Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1962

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

QUESTIONS

REPRINT OF MAIN ROADS ACTS

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"(1) Is he aware that the Main Roads Acts are out of print and have been virtually unobtainable for nearly two years?"

"(2) What action is being taken to have these Acts reprinted in view of the obligations contained in these Acts and the inability of those upon whom these obligations have been placed to obtain copies?"

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

"(1) My enquiries confirm this position."

"(2) Under instructions from the Department of Main Roads the Government Printer has set up a consolidated reprint of the Main Roads Acts and Regulations. I have requested the Government Printer to do everything possible to expedite printing of the consolidated Acts and Regulations as soon as final instructions on the proofs are received from the Department."

RAIL FREIGHTS AND ROAD-TRANSPORT FEES ON GYPSUM

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

"In view of the fact that large quantities of gypsum are available in the Boulia area and as this mineral is extensively used in the manufacture of cement, could he grant either favourable rail freight or exemption from or considerable reduction of road transport fees, so that this gypsum can be transported to the Stuart Cement Works which now obtains its supplies of gypsum from southern States?"

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

"Any application made to the Railway Department or the Transport Department by the interested parties, either mining or manufacturing, will receive consideration on its merits. I would mention that fees under "The State Transport Act of 1960" would not be payable in any case on the journey to the nearest railhead and that a concession in rail freight would be in keeping with the role so often played by the Railways, but mostly unapplauded, of assisting in development of industries at the expense of its own revenue."

MAINTENANCE OF MAREEBA-DIMBULAH ROAD

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

"As the main road between Mareeba and Dimbulah carries a heavy volume of traffic, much greater than it was designed to do, and consequently has deteriorated to about nine feet in places with very dangerous shoulders and as many accidents, often fatal, occur, will he concentrate a road maintenance force to quickly repair and widen it?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"A scheme will be released this week for widening one mile of the worst section of this road and it is hoped to release a scheme for a further section towards the end of this financial year. It is pointed out, however, that this work was not given a very high priority by Mareeba Shire in its request for works to be included on this year's programme. Steps will be taken to ensure that Mareeba Shire carries out maintenance where necessary."

STONE DEFLECTORS ON MOTOR VEHICLES

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

"As a serious danger to people, vehicles and property is ever present from stones flying off moving traffic, and broken windscreens are common, adding to insurance costs, will he introduce regulations requiring all vehicles to be fitted with deflectors to prevent such damage occurring?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

"The control of construction and equipment of motor vehicles is not a matter which comes under my jurisdiction."

WATER CONSERVATION, HERBERTON DISTRICT

Mr. GILMORE (Tablelands) asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"(1) As there is an acute shortage of water for irrigation purposes in Nigger Creek and Flaggy Creek near Herberton, will he give the investigation of possible dam sites urgent priority?"

"(2) Has the investigation of the Millstream for water conservation purposes to serve the rich lands of the Kaban area been started?"

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

"(1) While it is realised that there is a shortage of water in Nigger and Flaggy Creeks, this situation is also present in a large number of other areas in the State for which previous requests have been submitted and where many more irrigators are involved. However, it is hoped that some preliminary investigation in respect of Flaggy Creek may be carried out during the current financial year."

"(2) Again, because of the large number of previous requests and due to limitations of staff and funds, it has not been possible to commence investigation of the possibilities of conservation of water on the Millstream and diversion to the Kaban area. However, this is also listed for some preliminary examination in the current year and it is hoped that staff may be available for this work early in 1963."

PAYMENTS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES FROM ROADS MAINTENANCE FUND

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

"What is the total amount to the last date for which figures are available that was paid as a gift to (a) Ayr Shire Council, (b) Thuringowa Shire Council and (c) Dalrymple Shire Council from the Roads Contribution to Maintenance Fund?"

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

"The Department of Main Roads is charged with the responsibility of disbursing moneys collected under the provisions of the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Acts and I am advised by the Honourable Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity, that to May, 1962, the following amounts had been distributed to the Shire Councils referred to by the Honourable Member:—Ayr, £8,000; Thuringowa, £6,000; Dalrymple, £3,025."

HOMES ERECTED BY HOUSING COMMISSION

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

"What was the number of houses erected by the Housing Commission for sale and for rental in (a) the metropolitan area and (b) the rest of the State in the twelve months ended June 30, 1961 and 1962?"

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

"(a) Nine hundred and twenty-one home ownership and 207 rental in 1960-1961, and 993 home ownership and 430 rental in 1961-1962; (b) Four hundred and forty-four home ownership and 174 rental in 1960-1961, and 454 home ownership and 129 rental in 1961-1962. The numbers quoted are completed house units and flats are included. The latest year's country figure does not include any of the 96 flat units at Townsville which are in an advanced stage of construction."

USE OF WAVY LINES AS TRAFFIC WARNING

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"(1) Is it the intention of the Traffic Department to continue painting wavy lines as a traffic warning?"

"(2) Has any doubt been cast on the value of these lines?"

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier), for **Hon. K. J. MORRIS** (Mt. Coot-tha), replied—

"(1) Yes. These wavy lines have been found of inestimable value and will continue to be painted when and where considered necessary or desirable."

"(2) No. The only reports I have received have been couched in very favourable and complimentary terms. For the information of the Honourable Member I would mention that wavy lines were initially painted for experimental purposes on a limited scale only, to determine their value. There is an interesting history on this matter in that Mr. J. N. Nicholson of the Master Carriers' Association made the suggestion to me concerning these lines. I considered it and then passed it on to the Traffic Engineer. 'Before and after' studies at the localities concerned have indicated that these lines are very effective provided they are not used extensively or indiscriminately. Following our trial and our opinion of the value of these wavy lines, similar action has been taken on an experimental basis in Western Australia and Tasmania and I am informed that early evidence in those States also confirms their effectiveness."

INMATES AND STAFF OF WARD THREE, ROCKHAMPTON GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) What was the average number of inmates in Ward Three at the Rockhampton General Hospital during the month of August?"

"(2) How many nurses are on duty on each shift for Ward Three?"

"(3) Is it a fact that some nurses often make inmates help the staff in the making of their beds on account of staff shortage?"

"(4) Is it compulsory to have mattresses fumigated after a death and, if so, why is this practice not being carried out at the Rockhampton General Hospital?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"(1) The average number of inmates in Ward Three at the Rockhampton General Hospital during the month of August was forty-two."

"(2) There were eight nurses and one male orderly allocated to this ward, three nurses were on day shift 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., three nurses on a broken shift of 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 9.30 p.m., and one nurse was on the night shift. In addition there is one Sister on day shift and a Sister for the afternoon and night shift is shared with other wards."

"(3) The Rockhampton Hospitals Board has advised that nurses do not make inmates help them in the making of their beds and they are not required to do so but many walking patients often help in this manner of their own accord."

"(4) It is not compulsory to have mattresses fumigated after a death. The practice at Rockhampton Hospital is that a fresh mattress is placed on the bed after a death. The used mattress is aired in the sun for two days on special racks, which method the Medical Superintendent considers satisfactory."

DOMESTIC STAFF ROOM, ROCKHAMPTON GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) Is it a fact that the domestic staff at the Rockhampton General Hospital are required to eat their meals in the old morgue?"

"(2) If so, does he consider this a suitable room and, if not, will he provide more suitable accommodation for the staff?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"(1 and 2) The Rockhampton Hospitals Board has advised that a room previously used as a staff room and later as a temporary mortuary at Rockhampton Hospital has been renovated for use as a domestic staff room. The room is twenty-one feet by seventeen feet and situated in the ground floor of the General Private Ward block. There is a shower, basin and toilet. Cooking facilities, dining table, chairs, sink and ice chest are provided. A screened off area is used for dressing. This contains full length lockers, basin and couch. Another section is used as a lounge. In renovating the room, it was cleaned and ceiling, walls and floor repainted. Floor mats have been provided and some new lounge chairs are to be purchased. Before occupation by the domestic staff, the room was inspected by the organiser of the Australian Workers' Union. He was pleased with the room and facilities which the Board had made available. The Board also fully approved the accommodation provided. The room is being used by the staff and no complaints have been received."

BOTULISM IN CATTLE, TOWNSVILLE-CHARTERS TOWERS AREA

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

"What progress has been made by his Department in Townsville to combat the incidence of Botulism in cattle in the Townsville-Charters Towers area and what moneys have been lately expended or are to be expended by his Department in this regard?"

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick) replied—

"In May last an amount of £300 was provided for the conduct of field trials with a phosphorus supplement in water on two properties in the Townsville district where heavy losses of stock had occurred. The Honourable Member is doubtless aware that standard Botulism vaccine has been found to be less successful in the North than in other coastal areas. As a consequence the preparation of a more potent vaccine was negotiated with the Commonwealth Serum Laboratory. However, it has been ascertained that this vaccine cannot be made available before 1963. As an interim measure an order has been placed with a South African laboratory for 2,000 doses of a bivalent vaccine at an estimated cost of £200 and this will be despatched by air freight. In the meantime research is continuing and field officers are using every opportunity to obtain material from field cases for examination for the presence of toxins which can be typed at the laboratory."

Mobile Traffic Police Patrols

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

"In view of the appalling toll of death on the roads, especially at week-ends, will he give consideration to increasing the present number of mobile police patrols, which could be made up by substituting civilian staff for the present members of the police force, who check the parkatareas?"

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth—Treasurer and Minister for Housing), for **Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY** (Isis), replied—

"The Commissioner of Police states that all available officers are employed on patrols to reduce the incidence of road accidents. Only seven members of the Police Force are performing duties in relation to parkatarea parking offences. The release of these officers from these duties would do little to increase the number of police for traffic duty. The Honourable Member can be assured that the question of increasing mobile patrols will continue to receive urgent attention with a view to reducing the toll of the road. Might I point out that over the past five years, the mobility of the Queensland Police Force has been transfigured. At June 30, 1957, the Police Force had in use 212 motor vehicles and 155 motor cycles. At June 30, this year the numbers had grown to 337 motor cars and 176 motor cycles. Not only that, but the fleet is now of new model, well conditioned vehicles, in brilliant contrast to the assemblage of aged and mechanically imperfect vehicles which we inherited when we took over the reins of Government."

OVERTIME PAID IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Return to Order

The following paper was laid on the table—

Return to an order showing the amount of overtime paid in each Government Department (all funds) during the year 1961-1962 made by the House on the motion of Mr. Thackeray on August 23.

PAPERS

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

Report of the Licensing Commission for the year 1961-1962.

Report of the Commissioner of Land Tax for the year 1961-1962.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. TOOTH (Ashgrove) (11.25 a.m.), by leave: In today's issue of "The Courier-Mail," Mr. P. Beckett refers to my recent statement in this House concerning Mr. A. Arnell, and complains that the statement was made "behind parliamentary privilege."

Apart from the fact that my statement dealt with a parliamentary matter, and Parliament was therefore the correct place in which to make it, privilege was necessary to prevent the possible banning of discussion of this important matter by the issue of a "stop-gap" writ.

Members of the public are not generally aware of the growing practice of issuing writs with this object in view. Once such a writ is issued, public or parliamentary discussion of the matter is prevented until the issue is decided by the courts or the writ is withdrawn. In this way public discussion can be stifled until a matter is forgotten. Reference to the matter under parliamentary privilege prevents this undesirable use of legal processes to censor discussion of vital public issues. I therefore feel that this, apart from other considerations, justifies my use of parliamentary privilege.

Mr. Duggan: Do you want to abrogate our legal system?

Mr. Aikens: The Lord Mayor took out a writ against "Sunday Truth" and he had not got the guts to go on with it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Bennett: I issued one against the Q.L.P.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member for South Brisbane continues to be grossly disorderly, I will deal with him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That goes for the hon. member for Townsville South, too.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not propose to call the next business until the House is quiet.

COMMONWEALTH AID TO STATE GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPMENT OF QUEENSLAND

Mr. GILMORE (Tablelands) (11.27 a.m.): I move—

> "That this House, being of the opinion that the development of Australia and the well-being of her people as a whole are the joint responsibility of the Federal and all States' Governments, appreciates the co-operative help and assistance which the Commonwealth Government is rendering to this State's Government in its efforts to promote the development of Queensland's vast resources and the well-being of its citizens in the national interest."

It is well known how much the Commonwealth Government have given the various States over the years and the development that has taken place as a result of that assistance. I am sure that the other States are competent to speak for themselves, so I shall confine my remarks to the assistance granted to Queensland in the past and what I believe will be of assistance to its future development.

I should like to refer to immediate assistance rather than delve into the assistance that we received as a State in the past, particularly when Labour Governments were in power. The Mt. Isa rail project is something about which we can be very pleased, because we have received Commonwealth assistance to the extent of about £30,000,000 for it. It is a repayable loan, but at least we are able to proceed with the work of re-laying and improving the line, thus enabling the great mine at Mt. Isa to treble its output and get its products onto world markets. Under Labour regimes the line to Mt. Isa, in common with other railway lines in Queensland, was allowed to deteriorate.

Mr. Bromley: Labour did not close them down.

Mr. GILMORE: They almost closed themselves. The reconstruction of that railway line is now well on the way towards completion.

I refer also to the £5,000,000 grant for beef roads, which are under construction at present. Doubtless they will be sealed.

Mr. Nicklin: They are being sealed.

Mr. GILMORE: I thank the Premier for that information. They will be quite incapable of coping with the traffic on them if they are not sealed. Transporters at present are finding great difficulty travelling over the roads which are extremely corrugated. In fact, some of them carry their own welding plants. I am a keen advocate for the sealing of the roads and we are grateful to the Commonwealth Government for realising the need and providing finance for the work.

The brigalow belt development scheme will take £1.7 million in its first year of operation. It will quickly develop that area of Central Queensland and doubtless, as the years go by further sums will be granted.

I refer also to the special unemployment grants that we have received totalling £7,000,000 in the last eight months. I speak in round figures. Those grants have been of great benefit to the State and a tremendous amount of that money has been channelled into development.

When we view the development of this great State, it is incumbent upon us to view also the outlets for our products and commodities. It is very little use developing a country or an industry if it is not possible to channel the products of that development to the world's markets. We all know that the home market is the best but when it is satisfied it is then necessary to merchandise our commodities properly and place them on the world's markets. Therefore, I propose to give hon. members my views on the outlets for those products that, with the aid of science and the industry of our people, we can produce in abundance.

Because of the situation that developed in the Carribean, the United States of America found herself short of sugar and granted us a quota on her market. Sugar-growers had endeavoured for years and years, by all means possible, to break into the American market but they were not successful. We as a nation have had an unfavourable trade balance with the United States of America for very many years. In season and out of season, we have been one of her best commodity purchasers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! A practice has grown of hon. members standing at the end of the front benches and talking to Ministers. It is a practice that is not permitted and must cease.

Mr. GILMORE: We were significant purchasers of motor-cars, machinery, tractors, tobacco, and other commodities from the United States. As I say, our trade balance was adverse but, little by little, we are breaking into that market and today the United States is a valuable customer both of our sugar industry and of our meat industry.

Mr. Houston: Isn't Red China buying our wheat?

Mr. GILMORE: Red China is a valuable customer of ours, and trade with that country should be fostered. It is of advantage to Australia to sell to Red China.

Australia is faced with either a possible loss or a possible expansion of trade, because at this juncture no-one can say what will be the ultimate results of the European Common Market negotiations. At the moment the

Prime Minister and the Minister for Trade are negotiating and battling to preserve the advantages that Australian trade has enjoyed since the Ottawa Agreement was signed. Under the stimulus of the preferences that were given to many Australian commodities under that agreement, great development took place in this country. It is the belief of those very close to the negotiations that our trade, industry, and development could be seriously jeopardised by Britain's entry into the European Common Market. It is not for me to venture an opinion, but let me say that the matter is serious enough for the two top statesmen of the Commonwealth of Australia to be in Great Britain at this moment negotiating to save what they can of our affiliations with that country.

On the other hand, there are other schools of thought on the possible outcome if Britain does enter the European Common Market. It is suggested that if special negotiations are fruitful, greater markets will be opened to us, but it has yet to be determined what the ultimate outcome will be.

Whatever the outcome of the European Common Market negotiations, we have immediate neighbours who could become valuable markets for our commodities. Perhaps it would be better to look at the whole matter on a global basis. India is a nation of 450,000,000 people, and it was announced recently that its population is increasing at the rate of 1,000 an hour. Every hour of the day the population of India increases by 1,000. That country is not so far away when we consider the fast transport of today. The last estimate I could find of the population of Red China was 700,000,000. The figures estimated for Japan were 93,000,000, the Philippine Islands 28,000,000, and Indonesia 90,000,000, giving an approximate total of 1,350,000,000 people right at our back door. What a tremendous market is available to us for the commodities that we can and should produce! Whatever the outcome of the Common Market negotiations, those markets should be exploited. Today Australia is on the threshold of the greatest market of all times. It is up to us to produce the goods and exploit the possibilities to the utmost. I believe we could become the political leaders of a vast majority of the people in that area, but that is a matter for consideration on another occasion. Economically, we can exploit that market to our great advantage. Japan is recognised today as our best customer for wool. She is an excellent customer for our sugar, and she is also inquiring about our meat. We know already that our coal industry is being geared up to cope with the export to Japan of 2,000,000 tons a year. That could be the beginning of immense development in this State.

Indonesia is now adjacent to us after winning the West New Guinea tussle. It is not generally known that the boundary of Dutch New Guinea, which will become Indonesian territory, adjoins territory under Queensland control, with the exception of possibly three miles. We have one of the Asiatic nations as our immediate neighbour, and we must look to it for trade. When our neighbours wish to trade with us, and we have commodities that they are short of, we should be anxious to sell to them and it would be wise for us to enter into commerce with them.

Mr. Hilton: Do you think they could pay for what they bought from us?

Mr. GILMORE: It is remarkable that many people who have not visited the East believe that all the people there are poor. I can assure hon. members that they are not all poor. Admittedly some are very poor and others are starving. Statistics I read recently indicate that there are about 300,000,000 underfed people in the world. We can produce food to take up some of that lag.

Mr. Davies: How did you get on in Red China? Were they underfed?

Mr. GILMORE: I was not in Red China. I was in Kowloon, but I did not go beyond the border. I would have been much more welcome in Red China than in say, East Berlin. I would not relish the prospect of going into East Berlin, where the Russians are. The Russian ideological approach to politics is similar to the Socialistic approach expounded by the Labour Party in Queensland. That is why I should not like to go there.

There is a potential market for grains, meat, sugar, and fish in the East. I am reliably informed by fishermen who have fished the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria and the outer Barrier Reef that we are fortunate in having huge shoals of tuna eminently suitable for canning. That is a food that is in demand throughout the world. The Commonwealth, in co-operation with the States, should investigate the prospects for tuna-fishing in the Gulf of Carpentaria. I was surprised to find recently that the people of Gladstone are anxious to buy for processing the tuna hauls of the Japanese fishing boats which operate outside our territorial waters. Queenslanders should be catching those fish and processing them for the world's markets, thus creating employment for our people in a new industry.

Over the years, the sugar industry has been materially assisted by the Commonwealth Government and it is quite safe to say that, had it not been for them, it would never have made the advances it has. It has been developed to the maximum of efficiency and is able to sell its commodity on the world's markets. Even the home market has benefited greatly. The 1952 inquiry disclosed, if I remember rightly, that the people of Australia saved some £60,000,000 on the price they would have had to pay to import sugar. So the industry is a valuable one to Australia, and to Queensland. It has always been fostered by the Commonwealth Government. Its progress is an example to other industries.

The tobacco industry is a classic example of what can be done with the help of a sympathetic Commonwealth Government. When the present Commonwealth Government took office the production of tobacco in Queensland was just over 1,000,000 lb. weight; the price to the grower was approximately 60d. a lb., and the percentages required were 2½ in cigarettes and 13 in tobacco. Today we are producing just on 20,000,000 lb. weight of tobacco; the price is 134d. a lb. average and the percentages are 40 and 37 respectively. The industry has been responsible for the development of a large area of North Queensland and of some parts of Southern and Central Queensland. But the development has been more rapid in North Queensland.

Mr. Hilton: That is because of the Tinaroo Dam.

Mr. GILMORE: Oh yes, the Tinaroo Falls Dam has played a very important part in development and it will continue to.

Mr. Hanlon: What help did the Commonwealth Government give us on that?

Mr. GILMORE: Unfortunately it must be admitted that they did not give us any. The difficulty was that in those days no application was made for help. Had application been made, consideration would have been given to it.

It is quite possible that in the foreseeable future we will have substantial markets in the East for sugar, and, when that occurs, the Burdekin scheme is one that could be implemented to assist in the export drive. Those who have studied the Burdekin scheme will know that it requires the building of two sugar mills. Over the years the existing sugar mills have had some difficulty in selling their output. I do not think it would be wise to build two new mills to compete with those that are already experiencing difficulty. America and Japan have greatly relieved the situation but we do not want to accentuate the difficulties. However, when the time comes for the expansion of the sugar industry the Burdekin area would be the logical place to concentrate on and I should be very happy to support it.

As I have said in this House before, beef roads will do a wonderful job in allowing stock to be transported to market quickly and in their best condition. I would support another road right through the heart of the Peninsula, to enable stock to be moved to market from that area, and extended to Weipa. Weipa is a sea-port and, apart from the use of air-transport, which is very costly, the only means of access is by sea. The Commonwealth Government could, with great advantage, assist in having that road sealed and extended to almost the tip of Cape York.

Mr. Hanlon: They have already refused to help with that road, have they not?

Mr. GILMORE: No, not yet. They have not examined the proposal, but no doubt it will be submitted in due course.

Much development must take place in that region of North Queensland. We find on looking at it that it is basically a cattle-producing area.

Mr. Sullivan: The graziers must consider this to be a new era with the roads that this Government have put in.

