men came to me and placed all their cards on the table, told me what their old valuations were and what their new valuations were, and said, "We have to fight for our very existence." The figures that I have given today make it very clear that nobody can carry that excessive rate and that something has to be done about it. I am very perturbed about the action that is being taken. I believe that the Minister will tell us that the people have nothing to fear because they will have new values next year. I want to know how the Valuer-General is going to reduce the values in the Gatton shire very much when only recently the court reduced values by about 28 per cent. Even taking those values, they are about double the value of comparable land in other shires. Rather than argue the point and get themselves into disfavour, the Government should say to the Gatton shire and other shires, "Make your own valuations, strike a rate accordingly, and do not blame the Government if there is anything wrong."

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (3.39 p.m.): It is obvious that the Government, in bringing down this legislation, are carrying on a policy that they have been following for some time—a policy of makeshift. The Minister said at the outset that the legislation was designed to give temporary relief, and this was substantiated by the hon. member for Kurilpa, a member of a Government party, who spoke after the Minister. If they have to give temporary relief, it means that the Government are not satisfied with present conditions. The hon. member for Baroona, and I think also the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, said that if the Minister was not happy about the valuations, he should have done somthing about the valuations themselves. All the talk about affording relief to somebody is not borne out by the facts. As other hon. members have said, the giving of relief to one means shifting the burden onto someone else.

I should like to answer a few of the statements made by the hon. member for Kurilpa. It was very obvious that he was speaking with a lack of knowledge of the legislation. First of all he spoke about a previous Council in Brisbane of which he was a member. He condemned the Valuer-General's Department. Neither of those matters is under review in the legislation. He said that rates were a sectional tax. I do not think they are. Certainly they are paid by the landholder and landowner. Every person who rents premises has to pay rates in the rental charged so do not let us think that it is only the landowner who pays rates. Every person pays rates directly or indirectly. In fact the rateable value of property affects every person. The hon. member said that we should do away with the Valuer-General's valuers and substitute local authority valuers. Where would we get with that? If he is condemning the personnel he is getting nowhere at all. Is it not logical to assume that if the Valuer-General's Department were closed tomorrow and the onus thrown on the local authorities, the people who are valuing in the Valuer-General's Department would be engaged by the local authorities? If any improvement is required to be made it should take place within the Valuer-General's Department by laying down another set of formulae. It is true that there have been anomalies in the valuations so far. I have no doubt that when the valuations in other areas come out more anomalies will be revealed. But that is brought about, not by the personnel concerned, but by the formulae they are working under.

Today the term "unimproved land" has a different meaning from what it had years ago. In those days when you bought a block of land on which to build a home you bought unimproved land. It was unimproved in the true sense of the word—no roads or any modern amenities. I can remember in my own locality that to get to many of the houses you had to take a goat-track. There was no electric light or water. The houses were built on really unimproved blocks of land. Under ordinances brought down by various local authorities it is now compulsory for land subdividers to provide so many amenities that the land cannot truly be classed as unimproved in terms of what the word meant years ago. Unfortunately the people buying the land have to pay for those improvements. There again, I suppose it is logical that if the land subdivider has to spend large amounts of money to provide roads, concrete channelling, and ensure that electric light and water are

available, someone has to pay for it. The cost is passed on and accepted by the purchaser.

Mr. Hilton: Those improvements are not on the land itself.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is quite true. That is the difference between what was the interpretation of "unimproved land" and what it apparently means today. From the valuations made by the Valuer-General's Department it is obvious that they must be made on the sale price of the land, which includes the cost of those amenities. If that were not done the price for the ordinary suburban allotment would be £300 or £400 lower. The trouble is not with the Valuer-General, but with the basis that he has to use for valuing.

Mr. Hughes: Would you give local authorities the opportunity to carry out their own valuations?

Mr. HOUSTON: That does not come into this. I am sure that if I started to develop fully an answer to that question as I should like, the Chairman would call me to order. If criticism is required, that is where it should lie. Let us have a look at the position in Brisbane. I shall confine my remarks to Brisbane because that is the place about which I can speak with most authority. Other hon. members will deal with country areas much better than I can.

Brisbane at present has a rateable value in the urban area of £70,626,318 and the rate, at 1s. 4¼d. in the £1, will give the city council an estimated return of £4,781,992. The value of rural land is £1,145,614 which, at a rate of 8¼d. in the £1, will return an estimated £38,782. In other words, the city council estimate their return from rates at £4,820,774.

It is obvious that, if the council found that that amount of money was sufficient to carry out the operations of the city last year, then this year they would strike their rate in an endeavour to get that sum of £4,800,000-odd from the community by means of taxation. If they found that that amount was not sufficient and they were short either in their estimated returns or through the failure of the State Government to make good other aspects of finance, they would have no alternative but to increase the rate in the pound on both urban and rural land.

To keep this matter as simple as possible we must assume that if the city council found conditions this year very little different from those of last year they would take only £4,800,000-odd from the public to carry out the services required by their budget. If the Valuer-General had increased the valuation of the Brisbane district by 100 per cent., then the council would obtain the same revenue as previously by reducing the rate in the £1—1s. 4¼d. on urban land and 8¼d. on rural land—by one-half. I have not heard any evidence to show that, in the main, the Valuer-General has not taken into account relativity as between residential properties. There is no evidence to show that relativity amongst commercial properties was not taken into account, although there has been evidence to show loss of relativity as between residential and commercial properties because a different officer of the Valuer-General's Department valued the various classes of property.

However, there have not been any great anomalies because, although many people believe the values are too high, a general principle was adopted. Now, the Government are going to bring in another system of valuation for rating purposes, based on no fixed principle at all. The Minister tells us that the method to be used will be to take the previous valuation plus half the difference between the previous and the new valuations. Let us look at that from the practical point of view. Take the position of two landowners with land previously valued at £400, whose valuations in one instance go to £1,200 and in the other to £800. It is easy to imagine factors that would bring about the difference. Both persons realise that their increases are justified. Under the Bill the rateable value in one case will be £800 and in the other case £600. In other words, by the legislation the Minister has completely thrown aside the logical principles of valuation. The difficulty arises because we start with a fixed focal point; that is, the valuation at the present time, and it is because of the fixed focal point that the legislation fails to achieve its purpose. Landowners with land highly valued at the present time have an advantage over those whose land has a low value. The rateable value on land increased in valuation from £1,000 to £2,000 would be £1,500, but the rateable value on land previously valued at £500 and now valued at £2,000 would be £1,250. By basing the rateable value on a fixed amount to which is added half the difference between the old and new valuations we are discarding the logical factors of valuation, and many people will be adversely affected.

As I said earlier, if the overall valuation of Brisbane doubled and the Council required the same amount of money it could reduce the rate in the £1 by half. Landowners whose land valuations were doubled would pay the same amount of rates. Those whose increases in valuations were lower would pay less, and those whose valuations were more than doubled would pay more. Under the Bill the Council will have no fixed value on which it can work. It will have to calculate every rate notice separately. It will not be able to base its rate in the £1 on the total valuation for the City of Brisbane because that figure will bear no relationship to the rateable value. The Council will not be able to say that valuations increased from £72,000,000 to £142,000,000, will have a ratable value of £72,000,000 plus half the difference, or in other words, approximately £107,000,000. The Council will not be able to strike a rate in the £1 in that way.

In addition, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out, we have to take into account the unfair position of people whose land is classified as commercial land and whose valuations have been increased from, say, £500 to £3,000. The legislation does not solve the problems; it merely creates many more problems for the local authority.

The Bill has only one purpose, that is, to transfer to local authorities, the Brisbane City Council and others, complete responsibility for the rates they levy. It is wrong to bring in legislation that will throw an extra burden on local authorities. They will have no total figure on which they can work. They will have to proceed on a hit-and-miss basis. Ratepayers will be paying rates not on considered valuations, whether they be right or wrong, but on the formula of the Bill which does not follow sound valuing principles.

That part of the Bill at least must be given very careful consideration at the next stage. Frequently we find that at the introductory stage we are not given all the facts, that later, when we get to the second stage other facts emerge.

I reserve further comments until the second reading stage.

Mr. GAVEN (South Coast) (3.55 p.m.): I listened with great interest to the remarks on this Bill about the rateable value of certain lands for the purpose of the making and levying of rates thereon by local authorities and for other purposes. It is safe to say that no legislation introduced in this Chamber has more in common with the ordinary landholder in this State than the legislation that gave the powers to the Valuer-General's Department. It would be safe to say, too, that no legislation has ever been written into a statute that gives any department more power than the Valuer-General's Department. It has power, in my opinion, to make or break any land-owner in this State. During the course of the debate we heard that all valuations proclaimed since June, 1960, will be affected. We have been told that it is ultimately expected to give relief to those areas affected by the boom period. The formula, we are told, is based on the principle of the land-tax adjustment for the last two years. That means that valuations prior to 30 June, 1960, will be taken, the increase will be taken and divided, and then added to the old valuation giving the taxable, or rateable value, for local authority rates and precepts. Provision is made also for the State Housing Commission to appeal against the Valuer-General's valuation. That is quite right. However, I would go a little further and give that right to the land-owner.

We were told that up to 1951 the Valuer-General's valuations worked well and then we had this upsurge in speculation, and high prices. Let us examine that statement. The Valuer-General's Department was inaugurated, and became effective and operative from 1 July, 1946. The department was charged with the responsibility within seven years of valuing the whole of the lands of this State. The whole of the one hundred and thirty-two elected local authority areas would be valued on the basis of equity, justice, and uniformity with contiguous areas in the State. By 1953, seven years later, all of the lands of the State would be valued, and there would be equity, justice and uniformity. Let us look at what happened. Sixteen years have passed and some local authority areas have still to be valued. Some have been valued once, some twice, and others three times. How could there ever be equity, justice, and uniformity in the State under such a system? The personnel of the department has grown to 172, with a charge of about £307,000 against the taxpayers of the State. We have looked for this uniformity in contiguous areas, but we have not found it. The hon. member for Carnarvon, whom I respect in valuation matters, because of the many years he administered the Valuer-General's Department, said that in the olden days when local authorities were responsible for their own valuations many of them were corrupt because they did not have a true valuation of the land in their areas. By that he meant that some local authorities struck a high rate on a low valuation and that other local authorities struck a low rate on a high valuation. That was their prerogative, and they were entitled to do as they saw fit. The crux of the matter was that even when they carried out their own valuations some people believed themselves aggrieved, but we never had the chaos we have at present under the Valuer-General's Department, with many thousands of people cluttering up the appeal courts. In those days we may have had 50, 70, 100 or 150 people appealing in a local-authority area. Those cases were heard in the magistrates court and some people went away happy, others were still disgruntled, but the system worked very well indeed. Nothing would be further from my mind than to say that local authorities were corrupt. They did a good job in an honorary capacity to try to develop their areas. In my opinion, nothing could be carried out more expeditiously, and more successfully, than valuations made by the local authorities concerned. Over the years the Valuer-General has had a very difficult task. That is undoubted. I hold nothing against him personally. While he is sitting here listening to me, I do not duck around corners to make any statement I want to make. Let me say clearly once again that I will never rest until the Valuer-General's Department is abolished and the rating of the local authorities returned to the people concerned. For the amount of taxpayers' money we are expending the people are not getting what they should get. I believe in the complete abolition of land tax and I have believed in it ever since I entered this Assembly. I do not change horses in mid-stream when I go from one side of the Chamber to the other. I still believe it should

be abolished. I will not try your patience, Mr. Chairman, any longer on that but I wanted to get it in while I could.

I know that in Brisbane many people have been upset by the valuations. The South Coast area is valued higher than most provincial towns and cities on the coast of Queensland collectively. The hon. member for Redcliffe referred to my area as "Surfers' Palestine." I do not appreciate that. There are just as good Queenslanders in my area as there are in Redcliffe, and I am willing to have him test it any time he cares to try. My area has a valuation of £30,000,000 and his has a valuation of £4,000,000. The matter should be viewed in its right perspective.

Let me quote what was said by a man who has forgotten more about the art of valuing land in Queensland than anybody else I know. I refer to the late Sir William Payne, who said—

> "The law requires that the sales used must represent the purchases of prudent men, and not purchases for special purposes or speculative enterprises, the soundness of which has not yet been proved. Valuing on the basis of fortuitous or speculative sales could easily over-value a locality and retard progress. In my opinion nothing could be more calculated to slow down development and production and stifle progress in Queensland, where much pioneering development has yet to be done, than over-valuing the lands of the State. Few people will develop land if their only reward is to be their sense of constructive achievement.
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> "The advancement of any community depends primarily on the development of land from its unimproved condition. Without landholders who have the courage to risk their labour and capital, there would be no production to sustain a population, no Parliament, no Government and no valuers. Caution, care and much experience are therefore needed in arriving at unimproved valuations.
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> "To safeguard everyone, independent tribunals, the Land Court and the Land Appeal Court, have been constituted as the final arbiters of unimproved land values. This is the best organised judicial valuation system in Australia, and all work to date has been accomplished without any backlag of cases. These tribunals are intended by Parliament to give the citizens of the State adequate protection in land valuations but unreasonable overloading of the tribunals by avalanches of appeals arising from the way official valuation work is done in the first instance could clutter up the whole system and even lead to its breakdown."

In arriving at the valuation of land held by the people in the State what happens? Every area should have a different approach. Take the South Coast generally. It was a place where land speculators were rife from all over the world. We had the spectacle of land changing hands five or six times in five or six months. Values rose and rose because people desired the land for particular purposes—for accommodation houses, for hotels, business premises and so on—and they paid a price necessary to acquire it for the purpose. That increased the values out of all perspective. Then we had men coming in and buying great tracts of land, much of it mosquito-breeding, sandfly-infested mangrove swamp, and employing machines and bringing labour to develop it into good land. In the process these people spent many thousands of pounds. By using the residue from rivers and streams, they built up the land and made it saleable. The unimproved value of the land, in my opinion, should have been its value when it was a mangrove swamp, because many thousands of pounds were spent in making it saleable. Immediately the land was cut up into allotments and offered for sale, it was priced at £3,000, £4,000, £5,000, and up to £6,000 a freehold block. This showed very clearly that the many thousands of pounds spent in developing the land had not been taken into consideration. Many people paid £40, £50 or £60 deposit on blocks priced at £4,000, £5,000 or £6,000, and these figures were used in fixing other values. The values were fictitious, and when people received their first rate notices they said, "The first loss will be the smallest. We will let it go back to the subdivider." The subdivider was caught. He could not pay his land tax and meet all the other obligations imposed by the high taxation on land. Consequently, I say with all the emphasis at my command that if the Valuer-General's Department had gone down into my area with the idea of destroying it, it could not have done a better job.

In New South Wales and Victoria the basis of valuing is sales, it is true; but as the late Sir William Payne pointed out, sales can be dangerous in different areas and different approaches have to be made in different areas. The matter has already been taken up in New South Wales, and in November last year the Minister for Local Government said—

> "The Government intends to introduce legislation prior to Christmas and it is intended to set up boards of review to consider valuations made by the Valuer-General. The proposed board will reconsider values after the Valuer-General may have refused to alter the valuation at which he originally arrived. The boards of review will consist of three persons: the Valuer-General, or his representative; and two other persons representing the Commonwealth Institute of Valuers and the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales and the Association of Stock and Station Agents of New South Wales. It will quite readily be seen that the Valuer-General will be outnumbered two to one. As I have already said, it is proposed to submit the legislation before Christmas."

That was last Christmas. It will be seen, therefore, that we are not the only ones who have trouble.

Looking at my area, we find that, with a population of approximately 30,000, the total valuation is £30,000,000. Let us look at some of the other cities in Queensland. The garden city of Toowoomba is valued at £8,500,000, Rockhampton at £6,500,000, Ipswich at £6,500,000, Maryborough at £2,000,000, and Cairns at £4,500,000. In 13 towns and cities that have been revalued since 1952 the increase in valuation has been approximately £25,000,000, but the increase in the one tiny area of the South Coast has been £23,000,000, or only £2,000,000 less than in all the other areas of the State added together. Is it any wonder that I have taken every possible opportunity of condemning the action taken in my area?

We have heard of valuations rising in Brisbane from £200 to £500 and from £300 to £700. Let me give the Committee some figures from my electorate. There are 765 people whose land is valued at between £4,000 and £10,000, 118 whose land is valued at between £10,000 and £15,000, 56 whose land is valued at between £15,000 and £20,000, and 83 whose land is valued between £20,000 and £222,000. The total valuation is approximately £30,000,000. It is impossible for the people down there to pay land tax and meet their other financial obligations. That is why I stand here today supporting the Minister and the Government in this legislation. There is a weakness in it because we are only playing with it. We should go further. We should bring it in as a temporary expedient. We should abolish the Valuer-General's Department. We should proclaim all valuations in the State up to 30 June, 1962, do away with the Valuer-General's Department with the appeals to be heard from 30 June, 1962 on. The appeals will clutter up the courts for years to come. If we are going to adopt the present system how are the courts going to hear the cases? Every day of the year there will be people fighting and appealing against their land values, as they have every right to do. Thank goodness that the Government at least gave the people the right to go to the Land Court and the Land Appeal Court. It is idle to say that people have an alternative if they are not satisfied with their valuations. The ordinary home-owner has no desire to rush into court to fight a case over his land valuation. He has the inherent right to defend the bit of land he owns, but why ask him to run to a solicitor and barrister and spend his money fighting for the bit of land on which he has his home and is rearing his family? If we go on like this where are we going to end? This should be only the beginning. The whole matter should be gone into fully. We should take the opportunity to give the people more assistance in this area than we have up to date.

What about the man on the land? The primary producer is the very backbone of the State. Since 1952 the price of his primary produce has been steadily falling. The butter man, the beef man, the milk man, all of them, are getting lower incomes now in comparison with cost of production, but in each consecutive valuation his land valuation is rising. In my area people are producing butter and milk; some of them have mixed farms. Their valuations continue to rise. They rose in 1950, again in 1955 and again in 1960, but the price of their commodities is falling. What is the outcome? Are their values contributing to the holding of this inflationary spiral? Do they contribute to the falling of prices to the consumer? Of course they do not. The lower the land value, the lower the taxation these people have to pay, the lower the price of the commodity from the producer to the consumer.

Let us have a look at the dissection of the values in the Albert Shire. The Albert Shire runs from the New South Wales border, joining the Brisbane city boundary at Eight Mile Plains. Three different valuers were engaged in the valuing of the shire, one on the Brisbane end, one on the centre, and one on the southern end. The Brisbane end increased by 23 per cent., the middle went up by 33 per cent., and for some unaccountable reason the lower end went up by 96 per cent. I do not know whether they thought that the cows would milk better because they were near the Gold Coast. How can you have equity and justice among people in one shire when you have three different values? How did they arrive at the basis? If it was the basis of sale why go to all the trouble and expense of sending men out at all, running around the country in motor-cars? The whole matter could have been done by writing it up in the books. If a property has a certain valuation in 1955 and the basis is sales, they have particulars of all the sales without getting anyone to run round interviewing farmers. Why ask one man does his neighbour produce more milk or whether his land is better? Let us have a look at the position on the Gold Coast and see what has happened there. We have had valuations of Miami Keys, Rio Vista, Florida Gardens and Moana Surfers Paradise estate. That land is divided from the Albert Shire only by the arbitrary boundary of a tiny little canal, yet the people in the Albert shire are paying a rate of 8½d. in the £1, whereas on the other side of the little arbitrary boundary they are paying 3¾d. to the Gold Coast City Council. Can you blame those people who want to be transferred from the Albert shire to the Gold Coast City Council? Of course not. North of the Jubilee Bridge there are 7,640 properties with a total area of 34.84 square miles. They have an unimproved value of £7,740,000. The electors on the roll number 7,447 and they pay 27 per cent. of the total revenue for the whole city. On the

other side there are 12,632 properties, 12 sq. miles of country with an unimproved value of just on £23,000,000, and they find 73 per cent. of all the administrative costs, of all the work carried out, of all the plant and repairs and replacements, of all the necessary matters needed for all provisions contained in the local authority's budget. Seventy-three per cent. of the total of all the rates collected is found by these people and they also find 73 per cent. of interest and redemption payments. Therefore, they have divided the local authority into three classes in the Albert shire, and into two classes in the Gold Coast City.

If a man has a home in Brisbane and another man has a home half a-mile away in the same local authority, should they both not be responsible for the same amount of revenue for kerbing and channelling, laying down of roads, footpaths and the rest of it for each property? Why discriminate between two people living in the same area? That is what the Valuer-General's Department has done. It has divided our local authority area into different classes.

I say as forcibly as I can that the Minister has to go further with legislation in the future. These matters have to be looked into. A panel of approved valuers must be set up and the local authorities should have the opportunity of carrying out their own valuations.

When a valuation is fixed it is really the rate in the £1 on that valuation that counts. The hon. member for Carnarvon said this morning that we were upsetting local authorities. That, to me, is bunkum because the local authorities bring down a budget for their works for the ensuing year and it is up to them to say what they want. Whether they want £500,000, £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 they strike a rate on the valuations. The valuation is the basis of charges against the land and the rate in the £1 struck on that by the local authority is all that counts with the people.

