Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 1962

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Mr. ACTING SPEAKER (The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield) took the chair at 11 a.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr. Acting Speaker:—

Charitable Funds Act Amendment Bill.

Co-operative Housing Societies Acts Amendment Bill.

Commonwealth and State (Gladstone Coal Loading Works) Agreement Bill.

QUEENSLAND MARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

RESERVATION FOR ROYAL ASSENT

Mr. ACTING SPEAKER reported receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor intimating that this Bill had been reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure.

QUESTIONS

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR NURSES

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

"(1) Has he read the statement in 'The Sunday Mail', October 7, made by the Secretary of the Queensland Branch of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation expressing concern at the low minimum educational requirement for entry into the nursing profession?"

"(2) Is he concerned with the statement made by a nursing tutor at one Brisbane Hospital, who said she could understand how some nurses would find the questions on the examination papers difficult?"

"(3) Does he agree with the opinion expressed by a nursing tutor that the examination papers are set to favour girls who have educational qualifications up to matriculation standard?"

"(4) Will he consider the suggestion made by the same tutor that nurses should be given time off from their duties for study and examinations on the same conditions as apply to other trade apprentices?"

"(5) What are his reasons for rejecting the Nurses' Federation proposed new Act which provided for a registration board with a majority of nursing representation and also contained a provision for the training and control of assistants in nursing and mother-craft nurses?"

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

"(1to 5) The educational standard prescribed under the Nurses' and Masseurs' Registration Act is a minimum. There are, of course, no obstacles in the way of any matron giving preference to applicants of a higher educational standard. Of the 479 Student Nurses at the Princess Alexandra Hospital 407 have reached Junior University standard or higher. Of the balance, thirty-two were Sub-Junior standard and twenty were successful in Scholarship. Again, in the Toowomba Hospital of the 115 Student Nurses, 103 reached Junior University standard or higher, seven Sub-Junior standard and five Eighth Grade. It is not unusual from time to time for concern to be expressed by people closely interested in any group who have sat for an examination regarding the questions in the Examination Paper. It may be accepted that every examination gives rise to some complaint of this nature, but until the results of the particular examination are released, it is impossible for anyone to say that the questions will, in fact, cause a higher failure rate. When comparing the conditions pertaining to Trainee Nurses with the conditions of other apprentices, it must be remembered that Trainee Nurses 'live in', and therefore have no travelling time ordinarily in attending lectures. On the other hand, apprentices are required to travel to and from Technical Colleges. The Royal Australian Nursing Federation which, by the way, is a registered Industrial Union, recently submitted a Draft Bill containing somewhat revolutionary features and covering the whole field of nursing. It would be completely unrealistic for anyone to expect such a document to be accepted in toto without careful and detailed consideration. The Federation included in its proposals provisions regarding training and control of Assistants in Nursing, but during my recent visit overseas it was plain to see that nowhere in the world was there unanimity on this question. It is not correct to claim that I rejected the Nurses Federation's proposals as I informed them that they could bring the matter up again in, say, June next year when legislation to be submitted to the new Session of Parliament would be prepared."

MOUNT ISA RAILWAY PROJECT FUND

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) asked the Premier—

"(1) What payment was received by the Mount Isa Railway Project Fund from the Railway Department for the purchasing of rolling stock and/or equipment during last financial year?"

"(2) Will he give details of the rolling stock and/or equipment that was purchased from the fund?"

"(3) Was this payment a reimbursement of money spent by the fund or was it an advance payment?"

"(4) If it were a reimbursement, why was the fund charged with the amount before claiming on the Railway Department?"

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

"(1) £400,151."

"(2) Conversion of fifty 'W' to 'WR' wagons, £14,393; construction of ten 'BBV' vans, £86,980; construction of 200 'VTX' wagons, £298,778."

"(3) Reimbursement of a charge originally borne by the Mount Isa Railway Project Fund."

"(4) The cost of the wagons was paid from Project funds, as they were required for use in carrying out the works of the Project. As the Commissioner for Railways was imposing charges for the use of the wagons, it was decided to transfer the cost thereof from the Project Fund to the Railway Loan Fund Allocation. In addition to the lump sum credit in respect of the foregoing wagons, the Railway Department pays an annual charge of £40,300, based on amortisation of principal and interest over twenty years, in respect of five diesel locomotives purchased in accordance with the agreement but available to the Department to earn freight, prior to the completion of the project."

Traffic Lights at Wynnum Road, Cannon Hill

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) asked the Minister for Labour and Industry—

"As his Government is to install twenty actuated lights at school crossings in this financial year and, because Wynnum Road, Cannon Hill, is one of the heaviest traffic roads in Brisbane, will he, in order to protect the lives of the great number of children attending the State and Convent schools at Cannon Hill, who cross Wynnum Road going to and from school and to a shop opposite the State school, have installed in this financial year a set of actuated lights in Wynnum Road near the Cannon Hill State School?"

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

"As I mentioned in the House when announcing this very progressive step by the Government in the interests of road safety and as has been publicised in the Press, those desiring to make representations for pedestrian actuated lights to be installed at school crossings should make their representations to the Traffic Engineer, and in this regard I would mention that at least 100 schools are under investigation by the Traffic Engineer for the installation of such lights. The Honourable Member should arrange for the appropriate organisations or authorities to make applications direct to the Traffic Engineer on this matter in accordance with the announced procedure to be followed in such cases. The representations of the Honourable Member have been noted and they will receive equal consideration in conjunction with all of the other some 100 schools mentioned, and should it be considered that the circumstances concerning the Cannon Hill schools are such as warrant the installation of such lights, they will be installed. At this juncture, however, I am unable to say whether lights will or will not be installed at this crossing, as any decision must, of course, depend upon the investigation and report of the Traffic Engineer."

Train Crews, Railway Department

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Transport—

"Is it a fact that 200 drivers will retire from the Railway Service over the next three years? If so, will necessary replacements be available to maintain train crews at required strength?"

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

"No."

Diesel Locomotive Weights

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Is it a fact that a diesel engine recently delivered to the Railway Department exceeded the allowable overall axle-load by almost four tons? If so, who was responsible for this error?"

"(2) Will the correction of this engine weight cause the Department any financial responsibility?"

"(3) Have any other diesel engines exceeded the allowable overall axle-weight?"

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

"(1) No."

"(2 and 3) See answer to Question (1)."

Railway Employees at Mayne on Saturday Nights

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) asked the Minister for Transport—

"(1) Is it a fact that only one engine crew, comprising a driver, fireman and cleaner, and one office cleaner, are on duty at Mayne for approximately six hours on Saturday night of each week?"

"(2) As a fire could occur when the engine crew on duty is absent on an emergency call and when up to two hundred carriages could be in the carriage

shed, thus involving the Railway Department in tremendous loss and completely disrupting the rail services of the State, dos he not consider it desirable to have more than one train crew on duty at this period?"

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

"(1) No."

"(2) See answer to Question (1)."

INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS, TOWNSVILLE CO-OPERATIVE BUILDING SOCIETY

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

"(1) Is he aware that private insurance companies which lend money to the Townsville Co-operative Building Society demand that all borrowers from the Society insure their homes with the relevant lending insurance company and that those who control the society agree to this demand?"

"(2) In view of the fact that such a demand is a form of business blackmail which denies the home-builder the right of free choice of insurance cover for his home, will he advise the House if such is within the law?"

"(3) Do private insurance companies make a similar demand when they lend money to local authorities, hospital boards and other semi-governmental bodies?'"

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

"(1) Only one insurance company has made finance available to a Co-operative Housing Society in Townsville. A condition of this loan is that the Society will insure and keep insured against loss or damage by fire in the full insurable value in some insurance office approved by the Company and in the name of the Company, such of the mortgaged premises as are of an insurable value."

"(2) Model Rule 64 of 'The Co-operative Housing Societies Model Rules Regulations of 1958' provides that every dwelling house and premises mortgaged to a Society must be kept insured against loss or damage by fire and any other cause determined by the Board for such amount as the board may deem necessary and with such insurer as the board determines."

"(3) Most institutional lenders show a preference in lending to their own clients. If I might add something in general terms, I have always regarded a tendency to 'bite the hand that feeds' as the greatest folly to which mankind is occasionally subject. There is no obligation on insurance companies to support co-operative housing. They are most likely to do so where there is a certain prospect of reciprocal business. The premiums are at tariff rates except with the State Government Insurance Office, which, incidentally, looks for the same tied insurance. If I were to enforce a wider choice of insurer the building society movement would unquestionably be forced to operate in a much narrower field of money support."

EMPLOYEES ON IRRIGATION PROJECTS, MAREEBA DISTRICT

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon), for **Mr. ADAIR** (Cook), asked the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation—

"Owing to the concern expressed by employees working on the Irrigation and Water Supply projects in Mareeba and district at the possibility of retrenchment of staff in the near future, will he advise what the position is in respect of this matter?"

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

"It has been necessary to limit the expenditure on the Mareeba-Dimbulah Project in 1962-1963 to £505,000 compared with an expenditure of £810,000 for 1961-1962. This is because of the necessity for increasing the allocation to Borumba Dam which is in its peak year by £220,000. Completion of a pipeline contract, non-replacement of personnel leaving the job of their own accord, and retrenchments have reduced the numbers to approximately 220 at present. Further reduction to about 160 will be necessary by the beginning of 1963. These numbers include employment in a pipe manufacturing works in Mareeba which has large contracts for pipes for the channel system."

ACTIVITIES OF MACKAY DISTRICT ABATTOIR BOARD

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—

"(1) Will he make a statement on the activities of the Mackay Abattoirs Board since its creation in 1952 in connection with the proposal to erect an abattoir or central killing works in Mackay?"

"(2) Can he advance reasons as to why the plan and specifications for the erection of the works are not yet completed?"

"(3) Is he satisfied that the board has done all that could have been done to have these works operating, seeing that the board has been in existence for ten years?"

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani—Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity), for **Hon. O. O. MADSEN** (Warwick), replied—

"(1) The Mackay District Abattoir Board was formed in May, 1952, following which a careful and detailed investigation of possible sites for a works was undertaken.

In 1955, the Bakers Creek site was finally selected as the most suitable. The original intention was to build a works for local requirements only, but representations were made by various bodies for the provision of export facilities as well and consideration of the arguments advanced in favour of the larger works caused considerable delay. In 1957, it was decided that the Board should refrain from committing itself further until the question of export was resolved. In June, 1958, the Queensland Meat Industry Board recommended that provision should be made for export killing. In September, 1958, Cabinet approved of the establishment of an abattoir, for local plus limited export slaughter, and that allowance be made for future expansion. At this time, a graziers co-operative put forward a proposition that it would provide cold storage facilities. This proposition was subsequently withdrawn. During 1959 and 1960, a local meat export company made proposals that the company either build an abattoir at Mackay or negotiate a lease of any works constructed by the Board. These proposals caused further unavoidable delay and were concluded without any final agreement being reached. The Board then arranged for plans and specifications to be drawn up by a southern abattoir consultant firm. The formal report of the Board to me as Minister administering the Abattoirs Acts, was received in October, 1961. The following month Cabinet decided to reaffirm its decision of September, 1958 to which I have referred and also to have the proposal examined by the Advisory Committee on the Production, Processing and Marketing of Beef and the Development and Disposition of Abattoirs in Queensland. The Committee after investigation strongly supported the erection of an export works. In January, 1962, Cabinet considered the Committee's recommendation and approved of the report of the Board for the construction of a District Abattoir at Mackay."

"(2) Original planning was for a single-storied abattoir for local kill only. This had to be modified when the decision was made and approval given for export slaughtering. The Board employed a well-known firm of southern consultants to prepare plans and specifications, which were supplied in mid-1961. A local engineering firm was engaged to supervise the construction of the project. The latter firm reported to the Board a number of shortcomings in the plans and specifications supplied, and as a consequence several meetings with the consultant firm were necessary to endeavour to bring the documents to a satisfactory state for the calling of tenders. These meetings were satisfactory to a degree only, and in order to avoid further cost and delay, the Board authorised the local engineering firm to act as full consultants and to modify the plans and specifications where necessary. The modifications are expected to be finalised in the near future and tenders will then be called."

"(3) I feel that the Board has been unfortunate in encountering so many problems since its creation, but I believe it has done its duty by carefully considering all of the facets pertaining to the establishment of a District Abattoir."

Off-course Totalisator

Mr. DEWAR (Wavell), without notice, asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

"Has his attention been drawn to an article which appeared in the 'Sunday Truth' newspaper last Sunday headed 'Monster Let Loose on State'?"

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

"Yes. The statement that the off-course totalisator in Queensland will be such as has never been known in Australia before is utterly untrue. An off-course totalisator has been operating in Victoria since March, 1961, and in Western Australia, after seven years of a system of off-course bookmakers, a totalisator has also been established. Tasmania has had licensed off-course bookmakers since 1932.

"I have no evidence that the average Queenslander is less able to contain his betting operations to a temperate magnitude than citizens in other States and, unless such evidence is produced, I could not agree that the off-course totalisator in this State will give rise to problems which have not arisen in the other States.

"A study of the 1962-1963 Budget shows that Queensland's revenues from racing will rise to an estimated 16s. 9d. per capita; Victoria expects £1 1s. 11d., and Western Australia for last year received £1 4s. The revenue of the New South Wales Government from racing and poker machines will be £1 9s. 1d. per capita, or almost double the estimated Queensland revenue.

"The T.A.B. system is not necessarily an increased gambling facility. It replaces what was known to have been an extensive illicit system. It is true that it is now legally conducted and open to the public gaze. However, it has built into it a number of limiting features. It denies the use of credit for betting; to take advantage of it the public must either deposit a sum of money in advance of the time of making their bets or offer cash over the counter. One of the worst evils of betting has been credit betting, which encourages people to commit themselves beyond their means, and which has led to consequential troubles such as robbery and embezzlement, and great family hardship.

"A study of the T.A.B. operations to date in comparison with the odds offered by on-course bookmakers offers convincing

proof that the T.A.B. is providing at the one time a superior return to the punter, a handsome return to the race clubs, and a considerable revenue to the Crown. In comparison with the starting-price odds which were offered by the illicit operator, the T.A.B. return is infinitely better, and the public has a dependable enforceable contract. It has already reduced law-breaking. The public, the race clubs and the Crown are now sharing what previously went to enrich the illegal bookmaker.

"Our racing revenue is only petty cash compared with what the Labour Government in New South Wales expects to derive this year from gambling, the major part of which will come from the 'one-arm bandits'. If the term 'gambling monster' is applied to the T.A.B., I do not know what words exist in the English language to describe the poker machine, to which this Government remains implacably opposed."

PAPERS

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

Report of the Comptroller-General of Prisons for the year 1961-1962.

Report of the Department of Harbours and Marine for the year 1961-1962.

Report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year 1961-1962.

Report of the State Electricity Commission of Queensland for the year 1961-1962.

Report of the Queensland Radium Institute for the year 1961-1962.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

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

Regulations under the Workers' Compensation Acts, 1916 to 1961.

Regulations under the State Housing Acts, 1945 to 1962.

Order in Council under the State Housing Acts, 1945 to 1962.

Order in Council under the Irrigation Acts, 1922 to 1961

LAND BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (11.29 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

It is almost five weeks since the Bill was introduced and I feel confident that, in the intervening period, although hon. members opposite may not agree with all the principles contained in the Bill, all will have come to realise the tremendous advantages of a single code from the point of view of clarity and certainty over the confusing state of affairs existing today. To find out what the law is on any point, it is necessary to delve into the pages of no fewer than 79 different Acts.

I am confident that, in their study of the Bill, hon. members will have appreciated its logical and orderly presentation.

The objective is a simple one. Firstly, matters pertaining to administration are dealt with, and then, using a separate part for each class of tenure, the various tenures are established, and the terms and conditions applicable to each are clearly set out. In Part X the various ancillary provisions common to the respective tenures are grouped under various appropriate headings. A further part is then used for "grants, reserves, and reservations for public purposes." Another part deals with "roads," and another with "general" matters.

The Bill is a document in which one can now easily find one's way around. It will be a milestone in our land laws, ranging in importance with its five predecessors which consolidated the land laws of their relevant times, clearing away all the dead wood and confusion arising from a multiplicity of Acts, and giving us a very solid foundation, by virtue of its clarity and compactness, on which to base the further development of the land laws in our time, as social and economic circumstances dictate.

Ease of reference has been attained and clarity of expression will facilitate administration, while lessees and the public at large will be in a position to understand more readily the land laws. Indeed, from some of the remarks that I have heard and some statements to which my attention has been drawn, I have come to the conclusion that the Bill has already commenced to do its job so well that many people are realising for the first time just what is contained in our land laws. Many have referred to various provisions, asking, "Why did you insert that in the law?" and have been greatly surprised that it has been part of the law since 1910, or, in some cases, even earlier than that.

I have been surprised, too, at some of the interpretations—or, rather, misinterpretations—that have been placed on some of the clauses. I feel that I should devote a part of my time in this speech to referring to these and explaining them to allay any fears or worries that may have been engendered in the minds of those who read or heard them.

Perhaps the most contentious, or most discussed matter, relates to the definition of a living area. It is attacked more for what it does not say than for what it says. According to an article by a "special correspondent" in "Country Life" of 20 September, 1962, the new definition of a "living area"

is the most "contentious feature" of the Bill. According to this correspondent, the definition allegedly fails on two main issues—

(a) It savours of a grazing peasantry, in that the selector and his family will be required to emulate the dairy-farmer who, the correspondent states, with his wife and family, is required to work his land seven days a week and, in addition, must rely on Government bounty; and

(b) It fails to take into account the entry of Britain into the European Common Market.

This criticism is, of course, the most arrant nonsense. A most distorted interpretation has been placed upon the definition, and false premises have been adopted by the correspondent to attack the Government. No self-respecting and responsible Government, particularly one of the calibre of the present Government, which has done so much for the man on the land since it assumed office and whose good faith is further demonstrated over and over again by the provisions of this Bill, would introduce legislation that would lead to a "grazing peasantry".

The 1927 definition of a living area, the first legal definition attempted in Queensland's land laws, was introduced following the Payne Report of that year. It was confined to land suitable for grazing. It is interesting to note that Sir William Payne, the author of the definition, saw no good reason then, nor did he see any reason in 1959, why the herd or flock sizes, which comprise a living area unit for the various districts, should be written into the law.

These are matters for administrative determination from time to time, depending on the economy or the economic outlook at the relevant time of determination. After all, it is the policy of the Government of the day in respect to living-area standards that really matters. They have to decide what are reasonable and economic units into which various types of primary-producing lands can be subdivided, and it is their responsibility in their own time. To incorporate in legislation specific living-area units for each primary industry in every district of the State would lead to an undesirable rigidity, in that parliamentary approval would have to be obtained for any alteration to meet the circumstances of the relevant time. Any definition of a living area must necessarily be in general terms and provide the essential principles or factors which the administration is required to follow and apply.

Great Britain is not yet a member of the European Common Market. If and when she becomes a member, the effects upon our primary industries will automatically be taken into account in determining living-area standards to the extent that any such entry affects the income derivable from the primary products concerned.

It would be impracticable to attempt to incorporate in the definition of a living area every single factor that should be taken into account, including all the possible contingencies, practical, political, or economic. The definition of a living area contained in the Bill was compiled by the committee charged to consolidate the Acts and was based almost exclusively on the 1927 definition. In the opinion of the committee, all the essential features of the earlier definition have been incorporated in the proposed definition, leaving out words and phrases of the old definition which legally amounted to no more than mere platitudes and padding. It was considered appropriate and necessary in the consolidated Bill to extend the definition of a living area to cover all primary industries—hon. members will remember that the old definition referred only to grazing—and that the 1927 definition could advantageously be summarised to be inserted more conveniently in the definition section of the Bill.