Mr. GILMORE: The graziers now have a new outlook on life. They are improving their properties and bringing in a better class of stock. However, no matter how much the quality of stock is improved, the two basic features in beef production are feed and water. All other things are secondary. The Peninsula receives approximately two-thirds of Queensland's total rainfall, and the run-off is tremendous. Our efforts must be concentrated on preserving that water and holding it for the months in which no rain falls. It is an area that is under monsoonal influence. I have said in this House before—and I say it again—that we must set up a body to construct bores and dams and provide water in that area. I envisage some organisation, within the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, along the lines of the war-time Civil Construction Corps.

I shall indicate to the House the cattle numbers in Queensland, France, and Canada. In Queensland the figure is under 7,000,000. Canada has 12,000,000 and France 14,000,000 head of beef cattle. When we realise that France is a greater producer, by 100 per cent., of cattle than is Queensland, it becomes a challenge to us to do something about it. We are slipping, and it is time that we stopped that trend.

How can we stop it? Canada introduced in 1935 what became known as the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act. It was above all a water-conservation scheme, and the Federal Government of Canada co-operated with the States in constructing 63,000 water-conservation projects. Of that number only 5,000 were of a major nature. "Major nature" is not defined, but I imagine that it would refer to projects like the Tinaroo Falls Dam scheme. Most of them were farm-water preservation projects. It gained momentum only after 15 years, and in the last decade they have doubled their beef cattle numbers.

We can do that, and more. There is very fertile country here that produces a type of feed which, in my own language, is "self hay-making". It retains its nutrient value in dry seasons and is always there for the cattle. But the water is confined to the rivers, and there is no water in areas farther than 3 or 4 miles from rivers where there is an abundance of feed. The sensible thing to do is conserve water in those areas. Admittedly that is a costly procedure, but our failure to conserve water costs the State a great deal in revenue. I believe that this

proposal should be put before the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply and the Federal Department of Development for their urgent consideration. There is a great deal of starvation in the world today and many of our neighbours are looking anxiously to us for the products that they require, but we are not doing the job that we ought to do.

Mr. Hanlon: Are you speaking for the motion or against it?

Mr. GILMORE: I said at the outset that I would mention the projects that the Commonwealth Government have supported, and also submit to the House some others that I believe are worthy of their support. It is our task to tell the Federal Government what we believe is their duty in this matter. For far too long the control of the country rested in the hands of Labour Governments that did not know what to do, or, if they knew, did not have the intelligence to do it. The people in the areas about which I am speaking expect something to be done, and it falls to my lot to put forward these suggestions to the House.

Mr. Hanlon: You were a member of a Federal Government that knew that.

Mr. GILMORE: It is not for me to question the people's choice of a Federal member.

Mr. Graham: Did you raise your voice in the Federal House on this question?

Mr. GILMORE: I have spoken on this subject in the Federal House, and I speak in this House because I know it is true and it is the only way in which we will get something done.

Mr. Sullivan: As a result of these agitations, the Federal Government have made money available to the State Government.

Mr. GILMORE: Unfortunately, the members who represent the area in the Federal House are not interested in what happens in the back country. They are interested only in the areas where the great majority of voters are, the heavily-populated areas. But in our efforts to develop the country, we look to the battler in the Gulf Country and in the Peninsula, the men who are producing the wealth.

That brings me to the mineral wealth of the area. In the North are concentrated some of the richest mineral areas in Queensland, possibly in the world. We have at Mt. Isa the greatest mineral-producing field in the world, and the Weipa bauxite deposits make Mt. Isa appear small fry in comparison. We have Mary Kathleen; we have Constance Range and other areas producing iron-ore. Our vision should not become blurred by the magnitude of these areas. There are other areas that the small man could develop if he had a means of processing his ore. If we look back through history, we find that when the Labour Party closed the Chillagoe smelters it sounded the deathknell of the Etheridge and Hodgkinson areas, and other areas. We know that the Etheridge railway line was not being used to its fullest extent. It could now be bringing mineral in in great quantities to help these producers. There are thousands of mines there that were in full production. They are small mines, I will admit, but small fish are sweet and they were all helping this nation. If those mines were in production today, they would mean employment for thousands of Queenslanders.

Mr. Graham: They were not in production when the Chillagoe smelters were closed.

Mr. GILMORE: They were.

Mr. Graham: They were not.

Mr. GILMORE: They were, and they were profitable until the Chillagoe smelters were closed by the Labour Party.

A Government Member: What about Mungana?

Mr. GILMORE: Don't mention the Mungana scandal. We all know of that and what a disgrace it was to Queensland.

Mr. O'Donnell: Who said it was a scandal?

Mr. GILMORE: There was a royal commission into it.

Mr. Hanlon: What happened in the final judgment?

Mr. GILMORE: Is the hon. member referring to the final judgment of the Judges or of the four jurymen? He wants to watch the final judgment of the Q.C.E.

Now I come to a classification of the coal deposits that are being worked in Queensland. They are being worked and have been assisted by the Federal Government. In addition, a Bill was introduced yesterday for the development of Gladstone Harbour with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government. I am sure that the Labour Party is very unhappy with the progress that is being made, because they have from time to time endeavoured to prosper as a party on the backs of the unemployed.

Mr. Hanlon: We are not happy about it.

Mr. GILMORE: Hon. members opposite are happy and if the number of unemployed were doubled they would be happier still.

Mr. Hanlon: We were not very happy when your Federal Government subsidised Indian coal against Australian coal.

Mr. GILMORE: When Mr. Chifley was Prime Minister he had to put the Army into the mines to get coal. The Commos would not work to produce coal and Mr. Chifley had to put the Army in. And what about the watersiders? What a disgrace for this country, with its huge deposits of coal, to be forced to import coal from overseas to keep our industries going!

Mr. Hanlon: You did not have to import it.

Mr. GILMORE: We, as a nation, were barely touched industrially by the war and yet, 18 months after the war we could get so little coal for our heavy industries that we had to import iron, galvanised iron, and barbed wire from Germany, although that country was devastated by 1,000-bomber raids night after night. The Communists had this country by the throat. They were the same Communists who now have the Labour Party by the throat; they are in the unions that subscribe to the Q.C.E.

We will have a Communist's name submitted for the Senate. There is no doubt about that.

Mr. BROMLEY: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Tablelands referred to Mr. Arnell as a Communist. I strongly object to that.

Mr. GILMORE: I do not have to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that I did not say anything about Mr. Arnell; I did not mention his name.

To proceed with the subject of the sale of coal to Japan, this great development is one of the most forward steps this country has taken. Hon. members can visualise the picture—importing coal into Australia under Labour while today we are preparing to sell no less than 2,000,000 tons a year. If that is not progress, if that is not creating employment, if that is not developing this country, how much do hon. members opposite want? And 2,000,000 tons will not be the limit. The coal will be transported by electric railway.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. GILMORE: I am speaking of Australia today. I am also speaking of Australia when Chifley had to put the Army into the mines to get the coal. The Newcastle steelworks were closing down because they could not get the coal to keep going.

The brigalow country has stood from time immemorial without anything being spent on it. For the first time the Queensland Government have received £1.7 million as a grant for brigalow-lands development in the first year——

Opposition Members: Loan.

Mr. GILMORE: I have been corrected. It is a loan.

Under the impetus of that developmental scheme the brigalow area will come into fruitful production. Thousands of Queenslanders will be employed. The income from the area will be anything from £5,000,000 to £8,000,000 a year. It is hard to estimate at this stage because of the fluctuation of markets. A great deal of money will be spent in the area and from it will flow great progress and prosperity.

I am giving the facts in connection with the assistance given to Queensland. We will go further. We will demonstrate how we can further develop Queensland, in particular North Queensland. We will appeal for money to assist us with water-conservation schemes to hold the streams so that we can bring fat cattle out of that part of the State.

Mr. Hanlon: Men are being put off in Mareeba and Dimbulah.

Mr. GILMORE: The scheme is drawing to a close. It has to finish some day. Just as every major project must finish, that scheme will finish some day. As the money becomes available those men will be found other employment. There is so much progress in Queensland as a consequence of this Government's outlook and progressive thinking that employment will be made available. New South Wales has double the amount of unemployment that Queensland has. Hon. members opposite would be delighted if we could produce 34,000 unemployed. They would be excited about it because they would be able to get on every stump and say, "This will put us back on the Treasury benches."

(Time expired.)

Mr. PILBEAM (Rockhampton South) (12.9 p.m.): I greatly welcome the opportunity to second the motion, which was so ably moved by the hon. member for Tablelands—

> "That this House, being of the opinion that the development of Australia and the well-being of her people as a whole are the joint responsibility of the Federal and all States' Governments, appreciates the co-operative help and assistance which the Commonwealth Government is rendering to this State's Government in its efforts to promote the development of Queensland's vast resources and the well-being of its citizens in the national interest."

I believe it is most timely to draw attention to the change in Commonwealth-State relations that has taken place gradually over the past few years, and more particularly over the last five years. Those of us who can look back at the period prior to World War II. will recall the limited degree of the Commonwealth's financial assistance to this State. The States then had their own taxation rights which, in World War II., they ceded to the Commonwealth. War-time measures led to the intensification of Commonwealth authority and the multiplicity of Commonwealth control. The aim was military strength rather than a development of economic resources. In the immediate post-war period the A.L.P. Federal Government were concerned more with the continuation of war-time controls—price and rent control, capital-issues control, control of labour, and control by rationing—than with hastening development. There were plans aplenty. There were moves to socialise the banks and the air services; there was

talk of developing the northern, and even the central, part of Queensland, but very little development took place anywhere.

Then came the election of the Liberal-Country Party Federal Government in December, 1949. The rapid growth in the Australian economy that then took place resulted inevitably in more Commonwealth assistance to the States, particularly by way of State works and housing programmes, financed not only from loans, but also from consolidated revenue collected by the Commonwealth Government. Grants to the States continued under the States Grants (Tax Reimbursement) Act. In addition, the Commonwealth undertook a number of responsibilities that were previously carried by the States. Among them, for example, were the grants to the universities, but many were only on a limited scale.

From 1949 to 1957, with a Liberal-Country Party Federal Government and a Labour Party State Government in Queensland it could be said that the Commonwealth Government increasingly contributed to the development of this part of the Commonwealth. It could not, however, be said that it was co-operative help and assistance. Whatever was done then by the Commonwealth was the subject of abuse by the A.L.P. State Government, including the hon. member for Toowoomba West. Opportunities were lost by the State because of this lack of co-operation. The most notable example was the lost opportunity to participate in the soldier-settlement scheme. No-one can tell me that the State of Queensland did not fail dismally because of the bad representation of the day.

The present State Government have recognised that co-operation has to be two-sided and, to be effective, it does not always mean agreeing with the Commonwealth Government. I have not always agreed with them myself. The present State Government have not made co-operation impossible, as the preceding Labour Government insisted upon doing. When we talk about co-operation, I would say that it goes even further than co-operation between the State and Federal Governments. To have effective co-operation it must be on a four-way basis. It must come from the individual himself and it must come from the people. Then it must come through local-government bodies in the area, and then from the State and Commonwealth Governments. It is no use people sitting down doing nothing and crying about what the Commonwealth Government are failing to do. Nearly every part of the State's advancement must stem initially from a move by people in the area, then through the local-government body in that part of the State, to the State Government, and thence to the Commonwealth last. That is real co-operation. It is useless to sit down and cry over what the Commonwealth Government are doing, but that is what we have been prone to do in recent years.

To give some evidence of the growing co-operation between the State and Federal Governments, which has proved very valuable, and, since 1959, has led to a new system of financial assistance and grants to replace the formula under the States Grants (Tax Reimbursement) Act of 1946, the following illustrates the advantages gained by Queensland under this heading:—

General Revenue Grants to Queensland

	£
1956-1957 (the last year of the A.L.P. regime in Queensland)	27,261,000
1957-1958	29,695,000
1958-1959	31,894,000
1959-1960	36,375,000
1960-1961	39,951,000
1961-1962	43,730,000
1962-1963 (Estimate)	45,577,000

That is not a bad increase, from £27,000,000 in 1956-1957 to £45,000,000 in 1962-1963. Secondly, the Country Party-Liberal Government in Queensland was able to secure substantially increased allocations in road grants, as shown by the following figures:—

	Road Allocation £
1956-1957	6,009,000
1957-1958	6,585,000
1958-1959	6,890,000
1959-1960 (under a new agreement)	8,021,000
1960-1961	8,428,000
1961-1962	9,094,000
1962-1963	9,796,000

Hon. members will appreciate the large increase from £6,000,000 in 1956-1957 to nearly £10,000,000 in the year we are just entering.

Thirdly, provision was made for substantially-increased State works allocations, partly from Commonwealth loans (the whole of the proceeds of which go to the States) and partly from Commonwealth Consolidated Revenue. With housing allocations, which also show an increasing trend, the amounts have been as follows:—

	£
1956-1957	22,000,000
1957-1958	23,160,000
1958-1959	24,560,000
1959-1960	26,230,000
1960-1961	27,600,000
1961-1962	29,700,000
1962-1963 (Estimate)	30,000,000

These amounts by way of assistance grants for roads and for works and housing, though increased, were not the result of a new principle. Rather they were a recognition of a greater need for finance to carry out the required measures in a growing State, thanks to representations by a very progressive form of government. Even more recently—and not, as some hon. members opposite might suggest, because of the Federal election results last year—the Commonwealth have agreed to help Queensland for

new and for different reasons. From the Commonwealth viewpoint, as the Federal Treasurer put it, there are specific aims. He said—

> "One is to increase exports by opening new resources or facilitating the transportation of exportable products. A second is to promote development in outlying parts of the Commonwealth, especially in the far north and the far west."

One of the most notable features of this new venture by the Commonwealth into Commonwealth-State co-operation is the beef-cattle roads scheme. The scheme involves at this stage, roads from Julia Creek via Canobie's Gate and Donor's Hill to Normanton, from Mt. Isa via Ardmore to Dajarra and thence via Boulia to Winton, from Quilpie to Windorah, and from Georgetown and Mt. Surprise to the Inland Highway. When the original agreement was incorporated in legislation the agreed Commonwealth road contribution was £5,000,000. The basis was then, in 1961, all-weather roads. I say quite frankly that I do not believe in gravel roads. It is not sufficient, in my opinion, to say that they should be all-weather roads. Gravel roads are of limited use. I say quite definitely that a road is not complete until it is sealed with bitumen. The major portion of the cost of any road is in earthworks and in putting down the basic material. The cost of bitumen-sealing is no more than about 25 per cent. of the total cost. In some places, where roads go through ranges or require extensive earthworks or drainage, the cost could be approximately £40,000 a mile, but bitumen-sealing would still cost about £2,500 a mile. Without that seal, a road is left entirely unprotected. The seal is a form of insurance, and for that reason I am highly gratified that, since that agreement, an additional advance of £250,000 has been made to make possible the sealing of those beef roads. That is a very wise provision.

The main financial contributor is to be the Commonwealth Government. The main planning and supervising authority for the roads is to be the State Government. I am pleased to note that wherever possible the State Government are making use of contracts for construction work, and that consulting engineers will be used for much of the supervision. Anyone who has had any dealings at all with the Department of Main Roads or local authorities and their outside staffs will appreciate that their work forces at the moment are taxed to the limit, and the only way in which real progress can be made is by contracting out some of the work and using consulting engineers. I am sure that the hon. member for Redcliffe will agree with that. I am pleased to see that the Government, in order to expedite this venture, are dealing with it on that basis.

As a result of the very sound approach to this project, it appears that there has been very real progress made and that construction work will be finished in a very short time. When it has been completed, there will be a means of communication from the major cattle areas in remote parts of the State, a means that never previously existed in Queensland. It will benefit not only those who live in those areas, but also those who live on or near the coast.

A simple example of this, and one of particular interest to me, is the road that runs from Mt. Isa through Boulia to Winton. This road connects with the railway, which means that a large area is connected by rail to both Rockhampton and Townsville. We must, of course, be fair and concede that Winton is considerably closer to Townsville than to Rockhampton, and that that road will therefore be of greater use to Townsville than to Rockhampton, but that does not mean that I condemn that project.

I support the action taken jointly by the State and Commonwealth Governments in the implementation of the beef-roads plan. I would, of course, still like to see the Windorah to Yaraka road built, and I hope that that will come about. That part of the road, which is also part of the Windorah to Quilpie road, is being constructed at present. I have received an assurance from the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity that two contracts are soon to be let in respect of the remaining portion at the end of the Windorah-Yaraka road.

I have also asked the Minister to deal generously with the shires through which the road passes. In a similar instance we asked the Minister to cut down by half the contribution by local authorities to the western road that runs through Emerald, and he generously did as we requested. I know that the request I have made to the Minister in regard to the Windorah-Yaraka Road will also receive his sympathetic consideration.

Undoubtedly there is very real co-operation between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government in this new venture. In making this comment, I do not wish to suggest that I believe that roads will solve all the problems of the beef-cattle industry in remote areas. They will, of course, be of great value. If road-transport costs can be kept down to a reasonable figure, there will be a movement of fat cattle out to railheads. There will be some movement of store cattle, too, although the cost factor may mean that the number of store cattle so transported will not be as great as some people expect. There will be a movement, too, of cattle from drought-troubled areas. We must recognise that the old method of moving cattle on foot, using the highly-skilled drover, is likely to be limited not only by the difficulties of feed and water shortages, leading to loss of condition among the cattle, but also by the shortage of drovers sufficiently experienced in this work.

Mr. Evans: Channel Country cattle cannot be driven.

Mr. PILBEAM: No.

Droving does not readily attract young people in this mechanical age, and as some of the old drovers go their places are not always taken by newcomers. That is a further difficulty in travelling cattle on foot, and I look forward to even more of this co-operation on beef roads between the Commonwealth and State Governments in the future.

Nobody can help being favourably impressed by the schemes that are being formulated for the development of the brigalow belt, which forms such a large part of Central Queensland. In this respect, I should like to congratulate the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation and the hon. member for Mackenzie, who have taken such a keen interest in the project. I appreciate the amount that has been made available in the initial stage by the Commonwealth Government. The Treasurer told us yesterday that it is not actually a full grant but that some part will be by way of grant and some part will have to be repaid. I believe that this project cannot fail to benefit Central Queensland by intensive closer settlement; by putting in roads where no roads exist now; by giving people the opportunity to settle on the land and live there without fear; by giving greater security of tenure and greater availability of capital. I do not see how this can be anything but a wonderful forward step in the progress of Central Queensland in particular and Queensland in general, and we appreciate the full co-operation of the State and Federal Governments in this regard.

It must be appreciated that the cattle numbers of Queensland have not grown considerably over the past five years. For that reason we must be grateful for schemes such as this that are aimed at increasing cattle numbers. The main need of the industry in Queensland today is more cattle. I deplore the tendency not to attack it from that angle—not to say, "We have not enough cattle," but to admit that we have not enough cattle and then seek to build more meatworks, especially at the expense of the people of a particular area.

I have pronounced myself on more than one occasion as against the construction of district abattoirs and I take this opportunity to do so again. I speak entirely against the construction of district abattoirs in Rockhampton where we have the largest processing meatworks in Australia. I cannot see how this private-enterprise Government is helping the cattle industry by going along with a policy of building district abattoirs.

Mr. Aikens: It costs £5 a head to kill a beast at the Townsville abattoirs.

Mr. PILBEAM: It has caused a tremendous increase in the price of beef wherever one has been constructed, because of the failure of abattoir boards to compete with the keenly-run private-enterprise works.

I have the figures here if anyone cares to examine them. The cheapest meat in Queensland is in Rockhampton and Redcliffe, both of which cities are at the present time supplied by private-enterprise meatworks. It makes me laugh to hear people crying on behalf of housewives and at the same time advocating enterprises that must increase the price of meat. It also makes me laugh to see hon. members on the other side supporting district abattoirs because with the A.L.P. it all depends on where one is as to whether or not one supports district abattoirs. I do not say that district abattoirs should not be supported if they can stand on their own feet, but why support abattoirs that cannot stand on their own feet, that are uneconomical, and have to be protected by restrictive legislation? It is no good telling me that members on the A.L.P. side support them, because in N.S.W., under a Labour Government there are two abattoirs, one at Homebush supplying the demands of Sydney and one at Gunnedah classed as the best in Australia, both standing on their own feet and neither having restrictive protection giving it a sole franchise in the area. It is no good talking to me about Vesteys not getting a franchise at Rockhampton and casting a slur on the methods of private-enterprise works, because the Labour Party in New Zealand gave Vesteys a franchise at a Hawkes Bay works and they still enjoy it. It all depends on where you are how you talk.

Mr. Walsh: Do you think Borthwicks should have a franchise in the metropolitan area?

Mr. PILBEAM: Look at it this way: Redcliffe has the cheapest meat in the Brisbane area, and it is supplied by Borthwicks and by Keong's works at Oakey.

All sorts of accusations have been made against us because we oppose the establishment of a district abattoirs at Rockhampton. We are told of the fat cattle that go past the door, but I have figures here which prove that the works at Gladstone and Rockhampton killed 54 per cent. of the cattle in Central Queensland last year. This is not bad when one considers that Brisbane, which is by far the largest market in Queensland, is entirely closed to anybody except the Q.M.I.B. works down here. I have never heard one argument in favour of district abattoirs that cannot be thrown out. I say that the answer to prosperity in the beef industry in Queensland is to increase the number of cattle, not the number of meatworks. How are you going to cheapen meat by attacking private works that are already only 50 to 60 per cent. in production? I cannot see how it can be done.