This Bill, I believe, will give my people a reduction of about £10,000,000 on present valuations, bringing them back from about £30,000,000 to £18,500,000 or £19,000,000. Some people will pay an increased rate and others a reduced rate but there will be a levelling up with more of the equity, justice and uniformity that we heard so much about when the Bill was first introduced in 1946. Instead of persons being pushed out of their homes and off their land, finding themselves in a position of not being able to meet their commitments, under this measure they will be given temporary relief. Those paying hundreds of pounds in rates will get a measure of security by way of reduction, and, I am sure that in the main people will feel that they are receiving justice. I support the Minister in every possible way.

The only way in which the Bill could be improved is that it should go further. I have stated before that I have no confidence in the Valuer-General's Department because the Department of Public Lands will not accept his values, the Stamps Office will not accept his values, so what is the use of retaining the department? I stand where I have always stood. There will never be equity in this State unless the present system of valuing is thrown out. I have made that very clear. Some areas have been valued once, some twice, and some three times whereas others have not been valued at all. How could there be equity?

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (4.19 p.m.): Hon. members on this side have explained their reasons for objecting to the Bill. I do not wish to dwell on that point because I desire to speak on a matter to which no previous speaker has referred.

Before I do so I should like to say that this is legislation to be expected from the Government with a State election approaching. While in the past they have always been prepared to shelter behind a sub-department we find now, when a sub-department becomes an embarrassment to them, they are ready and willing to step in and draw away public opinion from their own failings by legislating to juggle this hot potato in order to rid themselves of such embarrassment. The principle of halving the valuation of the Valuer-General is so much political eyewash. If anyone benefits from it, it certainly will not be the average worker whose land has a low valuation. Those who will get the benefit, if any, will be the owners of land that has a high valuation.

Other hon. members have said that local authorities in preparing their budgets have to estimate the rate in the £1 that will give them the revenue they require. It does not take much intelligence to realise that any benefit from this type of legislation is not going to be received by the wage-earner. The few pence he will receive will be as nothing compared with those whose land is in the high valuation bracket.

I think the legislation is framed with the express intention of removing the spotlight from the Government on the eve of the State elections. In the broad view it matters little what valuation is placed on property. The local authority has to strike a rate in accordance with the amount for which it is budgeting. The Government, by this legislation, are trying to ensure that next year when the State election is being held the people will say, "The Government did their part. They reduced the valuation, but the City Council did not co-operate by reducing the rate in the £1."

Mr. Aikens: They will make the local authorities carry their own burden.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: They are trying to unload some of the unpopularity they have brought on themselves by their recent legislation. They want to be able to go to the people and say, "We were not able to do

anything about rates but at least by legislation we cut the Valuer-General's valuations in half and now the Brisbane City Council has not co-operated."

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member is satisfied that he had made his point.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I hope the people are satisfied I have made the point.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask him now to deal with the Bill.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I rose primarily to deal with the provision to give the Housing Commission the right of appeal against increases in valuations. Hon. members will recall that in the pre-Christmas session I asked a question of the Treasurer about the subject. I was alarmed about the possible effect of increases on the rentals of Commission homes. I asked for clarification of the point in order to find out whether tenants of Housing Commission homes could appeal against land valuations determined by the Valuer-General. When I asked the Treasurer the question he replied that my question posed a very nice question in law. He said that under the Valuation of Land Acts, 1944 to 1958, all owners except the Crown can lodge objections. He said—

> "But the definition of owner is extended to include a lessee from the Crown. If the Housing Commission is held to be the Crown, and the tenants to be lessees from the Crown, then it would appear that each tenant should have an individual right of appeal. If the Housing Commission is held not to be the Crown then the Commission has the right of appeal. I have asked the Solicitor-General to examine the matter. When his advice is available I will make a ministerial statement for the information of honourable members."

On receipt of advice from the Solicitor-General the Treasurer made the announcement—

> "The legal circumstances surrounding the properties of the Housing Commission are quite unusual. Technically, they are not rateable;"

Then, he said, that the Government recognised that there was a case that it should honour its obligation and should pay rates accordingly to the local authority. He said also—

> "To the extent that such rates are based on the current valuation, it is desirable that some protection should be accorded against any error in the valuation which would have the effect of bringing about a consequential increase, first in the rates and next in the rentals which incorporate the rates."

Finally, he said that the matter had been considered by Cabinet and—

> "The Government's view is that, in fairness to tenants, there should be a right of appeal. Because of the growing number of multi-unit dwellings, the Government's view is that there should be one standard appeal practice, the right of appeal resting with the Housing Commissioner."

There is provision in the Bill for the Housing Commission to lodge objections to the Valuer-General's determination. I am not satisfied with that. I believe that if we are to be guided by the Treasurer's attitude, particularly his attitude to housing tenants—and I refer to his recent Press statement that if people were going to spend their money on booze and betting, then out they went—it is hardly likely he would be concerned with the welfare of the people in the Housing Commission homes who would lodge an appeal against a valuation by the Valuer-General. It is quite plain from his attitude that he does not desire to rent Housing Commission homes at all. What rights do the tenants of these homes enjoy under the provisions of the Bill? It is quite clear that the Treasurer would not concern himself with lodging an appeal against the Valuer-General's determination. The hon. member for Brisbane has reiterated what I said, that the Minister is not concerned. He would far rather sell all of the Commission homes than honour his obligation to provide tenancy homes for persons in need of them. I repeat that I am not satisfied with this provision of the Bill. These people play a very important part in the economic structure, with the rental from their homes. If the matter is to be left to the discretion of the Minister, it is not worth the paper it is written on. The great number of tenants in this State who pay rent, and contribute to the economy of the State, should have the right of appeal. It should rest in their hands as to what they say about land valuations. This Bill is just another example, in this respect, of the token handout that the Government are trying to make in an endeavour to win support because they are now approaching the end of their term of office. Before the Bill reaches the Committee stage the Minister should re-examine it. I have heard it said frequently in the Chamber that this Government are great protectors of the rights of the people. If the Minister is genuinely interested in protecting the rights of the people and in trying to help those in this category, he might re-examine the principle to give the Commission a right of appeal on these determinations. He should consider moving an amendment to give every tenant of these Commission houses the right to lodge an objection to the land valuation. If he is not prepared to go as far as that, he might consider introducing a provision whereby, on the request of a number of tenants of Housing Commission houses, it becomes obligatory on the Minister to lodge an objection. The attitude of the present Treasurer would not be to appeal against any decision of a sub-department of the Government. However, if the Minister will not allow the tenants of Housing Commission homes to lodge objections directly

against the Valuer-General, he should incorporate in the Bill a provision whereby, upon a request by a number of tenants of Commission homes it becomes mandatory on the Treasurer to lodge an objection against those determinations.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) 4.32 p.m.): It is always wise when discussing a Bill to try to determine the reason for its introduction. I would say this Bill had been introduced because this Government have realised at long last that as propagandists they are only in the kindergarten class. So they have brought down a Bill which, in my opinion is a legislative abortion conceived in stupidity and brought forth in fear. What has happened is this: since the setting up of the Valuer-General's Department there have been in some local authority areas in Queensland steep rises in valuation. I have never yet met the owner of any parcel of land who is prepared to sell his land at the Valuer-General's valuation. I think that is the greatest compliment that can be paid to the fairness and equity that has been shown by the Valuer-General. But once the Valuer-General's Department got into full swing and began to place upon the parcels of land throughout the State a value of less than that at which the owner would sell the land, the various councils throughout Queensland seized upon the Valuer-General's valuations as an opportunity to jack up their local authority rates and blame the Government. Any Government with any vestige of political propaganda perspicacity would have seen long ago that they were passed a beautiful, big, odorous buck by the councils of Queensland and, like a lot of political dills, they were carrying that buck without saying anything about it.

What has happened in our own local authority in Townsville? The Townsville City Council, of course, did not raise the local authority rates prior to the last council elections. They waited until after the council elections. They waited until last August, when our rates went up by about 20 per cent. One of the reasons they gave for this staggering rise in rates, one of the reasons they gave for dipping their predatory fingers deeper and deeper into the pockets of the ratepayer, was that the valuations had been substantially increased. Of course, they gave a few supplementary reasons, such as the whittling down of the subsidies, the rise in costs, and various other things that do not cut any ice with me. It has taken the Government all this time to realise that throughout Queensland there has been built up a general and well-entrenched opinion among the people that the extra rates they are paying to their own group of councillors or aldermen have been caused by the Government through its Valuer-General's Department. I think that the hon. member for Salisbury touched on it, because he said in a rather querulous way, "The council will have to raise its rates irrespective of the valuations." All the councils need more money. If they are as broke as the Townsville City Council is, they will need much more money. Consequently, the next time they raise the rates they will not be able to say that the rises have been brought about by the increased valuations, because the Government, rather belatedly, have started to cut the ground from under the feet of the various local authorities that have been putting that argument forward.

Our old friend "Orrible Orace," if I may call him that, has asked me where I stand on the Bill. I am going to oppose it. I oppose all panic legislation. The hon. member for Maryborough should realise that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Townsville South to withdraw the remark that he made about the hon. member for Maryborough. I did not know to whom he was referring, but he has since mentioned the hon. member for Maryborough. The hon. member for Townsville South knows that he should only address hon. members by their proper titles, and I ask him to withdraw the words that he used.

Mr. AIKENS: I will withdraw the term "Orrible Orace." As a matter of fact, it was a term of endearment——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not want any added explanation. The hon. member withdraws, and that is the end of it.

Mr. AIKENS: I withdraw it.

What brought this about? What was the spark that kicked this Bill off? We all know that for some years there has been a propaganda battle and a boom battle going on between the South Coast and the North Coast. How often have we who have been some years in the Chamber heard the hon. member for South Coast, Mr. Gaven, stand up here and glory and gloat in the fact that there was a terrific boom on the South Coast, that values were skyrocketing, that people—I am not going to enter into whether or not they had prominent proboscises—were rushing about the South Coast and paying exorbitant amounts, as we thought, for small parcels of land. It did not stop the hon. member for South Coast from taking great pride in the fact that the greatest land boom in the history of Australia, if I remember his words correctly, was taking place on the South Coast. Then we had the Mayor of Gullargambone, the hon. member for Cooroora, Mr. David Low, coming into the Chamber and saying, "Why should there be this boom on the South Coast? Why don't they pay exorbitant prices for allotments and parcels of land on the North Coast?" We witnessed a battle of propaganda boom technique between the South Coast and the North Coast. I repeat that although those worthy gentlemen gloried in the fact that their particular areas, particularly the South Coast, Surfers' Paradise, and so on, were hitting the headlines in the Press and had become a household word in

Australia for value and prosperity, they did not have enough brains to realise that they would be hanged by a rope of their own making. The values did soar on the South Coast and they did soar on the North Coast, and the Valuer-General was quite right in taking into consideration the money that was actually paid for land on the South Coast. If I remember correctly, the hon. member for South Coast himself paid £13,000 for a 32-perch allotment. He gloried in the fact that such was the prosperity of the South Coast that he was able to pay it and willing to pay it. In fact, I think he said, "I would pay more if necessary." Now he complains that the South Coast City Council has taken advantage of the fact that the values have risen and has used this as an argument, or excuse, or smokescreen, or veneer, or facade —call it what you like—to jack up the local authority rating on its unfortunate ratepayers. Instead of tackling the people who should be tackled, instead of tackling the aldermen on the South Coast, instead of the hon. member for Cooroora who is also the Mayor of Maroochydore or Gullargambone placing the blame where it rightly belongs, on himself and his fellow councillors or aldermen, and saying, "We are jacking your rates up. We are using the high valuations as a miserable excuse for jacking your rates up," just as the aldermen of the Townsville City Council used the high valuations as a paltry and miserable excuse for jacking the rates up, they came running to the Liberal Country Party Caucus and squealing for a reduction in the land valuations. At least the hon. member for South Coast is honest in saying that if he had his way he would abolish the Valuer-General's Department tomorrow. With what would he replace it? He would go back to the old days when the local authority used to appoint its own valuers. I think I can speak from experience on that point because I served 19 years on a local authority, for six years as a councillor and deputy chairman of the Cloncurry Shire Council, and 13 years as an alderman and for some years Deputy Mayor of Townsville. I know what can occur when a local authority appoints its own valuers. Where are the local authorities to get these local valuers? In the main from the real estate agents and the less said about them the better. I have known local valuers to be appointed to work hand-in-glove with certain big property owners in a particular area. We had a case in Townsville when the party I had the honour to lead controlled the Townsville City Council. We appointed a local valuer who brought down a valuation that was so monstrous and so unreal that we threw his valuation out, and him with it. We appointed another valuer to do the job but the ratepayers, of course, had to pay for that unreal valuation. As far as I know, the Valuer-General's Department has no politics and no friends. I have never heard any accusation against the Valuer-General's Department that it was tinged with corruption or even faintly scented with corruption. Every attack I have heard made on the Valuer-General's Department has been that the values he has placed on certain properties were too high. Again I come back to the interjection I made when the hon. member for Burdekin was speaking, "Would you sell your land for the Valuer-General's valuation?" He quite honestly said, "No". I would not sell my land for the Valuer-General's valuation. I have yet to hear of anyone who would sell his land for the valuation placed upon it by the Valuer-General. So what is all this argument about the Valuer-General's Department being abolished and the people getting a fair deal under the Bill? The people are not getting a fair deal under the Bill, which is one of the reasons why I am going to oppose it. Let me give a very simple example. This Bill is a sop to the Hebraic gentlemen down on the South Coast. Take the case of a man whose land originally was valued at £500 but whose valuation has been increased by the Valuer-General to £5,500. Under the provisions of the Bill that gentleman now will be rated only on the basis of a valuation of £3,000, because half the increase will be wiped out or waived. The battler, the little worker round the corner or in the back street, who owns a property originally valued at £100 whose valuation has increased to £500, under the Bill will come down only from £500 to £300, so that he gains a miserable £200 from the passage of the legislation. As every hon. member who knows anything about local authority matters has pointed out, a local authority is not really concerned with the valuation. I was a member of the finance committee of local authorities both in Cloncurry and Townsville. What happens is that the various committees bring forth their budget requirements for the coming year. You estimate just how much money you will require. You take the valuation of your local authority area—whether it is low or high does not matter—and by simple arithmetical division work out how much you have to rate per £ in order to raise the money you need. So that this Government should have from the very start gone out and met the local authorities who were circulating this miserable lie, and told them, "Your rates have not been increased because of the valuations, your rates have been increased because the local authorities have got themselves into a pretty financial pickle." Had they gone to the columns of the Townsville "Daily Bulletin," for instance, and told the people of Townsville why the rates have gone up so staggeringly high, why workers had to sell their homes at North Ward, Melton Hill and Stanton Hill, and go out to Wulguru and Aitkenvale because they could not afford to pay the rates on their old homes, whilst those at Gullargambone and other places——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member is Gullargambone in Queensland?

Mr. AIKENS: Yes. I understand that it is the capital of the Maroochy shire.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to spell it so that it will appear correctly in "Hansard"

Mr. AIKENS: Yes. The aboriginal name is Nambour, which means nine dead goannas on a rock.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member does not spell the word——

Mr. AIKENS: "Gullar," which is galah, "gambone." If the Government had gone out when that lying propaganda appeared against the Government, if the Government had been politically perspicacious from the propaganda angle and nailed those lies every time they appeared, there would have been no necessity for the introduction of this Bill; but, they let this lie magnify and magnify until they think that it will affect them at the next State election. Consequently they brought down this abortion of a Bill, call it what you will.

We know, of course, that when the rates are struck on the South Coast—and apparently that is all that matters—or in the Maroochy shire of which the capital is Gullargambone, if I might mention it again, the big men who have walked in and paid exorbitant prices for land will get the benefit of it. As I say, there is one man who will get the benefit of a £3,000 reduction in his valuation and, whether the rate struck is high or low, he is certainly going to get a greater benefit from this Bill than the man on the lower valuation.

So, let me give this Government a word of advice. I do not care whether they remain on the Treasury benches or not, but I do not like a dill; I do not like to associate with a dill and I cannot resist giving him some advice. My advice to this Government is to get out and nail these local authorities the moment they tell this stupid lie. Let the Brisbane City Council carry its own burden. We know they will have a rate rise. We know the Townsville City Council will have a rise in rates. I know there are not many local authorities in Queensland in the same awful financial predicament as the Townsville City Council. We know we are going to get another big jack-up in rates.

The Government should go through the radio stations in Townsville, the columns of the local Press and other propaganda media and say, "You are not going to get your rates jacked-up because of any action of this Government. You are going to get your rates jacked-up because of the awful muddle that your aldermen and councillors have made of your city's finances."

Mr. Mann interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I do not care whether they do or not but I believe in simple honesty. I loathe and detest hypocrisy in its every manifestation and the attitude of the local authorities of Queensland for the last five or six years has been one of slobbering hypocrisy. My own rates have gone up from £18 to nearly £50 and many people have had heavier increases than mine, because they live in the high-rate areas.

I agree that most of the people in Townsville are saying and thinking what the people of the rest of the State are saying and thinking, that these increased rates to their local governments have been caused purely and simply by the high valuations assessed by the Valuer-General's Department. The Government have been stupid enough to allow them to get away with this silly lie for too long. I asked the Minister for Public Works a question with regard to sewerage. The Townsville City Council is even telling the people of the western suburbs area that they are not going to get a free pedestal and free gully traps in the same way as every other citizen of Townsville whose home has been sewered to date, because of the actions of the Government, and that is another lie the Government have not had the brains to nail. There is nothing to stop the Townsville City Council from putting in free pedestals and free gully traps at Pimlico, Currajong, Rosslea Estate and other places out of loan money, just as it did in other work in Townsville out of loan money, but it is passing the buck to the Government and the Government are too silly to do anything about it.

Turning to valuations, I raised the matter the other day and I am not going to labour it. I should like to see some uniformity in valuations. When I was in Townsville over the week-end a man came to see me. His land was valued at £300 by the Valuer-General. He pays his local authority rates on a valuation of £300, but he has received a notice from the Queensland Housing Commission that for the purpose of his rent reassessment the land has been valued by the Housing Commission at £500. If the Valuer-General values the land at £300, surely to goodness the Housing Commission should accept the valuation, but apparently it does not. The hon. member for South Coast said that other Government departments do not accept the valuations of the Valuer-General, so that if it is not possible to get uniformity in acceptance by various departments of the valuations of the Valuer-General, what is the good of having the Valuer-General's Department? I agree with the hon. member for South Coast, and this is about the only point of his speech with which I do agree, when he asked what was the good of having a Valuer-General's Department if government departments do not accept his valuations.

For the very clear, the very calm and, I should say, the very brief reasons I have outlined, I propose to oppose the Bill. I think it is a belated attempt by the Government to catch up with some of the adverse propaganda that has been directed at them by the local authorities. The worst feature, I think, is that the Bill is an attempt once

again to palliate the land-grabbers, the speculators and the various people on the South Coast and the North Coast who gloried in the real estate boom in their particular areas and who now find they are stewing in the juice of their own making.

Dr. DELAMOTHE (Bowen) (4.53 p.m.): In the life of every Parliament there comes a time when the Opposition devotes itself not to rational thought but to political propaganda, and to those listening today the speeches of hon. members opposite would indicate that that time has arrived in the life of the present Parliament. The lack of rational approach by hon. members opposite is indicated by all the loose statements and the loose thinking indulged in by them. The Government are being held up as the Aunt Sally for the Valuer-General's valuations. I do not know any member of the Government or any member of the Cabinet who takes any part whatever in working out valuations in any part of Queensland. The Valuer-General's Department is a department that has been in existence since 1946. The principles of valuation applied by the Valuer-General are to my knowledge the principles that have always been applied.

Mr. Aikens: Why are you not going to accept his valuations?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: If the hon. member is patient he will be led like a little child along the right paths.

One of the loose thoughts cast at the Minister was that the Bill was sectional legislation. I have examined the Bill in very great detail and to my knowledge it applies to every inch of Queensland. I fail to see anywhere in the Bill where any part of Queensland is excluded from the operations of the Bill. For many years the Valuer-General's values were the subject of a little grumbling here and there, but in recent years that grumbling has grown to a mighty roar. That would indicate, if he is using the same basis of valuation, and if he is the same honest man he has always been, that some new factor or factors must have been introduced into the situation.

Mr. Aikens: The local authorities were just using this as an excuse.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: No. It is very important to grasp this. The basis on which the Valuer-General arrived at a valuation is the unimproved value of the land based on sales. New factors have entered into the market price of land which is altogether different from its intrinsic value, and it is the market price or the sale value by which, by law, he may base his estimation of the unimproved value. Two factors have come in to influence that market value. One factor was mentioned by the hon. member for Townsville South, that is, the high cost of development of land in certain areas of Queensland. These high costs have been generated in two ways: one by the intrinsic nature of the land which has been developed, where it has to be drained or filled, or some actual physical improvement has been made to it, and the other factor is the ordinances of various councils that insist that certain improvements shall be made to the land before it may be sold. Obviously, when the land is sold, the subdivider recovers from the purchasers his cost of development. In addition, there is this factor: certain councils in Queensland have introduced all types of improvements for the subdivider to provide, such as kerbing, channelling, footpath formation, bitumen roads, water and electric light reticulation, and even gifts and loans to the finances of the City Council to allow the subdivider to introduce certain development. The cost of all this has to be recovered and, in some cases, I am informed—in parts of Brisbane, for example—this extra cost represents anything up to one-half of the purchase price of the land. The Valuer-General then comes along to value, and according to the Act, he must be guided by the market value or the sale value of the land. If it is a block that has incurred these extra charges, the purchaser has had to foot his share of the extra charges. The unimproved value on which that is based, naturally reflects a special increase. If it is in an area which is an older area of the local authority, where developments have taken place earlier, not at the expense of the purchaser, but out of the common fund of the council, then the market price and the unimproved value will show a much less steep increase. So the steepness of the increase you have to face depends on the area you are in. In different local authority areas and in different sections of the same local authority area you have the origin of these injustices in valuations. The steeper the rise due to these extraneous circumstances the greater the injustice. So the Government in their wisdom have introduced this interim measure to take the steepness of the injustice off while they are seeking a better way to overcome the anomalies permanently. I do not for a moment say that the Bill will level off all the injustices but it will go a long way towards it and I believe it should be approached in that way.