A close study of the two definitions will reveal to any fair-minded and clear-thinking person that no vital principles of the 1927 definition have been omitted. Breaking the proposed definition into component parts, it will be seen that the area envisaged as a living area must be sufficient to enable the lessee to derive from the working of the land an income adequate to—

(a) Ensure a reasonable standard of living for himself, his wife, and infant children;

(b) Provide a reserve with which to meet adverse seasons;

(c) Provide the cost of developing and maintaining the land at a high rate of production throughout average seasons.

Words such as "without the necessity to seek assistance from the Government", "making necessary working improvements on the holding without over-capitalising it", and "a sound economic proposition", which are used in the old Act, are inescapably implied in the present definition because it is specifically stated that the income to be derived from the land must be adequate to cover the three matters enumerated previously. All the principles and features of the old definition are summarised either expressly or by clear implication in the new definition.

The suggestion that the definition requires the selector and his wife and family to actually toil and labour on the holding seven days a week is a complete distortion of logical meaning. The working of the land does not mean only the actual physical labour necessary to erect and maintain improvements, and so on. The term "working" in association with land has connotations other than physical work. Its usual and

normal meaning implies the carrying out of the various activities that are necessary to bring the land into production and maintain it in production. No one man and his family could possibly attend to all such matters, and it is therefore inherent in the definition that the employment of labour will be necessary. The 1927 definition made no specific mention of the employment of labour, and no case is on record of the administration in the intervening period modelling its standards on the basis of a selector being required to slave seven days a week and personally provide all the labour essential to work his property.

The new definition introduces, "The wife and infant children of a selector." Any standard of living area must be based on the family-unit concept. Such is the case in the basic wage determination. Whether a selector is single or married, the yardstick must be uniform. The term "infant children" is used for two different reasons—

(a) To stress that the living area must support one family and not a father, his wife, his adult sons and their respective families;

(b) To denote a standard to enable the selector to meet the expense of educating his children and helping them until they reach their majority.

In New South Wales, a living-area standard is defined thus—

"An area which when used for the purpose for which it is reasonably fitted, would be sufficient for the maintenance in average seasons and circumstances of an average family."

This definition has proved satisfactory in the administration of the Crown lands in New South Wales, but the committee felt, especially having regard to the 1927 definition of a living area, that the administration in Queensland should be given more specific directions than those contained in the New South Wales definition. A definition cannot contain all the hopes and aspirations of the man on the land. A definition should be concise and to the point. Matters such as superannuation funds, and number of employees and their accommodation, are too detailed to be mentioned and must, of necessity, be implied in the phrase, "a reasonable standard of living."

The problem of determining unit areas to conform to the definition is an administrative one of a complex but not insuperable nature. It has been successfully tackled by previous and present administrations and there is no reason why it cannot just as successfully be tackled by future administrations applying the principles laid down in the definition contained in the Bill.

In regard to reduction in maximum area for grazing selection tenure from 60,000 to 45,000 acres, this amendment is not to be construed as meaning that the lessees of the State's arid and remoter regions will have their areas reduced to 45,000 acres, which would mean that they may be denied the right to aggregate a living area in those areas, without considering the poor quality of the land. Nothing is further from the truth than that.

Someone has said that he would not take as a free gift 100,000 acres in the Boulia district, and it is now being read into the Bill that aggregations under grazing selection tenure in excess of 45,000 acres will not be permitted in that district. That is nonsense.

The Bill, unlike the present Act, which limited aggregations of grazing selections not only in the Boulia district but also in any other part of the State to 60,000 acres will, in the case of inferior or light-carrying land, allow an aggregation of any number of selections or preferential pastoral holdings up to any area, even 100,000 acres or more, providing the aggregated area does not substantially exceed a living area.

Mr. Duggan: If you are permitted to remain the Government for long enough, the aggregation of the whole State will be made possible.

Mr. FLETCHER: The living area still stands. I refer specificially to Clause 287. The effect of this clause has, I feel, not been clearly understood. It waves aside every rental and area disqualification imposed by the Bill and allows aggregations, providing they do not substantially exceed a living area. The whole point in all this is that in very poor areas 60,000 acres may not be a reasonable area because of the quality of the land. A more elastic provision is made which will allow men to aggregate up to a reasonable living area standard. This will work in this way. If a person has a selection that is not a living area it will be contrary to the spirit of the Bill not to allow him to purchase another holding to bring him up to or above a living area, provided that the total areas do not substantially exceed such a living area. It should, therefore, be apparent that the truth is that lessees in the arid and remoter areas of the State stand to gain rather than to be disadvantaged by the new provision.

The real object of the clause is aimed at reducing and preventing aggregations of good-quality land containing substantially more than a living area. Although 30,000 acres is the limit of aggregations for selections with first-period rents totalling more than £600, some of these rents were fixed up to 30 years ago, and it is aggregations of selections with first-period rents determined 15 or more years ago which will be most affected by the amendment, but only when the present lessees come to sell.

The availability of new lands for settlement is limited, and many new settlers must necessarily be of the class who can purchase grazing selections from present

holders. The new maximum area will ensure a gradual break-up of some of the larger aggregations when they come on the market, thus making more land available to more people.

Much has also been said about 45,000 acres not being a living area for country capable of carrying at a rate of 1 sheep to 6 acres or worse. In point of fact, there are only 84 grazing selections of more than 45,000 acres in the State. The holders of these are specifically saved from the operation of the new maximum. They may also take new leases of their selections. They will be able to dispose of them as one unit; there is no provision in the Bill requiring them first to subdivide into two portions, one of which will be 45,000 acres, before they can sell.

It is the intention to use the tenure of preferential pastoral holding for the grazing lands on the fringe of the more closely-settled areas, and to use the tenure of grazing selection for the grazing lands of the more closely-settled districts. However, if the occasion warrants that the Minister should open a grazing selection in excess of 45,000 acres, the Bill still enables him to do so as long as the area does not exceed the maximum of 60,000 acres.

The maximum milage applicable to preferential pastoral holding tenure has been made flexible and may be of any area so as to ensure that any particular preferential pastoral holding contains a living area. When considering aggregations, it should be kept in mind that in Queensland, unlike in New South Wales and Victoria, the area held by a wife is not counted against that held by a husband, and vice versa. Under the present Bill it is still possible for a husband and wife to aggregate in their individual names a maximum area of 45,000 acres each of the better-quality lands, making a total of 90,000 acres. If this is not a living area, each is able, by virtue of Clause 287, to aggregate in their individual names any area, as long as it does not substantially exceed a living area. That is to cope with the poor quality of some of our western lands. I do not think that the new provisions are any way harsh, and feel that satisfactory safeguards have been written into the law to meet any special cases that may arise.

There have been inquiries as to why a maximum milage has been imposed on preferential pastoral holdings. This is nothing new, the maximum milage being one of the distinguishing features of this tenure when it was introduced in 1916. Under the present law, there was a doubt as to how long the maximum milage applied. Some administrations considered that it applied during the whole term of the preferential pastoral holding, others that it applied only up to and including the date of acceptance of an application for the land by the Land Commissioner.

Terms and conditions applicable to preferential pastoral holding tenure are akin to those applicable to grazing selections. Preferential pastoral holdings are, in point of fact, only large grazing selections. However, preferential pastoral holdings may be held by more than two persons and the land comprised therein need not be surveyed before occupation. It is intended to adopt the tenure of preferential pastoral holding in areas adjoining the closely-settled districts and between such latter districts and the country where pastoral lease is the most appropriate tenure.

Preferential pastoral holdings will be made available in living-area units and, therefore, just as in the case of grazing selections, it is essential in view of the limited amount of land available to place a limit on the area that may be aggregated.

The provisions of the Bill governing the maximum milage for preferential pastoral holdings has been designedly made flexible, and it has been made clear that they apply throughout the whole term of the lease. If the land contained in the preferential pastoral holding concerned has been made available by an opening notification, this notification will state the maximum milage applicable. Such maximum milage is usually the area of the preferential pastoral holding in question and varies according to the amount of land, having regard to the quality thereof, which is required to constitute a living area.

If the preferential pastoral holding has been issued as a result of a renewal of lease, there would be no opening notification, and in this case a maximum milage of 94 square miles (62,000 acres) applies unless the area of the preferential pastoral holding is greater than this area, in which event the area of the preferential pastoral holding in question becomes the maximum milage.

By virtue of this flexibility, it is ensured that persons can aggregate a living area under preferential pastoral holding tenure. In any event, the provisions of Clause 287 apply and if, in fact, any area declared by opening notification as the maximum milage applicable has been proved not to be a living area, a person may acquire a greater area provided the aggregate does not substantially exceed a living area.

Mr. Hilton: How do you visualise this aggregation taking place?

Mr. FLETCHER: By purchase. That is the only way it could be done.

Mr. Hilton: That is my point. It means quite a lot of purchasing and arranging between the lessees to get a living area.

Mr. FLETCHER: This Bill makes it possible to do that. Under the present Act, if you had a preferential pastoral holding which was substandard but up to the 92-square-miles limitation you could not buy any more aggregation, because the Act limited your acreage or milage. If you can prove

that the original holding was substandard or was not a living area, it is possible to buy the aggregation to make it such.

Mr. Hilton: If somebody else will sell.

Mr. FLETCHER: Regarding freeholding of grazing selections of 10,000 acres and less, this matter concerns the Opposition very closely because freeholding is not part of its policy. There naturally has been disappointment among landholders that the upward limit of freeholding has been placed at 10,000 acres. However, we as a Government have a responsibility to the public generally as custodians of a vast estate of publicly-owned land. As I said in my introductory speech, we must approach this matter with the utmost caution. We have gone 100 per cent. farther than Sir William Payne recommended in 1959 when he reported that, in his opinion, 5,000 acres was a reasonably-sized area for permanent tenure.

When better communications afford improved access to markets and availability of material for carrying out improvements, many areas will come to contain more than a living area and, if these are presently placed under permanent tenure at too early a stage in their development, future generations of young land men would not have the closer settlement opportunity they enjoy under our present system.

Whilst I am sympathetic with the case of the holdings with areas greater than 10,000 acres, particularly those containing inferior-quality land, I cannot too strongly emphasise that there must be a cautious approach to the granting of permanent tenure.

We have come a long way since 1957, and I think the Government should be judged on what it has done and be given credit for caution in this development in the direction of security of tenure for landholders. There are undoubtedly those on the benches opposite who accuse us of giving away the Crown estate. Here they should reflect that when they were the Government they did not hesitate to give permanent tenure to areas of 2,560 acres and under, and in the special cases of the pear lands extended this limit to upwards of 5,000 acres, with odd cases of up to 11,000 acres. That perpetual lease gives permanently alienated tenure.

Under this Bill the principle remains, as in the present law, that, within the 10,000-acre limitation, a living-area unit only may be converted to permanent tenure (freehold or perpetual lease). This is no reckless disposal of the State's assets to the detriment of future generations and prejudicial to their opportunity of obtaining free land for settlement. Interests of closer settlement are preserved, for, if a 10,000-acre block comprised two living areas, the present lessee would not be able to obtain permanent tenure. If such a block contains less than two living areas but more than one, it becomes a matter of whether the land surplus to one living area is so situated in relation to other lands that it can be designed conjointly with such lands into new selections. If this is so, a lessee would not be given permanent tenure over more than a living area.

Mr. Hilton: If it is opened at 10,000 acres, that argument does not apply. If it is opened on a freehold basis as a block of 10,000 acres, what is the position?

Mr. FLETCHER: The argument remains good. If it is more than a living area—if it is two living areas—the lessee is able to freehold only one of them. If in fact the block of 10,000 acres is only a living area as at this moment, of course the lessee will be able to freehold the lot.

Mr. Hilton: I am referring to future openings of 10,000 acres. Such a block may comprise two or three living areas.

Mr. FLETCHER: It could in the long run. We think we are venturing only into the areas that cannot be further improved very dramatically by putting on the limitation we are imposing.

Mr. Burrows: But why all this humbug when you make your land available to companies under those terms?

Mr. FLETCHER: As far as I know, we have not made the land available to companies.

Mr. Dufficy: But there is provision in the Bill to do so. What about the brigalow leases?

Mr. FLETCHER: Brigalow leases are not available to companies.

Mr. Dufficy: Oh, yes they are.

Mr. FLETCHER: Perhaps the hon. member will be more specific and let us know exactly what he is talking about when we consider the Bill in more detail, or perhaps he will specify the particular aspect he is talking about when he rises to speak in this debate.

Mr. Dufficy: I am talking about brigalow leases, and I will give details later.

Mr. FLETCHER: Recognising that a person naturally desires to obtain a permanent tenure, rather than refuse applications from lessees of selections of 10,000 acres and less containing land above a living area which can be dealt with separately or in conjunction with other land, we propose to allow such lessees to surrender their existing leases under Division III of Part VI and to receive back a grazing selection or settlement farm lease of the living area and a temporary tenure (probably a special lease) over the remainder of the land for the balance of the unexpired term of the original lease. Those lessees may then proceed to obtain freeholding tenure over the living area and the Crown will receive, in due course, the balance area for new settlement.

Objection has been taken to Clauses 56 (8) and 98 (6) in respect of refusal of applications from persons of bad repute, etc. These clauses provide that the application of a person otherwise qualified to acquire Crown land when opened under selection or pastoral lease tenure may be refused by the Land Commissioner, Committee of Review, or Land Court as the case may be, on the ground that he is an undesirable settler or that acceptance of his application would be prejudicial to settlement in the locality.

It has not been generally realised that these provisions have been law since 1925. Concern has been expressed that they give a land commissioner an undesirable power which he may exercise on the slightest shred of evidence and thereby wrongfully condemn a person's character. The provisions have been very little resorted to—probably no more than three times since they were enacted—but it is considered that they are a desirable safeguard and should be retained.

The clauses contain certain measures of protection within themselves against a frivolous application of the power by a land commissioner. It must be remembered that, when the commissioner considers applications, he constitutes himself a court. He would not be able to refuse an application under these clauses unless he had evidence of some weight, and from some reputable person, as to the applicant's undesirability. The commissioner is specifically required to hear the applicant concerned before he refuses his application and, by virtue of the requirement that the decision must be pronounced in open court, the applicant is given a right of appeal to the Land Court and even further.

It is also to be noted that complaints as to an applicant's undesirability may be brought by any settler in the locality concerned. The provision is designed to meet such cases as notorious cattle duffers, criminals, and inebriates, who are otherwise qualified, seeking to acquire land.

Mr. Burrows: You are going to reward the informer.

Mr. FLETCHER: Labour introduced it in 1925. That is an unwarranted assumption; there is no warrant at all for such an interjection.

As a clause of last resort in extreme cases, and in view of the protective measures as to its application that it contains, it is felt that there is nothing sinister or threatening in its inclusion in the Bill.

Clause 91 (3) is another clause that perhaps warrants some explanation. It reads—

> "Proof that the stock of any person other than the lessee are ordinarily depastured on a selection shall be prima facie evidence that the lessee is a trustee of the selection for the owner of the stock."

Since the Land Act of 1884, the cornerstone of this State's land laws has been personal ownership of selections. The lessee must hold the land and use it for his own use and benefit and not as a trustee, agent, or servant of another person. These provisions are what I like to refer to as the "owner-driver" provisions of the Act. I am firmly convinced that individual ownership, with its attendant pride and interest in developing and working one's land, taking a personal interest in the standard of one's flocks and herds, and doing one's part to foster and develop and improve the social and economic life of the community that serves one's particular area, is in the best interests of the political and economic life of this great State, and that, generally speaking, private ownership of living-area size has, and will, achieve much more for this State and the various districts than company ownership ever did or could.

When closely examined, it will be seen that the clause in question provides for a method of proving the existence of a fraud under the Act in that if the Crown can prove that stock belonging to some person other than the lessee are ordinarily depastured on the selection—I stress the word "ordinarily", for it does not mean occasionally or for a short period of time—as a matter of law the clause presumes that the lessee holds the selection in trust for the person who owns the stock.

Fraud is very difficult to prove. This clause merely gives a starting point to the Crown if it can prove that stock belonging to someone else had for some time been running on the selection. It changes—briefly, perhaps—the onus of proving the charge and places it on the lessee to refute that a trust relationship does exist between him and the owner of the stock.

To say that this clause prevents a son or daughter occasionally running a few head of stock on a father's selection is distorting its meaning in the extreme. If—and it is a big "if", for I know of no case where the department has ever done such a thing—a father were cited because his son ran a few head of stock on the selection, the clause merely casts on the father an onus to disprove that a trust relationship exists between him and his son in the running of the selection. If the father is bona fide, this should be easy to do. It will be no impediment to the honest man.

Clause 234 requires the furnishing of information and making of returns. Some people fear this clause as a sinister object aimed at making them reveal all aspects of their financial positions to the department. As a general rule, lessees co-operate wholeheartedly with Crown officers and thus enable them to carry out expeditiously their various responsibilities and duties under the law. Very occasionally exceptions occur, and it is to cover such cases that this clause has been retained in the law. We think that it is necessary. It is not intended to be used in a bureaucratic manner or to pry into the private affairs of lessees but, if the information mentioned therein were not made available for the purpose of the Act,

Crown officers would not be able to perform their duties. It is therefore desirable to have some legal provision to which to resort, if necessary, to obtain the information. In most cases of refusal to supply information, a mere reference to the legal provision should suffice. There is no record of this clause being invoked, and the lessees's interests are protected in that the information can be obtained only if required for the purposes of the Act. The Valuation of Land Act has a somewhat similar provision enabling the Valuer-General to require the furnishing of returns or the supplying of information required for the purposes of that Act.

I now turn to the relaxation of the re-imposition of personal residence on transfer. The Bill exempts grazing homesteads and settlement farm leases from the re-imposition of the condition of personal residence upon transfer of these tenures after the expiration of the first seven years of the term. Our experience was that in many instances transferees who had to undertake personal residence on transfer found that there was no homestead, or sometimes only a hut, on the particular selection and that often the grazing homestead concerned was below living-area standard. When we looked into the position, we found that personal residence was re-imposed on only those grazing homesteads that had been opened as new blocks since 1 January, 1917, and on any renewals of such leases. In effect, in round figures, of the 4,400 grazing homesteads current in the registers of the department, only about 2,000 were subject to the re-imposition of the condition of personal residence on transfer.

It is evident from these statistics that the alleged results of enforcing residence were not being achieved by the re-imposing of the condition. At first it was considered that the law should be amended to provide that the condition of personal residence should be re-imposed on transfer in all instances. However, as I have pointed out already, this would operate smoothly only if it could be assumed that all grazing homesteads constituted a living area. Unfortunately, this is not so, as in earlier days the mode of selection of grazing selections was that a block was made available for an initial period of only 56 days and, if not taken up, was then available as a grazing farm. It cannot be gainsaid that the condition of occupation will just as effectively ensure the maintenance of homesteads and rural population as the condition of personal residence. Pursuant to condition of occupation, either the selector or his registered bailiff must reside on the land. It cannot be left unoccupied.

If the re-imposition of the condition of personal residence is regarded as a measure preventing undue aggregation, it is contended that the provision of the Bill limiting to 45,000 acres the aggregation of grazing selections of living-area size will control this aspect far more effectively than the re-imposition of a condition of personal residence. It was decided, therefore, to take what we regard as a rational step and make the condition of occupation apply uniformly to all selection tenures throughout the term of the lease other than in the case of new selections made available for the first time by the Crown, when the applicant, as a measure of his bona fides, is required to undertake the condition of personal residence for a uniform initial period of seven years.