It is common knowledge that in Rockhampton one small operator is seeking to open an abattoir on a small scale and two of the largest operators in Australia are at present making inquiries about establishing works there. Their representatives say to me, "We are quite happy at the prospect of building a

meatworks in Rockhampton, but not if we have our hands tied behind our backs." If the restrictive clause is removed meatworks will operate one against the other, and that is how it should be. If an operator considers that a meatworks can be operated at Rockhampton and is prepared to bear any possible loss himself, what is wrong with that? What I object to is putting a meatworks in where the whole cost of the unit is put on the plates of the people.

Mr. Walsh: You have been condemning district abattoirs.

Mr. PILBEAM: I do not condemn any abattoir that does not carry a restrictive clause. My only objection is to replacing one monopoly with another.

Mr. Walsh interjected.

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. PILBEAM: Am I still speaking, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PILBEAM: Hon. members who heard the Treasurer introducing the Bill to validate the agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments to finance coal-loading facilities at Gladstone are well aware of the valuable co-operation involved in that project. As a result a coal-export industry, with a modern port at which to load the coal, will be well on the way. I said yesterday—and I say it again—that I am 100 per cent. on-side with Gladstone's development in that regard. I think it is wonderful that Gladstone should get that support from the Commonwealth and State Governments. The fact that £100,000 of the cost will be free money is a very good thing. I have indicated that we are not in opposition to Gladstone, but I am of the opinion—as I am sure every thinking person is—that the development in Central Queensland is such that we will need two modern ports. We are quite sure about that. We see the possibility of increasing cattle numbers in Central Queensland by virtue of the brigalow-lands scheme. We see a tremendous increase in grain production on the central highlands. We see the possibility of increasing our wool industry. We see even the possibility of factories coming into the area as a result of the very much improved water-supply scheme that we are developing on the Fitzroy River with Government assistance. We can see a tremendous mineral renaissance in the area. We are hopeful that oil will be discovered in the area. If that occurs we will certainly need the two ports.

I have nothing to say against Gladstone's development—indeed I fully support it—but I still say that the people of Rockhampton are doing the right thing in developing Port Alma to the same standard as Gladstone, and in having two first-class ports to offer the primary producers of Central Queensland. It is of importance to see that it attains the same affluent state as Gladstone. Make no mistake about it, when I said previously that they have had to work hard, the Gladstone Harbour Board have worked hard. They have been able to show us in Rockhampton the way. They have very able administrators, including Mr. Hopper, the secretary. We are determined to catch up with their rate of progress and make Port Alma just as good.

Leaving aside those mineral resources that have been known for many years, it is worth reminding hon. members that Commonwealth and State authorities have joined with private enterprise in the location of mineral resources that could revolutionise the economic outlook of Queensland in the next ten years. I refer first and foremost to the discovery of oil in Queensland, the work of the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources and the State Department of Mines, and the subsidy that has been paid and will be paid to encourage oil exploration. In that direction I refer particularly to Ampol Explorations, who are investigating the area north of Rockhampton. We are extremely grateful to Ampol for the interest they have shown in that area. We are hopeful that their enterprise, courage, and financial expenditure will meet with their just reward.

Queensland has benefited more from oil subsidies than have the other States. The total oil subsidy for Australia in 1961-1962 was £2,700,000 and the subsidy for 1962-1963 is to be £5,000,000. The volume of applications is well indicated by the fact that this £5,000,000—nearly double the amount for last year—will be expended, despite the reduced rate of subsidy. As there has been a great deal of controversy on that subject I should like to read a statement on this subject by the Minister for National Development, Senator W. H. Spooner.

Mr. Walsh: He is a Liberal, is he not?

Mr. PILBEAM: He is a first-class Australian, which is the same thing. The statement says:—

> "Following upon the introduction of the Oil Search Subsidy Scheme, and the consequent oil discoveries at Cabawin and Moonie, there was a big increase in exploration for oil in Australia.
>
> "The Government, anxious that the search for oil should proceed most energetically, has decided to allocate in 1962-1963 an amount of £5m. for oil search subsidy.
>
> "This is an increase of £2.3m. over the amount of £2.7m. which was provided in 1961-1962.
>
> "With this increased allocation it will be possible to retain the present procedure for dealing with applications for subsidy and to provide subsidy for all deserving applications.

"But in the present encouraging situation, it is felt that it is not necessary that subsidy should continue to be provided on the present generous scale—which has been generally 50 per cent. of cost, and more in certain cases.

"The amount of subsidy to be granted hereafter will therefore be limited in each case, having regard to the volume of applications and the funds which the Government has decided to make available. Initially, the maximum amount of subsidy specified in each Agreement in accordance with sections 9 (2) and 9A (2) of the Act will be 30 per cent. of the estimated cost of the subsidised operation in those cases where it has hitherto been 50 per cent. In other cases the maximum amount will be reduced proportionately."

That statement shows, in much the same way as the State Government pointed out when it reduced subsidies to local authorities, that, while overall the amount is nearly doubled, we cannot have it both ways; we cannot have an increased proportion as well as an increased total. An amount of £7,500,000 will be spent in oil exploration in Queensland this year.

Mr. Davies: It is not enough.

Mr. PILBEAM: On the subject of local-government subsidies, it is very easy for members of the Opposition to say that when they were in office they did not reduce the rate of subsidies on local-government works. What they did do was to reduce substantially the amount local authorities were allowed to borrow. Under this Government, local authorities have been allowed to borrow nearly twice as much as under the previous Government. We cannot have it both ways. It has been put to us that we can revert to the same rate of borrowing as we enjoyed under the Labour Government and get the same rate of subsidy, but we do not want that. I would sooner do the extra work and employ additional people.

It should never be forgotten that the speed-up in the search for oil in Queensland occurred at least partly as a result of the co-operative help of the Commonwealth and State Governments, particularly over the past five years. I do not think anyone will deny that. There was desultory oil search in the past under the A.L.P. Government, but it was on a scale not comparable with the present activity.

The co-operation of the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources and the State Department of Mines is significant, too, in other mineral discoveries. I believe that, when the time comes for an iron-ore industry in Queensland—leading to a steelworks in Queensland—to be commenced, it will be the result of the exploratory work encouraged by the Commonwealth and State bodies, and the enterprise of private concerns.

I have faith that a steel-works will be established in Central Queensland. There is only one thing the people must do to ensure it, and that is retain this Government with its ambitious and progressive ideas. All we need is an extension of time. (I think I might need one myself to finish my speech.) I believe the steel-works will come about by private enterprise, with the encouragement of the Commonwealth and State Governments. That is the type of enterprise that will achieve development. It was because I oppose any form of enterprise other than private enterprise that I opposed the establishment of district abattoirs. I do not believe, as hon. members opposite appear to believe, that a successful iron and steel industry will ever result from a scheme that is Socialistic in nature any more than I believe that a successful meatworks will be brought about by any Socialistic form of enterprise. I am a private-enterprise man, and I stand by it. We have seen too much of the failures that result from Socialistic schemes. We saw quite a lot in Central Queensland. Equally, we have seen how such schemes hold back real development by private enterprise. Queensland's development has too long been held back by Socialistic enterprises. The correct approach is the encouragement of private enterprise by both the State and the Commonwealth Governments.

There are many other ways in which the Commonwealth have co-operated in helping this State. I have referred to cattle roads and to the development of the brigalow lands. One lesser known aspect is the assistance being given to meet the cost of changing the chemicals in cattle dips. Hon. members must have heard the controversy that has taken place over the fact that the Rucide type of dip was found to be affecting the flavour of the meat and a switch has had to be made to the sodium type of dip. Under this heading, the estimate of Commonwealth Government help in 1962-1963 is £100,875. That is a considerable grant for a worthy cause. Instead of crying about what the Commonwealth are not doing, their critics should take note of what they are doing.

I have dealt previously with improved port facilities for coal loading at Gladstone. I am sure I need not stress the value of Commonwealth assistance on the rehabilitation of the Mt. Isa railway line. It has been discussed here often. Do not tell me we have not cause for gratitude to the Commonwealth Government for their tremendous financial assistance with that work. Do not tell me that the reconstruction of the line will not provide employment and greatly help the development of North Queensland. If we had this sort of financial assistance in Central Queensland I am sure we could have the enviable experience of hearing hon. members say "Thank you" when they have money spent in their areas. That is altogether different from the attitude of members of the Opposition.

Under the heading of additional extension services to tobacco growers, an amount of £12,000 has been provided this year to be used for research.

(Time, on motion of Mr. Hooper, extended.)

Mr. PILBEAM: I thank the hon. member and the House for the extension of time granted to me with the gracious acquiescence of the Leader of the Opposition. Grants by the Commonwealth Government to stimulate employment were to the order of £3,340,000 in February 1962, and a further grant of £3,640,000 was made available in June of this year. So we have had great Commonwealth assistance particularly in the relief of unemployment in areas that have worked hard to co-operate. Unemployment figures are decreasing substantially. That is so in my own area, where the unemployment figure is down round the 300 mark.

Another way in which the Commonwealth Government assisted in the current year was in grants for universities, which this year will total £1,953,000 against £866,000 in 1959-1960. Payments in respect of national disasters have been provided to the extent of £21,000. Other grants are £44,000 for long-service leave in the coal-mining industry, £66,000 for dairy-industry extension grants, £57,000 for agricultural advisory services, and over £1,000,000 for the maintenance of T.B. hospitals.

It must not be forgotten that there is an amount of £60,000 in the Federal Budget this year for capital expenditure on mental institutions, and £200,000 for capital expenditure on T.B. hospitals. I think that I should pause for a moment to pay tribute to the Commonwealth Government for the wonderful efforts that they have made to reduce tuberculosis in my area by providing a modern and beautiful chest clinic at Rockhampton, and making provision for its maintenance. Once regarded as a scourge, tuberculosis is now looked upon as a minor hazard indeed. This work is something worthy of the highest praise.

Over £1,000 has been allotted for the encouragement of meat production.

The Loan Council provided £26,200,000 for State works this year compared with £22,750,000 in 1959-1960. For housing, £3,800,000 has been provided. Borrowings approved for semi-governmental and local authorities amount to £27,123,000. Time prevents me from dealing with many other ways in which the Federal Government are helping develop this State.

One thing to which I refer specifically is the way in which the Commonwealth Government are fostering television, particularly in country areas. It is very gratifying to know that areas such as Toowoomba, Townsville, and Rockhampton will have television within the next 12 months. Anyone who has seen the development of this project in Rockhampton will appreciate the great amount of money made available by the Commonwealth Government to build a road to the site. I suppose that it would cost over £250,000, and the Commonwealth Government have also been very generous in their co-operation with the local television company, which will be engaged in commercial television.

Mr. Duggan: They charge £5 for a license; they ought to give something back.

Mr. PILBEAM: But they are still doing good work.

We appreciate also the work done in the aviation field by the Department of Civil Aviation. Where would one find more effective control than that exercised by that department? It must be a matter of great satisfaction to the Commonwealth Government that air services have been freed from accidents. I suppose that hon. members travel as much as most people, and we appreciate the services provided under the control of the D.C.A.

Mr. Walsh: Do you travel by T.A.A. or A.N.A.?

Mr. PILBEAM: I travel by the line having the service on the particular day; we have an alternate service at Rockhampton. We have reason to be grateful to the Commonwealth Government for giving us a splendid aerodrome; it is equal to any in any other provincial city in the Commonwealth.

I should like to voice the appreciation of those in my area of the shipping service of the Australian National Line. Because of competition from road and rail, we lost a shipping service from Rockhampton to the South. The Australian National Line intervened, and is now maintaining a ten-day service between Rockhampton and Newcastle and Sydney with River Class ships. I know that hon. members opposite will not be interested in this, but, on the employment front, that kept many watersiders in Rockhampton in employment.

I must be quite fair and not devote all my remarks to my own area. I think that Townsville must be particularly grateful to the Commonwealth Government for the extension of the Cunningham Laboratory to that city. It is unfortunate that it could not be established in Rockhampton. We would have said "Thank you" for it. The initial expenditure on the Cunningham Laboratory in Townsville is £292,000, and the announcement was made on 20 May that £50,000 would be made available immediately and that planning could be completed in time for construction to commence during this financial year. The laboratory is the only one in Australia specially equipped for tropical and pasture plant propagation. This proves that the Commonwealth Government is showing a keen interest in Queensland and co-operating fully with the State Government and the cities and shires in advancing the interests of this State.

I hope that we will continue to receive sympathetic consideration from the Commonwealth Government. I hope, too, that the present State Government will continue in office and give the same measure of co-operation as it has given in the past five years. No-one but the most biased person could deny that development is taking place in Queensland on an unprecedented scale, and, taking the long-range view, I should say that that will be the real solution of our unemployment problem. We can employ a few hundred or a few thousand people in small stop-gap schemes, but in the final analysis developmental schemes and the encouragement of worth-while industries in an area will solve the unemployment problem.

In my electorate in particular, we are most grateful for the support we are getting on the four fronts that I have mentioned, and the people of the area are showing a keener interest in its development. In Rockhampton, people are showing greater interest in all the city's enterprises. We are most grateful that the city council has accelerated its plans for the development of the city, because when the big Central Queensland uplift comes the city will be ready for it. We will not be left behind, as Brisbane was left behind. We will be able to keep pace with water reticulation, the building of roads and footpaths, and, most important of all, the provision of sewerage.

On top of that, we are grateful to the State Government for at last realising that there are three parts of Queensland—Southern, Central and Northern—and that Central Queensland is just as fertile and has as much potential as the other two parts of the State.

I am happy to acknowledge, above all else, the co-operation and support that the Commonwealth Government are giving to the State of Queensland under the various headings that I have mentioned. I hope that this support will continue and that the people of Queensland will appreciate that they are making progress on all fronts and that their best hope for its continuance lies in keeping the present State Government in office.

At 2.15 p.m.,

In accordance with Sessional Order, the House proceeded with Government business.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. O. O. MADSEN (Warwick—Minister for Agriculture and Forestry): 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 amend the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Acts, 1923 to 1934, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

LAND BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

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

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (2.18 p.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to consolidate and amend the law relating to the alienation, leasing and occupation of Crown land."

This is an important Bill and, although I am going over quite a few of the more important changes to the land law, I also intend to let the Bill lie on the table of the House for three or four weeks so that those who are interested can study it in detail and come back to the House, on so important a matter, I hope informed and armed with criticism—constructive, I am sure.

This is the sixth consolidation of the land laws of this State and is one of the largest and most comprehensive measures to be placed before the Chamber. The measure, like its predecessor, the Land Act of 1910, will prove a truly historic document.

There are presently 79 different Acts on the statute book relating to the alienation, leasing, and occupation of Crown lands. The Bill consolidates all the current provisions of these Acts and commits to oblivion the superseded material in the 79 Acts referred to.

Prior to the fifth consolidation of the land laws, remarks such as the following, made by the Hon. H. F. Hardacre, M.L.A., a former member of this Assembly, were not infrequently heard in the Chamber—

"Our land laws remind me of the remark of the astronomer who tried to ascertain the orbits of the stars with their cycles upon epicycles—nobody can understand them."

Bernays, in his book "Queensland Politics during Sixty (1859-1919) Years", writing upon the introduction of the Land Act of 1910, said—

". . . At this period the land laws of Queensland might well be described as chaotic. It was a series of amendments superimposed upon amendments until the confusion already existing became worse confounded. The gigantic task of consolidating them was taken in hand, with the result that the very complete and comprehensive Land Act of 1910 was passed—a work of unusual magnitude. . . . All previous Land Acts were by this measure virtually swept into oblivion, and the land law, for reference purposes, was simplified to a remarkable degree. Very few persons outside the department could with any reasonable certainty say at this time what the law really was, but we started in 1910 with a brand-new Act compiled on the experience of fifty-one years."

The present multiplicity of Acts currently on the statute book has resulted in a similar position today to that which existed in 1910.

The compactness of the Act as a single code has long since been destroyed by many amending Acts that have been passed in the intervening period and that contain important provisions within their own separate framework. In the result, very few persons can promptly say with certainty just what is the law relating to a particular matter. Understandably, ease of reference, let alone of understanding, has been lost.

During the last century our evolving land laws were consolidated at various intervals, none of which was longer than 20 years. Although the pressing need for a new consolidation has been recognised and referred to here for many years, has been the subject of representations from primary-producer organisations, and has been recommended by a royal commission and official memoranda, the tempo of this present age, not to mention the war of the 40's and its aftermath of reconstruction, rendered it impossible to undertake the gigantic task of consolidation.

The Government were fortunate to be able to arrange for the task to be undertaken and to have available the services of Mr. F. J. Mathews, a former Chairman of the Land Administration Commission. In equally fortunate circumstances it was possible to take advantage of the experience and knowledge of Mr. W. F. Smith of the Land Court and Mr. E. Sutherst of the Land Administration Commission. These men have painstakingly waded through the enormous volume of work to winnow the chaff from the corn, and bring the different aspects of the legislation into co-relation, as well as to arrange the sequence and relativity of the various pages so that the Act itself is a reference book in which it is not too hard to find what you are looking for.

It was not sufficient merely to consolidate the existing law by plucking a section from this Act and that Act, shuffling them around and thereby producing a brand new Act. The opportunity was taken to carefully scrutinise the law, practice, and procedure to see if they required revision in any way or if new principles should be introduced. It was found necessary in many instances to re-write sections to clarify their meaning and to revise provisions in the light of present-day conditions or intervening court judgments.

The objects that the committee was charged to keep constantly before it were broadly these—

(i) To embody in one Act all the "live" provisions of the 79 Acts now on the Statute Books.

(ii) To express the law as simply, clearly and compactly as possible.

(iii) To present the law in a logical and clear sequence using general and sub-headings to collate related topics so that ease of reference may be ensured.

(iv) To streamline and simplify administrative procedure and legal processes wherever possible.

(v) To introduce new principles as considered desirable in the public interest, as indicated by Government policy.

(vi) To reduce the number of existing tenures to a minimum consistent with efficient settlement of the public estate.

(vii) To eliminate anomalies and bring about as much uniformity of procedure and conditions of tenure as is practicable.

It is no over-statement to say that land law is of the greatest importance to Queensland. It is fundamental to the prosperity and well-being of what is still predominately a primary-producing State. It applies directly to some 90 per cent. of the State's total area of 426,880,000 acres. It applies not only to the large pastoral leases in outback Queensland but also to 24-perch allotments in our towns and cities.

It should set down a clear and understandable basis for land administration—from the making available of lands by ballot, sale in fee simple, maximum areas which may be held by one person, transfer of leases, mortgaging and other conveyancing dealings in respect thereof, forfeiture of lands, and the Crown's rights of resumption, as well as principles of rental assessment, destruction of timber, destruction of noxious plants, investigation of scientific methods for the control of prickly-pear and other noxious plants, dedication and construction of roads, removal of trespassers, netting-fencing claims, and the setting apart and reservation of lands for public purposes. All of these are among —but by no means do they exhaust—the subjects covered by the land laws. Even the movement of stock along stock routes and the rights to depasture stock on land adjoining stock routes are included in their scope.

The Land Act also provides for the issue of deeds of grant of land in fee simple and the Crown's right to include within those deeds mineral reservations and reservations for public purposes. Necessarily the Land Act also covers the procedure by which deeds may be freed and discharged from these latter reservations and for fresh deeds to issue in certain cases. All these matters and many more are provided for in the Bill. It would, of course, be impracticable to refer to all the matters contained in a consolidation covering such a large field.

For the convenience and, I hope, the help of those who are interested, I have had the departmental officers compile an explanatory note. I have outlined in it the objects of the Bill and, in addition, I have outlined, one by one, the changes that are included in it compared with the present legislation. For the convenience of interested people, the precise nature of what the change constitutes and the reference number of the clause concerned is contained in this explanatory note. According to my enumeration there are 40 of them and, again for the help of those

interested, I have had a copy appended to each of the Bills, which, I hope, will be printed today and in everyone's hands. For the purposes of inserting this note in "Hansard," Mr. Taylor, I ask permission of the Chamber to have it included, without the need to read it verbatim, which would take up a good deal of the Committee's time.

Mr. Duggan: Through you, Mr. Taylor, may I ask the Minister for an assurance that the explanatory note—for which I am grateful—contains all the major alterations in policy that he will be referring to during the course of his speech?

Mr. FLETCHER: I have already given that assurance. So far as I have been able to evaluate the changes, all the important ones are included.

Mr. Walsh: We will find out when we get the Bill.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have no doubt that the hon. member who interjected will find that all the important changes are included in the explanatory note.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the explanatory note referred to by the Minister be inserted in "Hansard"?

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. FLETCHER: The explanatory note is—

1. MULTIPLICITY OF ACTS

The land laws of Queensland are presently contained in seventy-nine (79) different Acts.

Fifty-two (52) years have elapsed since the land laws were last consolidated.

During the nineteenth century our evolving land laws were consolidated at various intervals, none of which was greater than 20 years.

"The Land Act of 1910" (the fifth consolidation of the land laws) which was acclaimed as a masterpiece of codification, is the basis of the present law but, as is not unnatural with the passage of time and changing ideas and circumstances, it has come to include much obsolete material.

By virtue of many amendments "The Land Act of 1910" has taken on the appearance of a "patch work quilt", amendments being superimposed upon amendments. Its compactness as a single code has long since been destroyed by many Amending Acts which contain important provisions within their own separate framework.

In the result very few persons can promptly say with reasonable certainty just what is the law relating to a particular matter.

Ease of reference, let alone understanding, has been lost.

It is of great public importance to have again a single all-embracing Act which will permit all to know with certainty the current law and which will provide a solid foundation for the further development of the land laws.

2. OBJECTS OF BILL

The Bill consolidates and amends the law relating to the alienation, leasing and occupation of Crown lands. The objects of the Bill are:—

(i) To incorporate in one Act all the "live" provisions of the seventy-nine Acts now on the statute books.

(ii) To express the law as simply, clearly and compactly as possible.