Those who own their own block of land, or who know somebody who does, will be aware of what is regarded as most important about valuations. What is the first thing you do when you get your valuation notice? You say to your next door neighbour, "I got my valuation today. It is so-and-so. How is yours?" If his is what you consider to be in correct relationship to yours, you do not kick up much of a fuss about the size of the valuation. So it is not so much the global sum of the valuation that matters; the important thing is that all valuations should be in correct relationship one with another. What has happened is that the correct relationship, which had been established by the Valuer-General over a period of years and which

developed following appeals from his valuation has, with the introduction of the new factors in the market value, in certain sections and in certain local authority areas, disappeared. The Bill is a genuine and honest attempt to restore, on an interim basis, that correct relativity. If it is viewed in that light it will be seen to be an honest attempt by the Minister to solve the problem that has got to be faced if the injustice of an incorrect relative valuation is not going to be carried over to an incorrect rate assessment. After all, it is not the global sum of valuation that matters; it is what rates, taxes and precepts flow from it. I believe this is an honest, interim attempt to do something to right the wrong relativity that has grown up and I have very much pleasure in supporting the Minister in that attempt.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (5.4 p.m.): While, as has been pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Australian Labour Party in the Chamber, we support one of the principles contained in the Bill—and that is the one whereby a delay of 12 months takes place before the valuation becomes effective—we wholeheartedly oppose the other principles of the Bill. The reason for our support of the 12 months' delay is the machinery operations that are so incidentally necessary in relation to appeals against the Valuer-General's valuation. In the 1959 amendment introduced by the present Government, the appeal procedure was amended to take away the power or authority of magistrates and Supreme Court judges to hear appeals and vest it in the Land Court. Whilst it redirected the right of appeal to the Land Court, at the same time it made provision for the appeal to be taken from a decision of a member of the Land Court to the full Land Appeal Court and, in turn, to the full Supreme Court of Queensland. In order to go through those various avenues of appeal, one would certainly require at least 12 months, so in that respect we agree with the principle contained in the Bill.

I was rather amazed at the observations of the hon. member for Bowen, who said that this was an honest attempt by the Minister to make an improvement in the chaotic conditions in which they find themselves in regard to valuations and the ratings based on those valuations. With all respect to the Minister—and I make no charges against him personally—I have no hesitation in saying that he, as a Country Party Minister, has been bludgeoned into introducing this Bill by the tenacity and forcefulness of the Liberal back-benchers who are controlling the Country Party in this Chamber. It was with no conviction that the Minister introduced this artificial level of valuation for rating purposes. It was not for any bona-fide reason that he introduced it. He introduced it because, as we have read recently and as we have been so perfectly convinced by recent events, the Liberal Party back-benchers in this Chamber are so scared of their political hide that they believe that the introduction of the Bill will be some sort of sop to the electors of Brisbane and the electors on the South Coast.

Mr. Windsor: Speak for yourself.

Mr. BENNETT: I speak for myself. The hon. member who has just interjected is already showing the panic that is in the present political wind by inserting a costly newspaper article in today's "Telegraph" trying to show the electors that he has not gone even though he is satisfied he has lost his seat.

Mr. Windsor: It got through to you.

Mr. BENNETT: To get back to the Bill, it is perfectly obvious that it is Liberal Party members representing electorates in Brisbane and the hon. member for South Coast who have forced the Government, and in turn the Minister, to introduce the Bill. I might say, as a private member who has observed the conduct of the new Minister during his short term of office, that I am most amazed and surprised that he would stoop to what I term a political confidence trick to satisfy the protestations of the Liberal Party back-benchers in Caucus. I had previously considered him to be a man who was strong enough to rely on principles in the Bill, to introduce only amendments that were substantial and which had some legal justification and certainly had some bona-fide background for their introduction.

There is absolutely no justification for the second principle contained in the Bill, that is, to set up the artificial level of half the Valuer-General's valuation. That means absolutely nothing. It will not fool anybody. It will not satisfy the electors or the ratepayers in Brisbane or on the South Coast that the Government have not been responsible for the rating. I am not suggesting that the Government are responsible for the rating, but I was shocked that they had not got the intestinal fortitude to satisfactorily defend themselves at a public forum against the very substantial opinion that prevails against the rating. Instead of having Ministers defending the Valuer-General's valuations, they prefer to introduce a specious Bill that has no legal or substantial background to create an artificial barrier in rating that will cost the taxpayers and ratepayers of Brisbane considerably more money because an army of clerks will have to be employed to re-check the rating valuation and adjust all the books and all the records and all the valuations that will apply under the new Act. In other words, the Valuer-General's staff will submit their valuations to the respective local authorities throughout Queensland. In turn those local authorities will have to employ an army of clerks to re-adjust their valuation books, their cards and records, to record the valuations, and secondly, to keep a second set of records to record the artificial level that has been determined by the Bill

introduced with a view to winning the 1963 elections. That is the only reason for the Bill.

In spite of what some of the Liberal Party members have said—it is too late to deny it now—they want to abolish the Valuer-General's Department. In supporting the Bill they say in effect that it is a vote of no confidence in the Valuer-General. The Minister has indicated already that it is only an interim Bill, designed to palliate the position temporarily, with a view to introducing new measures after the next State elections. That is the purport of his argument. If the vociferous back benchers in his Government are to be believed, as I understand their expressions this afternoon, if by some mischance the Government were returned to office, obviously this interim Bill is designed only to extend temporarily the life of the Valuer-General, whose head is going to be cut off, according to the Liberal Party back benchers, when they get the opportunity after the next State elections, if they get the opportunity.

I certainly agree that there have been appeals against the Valuer-General's determinations. I certainly agree that there has been a certain amount of dissatisfaction with a small percentage of his valuations. But it is a shocking shame that the Minister should allow his Government back benchers to support him in this political trick on the people of Queensland and in the process make a maniac out of the Valuer-General whose integrity should not be queried, whose name should not be introduced into the political football game being vigorously and determinedly played by the Government. The Government should have been honest about the Bill. They should have been in a position to indicate clearly that their responsibility or the responsibility of the Valuer-General applies only to the valuations themselves. The amount of rates extracted on the valuations is a matter for the local authorities throughout Queensland. In spite of what has been said I am absolutely satisfied, confident and content that the Brisbane City Council would be prepared to acknowledge the truth of that submission. They are not endeavouring to convince anybody that the Government's valuations determine the aggregate amount of rates to be extracted from the citizens of Brisbane. The Valuer-General's valuation determines only the proportion of rates to be extracted from each individual ratepayer. The accusation is not to the effect that the Valuer-General has been fraudulent or dishonest. There has been no suggestion that he has been unfair or that he has deliberately valued comparative properties at different values thereby causing a disproportionate burden in comparison one with the other. From the point of view of rating the only purpose of the valuation is to determine the correct amount of rates that should be paid by each ratepayer. Whether the value is £100 or £1,000, it does not matter because the rate level will be determined by the quantum that is required. It does not matter whether the value of the land is fixed at £1, £100 or £1,000. It has not been suggested by the Government that injustice has crept in. The only reason why it would be suggested that there were anomalies in the Valuer-General's Department would be if it was believed that injustices had crept in, because of the unfair comparison of values in any local authority area. That has not been claimed. Therefore, what is the purpose of this artificial level? Is it suggested that the Valuer-General has or will value South Brisbane in a different manner to what he will value Brisbane or Aspley or the South Coast? Is it suggested that the comparative values and principles of valuation that will be applied will be different in each local authority? Is it suggested that he will value my neighbour on different principles to those he will apply to me? If that is the case, then by all means let us amend the law but, if that is not the case, why are we setting up an artificial level?

It has not been suggested that the Valuer-General has not valued honestly. I challenge the Minister to say in his reply whether he believes there has not been an honest valuation. If he has honestly revalued these areas on the correct principle of valuation, while the principle in the Act for rating purposes is on the unimproved value of the land, why introduce this level? It means that those people who own humble allotments, whose valuations have not increased, who have not over the last five years been served by civic amenities such as water, sewerage, electric light, channelling and guttering and the sealing of roads, will be required to shoulder portion of the burden of those who have received them and the value of whose properties have improved thereby. It means that those Liberal back benchers have "conned"—to use a vulgarism—the Minister into introducing the Bill to satisfy those people in the community whom they think they represent, those people who own very valuable property and whose valuations have considerably increased. They will be relieved of a certain proportion of their rates at the expense of the little man who owns only a humble property, the value of which has not improved over the years because the civic amenities have not been taken to his particular locality.

I cannot see any justification for the sectional treatment that has been granted. The word "sectional" has been used freely this afternoon, particularly from the Government benches. I cannot see any reason for the differentiation.

The Minister has stated that, whilst the principle of valuation on unimproved value has stood the test of time for a long period of years, in this modern age it has some weaknesses and has created some anomalies. I readily realise that while the principle of unimproved values has, in the main, stood the test of time and has determined the

formula on which people contributed equitably to rating requirements of local authorities, at the present time, because of certain actions, in the first place by the Government and secondly by local authorities, and because of modern-day development of multi-storeyed unit-dwellings, the principle of unimproved value does not meet the situation for rating purposes. Therefore, it could be truly and substantially argued that it is desirable to explore new methods of valuation. Perhaps new principles could be introduced so that a fair and equitable system of rating could be adopted by local authorities. For instance, there may be an industry set up in an area which is otherwise completely residential. It could be said that it is not fair that that industry, employing perhaps 50 men and making tremendous profits, is not contributing more to the financial burden of running the local authority than the neighbouring residents. I subscribe to that argument but point out that local authorities that have allowed industries to develop in otherwise completely residential areas have only themselves to blame for such an outrageous position.

We have multi-unit buildings such as Torbreck and others. Torbreck is in the area where I reside. Each unit-holder is paying a nominal sum in rates to the Brisbane City Council for the use of what amounts to a household unit.

Mr. Lloyd: Four shillings a year or something like that.

Mr. BENNETT: As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, approximately 4s. a year. I do not think the system is just and fair but that does not point to any weakness in the principles of valuation of unimproved land. The situation comes about because of modern construction and development in the last decade. At one time it was impossible to build a home-unit such as Torbreck. It is now possible and the people who live in those units are enjoying the same amenities as people who in earlier times lived in private dwellings. They have such amenities as water, light, sewerage, gas, completely sealed bitumen roads, kerbing, channelling, footpaths, and so on. It would seem anomalous that their rating should be on the basis of unimproved value of the land, but that is not the fault of the Valuer-General. He is called upon to set the unimproved value of the land.

Mr. Hughes: But he does take earning capacity into account.

Mr. BENNETT: He may take into account the use of the land, but he does not take into account earning capacity.

Mr. Hughes: I read out a document in the Chamber. Read "Hansard."

Mr. BENNETT: Any document read by the hon. member for Kurilpa would not be an authentic document. I am very sceptical about the type of documents he reads out and, if any person ascribed any authenticity to them, he would in all probability end up in one of the law courts.

I was endeavouring to point out that the situation at Torbreck is not the fault of the Valuer-General. It does not point to a fault in the principles of the Act. It is a modern problem that has developed in the present era under present conditions. Government members and the Minister could have applied themselves profitably to a determination of the way in which the valuation of land used for that type of development could be tied in with the present system of valuation. I certainly think that, in arriving at valuations, the use of the land and the earning capacity of the land could be taken into consideration.

Mr. Lloyd: I think the rates at Torbreck would probably amount to about £4 a year.

Mr. BENNETT: Families at Torbreck live in what might be termed a concentrated fashion; nevertheless they live comfortably on land that would otherwise be used for 40 to 60 homes and, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition points out, they are paying about £4 a year in rates. I am not blaming the Valuer-General or the Minister for that situation. The submission I am making is that the Minister should do something to correct the anomaly that has crept in only in recent times. The debate would have been much more constructive if hon. members had exercised their intellect and their application in making submissions about what should be done to amend the Act instead of looking to their political future. They would have been well advised to see that the modern usage of this modern era was embodied in the Bill rather than in making a scapegoat of the Valuer-General.

Most hon. members are aware of the system prevailing with appeals. If you are dissatisfied with your valuation, first of all you lodge an objection, following which you then appear before one of the officers of the Valuer-General's Department. Incidentally, I did that once about my own land and, having had a conference with an officer of the Valuer-General's Department I was perfectly convinced that I was damned lucky the value was not considerably higher, and I did not proceed with my appeal. If you are still dissatisfied following the lodgment of your appeal and the conference with the member of the Valuer-General's Department, you may proceed with your appeal and then to a hearing with the Land Court, and subsequently the Land Appeal Court. Finally, if you are a very courageous litigant, and you are being done an injustice, you may enter an appeal to the Full Court of the Supreme Court. Statistics prove that only 5 per cent. lodge objections, and of that 5 per cent., only 1 per cent. follow up with an appeal. It seems that the chief bone of

contention is not the valuation itself, because, to some extent, following modern commercial practice, it is of advantage to have a reasonably fair valuation. In any case, I agree with the observation that people are disinclined to have their values lowered, because in competition with others in the commercial world they prefer the Valuer-General's valuation to be comparatively high in comparison with others so that on sale they can obtain what they consider to be fair remuneration for the land they are holding. However, there is inequity, in effect, if a householder in one position is paying just as much in rates as an industry next door to him.

For the benefit of the Minister and those who have supported the Bill and have deliberately attacked the Valuer-General and said, in effect, that this is a vote of no confidence in him, I refer the Minister to the decision of the Board of Review brought into existence in 1952 to review the valuations of the local authority area known as the City of Brisbane or the Brisbane City Council. On that occasion the board of review was presided over by Mr. Justice Sheehy, the Central Supreme Court Judge. There was also sitting on the board of review Dr. J. N. Murray who, at the time, was chairman of the Commonwealth Valuation Board and was regarded as the leading authority on valuation, and Mr. C. K. Carmody, a well known valuer from Townsville. In conclusion, they said that they found that the Valuer-General in making his valuations generally did not act on wrong principles nor were his values inequitable on those principles.

(Time expired.)

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Public Works and Local Government) (5.29 p.m.), in reply: At the outset I must emphasise that there is no departure from the principle laid down in the Act. This Bill is merely a temporary rating measure. It does not alter the basis of valuations nor the principle on which those valuations are made.

The hon. member for Carnarvon suggested that we should make the effect of this rating value retrospective by adjusting the rates collected in 1960 and 1961. Surely he realises that that would be impracticable! Some people will have sold their properties and others will have left the district.

Mr. HILTON: I rise to a point of order. I did not make that suggestion. In reply to the Minister's interjection I said that if he wanted to be fair and equitable the same provision should apply to those local authorities who were valued two or three years ago. I did not put it forward as a proposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister to accept the hon. member's explanation.

Mr. RICHTER: I will accept it.

It was said that the Laidley valuations were half the Gatton valuations. They were based on the same values. That was dealt with in the speech of the hon. member for Fassifern.

Mr. Mann: What about the Gatton ones?

Mr. RICHTER: The Gatton valuations were made a long time ago. It is not true that the Laidley valuations were half the Gatton valuations. They were fixed in accordance with the Court determinations in the Gatton appeals.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition gave many reasons why the Bill is necessary, and I agree with him. He suggested it did not go far enough. He recognised that inflation had forced up land values. That is the very reason for the introduction of the Bill. Again I point out to him that the Bill does not deny or interfere with the right of objection or appeal.

The hon. member for Baroona dealt with local government finance and State and Federal financial arrangements. They have nothing to do with the matter.

The hon. member for Redcliffe said that all shires should benefit from the Bill. Those shires whose valuations were proclaimed in 1960 had them based on the values in 1958-1959. That was the inflationary period. There was very little inflation before that.

The Bill is not an amendment of the Valuation of Land Act. It does not alter the principle of valuing adopted by the Valuer-General's Department.

Several speakers introduced the subject of land tax. Land tax has nothing whatever to do with the Bill. Relief has been given and will be given again in a similar amount under another Act.

The hon. member for Burdekin made some interesting observations. Again I point out to him that the Bill abates the problem arising from the payment of inflationary prices for land. We must realise that inflationary pressures have forced up land prices and that is what we have to face. It is the Government's intention to give a fair measure of justice to those most adversely affected by inflation.

All I could get out of the speech of the hon. member for Salisbury was a personal attack on the Treasurer, and I think the Treasurer can take care of himself.

The hon. member for Bowen outlined the position very fairly. He referred to the inflationary influence on land prices. He also referred to the very high cost of the development of newly-developed areas. Let me say at this stage that some excessive profits have been made.

The speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane was purely an endeavour to create dissension amongst Government members. He did that very cleverly, but again I say to him that he is at variance with the Leader of the Opposition, and he certainly does not agree with the Lord Mayor, who

was quoted in "The Sunday Mail" of 10 December, 1961, as saying that he hoped that in the new year a new rating system could be envolved to relieve the "disproportionate burden on the householder." The article goes on—

"He said, however, that any change would have to be made by State Government legislation.

'When all the valuations for Brisbane have been released we will be able to have a good look at the position,' Alderman Jones said.

Alderman Jones said he hoped the Council could 'look into some form of differential rating which gives a more equitable sharing of the financial burden'."

That is exactly what we are trying to do.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. RICHTER: We are trying to relieve the disproportionate burden. From the speeches of hon. members opposite who have taken part in the debate, one thing is obvious—they are opposing the Bill but they are absolutely disunited.

Question—That the motion (Mr. Richter) be agreed to—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 39

Mr. Anderson	Mr. Knox
„ Armstrong	„ Lonergan
„ Bjelke-Petersen	„ Low
„ Campbell	„ Madsen
„ Carey	„ Munro
Dr. Delamothe	„ Nicklin
Mr. Dewar	„ Pilbeam
„ Evans	„ Pizzey
„ Ewan	„ Rae
„ Fletcher	„ Richter
„ Gaven	„ Row
„ Gilmore	„ Smith
„ Harrison	„ Sullivan
„ Hart	„ Tooth
„ Herbert	„ Wharton
„ Hewitt	„ Windsor
„ Hiley	
„ Hodges	
„ Hooper	*Tellers:*
„ Hughes	Mr. Camm
„ Jones	„ Ramsden

NOES, 25

Mr. Adair	Mr. Houston
„ Aikens	„ Inch
„ Baxter	„ Lloyd
„ Bennett	„ Mann
„ Bromley	„ Marsden
„ Burrows	„ Melloy
„ Davies	„ O'Donnell
„ Dean	„ Sherrington
„ Donald	„ Wallace
„ Duffy	
„ Duggan	
„ Gunn	*Tellers:*
„ Hanlon	Mr. Byrne
„ Hilton	„ Tucker

PAIRS

Mr. Beardmore	Mr. Graham
„ Chalk	„ Newton
Dr. Noble	„ Thackeray
Mr. Morris	„ Diplock

Resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

THE CITY OF BRISBANE MARKET ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Forestry) (5.46 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the City of Brisbane Market Acts, 1960 to 1961, in certain particulars."

This is a Bill to amend the City of Brisbane Market Acts which as hon. members know, are designed to facilitate the removal of the Brisbane wholesale fruit and vegetable markets from their present congested site in the inner city to a new site with ample room for future expansion outside the limits of the city proper.

The main purpose of the Bill is to remedy certain inadequacies in the existing legislation and so enable the Brisbane Market Trust to better accomplish its task of planning and establishing the new market to be built at Sherwood Road, Rocklea.

When the new market comes into operation certain fruit and vegetable wholesalers will be prohibited by the provisions of the Acts from continuing to carry on their businesses in their present locations or in any part of the Greater Brisbane area except the new market.

They are the persons who carry on the business of wholesaling fruit and the lighter vegetables in the area of the present wholesale fruit and vegetable markets, and are commonly known as fruit and vegetable agents, as they sell mainly on the grower's behalf on a commission basis.

Because of this prohibition the Act makes it mandatory on the Brisbane Market Trust to provide accommodation for these wholesalers in the new market to be established by it.

There are other wholesalers in the inner city who carry on business in the heavier vegetables such as potatoes, onions and pumpkins. They are generally known as produce merchants.

Whilst there will be nothing in the legislation to prevent these wholesalers from carrying on business in their present premises when the new market opens, it is realised that their trade could be disturbed by the transfer of the other wholesalers to Rocklea, and that they would be anxious to obtain certain accommodation in the new market.

One can visualise wholesalers and retailers securing their supply of fruit and vegetables also desiring to secure their heavy vegetables such as potatoes, onions, and pumpkin at the same time instead of having to obtain the two types of vegetables in different localities.