The current initial period of five years in the case of grazing homesteads and settlement farm leases has been extended in the Bill to seven years because, although only a little longer, it is thought to be a more appropriate period. We think that if a person is prepared to live on his block for seven years the chances are that he is genuine in his desire to hold and develop his block as a bona fide settler rather than an opportunist who would be prepared to wait five years to effect a sale with great profit to himself.

It is also interesting to note that in the land laws of other States, and also, I understand, in the land laws of New Zealand, the concept of personal residence is used only as an initial testing period, after which the condition of occupation which can be performed by a bailiff is applied.

On the subject of timber treatment as an item of improvement payable for by the incoming tenant, one of the amendments in the Bill which I am particularly proud to move is the making of developmental works—that is, invisible improvements—performed in the ten years prior to surrender or expiration of an existing lease an improvement payable for by the incoming tenant. The most frequent application of this clause will be in respect of timber treatment performed in the ten years prior to the surrender or expiry of an existing lease.

During the introductory debate, mention was made—I think by the hon. member for Carnarvon—that it would not be possible to know whether, in fact, the timber treatment had been performed in the ten years prior to expiry or surrender. That remark shows little knowledge of the land laws, for, in the cases of terminable leases to which the clause mostly applies, the lessee cannot destroy trees without first obtaining from the land commissioner a permit which contains a sketch of the area over which the destruction is authorised.

Mr. Hilton: He could get that permit when he first takes up his lease.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is so.

Mr. Hilton: And it could stand for 30 years.

Mr. FLETCHER: No, I think the hon. member is completely misunderstanding this. There will be some record of when the permit was given or when the instruction

was carried out, even to the extent of a sketch plan of the property that contains the relevant area. I have little doubt that the records of the department will disclose what destruction of timber occurred in the ten years prior to expiry or surrender. Moreover, this evidence can be supplemented by the outgoing lessee, whose books would reveal relevant particulars of payments, and so on.

The amendment will overcome that hiatus period of development that occurs towards the expiry of all terminable leases, when a lessee is faced with the problem of whether or not he should undertake timber treatment against the risk of losing the land so treated and receiving no payment whatever for his efforts in that respect.

The Payne Report of 1959 recommended that lessees who had undertaken such treatment in the dying stages of their leases should be sympathetically treated by the administration when the areas of their new leases were under consideration, and that they should be given greater areas than the person who had not undertaken any development in that time. This has not been easy to administer and could result in subdivisional designs being adversely affected. It is doubtful, too, whether it is any real compensation to the lessee concerned.

I feel that the proposed amendment has more to commend it than the present practice. It is as fair as possible to both sides. The outgoing lessee receives back the actual cost of the treatment undertaken by him less any deterioration that may have occurred since the treatment was effected, and in addition, of course, he has had the benefit of greater returns from the increased carrying capacity that resulted from timber treatment of the particular land.

As far as the incoming tenant is concerned, he would have had to pay for the timber treatment if he had undertaken it himself, and, in addition, he has the advantage of receiving cleared country which he can immediately stock to his profit. He has not to wait for nature to complete man's work.

The period of ten years prior to resumption or expiry of the lease has been taken because the cost of any timber treatment done prior to such period should have been, to a great degree anyway, more than recouped by the outgoing lessee. Furthermore, to go back earlier than ten years would be permitting the outgoing lessee, at the expense of new settlement, to make a profit on his outlay by virtue of the rising cost structure. An even balance must be maintained between the interests of the outgoing and the incoming lessee. New settlement could not embrace the payment at present-day prices for all timber treatment on the land, nor should a fair-minded lessee, who has been recouped for his outlay, expect it.

Mention was made of the ten-year purchasing term for auction purchase freehold. With a view to facilitating as much as possible the conversion of leasehold to freeholding tenure and mitigating the impact of present-day values, the repayment period has been extended from 20 to 30 years in respect of selections.

When we looked at the period of repayment applying in respect of allotments, it was felt that the terms offered—10 years for the repayment of the 9/10ths balance, with interest at 5 per cent. based on yearly rests—were sufficiently attractive, and compared more than favourably with terms offered by private enterprise. Apart from the more highly-priced leasehold allotments on the Gold Coast, most of which are used for holiday homes as compared with bona-fide residences, the unimproved value of town lots varies from as low as £30 in the outback towns to about an average of £800 for a residential allotment in the city.

Surely hon. members opposite cannot contend sincerely that the payment of from £2 to £72, plus interest, per annum would be a hardship for a home-seeker.

I think, too, to be strictly fair in the comparison one must remember that in the case of grazing or farming land a man is buying his capital asset, the basic commodity on which he depends for his livelihood, and he is in addition required to outlay money for its intrinsic development apart from structural improvements, including his homestead.

We have found that our practice of making town allotments available under freehold tenure has been very popularly received by all sections of the community, and that has put a brake on the ridiculously high capital values that were bid when leasehold tenure was offered, especially on the Gold Coast.

We are at present having discussions with practical men in the industry and legal representatives whose calling gives them a wide experience in the administration of the land laws. They have already been given an assurance that amendments to meet their suggestions on quite a number of points will be introduced at the Committee stage. So far, no major policy changes have been agreed to but we are continuing to have discussions in much the same manner as that employed by the Minister for Justice when he introduced the Companies Act. Further minor amendments may be the outcome. Indeed, our own officers, in the light of continuing scrutiny of the various provisions of the Act, have suggested minor amendments. These will be introduced, of course, in the Committee stage.

The whole intention of the Government in agreeing to have the Bill lie on the table for a prolonged period was to give an opportunity of detailed examination, something that could not possibly have been undertaken before the framework of the Bill had been decided upon and its actual provisions reduced to print.

This morning I have endeavoured to cover most of the objections that have been publicly raised. I think this is a better way to answer public criticisms than to enter into argument with individual objectors through the pages of the Press.

As is my usual custom, I express the hope that those who have a genuine worry associated with this legislation, or Government policy generally, will come to me or my officers so as to make sure of getting their facts straight before rushing into print in the Press.

Arising out of the prolonged discussions which I and my officers have had with many men, both critical and approving, on the new Bill, I have a strengthened appreciation of what splendid work the committee that has had the great responsibility of preparing the Bill has done. The fact that no serious flaws have been found or real tenable argument advanced in any serious matter, makes me all the more grateful to my lands committee, the officers of my department, and more importantly, the consolidation committee and the Parliamentary Draftsman. The Bill is, in effect, a simplification of our land laws and an up-to-date expression of the Government's land policy. It is with confidence that I leave the second reading of the Bill to the House.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (12.19 p.m.): I think it is agreed on both sides of the House that this is an important Bill. It is a very timely measure because it consolidates a vast number of Acts.

Obviously if the consolidating measure is adopted it will provide a great deal of immediate relief to people who have occasion to use the Land Act. It will facilitate the inquiries into many problems, the solution of which is now found in multifarious Acts. I should like to join with other Opposition members in paying a compliment to the drafting section, and also to the officers of the department in preparing this consolidation, which is overdue.

I feel, however, that our main approach to the Bill is not so much in giving approval because it is a consolidated measure, but whether the high hopes held out for it by the Minister are likely to be realised.

I have before me a brochure prepared by the previous Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, Mr. A. G. Muller. It is quite an interesting brochure. It sets out what is hoped to be achieved in Queensland by the adoption of the 1959 Land Act. The foreword to the publication is as follows:—

> "The Government's land legislation has been designed to usher in a new era of rural progress. We cannot stand still with our development. We must march ever onwards. We must give scope for the initiative and enterprise of the people to find full expression."

He goes on with very well chosen words to point out the desirability of having a land policy which is likely to attract immigrants, increase our natural population, and provide security for the people on the land. It also draws attention to the fact that the land is the basis of our prosperity.

We now have this measure, so soon after the passage of that Bill, which was hailed at the time by Government members as being of tremendous importance to the progress of land development in this State and an outstanding piece of legislation which brought the land laws up to date, and also prescribed the policy which the Government should lay down. Those of us who have memories of these matters will remember that at the Country Party conference the trump card that the organiser of the conference used to allay criticism of the coalition Government was the then Minister for Public Lands. The Press was full of high praise for the way in which this fearless administrator had laid down the lands policy for the development of this State. He annihilated the critics within his own party. However, we find in a short period of time that not only has the Minister concerned been overthrown, but also we have an amendment of the policy which was regarded only a matter of three years ago as being desirable in the interests of the State.

Mr. Ewan: Would you mind telling us where it was overthrown?

Mr. DUGGAN: In this measure, and I would say largely for the reason that, whatever may be said about the administrative acts of the previous Minister for Public Lands, I think he followed Country Party policy to the best of his ability. I would say this measure arises very largely because of the pressure that has been exercised within the Caucus by the Liberal Party in demanding major alterations to the extent that they are contained in the Bill.

Mr. Fletcher: Which major alterations are you dealing with?

Mr. DUGGAN: I will deal with some of those things later on. I say that the present Minister for Public Lands has for a long period defended the policy and administration of the Department of Public Lands. He resisted this pressure which was being gradually applied to him by the Liberal section within the coalition Government. He came into conflict with such important people as Professor Francis and others. We had the extraordinary situation—admittedly it was a Liberal Party conference—that on an important matter such as land development, which, after all, should be the legislative province of the Country Party in the coalition Government, the Minister was not invited to be present despite the fact he expressed a desire to attend.

I should like to make this general observation at this stage: I feel there has been an amendment because of pressure that has been applied in the first instance by the Liberal people, in the second instance, by what I refer to as the landed aristocracy of this State, in expressing the opinion that all land policy should come from the Country Party, and thirdly, by the intervention of the Federal Treasurer. The Minister cannot deny that he has told deputations dealing with brigalow development in this State of the conditions under which the money will be made available by the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Holt. At the dinner that I attended at St. Lucia he drew attention to the benefits that would flow from the injection of large-scale capital into Queensland if the climate were politically right for its investment by big companies.

The Government is trying to make a lot of capital out of its claim of a new era for land development in Queensland and to create a general impression outside, through the Press and so on, that we had under the Labour Governments of the past, and will have under Labour Governments of the future, the spectre of Socialism hanging over the country inasmuch as 94 per cent. of the State's land is owned by the Crown. That percentage will be ruined by this legislation but at the time of this speech, the figure is approximately 94 per cent. The Government is trying to make use of the picture of Socialist tigers at work to preserve this land for the people of the State and we have seen a series of articles suggesting that this is an undesirable thing to happen in Queensland.

I should like to devote a moment or two to quoting from a book I came across quite cursorily in the Parliamentary Library. It is entitled, "Democracy in the Dominions" and was written in 1953 by Professor Alexander Brady of the Toronto University, for which he did a survey of the British Commonwealth, as well as for certain political science institutions. Among other things, he had this to say on the operations of democracy in the dominions—

> "The State of Queensland has gone farthest in the role of landlord, and has probably the best land laws within the Commonwealth. In 1884 legislation specified that henceforth the public domain was not to be sold but leased, the intention being to create a class of small resident grazing farmers instead of absentee pastoralists. But this policy was not rigidly respected. Land sales were resumed until in 1917 a Labour Government returned to its traditional policy of granting no further freeholds. Again the policy was partly reversed when Labour fell from power in 1929, but was resumed in the early thirties. In contemporary Queensland some 94 per cent. of the area of the State is Crown land. This territory, except when it is useless and unoccupied, is rented on various terms, the greater part being on pastoral leases, which run no longer than forty years. A characteristic tenure for farming areas is a perpetual lease, whereby the lessee and his heirs are left in possession, provided that they pay the annual rent and perform the other conditions of the lease. The leased land is periodically assessed by the Land Court, a judicial body independent of direct political control, which also deals with disputes concerning the value of improvements. A general administrative control over Crown land is provided by a Land Administration Board under a member of the Government."

The book goes on to say much more. That has been advocated by an analyst who examined these things and who regarded Queensland's land laws as being the best in the British Commonwealth.

Has there been any major disaster as a result of this? Mr. Commissioner Payne, in his Report on Progressive Land Settlement in Queensland, drew attention to the spectacular achievements that were accomplished. He emphasised the need for security of tenure and I do not think hon. members on this side of the House could argue the point very much about the duration of those leases as long as they are terminable in character. Obviously if the term is going to keep on increasing from the eight years that it was in the eighties to 14 years, then to 20 or 30 years, and if it is to be increased now to perhaps 40 years and by a system of progression converted to perpetual lease, there must be some stopping point. I do not see that, in principle, we have very much to quarrel about as long as the leases are terminable and controlled by the Crown.

In condemning the land policy of the Labour Government, people frequently refer to what has been termed the fiasco of the Peak Downs scheme. It is rather interesting to find in a very recent assessment of the work there by a research assistant of the University of Queensland an admission that that was a very worthwhile experiment. He points out some of the failures and the reasons for them. Over a period of years it was known how variable the rainfall was. Unfortunately, in the four years the variations of rainfall with drought and frost did affect the objectives of the scheme. There were several considerations, which time will not permit me to deal with now. A summing up of the scheme shows that, while the experiment did have some black spots, the overall benefits were such as to outweigh its defects.

It is remarkable that many of the people who were there took steps to acquire properties of their own in that area as soon as they had the opportunity. That shows that the project was not the failure that many people would have us believe. Time prevents my dealing with all aspects of the Peak Downs scheme, but it gives us no cause to hang our heads in shame.

I believe that we have had over a long period in the Department of Public Lands some of the best public servants available to

any Government. We have had a long succession of outstanding land administrators. Naturally there have been disagreements with individual decisions on leases and such matters, but there has been maintained a high ethical standard, a great display of knowledge, and a spirit of complete incorruptibility. I have not seen one scintilla of evidence to suggest that any officer has been guilty of malpractice of any kind. Their integrity and honesty have earned the respect of all people.

Mr. Ewan: They even set an example for a certain Government.

Mr. DUGGAN: I shall deal with that rather nasty interjection now. If there is corruption, whether it be in high political places or elsewhere, it should be exposed. I will not be a party to any corrupt practices. I merely state that successive Governments have been well served by land administrators in this State.

I am concerned not so much with what is contained in this Bill but with the gradual transfer of what has been the traditional policy of effective public service advice and control to the hands of men not answerable to Parliament. This is an important matter. I refer particularly to the method of selection contained in Clause 90 of the Bill. Here is laid down for the first time a selective method of application that makes a major departure from existing policy. I think it will be agreed that the balloting methods of recent times have caused a great deal of disquiet and criticism on the part of people in Queensland generally. There is no doubt that this is a land-hungry State. Despite complaints from time to time that conditions on the land are difficult, there is in this State and the Commonwealth generally a desire to acquire land in Queensland and develop it under the best possible conditions, and a Labour Government would be just as anxious as any other Government to provide the incentives necessary for that. I, with my colleagues, want to encourage good grazing and farming methods and good animal husbandry, and those doing that should be helped in every way. I would not want to prevent anyone from reaping the benefit of his efforts and his injection of capital to that end.

I feel that the balloting method has caused much disquiet. Under the old system, a person who could prove his bona fides and had experience in land matters and animal husbandry could get sufficient finance from recognised sources to assist him to go on the land. Today we find that there has been a gradual breaking down of that policy, and there is developing a system that will result in the establishment in Queensland of a landed aristocracy. I think that that will be further encouraged by some of the provisions of this Bill. Other hon. members on this side, who know more than I of the operations of many of these leases, will deal in some detail with this selective method of application.

I think that the crux of the Bill in regard to these methods is to be found in these words—

> "For the purpose of reviewing, considering and dealing with any application or applications, the Minister shall from time to time constitute a Committee of Review consisting of the following persons nominated by him—
>
> (a) a member of the Commission or other officer of the Department who shall be the Chairman of the Committee;
>
> (b) two persons not being officers of the Public Service, who, in the opinion of the Minister, are experienced in the primary industry for which the land is best suited."

For the first time the Government is taking the selection out of the hands of the permanent officers of the department and placing it, by a system of selective methods, in the hands of people who can outvote a permanent officer of the department. If one reads the clause, one sees that there are many reasons why these men are not answerable to anyone other than the Minister. It is guineas to gooseberries that they will be Country Party men, with a Country Party Minister in office. We often hear talk of Tammany Hall control. This will introduce a similar system under the control of the Country Party, particularly as it lays down a system under which screening can take place. If they think a man lacks certain standards, they have the right to vote against him and he has no right of appeal. If they think that a person is an undesirable influence in the comunity, they have the right to vote against him no matter what knowledge he might have of the land or how skilled he might be in animal husbandry. He may be an expert in such matters as increasing the weight of the fleece of sheep or improving the quality of breeders. But because he may be politically unsuitable to the people in a certain area, the committee may vote against him. The Bill says definitely—we will argue this more fully later; I think it is completely wrong—that these people have the right to require that in an important matter of this kind an application should be affected by political considerations and that the applicant should have no right of appeal against the decision.

Mr. Fletcher: Not political.

Mr. DUGGAN: What nonsense. There is no appeal. The only appeal a person has is where the Commissioner himself gives a decision in his personal capacity. He has no appeal against the decision of these people. They will be the Minister's political stooges. I say that quite unequivocally. There is still an appeal to the Land Court at present.

Mr. Fletcher: Not in respect of ballots.

Mr. DUGGAN: There is a far more effective method of appeal than will be available under the method outlined in the Bill.

Mr. Fletcher: No. You are getting all confused.

Mr. DUGGAN: I think it is thoroughly wrong. I cannot see any reason why these other people should have the right to outvote the permanent officer. At present the Minister has a Mr. Archer assisting him. I know Mr. Archer personally and have a very high regard for him. He is a very knowledgeable man. But Mr. Archer is not answerable to the Parliament or to anybody else. He is answerable only to the Minister.

Mr. Ewan: Did you give us the right of appeal to the Land Court on direct ballots?

Mr. DUGGAN: We certainly did not have this method. We had experienced officers to determine them.

Mr. Ewan: Did you give us any right of appeal?

Mr. Duffey: In the explanatory notes it is stated that there is a right of appeal from the committee of review. That appears in note No. 6. I want to see where the right of appeal lies.

Mr. DUGGAN: I pay a high and well deserved tribute to the officers of the Department of Public Lands, but let us look at what has been stated recently. A few months ago the hon. member for Cooroora, Mr. Low, said that the former Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, the hon. member for Fassifern, was the outstandingly successful Minister on that side of the House. However, his own party rejected that Minister. Although I have great respect for Mr. Muir's knowledge, it is extraordinary to find that, before the Bill was introduced by the Minister for our consideration, a Government member and Mr. Muir travelled round the State telling everybody what would be done.

Mr. Burrows: Not the Minister.

Mr. DUGGAN: No. the Commissioner and a private member. The Commissioner said at a public meeting that the present Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation is the best Lands Minister that Queensland has ever had. We expect public servants to be loyal to the policy of the Government, but I think that it going a bit too far. Although Mr. Muir is an efficient and knowledgeable officer, I think his remarks should be confined to matters arising for his decision and to giving people interested in land matters the benefit of his experience and in explaining logically to landholders the benefits of any proposed or existing Act. I do not think he should go out on political missions of this type or cast some doubt on these matters. When the brigalow lands belt is being established, I believe on advice given to me in good faith that some very prominent persons holding property in the area will be excluded from the belt to be resumed by the Crown. Those sort of things do not help very much when people feel that certain provisions are to be put in a Bill without the benefit of complete local knowledge. At least there is under the present system some uniformity in these living areas. Mr. Sallows and the others on the Land Administration Commission—Mr. Muir and Mr. Cochrane—review these applications from time to time and some uniform policy is applied. They know the State from the reports they receive from land officers and apply uniform policy throughout. They all have the same things in the back of their minds but if you establish a series of these committees in different parts of the State, there may not be any uniformity. Various reports will be furnished, and, in addition to that, these people for all their good intentions can be conditioned in some way or other to colour or slant their views. I am not suggesting it but I cannot completely exclude the possibility that they could be political appointees, and their judgment could be coloured in some way.