(iii) To present the law in a logical and clear sequence using general and subheadings to collate related topics so that ease of reference may be ensured.

(iv) To streamline and simplify administrative procedure and legal processes wherever possible.

(v) To introduce new principles as considered desirable in the public interest.

(vi) To reduce the number of existing tenures to a minimum consistent with efficient settlement of the public estate.

(vii) To eliminate anomalies and bring about as much uniformity of procedure and conditions of tenure as is practicable.

3. IMPORTANT VARIATIONS

Important variations in the existing law made by the Bill are:—

(1) The area limitation applicable in the conversion of Grazing Selections to permanent tenure (freehold or perpetual lease) has been extended from 5,000 to 10,000 acres (Clause 139).

(2) The period for payment of purchase price for freeholding of selections extended from 20 years to 30 years and given retrospective operation (Clauses 123, 124, 143).

(3) Provision has been made for an extension of the time to elect to proceed with conversion to permanent tenure—maximum period now six months in lieu of three months (Clauses 142, 193).

(4) No Deed of Grant is to issue in respect of a freeholding tenure until all developmental and improvement conditions have been performed (Clauses 125, 179, 195 (3)).

(5) Right to freehold extended to all industrial lands—leases for tourist purposes only excluded (Clause 191).

(6) A new system of Balloting, the Selective Method, replaces the "Group system." Selective Ballots will be conducted by a Committee of Review comprising a member of the Land Administration Commission or other officer of the Department of Public Lands, and two experienced primary producers. Rejected applicants are given a right of appeal (Clause 90).

(7) Persons holding less than 50 per cent. of a living area are permitted to enter ballots for selections or preferential pastoral holdings irrespective of maximum area, &c., disqualifications (Clauses 57 (12), 96 (6)).

(8) Persons holding 50 per cent. or more of a living area anywhere in Australia are disqualified from entering ballots for selections or preferential pastoral holdings opened subject to condition of personal residence (Clauses 57 (12), 96 (6)).

(9) As land is a commodity in great demand and with a view to gradually ensuring a wider distribution thereof especially in view of greater productivity through scientific advances, the maximum area which may be aggregated under Grazing Selection tenure or opened under that tenure is reduced from 60,000 acres to 45,000 acres (Clauses 83, 84, 86).

(10) Perpetual Lease Prickly-pear Selections and Perpetual Lease Prickly-pear Development Selections are converted to Perpetual Lease Selections (Clause 129).

(11) The License to Occupy and certificate of performance of conditions have been abolished. A lease will now issue immediately upon payment of first year's rent, one fifth of survey fees and provisional value of improvements (Clauses 102, 103).

(12) Condition of Personal Residence will not be re-imposed on transfer of Grazing Homesteads and will be for a uniform initial period of seven years for all new grazing homesteads, and settlement farm leases and for agricultural selections and preferential pastoral holdings where imposed in terms of the opening notification (Clauses 123, 127, 130 and 131).

(13) Residential conditions in cases of hardship or attaching to holdings of less than living area standard may be waived by the Minister for such period as he thinks fit (Clause 119).

(14) To ensure early decision in cases of sickness, hardship or leave of absence to earn wages the conditions of Personal Residence or Occupation may be suspended for up to six months by the District Land Commissioner in lieu of the Land Court (Clause 118).

(15) Timber treatment and development works (e.g., clearing, filling, reclamation) effected within the last ten years of an expired or surrendered lease become improvements to be paid for by an incoming lessee on basis of actual cost less depreciation (Clause 240).

(16) Easing of restrictions on transfer of leases where developmental or improvement conditions not fulfilled by allowing transfer in cases of hardship, sickness or misfortune subject to prior certificate of Land Court that good grounds exist (Clause 286).

(17) A person (irrespective of maximum area and rental limitations) may now acquire by transfer selections or preferential pastoral holdings to build his aggregation up to living area standard (Clause 287).

(18) The granting of Additional Areas is to be subject to specified conditions ensuring a more equitable distribution of any land becoming available for that purpose (Clause 269).

(19) A lessee is given a legal right to a new lease if the land in his expired lease is again to be leased under selection or preferential pastoral holding tenure provided he is qualified to hold a lease under those tenures (Clause 166).

(20) A simplified procedure for granting a new lease to a late lessee over land in an expired holding. The new procedure is similar to that applying in case of renewal of lease during the last ten years, viz., upon acceptance of the Minister's offer, a new lease is immediately issued (Clauses 164, 165).

(21) The maximum value of an estate which may be transmitted without obtaining probate or letters of administration is raised from £4,000 to £6,000 (Clause 290).

(22) A new definition of "Living Area" applicable to all primary industries (Clause 5).

(23) Abrogation by Crown of its rights contained in reservations in Deeds of Grant issued prior to 1884 in respect of sand, clay, &c. (Clause 6 (5)).

(24) The law relating to Deeds of Grant in trust and land set apart as Reserves for public purpose has been codified (Clauses 344-361).

(25) The Crown's rights to resume from leasehold land have been codified, revised with regard to recent judgments, procedures streamlined and the law compactly stated so that it is clear to all (Clauses 306-321).

(26) The provisions regarding movement of travelling stock on roads and stock routes have been revised, minimum daily mileages brought into line with present day rates of travel and the enforcement provisions strengthened (Clause 375).

(27) The Minister's power to vary conditions of lease and extend time for their performance is declared and clearly stated (Clause 14).

(28) The Land Appeal Court is given powers of equity and good conscience similar to those presently applying to the Land Court (Clause 44 (15)).

(29) If personal residence does not apply, or if the period of personal residence has expired, preferential pastoral holdings are made subject to the condition of occupation and a limit is imposed on the area that may be held under this tenure (Clauses 54, 62).

(30) The successful applicant for a pastoral holding is to be determined by ballot and not by auction (Clause 58).

(31) The number of tenures or classes of tenure has been reduced from twenty-nine (29) to seventeen (17).

(32) The basis of rental disqualification is made uniform in that the first period rent is made the basis of the disqualification in all cases Clauses 54 (1c), 92, 93 (2)).

(33) The interest a person holds in a lease expressed in area and rental and not the total area or rental of the lease, is uniformly applied as the basis of disqualification (Clauses 54 (2), 55 (2), 55 (6), 93 (5), 94, 95 and 235).

(34) The condition of fencing attaching to leases is compactly and clearly stated (Clauses 105-111).

(35) Unoccupied Crown land may be included in any offer of a renewal of lease, or offer of a new lease on expiry of lease (Clauses 157 (3), 164 (1)).

(36) The right of a person who acquired a lease in terms of a will or on intestacy, to take a renewal of that lease irrespective of area and rental disqualifications is recognised and clarified (Clause 235 (3)).

(37) The right of existing lessees to continue to hold their present leases and to take renewals thereof irrespective of reduced maximum areas is recognised and protected (Clauses 54 (5), 85 (2), 93 (3) and 129 (4)),

(38) Rental periods for all leases (other than Special Leases which in some instances do not have rental periods) made of uniform duration—viz., ten years (Clauses 61 (c), 127 (2), 130 (2), 131 (2) and 188 (2)).

(39) The various provisions relating to transfers, subleases and mortgages of, and other dealings with, Crown leaseholds are compactly grouped for ease of reference in a separate Division of the Act (Clauses 273-293).

(40) The defendant in a claim for contribution for benefit received from a netting fence is given equal power to the claimant in the original action to recover the cost of subsequent repairs effected by him to the netting fence in question (Clause 323 (6)).

A large number of consequential and other less important amendments are also included in the Bill.

Mr. Lloyd: Did you say this Bill will reduce the number of tenures?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes.

I refer now to what I think are the main changes in the law incorporated in the Bill. From the political point of view today, probably the most controversial provisions relate to freeholding. I have always considered that hon. members opposite, with their feeling against freehold, are entitled to their point of view. At the same time, we feel strongly that to keep the man on the land in the proper frame of mind we should rightly insist on security of tenure as a background necessity.

The Bill embodies the Government's policy of extending permanence of tenure wherever possible and desirable, subject to two important prerequisites, namely, that no person may convert to permanent tenure any holding that is substantially in excess of a living area or where any such conversion would be contrary to public interests.

During the previous five years these provisions have been progressively extended to all selection tenures but in the case of grazing selections an area limitation of 5,000 acres has applied. The 5,000-acre limitation was based upon the considered opinion of the late Sir William Payne who, in his 1959 report had this to say—

> "To holders of leasehold land, security of tenure is a matter of the utmost importance. What they want is continuity of tenure, or a lease of such length as will permit work to be prudently done and capital to be invested in adequately improving the land, and allow them to reap a fitting reward for their efforts. They want an asset which they can develop and sell, or hand on to their children.
>
> "That degree of security of tenure should always be granted by the State to its tenants. Anything less is neither business nor sense."

In another part he said—

> "Lands which can only be improved at a heavy cost exceeding, say, £5 per acre, including structural improvements, should be given a permanent tenure up to a reasonable-sized area, say, 5,000 acres. In no other way can maximum development be attained.
>
> "In another section of the Report it is explained that expenditure on the development of brigalow scrub land can easily exceed £10 to £12 per acre. It would be quite unreasonable for the State to expect its tenants to expend such sums without a permanent tenure."

We agreed with the principles expounded by Sir William and we have decided that his 5,000-acre limitation could with profit be extended beyond that acreage limitation so long as it was constrained by a living-area limit. The principles that actuated him in his recommendation are still good for the men who may have slightly more than 5,000 acres which contains valuable land and which otherwise would be precluded from the possibilities of freeholding.

The Bill extends the area limitation to 10,000 acres and safeguards the public interest in that a permanent tenure will be granted only in respect of any holding which is not substantially more than one living area.

The question of further extending freeholding to a larger acreage even within living-area limitation is one to be approached with the utmost caution for the simple reason that, owing to lack of communication and development generally, many areas which, in a comparatively short space of time, will become high-producing and very valuable could not at this moment be said to be more than a living area, even though in many cases the acreage would be 15,000 or 20,000 or even more.

For this reason, and for the reason quoted by Sir William Payne in Section 227 of his report, where he had this to say—

> "Doubtless some lessees will want 'to pick the eyes out' of their large grazing holding, and freehold or obtain Perpetual Leases over these portions. This should not be allowed. It would be quite against the interests of the State and, in any event, is not administratively practicable."

It is considered that any adventuring beyond a 10,000-acre limit would be ill-advised and possibly against the long-term interest of the land development of the State.

Sir William also had this to say—

> "In converting tenures to Perpetual Lease or Freehold an area limitation may not always operate in an equitable manner, but it is considered to be the only practical means of administration."

We take pride in the fact that, as a Government, we have made possible the freeholding of lands in this State which, under 25 years of Labour rule, had suffered—I think I can use that word honestly—under an inflexible policy of absolute Crown landlordism.

We have not done this rashly. Public interest has ever been paramount in our thinking, and any intelligent appreciation of our freeholding legislation will reveal that we advanced from the freeholding of residential lots (even the most avid Socialist could hardly sustain any demerit in that), perpetual leases, which are alienated anyway, to grazing selections up to 5,000 acres as a first stage to preserve and manifest our caution.

I say emphatically that in a democracy it is only human justice to extend to a bona-fide occupier of Crown land the right to a freehold title to his land at the stage when his unit represents not more than a fragment of a previously-terminable lease and has passed out of possible consideration for closer settlement in the reasonable long-term view.

Moreover, to recite the words of Sir William, where very heavy costs are involved to bring land into full production, "it would be quite unreasonable for the State to expect its tenants to expend such sums without a permanent tenure." I agree with him.

In determining whether or not any holding comprises substantially more than a reasonable living area, due regard will be had to the potential of the holding which, in many cases, would include arable land. The new Bill makes it incumbent upon a lessee to perform the developmental and improvement conditions attaching to his lease before he becomes entitled to a deed of grant. I think that that is an important consideration.

Having regard to the enhanced values of land and the many commitments facing primary producers, purchase terms have been eased, and the Bill provides for a 30-year repayment period, which has been given retrospective operation. Persons already paying over a 20-year term may elect to take advantage of the 10-year extension, and those who previously preferred perpetual-lease tenure in lieu of freehold tenure may now elect to purchase their land over a 30-year period.

Mr. Duffy: Does that apply also to town allotments?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not think it would apply to town allotments.

Mr. Duffy: Is there any differentiation between town and other allotments for this purpose?

Mr. FLETCHER: It has not nearly the importance to a person with a small town allotment that it has to one with a very much larger area.

Mr. Duffy: It is important to the person who has the town allotment.

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, of course, but it is nowhere near as important to a person with an area of 24 perches as it is to one with 4,000, 5,000, or 6,000 acres.

Mr. Duffy: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. FLETCHER: I quite agree; I have already said that. That is the hon. member's opinion, but mine is that it is much more important to the larger holder.

A new method of balloting, termed the "selective" method, replacing the "group" system, is introduced by the Bill. It is designed to remedy certain unsatisfactory aspects of the group system and, at the same time, streamline the procedure relating to the making available of Crown land. The better-quality lands of the inner districts have for some time been made available for selection under the group system of application.

Under this system, in addition to the statutory disqualifications which apply under the open system, the administration went further and imposed special qualifications as to finance, experience, etc., and special disqualifications (embargo placed on joint applicants, females, recent sellers, aged applicants, etc.), in determining who was eligible to go to ballot.

The successful applicant at ballot became the allottee, who was then required to occupy the land within three months and commence development. After being in occupation for one month, the land was

formally opened to him in priority by application through the Commissioner's Court. The allottee received no secure tenure over the land until the Land Court approved his application to the Commissioner.

The main provisions of the selective method are—

(1) The Minister may impose special conditions as to finance, experience, etc., but, unlike the present system, must publish the requirements on the opening notification.

I think that is a fair and reasonable requirement, because people will then know exactly what they are buying into.

(2) A Committee of Review is set up comprising a Member of the Land Administration Commission or other officer of the department and two experienced primary producers as nominated by the Minister.

(3) As the Minister deems practicable, the primary producers on the selection committee may be persons who have had experience in working land in the same locality as the land open for selection. The committee is to review applications and to determine which of them conform to the special requirements and are otherwise qualified under the Act. These will be permitted to proceed to ballot.

(4) Unlike the present system, rejected applicants are to be advised of rejection and are given 14 days in which to make representations to the Committee.

(5) After considering representations from rejected applicants, the committee will conduct the ballot.

By the publication of qualifications and disqualifications, the inclusion of primary producers on the committee, and the extending of a right of appeal to rejected applicants, we hope that justice will not only be done but will also appear to have been done.

Mr. Hilton: To whom will they have the right of appeal?

Mr. FLETCHER: To the committee.

What is most important, procedure has been streamlined and placed on a more business-like footing. The new lessee will receive his instrument of tenure at least six months earlier than before, and the former lessee may expect settlement for lost improvements at a much earlier time than previously. The long period between allotment and selection during which the allottee had no title to the land is removed. The Minister is given a discretion as to whether land may be made available under the open or selective method.

For many years graziers have contended that development of their holdings by way of timber treatment is prevented in the dying stages of a terminable lease by the inability of a lessee to recover compensation from the incoming tenant for such work. The average lessee is reluctant to embark on a programme of timber treatment on areas that he reasonably feels will be lost to him on the expiry of his current lease.

The peculiar difficulty associated with timber treatment is that it is an invisible improvement which soon becomes merged in the land and is indistinguishable. The eventual merging of timber treatment in land is, both administratively and practically, a necessity.

The recent appeals from the Valuer-General's determinations in the Shire of Balonne emphasised the extreme difficulty that confronts valuers and tribunals in endeavouring to re-construct the quantity of timber coverage in the unimproved state of a district that was first settled some 80 to 100 years ago. Furthermore, the economics of new settlement must be considered, and it would be unrealistic to require, and economically impossible for, an incoming tenant to pay for all timber treatment previously performed on his new selection on the usually-accepted formula for valuing improvements, namely, present-day cost less depreciation from use or otherwise.

If this formula were adopted, many outgoing lessees who were fortunate enough to have their land rung for as little as 1s. 6d. an acre years ago would stand to make a substantial profit at the expense of new settlement, which would not be in a position to bear it.

However, to alleviate the position and to be as fair and equitable as possible to both incoming and outgoing tenants, it has been decided to make timber treatment effected during the last 10 years of an expiring lease an improvement payable for by the incoming tenant on the basis of actual cost less depreciation as at the date the improvement is to be valued.

It is felt that this formula will ensure that a lessee is reasonably recouped for the expenditure incurred by him on timber treatment during the expiring years of his lease and, at the same time, it will increase the earning capacity of the land concerned for the incoming lessee.

One of the most important of the improved procedures contained in the Bill is the one relative to the granting of a new lease upon expiration of a current lease. Under present law, when the land in an expired lease is opened for selection, the late lessee is given a right of priority of application to the land if opened in one lot, or to one of the subdivisions if opened in more than one lot.

In practice he has to apply to the Land Commissioner before a specified date in the same manner as an applicant for Crown land that is being opened for new settlement. His application has to be dealt with by the Commissioner in his court and referred to the Land Court for approval. After approval, the new selection is in the same

position as land opened for new settlement, that is, it is initially held under licence to occupy and cannot be freely transferred or mortgaged until the improvement conditions have been complied with and the instrument of lease issued.

In the Bill, this involved procedure has been abolished. The right to priority has been changed to a legal right to receive an offer of a new lease from the Minister if it is intended to offer the land in the expired lease for further leasing under selection or preferential pastoral holding tenure.

Mr. Duggan: Is that legal right subject to compliance with certain conditions, and so on?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not quite understand.

Mr. Duggan: Assuming certain conditions were imposed and the lease was granted, and assuming he does not comply with those conditions, does he still retain a legal right to renewal?

Mr. FLETCHER: The legal right is his if the land is offered for further leasing under selection or preferential pastoral holding tenure.

Mr. Walsh: The legal right will continue?

Mr. FLETCHER: It would be a case of renewing his lease. Conditions would be imposed on the lease that he would be legally entitled to take up, and he would be obliged to carry them out.

Mr. Duffiey: He might avoid his responsibilities for 10, 15, or 20 years and then have a legal right to renewal of the lease, and you might still impose on him developmental liabilities that he should have carried out 20 years previously. Is that the position?

Mr. FLETCHER: There is no matter of his having dodged his responsibilities.

Mr. Duffiey: I am assuming that he did; he would still have a legal right even if he avoided his responsibilties under the previous lease?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not think anyone is entitled to talk of someone who has avoided his responsibilities. We are talking of the renewal of a lease. Surely it is a different argument altogether on his having carried out his obligations under the old lease.

Mr. Duffiey: There may have been certain conditions attached to his previous lease.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so.

Mr. Duffiey: Even if he did not carry out those conditions he still has a legal right?

Mr. FLETCHER: That is a matter that does not concern this particular legal right. It is an obligation on the Crown to see that he carries them out beforehand. It has nothing to do with the renewal of the lease.

After acceptance of the Minister's offer a new lease in accordance with the terms thereof is immediately issued and may be mortgaged or transferred in the same way as any established lease of the same tenure.

A similar procedure applies in the case of renewal of lease before expiry. The new procedure is greatly simplified and will cause a minimum of inconvenience to lessees and the administration. It is much more business-like in approach than the cumbersome procedure of application to the Commissioner.

Under the present and previous Land Acts any person who selected land under any of the selection tenures could enter into occupation and gain possession of the land only when he was issued a licence to occupy. That licence is issued by the district land commissioner after the Land Court approves the application to select, and the selector has paid the value of any improvements on the land. The selector becomes entitled to a lease after he complies with the residential, improvement, or fencing condition attached to the lease, and the commissioner issues a special certificate to that effect. Certain restrictions as to mortgaging and transferring operated against a selector during the period of his licence to occupy.

The procedure was designed to meet circumstances applicable in the early days of land settlement, and it is felt that the time is overdue for a more streamlined and business-like approach to the making of lands available under selection tenure. The Bill abolishes this inconvenience of the licence to occupy.

A selector will become entitled to his lease immediately after the Court has approved of his application and payment for improvements has been effected. The selector thus has the advantage of holding a title, which he may immediately mortgage to obtain finance for development. The development of the land is ensured by imposing appropriate conditions of fencing, etc., on the lease, and failure to comply with these renders the lease liable to forfeiture. That has very rarely been exercised. The period to effect boundary fencing has been uniformly fixed at three years. Selection tenure will thus be brought into line with other tenures under the Land Acts as far as relates to the issue of a lease.

The Bill provides that no person will be permitted to acquire or hold two or more grazing selections if the aggregate area exceeds 45,000 acres. Under the existing provisions of the Land Acts the maximum area any one person may acquire under grazing selection tenure is 60,000 acres.

Present holders will not be disturbed. They will be allowed to hold and renew existing leases. Grazing selections may be opened or renewed in areas in excess of 45,000 acres provided that the Commission

first certifies that such selections, having regard to their land quality and situation, are not greatly in excess of a living area.

The tenure of grazing selection first came into being with the Land Act of 1884, which fixed a maximum area of 20,000 acres, such maximum being carried over to the Land Act of 1897. The Land Act of 1902 increased to 60,000 acres the maximum area any one person could hold as grazing selections, and that maximum has remained to the present day.

Research shows that the larger area was decided upon when Queensland was in the throes of one of the most disastrous droughts yet experienced and, as far as we know, was more or less arbitrarily decided upon.

In the case of the better-quality lands, area limitations and rental limitations have applied. These will remain.

It is considered that the time has come when the overall maximum area of 60,000 acres should be reviewed. Development in land technology in recent years has resulted in land becoming more productive and it is felt in the public interest that, with less and less land becoming available as the years go by, a maximum area of 45,000 acres for grazing selections is reasonable under present-day conditions, and should be adopted under the new Act.

Mr. Aikens: Wouldn't that same argument apply against the granting of extra areas of land under freehold tenure?