The Bill accordingly empowers the trust to provide accommodation for them.

The principal Act, while setting out the main purpose of the new market to be the sale and storage of fruit and the lighter vegetables, makes it possible for the use of the market to be extended by Order in Council to heavier vegetables and other farm products. However, it does not specifically authorise the trust to provide accommodation for wholesalers of the heavier vegetables, and this is being remedied in the Bill now under consideration. The Act at present does not make it clear enough.

Mr. Aikens: Are you going to control the terrific profits these agents make?

Mr. MADSEN: That is not a matter that is under consideration in this Bill.

A third class of wholesaler operating in the markets is the country order merchant. He buys fruit and vegetables wholesale from the growers' agents and re-sells wholesale to country clients in fulfilment of orders. I think that practice has been going on for many years. Instead of coming down to Brisbane to buy produce, a country person engages somebody to purchase fruit and vegetables for him and forward them to him.

Mr. Hilton: Subsidiaries of the selling agents?

Mr. MADSEN: They may be in some cases. That would depend on the way in which the buyer arranged his purchases. As some doubt has arisen as to whether a country order merchant is a wholesaler within the meaning of the Act, the Bill will specifically authorise the trust to provide accommodation in the new market for this type of wholesaler. I think that would be office accommodation in the main.

In formulating proposals for the initial development of the new market site at Rocklea, the Brisbane Market Trust has reached the conclusion that provision should be made for the every-day needs of market users and staff who will be engaged on the market sections. These needs would include personal services and requirements as well as home food supplies, etc.

Although the trust has not reached finality on its proposals, the services it has in mind include banks, cafe, post office, service station, wholesale grocery, butcher, hairdresser, chemist, boot repairer, newsagency, hardware, wearing apparel, chain store, etc.

The Bill contains provisions which will enable the trust to provide accommodation for these ancillary and incidental services. They could have a double purpose. Apart from the service to people working in the area and persons who deliver their produce to the markets, rent would be charged for the space made available for these services and that revenue would have some effect on other rentals. We can get other examples of this type. Shops are included in big buildings, the chief purpose being to get revenue.

This may be done by Order in Council authorising the trust to provide accommodation in the market enabling the carrying on of the class or description of business, trade, calling or other occupation, or for the purpose, specified in the Order in Council. The decision will not rest with the trust. It will make a submission and approval will be given by Order in Council. The Bill contains that safeguard. If required by the Order in Council the trust will have to call tenders for any accommodation authorised by the Order in Council. Those requiring space will be given the right to tender for it.

Mr. Duggan: Do you think they would be treated more fairly than tenderers for the Inala hotel?

Mr. MADSEN: That is another matter.

However, where an Order in Council authorises accommodation to be provided for a particular class of business, the trust may be exempted from the calling of tenders where the accommodation is to be made available to a person who was carrying on a similar type of business on 31 December, 1959, in the schedule area—which comprises the area of and surrounding the present markets in Roma Street and Turbot Street. Some people may conduct a catering business in the market. The business would be destroyed with the removal of the market. In certain circumstances those people may be given some preference in establishing a similar business at the new market.

Mr. Bennett: Are you going to allow the old pie-cart to go out there?

Mr. MADSEN: That would be possible, but it would not interest the Market Trust, as it would be on the street. On the other hand, I think most of us have enjoyed a cup of tea at the markets at some time or another and naturally the workers, producers, purchasers and buyers who come to the markets need certain services. However, at the moment, this Bill is only making provision for that.

Where the trust satisfies the Governor in Council that a wholesaler of fruit and the lighter vegetables in the schedule area was, on 31 December, 1959, carrying on any other business in that area, the Governor in Council may authorise the trust to make arrangements with such wholesaler for accommodation to carry on such other business in addition to the accommodation provided for him for use as a wholesaler of fruit and the lighter vegetables. Some wholesaler may be carrying on some other type of business there, he may even be selling fertilisers and sprays, or something similar. Provision is being made for him to take his agency business to Rocklea. This may be done by Order in Council.

The Brisbane Market Trust is authorised by the Bill to invest money surplus to its requirements in securities of the Queensland Government or the Commonwealth Government or any securities guaranteed by either

of those Governments, or on fixed deposit or on the short term money market with an authorised dealer. This is quite a common procedure today with many of the local authorities and other bodies that are holding surplus money. They are allowed to invest in short-term investments and are able to recover a certain amount of interest on the money they have in hand. The trust is financing the preparation of the market site and the erection of market buildings from loan moneys. Because of some delay in the preparation of the site occasioned by City Council road works and the removal of a City Council water main, as well as delay in levelling the site brought about by weather conditions, the trust finds that it has moneys unexpended from loan raisings. I think most of those difficulties will now be overcome and the trust will be in a position to proceed at a very early date. While these moneys are surplus to its immediate requirements, all borrowings raised by the trust will be fully expended on the construction of the market as it proceeds. The trust has already invested some of its surplus funds on fixed deposit and on the short term money market and is thereby earning interest as a set-off against the interest payable on such loan money. The Bill will clear up any doubts as to the authority of the trust to make such investments.

Another matter which is dealt with in the Bill is the position of the representative of the Brisbane City Council on the Brisbane Market Trust. The City Council representative, together with other members of the trust, was appointed for a period of three years from 1 June, 1960. Except by resignation he can be removed from office only for the usual misdemeanours or absenteeism. Following the triennial elections held last year the administration of the Council was changed but the Council representative nominated by the previous administration has remained a member of the trust. The Bill will empower the Brisbane City Council, at its first meeting after any triennial election, to nominate a fresh representative for appointment as a member of the trust in place of the representative who is then holding office as a member of the trust.

Mr. Duggan: What is the position with the present representative? Will they have power to do that with the present one?

Mr. MADSEN: No. This provision will not apply to the appointment that has already been made but may be invoked only after future City Council elections. After the City Council elections it will be necessary for the Council to make its nomination to the trust. Whether it be a continuation of the previous administration or a change, it will be necessary for the Council to make its nomination at its first meeting. Those are matters generally that we have found it necessary to tidy up.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (7.15 p.m.): It seems that the Bill follows the general pattern of most of the measures introduced this session inasmuch as it contains some small, slight amendments. I regret having to say that, apart from the Valuation Bill and one other Bill, this is perhaps the tamest session of Parliament I have attended for the last 25 years. Unquestionably the Government have, because of their absence of positive and constructive legislation, seized upon the opportunity created by the session to introduce purely machinery amendments necessitated by administrative changes and upon the advice of the Public Service.

Moreover, it is rather extraordinary that we should have an amendment of an Act that was introduced so recently. It discloses an absence of intelligent anticipation and planning on the part of those responsible for advising the Government on the requirements of the Brisbane Market Trust. When the Act was introduced we were informed that it was a very earnest attempt to overcome the problem of the congestion of traffic at the existing markets and to provide for the orderly development of new markets to serve the capital. We were told, too, that some gentlemen had made trips overseas and had received the most specialist advice on the requirements of the trust, yet, after a few months, on the introduction of the Bill we learn that what appear to be obvious requirements were overlooked when the legislation was framed. Surely to goodness if it is now necessary—and I do not deny the wisdom of it—it seems to me extraordinary that in so short a time the Government should find that provision was not made to clothe the market trust with the authority to provide accommodation for those who were described by the Minister as being engaged in the heavy side of the produce and vegetable marketing business, that is to say, those dealing in potatoes, pumpkins, onions, and so on. Surely to goodness if you are setting up a fruit and vegetable market you would expect to have potatoes, pumpkins, onions and the like sold there. If the planning is so deficient, how are we to know that the allocation of land at the market site at Sherwood is sufficient for requirements?

Mr. Herbert: Rocklea.

Mr. DUGGAN: Sherwood Road, Rocklea. When the legislation was introduced we were told there was ample room for extensions. It is fortunate that there is a good deal of waste land available there for reclamation purposes to enable these requirements to be met. Not only are we faced with the need to make provision for the types of agents that have already been mentioned but also we must provide accommodation for the country agents. Again, they have been operating in Brisbane for many years, as the Minister would well know. Surely his advisers would have known that they would need some accommodation.

Then we have the ancillary services, if they can be so described—the caterers, banks, and various other people. It seems to me that, despite the exhortations of the Minister that ample provision was being made for this sort of thing when decisions were being made to embark upon the construction of markets at this allegedly impressive site, there has not been the consideration given to these matters that one would have expected. It seems to me to characterise so much of the Government's legislation. Either they are so preoccupied with their internal troubles and squabbles that they cannot apply themselves to the task of examining in detail the requirements of the government of the State as a whole or they do not apply themselves in the proper way to these matters. I know that over a period of years very often defects in an Act reveal themselves and there is need to take appropriate action to correct those deficiencies. If it were not for things of this sort arising from time to time, I suppose there would be no need for Parliament to be convened as frequently as it is.

Mr. Hughes: The Legislation is not perfect, but the Labour administration wanted to shift the markets from their present site.

Mr. DUGGAN: I cannot canvass that now, but quite a good argument could be advanced along those lines. However, the Government have taken action and, having voiced our protest, we accept the view that at least it was Government policy and they accepted the responsibility for introducing the legislation. We can only hope that it will be development along the lines envisaged by the Government, but it is rather soon after the introduction of the legislation for action to be taken to clothe the authority with the power outlined by the Minister. If the Government's general legislative programme is to be approached in the same cavalier fashion as the matter under discussion, it is no wonder we have to meet so often for the purpose of dealing with purely machinery amendments.

Giving an authority power to invest in various types of loans is apparently a new Government policy, and provision for that is contained in the Bill. We have noticed many similar amendments recently. Hospitals boards, fire brigades boards and other semi-governmental authorities have been given similar power. I am not quibbling very much about that. However, today we heard an admission from the Minister that, independent of the authority of Parliament, funds have been invested in this way. That is another indication that the authority of Parliament is being held more and more in disrespect, because we are making more and more legislation retrospective. Recently the Minister for Health and Home Affairs admitted that allowances had been paid in contravention of the Act, or, if they were not in contravention of the Act, there was certainly no authority for their payment. He stated quite frankly that the amendment sought legislative authority to ratify that decision. It is only when Ministers make such admissions or they are forced from them by interjection that we become aware of some of the things that are happening without the sanction of Parliament. If Parliament is to be asked to vest power and authority in certain people to do things, it should be done in the correct way. I have no objection to giving authorities power to invest idle funds more remuneratively than they can invest them at present, and nobody on this side of the Chamber has offered the slightest objection to that principle, but I do not like the retrospective provisions.

There is a reference to tenders being called, and some measure of priority is to be given to those who have been affected by the removal of the markets. I think that we canvassed these matters when the original legislation was brought down, when the Minister indicated that 10 years' protection would be given to some of the people who were moved compulsorily or who, if they were not moved compulsorily, would see their business dwindle away because other agents would be out at Rocklea. He said a mandate would be given to go out to this area. There are some features of these protective provisions that also need examination. The question arises of how far they are going to protect the agents out there for a period of 10 years against competition from other people. All sorts of circumstances might arise during the 10 years that will change the needs of those agents. One of my colleagues may draw attention to some developments that might well mean that the Minister will have to look into these matters. If it is necessary to clothe the Governor in Council with power to decide what type of business should go out there, surely it is not unreasonable to make provision also for cases that were not apparent at the time when the legislation was introduced. Ten years is quite a long period of protection. The Government only recently rejected an application for the registration of builders on the ground that they did not want to make it a close preserve for builders who were able to comply with the legislation and prevent other people from joining their ranks. I am not expressing an opinion one way or the other as to the merits or demerits of the Government's decision in that regard but the fact remains that they did reject the application. It indicates that they did not want it to be a close preserve, but in the case of the markets they are virtually doing that with the agents. Much could happen in 10 years to justify re-examination. The hon. member for Salisbury will direct attention to a specific matter in that connection.

Mr. Windsor interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: One does not need great imaginative powers to find material to condemn the Government. It is very easy to condemn them.

Mr. Windsor interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: With your permission, Mr. Taylor, I will reply to the hon. member. I am sure you are in a very generous mood. I feel some measure of satisfaction out of the little bit of needling I gave the hon. member the other night. He spent £40 or £50 as the result of what I said. A little bit of criticism in the right place at the right time does have some results. At least the newspapers reaped a little benefit from my remarks the other night.

I have no serious quarrel with the proposed amendments but it is a matter for regret that the need for these provisions was not anticipated before. I am surprised at the Minister because he is generally on the ball. He is one of the few Ministers whom we have little occasion to criticise. My remarks are made mainly for the purpose of warning him to gird his loins and not to become too complacent over there because time is running out. Complacency can be a very dangerous condition to lapse into. The Minister knows that I am most anxious about his personal welfare. I should not like to see him follow the pattern of some of his colleagues. Therefore he may exercise greater vigilance that sufficient recommendations are made to him. There is nothing we can quarrel about particularly except, as I say, there was such a regrettable lack of appreciation of the requirements at the time when the original legislation was introduced that the Minister is now required to repair those omissions. I again express the hope that the market trust will have the facilities and resources to meet the demands made upon it. If it can the Minister will have been extricated from the dilemma brought about by the lack of planning in the initial stages.

In his classic style the Minister will acknowledge these representations and perhaps give some laudable explanation in his reply. If he does that in his usual manner perhaps we shall let the matter rest at that point. If he chooses to engage in some provocative answers, of course, we may find the occasion to say something more at a later stage. I take this opportunity of voicing my protest on the lines already mentioned.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (7.29 p.m.): Like my Leader I feel that the Bill follows the familiar pattern of the legislation that has been introduced in the life of this Parliament. One can almost assume that having exhausted themselves of constructive thinking the Government are now mopping up before they have to face up to the electors next year.

In introducing the Bill the Minister said that one of its main purposes was to tidy up certain weaknesses and defects that had appeared in the original legislation. I feel that there are defects in the legislation and I should like to refer particularly to a matter on which the Leader of the Opposition touched—the protection clause in the Act. Those who have considered the establishment of the market trust and the transfer of the markets to the Rocklea area, know that because of loss of business the Government thought that some guarantee should be given to these persons and they have seen fit to introduce a provision to give ten years' protection to these traders. Anybody who was not in the business of wholesaling fruit and vegetables prior to 1959 cannot now obtain a section in the new markets.

I speak on this particular aspect because in my electorate there is a large and flourishing grape-growing area as well as a considerable number of small crop farmers.

The grape-growers in the area this year face one of the grimmest years since they established the industry there. One contributing factor, of course, has been the very unseasonable weather that has obtained during the growing of the grapes. It must be realised that these growers, as a result of many defects in the railing system between the States, the inclement weather and for other reasons, are faced with the prospect either of walking off their farms or taking other employment during the slack period. It will be difficult for them to obtain alternative employment at the present time. Consequently a very flourishing industry could be seriously affected under these conditions.

When these growers first approached me on the matter they invited me to view some of the farms. I visited one in particular where I saw 600 cases of grapes rotting on the ground because they could not be marketed economically. At that time grapes were bringing 7s. a case on the Sydney market and as it cost the growers 2s. to pack the case, it was not economical to send them to Sydney. The price of grapes on the Sydney market at that time was between 1s. 10d. and 2s. a lb.

They sought some solution of their problem because they knew that if those circumstances continued the grape-growing industry could well die out completely. I suggested that their first step should be to form an association and thus be able to approach the different departments on a common front and place their problems before them.

Mr. Wharton: Why didn't they join the A.L.P.?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I point out to the interjector that I have a true appreciation of the problems of these people and I am unlike the hon. member who, judging from the standard of his interjection, would appear to be in the grip of the grape. An unintelligent interjection like that during a discussion on such a problem only indicates that the hon. member knows full well that he will not have the political responsibility next year, of helping to solve the troubles of these people.

I spoke to these people about ways and means of helping their industry. During

the several discussions I had with them they suggested that on their behalf I should approach the relevant authorities to see if they could form themselves into a co-operative society and open a section in the new markets. In that way they would be able to deal through the co-operative and avoid the expense entailed in marketing produce through agents. They could supply the Brisbane market and consumers would get grapes at a lower price. By marketing in that way they could get a better price than the price they were getting at that time.

On making those representations to the market trust I was informed that, as they were not in the business prior to 1959, they could not obtain a section in the new markets. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that there is some justification for the protection of persons who have been engaged in the business and who want to transfer to the new area. Their rights must be protected. The Government claim to believe in free enterprise. That being so, it seems anomalous that the new markets to be established at Rocklea will cater only for the marketing of produce by agents who are at present operating at the municipal markets. It leads me to believe that no provision has been made for an extension of trading facilities to other than persons now engaged in the business. How can the Government on the one hand say they believe in free enterprise and on the other set up by legislation what can be more or less construed as a monopoly of existing distributors, free of competition from other persons who seek to set themselves up in business?

The Minister has said that the new markets can be regarded as the ultimate in marketing sites, that there is plenty of room for expansion. We would be very shortsighted if we designed our markets without envisaging development in the years to come.

Mr. Wharton interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Perhaps the hon. member has not been present during my speech.

Mr. Wharton: I have been waiting for you to say something worthwhile.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The hon. member should shake himself and wake up.

The problem of the grape-growers is a very serious one. Several of them told me that on an average farm of approximately five acres the expense for the growing season, that is, the cost of insecticides, fertilisers, and other materials that go to make for the successful growing of grapes, but not taking into account wages, is something like £700 a year. So serious have conditions been this season that many growers are receiving a gross return for their year's work of only £500, or in other words, £200 less than their expenses. The effect on the industry could be a very lasting one. These growers have merit in their case. They believe that they can market their fruit by establishing a section in the markets and will be able to protect their returns and supply fruit to the public at a cheaper rate. They will be supplying a good, healthful food at a more satisfactory price than is paid at retail stores when related to the amount that the growers receive from their agents.

As the Leader of the Opposition said earlier there is room for revision of the decisions made when the legislation was introduced in 1960. I know the Minister is very placid and it is very difficult to assess what he thinks. However, as he has seen fit to bring down the amendments under discussion and realises that there are weaknesses in the original legislation, I am sure that as a result of the case I have presented to him he will again look at this 10-year protection for established agents. I think there must be cases similar to the one I have outlined, and if the Minister is deeply concerned about such cases he may pay heed to the information I have put before him.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (7.42 p.m.): Speaking briefly on this Bill——

Mr. Hughes: Hear, hear!

Mr. BENNETT: As a result of that comment I may speak for a little longer.

I was about to make the observation that the Government are ever too ready to rush legislation through the House. As my Leader pointed out, very often it is ill-conceived legislation. Because it is not properly prepared it has many loopholes and is not comprehensive; it causes a great deal of expense to the State and a great deal of inconvenience in the practice of the law. Since 1957 the statutes, in particular the Traffic Acts, and other Acts, have been amended not once a year, but sometimes two or three times a year. That is a clear indication that the Government are preparing legislation without giving proper thought to all the problems involved or intended to be covered by the Bill. The hon. member who interjected would be well advised to consider carefully any other proposals that could well be included in this measure so that another Bill to amend the same Act will not have to be introduced in the near future.

The principle in the Bill is to provide further amenities at the new markets. Understandably the scheme to complete the new markets has not been proceeding with expedition. It is some time now since the original proposal was announced and the trust appointed. As the proposal has been adopted as a satisfactory and suitable one for development, it should have proceeded with much greater expedition. I have no doubt that by the elections next year the scheme will still be under construction and there will still be many problems to be considered and many loose ends to be tied up.

The Minister mentioned that the Bill was designed to allow produce merchants, wholesalers and others and those associated with

the activities of the markets in an ancilliary manner to apply for positions with the trust at the new location. I have no doubt that many will desire to do so but I do not think the Bill will carry out in its entirety the intention of the Legislature to remove the markets completely from the present position to the new position. The expressed intention was to remove wholesale trading in fruit and vegetables entirely from the Turbot Street area. The original legislation made no provision whatsoever for completely removing the markets from the Turbot Street area to the new location at Rocklea and after listening to the Minister today I feel quite sure that the Bill will not do so, either. It would seem to me that, as it was the original intention of the Government to remove completely, and to eradicate, the markets from Turbot Street and neighbouring areas, the job should have been promptly done and completed by introducing a comprehensive measure to shift all operators from the locality.

What is going to happen? It was argued by the Government when the Act was introduced that the existing markets were unsatisfactory. I think it will generally be conceded that the buildings have become old and dilapidated and unsuitable for modern trading. Furthermore, they create a traffic bottle-neck. In the main it was argued, with a great deal of wisdom and with a certain amount of approbation from most sections of the community, that the markets were certainly an unhealthy blot on the commercial life of Brisbane in their location at Turbot Street, Roma Street, the railway goods yards and the railway station.

Mr. Hughes: You did not say that when you were in the council.

Mr. BENNETT: At least I am consistent. The hon. member for Kurilpa was not game to say anything when he was in the council because he happened to be working under a Lord Mayor, Alderman Groom——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will be pleased if the hon. member will get back to the markets.

Mr. BENNETT: My brain became clouded for a moment because when I accepted the interjection from the hon. member for Kurilpa I immediately thought of the fruit stall he was operating to his own disadvantage at McDonnell & East's. How he got in the fruit stall I do not know.