I do not mind giving incentive and encouragement to people. If there is a flaw in the present land administration laws regarding people's opportunity to increase or improve their properties, we should try to repair that defect by examining, simplifying, and strengthening existing legislation where it can be shown that it is deficient in providing the necessary incentives for people who want to go on the land. I am not against that and I do not think anyone on this side is; but I feel that it is wrong to hand over the State's land on terms that are extremely advantageous.

One could get a 30-year lease for which the annual rental is determined in 1962. If I am wrong in this, the Minister can correct me. Such 30-year lease could be for, say, 10,000 acres at £3 an acre. At present-day values that would give it a value of £30,000. The lessee pays 3 per cent on that value in annual rental to the department, and because he is paying rental he does not pay any land tax. I understand also that if he makes application to convert to freehold there is some doubt whether that is an additional tax deduction.

Mr. Fletcher: It is not a deduction so far as I know.

Mr. DUGGAN: The developments that are taking place today seem to indicate that the Government is giving the right to freehold additional areas; it is doubling the size——

Mr. Fletcher: They are still living areas.

Mr. DUGGAN: Judging by the pressure that is being applied in these matters, someone could come along later and say that it is 20,000 acres but, at this date——

Mr. Duffey: The Government has increased the acreage now from 5,000 to 10,000 acres, and it is possible under this Bill to freehold an area of 10,000 acres which is a living area.

Mr. Ewan: Provided it does not exceed a living area.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DUGGAN: If a person elects to transfer to freehold, once he gets this larger living area which the hon. member for Roma has mentioned, the determining factor in the matter is that 10,000 acres may be valued, as I say, at £30,000 as at this date. That then is the arrangement between the lessee and the Crown. He will purchase that property at that valuation and his rent is pegged until such time as he pays off his indebtedness to the Crown in 30 years. Who is going to say, if he takes over the freehold in 30 years' time—assuming it goes for the maximum period—that with the injection of new methods of husbandry and the introduction of chemicals the land will not be worth much more? We have seen a desert in South Australia transformed. We have seen spectacular developments taking place in the chemical field whereby the injection of properly-balanced minerals and so on has made productive and quite valuable soil that is apparently not productive or valuable at present. But this person carries on with no interest and a capital redemption on the property on the basis established 30 years previously. His obligations to the Crown are pegged for 30 years. He pays no interest. But what would happen if he went to the bank? If I had a freehold property and I went to the bank and said, "Here is £5,000. Can you advance me £25,000?" What would happen? I would have to pay land tax and interest on that £25,000 over the period of the redemption of the loan. But in this case he pays nothing. He is getting an extremely valuable consideration that could build up his assets in 30 years' time.

What about the building of the beef roads? No-one is going to deny that the beef roads are going to add to the capital value, apart from their being very desirable for the quick transport of cattle. No-one can deny the advantage of the provision of large central developmental works in those areas—the provision of water, roads, transport, and the other things that will come. The Government has budgeted for large expenditure on electricity, including the construction of a power station in the central district. I am not opposed to that—it is very desirable—but all these things will add tremendously to the value of the holding, yet the Government is going to peg them today. In 30 years' time it will mean that a tremendous capital profit will have accrued.

Mr. Ewan: It will create employment.

Mr. DUGGAN: Of course it will create employment, just as it would create employment whether it was perpetual lease, grazing lease, or pastoral lease. This is a lot of poppycock. Before the downfall of the previous Government large-scale land developers, whom I could name, told me that they were prepared to borrow money from their banks for large-scale development on perpetual leases. Obviously, with the change of Government, the banks would say that they were not going to advance the money unless the land was freeholded. That is understandable. However, those people were prepared to make capital available for development, and to some extent did. I am not opposed to this development. I agree that it provides employment and increases the productivity of the State. What I am concerned about is that if a person elects to take advantage of the unexpired portion of his lease, by having no income tax and the low rental charge of 3 per cent. on the value of the property, he is enabled to make a non-taxable large-scale capital profit.

Mr. Ewan: What about succession duty?

Mr. DUGGAN: I am concerned about the State at the moment. If large-scale profits are being made the Federal people will want to reap some of them. But this is land owned by the State of Queensland. I want to see Queensland people benefiting from this. Under the present laws—I am not critical of them—money spent on fencing and other improvements is an allowable deduction. Mr. Payne points out that if a person over a period of years spent £25,000 on improvements to his property, even if he were paying 10s. in the £1 tax, he would make a capital gain of £12,500. The taxpayer is affording that person the opportunity to make that capital gain. What is going to happen when we surrender increasingly large areas of land? The practice will develop because the opportunities for capital gain are very great.

I cannot say that I am clear in my own mind about the discretionary powers given to the Minister to give companies or individuals areas of land in excess of 10,000 acres on a 40-year lease. They could go up to 20,000 acres. What is going to stop an aggregation of holdings by large investment companies through their subsidiary companies? Fletcher & Co. might make application, and be able to satisfy the Minister that they will spend £20,000 to £40,000 on a certain area of land, which is beyond the financial capacity of the small man. The Minister would say, "All right, we will give it to you." Then Duggan Investment Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of Fletcher & Co., would make application, and so down the line of a whole series of subsidiaries. In the course of time the parent company quite easily could obtain an aggregation of holdings. Once they are sold we have lost control of them entirely for all time. If we have another war—and we pray God we will not have—and there is a demand for land for soldier settlement, very high prices would obtain if we bought back the land.

I feel that the Bill itself has something that requires very close examination. I distrust particularly this tendency to take away from the officers of the department the right to carry out this work and place it in the hands of outsiders, political stooges of this Government.

It may be an opportunity to obscure the situation by saying they have been on the land a long while; even Mr. Archer, for whom I have a very high regard. He is a very knowledgeable person. This Government will lay down very definitely that there must be political loyalty. It will be one of the things it will insist upon. If you can guarantee me that there is a Country Party man who has been on the land and will vote for me at the next election, I will put him on one of those committees.

Mr. Wharton: That is a pretty petty attitude to adopt.

Mr. DUGGAN: It would be a pretty accurate one. I think, as a matter of fact, that if the hon. member for Warrego is prepared to put in an envelope now the names of some people who will be on the selected committees, if we open it in six months' time it would be found to be pretty accurate relating to the personnel I have mentioned.

I would hate to think of the noise from the hon. member for Roma if we have in the Roma district a couple of very good Labour supporters, very experienced in land matters, appointed to one of the committees. What a howl he would raise at the Caucus meeting if the Minister appointed them to the committee of review. We would hear the hon. member down in our party room if a Labour man was put on this body. I make that statement because he has been through the mill a bit and will see that that situation does not develop.

Mr. Fletcher: Are you questioning my honour?

Mr. DUGGAN: No. I do not put the Minister in the category of a scoundrel. I have a very high regard for his character and personal integrity, but I have very grave doubts as to his political judgment and particularly of his strength of character to resist the machinations of the people behind him. That is what I am concerned about. The Minister has capitulated already to the Liberals and Professor Francis and Mr. Holt. The whole story of the administration of the department is one of capitulation.

Mr. Fletcher: I have not capitulated to Professor Francis or to Mr. Holt—not on your life!

Mr. DUGGAN: I think the Minister has, perhaps not so much to Professor Francis as to the others. In any case, let us have a look for a moment at some of these things. There is need for vigorous action in having a sound land policy. In the last few minutes available to me I want to say that it is rather disquietening to read the paper by Professor Greenwood which he gave to a panel of bankers in Rockhampton some time ago. He pointed out that it was a sad fact from Queensland's point of view that the main proportionate increase in Australia's herds in the past 10 years had been—

Tasmania	47 per cent.
South Australia	38 per cent.
Western Australia	32 per cent.
Victoria	30 per cent.
Queensland	8 per cent.

It is rather disquietening to see that position.

I do not believe in absentee landlordism. In regard to this injection of outside capital, I think there is any amount of sound investment capital available in Queensland. On the basis of freeholding of land, and so on, and even on the leasing of brigalow areas, there is nothing to prevent these people, once they get their lease, from changing to freehold and immediately selling out. There is nothing to suggest that some of the importation of capital would be used for that purpose.

So, in a nutshell, I want to say that the consolidation itself is a very welcome and desirable measure. It contains many provisions that are merely reinstatement of existing policy. There are not very many variations except in the direction of the proposed new leases and the benefits that are intended to be conferred on leaseholders and those who want to convert to freehold at a later date. I think there will be an incentive for the building up of a landed aristocracy in the State. The Bill will give greater opportunities for the aggregation of holdings. The entrenched people with great wealth will be able to acquire land to the detriment of experienced people who have not the same opportunities as are being made available to others. This will be facilitated by the reviewing committee, the provisions for which is one of the main flaws in the legislation. That is the committee that will screen the people, and there is no right of appeal. That is a negation of British justice. There is a right of appeal only against the chairman's decision, and I think that is wrong.

The Committee stage will be the more appropriate time to argue many of the clauses. We have selected some that we think are worthy of debate. We hope the Minister will be prepared to accept constructive criticism on some of them or to give us a better explanation of the import of the provisions than we have had so far.

Despite the fact that the Bill has taken a long time to prepare, involving a good deal of work by responsible officers of the department, and has been submitted to the Caucus for consideration, there still seems to be a good deal of criticism even in Country Party circles outside. "Country Life," a very responsible newspaper, is not

by any means happy with some of the provisions, and some of its criticisms are quite valid. They are criticisms that, in various forms, have been ventilated elsewhere.

Mr. Fletcher: Could you indicate which criticisms are valid?

Mr. DUGGAN: I have only about two minutes left.

Mr. Fletcher: You might just give us a couple of the criticisms that you consider valid.

Mr. DUGGAN: Opposition speakers to follow me will deal with some of those matters. I have only two minutes left.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman has one-and-a-half hours in the debate.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am sorry. I was working on a wrong basis. Anyway, I will not take advantage of that because I have an appointment this afternoon.

Mr. Fletcher: It does give you a chance to tell me which ones are valid.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is the sort of challenge one has come to expect from the Minister. As a matter of fact, I have notes of many other matters I have not touched on. I have dealt with the Bill in a general way.

Mr. Fletcher: Now you have your chance with one-and-a-half hours, not just two minutes.

Mr. DUGGAN: It is not a question of two minutes. The main criticism I have is along the lines I have indicated. The Minister's speech this morning was obviously carefully prepared by the officers of the department, and for his reply he will have the opportnuity to get the same officers to go through all the criticisms that have been levelled here. No doubt he will elect to take advantage of that.

Mr. Fletcher: You just indicated that several of the criticisms in "Country Life" are valid ones. I want you to name them.

Mr. DUGGAN: We will name them.

Mr. Fletcher: You cannot think of any at the moment?

Mr. DUGGAN: I will accept that challenge.

Mr. Fletcher: But you cannot think of any at the moment.

Mr. DUGGAN: I have some here. That sort of smart talk does not help.

Mr. Fletcher: It is not smart talk at all.

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. member for Warrego, the hon. member for Barcoo and others will speak.

Mr. Fletcher: Mine is not smart talk; yours is.

Mr. DUGGAN: We will deal with those. We will let it rest at that for the time being. We have given the Minister enough at the moment. As a matter of fact, if he says the criticism is not valid, it is remarkable that he has been jotting down copious notes for use in his reply—for examination or denial or for some other purpose. He has been writing copiously for some time.

Mr. Fletcher: That is not the point. You make a statement and you are not game to back it up.

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes, I will.

Mr. Fletcher: You have not done so.

Mr. DUGGAN: I will. As a matter of fact, I will hand these notes to the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. Fletcher: Say them now. You have one-and-a-half hours.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am going to meet the Governor-General at a quarter-past 2. The Minister knows that.

Mr. Fletcher: I did not know.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am going to be present out of respect for the Governor-General. Were it not for that, I would accept the Minister's challenge at a quarter-past 2. Those arrangements were made a week ago. I think as Leader of the Opposition I should show respect for the representative of the Crown. That is my only reason for not taking up the Minister's challenge myself. However, as I said, hon. members on this side of the House will speak with greater particularity on some of the provisions than I have done.

All in all, the Bill is a disappointment. The consolidation is to be commended; some of the provisions we agree with; but, all in all, the birth of this long-awaited measure has been somewhat of a disappointment. I do not think it will be accepted by the people of Queensland as a measure likely to stimulate production and development in the manner indicated. I do not think it will provide any greater security than is possible under existing measures. In our view the Crown estate is being dissipated wantonly without any advantage accruing to the State. For those reasons I say that the Bill is a disappointment to the Opposition.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (2.15 p.m.): In view of exchanges between the Minister and my Leader on remarks in "Country Life", I quote without comment some expressions of opinion from that paper in criticism of the present land administrator, no doubt by people who no longer support the Government—

"The abandonment of the doctrine of infallibility of the Minister and his officers."

"A willingness to consider economic data."

"The appointment of an independent judicial arbitrator."

"Commonsense and practical considerations to be used in all land subdivisions"

"Eliminating red tape and Rip-van-Winkleism in lands administration and replacing them with initiative and energy."

"In Western grazing districts cultivation potentialities should not be regarded as actualities until they have, in fact, been proved."

"Valuation methods should be revised and co-ordination achieved between Valuer-General and Lands Department."

"There should be a willingness to accept constructive suggestions without attributing motives of ill-will."

"The new Land Bill is best described as a paragron of contrasts. The Committee responsible for the compilation of the Bill deserves high praise for a job well done on the consolidation of 79 different Acts which comprised the land laws of Queensland.

"However, the same high praise cannot be extended to those responsible for directing the committee on the policy for whatever else the Bill is, it does not carry out the stated policy of the Country Party which is the substantial implementation of the monumental 1959 Payne Report."

"The most contentious feature of the whole Bill is the definition of living area. The relevant portion reads:

'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,

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 met adverse seasons and the cost of developing and maintaining the land at a high rate of production throughout average seasons;'

"Peasantry Hint

"It is of interest to contrast this with the definition of living area contained in the amending Land Act of 1927—

'The term living area, when used in respect of grazing lands, shall mean an area as may be determined by the Minister, having regard to the district in which the land is situated, and for the purpose of determining what area shall so constitute such living area the Minister may consider what area of sheep or cattle grazing lands would be of sufficient area as would permit a lessee to—

(a) carry sufficient sheep or cattle from which a reasonable income may be obtained and a reasonable reserve be available to assist such selector over drought or dry periods without the necessity of seeking assistance from the Government.

(b) maintain both quality and quantity of wool or beef as the case may be, so that production and revenue, direct or indirect, from Crown lands may not diminish;

(c) make necessary working improvements on the holding without over-capitalising it, so that such holding may be worked as a sound economic proposition.'

"The Minister may also take into consideration all or any of the following circumstances—

'(d) nature of country, carrying capacity, distance from railway and markets;

(e) nature and cost of necessary water improvement facilities and of other improvements required or considered necessary to develop the potentialities of such lands;

(f) the income that a prudent tenant may reasonably be expected to make from such holdings;

(g) such other factors and circumstances as he may think just and proper.'

"It does not require the vast knowledge of a Sir William Payne to appreciate what can be done with the proposed new definition by an unsympathetic administration."

Mr. Ewan: Who wrote that?

Mr. O'DONNELL: It was published in "Country Life".

Mr. Smith: You support that, do you?

Mr. O'DONNELL: I am not supporting anything. I said earlier that I would read it without comment.

Mr. Fletcher: The Leader of the Opposition indicated that he supported "Country Life" in certain of its statements.

Mr. Duffey: He did not. He said that "Country Life" criticised the Government, and that was denied from that side of the House.

Mr. Fletcher: No.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. O'DONNELL: I appreciate, as all hon. members do, the consolidation of the Land Acts. It is certainly a monumental work, and I think that, even though we had five weeks in which to go through the Bill, the Minister will agree that it was certainly a difficult task. If I may make a suggestion, I suggest that the administration might perhaps produce booklets elucidating many of the matters outlined in the Bill. After all, it is a legal document and, as such, is not very clearly expressed. People not acquainted with legal terms find it difficult to comprehend.

Mr. Smith: Don't you think that is a bit unfair? It is reasonably clear.

Mr. O'DONNELL: Well, what is reasonably clear is not always reasonably presented in argument. When it was mentioned that the definition of a living area would mean peasantry in the State, the Minister was quite caustic in his comments. Much of the comment arose from a simple misunderstanding of the word "infant". In legal terms it means a person under the age of 21, but to the ordinary man in the street and on the land it means a child of tender years. I am not arguing with the hon. member for Windsor, who has legal knowledge, but I am pointing out that what may be a reasonable meaning to the legal man is not reasonable to the ordinary layman. I heard criticism wherever I went. People said, "What on earth is this?" It reminds one of the fallacious and ridiculous statement that the basic wage is the amount needed to support a man, his wife, and three children. Here we have terminology that is similar to Industrial Court terminology. People say, "What does it mean?" That shows the need for booklets to elucidate the various provisions.

Mr. Smith: What, a booklet to tell a person that an infant is someone under 21?

Mr. O'DONNELL: No. The hon. member who assumes that the word "infant" is the only word calling for an explanation certainly has not opened the Bill. The question of a living area is of such moment that, whilst we recognise the Minister's effort to give us a concise definition covering all aspects of rural industry, he still has on his hands a most contentious term because there will be differing opinions in various parts of Queensland on what a living area is.

Interpretation is individual and I am indeed sympathetic to anyone who has the implementation of land policy, because, as we go from area to area, we find that each one has a tremendous interest in his own property and, in most cases, considers his own property as the only one and regards as essential the ironing out of his dealings with the administration, not to the general satisfaction of the people of Queensland but to his own satisfaction. Consequently, his assessment of this department is based on its reaction to his requests. I know, and really appreciate, that when we meet with these major problems in the country we in the city are apt to treat them with a certain amount of levity and to fail to consider the economic importance of the factors that are discussed from time to time and to pass them off as something of no immediate concern.

I think that, where land policy has to be criticised—and it is being criticised with great strength not only by people who are opposed to the Government politically but also by its supporters—we have, indeed, a matter to which we must give grave consideration. It is believed that the Government, being a coalition, will have divided views on land policy. We all remember the article by Professor John Francis, a noted Liberal supporter, who said that he believed that the present land policy was Socialistic. Members of the Government raise their hands and cry, "Horror!" whenever they hear that word "Socialist," but this man went on, "Not only Socialistic but outmoded and wicked," and said that the Queensland Government is the biggest absentee landlord outside of Russia, totally ignoring the fact that the lessee is a landlord. Professor Francis favours the Mt. Isa attitude to development per medium of companies, namely, land worked by employees of large companies rather than by independent owners and occupiers of individual blocks. This theory is offensive to genuine landholders and to anyone who has any sense of responsibility to Queensland, too, on the grounds that individual ownership enhances the standard of husbandry and responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of the land for self and posterity.

I can assure hon. members that, from utterances I have heard by the Minister, he totally disagrees with Professor Francis. One could contrast the use of land at Peak Downs when it was controlled by the Queensland British Food Corporation and now. As a result of wise Labour closer-settlement policy it has increased in production and in efficient management. When the Queensland British Food Corporation was flourishing as the Queensland British Food Corporation, what did we hear from the Liberal element? They cut it to pieces. Now they are quoting it as an example of development by companies and they want to recommend it to the Country Party Government today.