Mr. FLETCHER: Exactly the same, yes.

Mr. Aikens: Why are you granting extra areas under freehold?

Mr. FLETCHER: For good reasons that have been explained, and for the reason that the extension of the area that can be freeholded is still limited by the living-area concept. There are plenty of areas that are more than 5,000 acres but still less than a living area. As long as the concept of a living-area limitation remains, we are not venturing into really dangerous areas by allowing it to go higher. We think that it would be bad business to go other than very cautiously. The maximum of 30,000 acres where rental is a governing factor is being retained, that is to say, where £600 is the rental limitation.

Persons who now hold two or more grazing selections with a combined area of more than 45,000 acres will be permitted to continue to hold their existing selections. Provision is being made to allow transfers of selections of any acreage provided they do not substantially exceed a living area, and this will cover any odd case of hardship that may arise. The living-area concept runs through the Bill as one of its main features.

Mr. Duffey: You do not intend to give a freehold tenure over all living areas in the State, do you?

Mr. FLETCHER: No.

Mr. Duffey: Do you think you are being consistent, or inconsistent?

Mr. FLETCHER: I think I am consistent.

With reference to conversion of perpetual lease prickly-pear selections, and perpetual lease prickly-pear development selections to perpetual leases, the perpetual lease holding tenures under the Prickly-pear Acts were devised for the purpose of dealing with Crown land infested with prickly-pear. As the pear covered an estimated 20,000,000 acres up to the advent of cactoblastis, there are about 2,500 of these tenures presently on the books of the department.

In a number of cases the ordinary maximum area of 2,560 acres for perpetual lease selections was exceeded in several of the grazing districts. This situation arose because of provisions in the Prickly-pear Land Act of 1923, under which the Prickly-pear Commission allowed conversion of some grazing tenures to perpetual lease as a means of inducing the then lessees to remain on their selections, under dreadful circumstances, and continue to fight against the pear. Pear-clearing conditions were imposed involving somewhat heavy expenditure for that particular period. Fortunately for Queensland, of course, shortly after that time the cactoblastis solved the menace of the prickly-pear.

With the proposed repeal of the Prickly-pear Land Acts, provision must be made for the lease in perpetuity issued thereunder. The only practical way for making such provision is to convert these tenures to perpetual lease selections under the new consolidated Act. Otherwise the prickly-pear tenures will remain in perpetuity.

Mr. Muller: How do you propose to arrive at the rental? Will you revalue them? They have them at the moment for a mere song.

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes.

Mr. Muller: How will you get down to a fair rental?

Mr. FLETCHER: On exactly the same basis as the perpetual leases.

Mr. Muller: They will be revalued?

Mr. FLETCHER: Many of them have been. They will be brought under ordinary perpetual-lease tenure.

Mr. Muller: Under the old practice they paid virtually nothing.

Mr. FLETCHER: It was as low as ½d. an acre. We cannot allow that to continue. It is not fair.

The term of the lease being converted remains unaltered as perpetual in nature. All rights and privileges of existing lessees are protected and preserved. The difference in the maximum-area limitation will not affect present holders, and any possible hardship involved on sale will be covered by the provision enabling aggregations up to living-area size. That is to say, area limitations are

over-ridden by the concept that if it may be fairly said there is no more than a living area, then the area limits are set aside.

Mr. Aikens: So long as we do not work on the basis of a "Charlie Russell" living area.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is not likely to happen.

The main object of the conversion is to delete from the statute book a mass of law now obsolete due to the control and eradication of the pear menace.

All perpetual-lease selections will have the benefit of the liberalised, modifying, or waiving provisions in the new Act as regards residential conditions. The principle of occupation of land by the lessee or his bailiff is in the public interest generally, and its application to these lands should not present any practical difficulty. If any does arise, as previously mentioned, the new Act will contain provisions to waive the condition in certain circumstances.

The proposed reduction of the maximum area that may be held under grazing selection tenure from 60,000 to 45,000 acres and the conversion of perpetual lease prickly-pear selections and perpetual lease prickly-pear development selections to perpetual lease selections may in some instances, more particularly in the case of the larger converted prickly-pear tenures which contain grazing land only and which are presently held in conjunction with existing perpetual lease selections, lead to anomalies in that some aggregations will be too great in area to come within the maximum-area limitation prescribed in the Bill. This will not affect present holders, who will be permitted to continue to hold their aggregations and bequeath them to whom they please. However, present holders, if their selections aggregate more than 45,000 acres (grazing-selection tenure) or 2,560 acres (perpetual-lease tenure), could not sell their aggregation as one entity as no transferee would be qualified to hold. Such persons may thus be faced with piecemeal sales which may result in a lesser overall price being received, especially if the aggregation is only of living-area size. The case could also arise of a person, presently holding a selection which is not a living area, desiring to purchase another selection, and the combined area of the two, whilst not in excess, or not substantially in excess, of a living area, is in excess of the maximum acreage prescribed. It is therefore provided that, notwithstanding any limitation as to the maximum area that may be held under selection or preferential pastoral holding tenure, or as to the combined rentals thereof, any person may acquire by transfer any number of holdings of the same mode of tenure provided the area thus sought to be acquired, together with any land already held, does not substantially exceed a living area. There is the same concept running through. The reason for it was that some of these prickly-pear areas were rather poor land in fairly large areas and it would not be fair to impose on them arbitrarily an area limitation that would in effect stop the holders from clearing enough land to enable them and their families to make a reasonable living.

Mr. Hilton: What is the definition of "substantially in excess of"?

Mr. FLETCHER: I will leave the hon. member to work that out for himself. There will never be any unanimity on what a living area is. It will always remain something that cannot be defined in terms of acres or otherwise; but I have enough faith in the common sense and the administrative experience and ability of the men who will be entrusted with the administering of these laws to believe that, even though it is a matter of argument, there will be no dramatic maladministration.

Mr. Walsh: It is not a matter of administering the law; it is a matter of Government policy.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so. Certainly under this Government's policy the standard of a living area is higher than that used as a yardstick when we took office.

Mr. Lloyd: You would not notice that very much in some places.

Mr. FLETCHER: But you would in others.

Preliminary requirements to approval will be that it is proposed to work conjointly the holdings sought to be acquired, or sought to be acquired and already held, and that the Commission certifies the combined areas do not substantially exceed a living area. This provision is regarded as being extremely important as it will mean that acreage limitation will in the main be over-ridden by living-area standards. This provision and others in the Bill lay down for the administration the considerations to be taken into account in defining a living area. Again I admit that nobody will ever be able to measure accurately, in terms that everybody will be able to apply in exactly the same way, what a living area is; but these are the matters that are to be taken into account.

The definition of "living area" contained in the Bill is—

> "'Living area'—Such an area of land as having regard to the following matters:—
>
> (a) The District in which the land is situated;
>
> (b) The nature of the country, its potential for development, and distance from transport facilities and markets;
>
> (c) Whether the land concerned is best suited for pastoral, agricultural, dairying, orchard or mixed farming purposes, as the case may be;
>
> (d) Occurrence of variable seasons."

That will be sufficient to enable a competent person to derive from the working of the land, according to the use for which the land is best suited, an income adequate to ensure a reasonable standard of living for himself, his wife, and infant children, as well as to provide a reserve with which to meet adverse seasons and the cost of developing and maintaining the land at a high rate of production throughout average seasons.

Mr. Davies: There are no Liberals in the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not desirable for the hon. member for Maryborough to interrupt the Minister.

Mr. FLETCHER: In other States, the principle of a home-maintenance area has for many years been the basis for holding Crown land. It is considered wise that any change with respect to living areas, limitation of areas of holdings on the basis of area or rental disqualifications, should be introduced gradually. The tenor of the Bill is towards basing the limit of aggregation on land quality rather than prescribed acreage. We feel that in what we have done we have taken safe steps in the right direction.

The Bill endeavours to rationalise and make more equitable the restrictions on applicants for blocks made available by the Crown for new settlement under selection or preferential pastoral holding tenure to which the condition of personal residence applies. All such blocks made available subject to this condition will comprise sound living areas. Limitations based on acreage and rental alone have been found to be not strictly fair and equitable. For example, it has been found that persons who own even less—and substantially less—than 50 per cent. of a living area are often disqualified from applying for the better-quality lands because the rentals of their existing holdings, together with those of the holdings for which they wish to apply, exceed the prescribed maximum. The Bill therefore provides that any person holding less than 50 per cent. of a living area, irrespective of the area in acres and rental disqualification, may apply for lands made available for settlement.

At the same time, it is felt that no person who already possesses land interests of a more or less substantial nature should receive a free gift from the Crown. The Bill therefore provides that no person holding anywhere in Australia land of any tenure, which is 50 per cent. or more of a living area, may apply for living areas made available for settlement in Queensland. This provision is designed to place all Australians on an equal footing with respect to applications for land in Queensland.

Upon consideration of the cases in which the condition of personal residence is applicable, it was decided that the imposition of this condition should be placed upon a more uniform and rational basis.

Mr. Aikens: You are going to pick and choose those who are to be allowed to contest the ballots?

Mr. FLETCHER: There will be certain discrimination as to those allowed to ballot, yes. The existing tenures under which the lessee must personally reside on his holding are—

(a) Preferential pastoral holding in respect of which the lessee has offered to perform personal residence, during the first seven years of the term of lease.

(b) Agricultural selection, being either an agricultural farm or perpetual lease selection, in respect of which personal residence is imposed by the notification opening the land, or has been offered by the successful applicant for the land, during the first five years of the term of lease.

(c) Settlement-farm lease and grazing homestead, in respect of which personal residence is a statutory condition of lease to be performed during the first five years of the term of lease. In regard to these tenures, the condition is reimposed for five years as the selection is transferred from one person to another during the remainder of the lease.

Mr. Aikens: Are you taking any effective steps to prevent dummying?

Mr. FLETCHER: Administratively, yes. However, through changes in the law since 1916, more than half the existing grazing homesteads, which number about 4,300, are not subject to personal-residence conditions at any time during the lease, whereas those grazing homesteads carrying personal residence are subject to re-imposition of the condition upon transfer during the subsisting lease or any renewal thereof.

Confusion often arose in the minds of lessees and the public as to which grazing homesteads carry the condition of personal residence. So it will be seen that personal-residence conditions did not apply uniformly to all preferential pastoral holdings and agricultural selections, and in the cases where the condition did attach to the lease under those tenures, personal residence was to be performed only for an initial period of the term. Unlike grazing homesteads, there was no re-imposition of the condition when the holding was transferred.

To rationalise the position, the Bill provides that—

(a) Preferential pastoral holdings and agricultural selections be subject to an initial period of personal residence for the first seven years of the term, when the Minister in his discretion considers that the area, quality, and situation of the land being made available by the Crown, warrants the condition being included in the opening notification. That would be if the area was a sound living area. On the expiration of this period, the condition

of occupation, as against personal residence, will apply for the balance of the term of the lease.

(b) All lands made available by the Crown for selection as grazing homesteads or settlement farm leases will be subject to the condition of personal residence during the first seven years of the term and thereafter for the balance of the term of the lease to the condition of occupation.

(c) The condition of personal residence will not be re-imposed upon transfer of any leasehold tenure unless transfer is permitted during the first seven years of the term in the case of the death, mental illness, incapacity, or misfortune, of the original lessee, when the transferee will be required to complete the residue of the seven-year period.

Mr. Walsh: That will open the gate for more absentees.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not necessarily. We think it will do a lot of good.

Mr. Walsh: But it could.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Bill also provides—

(d) Transfer of any lease subject during the first seven years to the condition of personal residence will be permitted only, as is now the case, upon the inability of the lessee through death, mental illness, adversity, or illness, to perform the condition following the certificate of the Land Court that good reasons exist to permit the transfer.

(e) That selections and preferential pastoral holdings subject at the commencement of the new Act to the condition of personal residence remain so for the unexpired portion of the period of such condition.

The above provisions will ensure not only uniformity of approach and application in regard to the imposition of the condition of personal residence but also that new settlers who obtain their lands from the Crown free of lease premium will demonstrate their bona fides by undertaking seven years' personal residence thereon. I think that is only sensible. It is considered that the retention of the condition of occupation attaching to perpetual-lease selections, grazing selections, and settlement-farm leases, and its extension to preferential pastoral holdings will ensure the maintenance of homesteads and rural population in pastoral areas.

Whilst on the subject of residential conditions, I mention that the Bill amends the existing practice whereby the Land Court's approval is necessary to obtain six months' exemption from these conditions in cases of sickness, hardship, or leave of absence to earn wages elsewhere, and places the authority to grant such exemption in the hands of the District Land Commissioner. This will ensure speedy on-the-spot decisions in these emergent cases.

Mr. Aikens: And their decisions are under the jurisdiction of the Minister, which is an important point.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is correct.

Another provision dealing with residential conditions is the power given to the Minister to waive the condition for such period as he deems fit, on the recommendation of the Commission, in cases of hardship or where the holding to which it is attached is not a living area and does not form part of an aggregation which is a living area. I know of cases in which the condition of personal residence attached to areas that had a carrying capacity of only 25 head of cattle, which is too silly for words. We must have power to protect people in that position. There are quite a number of small selections below living-area standard, or which have no earning capacity worth mentioning, throughout the State, particularly along the coastal strip, which are subject to the condition of occupation. Although this condition may be fulfilled by a registered bailiff, such a selection may have limited grazing value only and the cost of a dwelling, together with a bailiff, is not justified. The proposal will give legal effect to the department's practice of refraining from enforcing the condition of occupation on sub-standard blocks in coastal areas.

The practice of granting additional areas received statutory recognition in the 1927 Act at a time when the pastoral industry was in the throes of adversity owing to drought and falling prices. It was originally intended to be a measure of assistance to the small leaseholder who had lived on and worked his holding for a long period and depended solely upon his holding for his livelihood, and where it could be amply demonstrated that he had not sufficient land to do that.

In the post-war era there has been considerable pressure on the department by purchasers of existing holdings who, in applying for additional areas, were really seeking a free handout of valuable Crown land. As the law is presently framed, the granting of an additional area is at the sole discretion of the Minister. Apart from the selection presently held by the applicant being required to be below living-area standard and the vacant Crown land sought as an additional area being "in the neighbourhood", there are no statutory rules or principles governing the granting of an additional area. It is all a very-hard-to-understand, weak sort of system.

Applicants have come to regard as a right what was intended to be a privilege and many lessees press their cases, irrespective of merit, with vigour and perseverance, to secure this most valuable concession. It causes a good deal of embarrassment to me, and to others. They are seeking a valuable concession as a right when what was envisaged in the first place was a measure to help those in desperate straits.

Paramount among the rules is the requirement that the needs of closer settlement must take precedence over the granting of additional areas. Eligibility for the grant of an additional area is otherwise confined to a person who was the original selector or lessee from the Crown of the holding in respect of which he seeks an additional area, and who has continuously held such holding.

Mr. Muller: Is any period set out?

Mr. FLETCHER: No.

Mr. Hilton interjected.

Mr. FLETCHER: There is certain Ministerial discretion and I take it that in certain cases of extreme hardship there may be a way to do it. However, those are the fast and general principles that are laid down under which the Minister is entitled automatically to consider it.

Mr. Hilton: Statutory principles may be broken. I do not think there should be any discretion.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member will agree that in some extreme cases statutory principles are often over-ridden by ministerial discretion.

To summarise a few of the main points, they include—

Security of tenure;

Freeholding up to 10,000 acres with living area limitation;

30-year term for freeholding;

Freeholding of industrial sites.

Although I have mentioned what in my opinion are most of the most important changes, one I did not mention was the freeholding of industrial sites, which has not been possible up to now.

I am not quite sure whether I covered the developmental conditions to be complied with before the issue of freehold title deeds, but I think I did. The other main points I have dealt with include—

Providing for a simpler and quicker issue of lease documents to lessees, which will be welcomed by many people;

Uniformity of personal residence conditions, under which people will know where they are and what is required of them;

Timber treatment in last 10 years an improvement for compensation purposes;

A more satisfactory method of ballotting for land;

Reduction in number of land tenures;

Adoption of living-area standards as an over-riding factor in area limitations;

Clarifying qualifications for additional areas.

I have not mentioned certain new rights of appeal for stud leases, but that matter is referred to in the explanatory notes.

Mr. Hilton: Are you going to tell us anything about the brigalow-lands scheme?

Mr. FLETCHER: This is not the Bill covering that scheme.

Mr. Hilton: It will be the subject of a special Bill?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes.

Mr. Hilton: Will the conditions governing the selection and development of that land vary from the conditions outlined in this Bill?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not think they will vary at all. I think the freeholding limitation of 10,000 acres will apply to all those blocks that are to be opened as freehold blocks.

Mr. Hewitt: Except where it is in bad country.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so. The 10,000-acre limitation will be exactly the same there as anywhere else.

Mr. Hilton: Will the leases in the brigalow lands be the same as those contained in the previous amendment that was brought in by your predecessor?

Mr. FLETCHER: We are still negotiating with the Commonwealth Government over certain of the administrative details, but it is intended to open the blocks as freehold blocks. That implies that they will be under 10,000 acres. Any block over 10,000 acres would not be freehold.

Mr. Walsh: You will have to make some adjustment with the existing lessees.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is going on all the time.

Mr. Walsh interjected.

Mr. FLETCHER: Although the Bill is not specifically directed to the brigalow-belt development, most of the administration of the brigalow belt, or any other belt in Queensland, will come within the rules, regulations, and conditions laid down in the new Land Act. There is no likelihood of the brigalow-area development being taken out of the ambit of the ordinary Land Act. There is nothing to worry about in respect of the brigalow belt at the moment.

Mr. Walsh: There will be some new principles in the other Bill that you are going to bring down that are not contained in this Bill?

Mr. FLETCHER: Why does not the hon. member wait and see the other Bill?

Mr. Walsh: We should like to know now.

Mr. FLETCHER: I myself do not know what they will be.

I acknowledge the great amount of patient work and effort that has been put into the Bill. The committee that I have mentioned has done splendidly as have many other officers of my department. The Parliamentary Draftsman has also had to work hard and long on such a voluminous document.

To Mr. Hewitt, the chairman of my land committee, who has been a loyal and patient lieutenant, and the rest of the committee, I say "Thank you." They have done a great deal of work.

The Bill, I think, takes a long step forward in the direction of a practical recognition of the needs of the land-owner in this State, at the same time keeping in mind that Queensland is still growing and developing. On the experiences of the past I think that we have built a structure that will serve the up-to-date needs of our land men, and at the same time preserve the rights and opportunities of future generations of land men who will in due course inherit our responsibilities and undoubted privileges here. I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (3.25 p.m.): The phrase is very frequently used in this Assembly that the Bill presently before the Chamber, whatever it may be, is one of the most important ever to be discussed, but I think it can be truly said that any major amendment to our land laws and, in particular, a proposal to consolidate the 79 existing Acts, especially in a State like Queensland, must be regarded as major legislation. The decisions, be they administrative or legislative, that will flow from this legislation will, of course, profoundly affect the pattern of economic development in this State.

At this stage I do not propose to say very much, nor do other Opposition members, not because we consider the Bill unimportant, but primarily because we consider it tremendously important. It represents monumental drafting. Several agencies have been used, and the services of some of our outstanding officers have been utilised to produce this legislation. The Minister has gone to the trouble of circulating an explanatory memorandum containing details of the principal changes. We have a duty to the State of which we are pleased to be members to examine the measure and during the second-reading stage we will avail ourselves of the opportunity to offer constructive proposals about steps that we think should be taken in land policy development.

I think it is incumbent on me, as Leader of the Opposition and as a member of the A.L.P., to say that the A.L.P. is prepared to state categorically that as a matter of political philosophy we have, as the Minister was pleased to acknowledge, some firm, fixed, and, I might say, continuing views, on basic aspects of land policy. In taking that stand, we are not unappreciative of the need to use wisely and well the State's resources if we are to make a sound and solid contribution in our time. We will therefore not bury our heads in the sand and say that because something was the political philosophy of our Labour predecessors we will slavishly follow their lead, nor will we say, merely because the Government make the proposals, that we are basically opposed to them. However, if they cut across fundamental Labour thinking on the administration of land laws, as a major political party we are entitled to take our stand. We have no reason to apologise for that.

These remarks are prompted very largely because of the atmosphere surrounding most of the speeches in this Assembly during the present session, because of the imminence of a State election. The pattern of the propaganda of Government members has revealed itself as an attempt to arouse public opinion on the menace that may confront the State if a Socialist Government assumes power in 1963.

Mr. Campbell: What about the propaganda of your people outside?

Mr. DUGGAN: To what is the hon. member referring?

Mr. Campbell: The propaganda of your people outside; their slanderous remarks against the Government.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am referring to what has occurred in this Chamber. In so far as the printed propaganda outside is concerned, the only information I have received about political slogans concerns those erected by the Liberal Party. They occupy large and very expensive vantage points in the city, with hoardings 20 feet by 15 feet, stating that the basic issue in 1963 is Socialism.

A Government Member: Haven't you seen the "Red" signs?

Mr. DUGGAN: All we have seen of Labour propaganda is, "Life is best under the A.L.P." I do not see how that is slandering Government policy, but this matter is too important to be wasting time in an exchange of words with the one-time president of the Liberal Party who has not made the same impact in this Chamber as he did before he entered it. I think I should confine my remarks to the important issues and ignore these attacks, or suggestions, or innuendoes. I will throw them back into the teeth of those critics who are merely trying to capitalise on them for political purposes, and make it very clear that the people have nothing to fear from the election of a Labour Government once more in Queensland despite all this clap-trap outside about Socialism.