I was endeavouring to point out that the Government should, when introducing legislation, have it completely tidied so that all of the problems that will creep in as a result of the changed methods will be satisfactorily attended to in the initial stages rather than have to be attended to like a patchwork quilt and make a pak-a-pu ticket of every Act they introduce. It is obviously the desire of the Government to remove all the wholesale marketing of fruit and vegetables completely from the present markets area. The Act did not do that and from what the Minister has said the Bill does not do it and he does not intend to do it.

Mr. Madsen: Are you quite sure about that?

Mr. BENNETT: If he does intend to do that, so much to the good, but I do not think the Minister indicated it in his introduction. If the Bill does that, it must contain compulsory acquisition provisions for those who are not operating on City Council land or who are not operating on land owned by the Crown. In other words, those who are operating on freehold land owned by themselves could be covered by the Act but suitable compensation provisions will have to be inserted in the Act for the compulsory acquisition of that land. From the interjection of the Minister, it appears that he intends to do that. Obviously, if it is intended to shift the markets they are either shifted or they are not. If it is not made mandatory for all operators to shift, we cannot eliminate all the bad practices. If we make it possible for the operators who do not come under the trust at present to come under the trust as well as to operate at Turbot Street and Roma Street, where they are on freehold, they will certainly take advantage of that opportunity. They will operate at the new markets at Rocklea, and they will continue to operate at Roma Street and Turbot Street. In other words, they will have two avenues for the conduct of their business. This will maintain to some extent, perhaps to quite a large extent, the traffic hazard and the inconvenient market operations that now exist. It will be found that the Brisbane City Council, in any future planning proposal, will not be in a position to develop the area adequately if privately-owned markets continue operating there. To do the job properly, if it is intended to shift the markets they should be shifted in their entirety. If they are shifted in their entirety, the Minister must be given powers—from what he said, it appears that he is being given those powers—of compulsory acquisition and provision should be made for adequate and justifiable compensation to be paid. It reminds me of the City of Brisbane (Town Plan) Act, which makes provision for a town plan but makes no provision for adequate arterial roadway development in Brisbane and does not make adequate provision for just and fair compensation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member may be drawing an analogy, but I ask him to confine himself to the Bill.

Mr. BENNETT: I was just making a comparison, but I certainly have the utmost respect for your ruling. I was pointing out that the Minister, in order to bring in a Bill that will be composite, should name a definite time within which the Government are prepared to take over the markets in Brisbane and the time within which claims for compensation can be made. Obviously, if the legislation is to be left in the air, if no strict

time limit is laid down making the Government's attitude definite, clear, and concise, it will go on ad infinitum. The commercial interests in the area certainly will not improve their buildings. They will not even do adequate maintenance on them—of course, many of them do not do it now—and they will continue to operate under the anxious uncertainty of not knowing when the Government are going to acquire their premises or, if they do, what they are going to pay. In the case of compulsory acquisition, once the Government express their decision to take over private property compulsorily it is only fair and proper that they should make a definite decision in relation to time, place, and the method by which compensation will be determined.

Mr. Hughes: I hope that applies to the town plan.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BENNETT: Unfortunately Mr. Taylor will not allow me to discuss the town plan. I know it would embarrass the hon. member if he did allow me to do so.

I think that the Minister should be able to give hon members an assurance that all those who are operating at the markets at present and who wish to tender in terms of the trust for a position in the new markets will be given consideration on a satisfactory basis in keeping both with the case law on tendering and the acknowledged custom in relation to tendering.

It has come to my notice recently in relation to one matter of great importance to the State of Queensland that the Government departed radically from the law as it applies to the acceptance of public tenders. I know that the usual rountine is followed and has been followed by the Government when they are offering some Government property or privilege to the public. The advertisement normally includes a statement to the effect that the highest or any other tender will not necessarily be accepted, but the clear-cut law by cases decision and otherwise is to the effect that if you do overlook or pass over the highest tender under such circumstances, you have to have very sound, convincing and substantial reasons for overpassing that highest tender.

Opposition Members: What about the Inala hotel?

Mr. BENNETT: I am perfectly convinced that no such substantial reasons have been given to Parliament for overlooking the highest tender for the Inala hotel.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill or I will be obliged to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. BENNETT: I shall certainly do that.

The Minister said the Bill makes provision for the tendering for positions in the trust in this new location. I am exhorting him when considering the Bill to endeavour to persuade his Cabinet colleagues that they should follow the accepted practice in law in relation to tendering. In view of what has happened in the past and to avoid creating unsavoury feelings in the minds of the public and the taxpayers of Queensland I am exhorting him to write into the Bill the unwritten but acknowledged principles of the law in relation to the acceptance of tenders. If by statute those principles, as we know them in law, and which are recognised throughout the law courts of the British Commonwealth of Nations, are written specifically into the Bill nobody will have justification for saying that he did not understand the law relating to the acceptance of tenders or alternatively that he was under some misconception or misapprehension about their acceptance. Surely there is no valid reason why that should not be done. I am sure that personally the Minister would desire to write into any Bill that he introduced all the provisions that would safeguard his Government against any malicious suggestions about the Government's integrity. As it would be at comparative little cost to the Government it would be highly desirable to safeguard his Government's reputation by having those specific provisions in relation to the law of tendering written into the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. member has established that point. It is not necessary to repeat it three times. The hon. member is repeating himself.

Mr. BENNETT: I might be, but I think it is an important point. When you are dealing with important points sometimes repetition is a good thing. There is one point I have not made in relation to tendering. These positions in the trust will be of great value not only to those marketeers presently operating in the markets—I call them that as a general conclusion—but also those prospective wholesalers and ancillary workers who would desire to obtain a position in the trust. A position in this trust obviously will be of tremendous value to the happy and successful tenderer who is accorded such a position. It will mean not only a livelihood to him for the rest of his life but a very comfortable and bountiful one for his family for generations to come. Some will be in a position to, and no doubt will be prepared to offer large sums for their position in the market and I should like the Minister to indicate on what basis preference will be given. Will he give preference to the existing operators who have control of a position in the existing markets, or will it be what might be termed "open slather", and "the best man wins"? Will he allow one of the existing marketeers to tender and at the same time continue to operate in the existing areas, thereby giving himself an opportunity of getting a position in the trust and continuing to operate at the existing location?

I feel that the Minister should clarify those propositions, if, in fact, provision for them is not included in the Bill.

Finally, I feel that under the City of Brisbane Marketing Act not only should the wholesale dealers who are operating in the markets at present be given an opportunity of taking a position in the trust but that, if any group of farmers or, for that matter any individual farmer, wish to tender for a position in the trust and if there is room available in the new building, they or he should be given every consideration, because it would be not only in the interests of the man who is tilling the soil and whose hard toil and sweat is providing the products for sale in the fruit and vegetable markets but would also give the public the opportunity perhaps to get fruit and vegetables at a lower price.

Mr. Lloyd: Have you heard any stories about favouritism being given to some produce merchants?

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, that is why I have been, in the Chairman's opinion, perhaps a little bit tedious on the details of tendering. I have been reliably informed that, running true to form, this Government will give certain operators preferential treatment over others who are not persona grata with the Government. I apologise to you, Mr. Taylor, for being perhaps a little tedious, but I want this Government to lift themselves from the attitude they have adopted in the past of giving kindly treatment to supporters. I feel that, if the man on the land, the genuine farmer who works hard, was given the opportunity of marketing his own fruit from a position in the new markets, it would be to his advantage and to the advantage of the purchasing public who have to pay considerably more for his product than he is paid for it. Undoubtedly the high prices have been forced upon the public by the attitude of the Government and that of the Commonwealth Government in relation to costs generally. Nevertheless, if positive action were taken in matters of this nature, by the Minister and his Government—in this case, in the control of prices—it would give the public an opportunity to get these commodities at a reasonable and satisfactory figure.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to cease departing from the Bill. If he has completed his remarks, I should be glad if he would resume his seat.

Mr. BENNETT: I certainly have not completed my remarks. I felt that my submission on prices could have a direct bearing on the policy adopted for the control of these markets and is very apposite.

Mr. Windsor interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BENNETT: In conclusion I express the hope that the Minister will not rush the Bill through all stages merely for the purpose of having something to talk about during this session. He should be activated only by the desire to introduce legislation of value to the State.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (8.6 p.m.): This is the second occasion on which the Act has been amended. I am a little hazy about the Minister's explanation of some of the principles of the Bill. He said that, although agents who handle heavy lines of vegetables such as pumpkins, potatoes, and so on, would be allowed to operate in the city of Brisbane, it would be necessary for the trust to provide them with office accommodation at the new market site.

Mr. Madsen: No, space accommodation.

Mr. HILTON: When the Act was introduced originally the Minister clearly stated that agents handling heavy lines of produce and vegetables would be allowed to operate as they are operating at present. The Minister informed us today that the trust will have to provide them with accommodation but I thought he implied that the accommodation would be office accommodation only.

Mr. Madsen: No. I was only referring to buyers who required office accommodation.

Mr. HILTON: I am still a little hazy about it. Is it the intention of the Government that the sale of heavy lines of vegetables will be at the markets, or is that not the intention?

Mr. Madsen: Not at this stage. We are going a step further than we went originally, in providing for the heavy vegetables.

Mr. HILTON: For the sale of potatoes, pumpkins, onions, and so on, accommodation will have to be provided at the new market?

Mr. Madsen: If they so desire.

Mr. HILTON: I think a definite policy should be laid down. If I remember correctly the subject of additional stands at the market was discussed when the Act was introduced, and the clear intimation then was that all available stands woud be taken up and that it was very unlikely that any new agents would be licensed because of the fact that there would be no accommodation for them. Now we find that, instead of extra stands being given to people who will be selling fruit and vegetables, accommodation will be given to other people who are selling heavier lines of produce.

Mr. Madsen: In the main they would be the same people.

Mr. HILTON: I take it that some of the agents in town who sell fruit also sell pumpkins, potatoes, and so on, but if a restriction is going to be placed on the number of agents at the new market who sell on behalf of growers, and at the same time accommodation is going to be made available for the sale of heavy produce, there would seem to be some inconsistency between the provisions of the Bill and the policy outlined by the

Minister for the trust when the legislation was first introduced. I think that matter requires amplification.

If I understood the Minister correctly he said that, if the Order in Council issued by the Government required the calling of tenders for accommodation, tenders would be called, but that if the Order in Council did not stipulate the calling of tenders they need not be called. I want to know if the trust at this stage envisages the creation of another supermarket in a market that is essentially a fruit and vegetable market. No-one is arguing against the creation of a market at the new site. Does the trust at this stage visualise that in order to obtain greater revenue it should be given power to create a supermarket? Under those powers firms could combine to create another supermarket imposed on our fruit and vegetable market. From what the Minister said, this Bill will empower the trust to act along those lines. No-one would quibble with the policy of allowing people to cater for certain lines of business at the market, such as a pie stall, or something else, to meet the requirements of the people who go to the market. However, if the Bill is to enlarge that principle to empower the trust to recommend to the Government that it be allowed to create a supermarket to trade in everything, I think that is wrong. I believe that it should be clearly stated in the legislation that the trust will not be empowered in any circumstances to engage in, or promote, a supermarket there such as we have seen established in other parts of the city of Brisbane. If that policy is pursued, it will create more congestion and would operate against the best interests of the marketing of fruit and vegetables in the new market. I hope there is no such provision in this legislation.

I gathered from the Minister's remarks that an Order in Council can be issued—and no doubt such an Order in Council would follow upon a recommendation made by the trust—in regard to the conduct of certain business out there. This may be the thin end of the wedge. I believe, with all due respect to the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, that that body is anxious to increase its commercial activities rather than concentrate solely on the interests of the growers of fruit and vegetables. I say that because we find at present it is marketing aerated waters that are not derived, as it were, from the produce of fruit-growers. Pineapple juice is well and good, and citrus fruit drinks, and soft drinks of a like nature, but when we find that it is embarking upon the manufacture of ginger ale and other cordials that have no relation whatever to primary produce, that is to the detriment of other business concerns and indicates that the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing is bent on becoming a big commercial undertaking rather than concentrating on the interests of fruit and vegetable growers.

During the debate, other hon. members have said that co-operative fruit societies will not be allowed to function at the new market. That is a great pity. The wholesalers to whom hon. members concerned referred do not make any direct contribution to the welfare of the growers by acting in that capacity. As a matter of fact, I think the Minister agreed with an interjection I made that in many cases those wholesalers are mere subsidiaries of selling agents in the markets. Undoubtedly that is the practice: selling agents have subsidiaries so that when fruit is selling at the cheapest price they can buy it up and retail it through their own shops or through their wholesale agents. Before any move is made to allow such activities the situation should have very careful attention. Every endeavour should be made by the Government to try to stop the nefarious practice of agents having auxiliaries that acquire the fruit when it is sold cheaply, at the expense of the growers, and make large retail profits that are the order of the day with fruit and vegetables sold in the city of Brisbane and elsewhere. I have very strong feelings on this and I hope that, with the advent of the new markets, the position will be so organised that those nefarious practices that have crept into the marketing of produce will be eliminated as far as possible. I believe the idea of creating the new markets was to facilitate the sale of fruit and vegetables in the interests of growers in the main but those practices that have crept in are not calculated to function in the best interests of the growers. I may be departing a little from the principles outlined by the Minister, and I do not want to offend in that way, but when he said wholesalers were to be catered for in a particular manner under the terms of the legislation——

Mr. Madsen: May be.

Mr. HILTON: May be. We accept that but, when it is a recommendation of the trust, we are not so naive as to fail to realise that the "may" will be converted into "shall." Representing an important section of fruit-growers and knowing what has gone on and what is going on, I feel that I should stress those aspects so that the wholesalers who may, according to the Minister, be catered for in a particular manner in the markets will not have further facilities afforded to them to rake off at the expense of the growers as they have been doing and as they have done in recent months. Again I say that, because a few months ago we had the spectacle of thousands of cases of luscious stone fruit not being sent to the market because of depressed prices, but at the same time these wholesalers and many retailers were making extraordinary profits. That is no exaggeration. I know of orchardists in my district alone who allowed practically 1,000 cases of peaches to rot on the ground because the price they were receiving was uneconomic.

Mr. Lloyd: Do you think the Government have sufficient supervision over the market trust in the establishment of the market?

Mr. HILTON: If the Government have not sufficient supervision, they should see that sufficient supervision is exercised. If the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing extended its activities in that way instead of concentrating on commercial activities it could be a good force working on behalf of the growers. I do not decry it entirely. It has done a good job in many respects, but I can see the tendency to create a monopoly creeping into the whole organisation. I see a tendency to concentrate on commercial activities not directly related to the marketing of fruit and vegetables and I think that is to be deplored.

I sound this note of warning because for these industries to expand there must be a satisfactory marketing system. When the new markets are established, irrespective of maintaining the rights of existing agents, some provision should be made for co-operative fruit societies to function as well as the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing and other agents. That will mean more competition and will destroy the totalitarian aspect that is developing within the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing and bring cheaper fruit and vegetables to the consumers and better prices to the producers.

I intend to study the provisions of the Bill in detail in conjunction with the Act and I hope that the aspirations which should lie behind the creation of the new markets will be fully realised and that this measure will not in any way impair the functioning of the markets along the lines I have indicated.

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Forestry) (8.19 p.m.), in reply: It would be very difficult for me to deal with all the questions that have been raised but let me say at the outset that, if we have been a little hurried in dealing with this legislation, at least the previous Government could not be charged with having dealt with it hurriedly because it took them 25 years to do nothing about it at all. They could not even make the decision to remove the markets despite the fact that the matter had been dealt with by various committees and various recommendations had been made. This Government could at least make up their mind about entering into a new field. It is not surprising that we have not covered every aspect. I make no apology for that. If there is anything to correct, let us be big enough to correct it.

Mr. Lloyd: I gave one case to you that you could not correct. It related to the allocation of space, and it is still not corrected.

Mr. MADSEN: I do not know much about that, but I may be able to investigate it later. I was very surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. member for South Brisbane. It was perfectly obvious that although he was in perhaps a better position than anyone else to examine the earlier legislation thoroughly, he knows less about it than many people, because most of the matters that he raised were dealt with in that legislation. The Government set out originally to make provision at Rocklea for the lighter fruit and vegetables. The hon. member for South Brisbane referred to acquisition. Where does acquisition come into it? We are not acquiring land. We are not acquiring anything. We are merely telling the agents that after a certain date they cannot sell fruit and vegetables on the market site here, and in lieu of that we are giving them protection for 10 years.

Mr. Bennett: The point I was making was that if you do not acquire their markets here they will operate in both places and you will defeat your purpose.

Mr. MADSEN: The hon. member is displaying his ignorance of the Act when he says that, because I could put in half the night explaining to him the provisions of the original legislation that he should perhaps have spent a little more time studying himself. These matters are all provided for in previous legislation. After a certain date they will not be permitted to operate in that space. If their land is freehold land, they can do what they like with it. The question of acquisition does not enter into it.

We are trying to get on with the job. We tried to deal with fruit and light vegetables first, and we endeavoured to establish facilities for people who would no longer be able to operate in the area described in the schedule to move there first and to have 10 years' protection as compensation. That was provided in the original legislation. As these people may be at a disadvantage, we are now bringing in provisions to cover the heavier vegetables. We have heard talk of all the people who are inconvenienced. I have gone to the trouble of finding out who they are, their numbers, and what they have been doing. Broadly speaking, the people who are handling the heavier fruit and vegetables are really produce merchants, and they have asked for this amendment. They realise that a person who goes to Rocklea or Sherwood Road to buy lighter fruit and vegetables will not be able to buy potatoes, onions, and things of that sort, also, and that it will be somewhat inconvenient for a buyer to visit two areas to get what he requires. They believe that they should remove that section of their business there too. There is provision—the hon. member for South Brisbane should have known this if he had done a little research——

Mr. Bennett: If you read the Vitosh case that went to the High Court in 1954, I think it was, you will find that the court unanimously said that you cannot kill a use of land unless you pay compensation for it.

Mr. Nicklin: Who are you going to compensate?

Mr. Bennett: The owners.

Mr. MADSEN: Everyone knows that anyone with land in that area can sell it with considerable advantage today. There is no

doubt about that. Anyone would realise that. I shall quote the paragraph that the hon. member talks about. Section 25 (1) of the Act states—

> "The Governor in Council may from time to time by Order in Council declare that the public market established under this Act may be used for the sale and storage of any farm products or other commodities and thereupon the public market may be used for such purposes."

It is as plain as it can be yet the hon. member, who is in a very good position to understand the Act, comes forward and makes the rather silly statements he has made.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. MADSEN: This matter is far too important to listen to that sort of yabber. The legislation was designed in the first place to handle fruit and light vegetables. It is a start. The market area probably will eventually handle the whole of the fruit and vegetables, both light and heavy, and also the farm produce as well. It will probably take years before all those things are done. This is regarded as being a first step to establish the market out there. When the matter was first raised some of the agents had some doubts about whether they wanted to go out or whether it was in the best interests of the industry to go out. Today most of them cannot get out there quick enough. They realise the great advantages to be gained by going out there. That is the word I get today. People who came to me a year ago wondering whether it was the right step are coming to me and saying, "We are very anxious to have the new market established." There is all this talk about compensating the agents and so on but that has all been taken care of in the previous legislation. I do not intend to deal with that because it is all there for hon. members to read.

The hon. member for Salisbury put up a case for the grape-grower. It is very easy to take advantage of a debate of this kind to put up a case for the grape-grower. To see whether there is anything to be gained by it, the hon. member should ask himself a simple question. Does he think that the grape-growers should ask for space at the markets to deal with a product that is only to be marketed for a few weeks in the year——

Mr. Sherrington: I said that they were grape-growers and small-crop farmers. They would have produce the whole year round.

Mr. MADSEN: That is possible, but I suppose we have had those sort of people for a long time. They have been operating in the outskirts of Brisbane for years. If it so happens that we have not made provision for them in the legislation as it stands, if there is a case to be considered I am certain that the Government will not be behind the door——

Mr. Sherrington: But they will be broke by the time it happens.

Mr. MADSEN: We hear those stories. What about the wheatgrowers? What about all the wheat that was destroyed last year? I am somewhat surprised to hear hon. members opposite weeping for people on the land. There were no tears shed for the landholders in their day. Now we can see the tears running down their faces. They say they are worrying about the primary producer. I could tell many stories about the days when I sat on the other side of the Chamber. They had very little consideration for them then. The hon. member for Carnarvon dealt with the forming of co-operatives to deal with primary produce. I am a great sticker for co-operatives. At the same time there has been ample opportunity to form these co-operatives but how many have taken advantage of it? After all, are we to tell producers what they should do with their product? We can provide facilities or at least legislation that will allow them to do many of these things but can we go on and tell them how they will market their products? Again, the initiative has to come from the industry itself.

Mr. Hilton: If they cannot get a look-in at the markets it is futile for them to form a co-operative.

Mr. MADSEN: They have had ample opportunity of getting a look-in over the years. It is all very well to weep for these people at this particular stage, but we can only deal with matters as they are and that is just what we have done. We have dealt with the situation as it is and I am certain that if a case can be put up by any industry to show that it would be to their advantage to have something out there, the Government would be prepared to look at it. As I say, we can only deal with these matters as they exist. We cannot go to the extent of telling the grape growers that we can put an end to their problems. The problem they have this year may not exist in the next few years. Many hon. members of this Committee know of farmers who grew rockmelons, and were making fortunes from them a few years ago whereas this year they are either sent to market uneconomically or destroyed altogether. Those things happen and are hard to take care of. They are caused by over-abundance of rain or other conditions.