Periodically our policy regarding land has been criticised on the ground that a good leaseholder is the first to have his rent raised and his block subdivided. Incidentally, for the information of the Minister, I wish to point out that this subject was discussed recently in an article in "Country Life."

Whilst I have not been able to make a complete survey to prove or disprove this statement, I do not think there is much basis for the assertion. Subdivision (and again I quote the Peak Downs area) is essential in some districts otherwise some of the best agricultural areas would still be in the hands of the heirs and successors of pastoral families. We must also remember,

too, that many companies, particularly the family type, are operating and within reason they have a place in our land development. However, some of those, too, will have to face up to State development, which will seem to require closer settlement in the areas in which they are interested.

Another point which attracts considerable publicity is the fear of lack of security of tenure.

Mr. Smith interjected.

Mr. O'DONNELL: A remark was passed in the House recently that blacksmiths had had their day. I should say that there is another type of "Smith" that has had his day. He can go if he does not want to listen.

To my mind, this lack of security of tenure is repeatedly contradicted by prices paid for leasehold country, and I believe it is the employees on the land who have no security of tenure for they are debarred from a significant contribution to civic standards which could prevent the drift to the cities of those who feel there is no future as employees in rural industries.

Those remarks relating to freehold—and I could add a few more—form substantially the criticism by the party that I have the honour to represent. I quoted from "Country Life" on the subdivision of properties. As we know, the Ryan Government in 1916 adopted the principle of leasehold tenure. In the last five years we have seen the present Government attack this essential of good land administration. We have noticed how freeholding has spread from the home site to small farms, up to areas up to 5,000 acres. Now we have 10,000 acres as the maximum as long as not more than one living area is involved.

Mr. Ewan: Are you opposed to that?

Mr. O'DONNELL: I am in total support of the A.L.P. policy, which is against the extension of freeholding. If the Country Party-Liberal coalition remains in office we can expect further inroads, because the point does not seem to be realised that if you give a concession to one section of the people you must in all fairness extend it to all sections of the people, or you will end up in political hot water. If people in the brigalow area are to have the opportunity to freehold up to 10,000 acres, I can easily understand there being a great deal of opposition from certain people in the Barcaldine area if they cannot freehold up to 20,000 acres or more on a living-area basis. They will not understand why they should be on the "outer" in the right to convert to freehold.

Mr. Sullivan: Are you opposed to the development of the Fitzroy basin?

Mr. Ewan: Are you advocating that the people of Barcaldine have that right?

Mr. O'DONNELL: The repeated interjections by hon. members opposite in an endeavour to sidetrack me will be of no avail. The hon. member for Condamine makes a serial speech by continually asking questions of speakers from this side of the House as they endeavour to make their points. That is the only contribution he is able to make.

Country Party policy on private land-ownership is well known. The Liberal Party idea of private enterprise, however, has a shadowing effect on that, because if the Liberal Party has its way the Country Party policy will be one of deviation from the original desire of the people who support that political association. We can confidently expect that the Minister will be in constant fear from within the coalition Government, and perhaps he, too, will succumb to the pressure as did his predecessor, the hon. member for Fassifern.

The point will be whether he has the moral strength to resist the danger of company development financed by overseas capital? I warn the Minister that whilst he may be sowing the wind for posterity to reap a whirlwind by a freeholding policy which will inevitably result in widespread resumptions at a terrific cost to the State, he will go down in Queensland history as the man who ruined our land and its people if he adopts the Liberal desire to sell not only the land, but also our future farmers and graziers, to overseas capitalists. Much of the profits of primary industry is being channelled out of this country per medium of dividends to shareholders in firms and banks. As undesirable as private land-ownership is to us, far more so is the threat to invite overseas capital. In 1963 the electors will prevent the extension of freehold tenure, and remove the threat of having our agricultural and pastoral holdings held to ransom to provide profits and nothing else.

Mr. Ewan: What would you do with this freeholding legislation?

Mr. O'DONNELL: The hon. member will find out in 1963.

I suppose that I, too, must make some contribution to the criticism of this selective matter. My Leader outlined the personnel of the committee of review as constituted by this Bill. However, the important point he made was that it included two persons, not officers of the Public Service, who, in the opinion of the Minister, are experienced in primary industry and who have knowledge of what the land is best suited for.

Mr. Sullivan: The Labour Government did that for soldier settlement.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I should like to read to the hon. member for Condamine an extract relating to the 1959 Act, which abolished the Land Administration Board and created the Land Administration Commission. I hope the hon. member for Condamine is listening very carefully.

It says—

"The Government which has a policy must administer it and not hand it over for implementation to some independent body outside the Public Service. The Land Administration Commission will operate within the framework of the Public Service of Queensland."

Mr. Sullivan: Ridiculous!

Mr. O'DONNELL: What Government was in power in 1959, I would like to ask the hon. member for Condamine?

Mr. Hanlon: He just interjected and said that that was silly. His own Government was in power.

Mr. O'DONNELL: We want to impress upon the House and convince the Minister through our speeches how the people feel, and what they think when they are discussing the various aspects of this selective matter.

I do not want the Minister to conclude that I will at any time refer to him in a derogatory way but the expressions of opinion that I have collated may be of interest. Should the Minister's power to appoint be limited by the addition of the words "with the approval of the Governor in Council"? Even conceding the fact that each industry merits experienced personnel on the committee, no consistent principles are assured because the personnel may vary even in the one industry and in the one locality and inconsistencies result from individual changes.

Bias could enter into a decision on personal, political, or industrial grounds. We know that there is political bias; we should hate to think there was personal bias; but there is also industrial bias. Frequently I have heard comments among rural people discussing the activities on farm or station of their neighbours and they were highly critical; in other words, they had diverse opinions of their neighbours' ability. There we could have another aspect of criticism entering into this matter. Although the Bill provides for the exercise of personal attack on people, I would not like to believe it would be used. I was very happy to hear the Minister inform the House this morning that there had been only three instances of rejection because of a bad reputation. However, I think political and industrial grounds can be reasons for bias. I know very well of two prominent gentlemen who hold settlement farm leases, who, if they were elected to the same committee, would never agree. The chairman of the selection committee would have a very arduous time indeed sorting out the contrary opinions they would express. I am afraid such a committee would fail to bring about the effect desired by the land administration.

The Minister has power to choose whom he likes. I repeat that it is not my opinion but it has been expressed that this could mean "whom he likes personally." The non-Public Service members can control the committee. While their local knowledge may be of advantage it could also be a disadvantage as they may know too much. Clause 98 (6) provides possibilities for setting up rural cliques or an aristocracy where the black ball can be used. One can understand what these people mean. Only one member of the committee is to be responsible to Parliament. That is a fact. Although there are to be three people on it, only one is to be responsible to Parliament. The decision of the committee to reject an application is to be final and conclusive. That is to say, there is to be no right of appeal to a higher authority after paragraphs 10 and 11 give a second chance. By taking advantage of the second chance, one is actually appealing to Caesar against Caesar. What is required is a tribunal in order that arbitrary and capricious judgments will not result, and in order that reasons for rejections will be given.

The Bill gives the committee power to determine a living area, subject to review by the commission, and, of course, reference to the court is covered. Many people read these things superficially and they come to me with these criticisms. Fortunately, I have had time to assure people of the genuine attitude of the Minister and I have said that we will endeavour to point out what appear to be inconsistencies, which set people in a state of unrest. On such an important matter as land, there must not be any feeling that will make people on the land dissatisfied with their lot.

I have not much time left, but another point that I wish to bring forward is the development of freeholding in Australia. I do not know whether hon. members are aware of it, but comparative State figures reveal that to date Queensland has 6.5 per cent. of freehold land, Western Australia 6.4 per cent., South Australia 6.6 per cent., Tasmania 39.1 per cent., New South Wales 33.3 per cent., and Victoria 58.5 per cent. Because freeholding has not been propagated here, Queensland is in the second-last position. What impresses me is that Queensland is a primary-producing State, and the only State of Australia with a favourable overseas credit balance. To what can we attribute that?

A Government Member: Good government, mainly.

Mr. O'DONNELL: There have been favourable trade balances over many years. I was not trying to give hon. members opposite an opportunity to score, and they will understand that I think there could be in this matter some linking-up with our attitude towards land administration. We know that in New South Wales land is being resumed. If I remember rightly, Victoria is so hard-pressed for land for development that the authorities are moving into very difficult country that is costing almost £40 an acre to make suitable for production. I mention this as being of

interest to those wishing to know how Queensland fits into the freeholding picture in the Commonwealth.

I have some further figures that may be of interest. I shall take only perpetual lease selection applications, settlement farm lease applications, and grazing settlement applications for freeholding, the number that have been determined, and the number granted. We know that these applications are always proceeding. There have been 1,377 applications in respect of perpetual lease selections, of which 1,187 have been dealt with and 770 approved. In the case of settlement farm leases, which are common in my electorate, there have been 140 applications, 85 determinations, and 33 approvals. In respect of grazing selections, of which there was much discussion earlier today, there have been 389 applications, 95 determinations, and 30 acceptances. The total number of applications for all leases is 5,998, of which 4,251 have been determined and 2,682 accepted. Those figures are now on record and may be referred to by hon. members at a later date.

In conclusion, I reiterate that we in Queensland, particularly in rural Queensland—I suppose we can exclude the cities and larger towns—are very concerned about the implementation of the provisions of the Bill by the administration. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Public Lands will continue to receive many queries, because a number of hidden points contained in the Bill have not yet come to the surface to enable us to have a full comprehension of the future rural land development of Queensland.

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) (2.51 p.m.): I suppose it will be admitted that this is one of the most important Bills that has come before the House for many years. It is regrettable that members of the Government have at times tried to be smart and play politics on this matter. I wish to say at the outset that I have no intention of playing politics, because I believe that a Bill such as this, which deals with the smallest town allotment of 16 perches as well as the largest pastoral holding in the West, is far too important for the playing of party politics.

It is regrettable, too, that the Government sometimes accuses hon. members on this side of the House of being knockers when we criticise and scrutinise, and possibly seek to amend, legislation such as this. The very basis of democratic government is that it is the duty of the Opposition to scrutinise legislation fully and also to criticise it.

Mr. Windsor interjected.

Mr. DUFFICY: The hon. member would not know what I am talking about. I ask him not to interject.

It is the duty of the Opposition, having scrutinised the legislation, to move amendments if it considers that it is in the interest of the State to do so.

Mr. Harrison: Would you put "eulogise" in as appropriate?

Mr. DUFFICY: When I think I should eulogise the Government, I shall do so Unfortunately, I cannot eulogise it on this Bill.

Let me deal again with the charge of "knocking". In a previous debate in this Chamber I spoke about the brigalow leases. I mentioned at that time that, although they were not necessarily my own opinions, I was repeating some of the inquiries that have been directed to me on the brigalow leases, which are dealt with in one of the clauses of this Bill. Because I made some remarks about the brigalow belt, I was accused by Ministers on the front bench opposite of being a knocker. Surely this complacent Government, this self-satisfied Government, must think that it has the answers to all the questions, that all the knowledge in this State reposes in those on the front bench opposite and those who sit behind them, if, when somebody in this House criticises something as important as the brigalow belt or simply asks questions that have been referred to him as a representative of the people, he is charged with being a knocker.

We on this side of the Chamber, as a party, represent more people in Queensland than does any other individual party. Let me stress that. I stress also that when we on this side advance an argument or criticise something that the Government has done, we are speaking on behalf of that section of the people representing the majority that voted for us, casting a greater vote for us than was given to any other individual party in this Parliament.

I point that out before I get onto the Bill because any remarks that I might make on the Bill today may not necessarily be mine; I may be genuinely seeking information, and I can assure the Minister that, as far as I am concerned at this stage, I have no intention of criticising him officially and certainly not personally, nor have I any intention of engaging in dog-fights with any back-bench member opposite who possibly does not know very much about land, anyhow. What I intend to put up very briefly are questions that I suggest the Minister might answer in his reply. If he answers them to the satisfaction of members on this side of the Chamber it might considerably shorten proceedings in the Committee stage.

Mr. Fletcher: I will do my best.

Mr. DUFFICY: I thank the Minister very much; I am sure he will. The Minister mentioned in his second-reading speech that it was quite obvious that members on this side would oppose the freeholding conditions, which have been extended in this Bill. Of course that is so. I am not going to delay the House to any great extent by repeating the arguments against freeholding provisions that I have put forward on so many occasions.

Mr. Ewan: Would I be right in saying that you are uncompromisingly opposed to freeholding?

Mr. DUFFICY: Of course the hon. member would be right. After all, I am not saying that as an individual; that is the policy of the party of which I have the honour to be a member.

Mr. Smith interjected.

Mr. DUFFICY: There is provision in the Bill for a select committee to handle ballots. I wonder if the hon. member for Windsor would tell me if that provision would apply in the selection of a candidate to fill the vacancy in the Cabinet that I understand will occur. That is the only interest he has in a selective form of ballot.

Now let us get back to the Bill. Of course I am opposed to the principle of freeholding. It is true that since this Government assumed office slowly but surely it has alienated the Crown lands of the State. Its first land Bill provided for the freeholding of areas of 2,560 acres; the next amendment to the Act provided for the freeholding of areas up to 5,000 acres. The Bill we are now debating proposes the freeholding of areas up to 10,000 acres. Slowly but surely the Government has alienated the Crown estate. Between 1957 and 1962, when this Bill becomes law, the area will have been increased from 2,560 acres to 10,000 acres. The Bill will become law because it is not a matter of logic from this side, but numbers on that side. Obviously the legislation will become law.

Of course I am opposed to the freeholding of areas up to 10,000 acres, for the reasons I have expressed so often. In his reply I should like the Minister to explain why great stress has been placed on the fact that that 10,000 acres must only be a living area. It cannot be freeholded unless it is only a living area—not in excess of a living area. Even if the Government was consistent in the matter surely it would be admitted that 10,000 acres in the brigalow belt, which is, after all, a fairly high rainfall area, would be a living area. If it is only a living area it can be freeholded. But 100 miles west of Charleville, 60,000 acres may be only a living area. Where does the Government draw the line of demarcation? It draws the line not at 10,000 acres, but at the limitation of a living area.

Mr. Fletcher: A living area, or 10,000 acres.

Mr. DUFFICY: That is so, but the maximum is 10,000 acres. On the other hand, if that 10,000 acres contained two living areas what would be the decision of the Government?

Mr. Fletcher: To freehold one of them.

Mr. DUFFICY: The Minister would not freehold the two. That is my point. But the Minister would freehold a living area if it was 10,000 acres or contained only 10,000 acres as only one living area. That is the position, is it not?

Mr. Fletcher: Yes.

Mr. DUFFICY: Of course it is. If 30,000 acres in the Charleville or Roma district was certified as only a living area, the Minister would not freehold that. Even in the freeholding conditions the Minister is not consistent.

Mr. Fletcher: Do you think we should go the whole hog?

Mr. DUFFICY: No. I am not laying down the policy. The Minister has to justify his Government's policy. I am asking him to justify it. I stated my position and the position of the Opposition very clearly. I have pointed out that we are opposed to freeholding, but that the Minister and his Government are in favour of freeholding a living area. Why does the Minister not be honest? That is what I am suggesting. Why is he not honest enough to say, "We are prepared to freehold a living area in certain parts of the State, but we are not prepared to freehold a living area in other parts of the State"? In effect that means that he is introducing freehold legislation applying to that area. It is sectional legislation, which, after all, must always be wrong. The Government's policy on freehold is sectional; it applies only to people on the coast or close to the coast.

I do not think the principle should have been introduced at all, but having introduced it, I think the Minister should have been consistent. I want him to justify his inconsistency. That is all I am saying, because if he suggests that 30,000 acres in the Roma district—which is only a living area, may subsequently, because of the advancement of science or for some other reason, be subject to subdivision at some time, and consequently he could not grant freehold tenure over that 30,000 acres, I want him to tell me why the same argument could not be advanced in respect of the brigalow area.

Mr. Fletcher: You will find the whole answer to that in my introductory speech.

Mr. DUFFICY: I have read the Minister's introductory speech and the answer is not there. It is not there to my satisfaction. I will be very happy if he will give me an answer in his reply.

Mr. Ewan: You are opposed to freehold, but would you grant these living areas in the West, to which you have referred? Would you give a perpetual lease?

Mr. DUFFICY: The hon. member will have an opportunity to make a speech in a short while, I am sure.

Let us leave the question of freehold for the moment, because we will have a further opportunity to debate it in the Committee

stage. Let us get on to the conduct of selective ballots by a committee of review. I realise that this matter has already been discussed to some extent by previous speakers, but I consider it is such an important principle that I should like to say a few words about it. The Minister knows as well as I do that the question of ballots has caused a considerable amount of dissatisfaction in the West. I have had more telegrams regarding ballots over the past few years than I have on any other matter since I have been a member of Parliament. I think that one of the reasons for that was that this Government never knew what its policy was, particularly in recent times. Without reflecting on the present Minister, it did know its policy to a greater extent, I would suggest, under the administration of the former Minister.

Mr. Fletcher: What change are you referring to now?

Mr. DUFFICY: I am referring to the change where the condition was laid down that an applicant for a ballot must have at least £12,000 in ready cash. I am suggesting that few people in the West, or anywhere else, would have £12,000 in ready cash.

Mr. Fletcher: 1,500 did.

Mr. DUFFICY: I saw the Minister's lithographs, and I saw the conditions that were laid down. I assure the House that the manager of Nive Downs, a man who must have had some practical pastoral experience and whom Primary Producers were prepared to guarantee to the extent of £12,000, was not admitted to the ballot.

Mr. Fletcher: There were still 1,500.

Mr. DUFFICY: 1,500 what?

Mr. Fletcher: 1,500 applicants.

Mr. DUFFICY: Of course there were! 6,000 or thereabouts were rejected. That is what I am complaining about.

Mr. Fletcher: You said nobody could comply, but 1,500 applied.

Mr. DUFFICY: Would the Minister appreciate this: there are not very many people who could comply.

Mr. Fletcher: 1,500 in this case.

Mr. DUFFICY: In which case?

Mr. Fletcher: The one you are referring to.

Mr. DUFFICY: That is not true, with respect. The Minister is talking about the first year's rent and a fifth of the survey fee. I am talking about the conditions that were imposed on applicants for the Nive Downs ballot. In the first place, they had to have a minimum of £12,000 in cash or readily-convertible assets, or to be guaranteed by only one person in the first instance. I wrote the Minister a letter and I have his reply. The only guarantee that was acceptable was by their parents in the first place.

Mr. Fletcher: Or a near relative.

Mr. DUFFICY: Now the Minister is coming to it. He says, "Or a near relative," and the Minister's definition of a near relative was the mother or father and not the brother. Is that not true?

Mr. Fletcher: I can't remember that.

Mr. DUFFICY: It is true, anyhow. Despite the fact that the manager of Nive Downs had the guarantee of a company like Primary Producers, and there could not be any doubt about his knowledge and ability to comply, or his pastoral experience, he was rejected from that ballot.

There was considerable discontent among the people who formerly supported the Minister and his party over the ballot conditions, not as laid down in the Act but as administered by the Minister and his party. What I am concerned about with this measure is not so much what is in it as how it is to be administered by an unsympathetic Government, as "Country Life" pointed out.

Mr. Fletcher: You are upholding the criticisms in "Country Life", too?

Mr. DUFFICY: "Country Life" upheld the Minister and his Government while they were doing the reasonable thing, or even the unreasonable thing, but, when they did the completely ridiculous thing, even "Country Life" had to drop them. "Country Life" has never supported me or my party but it had to drop the Minister when he did the completely ridiculous thing.