I have read, and been informed, and I have been asked in private conversation in the last few days, "Why is it that Queensland is the only State in the world, outside the Soviet Union, where 92 per cent. of the land is owned by the State?" An attempt is being made to suggest or create an atmosphere that there is no security of tenure, no personal liberty, and that there is opportunity for deprivation of the people's assets, and so on, in this land. I think it is appropriate to say what should be said on these matters.

Here is a statement to think about—

"I think it is a pity that public opinion should be misled by an article based on attractive headlines such as 'Bold Land Policy Needed,' 'Queensland the biggest absentee landlord outside Russia,' supported by dogmatic statements to the effect that land policy is socialistic—outmoded—wicked."

What has the hon. member for Aspley to say of an attitude of that kind dealing with these allegations about the Socialistic pattern of land legislation by the Labour Government?

Mr. Campbell: I will say it in due course.

Mr. DUGGAN: That statement was made by none other than the present Minister for Public Lands, when he was fair enough to deal with an attack on land policy by Professor Francis of the Queensland University. We will have cause to argue the point about Queensland's land policy during the second reading of the Bill but it is to the credit of the Minister that on that occasion he took his political courage into his hands.

On the business sheet today appeared a motion by which hon. members opposite congratulated themselves on the close amity that exists between the Liberal Party and the Country Party and their capacity to govern the State, yet in this same article, on the most important piece of legislation coming before this Parliament, not only this session but perhaps for many years, again the Liberal Party denied the Minister the opportunity of expressing the views of his Government on land matters, when he was asked to make their members familiar with what he considered to be the basic land requirements of this State. Their clap-trap about unity and co-ordination and so on was exposed in all its hideous and wicked nakedness by their refusal to accept the man who, as Minister for Public Lands, is introducing a measure claimed to be carrying the full endorsement of the party. So let us get away from all the clap-trap outside about fears of what will happen if Labour is returned as the Government.

I do not pose as an authority on land matters and I do not say that I know about them with the same particularity and specialisation as some hon. members who represent pastoral, grazing, and agricultural areas. But I have enough brains and knowledge of the requirements of the State to express an opinion on the general economic implications of important matters of land policy. I was refreshed and heartened to read the late Sir William Payne's report on progressive land settlement in Queensland. Despite criticism of Labour's policy, if there is anything that stands as a lasting monument to progress and development in Queensland it is in general terms—not in every particular—the land policy of successful Labour Governments in Queensland over the last 40-odd years. The report contains striking evidence, both written and pictorial, of what has been accomplished by the application of Labour policy. I agree in general terms with what Sir William said about the obligations reposing upon governments and upon land administrators for the use of our great natural heritage, the soil.

We have complex problems in this State. We have wide climatic and rainfall variations, varying carrying capacities, different types of leases, and different marketing problems, which are all things inseparable from a State the size of Queensland. To meet those varying factors, we have been obliged to devise various measures. We have had some outstanding Ministers for Public Lands. We have had some policies that have been shown, in the light of experience, to have been wrong. Perhaps living areas were too small and sufficient incentives were not held out for people to develop the land.

Everyone with a sense of responsibility, and who is conscious of the need to develop our great land resources, realises that the products from the cattle and sheep lands are of the greatest importance to our economy and contribute to a far greater degree than do any other of our products to our ability to earn overseas credits. I agree that this is predominantly a primary-producing State, and we must do all we can to husband and promote our primary resources.

Under our various tenures, there has been nothing to prevent people from obtaining the measure of security to which industry and effort entitle them. I have here a pamphlet written by Mr. Russell, with a foreword by Sir William Gunn. No-one can say that Sir William is a Labour supporter, nor that he has been associated in any way with the A.L.P. In his foreword he says—

"Queensland will not be developed unless those who are able to finance the development are given security of tenure, by the granting of freehold or perpetual lease tenure . . ."

That is what was said by one of the leading graziers of the State, the chairman of a Wool Board, a director of many public companies, spokesman for our pastoral industry throughout the world, and a man who has not been associated with the Australian Labour Party at least since I have known of his public or political activities. He makes no differentiation on the security aspect.

Mr. Campbell: He mentioned freehold first.

Mr. DUGGAN: He had to put one first. If I said, "Mr. Campbell is a Liberal and Mr. Anderson is a Liberal," who would say that Mr. Anderson was not because I put Mr. Campbell's name first? How silly can you be! There is no difference between the securities of the forms of tenure. If land is freeholded over and above what has been recognised in the past as being reasonable

and able to provide a measure of security, it is possible that a situation could develop where what is improved is not the security of tenure but the saleability of an asset for the enrichment of the person holding that particular lease.

I do not think there is any need to be ashamed of the fact that we have this vast aggregation of land throughout the State totalling 27,000,000 acres, as I think the figure is, or of the fact that 92 per cent. of it is owned by the Crown. Successive generations will reap the benefit of it. I see nothing in existing Labour legislation, Labour legislation of the future, or Labour philosophy generally that prevents people from developing the land fully. As Leader of the Australian Labour Party in this State, I make the general declaration that if we are returned as the Government at the next election no landholder need have any fear that he will not be given the opportunity to contribute fully, with other sections of the community, to the development of this State. At all times we will encourage him and provide the necessary incentive for him to obtain the maximum possible production from his land, so that he can get every reasonable and deserved return from the use that he makes of it. I do not think there is anything wrong with a statement such as that.

The only reason why the Government have introduced the legislation is that, being a group with incompatible political philosophies, they have been driven to it. There is no doubt about that. On one hand we have the Liberals, who want the large interstate organisations with a great deal of capital behind them to come here and develop the land resources of the State. On the other hand, the Country Party is diametrically opposed to that attitude. The Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation points that out in the article in which he says that, as a Country Party man, he is strongly opposed to people from overseas—absentee landlords, and so on—enriching themselves at the expense of Queensland and its citizens. It is only because of the pressure that has been exerted that they have reluctantly brought down legislation that they think will mollify the growing antagonism throughout the State to their administration.

I was surprised to hear one of the State's most outstanding graziers say to me recently, in the presence of other graziers, "1963 cannot come too soon, as far as I am concerned. I did not go along with your land policy over the years in its entirety, but I must say that at intervals I dealt with successive Land Ministers and I always found them helpful, courteous, and fair." He went on to say, "I cannot say in complete sincerity that the same applies to many of the approaches that I have made to the present Government. Do not think for one moment that, because people are trying to smear you with this Socialist sort of business, we who are big men in the industry are against you." I was very heartened to hear that declaration from the gentleman concerned, which was made, as I said, in the presence of other graziers.

Mr. Sullivan: Who was that?

Mr. Houston: Do you want another character assassination?

Mr. Dufficy: He would probably lose his lease.

Mr. DUGGAN: All I can say is that I was very glad to get that declaration from him, and his opinion is shared by many people. As a matter of fact, I was in Toowoomba last week-end and a prominent person from the Balonne electorate came to see me. He told me that some months ago a Country Party meeting was called in Balonne and the only two people who turned up were the hon. member for Balonne and the president of the Country Party. Because no-one turned up at the meeting the hon. member for Balonne went along to some friends and said, "Everything is hunky-dory. They have no complaints." He was told, "The reason why they did not turn up was that they were so damned dissatisfied with the Country Party. They hoped by staying away to show their dissatisfaction with the Country Party policy."

Mr. Beardmore: You could not get one of your men out there to stand against me. You had to come to Brisbane to get an A.L.P. candidate.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is about the longest speech I have heard the hon. member make for years. I have a good deal of personal respect for the hon. member, so do not let us get into an argument. I wish I had as much respect for many other people as I have for him. I am merely stating facts at the moment.

I have deliberately been speaking in generalities, Mr. Gaven, I have not dealt with details because, as I indicated at the beginning of my speech, I wanted to state some general attitudes on land matters on behalf of the Australian Labour Party.

There are some declarations by the Minister that I should like to read before I express dogmatically the views of the Opposition, and I will be helped in that by men with a greater knowledge of these matters than I have. One point that I raised by interjection—it was amplified by the hon. member for Warrego—related to the legal right to transfer a lease, and I think that does require definite clarification. The Minister says that if a person does not carry out certain developmental obligations there are internal means of dealing with that situation. At the expiration of the lease, or at some other time, when the person wishing to exercise his option for a new lease comes along, he can be told, "No, we are not interested in giving you a new lease because you have been an unsatisfactory Crown tenant." In this case the Minister

is making it mandatory to give him a lease. He then says that some future action might be taken to deal with him.

Mr. Nicklin interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: Why would the Government say he is legally entitled to get one automatically?

Mr. Nicklin: Provided he is qualified.

Mr. Fletcher: Have you any record of anyone having avoided the conditions of his lease?

Mr. DUGGAN: I do not know any off-hand.

Mr. Fletcher: You are becoming confused about it.

Mr. DUGGAN: Most of the trouble happens as Sir William Payne set out in his report. His quarrel was with the 1952 Act of the Labour Government in particular. He said that in his view it did not deal fairly with the person who had done more than the average requirement as compared with the person who had done less than the average requirement. Some people claim that they want to do more. I will mention names now. It is a big organisation headed by Sir Rupert Clarke, whom I met here recently and for whom I have a very high personal regard. I think he is a very good Australian and he wanted to do something. He had Mr. Kleberg, the American millionaire, here. We had a discussion and Mr. Kleberg made it known to me that he preferred freehold tenure. I told him we did not go along with that but Sir Rupert Clarke said, "Mr. Duggan, irrespective of governments"—I think he might be a Country Party man; I do not think he is a Labour Party man—"I wish to play my small part in the development of Australia and if it is laid down as a requirement that I have to spend £50,000 and, when I have spent that £50,000 I proceed with further development, I want to know what you are prepared to do if, in addition to the £50,000 we want to spend £100,000."

I think they should be encouraged to do it and something should be done to reward such people, but if a man does not meet the average requirements imposed by the department's administrators it should not be mandatory that he get a new lease. Why do not the Government leave the existing provision in? If he is an unsatisfactory client and someone comes along who is a satisfactory client—say the hon. member for Aspley fell down on his obligations and the Minister for Public Lands came along with the capital and the hon. member said, "Subject to your concurrence I propose to transfer this lease to him," and the department accepted the position, why should he have anything to sell?

That is one of the matters to which I am opposed. I refer, for instance, to Golden Casket agencies to which no goodwill at all attaches. Why should the holder of a Golden Casket agency have the right to sell goodwill that is non-existent, or the proprietor of a picture theatre sell a licence which gives him a monopoly?

I do not think it should be a mandatory provision in this matter, but I welcome the way in which the Minister introduced the legislation. I think there will be many aspects of it that we will be obliged to oppose in the second-reading and Committee stages, but at this stage I appreciate the manner in which the Minister introduced the legislation; free from rancour he unfolded to the Committee the different steps he proposes to take.

As I say, in the second-reading and Committee stages we might be arguing spiritedly on some provisions, but at this stage I thank the Minister for not making a great deal of party capital out of an important matter. I know there is a definite line of demarcation separating the parties in particular aspects of land development, but I content myself now by saying that as a responsible political organisation we are seized of the desirability of developing land laws, assisted by the wise administrators whom the Minister is fortunate in having. The Department of Public Lands has been well served over the years by wise administrators. This Minister is perhaps more fortunate than others. In the gentleman whom I see in the lobby, and others that I know of, I think the State is being well served. With the help of those men I hope that as a result of our policy and efforts we will be able to make a contribution to the wise development of our resources. It is essential that we should. Much depends on our ability to build up quickly. I do not think political expediency, because of a desire to win seats, should enter into it. What I say I do not say in any dishonest political sense. I do not think the Government are motivated entirely by these high-sounding principles about the need to serve the State. The introduction of the legislation is brought about because of pressure that has been applied by various Country Party organisations throughout the State. Some of these people are selfish, while others are well-meaning. I am not quarrelling with their right to put their view strongly to the Government of the day but——

Mr. Camm: You don't think we come down here merely to make a living, do you? We come down here with high ideals.

Mr. DUGGAN: If I had as much money as the hon. member——

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DUGGAN: Those are generally the views of the Opposition.

(Time expired.)

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (3.52 p.m.): I rejoice in the fact that a consolidation of the land laws of this State has been brought before the Committee. I have some

realisation of the immense amount of work involved in consolidating the land laws. During the brief period I was Minister for Public Lands I inquired how long it would take to consolidate them, including, of course, amendments that I proposed to submit to my party at that time. I was told that it would take three men at least 18 months or two years to make a job of it. I thought that was a rather long time, but it appears that actual experience in the consolidation of these laws has proved that that statement was more or less correct. I repeat, it is a very good thing that the land laws have been consolidated.

From the historical resume of the Minister, we realise that in this great and progressive State of Queensland changing conditions require changing laws, particularly land laws. Although in this session we make a complete consolidation of land laws we may find that next session amendments will be necessary even to the consolidated Act.

Mr. Fletcher: That is almost certainly true.

Mr. HILTON: So it goes on. Down through the years, despite differences of opinion about land tenures and alleged dissatisfaction emanating from certain Crown tenants, there has been great and substantial progress. Closer settlement has proceeded at a fast tempo. Nobody can gainsay the fact that by and large the land laws have given all-round satisfaction.

In order to refute the idea that leasehold tenure belongs to the purely Socialistic philosophy, I want to point out that long before there was a Labour Party in Queensland there was such a thing as leasehold tenure. It did not originate in the minds of Labour men. I remember reading the famous Georgian theories about all taxes being derived from the land. That, of course, was many years ago. It is interesting to note that even the men who formed Governments before the advent of the Labour Party thought that it was necessary in the interests of the State, in order to prevent enormous land monopolies being created, that leasehold tenure should be instituted.

There is a wealth of merit in the policy of leasehold tenure. As long as security of tenure is given, as long as due attention is paid to closer settlement and the State is developed, I see nothing whatever wrong with leasehold tenure. I submit that that must embrace perpetual-lease tenure in respect of very small holdings and the other tenures that we have in respect of holdings that, in due course, will be subdivided to permit closer settlement. I think it is an important aspect of this Bill that the area of land to be freeholded will be increased from 5,000 to 10,000 acres. On behalf of the Government, the Minister has not given any firm indication that in the next session of Parliament, if they are the Government, that area will not be increased from 10,000 acres to 15,000 or 20,000 acres. This is very important when we consider the state of development Queensland has reached and what we desire it to be so far as land settlement is concerned. I, and I think all hon. members on this side of the Chamber, opposed the freeholding of up to 5,000 acres when the legislation was introduced a few years ago. At that time I pointed out that by fixing an arbitrary limit of 5,000 acres anomalies were being created, and that has proved to be true. A man with 5,001 acres could not freehold, yet he could be alongside a man with 5,000 acres who could freehold. Was it absolutely unnecessary to create such anomalies when real security of tenure could have been granted by perpetual lease and, if necessary, in those areas that are not likely to be subdivided for many years, a period longer than 30 years could have been granted? In country where difficulties in development can be expected I realise that a longer lease is necessary and desirable. Any situation that confronts the Government of the day, or any Government in the future, can be met by a system of leasehold designed to allow the lessee to recoup the large amount involved in development and give him a fair return for his capital outlay, industry, and labour. No-one can gainsay that argument. I recall that when the former Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, the hon. member for Fassifern, introduced measures dealing with the development of the brigalow land I supported his proposal for a 40-year lease for those lands where much developmental work was required.

I was rather surprised this afternoon to learn from the Minister that in respect of this brigalow development, on which attention has been focused lately, it is the intention of the Government to open areas of 10,000 acres and under as freehold land, and only blocks in excess of 10,000 acres will be opened as leasehold land.

Mr. Duggan: I think I may be permitted the privilege of an interjection at this stage. On the information that we have, Mr. Holt made this money available on the distinct undertaking that the land was freehold. In other words, the Federal Government is dictating the policy of the State Government.

Mr. HILTON: I was coming to the substance of the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition. While £1,700,000 has been allocated for the development of this area, according to reports, if most of it is to be opened up on the basis of freehold tenure, I venture the opinion—and this is given only in a sense of proportion at this stage—that most of that money will be required for resumption purposes, unless of course a very small area of land is made available for selection and development over a long period of years as the leases expire. If there is to be a vast development of the brigalow belt over a few years, a good deal of that money will be required to compensate the lessees for resumptions.

I am altogether in favour of the development of the brigalow lands as far as possible. A few years ago, when there was great talk by the present Minister about fattening cattle on the coastal lands of the North, I stressed that, although I did not claim to be an expert in the matter, there did not appear to be a great deal of merit in the scheme. The former Minister for Public Lands supported me. The Federal Government and this State Government intimated then that there would be wonderful development of the coastal areas of the North and thousands of fat cattle would be turned off. To date very little has been done, and apparently very little can be done. At that time I stressed that it would have been better to concentrate energies on the development of the brigalow belt, but I realise now, from the statements that have been made this afternoon, that we cannot expect great development there in association with closer settlement if all those blocks from 10,000 acres down are to be opened on a freehold basis. It seems to me that the Federal Government have intimated that it must be on a freehold basis so that the companies can come in and develop the land and win a reward from it not on what it produces by way of cattle, sheep, and crops but by selling future subdivisions after they have developed it.

I agreed heartily with the present Minister when he made a statement some time ago following on comment that was made at the Liberal Party conference. I really felt proud that he was standing up to the pressure that was then being exerted. Unfortunately, it seems that once again Liberal policy has prevailed and that what could be a great feature of the development of Queensland—the brigalow belt—has been channelled into a subject of speculation by Big Business, which will not assist closer settlement in Queensland. It is cardinal for the use of the land, particularly for primary production, that the owner-worker should be the main man in the picture and that the rewards should come from what is won from Mother Earth. It is wrong to allow big financial interests to cash in, use their money to develop the land and then subdivide it and make a big profit and make things difficult with the great demand for the land in the years to come.

Even if the Commonwealth are demanding that the land be opened up as freehold, I suggest that the Government should give consideration to a restricted title so that there will be some safeguard against big monopolies gaining vast areas of the land for the purposes of exploitation rather than development. It is time the present Government, with their freeholding policy, considered some type of restriction of title. I know that the Torrens title does not permit of any restrictions but, in these days of enlightened civilisation and progress, there is nothing wrong with devising another title, if necessary, with restricting clauses permitting any administration to prevent the undue aggregation of freehold land. I think that the history of the world since civilisation began, and since there have been land laws, reveals that one of the greatest things against which the people have had to fight, and one of the greatest evils that caused oppression and poverty, was monopoly in the holding of land. That is why I oppose this policy, knowing full well that everything necessary for closer settlement and security for lessees can be achieved by a sane and sound policy of leasehold titles.

Whilst this legislation remains on the table for some time, as I understood the Minister to say it would, I urge the Government, seeing that they are adamant about increasing the freehold area from 5,000 to 10,000 acres, to give some consideration to placing a restriction on those titles to prevent the development of land monopolies in this great State.

In regard to the matter of living areas to which the Minister referred, I fully appreciate that it is not possible to define exactly what a living area is, but the principle that he mentioned this afternoon did not, so far as I could gather, take into consideration that changing circumstances may well bring about a position in which what is only one living area today in certain parts of the State may be 10 living areas in 20, 30, 40, or 50 years.

We are living in very critical times. We have read and heard so much of Britain's proposed entry into the European Common Market and the likely repercussions that we do not know where we stand in regard to many of our primary products and our future markets. It could well be that within the next 30 or 40 years there will be an immense stream of migrants to this country, if we still hold it—and God grant that will be the case. In defining a living area, the Land Administration Commission should be charged with the responsibility of considering the likely development in 30, 40, or 50 years. I have in mind now living areas that can be freeholded. Obviously as population increases it will be possible, because of the increased density of population and the greater home markets, to carry on agriculture in areas where it could not be now carried on. It is all-important that in determining this matter of freeholding we have in mind that in 30, 40, or 50 years the population of this country will be greatly increased. Whereas 1,000 acres may not be a living area in the brigalow lands at present—and here I am speaking very broadly and generally—in 30 or 40 years it may constitute even two or three living areas.

Mr. Sullivan: If there is freeholding, the lessee can subdivide and he will play a big part in increasing population.

Mr. HILTON: That interjection reinforces the point that I have been trying to make this afternoon that, by making these large 10,000-acre blocks available for freeholding, the land monopolists will come in and the ordinary fellow who wants a block will not be able to get it because of the huge amount of finance required to purchase a freehold block on the terms of the monopolist landlord. Does the hon. member for Condamine agree with that observation?

Mr. Sullivan: If, through development, a smaller area becomes a living area, a man who has freehold tenure and has three or four sons can subdivide the area and settle them there.

Mr. HILTON: That is a most illogical argument in discussing land settlement. It is obvious that the Commission cannot ask themselves, "In respect of this land, in 20 or 30 years' time will the man who owns it be the father of three or four sons?" That is a completely untenable argument. I agree that men wishing to engage in primary pursuits should be given every opportunity to do so; but in discussing our land laws, the prevention of land monopolies, and the encouragement of closer settlement, we cannot take that argument into consideration even though in certain circumstances and in certain localities the question may arise.

I very much doubt the wisdom of the provision relating to timber treatment which was outlined by the Minister in introducing the legislation. I recall that strong pressure was exerted on the Moore Government from time to time to get them to agree to the principle that the outgoing lessee should be compensated by the incoming lessee for timber treatment. That Government resisted it strongly and every Government in Queensland since land settlement began have resisted it.