I feel that the hon. member for Salisbury took advantage of the debate to put a case for grape-growers.

Mr. Sherrington: Someone has to put their case for them and it apparently fell on very unsympathetic ears.

Mr. MADSEN: From the suggestion the hon. member made here, I doubt whether they are quite as sound as he would have us believe.

Mr Sherrington: You are not sympathetic to their case.

Mr. MADSEN: I am sympathetic to any primary producer, but, at the same time

it is hard to see how the suggestion would work economically. I think that the hon. member should look at it. After all, these people must realise that rent has to be paid and it has to be paid all the year round, not just for the few weeks of the year during which the crop is being marketed.

Mr. Sherrington: As I have already pointed out they are small crop farmers as well and would have produce for the market during the whole year.

Mr. MADSEN: That is all right. If they form this co-operative for all the produce, we will look at it then.

I do not know that there is much more I can select from what was said. The hon. member for South Brisbane spent virtually the whole of the time he was speaking on something that already exists in the Act. Before he says anything more about it he should look at the Act to see what it is all about.

On the question of preferential treatment I pointed out in my opening remarks that naturally some consideration would be given to those established there. It is only with the permission of the Governor in Council that such would be done. First of all, the trust would deal with the matter and after all I think one has to give credit to a trust established in the way this is by reasonable men able to make a reasonable decision. In the first place, the trust would make a recommendation to the Minister; it would go to the Governor in Council from there. Surely that should be sufficient for anyone to believe that the matter would be handled in a straightforward way and in the interests of those making the application. It might be that the Governor in Council would not approve of it. In connection with such a simple matter as those earning their livelihood by providing a few sandwiches and other such services perhaps the trust would feel that those people should again be given the opportunity of having a little stall to continue along the lines they have followed for a number of years in gaining a livelihood.

Mr. Hilton: No-one quibbles with that, but the legislation permits the trust to make a recommendation in regard to any type of business, and the Governor in Council can agree to it.

Mr. MADSEN: Surely the hon. member gives the Government credit for having sufficient intelligence to work out these things. I thought I made the position clear in my opening remarks. The hon. member referred to a supermarket. In my opening remarks I spoke of a post office, cafe, service station, wholesale grocery, butcher, hairdresser, chemist, boot repairer, and so on.

Mr. Hilton: And I think you mentioned drapery.

Mr. MADSEN: Wearing apparel. We are not envisaging a supermarket. Tenders will be called for the supply of these services. The Bill provides a safeguard whereby the trust first of all makes a recommendation to the Minister and the Minister makes a further recommendation to the Governor in Council. The persons who would be competing for this type of business would be dealt with in that way. Special consideration would be given only when the case for that person had been proved. I do not think I can add anything to what I have already said. When hon. members receive a copy of the Bill they will be able to discuss it in detail.

Motion (Mr. Madsen) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

LAND TAX ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (8.39 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Land Tax Acts, 1915 to 1959, in certain particulars."

The purpose of the Bill is a very simple one. It is designed to relieve taxpayers from the necessity to render land tax returns at a low level of land holding. It will also relieve them of the necessity in the cases that I instanced to the House some time during the last 12 months when I indicated that there was wisdom in removing the full liability for land tax from the holder of a residential dwelling on an area of land not more than 40 perches in area where he held no other land and where he used the land for his own residential purposes.

In explaining the background of that, and the history of it, may I state that the Government have always been concerned that land tax had drifted from what had been its fundamental basic purpose? It was never intended, I think, by any Government in the history of this State that land tax should be a pure revenue measure. Rather, its purpose was a social purpose, to discourage large aggregations of freehold land held by one individual. When this Government took office the exemption in the case of lands described as resident land was £700 and in the case of country land, used for agriculture and similar purposes, the exemption was £1,900, reducing by £6 for every £5 the value of the land exceeded the basic £1,900. The result of that policy was that approximately 25,000 people and companies in Queensland were annually assessed for land tax. Feeling that this imposed the Land Tax Commissioner's hands on too many small landholders in the State the Government have over the succeeding years introduced a series of small relieving

steps which have in fact reduced the number to be called upon to pay land tax by approximately half and I remind the Committee of the steps that were taken. In 1958 the first amendment gave a further exemption of £1,900 to resident owners using land for agriculture, dairying, or grazing purposes, and that flat exemption existed, without any tapering down, as had previously been the case, where the £1,900 was reduced by £6 for every £5 that the unimproved value exceeded £1,900. Then, the second step in 1958, was to increase the minimum assessment from 10s. to £2. As the minimum rate of tax at that time was 1d. in the £1, the effect of that was to increase the effective exemption from £119—that is the number of pence in 9s. 11d.—above the then exemption of £700 for resident-owned land, or £1,900 for country land, to £479 higher, or £1 19s. 11d. in tax. Then, in 1959, three steps were brought down: the first was to introduce one graduated scale of tax combining what had been two separate scales of land tax and super tax. Anyone who has studied these schedules will realise that the Government, in preparing these new schedules, set out to put a heavier hand on the shoulder of the big landholder and a relatively lighter hand on the small landholder.

Mr. Duggan: I think you mentioned at the time that the country person would pay £100,000 less and the city dweller about £100,000 more. Were those figures realised?

Mr. HILEY: I have not refreshed my memory, but I think that tendency was exaggerated.

The second exemption was to increase the country exemption from £1,900 to £3,000 and the other resident land exemption was increased from £700 to £1,000. The third step did something parallel to what this Bill now proposes, that is, it lifted the minimum value for which a return must be submitted from £700, which was the previous level, to £1,000. Then in 1960 the Land Tax (Adjustment) Act provided relief from the problem of the inflationary factor on new valuations to the extent of 50 per cent. of the increase over the old valuation.

A study of the reports of the Land Tax Commissioner has shown that the cumulative effect of those steps reduced the number of people in Queensland called upon to pay land tax from approximately 25,000 to about 12,000, but very quickly it became clear that the continued trend of inflation in land values as each new valuation came up had tended slowly to offset the benefit of the steps that had been taken. It is clear that, if the Government's desire is to be maintained, still further steps will be needed. We want to keep it that land tax becomes less and less a tax on the smaller landholder and more and more a tax which touches the holder of the big aggregation.

The Bill does not fix any new level of exemptions. The new-level exemptions will be part of the Budget proposals for next financial year and will be dealt with in the Bill that will be brought down in the next session of this Parliament. At this stage the Government want to make it clear that when those proposals are brought down there will be three steps of developed exemptions. First there will be a further increase in the exemptions for resident-owned land. Secondly there will be a further increase in the level of exemption for country land used for the purposes specified. The third is the important one and it confirms the indication I gave the Assembly some time within the last 12 months when I expressed my predisposition to favour it. There will be a new principle of exemption for a single residential block not exceeding 40 perches in area owned by a person who owns no other land and who uses the land for his own residential purposes.

However, although the new level of exemptions will be brought down as part of next year's Budget proposals, before the Budget is brought down land tax forms have to be printed. In printing those forms it is desired to anticipate the effect of these further exemptions and consequently the Bill now increases the minimum value for which returns must be submitted from £1,000 to £1,500 and exempts from lodging the return persons who own only one block not exceeding 40 perches and who use the land for their own residential purposes. We regard this as a combination of public and departmental convenience. From some points of view—that is, from the point of view of having every available record within the department so that you can check everything —returns in respect of every freehold block would be desirable; but unnecessary returns mean a lot of extra work. They have to be received; they have to be sorted; they have to be filed and examined and dealt with. They can produce no revenue and, for the odd occasion when the department might find that such a return could be helpful, it is our belief that it causes much more trouble and expense than that benefit is worth. That is from the department's point of view, but from the point of view of the public at large the requirement that they must prepare and lodge a return even where no tax is payable is regarded by most members of the public as an unmitigated nuisance. The public may not appreciate but at least they can understand the need for lodging a return if an assessment does issue. If you say to the public, "You have to put in a return" and they then get no assessment, they naturally say, "What goes on? You are annoying us needlessly." You are simply making work at the administrative level for no useful purpose. As our forms have to be printed now and issued through the various issuing offices in the State before 30 June, we find it necessary to bring this limited measure down at this stage.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (8.50 p.m.): I do not think that any serious objection will be raised to the Bill, because it sets out to

avoid any inconvenience, as the Minister pointed out, to departmental officers and to the public at large. However, I think that the measure highlights the inflationary trend in land values, and I believe that some method other than a periodic adjustment of exemptions should be examined with a view to halting what in my opinion is a most unhealthy development of our economy. I suppose there is no other phase of our economic life in which we have seen such inflationary pressures as we have seen in land values. Admittedly Liberal Governments, and I suppose in some respects, for that matter, Labour Governments, did not want to impose unnecessary controls on the sale of land. I forget its actual title, but a land sales control Act was introduced by the Commonwealth and operated during the post-war years in an attempt to control the abuses that crept in with the inflation of land values. All sorts of bets were undertaken to avoid legal requirements. If a piece of land that was subject to land sales control was valued by the valuers at £500 and a purchaser was prepared to pay £800 for it, we found the silly situation in which somebody would bet somebody else £300 that he could not jump over a hat, or something of that sort, to avoid the penalties provided in the legislation. That sort of thing is undesirable, but we have witnessed in the post-war period, and particularly in the last four or five years, a tremendous upsurge in land values. The Treasurer indicated in his brief recapitulation tonight the steps taken in recent years to lift the exemption. I do not propose to waste the time of the Committee in going over every move, but I point out that in the period between 1915 and 1950 the statutory exemption was £300 for residential land. There was no movement in that figure for 35 years, and there was no agitation in that period for any higher statutory exemption. In 1951 the exemption was lifted to £500, so over a period of 35 years there was a movement of £200. There was an upward movement in the following year, and the Treasurer has indicated in chronological sequence what has taken place since then, with three amendments since 1958—1959, 1960, and again today.

I think that everyone will approve of the general principle that people owning land on which they have their own residence should not be compelled to pay land tax. Land tax has been imposed primarily to prevent large aggregations of land and to enable land to be put to more profitable use, and I believe that every person who wishes to promote a more intensive development of idle lands will subscribe to that principle.

It seems to me that we must go further than this continual increase in exemptions to meet increased valuations. It is a problem because many people are being penalised unfairly. There is the person who has been in a home for many years and no further improvements have been effected to it. Take the person in a closely settled area who has had a bitumen road, kerbing and channelling, sewerage and electric light for 20 or 30 years or more. Although there has been no improvement in the facilities and in fact he may be at a slight disadvantage because, as a result of the concentration of fast moving traffic, the noise factor has increased and the dust nuisance has increased, and so on, and it has become a less suitable place for a person to have a house, that person has been caught in the grip of increased land valuations caused by the establishment of businesses and factories and the operations of land speculators. The value to him personally has not increased; in fact, it has probably decreased over the years. We have another type of person in a newly developed estate who, because local authorities insist on land developers carrying out certain conditions before offering land for sale, has to pay in advance for all the improvements that are effected immediately, such as channelling, kerbing, bitumen roads, electric light, and other things that come into the area. After he has paid for them he cannot expect, and indeed he does not require, any amenities or facilities to be provided by the local authorities. So you have these two groups in the community that are paying these inflated values. It is time that the Government looked to see whether, without unduly interfering with the incentive for people to engage in any industry, they could prevent this pyramiding of costs. In the initial stages of the development of a project people perhaps may pay £1,000 an acre for land that they want for developmental purposes. If it is divided into five allotments it would work out at £200 an allotment. The cost of road improvements, channelling, etc., might work out as much as £200 an allotment, which makes a value of about £400 for each property. But there are much larger promotion costs by way of advertising, commissions to that and the other person, and so on. By the time the land is finally sold it might reach the figure of £1,000 an allotment. Why should those astronomical increases be the measuring stick for a person who has no interest in any of this inflation at all? I suppose that the most equitable way to deal with it would be some form of capital gains tax. I realise that there are arguments for and against a capital gains tax. I think that the Treasurer will concede that except in cases where a person's general financial position enables him to justify the expenditure of moving to a better house in a better locality, or the public servant or a person in some other occupation subject to the whims of his employer regarding the location of his employment who is compulsorily transferred, the average person when he builds a home and enters into financial commitments with a bank, building society, housing commission, or some other financial authority, intends to retire in that particular place. It is most unfair that that person should be penalised the whole time and

because of some action of another person, independent of him altogether, is caught up in this inflationary spiral. Something should be done. There should be an examination to see whether we can prevent this very great inflation in land values that in my view is having a very detrimental effect on the economy generally.

The Treasurer pointed out that it is proposed to increase the exemption on residential land from £1,000 to £1,500. At the rate at which the increases are taking place—in 1958, 1959 and 1960—it is possible that the £1,500 will be reached before very long. I could instance my own case because I am familiar with it. What applies to me would apply equally to many hundreds of thousands of others who have been living in one place for many years. From the quietness factor, and from the beneficial factor of living in a locality that is not causing worry to them because of the tremendous development of traffic, and so on, nothing at all has been provided by the local authority in those areas. Sooner or later even the Labour Party—I am speaking personally on this matter—will have to examine the whole question of unimproved value and look for some other means of valuing, perhaps the annual rental value or use value, of those particular places. If that were done as they got older people would not be caught in the vicious spiral. There is no question that old people are suffering a very great hardship because of this inflationary movement.

In addition to raising the exemption to £1,500, the Treasurer proposes to exempt from the obligation to pay land tax single residential properties built on land that does not exceed 40 perches. Why the figure of 40 perches I do not quite know. It may be said that in most cases 24 perches would constitute the average suburban allotment. Thirty perches might be regarded as being fairly adequate, whereas 40 perches would be the exception rather than the rule. But there are many parts of the State with residential allotments much larger than 40 perches. I know that in Maryborough a great number of homes would be on land much in excess of 40 perches. I do not know what the position is in the green belt, at Kenmore or Mt. Gravatt or Everton Park or Bunyaville and those places where 2½-acre blocks are the minimum they can hold to get a permit to build. They could have quite modest residences on those particular properties and I think there should be some examination made to see whether we cannot improve on those 40 perches. If it is found that the value of those places is enhanced by use, if they are used for flats and purposes like that, the Treasurer might have to examine whether——

Mr. Hiley: It will not apply to them; that is not for his own residential purposes.

Mr. DUGGAN: It may be land used for some other purpose. If a person has an acre of land he might have a hatchery or a workshop or something else like that on it. It would still be used for his own residential purposes. I can understand the desirability of giving him exemption if he is using it for residential purposes but there seem to be many of these homes in Queensland where they are using more than 40 perches and the value of the house would be much less than those in selected parts of Brisbane such as St. Lucia or the Treasurer's own suburb where the value of land would be much greater than 40 perches would be in other parts. It would be unfair to exempt from land tax a man who has purchased high-price land—£4,000 or £5,000 for land with a choice river frontage—and put a house on it. Because he has that house on it and is living in it he does not have to pay any land tax whereas somebody else with a much more modest home is required to pay land tax.

The point is, of course, whether in those green belt areas one could get 2½ acres for £1,500. I doubt very much whether one could. Consequently, I feel that people living in those areas will perhaps be brought into the ambit of land tax. As the Treasurer indicated he is not desirous of placing a liability on some of these people. I should like him to have a look at it and see if he cannot overcome the problems I have raised in relation to the 40 perches. I realise there is some difficulty in evolving a formula, but in recent legislation which the Government introduced they had no hesitation in applying some rough measuring stick and formula to deal with a situation brought about because of rising public criticism from various parts of the State.

Perhaps at the second reading I could amplify those general submissions a little but I feel that we can approve of the general idea of exempting from land tax people living in their own homes. I do not think anybody could cavil at that nor do I think that the proposed amendment will give complete justice to some people in the community, and there are very many of them.

I am not putting a case for myself although I come into that category. I have two allotments each about ¼ acre so that I have about ½ acre altogether. On the second allotment I have spent a good deal of time and money developing what I think is a nice garden which I hope some day will occupy my time when it suits me to retire, not when it suits hon. members that I should retire.

I am sufficiently realistic and fair in these matters to realise that if I am holding up the development of areas I should be penalised, but I am not. In my own case, I can quite frankly say that I do not know of one single residence in the area that has changed hands in recent years where the value has gone up tremendously. When we build homes we wish to live in them permanently and retire in them and I do

not think it is fair that, because somebody buys a service station or builds a block of flats alongside me, there should immediately be an increase in the value of my land. I shall have something to say on this in more detail when another Bill comes before us at a later date. If the Minister's desire is to afford relief to these people, naturally we are in agreement with him. My only quarrel with the Bill is that it will perhaps still impose a hardship on people who have allotments of land in excess of 40 perches. I ask the Treasurer to consider ways and means of granting relief to people who are genuinely occupying residences on allotments of more than 40 perches, when they are not engaged in any occupation on that land. If a person has a workship on the land from which he obtains or augments his income, I think it could be said that 40 perches should be the maximum. If the land is used only for the purpose of a residential area, the person living on it should be given the same relief as the person who is living on land of less than 40 perches, land which may have cost him considerably more than the land of more than 40 perches on which the other person resides.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (9.7 p.m.): I support the Leader of the Opposition and I want to deal particularly with the exemption up to 40 perches. During the dark days of the depression many families due to economic circumstances left the inner suburbs and bought blocks of land of 5 and 10 acres in the Hemmant and Belmont areas, with the sole idea of trying to make enough money to get bread and butter. They could not obtain employment. As time went on the Green Belt idea was developed and came into operation. These people had built homes on the land, although the homes could not be said to be up to modern standards. The blocks have been subdivided into 2½-acre blocks. That is the minimum area. Even under the present town plan the scheme is that the blocks must not be subdivided into less than 2½ acres. Some of them are approximately 2¼ acres, but generally speaking they are about 2½ acres. The land is used purely for residential purposes.

Mr. Hiley: I would think that most of the areas of 2½ acres in the Gumdale and Belmont districts would be inside the amount of the exemption.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is what I am worried about. A few months ago a move was made by a company known as Gumdale Developments. Big money was being spoken of because someone had the idea that approval would be given for the subdivision of that land. I know that big money was offered and in some instances virtually accepted.

Mr. Hiley: Big money was talked about. I happen to know a great deal about that ill-fated project. Nobody got any money.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is true. No money changed hands, but I know of two cases of people who were approached. In one case the person signed documents and paid over a large sum to buy another home at Wynnum. I had to go to a deal of trouble to convince the agent down there that the money should be refunded when the deal fell through. It amounted to some hundreds of pounds.

If development along those lines took place values would be increased and these people would be outside the exemption of £1,500. The homes of these people are comfortable, but they are not in the £5,000 class.

Under the town plan an area along Wynnum Road will be a restricted area, a non-urban area. That ground will be virtually closed because while the Town Plan is as it is no-one could possibly buy it. Even without the restrictions that may be imposed by what may happen in the future, these people could also be adversely affected. As the Leader of the Opposition said, they have no intention of using their land commercially. They have their homes on it. Some of them with half an acre of land had the houses so placed on the ground donkey's years ago that they would have to shift the house to subdivide because of the narrow frontage. With those few remarks, I support the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (9.11 p.m.): The present position could be a little confusing because the Treasurer said no return is required if the land is worth £1,500 in unimproved value, yet presently the exemption is £1,000. The Treasurer assured us that it is intended to increase the exemption later on in the year. At the moment that could be confusing to the public. The question arises, when annual returns are due on 1 July, and this legislation could not very well come in until August. I presume that if anyone had land valued at £1,500 he need not make a return although the Act during July, at least, would make him liable for tax if his land was valued at over £1,000. Maybe not many people come in that category and it will iron itself out. It is a little confusing, and it certainly confused me until the Treasurer explained it to me just now. I should like the Treasurer to tell me if the owner of land valued at over £1,500 is exempted under the provisions if he is living on his own land? Would he be required to put in a return?

Mr. Hiley: Not unless he is specially called on to do so.

Mr. BURROWS: Even if he may have land——

Mr. Hiley: If he has other land, he has to.

Mr. BURROWS: There may be people, although there is none in the area I represent, who would own land worth £1,500. You could buy the whole street in my area for £1,500. Only the people are valuable. It could happen that in a fashionable part of Brisbane a man may own a piece of land and be living on it and be not liable for

tax although it is over £1,500 in value. The Treasurer assures me that unless he is called upon he would not be required to make a return, so that matter is cleared up. Another question arises: a man may have two allotments; he may have bought one adjoining him.

Mr. Hiley: If they are contiguous, it is treated as one block.

Mr. BURROWS: That clears that up. I should imagine there could be a little bit of a rush if they wanted to consolidate them for the purpose of the Act.

The Treasurer said that he hopes later in the year to amend the Act further. I commend for his consideration the possibility that some companies will, through their subsidiaries, get a great deal of exemption by putting one lot of land in the name of one subsidiary and another lot in the name of another. One company I know in Brisbane has 14 or 15 subsidiaries. That company could defeat the provisions aimed against large aggregations by having each of its parcels of land in the name of a separate subsidiary. The Treasurer may be able to prevent that by inserting a provision similar to that in the Companies Act whereby in certain cases what is owned by subsidiaries is treated as being owned by the holding company. Along with the Treasurer, my colleagues and I are definitely opposed to large aggregations and the purpose of the Act should be primarily to prevent them.