Mr. Fletcher: What are you referring to?

Mr. DUFFICY: I am referring to what my colleague read out a short time ago. If the Minister was not listening, it is unfortunate.

Let us return to the conduct of the ballots and let me point out to the Minister that I know very well, just as he does, why he introduced the conduct of selective ballots by a committee of review. I know very well that he and his Government are ducking from under. They got into a considerable amount of trouble with ballots and nobody knows that better than I. Of course they did! They are now taking a way out that, to my mind, cannot be defended under any circumstances.

Mr. Fletcher: Did "Country Life" object to this one?

Mr. DUFFICY: I do not know about "Country Life"; I am speaking of what I know. I am saying that "Country Life" supported the Minister and his Government even when they did the wrong thing. I do not know what "Country Life" said about it; this is what I am saying now.

Mr. Fletcher: It is not "Country Life"?

Mr. DUFFICY: No, this is my opinion. I have finished with "Country Life". I am speaking now about the conduct, as laid down in this Bill, of selective ballots by a committee of review. I am suggesting that I know the reason why the Minister wanted to duck from under on this matter of ballots. His Government made such a hopeless mess of it and created so much hostility in the minds of people who previously supported it on this matter that there was a feverish search for a way out so that in any future ballots the Government would not have to cop the rap, as it were. What the Minister did, and what I do not think he can defend, was make provision in this Bill for a selective committee to screen applicants to participate in ballots.

Mr. Fletcher: A very good idea, too.

Mr. DUFFICY: I am happy to have the Minister's opinion that it is a good idea, but I shall point out what I think of it. I might say that the officer of the Department of Public Lands on the committee has my sincere sympathy if he is chairman, as he will be, because, as an officer of the department, he is responsible to the Government, and should be responsible to Parliament, too, because this is a very important matter. He will be in the minority to two people on the committee who are selected by the Minister and given tremendous power, because they represent a majority, but with no responsibility to anybody.

Mr. Ewan: Do you think it was better as it was under the old group system?

Mr. DUFFICY: I am not talking about the group system at all. The hon. member is jumping in where angels fear to tread. I am speaking about the system of balloting, which I think should remain entirely in the hands of the Department of Public Lands and not placed in the hands of people outside the department who are given great power but have no responsibility to anybody.

Mr. Ewan: If that were not done, you would have no objection to it?

Mr. DUFFICY: The hon. member can make his own speech; I am making mine. I am condemning the principle of appointments by Parliament of people from outside. I can tell hon. members opposite now—the Minister would deny it, of course—at least one person who will be on this selective committee. After all, we are not all naive in this House. He have all been in politics for a long time and are not complete fools. We know that the two people selected by the Minister under the Act to serve on this committee will be good Country Party supporters who might display some political patronage towards the people who are selected or rejected.

Mr. Fletcher: Oh, no!

Mr. DUFFICY: If the Minister wants to play politics, let us play them in the House, not outside.

Mr. Fletcher: The men will be chosen for their practical ability.

Mr. DUFFICY: Very well. The Minister had a committee inquiring into land matters prior to this. Was not somebody from the Warrego area on that committee?

Mr. Fletcher: That was not my committee.

Mr. DUFFICY: Whose committee was it?

Mr. Fletcher: That was a Country Party committee.

Mr. DUFFICY: It was an advisory committee on land matters.

Mr. Fletcher: There may have been a committee, but it was not my committee.

Mr. DUFFICY: That is even better. It was not a committee appointed by the Minister; it was a committee appointed by the Country Party. Let me suggest that these two members might be appointed by the Country Party, too.

Mr. Fletcher: Oh, no, no.

Mr. DUFFICY: That is what the Minister said. He said that there was an advisory committee on land matters. That is true?

Mr. Fletcher: I did not appoint it.

Mr. DUFFICY: But the Country Party did.

Mr. Fletcher: This has nothing to do with that.

Mr. DUFFICY: If a committee on land matters was appointed by the Country Party, surely to goodness the Minister, being a Country Party Minister, was aware of it and took some notice of that committee. It is true that somebody from the Warrego area, who is an executive member of the Country Party——

Mr. Fletcher: That has nothing to do with this at all.

Mr. DUFFICY: Hasn't it?

Mr. Fletcher: No.

Mr. DUFFICY: I suggest that it has this to do with it: that the same principle will apply in the selection of these two outside people as applied in the appointment of that committee.

Mr. Fletcher: I did not appoint the committee. It is a quite unwarranted suggestion.

Mr. DUFFICY: I will accept the Minister's assurance that politics will not enter into the appointment of these two people to the committee of review.

Mr. Harrison: They could vary from district to district.

Mr. DUFFICY: I will accept the Minister's assurance. If politics does not enter into it, I will be the most amazed person in the world. However, even if that is so, it still cannot be justified. How can the Minister justify appointing two people from outside without any responsibility to Parliament or to the Government?

Mr. Fletcher: They have every responsibility to me.

Mr. DUFFICY: They make a decision against which there is no appeal. The Minister can say, "You are not going to be on the committee any more." Does that interfere with their livelihood in any way?

Mr. Fletcher: That is not the point.

Mr. DUFFICY: It certainly is the point. They have no responsibility to Parliament, and they have no responsibility to the Government, as far as I can see, other than that they are appointed and perform their duties. They can be replaced, certainly, but they have no responsibility to the Government. The Minister intends making one of his departmental officers chairman of the committee. Undoubtedly he will be a man who has spent a lifetime in the Department of Public Lands, a man who has had considerable experience in land matters, who knows land administration, who knows how ballots should be conducted, and who has himself conducted them for many years. Despite all this experience, despite his responsibility as an officer of the department to the Minister, to the Government and, in the final analysis, to Parliament, he could find himself in a minority on the committee, and controlled by two people who would have limited experience of land administration and no responsibility. I say the principle is wrong.

Mr. Hewitt: I should like to debate that point with you.

Mr. DUFFICY: I should be very happy to debate anything at all with the hon. member.

Mr. Walsh: You will have a good chance in Committee.

Mr. DUFFICY: I would not be really interested in the hon. member at all, because I feel that, if I was, it would be like hitting a woman with a baby in her arms. That is what I think about the hon. member.

Mr. Ewan: Will you answer me one question?

Mr. DUFFICY: I will not answer the hon. member anything. Let us get away from that for a moment. We will have opportunities of dealing with this question more fully in the Committee stage, but there is something else I should like the Minister to mention in his reply. In his second-reading speech he said there was no provision for granting a company a lease of anything. I pointed out at the time by interjection that I thought he was wrong. Of course he was wrong, because there is a provision I am not condemning the Minister for this. After all, this Bill contains 385 clauses and it is very difficult to keep them all in mind, but it is a fact that in the brigalow section there is provision for the granting to a company of a 40-year lease of an area of 20,000 acres.

Mr. Fletcher: That is the old brigalow lease provision.

Mr. DUFFICY: It is a lease under this Bill.

Mr. Fletcher: Under the old Act, too.

Mr. DUFFICY: I am not concerned about the old Act; this is a consolidation and we are discussing this Bill.

Mr. Hewitt: Something you would never face up to as a Government.

Mr. DUFFICY: After all, I think the scheme might assist the hon. member considerably, including a lease in which he is interested, so he should keep off the brigalow scheme.

Mr. Hewitt: I will answer that later on.

Mr. DUFFICY: The hon. member may do that if he wishes. At present, I am speaking to the Minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, and I should like him to explain why a company should receive a 40-year lease of 20,000 acres which could be equivalent to four or perhaps five living areas? He said that no company was being granted a lease.

Mr. Fletcher: You mentioned the Fitzroy area.

Mr. DUFFICY: I am mentioning the provision of a brigalow lease under this Bill.

Mr. Fletcher: You mentioned it in connection with the Fitzroy area.

Mr. DUFFICY: Another provision I should like to mention in the short time at my disposal is Clause 16, which, as I see it, prevents an alien who has not received a permit under the Aliens Act from holding any leasehold tenure in this State. However, the same clause contains a provision whereby an alien can purchase in fee-simple an area up to 10,000 acres. It does not mention that specifically in the clause, but I think that is the effect of it. I should like the Minister to explain why an alien must receive a permit if he wishes to procure, say, a perpetual lease town allotment of 32 perches in Charleville. An alien must receive a permit under the Aliens Act before he is eligible to be the lessee of a perpetual lease allotment, yet he can, by public auction, buy 500 acres of land in the suburbs of Brisbane without a permit. I want to know where the distinction lies.

(Time expired.)

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (3.31 p.m.): After listening to the hon. member for Warrego, I think I may be pardoned for saying that his contribution was one of the most confused

speeches I have ever heard in the Chamber. He started off by saying that this Bill, which is a consolidation of the present land laws with the introduction of a few new principles, is the most regrettable Bill ever brought before Parliament. What a most extraordinary statement coming from a supposedly responsible member of the Chamber—the shadow Minister for Public Lands should ever the people of the State be so foolish as to return a Labour Government to the Treasury benches.

I have known the hon. member for Warrego since about 1925. He poses as an expert on land matters. Of course, it is so easy for him to delude and mislead the inexperienced members of the Opposition on these very important land matters. I knew him as a union organiser; I knew him as the secretary of the western division of the Australian Workers' Union. He was an excellent A.W.U. organiser; he was an excellent union secretary. He was very moderate in his approaches in those days. He was quite a good advocate in the Industrial Court, although no-one could ever pin him down. I have found the same difficulty in pinning him down here. To say that this is the most regrettable Bill ever brought before Parliament is a statement that surpasses all understanding when it is realised that a consolidation of the land laws had been asked for over the years. I remember that in my maiden speech when I entered Parliament in 1950 I said that one of the most important things that Queensland needed was a consolidation of its land laws. I appealed continually for a consolidation over the years but successive Labour Governments refused to do it. The last consolidation was undertaken in 1910. The present "monumental" work, as it has been referred to, incorporates the consolidation of 79 pieces of legislation. It was essential in the interests of the development of the State of Queensland that the consolidation should not be put off any longer. Indeed, it should have been tackled 10, 15, or 20 years ago but previous Governments were not prepared to face up to their responsibilities. They wanted a confused Land Act so that they could do this and that with it. It was so difficult to arrive at an interpretation of the real meanings of the Act, having to read 78 amendments in conjunction with the principal Act, that you had to be a trained barrister on points of law.

Mr. Aikens: You would have made the difficulty even greater if you got a barrister.

Mr. EWAN: What was the real reason behind printing this Bill in 385 clauses? I do not think that the hon. member for Warrego has even perused it. The 385 clauses contain the whole of the provisions of the 1910 Land Act and its 78 amendments. The previous Country Party Minister set this work in train, to be carried on by the present Minister, and it is highly necessary and desirable.

The hon. member for Warrego raised only four points. One was freeholding, to which he said the Labour Party was uncompromisingly opposed. That has been stated by the responsible members of the party, from the Leader of the Opposition down, on every occasion when freeholding legislation has been introduced in this Chamber. When the Labour Party first came into office it abolished freeholding provisions. Following its re-entry into Parliament in 1932 it abolished the then freeholding provisions and it will be very pleasing for me to be able to go back to the people in my electorate in the West and say, "If you return the Labour Government the freeholding provisions which you asked for for years, which you demanded, which you have worked for and which you have voted for, will be uncompromisingly abolished." There is no backing and filling in that statement. The people of Queensland should know that.

The shadow Minister for Public Lands had only four objections to the 385 clauses of this Bill. He said "It is the most regrettable Bill ever brought before the House."! The four objections related to freeholding, group balloting, and selective balloting, and then he spoke about aliens, and whether or not they could participate in ballots. Surely we expected something more from a person who is foreshadowed as the Minister for Public Lands.

Let us consider these matters in detail in the light of what the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Barcoo have said. The Leader of the Opposition said it was an abandonment of the policy laid down by the previous Minister for Public Lands administering land affairs on behalf of the Government. There is no suggestion of an abandonment of policy. It is an enlargement of policy. It is clarification of policy. To a great extent it is clarification and enlargement of the work carried on by the previous Minister.

The Leader of the Opposition opposed freeholding. He objected to the selective committee and selective balloting. His speech left me appalled at his ignorance in land matters.

The hon. gentleman does not realise that freehold tenure will provide increased productivity and greater employment of people. He even went so far as to say that he objected to capital gains being made on the resale of freehold lands. His statement cut right across the whole principles of free enterprise. We know that hon. members opposite do not understand that from the resale of land there is capital gain. They do not understand that in any business where goodwill is created there is capital gain. They do not understand that if land is selected from the Government, or is bought from the Government on a freehold basis, and is developed and brought to a full state of production over a period of years, there

must naturally, in accordance with free enterprise society, have a capital gain. Do they deny the right of anyone to make a capital gain? If they do, do they deny the right of a man who builds his own home to sell it in five years' time for more than he paid for it? Let them stand up on the hustings and tell their own people that and see what they say.

The hon. member for Barcoo made a snide reference to the abolition of the Land Administration Board and its replacement by the Land Administration Commission. What he did not say was that hon. members opposite were responsible for that through their maladministration and their unworthiness to govern, when they traduced a very fine gentleman in the person of Mr. Creighton at the Bar of the House. The Land Administration Commission was formed so that on no future occasion, if anything went wrong, would administrative officers have their characters dragged into the gutter and be prevented from taking part in their profession at a level commensurate with their ability.

Mr. Walsh: I think it would be in your own interests to leave the dead body where it is.

Mr. EWAN: It would be in the hon. member's interests, because he was associated with it.

Mr. Walsh: If you want to rake it up, go ahead.

Mr. EWAN: I have no intention of raking anything up. I merely want to explain to the new hon. member why that was done.

Let us consider the only objections that have so far been raised on the framing of the Bill. They need not occasion the Minister any undue alarm. We have not heard one constructive suggestion from the ranks of the Opposition.

Let us consider why it is necessary to have security of tenure. Is it realised that Victoria has over 85 per cent. of its agricultural and pastoral land under a secure tenure while Queensland has about 10 per cent? In Victoria approximately 40,000,000 acres of land are devoted to agriculture and the raising of stock while Queensland has approximately 350,000,000 acres used for the same purpose, yet it is amazing to realise that Victoria's productiveness is much greater than Queensland's. Do not forget that Victoria has freehold title with security of tenure, which the people got in the course of their development.

Mr. Walsh: Is that why you left?

Mr. EWAN: I was never in Victoria. The people in Victoria, over the years, in the acquisition of security of tenure, brought the land to its full production while the people of Queensland during the last 100 years, with one or two exceptions, have been denied that privilege. Yet hon. members opposite want to know why stock numbers in Queensland are static. There are no more sheep in Queensland today than there were in 1898, and we have about 6,000,00 head of cattle. If, over those years, the people of the State had had security of tenure, Queensland would have advanced much further. I am not criticising the magnificent job done by a mere handful of people in the State over the last 100 years—they have set a very worthy example—but, if freehold tenure had been granted and proceeded with over the years, we would have had a much greater agricultural and pastoral population providing more employment than we have at present and producing more.

It is interesting to note that about 87 per cent. of the total area of Queensland, or roughly 228,000,000 acres, receives more than 10 inches of rain a year, while in South Australia, with 17 per cent. or 42,000,000 acres, only 8,000,000 acres has more than a 10-inch rainfall. Excluding our sugar production, I think their primary production would nearly equal ours. We know, of course, that South Australia has a temperate climate and has winter rain, which we do not. That is far more effective for wheat-growing, and that sort of thing. Nevertheless, the discrepancy is so great that, as responsible people, it is our duty to search for the reasons behind the lack of development in this State.

As I said before, we have had over the years the mistaken idea of trying to bring about development before advancing security. This Bill is an attempt to give people reasonable security, though admittedly only up to a living area and not exceeding 10,000 acres. It will have been noticed that the hon. member for Warrego would not commit himself when he mentioned the alleged lack of consistency by this Government in not extending the freeholding privileges to areas over 10,000 acres. He quoted what might happen at Quilpie or Roma.

Mr. Bromley: We know what will happen at Roma at the next election.

Mr. EWAN: So do I. I am very confident.

The hon. member would not commit himself, although he said that it was inconsistent to grant people living in the more favourable areas the right to convert living areas not exceeding 10,000 acres, and deny that privilege to people farther out. He might be forgiven for not committing himself, but I have committed myself in this House a dozen times and I believe, in conformity with the policy of the Government and the Country Party, who are approaching this matter, as the Minister said this morning, cautiously, in an endeavour to make as few mistakes as is humanly possible, that ultimately the privilege of converting to a secure tenure up to a living area will apply anywhere in Queensland, without regard to acreage. I think that that is highly desirable, but the hon. member for Warrego merely criticised and would not commit himself.

Mr. Camm: Where is he now?

Mr. EWAN: He has gone. I do not know where, but give me three guesses and I would probably be right. Hon. members of the Opposition are not opposed to perpetual leases—they laud them—but did they, during the 30 years in which they occupied the Treasury benches, extend the privilege of converting to perpetual lease to the very people in the western areas that the hon. member for Warrego sought to defend? No, they did not. If there is to be any charge of inconsistency, it could well be levelled at the successive Labour Governments over the last 30 years for denying to people with over 10,000 acres, who cannot freehold, the right to a secure tenure. They claim that it is a better tenure than freehold, but they denied that right to these same people. Where is the consistency in that?

Mr. Bromley: At least the land remains in the hands of Australians, and not overseas monopolies.

Mr. EWAN: I take it that that was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lloyd: I say the same as the hon. member for Norman.

Mr. EWAN: If we look at the family history of the hon. member, it will probably be found that his mother and father came here many years ago—I hope they came freely—bringing with them all that they had, and on that Australia was built. What utter nonsense it is to use that sort of rubbish!

I shall now proceed to deal with other objections that might be raised to this section. Before doing so, I want to appeal to all thinking and responsible persons, in the knowledge that it is their desire that security of tenure be provided for people of this State, not to listen to the inherent rubbish that emanates from the Opposition benches about selling, or alienating, the people's estate. Of course, we know that hon. members opposite are Socialists. They believe that everything should be socialised. During their 30 years in office they succeeded in making Queensland the biggest landlord in the world outside of Soviet Russia. They do not believe in private ownership. They believe that the State is paramount. What is the State? It is the people who are in it. Hon. members opposite should not forget that the future will look after itself if we have security of tenure.

It is absurd for anyone to say that this land will be alienated and lost to the Government for all time. In New South Wales thousands of acres are being re-acquired by a Labour Government now. Nobody loses any money, because if a fair value, as determined by the Land Court, is paid for the acquisition of the land and it is subdivided, as many private landowners have done, the incoming tenants pay for it over a number of years. If Parliament believes that land is required for a specific purpose of development, there is no objection to re-acquisition, just as there was no objection to the re-acquisition of leasehold land by former Labour Governments on many occasions. The difference is, of course, that they failed to pay a fair and reasonable valuation, and I am referring particularly to the re-acquisition of the Wandoan lands.

Mr. Hilton: Under what circumstances can freehold land be re-acquired, and for what purposes?

Mr. EWAN: By direct offer.

Mr. Hilton: For soldier settlement, or something like that?

Mr. EWAN: Under the Public Works Land Resumption Act.

Mr. Hilton: For public purposes, but not for closer settlement in the ordinary sense of the word.

Mr. EWAN: Yes, it can be acquired for public purposes, including closer settlement.

Mr. Hilton: Your argument about New South Wales crashes to the ground immediately.

Mr. EWAN: It does not. I should like to debate that matter privately with the hon. member.