I can see great administrative difficulties in regard to the principle, which I do not think is sound. Where a lease expires and subdivision takes place, it will obviously place a very big burden on the lessee who may ballot for the particular block on which extensive timber treatment has been carried out in the last 10 years. Let us take a grazing selection on which the lessee realises full well that, through force of circumstances and the development of the country, he will not be allowed to retain all of it when his lease expires. He will be given priority in selecting a living area for himself—it is only fair that he should be—by the Land Administration Commission. The Minister will agree with me, of course, that he will concentrate on the particular area that he wishes to retain. But in the last 10 years, if he wishes to extract money from the lessees of the other portions that are for ballot, he can do quite a lot of timber treatment on those portions on which the department would not have a really close check. How are they to ascertain with exactitude what area has undergone treatment in the 10-year period? The Minister's argument postulates that the Commission will have an army of land rangers on the job measuring the timber treatment carried out each year on all selections, particularly in the last 10 years of the lease. If over the years it has been unnecessary to admit timber treatment as an improvement for which the incoming lessee must pay, why make provision for it now? Governments who were in office before the Labour Party ever came into office refused to adopt the principle. The Moore Government refused to adopt it. I do not think it is sound practice. When a man enters for a block of land he really contracts to carry out certain timber treatment if that is a condition of the lease. He knows the contract he is entering into and he should reasonably carry out those conditions. If he does that he is playing his part in developing the lease, but a man who may be in fortunate circumstances can perhaps do something more than that. He could put in his claim for treatment that may not in reality have been carried out in the last 10-year period. I defy the department to make sure that their rangers can carry out inspections that will ensure with exactitude the timber treatment on all these selections during the last 10-year period of the lease.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (4.16 p.m.): I am sure that there will be no disagreement by members of this Committee or by people outside—a Bill having been passed by Parliament in 1910, prior to the advent of a Labour Government, and having operated as it has over a period of 52 years—that there is necessity for consolidation of the land laws. It is essential not only from the point of view of department activities but also from the point of those who have to deal with the land laws in representing various interests before the tribunals of this State. To that extent, it is well that the Government have taken the initiative to consolidate the land laws of this State.

It might be a bit harsh of me to suggest that the early consolidation of the Acts was brought about by the fact that the Government, since they have been in power, have made such an unholy mess of land legislation. It is to cover up some of the sins of their policy over the past five years that they have found it necessary to bring down a Bill that will completely eliminate from public attention all the mistakes that have been made in land policy.

It is important, even to members of this Assembly, who do not seem to realise it; it is particularly important to those engaged in rural pursuits, but all they seem to be interested in is speculation and the exploitation of the land. I view the land of this State, or of any country, outside of those phases of the liberty of the subject that have to be dealt with by this Parliament, as the most important item in the sphere of public administration. The very bloodstream, if I may so describe it,

of the nation depends upon the things that are produced from either on or under the land. Whilst in the past we may have paid particular attention to the importance of land development from the point of view of things that were produced from the land, whether it be meat, wheat, sugar, vegetables, fruit, wool, or any other item, these agricultural products will, in future, be playing a larger part in the economy of the nation, as distinct from the purposes of supplying the needs of the breakfast or dinner table. We know now what is going on in the field of research into agricultural products, and I suggest that one day the products of the land may displace mineral oils in their particular sphere. Sufficient advance has already been made in research to indicate that we might be running motor-cars and aeroplanes on the products of certain molecules from land products. Therefore, we realise the importance of the land. However, those are matters ahead of us. They will become important under the policy of the Government as outlined by the Minister today, and as it has been given effect to over the past five years.

I do not propose to go into all the features of the changes dealt with in the explanatory notes circulated by the Minister, which incidentally are very helpful. A few points have been stressed by him as important. Of course, he has skipped over others. He may regard them as unimportant, but on this side we will regard them as very important. However, I realise that the Minister did well to get through his explanation of the Bill within the hour, or slightly over the hour.

I should like to draw attention to the criticism levelled from the other side of the Chamber, and from outside the Chamber, at the policy of successive Labour Governments. The Minister has assisted in exploding much of that criticism today. The Leader of the Opposition quoted from "The Courier-Mail" a letter that was written in reply to Professor Francis, who attended the Liberal Party conference and gave his theories and views about how the lands of the State should be developed. All the failure to develop the land was attributed by him to Labour Governments. I might have a great respect for the professor in his sphere of veterinary science, but it is a pity he did not keep to that field. Anybody dealing with the subjects of land development, land research, and land legislation needs to do a lot of research. A man in the professor's position would be better employed in occupying his time in the field of veterinary research. His ideas are far removed from the factual position, as the Minister wittingly or unwittingly pointed out today. He pointed out, for example, that what was described as a living area for a grazing selection or homestead, whatever the tenure may have been, was a matter of about 60,000 acres. He said that those limitations were introduced in the first place in 1884, long before there was a Labour Government, when Sir Samuel Griffith was the Premier of this State. He pointed out that that was modified in some way in 1902—still far removed from any Labour Government.

Mr. Fletcher: That was not in area.

Mr. WALSH: I am referring to the limitation of grazing selections. It comes into the same category. The grazing selections were limited to that area because they were regarded as living areas. That would be the effect of it. The Minister admitted that the Labour Governments, as they came into power, had not altered that particular modification in 1902. Now the Government propose to cut them down to 45,000 acres. Most of the basic features of land policy were handed down to Labour Governments from non-Labour Governments. It is to the credit of the Labour Government, despite all the so-called "Socialistic" bunk, that they continued to recognise many of the sounder features of the early pioneers who handled legislation. It is quite true that so far as perpetual leases were concerned from 1932 to 1957 the Government were very adamant that there should be no alienation of Crown land. I challenge the Minister, or anybody else who wants to argue the difference between the security of freehold tenure and perpetual lease, to prove that freehold has a better security of tenure than perpetual lease. As a matter of fact, if we go into all the merits of the differences between the two tenures, perpetual lease is a long way ahead of freehold. On the experience I have had, both as a land man and as a land administrator, if I had my choice now, my recommendation to any person taking up land would be to take up perpetual lease.

Mr. Gaven: I thought you were a better judge than that.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for South Coast has his perpetual leases.

Mr. Gaven: I have not any.

Mr. WALSH: I am sorry if he has not; he should have. If he had perpetual leases, other than the re-appraisal that takes place by the Land Court—the independent authority that re-appraises the value and the rental every so often—he would know that perpetual lease can be negotiated in exactly the same way as freehold. My experience in the Department of Public Lands taught me that, from the speculative point of view, perpetual leases were being exploited to a greater extent than freehold tenures.

Mr. Fletcher: Yet you still believe in it.

Mr. WALSH: My only complaint, and I voiced it over and over again, was that Labour's policy was not tight enough in preventing that exploitation. We had the fantastic position of a Land Court judgment—when land was resumed from a perpetual lessee, not being the owner of the land—giving 70 per cent. of the capital value of

the land for resumption. In my opinion, that is very good. I defy anyone in the Chamber, particularly on the Government side, to make out a case that, from the financial point of view perpetual lease is not a better bet than freehold.

Mr. Muller: There used to be a limit of 2,500 acres.

Mr. WALSH: That is perfectly true, and I have some comments on those limitations. If the Government are sincere, and if those who are backing and sponsoring them in their organisation believe that freehold is the ideal tenure, why not abolish all leaseholds? Why not abolish all leaseholds if they have such great faith in freehold? That is the test. But no, the Government wish to see that the land that may be closely settled is available for wider speculation, whether it is for the subdividers—as in many of the coastal areas—or those who are taking up tenure under the Land Act and eventually are given the right to subdivide. All that will happen is that they will make money out of an equity that has been handed to them by the Crown. There cannot be any objection to anyone who has taken up tenure from the Crown being reimbursed for the cost of improvement and development, but I have a violent objection to the lands of the State being placed in the hands of a few and then being bandied about for the purpose of profit with nothing being done to further the development of the land.

The Minister may deny it if he wishes, but in this memorandum there is enough material to charge the Government with opening the gates and allowing the land monopolies to come here and take up vast stretches of worth-while, fertile lands under single ownership. We hear this boloney about giving security to the small landholder. As the years go by—the Minister may not be here, and it may be a little late—we will find that the State will return to the days of the squatocracy in the early settlement of Queensland. How does one determine a living area? It is not so much a matter of Government policy. All Governments, I suppose, since a Government was constituted in Queensland, have endeavoured to follow the advice of their expert officials. Probably the trouble is that this Government have been following the advice of people who are not expert in land administration; but the success of land policy over the years under Labour Governments came from the fact that they took cognisance of many experienced men. I admit that mistakes were made, but they came about through the theoretical submissions of some of those officers who apparently thought somebody could go out and make a good living on a limited number of acres. For instance, at Julia Creek 10,000 blocks were subdivided only to have all the stock annihilated in the first drought. In the Department of Public Lands you will see old maps of the subdivision of land outside Longreach into agricultural farms of 160 acres each. That was long before the days of the Labour Government. If the Government follow the adopted policy, of course, they get the blame. Admittedly the officers must take some responsibility.

What is going to happen if these areas are allowed to be freeholded? What limitation will be placed on the owners of the freehold, whether in the brigalow area or in any other part of the State, where the land tenure has been converted from leasehold to freehold, and where at present the Government have some hold over the lessees to the extent that they are not allowed to subdivide further into areas that the department does not consider to be living areas? Are they now going to hand over thousands of acres of the good land of the State to people who will be at liberty to divide their 5,000 acres into 10 or 12 or even more blocks? I take it there will be no restriction on them. Once they are given the freehold title and they have paid their full money, they can do what they like. So we face a future with a land of peasants, instead of having a prosperous population on the land. As in the Soviet and other countries, more and more people will be reduced to peasant life. Under Labour Governments the primary producers in Queensland became fairly prosperous, but now men on the land are being forced into the category of the poor classes through the falling rural income. I am not talking now about the wealthy pastoralists.

I realise that none of us can discuss the Bill intelligently until we see the actual wording of its provisions. The Minister, not deliberately, had to slip over many important variations to the legislation through lack of time. He was good enough to prepare an explanatory memorandum to draw our attention to some of the more important features of it; but one part he did not elaborate on was that dealing with the extension from 20 years to 30 years of the period of freeholding selections and its retrospective operation. It means that this feature of the Bill will be applied to any of the selections that have been taken up under legislation passed since 1957, and apart from anything else, that will exempt them from land tax for another 10 years.

It is interesting to see that paragraph (6) of the circulated memorandum deals with a new system of balloting. A selective method replaces the group system. It reads—

> "Selective ballots will be conducted by a Committee of Review comprising a member of the Land Administration Commission or other officer of the Department of

Public Lands, and two experienced primary producers. Rejected applicants are given a right of appeal."

I do not know whether the present system of balloting has fallen down, but obviously it has somewhere along the line. The Minister will probably recall a case brought to my notice concerning a person from Dalby who applied to be included in a ballot. According to my information, he was told that he could not be put in. The member for the area made representations that he be included, but they were rejected. The person concerned came to Brisbane and saw some authority—it may have been the Minister—and eventually he was placed in the ballot and won it. I do not know how he did it, but that suggests to me that some skullduggery goes on somewhere along the line.

Mr. Fletcher: You have a nasty mind.

Mr. WALSH: I cannot help it. If the Minister can give me the facts to clear my mind of any such suggestion, that would be better. I should be quite happy to hear his explanation. I can refer also to another man whose family I know—the Duffys—and who is also known by the hon member for Barcoo. They are out in the Barcaldine area and have been on the land all their lives. This particular person was actually a Land Commissioner in his day, and he is now living in Bundaberg. His name is Tom Duffy. Apparently he was rejected because he was inexperienced. I do not know whether that was the reason, but he thinks so. These things lead one to the belief that the ballot system has not been quite fair.

Mr. Duffey: People in the West cannot be convinced that it is fair.

Mr. WALSH: There are two cases, and if the Minister can produce honest and truthful explanations of why those two people were rejected, particularly the first one, I shall be prepared to accept them.

Mr. Hewitt: I would like you to produce the same thing in relation to the Hamilton Brothers, who were thrown out of the Auburn ballot.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member can put his own case: I am putting mine. I am not suggesting that some mistakes were not made by the previous Government. My job is to raise these matters and, if the Minister can say why certain things were done, let him do so. I am simply outlining the facts as they have been conveyed to me. I shall bring the documents on Duffy to the House later to prove my point.

Paragraph 3 (12) of the explanatory note says—

"Condition of Personal Residence will not be re-imposed on transfer of Grazing Homesteads."

The Minister explained that, and my interjection was that it would open the door to increased absenteeism. Of course it will. More and more landholders will be living away from the country areas and outside this State. After they have satisfied the condition requiring a certain period of residence, they will be relieved of future requirements.

Mr. Fletcher: Under your Government, they did not have to occupy them.

Mr. WALSH: A lot of your people are not complying with the conditions. Do not let us be under any misapprehension about that. Do not try to say that you have been rigidly applying all conditions of leases. Most of my term of office as Minister for Public Lands was during the war, but in that time I saw to it, as far as I could, that the conditions that were imposed were complied with, and the decent people in the community were very pleased that I took that stand.

I know that the consolidation of the land laws is a very big job, and we are particularly interested in the new features. Not for a moment do I imagine that the Government are going to all this trouble without introducing a new feature which will cut right across Labour policy and which will be to the detriment of the majority of people in Queensland. If the Government are going to bow to the pressure of Harold Holt and the big overseas companies, they should be ashamed of themselves.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (4.41 p.m.): It could be said, perhaps with a good deal of truth, that no other subject is as important and contentious as land legislation and land administration. The consolidation of the various Acts has been mooted for some time. As a matter of fact, the all-important legislation relating to the consolidation was brought down during my time as Minister for Public Lands. I refer chiefly to the Payne Report, entitled "Progressive Land Settlement in Queensland", which was produced largely as a result of my initiative. During my term of office no fewer than six important Bills dealing with land matters were brought down. I said at the time that I did not believe for one moment that the land laws would be perfect as a result of the introduction of that legislation, but I should like to mention a few of the important Acts that were amended other than those to which I have referred. There was the amendment relating to stud leases that gave genuine stud-breeders absolute security of

tenure. That has been accepted with very good grace by stud-breeders and commercial owners of stock.

There was also an important amendment relating to farm settlement leases. There was another amendment relating to rent adjustments, which varied all over the State. Then there was the legislation to which the hon. member for Bundaberg referred as being most unfair and playing into the hands of speculators, that is, the Crown Land Development Act, which I will be proud of as long as I live. If anyone got any advantage from that legislation, it was the State. We had thousands and thousands of acres of land which were useless and which could not be developed until this power had been granted to the Government. There was legislation dealing with the right of lessees to come to the Land Court if there was a dispute about their rent at the time of renewal. Then there was the spread of Harrisia cactus throughout the brigalow area. No positive action to deal with it was taken until I brought down legislation for that purpose. If there is one piece of legislation that the people of Queensland have reason to be thankful for it is that.

I suppose I should not blow my own trumpet all the afternoon if I am to deal with some of the amendments suggested in the pamphlet that the Minister has circulated. The impression has been given that perpetual leases were available to people and that they were as good as freehold. There is not the slightest doubt that a perpetual lease is granted to the owner in perpetuity. One could no more take that from him than one could take freehold from him. The fact of the matter was that you could not get a perpetual lease. The only perpetual leases we had were small blocks of land which were considered less than a living area. Prior to my taking office, 95 per cent. of the perpetual leases in existence would have been less than living areas. They were limited to 2,500 acres of inferior-class land. There were bits and pieces all over the place that were not considered large enough to submit by way of period lease.

Do not let us get away with the idea that you could get perpetual lease in exactly the same way as you get a period lease, or a grazing lease of any kind. It was not available. I will deal with that question a little later. The Minister referred to it in the conversion of prickly-pear leases to perpetual lease.

I should like to take the proposed amendments in the order set out and deal with them very briefly. I have not the time to go into them in detail. We can do that when we reach the second-reading and committee stages.

The first on the list is the increase from 5,000 acres to 10,000 acres in the right to convert. One hon. member who spoke a moment ago—I think it was the hon. member for Carnarvon—said that if you had 5,001 acres you could not convert. We had to put in a peg somewhere. Whilst the 5,000 acres existed previously it was a living area up to 5,000 acres. It could be 2,500 but it could not exceed 5,000, and I mentioned at that time that that was the first step in freeholding. I support the proposal to increase the area from 5,000 to 10,000 acres, with the provision included in the Bill that it could be less than 10,000 acres. I saw enough of Queensland to convince me that in a great many cases I would think that 160 acres would be better than some of this 10,000-acre country. It is a matter of the quality and the location of the particular land. Furthermore, it is a question of whether it would be in the interests of the whole of the land to convert to freehold.

This does not compel or oblige anybody to do anything. Each one can please himself. In a great many cases it will be found that it would be very much better to hold a block of land as leasehold than to convert to freehold.

We have to examine very closely not only the legislation but its administration as well. I draw attention to what is happening with freeholding legislation, and I am not blaming anyone. I have the highest regard and respect for the officers of the Department of Public Lands. Nevertheless, when one gets a clear picture of what this conversion means, it is not nearly as good as some people think it is.

I shall give hon. members the picture. I am not mentioning any land but I have it in mind. I could give hon. members many worse pictures than this. Take a block of land of, say, 5,000 acres that would be commanding a rental today of 6d. or 7d. an acre. On that basis it would command a rental of about £150 a year. This is not supposed to be authentic but it is so close to it that it makes no difference. The owner makes application to have it converted. He has his value struck at £2 an acre, which would give him a value of £10,000 for the block. If he was going to convert it to freehold under existing conditions it would be over 20 years at a payment of 5 per cent. annually. He would thus be contributing £500 a year as against £150 previously.

It can be taken a little further than that. That lessee would contribute by way of rental, which would be a deduction for income-tax purposes. It is reasonable to suggest that he might be paying income tax at the rate of 6s. 8d. in the £1. In that case he would get a further concession of £50 from his income tax, which would bring him down to £100 a year as against £500 if he converts to freehold.

I am not opposed to this proposal. As a matter of fact, a number of lessees suggested to me that the period should be increased from 20 years to 40 years. I violently resisted it at that time because I considered that the Act was very generous and that there was no need to increase the term. Since I have become a lessee myself, largely for the purpose of getting first-hand information, I find that it does not work out as well as I thought it would in the first place. With the concession it would mean that if the lessee wanted to convert to freehold his annual contribution would be reduced from £500 to, say, £350, but it would be still costing him £350 as against £100 if he were leasing. He would, of course, get a concession if there was timber on the property. He would be able to cut the timber, which he cannot do under his lease. It is a matter that each lessee will have to decide for himself. It depends very largely on where the land is, the class of land, and what its development is likely to be.

I used to think that it would be definitely in the interests of the lessee to convert to freehold. I have given the picture this afternoon to give the Committee an idea of what the lessee would be against. If he had 5,000 acres in the brigalow country, on the basis of a value of £2 an acre he would be paying a rental of £500 a year. In addition to that, he would have all his heavy developmental costs. It is quite safe to say that a fair average for developmental costs in the brigalow area would be £10 an acre. It could be £15 or more an acre. The development of this heavy brigalow country is essentially a young man's job. How in the name of heaven can a young man meet all his expenses and keep a wife and family? I do not think he can survive. To my mind it is virtually impossible. But the country must be developed in some way or other. My idea under the legislation that I introduced was a brigalow lease of 40 years with areas up to 20,000 acres. We want to develop that country. Even if it means that a company comes in, as long as it provides the money and we get the development, Queensland will get the benefit. We have to accept the picture as it is. We have to be realistic. Are we to go on as we are and do nothing, or are we to change the policy and invite people with money who can develop it, to come in?

We have to ask ourselves one or two very pertinent questions about the reason for the delay in developing the brigalow country. In very many cases it was due to the fact that the lessees had too much land. They could make a living without using the scrub country. In many instances economics entered into it. They did not have the money or could not raise the money, or it did not pay them to do it. If someone is prepared to come in and clean that country up, what harm is there in it? If he develops it and subdivides it after he has paid for it, surely the State must be the beneficiary. I have grave doubts whether young men will be able to go onto a lot of this country that requires development, and survive. In the circumstances I think it is advisable to increase the time from 20 to 30 years.

The subject of balloting has always been a contentious one. I do not envy the new committee their job. Rejected applicants are to be given the right of appeal. I do not know where this will end. Most of the applicants in a ballot do not seem to realise what they are up against. I should like to emphasise that point. A question was asked recently by the hon. member for Cook. He complained that in respect of a block of land in the Tinaroo irrigation area that had been made available for grazing purposes and pasture improvement, the condition was imposed that applicants must have £8,500. The hon. member for Cook thought it should be reduced to £3,500. The Minister pointed out in his reply that it was considered it would take £24,000 to develop the block. I question whether the £8,500 would be enough. These things are not done to shut out anyone but to protect applicants from themselves. Men have taken on these propositions with little money and have found themselves financially embarrassed before they started. How can anyone with only £3,000 or £4,000 shoulder development costs amounting to £24,000?

This committee will have to make a number of difficult decisions. Since I have been out of office a number of people have complained to me that they have been refused the right to ballot. On examining their cases and their financial position, I could not help but feel that many of them were done a service rather than a disservice. I must confess that, before I realised the stark truth, I had the idea that if a man had £5,000 or £6,000 and drew a block of land 20,000 acres in area, with a value of 30s. an acre, he had drawn a prize of £30,000. If he had the money to develop the land and make use of it, probably he drew something better than a mammoth Golden Casket. However, if he had only £5,000 or £6,000—and I saw some of these men, and I have seen nothing more pathetic—he would be committed to a life of struggle, without making proper use of it, and having to pay the rent and other charges. I saw men with these blocks and the land was just there to be looked at. Often they came to me and asked me, "Can I sell it?" If they were allowed to sell they would have no trouble in realising from £25,000 to £30,000 and it would go to someone with the money to develop it. However, under the settlement policy that cannot be done. The

idea is to give young men an opportunity, but they cannot sell it and realise on it and they cannot make use of it. They are in a terrible mess.

I come now to the undeveloped brigalow country. Do not for a moment let us think that all the graziers are fools. Some of them might be, but the majority are not. If they had seen that it was wise to spend money on developing it, they would have done it years ago. However, that is a very contentious matter. I should not like to see anything done that, in effect, would induce young men to go into it and find out they had bitten off more than they could chew.