Although we have not seen the Bill, from the Treasurer's outline there does not seem to be anything contentious in it. Pending the receipt of it I cannot see anything that would warrant my opposing it.

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (9.17 p.m.), in reply: I am very pleased at the way in which hon. members have received the Bill but some observations that have been made prompt me to make a few expressions in reply.

The problem of inflation with land values is something that worries every member of every political party in Australia. All my thought on it is that, if I have a violent aversion to what I regard as an unbridled inflation of land values, I do not like to see too heavy a capital burden put on the shoulders of young people who are aspiring to own their first home or on people who are engaged in the productive enterprises of the nation, whether in the factory or on the land, and who find themselves often with a capitalised burden of interest and redemption, if they have had to borrow the money, which adds seriously to the costs of production and lifts the whole cost structure of the nation. I have always felt that, particularly in the primary-producing industries, high land values finish up as something of a real curse.

Mr. Burrows: High land values can be just as dangerous as a depression.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. In fact, several times in world history they have proceeded to depression; they are among the causes of depressions. On the other hand, we have to be realists and accept it that some degree of inflation in land values is inevitable in a community with a growing population and developing industries. As population pressure grows, as demand increases, so land values tend to reflect it and perhaps, whilst all of us cavil at what we regard as an unbridled inflation, we might have cause on the other hand to express concern if land values in Australia were completely static. That would be a warning that something might be wrong.

As hon. members know, we have been endeavouring to do something in a small way in our dealings with our own people. In estates developed by the Housing Commission we are able to offer allotments for sale to intending purchasers whom we finance at a price that is quite low in comparison with what the public generally are called upon to pay when they deal with the average subdivider. While that person remains a tenant of the Commission or a purchaser from the Commission he receives benefits in certain ways. First of all, there is the low capital value on which his rental is assessed or on which he pays interest. Secondly, the average valuation by the Valuer-General of a block developed by the Housing Commission —I have now had an opportunity of studying this—is very much lower than the average value of a comparable block developed by other means in the community. So our tenants or our purchasers, generally speaking, get the benefit of lower valuations than other people in Brisbane, and therefore they have a smaller component of rates, whether they pay them themselves as purchasers or pay them as part of their rent as tenants.

That brings me to a point that I had intended making in reply to some observations made by the hon. member for Baroona and some questions that he posed to me on the State Housing Acts Amendment Bill. I will use part of this information because it illustrates particularly what I have been saying. One thing that has started to worry me is that some of the benefit of developing these blocks cheaply and getting houses constructed cheaply is being lost because people will sell and take a profit, and a fairly big profit, too. I will give hon. members some figures. I will take first the case of a house that was completed and occupied on 1 June, 1953. The purchaser from the Housing Commission sold that house in December, 1959, and made a clear profit to himself on the transaction of £808. Part of that was attributable to the fact that our land values were low and he was selling on a market where land values were higher. In addition, I think we can say that the Commission's construction costs are at least as low as any others in the community. That man is putting £808 into his pocket. I do not begrudge him that. But here we have a young couple paying a deposit to us on a house and starting to pay it off, and

then they cannot resist the lure of an estate agent who offers a big price compared with their debt.

Mr. Burrows: Quite often they will go and rent a house and buy a car.

Mr. HILEY: Exactly. I know of cases where they have cashed in, taken the profit, bought a car, and two years later have come back and asked the Housing Commission for a rental house.

Mr. Sherrington: They do not get it.

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member will understand very clearly why I do not give it to them.

The next case that I wish to quote relates to a house at Stafford. It was occupied on 22 December, 1953, and sold in December, 1959, and the net profit on the deal was £1,533. Hon. members can understand why people are tempted to sell. To show that these things do not happen only in Brisbane, the next case is at Roma. The house was completed and occupied on 1 April, 1955. In January, 1962, the house was sold at a clear profit of £789. A house at Charleville was completed and occupied on 7 September, 1955. It was on Crown leasehold, and the original cost was £2,400. It was sold in February this year for £3,410, giving the purchaser from the Commission a profit of £1,010.

Mr. Burrows: You have to remember that many of those high prices are due to the scarcity of houses.

Mr. HILEY: They are not as scarce now as they were when these were built. A house at Corinda, which was first occupied on 29 March, 1956, originally cost £2,920. There was an addition costing £880, making a total cost of £3,800. It was sold in December last for £5,200, and the market was not terribly buoyant in December last because of the credit squeeze. It was sold and the person selling it cleared £1,400 on the deal. I wish somebody could tell me how we can effectively protect ourselves in these cases.

On the point raised by the hon. member for Baroona, the man who cleared £1,400 was asked to reduce the Commission's debt by £310. I told Mr. Galvin that if I had been making the decision I would have made him pay more. I think the hon. member would have, too. The man who cleared £789 we made pay in £318 in reduction of the Commission's debt.

The longer I am in administrative office the more concerned I am about inflation at work. Through the Housing Commission I try at least to hold it down as far as our own customers are concerned. I think all hon. members will agree that the price we charge for our allotments looks cheap compared with the price that the average subdivider is asking. What worries and vexes me is that you help someone with easy terms and, a low rate of interest but he cannot resist the temptation to cash in and take the profit. Later he is grizzling because he cannot get a Housing Commission house. He has had one but sold it and taken the cash profit. As the hon. member for Port Curtis pointed out, very often he buys a car with the proceeds. Running the car keeps him too poor to save up enough for a deposit on his next house.

So far we have not attempted to say to people buying houses through the Commission, "You must not sell." What we do is what was raised by the hon. member for Baroona. We ask them to reduce portion of the debt. If they are taking out in cash that much profit it is fair enough that some of the debt owing the Commission should be paid so that more funds are available to the Commission and as they accumulate we can build houses for others. I shall be pleased to go through these figures later with the hon. member. That principle is applied unless there are clearly commiserative circumstances. If a person is transferred and the sale is enforced it is a different matter. If it is a voluntary sale and a person is doing it because there is a profit to be made, that is the occasion when in all fairness and wisdom we can harden our hearts a bit and require more to be paid in so that the Commission is in a position to help somebody else.

A question was asked, "Why 40 perches?" If you want a simple approach you have to be prepared to draw a line somewhere but inevitably some people will fall just the wrong side of the line. The 40 perches was arrived at after consultation with some of our officers who were skilled in local authority affairs, and who had a fluent knowledge of subdivisional practices, not only of late but for many years. At first my proposal envisaged 32 perches. In fact, I think I did mention 32 perches when I casually mentioned the matter first in the Chamber. When I made inquires some of my officers told me that particularly in the North several of the towns in the early days had a minimum subdivisional area of 40 perches. They told me that that applied to Townsville for part of the time. It applied to Ingham and one or two other towns in the North where there was a minimum subdivional requirement of 40 perches.

Mr. Burrows: Some of them are on 16 perches.

Mr. HILEY: They are the older ones. The 16-perch allotment has been out for a long time.

Mr. Duggan: There are very few on 16 perches now.

Mr. HILEY: They are the really old ones.

Mr. Burrows: Has that been altered in the Local Government Act?

Mr. HILEY: No, that is the minimum the local authority can accept. I think most

local authorities turned their backs on 16 perch allotments somewhere about the end of World War 1. Some of the older members would remember, but I think that would be generally right. On the other hand northern members would agree that the local authorities in the North made provision for larger areas in those towns more in the last two generations rather than before the turn of the century. They were starting in a new area in a hot climate; there was plenty of land available around them and many of those local authorities struck what today seems to be a generous allotment size.

Mr. Duggan: Would that not indicate that something is wrong when people in a high-value area with land up to 40 perches might be exempted?

Mr. HILEY: Those inequities are always present when one makes a broad approach of this character. The alternative, of course, would be to exempt every residential allotment.

Mr. Duggan: Could you make it a time factor—if they had been living there for 10 or 20 years?

Mr. HILEY: I repeat that we are not drawing the exemptions tonight. All we are doing is lifting the point at which a return must be lodged. As I told hon. members, the drawing of the exemptions will take place when the Bill is brought down in the Budget session. The Government will be quite interested in any suggestions that hon. members can make from both sides of the Chamber as to how this matter can be fairly approached.

Frankly, I listened to several of the cases put up, and, I think the direct level of monetary exemption will meet most of the cases to which the hon. member for Bulimba referred. I am tolerably familiar with that area and I should think that most of the blocks in the Belmont, Gumdale and back-of-Bulimba area are 2½-acre to 5-acre blocks. They are not in high-valuation areas and the new valuation, I should think, will exempt them on the monetary exemption. It is true that in some of the glamour suburbs such as Kenmore where 2½ acres is the minimum subdivision, I do not doubt that many of those will be valued at higher than the monetary exemption that will be fixed.

I will give some thought to whether there is some other way to approach it. My concern was to strike a figure that would help a vast number of people. I never dreamed I would strike a perfect one that would meet every conceivable case. On the other hand we have to be careful. Local authorities today handle vastly increased responsibilities to what they did 20 or 30 years ago. We are living in an age when people expect and demand sewerage, water, telephones, transport and gas. We have to realise that if we allow suburban subdivisions to sprawl all over the community we put a cost burden on the shoulders of the local authority that is intolerable.

I think Australia has to readjust its concept of suburban density having regard to the innumerable services people demand from local authorities today. I should never expect the suburban density in Australia to nearly approach what can be seen in some of the older countries of the world where they have terraced occupation of intense density. I hope we never see that sort of apartment density that can be seen in the Bronx and some of the sections of Manhattan Island. At the same time I think we have to ask ourselves can we go on for ever with a residential density per occupied acre of something like 15 persons, which I think is about the average for Australian city conditions.

Mr. Burrows: Vacant allotments are a curse to any local authority.

Mr. HILEY: They are a curse to local authorities and the man who lives on a too-generous area has, I think, to accept it. I, like the Leader of the Opposition, choose to live on a ½-acre of land and I do not think he and I should be exempt. We like to surround ourselves with all the curious flowering trees and shrubs we can have.

Mr. Wallace: They tell me you are both experts.

Mr. HILEY: I can assure the hon. member we both learned it the hard way. It is his choice and it is my choice and I do not think that he or I should be exempt from land tax because we happen to choose that way of living.

Mr. Duggan: My point is that in those cities with civic pride I do not think there should be a penalty on persons who are contributing to a good community. There are many towns like that. Toowoomba is one of them and there are others.

Mr. HILEY: There is a limit to how far we can allow our legislation to add to the burden of local authorities. In my chair I know of problem after problem, nearly all of them financial, that confront local authorities today.

Mr. Burrows: You will have to give them some alternative means of revenue sooner or later.

Mr. Lloyd: In the next 12 months.

Mr. HILEY: I hope they get a better deal than when the hon. members' predecessors were in office. All they did was to tax the smallest landholders in the State. They never did a thing to help them. I advise the hon. member to keep quiet on their record on land tax. Their record was shameful in that regard. The hon. member should keep his mouth shut on the subject.

Mr. Lloyd: I seem to be able to upset you.

Mr. HILEY: The hon. member talks such rot.

Mr. Lloyd: It must be rot if it upsets you.

Mr. HILEY: I always react to rot.

Another useful suggestion has been engaging my attention for some time, and that was the matter of aggregation of land holdings by subsidiaries. The hon. member for Port Curtis raised the matter. I considered it, and I can inform hon. members that there is one group of companies in the State which has, to the best of my knowledge, 104 subsidiaries.

Mr. Burrows: I know the one you mean.

Mr. HILEY: It is a landholding company. It is obvious that by partitioning the incidence of land tax they are able to break down the aggregation bracket rate to the partition rate and thereby make an infinitely smaller contribution in land tax than they would if the empire was treated as one aggregation which it virtually is. I am advised that the extra tax that could be collected would hardly be worth while compared with the infinite bother that would be occasioned in dealing with this complicated set-up, because these subsidiaries do not always have the same shareholders. There may be subsidiaries with 75 per cent. common shareholders and 25 per cent. strangers. Because of that fact the basis is quite complicated. So far I have had to accept reluctantly the advice that the extra tax would be fairly light and that it would be extremely costly to collect. However, I have not lost sight of the matter and have not lost hope of getting it, because in my view, if the State is going to accept the social concept that land tax should be an instrument against excessive aggregation, it is a dangerous thing to allow that concept to be destroyed by the formation of a chain of companies. In those circumsances there is an aggregation by dispersal instead of an aggregation by unit concentration in the one company. We are still looking at it in the hope of finding a way of successfully dealing with the position. It is something that challenges the attention of the Government.

I am pleased with the way in which the measure has been received by the House. I repeat that I will be glad to hear any thoughts that any hon. member may have on the subject or any suggestions as to how the proposal may be more skilfully or fairly devised. If any hon. member has any thoughts on the subject. I shall be pleased to discuss them with him. The exempting measure will be brought down in the August session. If hon. members who are interested in the subject will let me have their views, I will consider them.

Motion (Mr. Hiley) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

CITY OF BRISBANE (NORTH PINE RIVER DAM) BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(Mr. Dewar, Wavell, in the chair)

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (9.41 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced relating to the construction of a dam on the North Pine River to supplement the water supply of the City of Brisbane and contiguous areas, and for other purposes."

The object of this Bill is to authorise the construction by the Brisbane City Council of a dam on the North Pine River to provide an alternative water supply for the City of Brisbane and to supplement and ensure the supply of water to townships in the Shire of Pine Rivers, the factory of Australian Paper Manufacturers Limited at Petrie and the City of Redcliffe.

The construction of the North Pine dam is the culmination of investigations which have extended back as far as 1950. These investigations carried out by departmental and Brisbane City Council officers have shown that a major augmentation of the water supply of the city of Brisbane and its environs will be required in the vicinity of the year 1970 when it is felt, the maximum potential of Somerset Dam will be fully utilised.

Mr. Lloyd: You say now that 1970 is the estimate as to when Somerset Dam will be fully utilised?

Mr. NICKLIN: Somerset Dam will be fully utilised, it is estimated, in 1970.

Mr. Lloyd: Several years ago you said 1965.

Mr. NICKLIN: The holding level of Somerset Dam is being increased.

The investigations further revealed that, of alternative sources of supply outside the Stanley-Brisbane River system, the Pine River was the most promising source from which to achieve the augmentation, it being estimated that the construction of a dam on the river near Petrie would give a continuous yield of 40,000,000 gallons per day. Foundation investigations for the construction of the dam have already been carried out under the supervision of the Department of Local Government and working plans and estimates of cost for the construction of the dam can be commenced upon the passing of this Bill. Preliminary estimates show that it will cost approximately £12,000,000 to build the dam proposed. The first stage to reach a level of R.L. 80 feet will cost approximately £5,000,000. To carry the dam to its ultimate height of R.L. 130 will cost an additional £7,000,000.

Mr. Lloyd: This will all come out of Brisbane City Council loan funds?

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes. The Bill will provide for the Brisbane City Council to be the constructing authority responsible for the dam.

Owing to subdivisional activities in the location of the proposed dam site which occurred in 1957, it was deemed desirable to resume areas subject to subdivision in order to avoid heavy resumption costs at a later stage. Accordingly, an Order in Council was made in 1958 under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act authorising the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works to construct the dam. This Order in Council was primarily intended to enable the Co-ordinator-General to resume lands the subject of subdivisional applications, and in fact certain lands were so resumed. In reality the whole of the lands that will be covered by water when the dam is constructed were resumed by the Co-ordinator-General.

As the authority charged with the exercise and performance of the functions of local government in the city of Brisbane, the Brisbane City Council is the logical constructing authority for the scheme. It has the necessary technical staff and the financial resources required. The Bill accordingly vests the Council with power to construct the dam and with the necessary legal powers in that behalf. Lands previously resumed by the Co-ordinator-General for the purposes of the dam are transferred to the Brisbane City Council under the Bill.

There are two further points in the Bill to which I would draw attention. The first is the provision that vests power in the Brisbane City Council to object to the subdivision of land outside its area which will be required for the purpose of the scheme. If the local authority in whose area the land is situated —that is, the Pine Rivers Shire Council— approves a subdivision contrary to the Brisbane City Council's objection, the Council will have a right of appeal to the Minister for Public Works and Local Government. The Minister's decision in the matter will be final and binding on the parties. As hon. members will realise, the provision is, of course, designed to avoid the payment of heavy compensation consequent on the subdivision and development of land which will later be required for the purposes of the dam or for the purposes of constructing works associated with it, such as pumping works and filtration plant.

The second point is that the Bill preserves the authority conferred upon the Pine Shire Council under the Local Government Act to take water from the North Pine River and its tributary, Sideling Creek, for the purpose of supplying water to townships in the Shire of Pine Rivers, to the Australian Paper Manufacturers' Ltd. Mill at Petrie, and to the city of Redcliffe. Under this authority the Pine Rivers Shire Council has already constructed a dam on Sideling Creek and is at present supplying water for the purposes mentioned to its own area, to the A.P.M. and to the City of Redcliffe. This dam is situated downstream of the site of the proposed North Pine Dam.

By reason of development taking place in the Shire of Pine Rivers and the proposed enlarged activities of A.P.M. the shire council considers that the output of its present water supply scheme will be inadequate for its future requirements. To meet any increased demand which might arise, the Bill makes provision whereby on the commencement of the storage of water in the North Pine Dam the Brisbane City Council will be required to make available to the Pine Rivers Shire Council, at its request, a supply of water not exceeding 8,000,000 gallons a day or such additional quantity as may be required by the council. If that quantity is not available on any one day, then the Brisbane City Council has to make available, if requested by the Pine Rivers Shire Council, the equivalent of what would be the natural flow in the Pine River past the dam site if the dam had not been constructed.

Mr. Bennett: Any charge to be made?

Mr. NICKLIN: No charge is to be made for the water so supplied. The Pine Rivers Shire Council at present has the right to draw from the river and supplement its own supply.

Mr. Lloyd: Who constructed the dam on Sideling Creek?

Mr. NICKLIN: The Pine Rivers Shire Council. When the water in the dam reaches R.L. 130, or, if the dam is constructed in two stages, R.L. 80, the Brisbane City Council will be required to make available to the Pine Rivers Shire Council, if so requested, a supply of water not exceeding 8,000,000 gallons a day or such higher quantity as may be agreed upon. The Bill authorises the Brisbane City Council to charge for water so supplied, since it is considered that the Pine Rivers Shire Council should make a contribution towards the expenditure incurred by the Brisbane City Council in constructing the North Pine Dam. I think all hon. members will agree that that is a fair charge under the circumstances. In this connection, it will be appreciated that one purpose of the construction of the North Pine Dam is to ensure the supply of water to the townships of the Shire of Pine Rivers and the factory of A.P.M. Ltd. at Petrie. The charge payable is subject to agreement between the councils. In the event of a dispute between the parties as to the quantity of water to be supplied or as to the charges to be paid therefor, the Bill provides for the settlement of the dispute by arbitration with the Director of Local Government as arbitrator.

As I stated earlier, investigations have shown that provision should be made to augment the water supply of the City of Brisbane and its environs in the foreseeable future. These investigations show that

the augmentation can best be achieved by the construction of a dam on the North Pine River, more particularly as the city is rapidly growing out towards that locality. The Bill authorises the setting in motion of machinery for the planning and construction of the dam, and I commend the motion to the House.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (9.52 p.m.): I shall withhold any detailed comment on the Bill until I have had an opportunity of reading it. It has not been made clear to me at the moment whether the council has been very enthusiastic about the proposal.

Mr. Nicklin: Which council are you referring to?

Mr. DUGGAN: The Brisbane City Council.

Mr. Nicklin: Yes, they are happy about it.

Mr. DUGGAN: If the Brisbane City Council has indicated that it is very keen to embrace the scheme, that will affect the attitude of the Opposition to some extent. It is a very large elective body, and it should not be in the position—I am not saying that it is—of being compelled to accept the responsibility for the provision of water supply outside its own area unless the terms are fair and equitable to all concerned.

I mentioned the other day when discussing fire brigade precepts that I believe there is a responsibility on local authorities to help their near neighbours. I said that I thought it was stretching the responsibility too far to expect Toowoomba to extend the precepts to a town such as Millmerran. Unless the Brisbane City Council was happy about it, I should not like to be compelled to supply the Pine Shire Council or any other council with water.

I appreciate that plans will have to be made to augment the water supply in Brisbane when the demand reaches a point where the capacity of the Somerset Dam is insufficient to meet that demand. It is obvious that now is the time to plan for that. If there is an agreement as the Premier says, it does away with some of the opposition we might have to the Bill.

Another point that I should like the Premier to clarify at the second reading stage is whether the payment of a total of £12,000,000, in stages of £5,000,000 and £7,000,000, will come out of the normal allocation of loan funds of the Brisbane City Council or whether there is provision for this amount to be raised by special loans. If the Brisbane City Council is called upon to provide the water requirements of the Pine Rivers Shire to the extent of 8,000,000 gallons a day and is not recompensed for any capital expenditure on a dam to provide that quantity of water, it would be very unfair to the people of Brisbane if that demand was meet at the expense of sewerage, roads, and other amenities in the Brisbane area. If it is proposed to vest some authority with the power to raise money for that it would deal with the situation, but if it is to come from the normal flow of funds I think it would be unfair because it might be 10 or 15 years before the Pine Shire will be demanding in excess of 8,000,000 gallons a day. I do not know the period of time anticipated.