Passing from the question of freehold tenure, I come now to the complaints, most of which are invalid, of hon. members opposite about group balloting. They do not call it group balloting, but the selective balloting under the Bill is simply a transfer, with improvements, of the old group-balloting system. Labour Governments introduced the group system when men came from southern States with the know-how and capital and found land in Queensland, most of it vacant Crown land, that was not being used and asked that it be set aside for them to grow special crops on it or for certain other purposes. The Government made land available to them, and in many instances they did excellent work. The responsibility of selecting desirable applicants was thrown onto a committee within the Land Administration Commission. Under the framework of the existing Act, they were compelled to consider written applications and to decide, after studying the applications, whether the applicants were desirable, whether they would make a success of their venture, and whether they were reputable people who would not be a bad influence on other people in the area. After considering an applicant's statements on his finance, they had to decide whether he was suitable to take part in the ballot. The greatest single factor was the man's written application. If he wrote a good story, he was probably allowed in; if he wrote a bad story, he was probably kept out. As a result, weird and wonderful reasons were given for the rejection of some of the applicants.

The committee was faced with a virtually impossible task. I have been on the land all my life, but I could not pick a man who is

likely to succeed on the land. Sometimes a man might think he can, but I have seen many practical managers who have done a splendid job under a boss but who have been hopeless when put out on their own. One sees that everywhere. We have seen schoolmasters going on the land and making a success of it; we have seen Presbyterian parsons going on the land and making a success of it. Is it not ridiculous to say that by reading an application one can decide whether a person is desirable? One has to take into account his financial status. If we had done that over the last 100 years, there would not be much settlement in Queensland because people then had very little money. When we see the development that has taken place we should be proud of it but not satisfied, because we want to develop still further.

It was thought that this selective system of balloting would overcome some of the difficulties I have endeavoured to explain on the application of the group ballot. It was thought that certain land should come under it, that a man should have a certain amount of money, certain experience, and so on. Opposition members object to this selective committee. I make no apologies when I say that I am 100 per cent. behind the Minister on the selective committee. I want it clearly understood that ordinarily I do not favour group or selective ballots but I am 100 per cent. sincere when I say that this system is far superior to that adopted by the Labour Government.

As far as I know, the Minister will have power to appoint to this selective committee an officer of the department, who will be a full-time officer. He will then select two practical men living in and experienced in the district where the land is situated to consider all the applications and, when they have been considered, to choose the desirable applicants. There is no doubt in the world that they will make mistakes, but here is the advantage of our system over that adopted by the Opposition: Applicants will be informed of the reason for their rejection and will be given 14 days to appear personally before the committee and state their reasons why they think they are desirable applicants. They did not previously enjoy that privilege; it was denied to them. In many instances, at one stage the Government did not even tell them the reason for their rejection, and the officers of the department were instructed to that effect. When we came into office no reason was given to anyone for rejection. Hon. members opposite may say that these committee members will be Country Party supporters.

Mr. Graham: They will be, for sure.

Mr. EWAN: What if they are? Hon. members opposite can make suggestions to the Minister. Perhaps a union organiser could be included on the committe. He might be a practical man and the Minister might be particularly impressed with him and might put him on the committee. However, I sincerely hope that, in the selection of the men for the committee, the Minister will consider applicants in the area in which the land is situated, not in Brisbane, and that he asks the producers' organisations in the area in which the land is situated for nominations. If hon. members opposite so wish, they can approach him administratively and nominate those whom they consider to be practical men. A panel of names can be submitted to him. However, I hope the Minister will accept nominations from producers' organisations, because they are responsible bodies and would submit only the names of practical men who in their opinion would be quite capable of doing the job.

Mr. Beardmore: Men with local knowledge.

Mr. EWAN: Men with local knowledge. If such men are selected the system has a far greater chance of succeeding than the old system had. So much for the group-balloting system.

Great play was made of the living area. This is perhaps one of the most difficult matters to determine in the whole Bill. However, this provision is simply that contained in Section 8 of the 1927 Amendment Act, which was included at the suggestion of the late Sir William Payne and has served us very well during the interim period. The clause simply contains in a condensed form the provisions of the 1927 Act as laid down by Sir William Payne. It is claimed with some degree of accuracy that it contains in abbreviated form most of the provisions laid down by Sir William Payne. Is there anything wrong with that?

Mr. O'Donnell interjected.

Mr. EWAN: The Leader of the Opposition criticised it. Personally, I like a bit of fancy stuff. It would not matter to me if Section 8 was written into the Bill, but the persons appointed to do the work on the consolidation evidently thought that, as long as it did not defeat the ultimate end, brevity was more desirable than a lot of words that meant precisely the same thing.

Both the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Warrego criticised us for reducing from 60,00 acres to 45,000 acres the area of grazing selection tenures. They said that we were taking something away. The hon. member for Barcoo read a long report from "Country Life". When they speak in that way, it is quite obvious that they have not studied the Bill. Under the old Act the provision for a grazing selection was a maximum of 60,000 acres. Under the Bill it is 45,000 acres, but what hon. members opposite and "Country Life" have forgotten is that in the drafting of the Bill the number of tenures has been reduced from 28 to about eight. Under the Bill we have pastoral leases and preferential pastoral leases. Pastoral leases take in the large undeveloped areas that are difficult and costly to develop.

The preferential pastoral lease contains developmental conditions. Then we have the grazing homestead, grazing farm, agricultural farm, perpetual, and settlement leases, without going into the urban areas. I have named seven tenures.

If hon. members opposite look at the clause containing the 45,000-acre provision they will find that subclause (2) lays it down that if the departmental officers report to the Minister that a smaller area is not sufficient to provide a living in accordance with the definition of a "living area", he has the power to open an area in excess of 45,000 acres up to 60,000 acres. So again the provisions of that clause are no different from the provisions of the old Act, except that they have been condensed. To be perfectly honest, I cannot see the necessity for altering the old section, but the officers responsible for drafting the Bill are skilled men and they believed that it should be altered. I am quite happy about it. The point is that the Minister had some control under the old Act, as he has under the provisions of the Bill, over the living-area content of a grazing selection. It must be remembered that in accordance with the reports furnished to him the Minister had to approve of the design. In accordance with his policy he could ensure that no grazing homestead lease over 45,000 acres was opened or designed.

They are all the objections raised by the Opposition so far. It has been a most fruitless debate. I looked for a considerable amount of criticism, but we have heard nothing constructive. The greatest single factor for the Government to take into consideration is not to repeat the ghastly mistakes made in the past by Labour Governments.

It would be most interesting if we were able to get the relevant figures. I suggest that the Minister might endeavour to assist me in that respect. I have the figures to 31 December, 1959, from the 1961 Year Book. They set out the whole of the individual holdings, the preferential pastoral holdings, the pastoral development holdings, the occupational licenses, grazing farms, forest grazing leases, grazing homesteads, grazing farms, and the process of the alienation. I found that in 1959 there were 25,443 holdings.

It is my contention that owing to the ghastly mistakes made in the past when land was opened up in Queensland, there were areas ranging from 120 acres, 240 acres, and 680 acres right up. If we could only have the figures of the individual holdings and the individual holders from 1914 to 1920, and compare them with the present figures of 25,000 holdings and the number of people occupying those holdings, I know hon. members would share my dismay in knowing that we have no more people actually in occupation of the various holdings today than we had 40 years ago. We have a tremendous number of aggregations, simply because of mistakes in the past in opening up areas of unattractive land, areas incapable of affording a comfortable living in accordance with the interpretation of what constitutes a living area. The result has been that the people have sold these places. I have knowledge of a block of land of 640 acres at Wallumbilla incorporated in a holding of 14,000 acres, and the present owner paid £10 for it. Farther along the line there are areas of 15,000 and 20,000 acres, and even up to 60,000 acres made up of many sub-standard holdings.

I believe that closer settlement must be provided for. There must be areas from which a person can make a reasonable living. The whole success of the efforts of the Government depend on wise, sound, and careful administration of this Bill. There must be no repetition of past mistakes. There must be a sufficiently attractive area to keep people on it so that they will pass it on to their children and so increase the number of people working on the land and not reducing the number of holdings, which has been our experience over the last 20 or 30 years. Let us be very careful how we help them. Let us provide what constitutes a living area. Let us provide an area which will be sufficient to secure for them a comfortable living and which will enable them to stand up against the vicissitudes which they will encounter.

Mr. Graham: And make them all graziers?

Mr. EWAN: If the land is not suited for anything else, has the hon. member any objection to graziers? Graziers were responsible for the great development we have experienced. Goodness, gracious me! There is an example. The hon. member for Mackay is saying, "Make them graziers." What is wrong with graziers? I am proud to be associated with them. If the hon. member mixed with them, he would not have such extreme views. It is appalling to hear an assertion such as his. Give these people sound living areas and err, if you are going to err, on the side of generosity. As the Bill says, give them sufficient to provide for the wife and infant children until they are educated in the hope that the land will prove sufficiently attractive to imbue them with a desire to stay on it and to help in the development of this great State. I know that is the Minister's idea. It is certainly mine and, I think, that of every hon. member on this side of the House with an interest in the land. I am beginning to wonder whether the same motivating force is behind the utterances of hon. members opposite.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (4.11 p.m.): Having perused the consolidating Bill, I can welcome its presentation. That does not mean, of course, that I must agree with all the principles, particularly some of the new ones, contained therein. I think it is a measure that has to be studied at great length before the import of all the new principles can be fully appreciated, and I

hope that the Minister will not proceed to the Committee stage till towards the end of this session, because very serious consideration has to be given to some of those important principles.

While I appreciate the form of the measure and congratulate all those concerned in its drafting and compilation, I have some disagreement with the Minister inasmuch as this morning he intimated that already amendments have been suggested and considered, and that he intends to move them. We do not know their import, nor did he indicate to the House what they were. Many of the clauses of the Bill are inter-related, and this afternoon we are at a disadvantage in setting out to debate the principles of the Bill knowing that later the Minister will move amendments, though he has not given us a clue as to what aspects will be affected.

Mr. Fletcher: Why have you asked me to keep the Committee stage till the end of the session if you do not want to look at the Bill? And if you are going to look at it, it is quite obvious that you expect to have further ideas on it.

Mr. HILTON: If the Minister has already determined that certain amendments are necessary, that is all the more reason why he should have intimated to the House what those amendments are so that in debating the principles of the Bill this afternoon—and we cannot deal with the clauses; Standing Orders forbid that—we will not be beating the air in suggesting certain things about clauses on which the Minister has already made up his mind to move amendments.

Mr. Fletcher: Nothing vital will be changed. In any case, it has to be tidied up legally, then presented to the joint parties and adopted before I can go ahead on that basis.

Mr. HILTON: As the Minister has just made that astounding statement, I think he was premature in bringing the Bill before the House without having attended to all those things.

Mr. Fletcher: I am only talking about those things that came out of tabling the Bill, as was requested.

Mr. HILTON: The Bill was introduced and circulated, and no hon. member has had an opportunity of criticising the principles or suggesting anything until today. If the Minister argues that, because certain other interested parties——

Mr. Fletcher: You were quite entitled to approach me with suggestions.

Mr. HILTON: The Minister is a little late in extending that invitation now.

Mr. Fletcher: I did it on the introduction.

Mr. HILTON: I beg to differ. The usual procedure, of course, is that the Bill lies in the House for some time. The Minister said he would allow a reasonable period so that members could study it and be able to make suggestions at the second-reading and Committee stages. He did not extend the invitation to hon. members on this side to consult him in his office on the matter. If there are amendments suggested by interested parties outside this House, to which the Minister has agreed, I think that he should, in all fairness, give hon. members at least some indication of what they are.

Mr. Fletcher: Some hon. members have construed my invitation in the manner in which I meant it to be taken.

Mr. Walsh: You mean members of your own Caucus.

Mr. Fletcher: Not necessarily.

Mr. HILTON: I should be surprised if any hon. members on this side of the House have been to see the Minister or his officers in the department and discussed the provisions of this Bill. I do not wish to argue the point unduly, but I desire to stress that, if there are to be any important amendments, the Minister should at least have given, in his second-reading speech, some indication of them.

Mr. Fletcher: They are only a few procedural ones, and no policy ones.

Mr. HILTON: Now we are getting the matter clarified a little farther.

Mr. Fletcher: Between now and the Committee stage you may come to my office if you feel badly about something.

Mr. HILTON: I propse to deal this afternoon with certain of the new principles contained in the Bill. Whilst everybody appreciates that this is a consolidating measure, I join issue with those who assert that previous Governments refused to proceed along these lines. During the short time that I was Minister for Public Lands, one thing that impressed itself very much on me, as I think on previous Ministers, was the necessity to consolidate the Act. I recall instructing executive officers to make notes of certain things that they thought should be incorporated in a consolidated Act. No-one with any common sense would argue that the time for a consolidation of the Land Act was not overdue. It was a question of time and obtaining the services of officers to carry out this all-important work.

Much of the debate this afternoon has revolved round increasing from 5,000 to 10,000 acres the area that may be freeholded under the provisions of this Act. I want to make my position quite clear. As a responsible member of this Assembly, I stand four-square behind a policy of secure tenure to producers, whether they be in a large or a small way, and closer settlement. To foster that policy, it is not necessary, in my opinion, to have this system of freeholding. It is absurd for anybody to say that Queensland has been retarded because of what I submit

are the excellent land laws that have governed land settlement and development in this State for many years. Certainly, they have not been perfect in every respect.

I listened to the hon. member for Roma this afternoon boost land development in Victoria compared with the position in Queensland. I wish to remind him that hundreds of Victorians have travelled from their own State to Queensland seeking land here. As a matter of fact, in the post-war period many of these people from Victoria were responsible for putting in train the great inflation in land prices that took place in Queensland.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: There was no room for them down there.

Mr. HILTON: They came from Victoria because of the extortionate prices that had to be paid for land down there.

Mr. Ewan: It was because they had full development down there.

Mr. HILTON: I remind the hon. member that it was irrigation schemes, implemented at great expense by the Victorian Government, assisted of course by the Commonwealth Government, that were responsible more than any other factor for the intense development in Victoria, plus the climatic conditions that that State enjoys.

Mr. Ewan: Who undertook the first irrigation in Victoria?

Mr. HILTON: I, too, have read the story of irrigation in Victoria.

Mr. Ewan: They paid for it themselves.

Mr. HILTON: And many millions of pounds were written off by the Victorian Government.

What an unpatriotic attitude towards Queensland to argue that there has been no development here—that we have stagnated—because of the land laws that were in force! Victorians in their thousands came to Queensland and sought to participate in the wonderful opportunities for land settlement that were open to them here because of the Government's system of tenures. Nobody can deny that.

I object to freeholding because, in due course, it can lead to the creation of big monopolies in the ownership of land. The Minister said this morning that the Government had to proceed with great caution in this matter.

Mr. Ewan: As a former Minister for Public Lands, I thought you would know your Act. I told you that the Government can resume land under the Public Works Land Resumption Act, and it can.

Mr. HILTON: I entirely agree. I have not argued for one moment that the Government cannot do that. But I ask the hon. member to produce proof of resumptions of large areas of land recently, either in this State or in any other State, for closer settlement, other than for soldier settlement.

Mr. Ewan: In this State, or in any other State?

Mr. HILTON: In any other State.

Mr. Ewan: I will give you dozens in New South Wales.

Mr. HILTON: For soldier settlement.

Mr. Ewan: No, not for soldier settlement.

Mr. HILTON: Of course, the Government is put to great expense and, as the hon. member for Roma well knows, the incoming tenants have to pay through the nose for it.

Mr. Ewan: I do not know it.

Mr. HILTON: The Minister said this morning that the Government had to proceed with great caution in the matter of freeholding. When the previous Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, the hon. member for Fassifern, brought down legislation permitting the freeholding of up to 5,000 acres, he intimated on behalf of the Government that that was the Government's firm policy and that it would not go beyond 5,000 acres. The Bill now before the House provides for 10,000 acres, and if we accept the remarks of the hon. member for Roma as a guide, in due course there will be no limit on the area that may be freeholded, other than that it is a living area.

Mr. Ewan: I would be very happy if that came about.

Mr. HILTON: As I said at the introductory stage, there are vast areas of Queensland, including the brigalow belt, where 5,000 acres or 10,000 acres may be a living area under existing circumstances; but in 50 years that may comprise many living areas. Of course, if we wish to proceed with closer settlement then, it will involve costly resumptions.

The very principles of the legislation support my contention in regard to preventing the creation of monopolies in freehold land. Under the provisions of balloting for grazing selections, companies are not allowed to participate other than for the brigalow leases. But once a lessee acquires a grazing selection of up to 10,000 acres, under the provisions of the Act he can freehold that, and he need not wait for 30 years to do so. If he has the money to freehold it, he can do it within one or two years. Immediately it becomes freehold he can sell it to another person, or to a company if he so desires. Once he has freehold title to it with absolutely no restriction as to its disposal, he may sell it to another company.

Mr. Muller: He has, first of all, to pay for it.

Mr. HILTON: Of course he has to pay for it, but after he wins a ballot he can pay for it in two years or less if he wishes and then immediately dispose of it to a company. I am looking a long way ahead and I do not favour a policy that may lead to the creation of land monopolies. Most certainly, under the provisions of this legislation, monopolies could be created in the years that lie ahead.

Mr. Muller: That has not happened in freehold areas up to now. It leads not to monopolies, but to closer settlement.

Mr. HILTON: When the hon. member first brought in his legislation?

Mr. Muller: I am talking about our freehold areas, in which the experience has been the reverse to monopolies.

Mr. HILTON: In that respect, the areas were too small. In the old days, farms were cut up and opened for selection—a few hundred acres. In the days of the Moore Government, of course, there was no limitation on the area, if I remember rightly, but for that period of three years the people did not have much money. The option to freehold was granted but, by and large, in the old days freehold settlement proceeded in respect of small areas only. The Darling Downs and the Fassifern district are examples of that. They were, in the main, small areas, but I am drawing attention to the position that could develop in 20, 30, 40, or 50 years, when areas of up to 10,000 acres of land could be freeholded, and, immediately they are freeholded, they could be sold to large companies.

We know the case of one man whose name has been mentioned in this House from time to time. In the post-war years he had hundreds of thousands or millions of pounds of capital behind him and went round and bought up freehold land all over Queensland wherever he could get his hands on it. We do not know what is going to happen on land settlement in the next 10 years. Because of the likely entry of Britain into the European Common Market, the whole scene may be changed here and I think it is better to play safe and make sure that no large monopolies will gain control of vast areas of land that might be required for closer settlement.

Mr. Ewan: Don't you think that land tax and death duties will stop that?

Mr. HILTON: The hon. member for Roma interjects on land tax. On the one hand it is considered the policy of the party he represents—the Country Party—and the Liberal Party to reduce land tax progressively with a view to its entire abolition. They cannot have it both ways. On the one hand they say, "We do not believe in land tax; it must go," and on the other they argue that large landholders will be called upon in the future to pay land tax, which may not be in existence at that time.

Mr. Ewan: If we found that was happening, as you suggest, we would be foolish if we did not reintroduce land tax.

Mr. HILTON: That argument does not go down with me.

Mr. Walsh: Will you put that on your campaign leaflet?

Mr. HILTON: The Government says, "It is our policy to eliminate land tax completely." Speaking personally, I do not believe in the ordinary man on a living area paying land tax if he is working his land; I think it is an imposition. In addition, under the provisions of this legislation it will be found that while land tax is still in operation the man on perpetual lease has not to pay it but the freeholder has. These anomalies can arise because of the provisions in this legislation. If we have power to give that security of tenure to Crown lessees without, of course, creating the danger of land monopolies, why stress—I repeat, "why stress"—this freeholding of land, as the hon. member for Roma remarked, up to any area at all? If his argument is valid the Government should not be including in the Bill the restriction that prevents companies from participating in land ballots for grazing selections. It is ridiculous to have that provision on the one hand and to open the door wide on the other.