The next matter concerns the reducing of the limit from 60,000 acres to 45,000 acres. In my time I considered this matter very carefully. Again the question arises that in some cases 60,000 acres as a limit would not be too much, while in other cases it would be far too high. I believe that, with the growth of population, the compromise that has been made by reducing it to 45,000 acres is quite reasonable. If land is so poor that 45,000 acres will not keep you, you are better off without it. Again, if you were to go out to the Channel Country, and to the western areas, you would need a million acres. Certainly I would not take it as a present. I am not the poorest man in the Chamber, but I should say I could not afford it. However, a company could afford it. I saw some very sad sights in the Channel Country. Men went into it who just could not handle it, whereas a company composed of 20 or 30 men, pooling their assets, could employ people and set up a little township of their own, with a butcher shop, a store, and a theatre, and provide all the necessary amenities. With present-day means of transport they can keep the roads about the head station in fair condition for their motor vehicles and the wives and families can live in some comfort. But take the poor, unfortunate settler with his wife and children out at some isolated place with only the dingoes for company. It is very sad to see. Is it not very much better to have a bigger show employing 20 or 30 men and providing a living for 50 or 60, including their families, or perhaps more, in reasonable comfort, than to put the poor individual selector out into isolation to face starvation?

These matters should be considered quite apart from party politics. At times we should forget that we are members of a particular party and try to develop the State in a practical way.

I will have a good deal more to say when I see the Bill, but I want to devote a minute or two to the question of conversion from pickly-pear leases to perpetual leases. When the Minister was speaking I interjected and asked if these leases would be valued and the rentals adjusted. I do not want anyone to think for a moment that I begrudge those people who took up the prickly-pear leases what they have made. However, some of the land at that time was very badly infested and it grew worse. Do not think for a moment that they cleared the pear. They did not clear it any more than you or I did. They made a desperate attempt, and a mighty good attempt, but had it not been for the introduction of the cactoblastis insect they would not have been successful. These old leases have been running for a very long time. They were got for a mere song. In the interests of the tenants themselves a change of tenure is advisable. The Crown should be fair and reasonable. Whatever the tenure—whether perpetual lease, which I agree with, or for a period—they could do something with it. I had cases that I would have liked to convert to freehold for the purpose of subdivision. They were quite willing to subdivide, but the Act did not give them that power. Had they been allowed to subdivide, they would have been able to place two or three families on properties that were carrying only one.

Whatever the Bill, or the consolidation does to the Act, one thing is certain; that is, that by next year or the year after some other anomaly will arise—and we should be prepared to meet those anomalies as they become apparent.

The question of renting additional areas is something I was very sore about for this reason. After I took office I found that everyone about the place was writing to me for additional areas. Under the Act the Minister had the power. Sometimes it would be a good thing if he did not have it. When you have the power some people expect you to use it in their favour. Perhaps many people were not entitled to additional areas, but many who were not entitled to them have got them. Some have gone from a horse paddock to a sheep station. I cut it out completely. This is what would happen. If some clever Johnny about the place looked at a large property which was likely to be resumed for closer settlement, he would go along to some poor unfortunate and buy the block because he would have a pretty good case for an additional area. They were getting them. His area was much less than a living one. He bought it cheap. The poor unfortunate who had had it was glad to get out. The other man got the block not through a ballot but at a straight-out rent, which amounts to a straight-out gift from the Crown. I thought it was very much better to abolish the granting of additional areas. The provision had served its time. As Sir William Payne said in his report, if anybody wants an additional area let him do the same as everybody else and buy it.

I am hurrying along. There is just one other point the Minister mentioned that I should like to have clarified. It is on the resumption of land for closer settlement and the compensation of the retiring tenants.

I consider it very unfair to take improvements at their cost, less depreciation at that time. It would be all right if the present owner was the original owner, but it may have been sold two or three times, and the present tenant has paid for the improvements as they stand. If they are taken from him at their cost 20 years ago, less depreciation, after he has paid for them at their later value, it is straight-out robbery. I shall deal with that when we see the Bill.

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (5.6 p.m.), in reply: Generally, I take it that hon. members feel that this measure will be better debated at the second-reading stage. That seems to have been indicated by the fact that there has not been a very long debate on the introduction.

I think the Leader of the Opposition said that I did not speak in a political strain. I endeavoured to give the Committee as much information as I could in the time that I felt ought to be devoted to this matter. He did say that he thought that, if the Labour Party were returned to office at some future time, they would not necessarily slavishly follow the old course in land matters. That is a good thing. I am glad to see that it is not in his mind to stick rigidly to the old merely because it is old.

Mr. Duggan: I do not reject the old merely because it is old, or embrace the new merely because it is new.

Mr. FLETCHER: He then went on to try to suggest, but not very convincingly, that there were strong differences of opinion between the Country Party and the Liberal Party. I do not think that he made a very good case. The mere fact of my having crossed swords with the gentleman who saw fit to go to the Liberal Party convention to air some of his ideas—I shall not say "knowledge" because he was not very well "clued up" on some things—does not mean that the Liberal Party subscribes to that sort of thing.

Mr. Duggan: They didn't kick you out.

Mr. FLETCHER: I did suggest to several Liberal members that it would be better if I were asked at the appropriate time, but I made no official approach to the Liberal Party organisation for an invitation.

I am flattered that the Leader of the Opposition quoted me from a newspaper as being a "quotable quote". Obviously he was pleased to note what I said. He was, I think, whistling in the dark a good deal to keep up his courage. I am not too sure that there is not something sinister about his getting on a very matey basis with a big grazier. It does sound a little odd, and I am not sure that that is something that he really ought to talk about.

Mr. Duggan: I spared you personally by not naming you in connection with some of the things that he said about you.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not worried about that one, nor is there any story that worries me. What people say about me if it is not true, is a reflection on them. In this case, no doubt, it is a reflection on the informant, and I have no worry about it. I have done what I thought was correct. If someone does not agree, that is all right. If they say things about me, as this big grazier friend of the Leader of the Opposition apparently did, it is nice to know that he has friends of that calibre. That does not worry me very much.

There is one matter about which the Leader of the Opposition apparently is worried. He wondered if we were going to give the right to renew a lease to a man who had not carried out the terms of the old lease. That is really confusing. The fact that he is still there means that, in the eyes of the administration, he has carried out the conditions reasonably or has not so unreasonably carried them out that he deserves to be refused a renewal. One does not worry at the time of the extension of a lease whether a man has or has not been a good tenant; one worries about that during the term of the lease. Incidentally, I cannot remember any case, or remember anyone telling me of any case, in which a tenant was thrown out under a Labour administration because he did not carry out the terms of his timber treatment. Be that as it may, when his lease comes up for extension the time has long passed when something should be done about his not carrying out its terms. I think it is fair enough to say that if a man is still there at the expiration of the lease he has a right to a renewal—either that, or somebody has not been doing his job.

The hon. member for Carnarvon said several things that I expected him to say and that I do not blame him for saying because he is an honest man and says what he thinks. He does not like the idea of freeholding; he never has; and on that I disagree with him. He thinks that the scheme for the development of the brigalow lands could be a bit of a fiasco. That may not be the term that he used, but he indicated that he was worried about the money that we are to get from the Federal

Government being fully consumed in compensating the people whose land we will be taking. We do not expect very much of that money to be leached away in that manner. Many of the leases are almost due for renewal, and it is our right, as it was the right of the hon. member when he held this portfolio, to take land in excess of a reasonable living area from the lessees. Where the lease still has a certain period to run, there should be—and I am sure there will be—a way of making a deal. If a person gets a little more than a living area because he has to forego his right to six, seven, or 10 years of his lease, who will complain about that? I do not think that we will spend very much of the money we receive from the Commonwealth on resumptions. In any case, the man coming in will pay the price for the land and the improvements on it when he draws the block. That is the usual thing. I assure the hon. member for Carnarvon that there will not be a big waste of money in that respect.

The hon. member's memory is better than mine when he claims that I rose in the Chamber and lauded the attractions of the wet coast. It seemed to me that he said by implication that I gave priority to the wet coast.

Mr. Hilton: The north coast.

Mr. FLETCHER: Well, that is the wet coast.

Mr. Hilton: I thought you said "west".

Mr. FLETCHER: I have never been very wrapped up in the developmental possibilities of the wet coast, but I am interested in increasing beef production.

Mr. Hilton: See what you said in "Hansard".

Mr. FLETCHER: What I would have said is that there are areas on the wet coast that are well worth developing. At the time that may have been my opinion, and it would have been an honest opinion. But I have never deviated from the opinion that the brigalow belt has a great deal more than the wet coast to offer in rewards for development. As a matter of fact, I appointed a committee to classify land up there. It worked in the area for three or four months to provide me and the department with information. To say that I went off the deep end about the attractions of the wet coast is mere exaggeration.

In regard to the general sentiment that was expressed that it is the worker on the land who ought to reap the reward, that is my own view. Surely the views that I have expressed about owner-development of land makes that very clear. I think that the man who does the work personally, with his brain, his brawn, his initiative, and his organising ability, is the person who ought to get the main reward. That is what I like about the idea of freehold tenure; it ensures that the man who does the work, the development, who takes the risks, and sticks to it for long enough, will get the reward.

The idea of saying—and it was said—that this opens the door to the big monopolies is an alarming point of view and not strictly in keeping with what we hope to do, or with our intentions. It will not be automatically open to big monopolies; it will be open to single selectors. If in the process of time there may be aggregations that we cannot prevent, let us consider it from the point of view of the good it will do rather than from that angle. Surely we are here to do a job.

Mr. Hilton: It will be too late then.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is not too late. This Assembly can do what they feel is best in administering the affairs of the State, and that includes land matters. There is nothing to stop us at this moment from doing things with respect to land tenures, and there is nothing to stop future generations of our breed from doing the same thing. At this moment we have to do a job, and we have to get on with that job.

Mr. Hilton interjected.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not going to worry about how much it will cost somebody in the future if, in fact, we have to do a job at this moment. It is throwing a spanner in the wheels to say, "If you do this, in 40 or 50 years from now somebody will make a lot of money out it. You must not do it." That is the old, old story. It is the trap into which Labour members have fallen year after year. They are so dead scared that somebody will make a few bob out of this that they overlook the advantage of getting on with the job, getting people onto the land and producing goods for export, thereby establishing a standard of living such as we can do if we play our part today. It will be no comfort to me when I am very old for somebody to say, "In 1962 you did a good thing in keeping land in certain big areas from being freeholded because if you had not we would have been in the hands of big monopolies," when somebody else could say, "By doing that very thing you kept the development of land in Queensland back for 20, 30 or 40 years." That could easily be the other side of the argument.

The idea that timber treatment cannot be administered—that is to say, that the records for timber treatment cannot be administered—is not right. In any case we have to give it a go; it has so many obvious advantages. If a man is not going to do any timber treatment in the last 10 years of his lease because he cannot get anything for it, what sort of position is the State in?

Mr. Hilton: Don't you think he should carry out the terms of his lease?

Mr. FLETCHER: He is freed from those; he has carried those out but this is in connection with extra improvements he will do over and above the original terms of the lease. The point is that if he thinks that he will lose the value of such improvements he will not do them, but if he knows he will get the value of them less depreciation to the time he gets out there is nothing to stop him doing them. In addition, the man who comes in also gains. He has a better chance of making a living right from the start. If hon. members cannot see the logic of that, they are displaying very limited vision. Just because they are old practices they are not necessarily good. Hon. members opposite say, "We have done this for years and years, and because we have done it for years and years it must be right." That is not so. Every day in the week we find that some of the old practices are not the best practices. One has only to go back to the predecessors of Dr. Noble who thought that cupping was a good idea and that they could, by bleeding, mitigate the effects of haemorrhage.

The hon. member for Bundaberg adopted a very holier-than-thou attitude. He set about it like the Pharisee and, figuratively pounding his chest, he said in effect, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men."

Mr. Walsh: Obviously you were not following me too closely.

Mr. FLETCHER: I was following the hon. member very closely. The implication was that we were a bumble-footed lot of ignoramuses and that in the good old days when he was Minister these things did not happen. He endeavoured, quite unconvincingly, to suggest that there was a strong rift between the Country Party and the Liberal Party in Government. He took a lot of unction to his soul from the fact that the things that Labour did in land administration were not really Labour responsibilities at all but something that had been laid down way back in 1880. Because they did not change them he was prepared to consider that that was a good thing. What sort of credit can anyone take for merely carrying on what someone else has done? It could be the very worst attitude one could confess to. A set of conditions relating to the land laws way back in the era when we were an unoccupied country that was just starting to experiment in ways to get men on the land and keep them on the land could become outmoded in the first 20, 40, or 60 years. To confess that you have not changed them in 100 years is merely to confess that you did not keep up with the times. Of coures, the fact is that there was not much original thinking. There was a parsimonious fear that we might be doing something whereby someone would make some money. When the Hon. A. E. Moore was in power for three years he tried to do a few things that gave the people on the land a shot in the arm, but immediately on his defeat in 1932 the machinery was put into reverse and the State went back to the 1880 standard. It is time we got away from that. The. hon. member said that perpetual lease was much better than freehold, but then he got his wires crossed and said that the perpetual lease, even in his day, was being exploited. He said that land exploiters were getting it, cutting it up, and making money out of it.

Mr. Walsh: Not cutting it up, selling it.

Mr. FLETCHER: Well, they cut it up and sold it.

Mr. Walsh: No.

Mr. FLETCHER: Whether they cut it up or not, as long as they sold it. He said in one breath that perpetual lease was better than freehold any time; in the next breath he said that it was capable of being used for exploitation.

It was characteristic of the hon. member to suggest that we were being influenced by the Federal Government in our freeholding policy. That is pure baloney. That is the term of the hon. member, but it is applicable to his suggestion. The extension to 10,000 acres is our policy, nobody else's.

Mr. Hanlon: It is your latest policy.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is the latest policy. I take pride in that. It is the latest, most up-to-date policy we have.

Mr. Dufficy: Didn't you tell the selectors that the Federal Government were insisting——

Mr. FLETCHER: They have a strong prejudice but they have never laid down any conditions.

Mr. Dufficy: But you told them something along those lines.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have told them a number of things. I have told them all the things they wanted to know. I have told them that I had the impression from Mr. Holt that he and his Government would strongly favour a freeholding policy and that that would be consistent with their attitude all down the years.

Mr. Dufficy: That is getting closer to the truth.

Mr. FLETCHER: I protest. I have not deviated from the truth at all. That is just as I said it, and it is the truth.

The hon. member continued with a great deal of generalisation about living areas and

asked, "What do you take as your yardstick?" We are told that the idea of freeholding living areas at this moment is terribly dangerous as in 20, 30, or 40 years' time it may represent five living areas. Any common-sense evaluation of the situation includes that conclusion. Of course it may be dangerous, but we are here to do the right thing today. If we were to be scared of doing what we think is the right thing now because of what may happen in 20 or 30 years' time, we would do nothing. That has been the trouble in the past.

Mr. Walsh: Why don't you make the pastoral leases freehold?

Mr. FLETCHER: For very good reasons.

Mr. Walsh: Why?

Mr. FLETCHER: Because we are still developing them.

Mr. Walsh: Don't give me that!

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not mind making the far western pastoral leases freehold in living areas, but it is very difficult to do that without including many of the better-class areas, and if we put no limit on the pastoral leases it would allow pastoral leases in the closer areas to come into it. That would not be a good idea unless we devise a method for doing it separately. It would not be a good idea because, in the immediate future, we can see a very quick development of that country. I think we should reserve for the time being the living-area standard there. If we were to allow ourselves to be prevented by these forecasts from getting on with the job of encouraging production we would be falling into the same old trap as did the hon. member who now speaks all this claptrap about freeholding living areas. I should say that the balloting for land has not fallen down. If he believes that the Government of which he was a member did not have any dissatisfied men applying for ballots, he is kidding himself. If the hon. member suggests that we should have no dissatisfied men entering ballots he is suggesting the ridiculous.

Mr. Walsh: You account for your own mistakes.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not accounting for mistakes. I can explain them, and I admit we make them. But it is plain silly for the hon. member to again adopt his Pharisee attitude of implying, "This did not happen under me." The hon. member for Mackenzie made an interjection that obviously threw him back on his haunches, namely, that mistakes just as serious happened in his day as he was suggesting happened under me.

Mr. Walsh: Of course they made mistakes in the past and I admit them, but you account for your own mistakes.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member's remarks about ballots provide a very good supporting argument for my suggestion about the reorganisation of the system. It is the best thing that could have been said in this Chamber by me, or any other hon. member. He gave me complete justification for the suggested reorganisation, which will put two outside practical men and a man from my Commission in charge of ballots. They will ensure that the obvious mistakes that have occurred in the past will not occur so repeatedly.

It was suggested that the McAllister case was a bad one. After his case was outlined—and I think he came to me—we had another good look at it and allowed it in. The other case concerned a Land Commissioner who had no practical land experience.

Mr. Walsh: That is tommy rot! His family was born and bred on the land.

Mr. FLETCHER: That could be.

Mr. Walsh: The Minister says a Land Commissioner would not have any experience, but he is reporting on it every day. What rot!

Mr. FLETCHER: I presume the hon. member would suggest that if he was reared on a poultry farm he would be entitled to claim he could lay eggs.

It was really refreshing, after the session we had, to hear a practical man give his views about what was going on. The hon. member for Fassifern gave us some of his ideas and they were refreshing. I did not disagree with one.

Mr. Hewitt: He made some excellent points about ballots.

Mr. FLETCHER: Hon. members opposite cannot prove that I have done other than commend him. I give credit where credit is due.

Mr. Duffey: What you said to him——

Mr. FLETCHER: What the hon. member said would probably not have been fit to register in the chronicles.

Mr. Duggan: If you want something registered, you should commend him for the way he threatened to punch you in the nose.

Mr. FLETCHER: Did I threaten to punch him?

Mr. Duggan: No. He threatened to punch you.

Mr. FLETCHER: Exactly.

I was very interested in the statement by the hon. member for Fassifern that he had become interested in this matter by becoming a leaseholder himself. That is a jolly good way to do it and I commend it to hon. members opposite. Even if they can get

only a 24-perch allotment and go through the process, it might help. Heaven knows they need the experience.

I know that brigalow development is expensive. Of course it is, but it is being done, and done in a practical way. I was as worried about it as anyone else in the State. That is what really started me thinking seriously about it and doing something about getting some money from the Federal Government. That is the real reason behind my approach to them and the basis of my arguments to them, which I hope were relevant. Apparently they have had some result. I have had the saddest possible experience of having young men come to me time after time and confess that, with the best will in the world and the greatest possible expenditure of energy, they have failed, or looked like failing, on brigalow blocks. They have gone in with big hearts and with probably £5,000, £6,000, or £7,000 and found that it did not amount to anything like enough. It is to get some way of alleviating their difficulties and helping them to get into an earning condition that we are trying this method. Let us, for their sakes, have a go.

Mr. Hilton: We do not know yet what it is.

Mr. FLETCHER: Hon. members know it in the broad. We will tell them chapter and verse. It is one of the reasons why we must put money conditions on men entering ballots. The hon. member himself said it is no privilege to be allowed into a ballot without money if you have no chance of winning. It would be a danger to let men in without money.

Mr. Walsh: It is a pity you cannot control the interest that the hire-purchase companies are charging.

Mr. FLETCHER: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Walsh: My word it has—12 per cent.!

Mr. FLETCHER: Some of the records of the hon. member's day would show that there were side-issues and problems like that but they were not attended to. In this case we have to do a job if we can, and it is worth doing. The rewards are worth a bit of effort and some risk. After all, nothing was ever achieved without a little risk. We must have a go, in any case, and one of the conditions we are most reluctantly imposing is that they have some money of their own. That sounds a little harsh and no doubt we will hear some mealy-mouthed guff about it—about keeping the battler out, and keeping out the good hard-working, honest type. I do not want to keep any out but it is no good letting them in when they will not have a chance. We have to say that they must have a certain amount of money to give them a chance.

We know that giving a right of appeal to men thrown out of a ballot will cause a lot of trouble. Indeed, that is why the Labour Party did not include provision for it. It has been a matter of heart-burning, which we deplore. We think the result will be worth the trouble, and we intend to give it a go.

The hon. member mentioned the reduction of area allowed to be held in the West from 60,000 acres to 45,000 acres. I remind him that this is over-ridden in a case where the land can be proved not to be a living area or substantially more than a living area. That is the limit, but if people can show that, though it is 50,000 acres, it is still not a living area, or more than a living area, or substantially more, we are taking the right to over-ride that limit. I think that that is a reasonable and practical way of approaching it.

With regard to prickly-pear, I mentioned that perpetual lease conditions will be carried on. They will become ordinary perpetual leases. They are at the moment at a rental of 1½ per cent. I think I may have said 3 per cent.

Mr. Muller: You said ½d.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is what it may be now if there has not been a revaluation. They were originally leased for a 30-year period, without re-appraisal. They are now on the basis of a 10-year re-appraisal, at 1½ per cent. of the unimproved capital value.

Regarding additional areas, I know that there has been a pretty dismal record, but the dismal part was not our doing. This has not been easy. We have done it in a certain few cases where it was worth doing.

Resumptions of brigalow areas will be on exactly the same basis as has always been the case. Actually, in most cases they will not be resumptions but surrenders of leases in return for living areas. Those with lengthy periods of their leases remaining will receive more than living areas to compensate them. If it is necessary to resume, the ordinary resumption procedure will be followed, but I do not expect there will be any compulsory resumptions.

I thank hon. members for their helpful remarks in an obvious attempt to assist me, and I commend the Bill to the Committee.

Motion (Mr. Fletcher) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

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

The House adjourned at 5.39 p.m.