Mr. Nicklin interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: In any case the Premier might indicate the financial arrangements that are proposed. It is all very well for the Government to say, "We are going to do all the resumptions," which apparently they have done under the Co-ordinator-General's Department. That very properly has been done because it is undesirable to delay until resumption costs become prohibitively high. I agree that the preliminary steps have to be taken as long as there has been preliminary agreement between the parties. In the case of Redcliffe I understand that because of some agreement entered into in the past, although water restrictions may be applied in Brisbane generally, as long as a person has a water-meter he can get as much water as he likes in Redcliffe provided by the Brisbane water supply authority. I do not want to take from the Redcliffe people the opportunity to have a water supply but it seems unreasonable that the great mass of ratepayers in Brisbane, whether they are prepared to pay for it or not, are prevented from getting an adequate supply for their own purposes. I should like the Premier in due course to say whether there is any agreement that that 8,000,000 gallons a day will be available in the years ahead. It could drop below 8,000,000 gallons. I do not know whether they are quite happy about maintaining that as the average over a period of time. If that is so it might remove any possible objection. If the dam were not constructed it might conceivably result that the Pine Shire Council will be compelled to pay more for maintaining the 8,000,000-gallon flow from the existing Pine River. Because of climatic conditions or perhaps a greater concentration of population there the flow might be less. As suburbs develop much of the run-off water is trapped. In some instances swampy areas become no longer swampy because of the gradual encroachment of residential buildings. The normal run-off is trapped in some way or diverted to other places. At the second reading stage I should like the Premier to indicate whether the Council are quite happy about the 8,000,000-gallons-a-day arrangement. If they are consenting parties again it will remove a possible cause of disputation.

I much prefer to see the Bill before I comment further. I shall be glad to hear what the Premier has to say in the second reading stage. One of the important matters

is the financial burden on the Council. We know that with their electricity responsibilities they are experiencing tremendously great problems in financing their normal work. Obviously this will be for the benefit of the people of Petrie, the area served by the Pine Shire Council, and the Australian Paper Mills. If the Brisbane City Council have this additional financial responsibility superimposed on their current problems without the opportunity of increasing their present loan allocation, even on a proportionate basis, it will be unfair to the ratepayers of Brisbane generally. If these matters have been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties and there is general agreement it may remove any possible objections. It is an obvious source for an alternate supply of water. Apparently the engineers and others engaged on the research work have accepted it as the most suitable site. I am not challenging the validity of their claims in that regard at all. It is obviously a suitable site and I am not quarrelling with that. It is only on the question of financial responsibility and whether the demands of the Pine Shire Council in relation to those of the ratepayers of Brisbane are fairly distributed. If they are, that is all to the good. I should like to make some further general comment at the second reading stage.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (10.1 p.m.): I do not intend to speak at any great length on this matter but, because in 1959, when the Premier introduced the City of Brisbane (Water Supply) Bill I spoke in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition, I think it is necessary for me to deal shortly with the matter. At that time, the Premier made a statement that if the people of Brisbane required more water for the sewering of the city it was their responsibility to go ahead and undertake any construction work required. At that time it was anticipated that the Somerset dam would give ample water supply to the city of Brisbane and the city of Ipswich, under the control of the Brisbane City Council, until 1965. In the meantime the filtration plant at Somerset Dam has been improved but the demand has grown to such an extent that the water supply of Brisbane is completely inadequate for the requirements of a population of nearly half a million and we have to expand the water supply.

We must also remember that the Brisbane City Council is the constructing authority for water works. That is under the recommendation of an expert committee appointed by this Government in 1958. The report was received early in 1959. The Brisbane City Council has now become the constructing authority not only for the Brisbane city area but also the surrounding districts of the Pine Shire, possibly the Albert Shire if it ever becomes necessary, and the town of Redcliffe. The common loan commitment that is entailed in the construction of these dams and water supply areas is to be undertaken by the Brisbane City Council itself. This is possibly the first sort of dam construction which it will be necessary for the Brisbane City Council to undertake.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, we do not know whether the former Brisbane City Council was in complete agreement with this project. All we know is what we can read in "Hansard". In 1959 the Premier told this Chamber when introducing the City of Brisbane (Water Supply) Bill that the Government had appointed an expert committee comprising the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works as chairman, the Director of Local Government and the Town Clerk of Brisbane to investigate the desirability of establishing a water supply and sewerage authority. That committee reported, according to the Premier's remarks at that time, as follows—

> "(1) That no separate water supply and sewerage authority be established.
>
> "(2) That the Brisbane City Council supply water in bulk to other local authorities at convenient points at prices to be mutually agreed upon, each local authority to undertake its own distribution. Failing agreement, the decision of the Director of Local Government to be final and binding on the parties.
>
> "(3) That a Water Supply Planning Committee be established."

That appears at page 2466 of Volume 223 of the 1958-1959 "Hansard". It was also stated by the Premier at that time that it was intended that the Committee give to the Brisbane City Council legal powers to establish head works and other water supply works within the catchments of the Brisbane, Pine, Logan and Albert Rivers and their tributaries and of such other stream or tributary thereof as the Governor in Council may determine.

It seems to me rather strange that, at a time when the Government have been violently pressing the Brisbane City Council to relinquish some portion of its profitable undertakings, they are endeavouring to impress upon the Brisbane City Council the necessity for undertaking further commitments over and above their own requirements for the Brisbane city area, in relation to other neighbouring local authority areas. If it is impossible for the Brisbane City Council in the next five to ten years to undertake from its loan allocations the expansion of its electricity undertaking, how can we in justice approve legislation which forces the Brisbane City Council to accept responsibility for expansion of the water supply of not only its own area but also neighbouring local authorities? The Pine River dam will supply not only the requirements of people in the Brisbane City Council area but also the requirements of the people in the Pine Shire and Redcliffe area.

Mr. Nicklin: They will pay for it.

Mr. LLOYD: Yes, but my point is that, if the Brisbane City Council with its loan allocations cannot carry out essential works required by the people of Brisbane, how can it undertake from its loan allocations the expansion of water supplies not only for its own people but also the people of neighbouring shires? The fact that the loan commitment is secured by the sale of water is beside the point. The money for the expansion programme must come from loan allocations.

There is a further point. I am not able to argue it in detail because I do not know all the facts. The Premier has never given full reasons why the committee reported against the creation of a water supply and sewerage authority in the Brisbane River area. At one stage the Co-ordinator-General and certain officers of the Brisbane City Council reported in favour of the creation of a water supply and sewerage authority with jurisdiction over the whole of the catchment area of the Brisbane River.

Mr. Nicklin: The main thing that influenced the committee in its decision at that time was the resistance of the Brisbane City Council. It did not want it.

Mr. LLOYD: The members of the committee were the Co-ordinator-General, the Director of Local Government, and the Town Clerk. Apparently no approach was made to the administration of the Brisbane City Council, whether it was C.M.O. or Labour at that time. The committee appointed by the Government was composed of administrative officers who may or may not have been competent to undertake the task. It was similar to other committees frequently appointed by the Government and about which we hear very little.

Mr. Nicklin: Can you suggest a more competent committee?

Mr. LLOYD: I am not making any suggestions in that regard. The Co-ordinator-General, whoever he may have been, from time to time has suggested the formation of a water supply and sewerage authority for the catchment area of the Brisbane River. In 1959, in reply to the Premier, I made the point that local authorities are taxing authorities only in respect of their own areas. For instance, the Brisbane City Council has jurisdiction over an area of some 380 square miles. Its area adjoins other local authority areas. Difficulty would be experienced in sewering marginal districts on the boundary of the Brisbane City Council and, say, the Pine Shire. If that locality had to be sewered, it would have to be done by a joint authority. In other words, in the catchment area one portion of the sewered area would be in the Brisbane City Council area and another portion in the Pine Shire. If the Brisbane City Council was the constructing authority, it would have no legal right to levy a sewerage rate outside its own boundaries. That complication could arise if the Brisbane City Council was the constructing authority.

These are matters that have not been adequately considered by the Government. As the Leader of the Opposition said, we are saddling the Brisbane City Council with additional commitments from loan expenditure. Are we to take away from the people of Brisbane the finance required for sewerage works in the city? It may be possible that from the extra money expended on the construction of the Pine River dam this extra sewerage work could be undertaken in Brisbane. Will the Government make additional allocations of loan money to the Council? If the Government intend to make additional allocations of loan money from the Loan Council to the Brisbane City Council to complete the construction of this dam there may be no argument. I think these are matters that the Leader of the Opposition rightly raised and that the Premier should answer. If the Brisbane City Council has to spend this additional money each year from its loan allocation, until the dam is constructed, how will the Government recoup the Council for the expenditure of this money that will benefit people living in neighbouring localities? If the Government make available additional finance the people of Brisbane will not suffer but if the Brisbane City Council has to carry on as it has in the past, struggling for additional loan money, the people of Brisbane will not benefit at all from the additional money that is spent.

Somerset Dam has a total capacity of about 200,000,000 gallons compared with 40,000,000 gallons suggested here. It was constructed by the Government and there was no drain on the finances of the Brisbane City Council although it has now had that project handed over to it. If we were to establish a water supply and sewerage authority covering the whole of the Brisbane River catchment area, that would be a separate authority that could engage in loan raising and could possibly give a greater service to the people living in the area than the Brisbane City Council which is confronted with certain legal difficulties in levying rates for sewerage purposes.

These are matters that may be examined when the Bill is presented. I believe that we have raised one or two questions that the Premier should be able to answer.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (10.13 p.m.): I was an alderman of the Brisbane City Council when this scheme was initiated. We have now reached the stage when many of the differences of opinion that existed have been composed through the administration of another council. This is in sharp contrast to the bitter and vigorous arguments between the present Government and the C.M.O. when the scheme was originally

embarked upon. We had vulgar public arguments between the Premier and the Lord Mayor, Alderman Groom, about whose obligation it was to complete the dam, or to embark upon the construction of the dam. The Pine River Shire Council also joined in the argument. At a meeting of the council held on 24 January, 1961, it described the scheme as a true case of departmental bureaucracy. At that meeting the query raised by my colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was mentioned. It was suggested that the control of water in South-east Queensland should not be vested in a local authority, in the Brisbane City Council, or in the Government, but should be vested in a water board. That proposal was no doubt put to the Premier and his Government, as was mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but as yet we have had no official pronouncement on it from the Premier. I am satisfied that strong representations have been made to him by the Pine Rivers Shire Council for the Water Board. They no doubt adopt what might be called a jealous attitude to the Brisbane City Council's being the constructing authority. There was a body of opinion that the Brisbane City Council was the logical body to construct the dam because of its resources, the engineers it already had in its service and the knowledge that it had acquired in the construction of large dams. As a matter of fact, it was the Director of Local Government, Mr. J. A. Sewell, who reported that he thought the Brisbane City Council was the logical authority to develop the scheme. He thought it better to go for the certainty of the development of Brisbane than for the uncertainty of limited development by the Pine Rivers Shire. No doubt the Premier has acted on the submissions and recommendations of the Director of Local Government.

However, the unfortunate delay has been very costly. As late as 14 December, 1960, the estimated cost of construction officially and publicly announced was £8,000,000. I was staggered this evening to hear the Premier say that presently the estimated cost of construction of the dam is £12,000,000. In 15 months, during which time there has been unpardonable delay by the Government, the cost has increased by £4,000,000, or some 50 per cent. of the original estimate.

Mr. Nicklin: I made a mistake. It is £8,000,000. There are two stages and I added the costs together wrongly. It is £8,000,000.

Mr. BENNETT: The Premier's assurance relieves my blood pressure because I thought the increase was inordinately high.

I gathered the impression from an interjection by the Premier that there would be no distinct time limit on the completion of the dam by the Brisbane City Council, which gives cause for some anxiety. In the 1960-1961 Estimates of the Brisbane City Council a sum of no less than £103,000 was set aside for the purpose of land resumption, boring and design work in connection with the scheme, and that is a fair outlay for preliminary work alone. It has been estimated that Brisbane's population by 1976 will be over 1,000,000 and if that is realised the existing capacity of the Somerset Dam will not be adequate for the supply of water to that population taking into consideration Brisbane's obligation to Ipswich and Redcliffe. Therefore there is no room for complacency in the matter. If the scheme has been accepted by the relevant authorities and has the approbation of the Government, every measure should be taken to insist on its completion with due expedition and without delay; as a matter of fact it should be hurried. A spokesman of the Pine Rivers Shire Council, the chairman, Councillor J. S. Bray, as far back as 14 December, 1960, publicly announced that complete stagnation of development in the Strathpine-Petrie district would result unless the £8,000,000 North Pine River Dam was built by 1965. He has been Chairman of the Pine Rivers Shire Council for a number of years, and he was appointed to the North Coast Hospitals Board by the present Government.

Mr. Nicklin: Elected by the local authority.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes. I correct myself. He was elected to the North Coast Hospitals Board by the local authorities. It is obvious that his status is respected not only in his own shire but also by aldermen of the Brisbane City Council and shire councillors in neighbouring districts. This is an indication that he has a good reputation and that his opinion should be respected. When he sounds a warning that complete stagnation of development will set in in the Pine Rivers Shire unless the dam is completed by 1965, one would expect the Government and their instrumentalities to do everything in their power to hurry a scheme that is so urgent. But we find that as late as 1962 we are considering the introduction of a Bill virtually giving the Brisbane City Council authority to commence work.

As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, apparently no provision is being made in the Bill for the Government to assist the Brisbane City Council by way of loan moneys, or any other moneys for that matter, to provide the wherewithal for the construction of the dam. I say without fear and without hesitation that £8,000,000 cannot possibly be raised by the Brisbane City Council within the next three years in addition to its existing loan commitments in relation to transport, electricity, water supply and sewerage, road construction, and other essential works in the city. As a matter of fact, I venture the opinion that it would be almost impossible for the Brisbane City Council to raise £8,000,000 in the next 10 years in addition to loans necessary to enable it to meet its urgent commitments in Brisbane. I join with the Deputy Leader of the

Opposition in exorting and beseeching the Government to shoulder some of their responsibility to the people they represent in the South-East of Queensland by offering some assistance towards the construction of the dam. It is all very well to give authority to others to retain supervisory jurisdiction over big projects of this type and fail to shoulder the financial responsibility that accompanies them. I believe that the sentiments of the Government will be rather cold and empty if they merely say to the Brisbane City Council, "This is another burden for you to shoulder. This is another baby in your lap. We have made ourselves good fellows by saying that the dam should be constructed and will be constructed. But beyond committing ourselves to paper in the form of legislation on the Statute Book, we do not propose to assist you in any way in providing the fundamental necessity, the method of raising finance, or by granting you some financial assistance." I hope that the Premier will give some indication in his reply of the amount of money that the Government will make available for the construction of the dam and when it will be made available.

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (10.24 p.m.), in reply: After listening to hon. members opposite commenting on the Bill, I should say that they are lashing themselves into a fury over nothing. I can assure the hon. member who has just resumed his seat that the Government will accept their responsibility wherever they may be called upon to do so, particularly in regard to this project. After all, the Bill has been a long time on the stocks. I gave notice of it in the last session of Parliament. I would not bring the Bill in until all the parties concerned had agreed on its provisions. They have agreed only in the last week.

Mr. Houston: Why didn't you say that when you introduced it?

Mr. Rae: You were not listening.

Mr. Houston: You were not here to know.

Mr. Rae: I was.

Mr. NICKLIN: I have said it now. It has been asked why the Brisbane City Council has been made the constructing authority. As the hon. members for Kedron and South Brisbane said, a committee was appointed by the Government with the idea possibly of creating an extra authority that would care for the harnessing of water in the rivers surrounding Brisbane. Most people realise that the city of Brisbane cannot get its water supply from within its own area. It must depend on a water supply from outside the area of the Brisbane City Council. The only sources of supply available are the Brisbane River, the Pine, Logan and Albert Rivers, with a minor supply from Enoggera Creek. The Brisbane City Council is in a different position from other local authorities in the State. Some provision had to be made to protect the future water supplies of the city. The Bill is designed for that purpose. The responsibility of providing water for the people of Brisbane is the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. The Government are endeavouring to help them in that responsibility. By 1970 the full capacity of the Stanley River Dam will be utilised. Unless some provision is made before that date to meet the city's growing water needs it will be in real trouble.

Mr. Duggan: Would not the same position apply in Sydney and Melbourne? They have to get water from outside their own areas.

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes. I was referring to Queensland. Of course, some other towns in Queensland would get a supply from outside their own areas.

The point is that the committee was appointed. At the time the Government thought that an extra authority to deal with the matter would be wise. The committee we appointed was an expert committee, the best committee to deal with the problem that could be appointed by the Government or anybody else. The committee reported that it would be desirable for the Brisbane City Council to control its own water supplies, and be the constructing authority for water storages on the Pine, Logan or Albert Rivers, as the case might be. The Brisbane City Council at that time expressed themselves very forcibly on the point. They said that they were not going to be subject to the whims of any extra authority or depend on any other local authority for their water supplies. In view of the committee's report the Government agreed to that, and have proceeded along the lines mentioned. The Bill confirms the other legislation I introduced, that was mentioned by the hon. member for Kedron, to give the Brisbane City Council the power to go on with the construction of the Pine River dam. It is the most convenient and will be the cheapest means of augmenting the water supplies necessary for the city of Brisbane. Brisbane is rapidly growing right out to the Pine Rivers area. In fact the actual site of the dam is only a stone's throw from the northern boundary of the Brisbane City Council. It is a very useful estimated supply of 40,000,000 gallons at quite a reasonable cost. Hon. members have concerned themselves about the Brisbane City Council. Other local authorities concerned have been very vocal on this matter. They have been very hostile at the fact that the Brisbane City Council has been given permission to build the dam. They say that they will be placed at a disadvantage by being customers of the Brisbane City Council.

Mr. Duggan: If the burden is equitably distributed I do not think they could quarrel about that.

Mr. NICKLIN: Even though the burden is equitably distributed there still is a quarrel by the Pine Shire Council in whose area the Pine River is situated. They rightly take up the attitude that the Pine River is their river and it should be reserved for their water supply. But, the Pine River water supply will provide greater needs than those of the Pine Shire Council and the City of Redcliffe; so, the needs of all are being served by the construction of this dam which will, in years to come, be used principally by the Brisbane City Council, and to a certain extent by the Pine Shire and the Redcliffe Town Council.

On the question of finance the Government will naturally see, as far as it is possible to do so, that the Brisbane City Council gets loan requirements for all needs to carry out its regular services, and the provision of water is one of the services that the Brisbane City Council has to supply to its people. The Government will accept their responsibility by providing subsidies to construct the dam.

Mr. Lloyd: Reduced subsidies.

Mr. NICKLIN: It will be the subsidy at the time the works are done. I am not going to say that it will be a reduced subsidy. It will be the subsidy applicable at that time for that class of work.

Mr. Lloyd: At the time this committee made its recommendations the subsidy was higher than it is today.

Mr. NICKLIN: No, not for water supply. There is no alteration in the subsidy for water supply works.

Mr. Lloyd: What about flood prevention?

Mr. NICKLIN: We are not talking about flood prevention. We are talking about the Pine water supply and the subsidy is the same today as it was then; it has not been reduced.

Mr. Bromley: It is about the only subsidy your Government have not reduced.

Mr. NICKLIN: This year our subsidies to local authorities in this State will be more than double the greatest amount ever paid by any Labour Government in the State. We are looking after the local authorities.

To build this dam they will be looked after by the Government and the Brisbane City Council will not be in any way handicapped as a result.

The hon. member for South Brisbane mentioned the delay. There has not been any undue delay except the delay that has occurred over the last 12 months due to the arguments between the various parties.

Mr. Bennett: That is the delay to which I was referring.

Mr. NICKLIN: It has not delayed the actual construction one iota.

Mr. Bennett: The Council were ready to get going when I was there.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am afraid the hon. member will not see any construction work on the dam for three to four years at least.

The Brisbane City Council during the course of discussions said they were proposing to build a main from the Brackenridge area to serve the needs of the Pine Shire and A.P.M. That is evidence that they are not likely to start constructing the dam for some considerable time.

Mr. Bennett: The Pine River area will start stagnating by 1965 if the dam is not there.

Mr. NICKLIN: That is not a factual statement.

Mr. Bennett: You disagree with that?

Mr. NICKLIN: I suggest that the Pine Shire Council will take care of their needs until 1965. At any rate, the Pine Shire Council has decided to augment the Sideling Creek storage which will provide their needs until 1970 so they will not be requiring any water from any proposed Pine River dam until at least 1970.

I can assure hon. members opposite that their fears are without foundation. The Government realise their responsibility to help the Brisbane City Council to raise the money it will require to provide the water needed by the people. The Government will accept their responsibilities in connection with the construction of the dam.

Mr. Mann: It will be glad to have your assurance on that point.

Mr. NICKLIN: I was merely assuring hon. members opposite. The Brisbane City Council already knows it and is quite happy about the matter.

When hon. members read the Bill I am sure they will find nothing in it about which they can complain.

Motion (Mr. Nicklin) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 10.38 p.m.