As far as capital gains are concerned, anybody who works on the land and improves it is entitled to some compensation for his effort. But I wish to make the point that down through the years, through the development of closer settlement, the community in general has played a big part in enhancing the value of land that previously was not worth very much. As a result of that community effort, men who hold certain land now can obtain a large reward from its enhanced value—a value they have played no part whatever in bringing about.

Mr. Muller: The capital gains were very much greater on leasehold land than on freehold land.

Mr. HILTON: I concede that. The hon. member for Bundaberg has stressed that point from time to time. I concede the point that large capital gains have been made on the sale of Crown leaseholds. The present Government brought in a tax on that, but it has been decided to eliminate it now because of the keen opposition in Country Party circles.

When we talk about capital gains and the man working freehold land being entitled to something for his effort, I want to make the point that in many instances much of the capital gain is not due solely to his efforts but to the enhanced value arising from the community effort.

Mr. Muller: And fluctuations in values from time to time.

Mr. HILTON: That is quite true.

Freeholding must have a long-range effect on Crown revenue. At this stage nobody can give a clear exposition on the ratio between land tax and the average amount paid by way of Crown rentals, but as land is freeholded and paid for, and assuming land tax goes by the board, Crown revenues will be appreciably affected. That will be a continuing process down through the years.

Although I am not arguing that the Crown should be out to charge exorbitant rentals, I think every fair-minded person realises that a person using land, whether it be as an industrial site or for primary production, should pay a fair rental for it. I do not think the Minister would argue against that, either. So far we have nothing from the Government to indicate what effect freeholding will have on Crown revenues in 20, 30, 40, or 50 years. In any event, it will mean a very big reduction. Possibly the Government now has such a bonanza in off-course totalisator betting that it may be prepared to forget about legitimate revenue through land rentals.

Mr. Ewan: Don't you think that increased production will more than offset that loss of revenue?

Mr. HILTON: Taxation flows directly to the Commonwealth Government, not to the State Treasury.

Mr. Ewan: Indirectly, it does.

Mr. HILTON: On the formula that applies it matters little what our production will be in the future because the Commonwealth Government holds the reins. The State should not impoverish itself, as we have done in the past with irrigation schemes, to provide extra revenue for the Commonwealth Government. That applies particularly to the tobacco industry.

On the question of equity in rentals, look at the position that develops now in the renting of perpetual leases. The old perpetual leases will continue to pay £1 10s. per cent. per annum. The new perpetual leases will pay £2 10s. per cent. per annum on the same capital values. I am not for one moment advocating repudiation of a contract, but I think repudiation can only be applied between two individuals, or between the Government and the individual.

Mr. Muller: The old tenants are not affected.

Mr. HILTON: I know they are not, but the new ones are. They will all be valued on the same basis. This most illogical position will develop. It is already in existence with holders of perpetual-lease land comparable in value and nature paying differing rentals to the Crown each year. I think that could be overcome when the holder of the perpetual lease dies. If the Government insists that £1 10s. per cent. per annum is too low and should be increased to £2 10s. per cent. per annum in the case of new perpetual leases, when the holder of an old perpetual lease passes on I do not think there would be any repudiation of a personal contract if the rental was reviewed. It would certainly be an alteration to a lease given in perpetuity, but because of the Government's bringing in a new basis for rental in respect of new perpetual leases, I do not think they should allow this anomalous position to develop and remain in perpetuity, with tenants of the Crown paying one rental in one area, and perhaps those on adjoining blocks paying a different rental.

Whilst I do not for one moment stand for repudiation, I think that once the holder of the perpetual lease passes on, the terms of the rental of that lease could be renewed or reviewed to bring it into line with the decision of the Government. I make that suggestion, not that I want to see anybody pay any more or less, but for the sake of uniformity and equity between the tenants and the Government. I think some action should be taken in that direction.

Now let me say a few words on the subject of timber treatment. The Minister charged me with not knowing about the administration associated with the treating of timber. I think I know something about that. I know it is necessary to obtain a permit. The permit can be obtained and it is valid to the lessee concerned for a long time after it is issued. I think the principle of paying an outgoing lessee for timber treatment is entirely wrong. It has been resisted by various Governments down through the years ever since the question first arose. The clearing and treatment of timber is a condition of the lease. To my mind I think it is much fairer and more reasonable and equitable for the Crown to impose fair and reasonable conditions in the clearing of timber when a lease is issued rather than have the lessee compensated for any timber cleared in the last 10 years of his lease.

I have been told that to implement administration of this principle it would be necessary to have an army of land rangers to make continuous inspections of timber treatment in the last rental period. Again it would have the effect of making things much more difficult for an incoming lessee if he had to pay for timber treatment carried out perhaps at great expense. He may be prepared to do the necessary work himself if he had to carry it out.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: He would lose all those years, though.

Mr. HILTON: When a man enters a ballot for a piece of land, in most cases he looks at the land and sees what it is and he knows the conditions of the lease. If he knows what it is about, he knows what he is up for in work and expenditure. If the original lessee was supposed to clear the timber at reasonable periods but postponed it till the last 10 years, why should he get the full compensation at the expense of the incoming lessee?

The whole question arose because of the conditions associated with certain brigalow of the lands in the Goodinwindi district some few years ago. Lots of people did timber treatment. It was when the amending Bill was introduced by the previous Government to provide that, if they surrendered certain land, they would be granted priority over two blocks that it hit the light of day. There was intense agitation for the introduction of this unsound principle. I think it is much better for the Government to impose reasonable conditions for the clearing of timber in a lease when it is first granted, and the lessee should be held to his obligation. He covenants to do a certain job and he should do it within a stipulated time. This principle is wrong. The fact that it was not adopted through the years by previous Labour Governments and non-Labour Governments indicates that men experienced in land development and land administration in the past regarded it as unsound. It means that the Government has, under pressure, decided to incorporate an unsound principle, which will lead to no end of difficulty in administration.

While I am speaking on the terms of leases as set out in the legislation, I want to make a point on the security of tenure. In certain types of country, particularly trap-rock country, where there is no hope that agriculture will ever be carried on, and where perhaps difficulties are encountered in the clearing of scrub susceptible to regrowth from time to time, I do not see any objection to extending leases from 30 to 40 years, or even to 50 years if necessary. I have always regarded it as foolish to lay down as a hard-and-fast term 30 years all the way along even with trap-rock country, country infested with rosemary or with peach-bush. Even looking 100 years ahead it would never be more than one living area, so the restriction is absurd. With those selections calling for recurring expenditure on noxious weeds I should be happy to see the lease extended to 40 or 50 years if necessary.

Again, if the conditions of a stud holding are being observed as they should be, I do not see that 40 years is an undue length of time for the lease. I should like to see it 50 years. It is a very specialised business.

Mr. Muller: If they comply with the conditions the lease goes on for ever.

Mr. HILTON: But initially it is for 40 years.

Mr. Muller: Still, if they comply with the conditions it goes on for ever.

Mr. HILTON: That is so. The same applies to every grazing selection that is a living area. A person or company establishing a stud is, of course, involved in considerable expense. It is a specialised field, and only a few people are adapted to it.

Mr. Fletcher: They have an absolute right to renewal.

Mr. HILTON: I agree with that. That being the case, why limit it to 40 years in the first instance?

Mr. Fletcher: Why put any limitation?

Mr. HILTON: It is leasehold land. If the time comes when it is decided not to continue it as a stud property, the Crown has the right of resumption.

Mr. Muller: The only lever you had over them was compliance with the conditions.

Mr. HILTON: That is true, otherwise there would be no lever over them at all. Because of the heavy expense involved and the specialised work associated with a stud, I would agree to 50 years for a stud lease in the first instance, provided the requirements of the Department of Public Lands were carried out in every detail.

A lot has been said about security of tenure. Let us take into consideration some common-sense aspects of ordinary grazing selections, where there would never be more than one living area and where there would be unusual expense because of noxious weeds. Let us encourage the development of stud holdings, because they are very necessary if the pastoral industry is to develop as it should.

There are other aspects relating to the Land Court on which I should like to comment. That would mean, however, that I would have to discuss particular clauses, so I shall content myself at this stage with saying that there are certain aspects of the legislation concerning the Land Court which, in my opinion, need very serious consideration and review. I think that in some instances the Court has been given too much power. We see in another instance provision made for a merging of the judicial functions of the court and the administration of the department. I think that the court should be kept completely free from the administrative section of the department. As hon. members know, there is provision for the Minister to refer any matter arising from this Act to a member of the Land Commission and a member of the Land Court for joint consideration. That member of the Land Court could be called upon later to hear argument on, and decide, a matter that was related to his earlier inquiries. I merely make the point that that is an amendment that could be examined to prevent matters being referred to a committee composed of members of the Land Commission and a member or members of the Land Court. I think that there should be a clear line of demarcation between the court and the administration all the way along the line.

I think it is entirely wrong that the President of the Land Court has to be a man with at least five years' legal experience. That is not at all necessary, and the fact

that any member of the Land Court can relieve the President if he is ill or absent indicates that this insistence on his being a legal man is all poppycock. We may not always have in the Department of Public Lands a legal man versed in land matters and competent to fill the Presidency. I do not see why that condition should be imposed; there is no necessity for it. It may operate against the best interests of the court from time to time.

Mr. Muller: It would be helpful if he had that legal training.

Mr. HILTON: If no legal man with experience in land matters were available within the Department of Public Lands, it may be necessary to go outside the department altogether to the legal profession and perhaps select a man with no qualifications or experience in land administration and all that goes with it.

Mr. Walsh: After all, the Land Appeal Court is supposed to determine the legal matters.

Mr. HILTON: That is so.

Mr. Hart: It would be quite expensive.

Mr. HILTON: We might have something to say about it in the Committee stages, but it is mandatory under the provisions of the Act for a judge of the Supreme Court to sit on the Land Appeal Court. History reveals that one judge of the Supreme Court intimated that he would no longer sit on the Land Appeal Court because two non-legal members of the Court gave a majority decision against him on a question of law.

Mr. Walsh: I think there are two now.

Mr. HILTON: Under the provisions of the Act, it is mandatory for a judge of the Supreme Court to sit on the Land Appeal Court, and the Government may well find itself in some difficulty under the provisions of the Bill.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah) (4.51 p.m.): The Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation said earlier this morning that the Bill is a milestone in the history of the land laws of this State. I agree with him, and I think that all hon. members and the people generally are pleased that the Land Acts have been consolidated. It will certainly simplify the administration of the Act in years to come, and I compliment the committee responsible for the compilation of the Bill on their efforts. The members of the committee deserve very high praise for the way in which they have consolidated 59 Acts and amendments. It has also been a big responsibility for the Minister, and I give him credit for the part that he has played. I understand, too, that the hon. member for Fassifern, who was the previous Minister for Public Lands, took the first steps to have the Land Acts consolidated, and he also should be given credit.

I believe that the success or otherwise of the Bill will depend largely on the way in which it is administered. It will have a far-reaching effect on certain land matters. There are a number of new features that hon. members on this side of the House are very pleased to see included in the Bill. The period in which to pay for the freeholding of land has been extended from 20 to 30 years, and I think that every fair-minded person will agree, particularly having in mind the problems associated with land matters generally, that this is a wise, just, and fair method of assisting primary producers.

The hon. member for Carnarvon spoke at length on the question of compensation for land treatment during the last period of 10 years of a lease and said that, in his opinion, it was entirely wrong. I understand that other hon. members hold the same view. I want to make it clear that in fairness to the people who occupy the land and carry out such an improvement, I have always striven to have this provision introduced. It is quite obvious to me—I am surprised that it is not obvious to other hon. members and to the previous speaker—that if the provision is not incorporated in the Bill, a great deal of development and progress in the State will not take place. Obviously, in the last 10 years of a lease it is not possible to be recouped for the expenditure on timber treatment. By the time the land is cleared and grassed, the lease has expired. Over the years, that has greatly retarded land development, and I commend the Minister for including the provision in the Bill.

I should also like to speak at some length on the increase from 5,000 to 10,000 acres in the area that may be freeholded. In my opinion, this is a very important step forward in the progress of Queensland generally. In saying that, I am one who, like other members here, has been associated with land all my life and I realise the great difference it makes if one occupies freehold land as against land of another tenure. No man on leasehold land would want to carry out improvements of a high standard if he was not certain of the outcome of the particular work. The previous speaker said that our State has not been retarded by the old Act; I completely disagree with him and other Speakers in this connection. I cannot understand how hon. members of this Assembly can imagine that leasehold tenure, as it existed in the past, has not had a very definite effect on progress.

After the war I was engaged clearing land and pulling scrub for a period of 10 or 12 years and from that experience I realised just how much production and development we have lost in this State, because invariably on areas that had only a short time—from

10 to 15 years—to run the lessee would say that carrying out development work in that period was not warranted.

Mr. O'Donnell: Sir William Payne did not agree with what you are saying.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That may be his report but I am speaking from my own personal experience, as one who carried a fair amount of equipment and had quite a number of men employed in this occupation. That is the experience I have had and I know very definitely that that has been the result during the last years of a lease.

The hon. member for Carnarvon spoke of men from Victoria seeking land in our State. That is natural because of the greater scope and opportunities here, and because there was so little development——

Mr. Walsh: And because of the cheap land.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Because of the cheap land and because of the fact that it had not been developed as freehold land. For those reasons many of these men came to Queensland and sought land where there was scope and where the land was cheaper. I wonder how Victoria was able to counter the loss in Crown revenue that the hon. member for Carnarvon referred to previously? I cannot see why the primary producers, who are unable to control their costs, who have so much to contend with in making both ends meet, should be looked upon as a source of revenue for the Government as a whole. Victoria has not suffered from having a preponderance of freehold land. It is a very progressive State, and I contend that the development and production that takes place more than compensates for the loss of revenue that may ultimately result from freeholding land.

The hon. member also spoke of the possibility that in 10 to 30 years' time some of these areas that may be freeholded today would be much more than living areas. Invariably there are circumstances that take charge of these factors. We see many instances today, where sons of the family grow up and the area is divided and set out in different portions, of properties becoming separate living areas for different members of a family. Indeed, death duties and such like always take toll of these areas that might perhaps eventually become too large.

I am pleased that the Minister has made it quite clear that areas under 10,000 acres that could be considered living areas will also be granted freehold tenure, because I consider that whether an area is 7,000 or 8,000 acres, or whatever it may be, these people should also have the opportunity to convert to freehold. Freehold tenure is the only way to give real incentive to the man on the land to make his improvements worth-while and lasting and to maintain them in good condition to the very end.

Mr. Walsh: Why stop at the limit of 10,000 acres if that is the case?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Those are precisely my thoughts and views on the matter. I personally believe that every man who works on the land, no matter where he is, should be entitled to a living area. I have stressed that again and again in public and at party meetings. If the present Government continues in office, I believe that ultimately that will be the objective and the ideal. As the hon. member for Warrego said, I believe that if it is right for a man to have freehold tenure for his household allotment, and as the hon. member for Barcoo indicated, if the household allotment is freeholded—the home site, as he referred to it——

Mr. O'Donnell: I said that if you freehold up to 10,000 acres in one area, surely a man in another area would expect to be granted the freehold of a living area in his part of the State.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The hon. member referred to the fact that if freehold tenure is granted for 2,000, 3,000, or 5,000 acres, everybody should be entitled to the same consideration. In other words, if we do it for one we should do it for all. That is what I maintain. I believe that eventually that will be so.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that it would lead to the buying up of large areas of land. In the South Burnett and on the Downs we realise that that is definitely not the case. It does not take place there. It has not taken place in the closer-settlement freehold areas that we know of. I am only sorry that the Bill does not help the holders of the western leases. In the larger areas out there the lessees should be given the opportunity of freehold tenure to a living area. Many of those people will be very disappointed in the Bill for that reason. Naturally, the development of those areas has always been very slow. As no encouragement has been given on this occasion, it will take years to achieve full progress and productivity in much of that part of the State.

The hon. member for Roma gave a very interesting illustration of the difference between the progress and development in Victoria and that in Queensland. I agree completely with what was said by the president of the Chamber of Manufactures, Mr. Forsyth, at the Australian Institute of Management conference at St. Lucia a few months ago. He said that Queensland was the most Government-controlled State in the Commonwealth and had been over the years.

Mr. Walsh: The last seven.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, in the last seven years with the lifting of price control, as the hon. member will agree, we have removed a great deal of that control. That has been done even in land matters. Mr. Forsyth said that before full progress and

development could take place one of Queensland's first requirements was to overcome that control. Unfortunately, in land matters we are well out in the fore with Government control, as we have been for so many years. Even though that has altered slightly, to my mind we are progressing much too slowly. It is definitely not in the real interest of progress and development. I challenge any hon. member to prove to me that leasehold tenure is more advantageous than freehold tenure.

Mr. Donald: What about the success of the hon. member for Roma under leasehold? Who would have been able to buy that property?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I maintain that all of us should be able to own freehold land. While I agree on the subject of treatment over the last 10 years, I have never been able to work out why people who are granted a lease of land should be expected to get all these concessions free. Not one man who owns freehold land would be prepared to sell it. On that basis, it would not be fair to expect a man with freehold land to say, "I will not charge for any of the clearing or development I have done."

Mr. Donald: Don't you believe in encouraging people to go on the land?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes.

Mr. Donald: Don't you think that is encouragement for them?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That they should have to pay for the improvements? It may be an encouragement. I think if the hon. member had a lease of land or freehold land, he would not be prepared to sell it for the value of the fences.

Mr. Donald: How could they get land if it was not leasehold?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: In the same way as other people pay for it.

Mr. Donald: It is absolutely impossible.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No, it is not.

Mr. Donald: Where would they get the money from?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: We know that they can get money to buy freehold land. That could be quite an interesting remark of the hon. member, but that is all right as far as I am concerned. I think he is inclined to make it a personal matter. I believe this is very important and very necessary if we are to live as a democratic and free country. Not only those with a small portion of land, a small market garden, or a building site, but everyone who wants to build a home or make a living should be entitled to a living area.

Mr. Donald: Thousands of people cannot get an allotment to build on.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not know why that is. I realise, perhaps, that it is difficult to buy a building site, but that has nothing to do with the freeholding of land.

I agree with the Minister when he said in a Press statement in June that it was recognised that a soil's best fertiliser is the foot of its owner, and that individual ownership of land enhances the standard of husbandry and responsibility, both for the maintenance and the improvement of the estate for its own sake and for the sake of the security and prosperity of the owner-occupier and his family after him.

There is a lot of truth in that statement. It cannot be applied completely to the man who has only a lease because there is always the uncertainty of the future. When the lease comes to a conclusion there will always be the thought of whether this or that section will belong to him in the ultimate conclusion. Consequently, I do not think the Minister's illustration or example covers all those circumstances.

I believe that this matter of paying at least for the clearing of the timber or the maintenance during the last years is an advantage, but it still does not overcome the fact that he is probably going to lose portion of that land that he has been working. I stress again that at least a living area or portion should be available to him. The Minister cannot say in advance which portions will be resumed. If he could so indicate to the landholder, naturally more development would take place. It seems to me to be an implication that some of the improved land will be taken and offered under a new lease. In some circumstances that is absolutely correct. I agree that those areas larger than a living area should be resumed. I am not speaking about that. I am speaking entirely of a living area, just as the hon. member for Roma did. That is the only area that should concern us and it does concern me. The area beyond a living area should eventually, upon the expiry of the lease, revert to the Crown.

It is a different matter with the living area. Men are entitled to some degree of security of tenure so that they might make and maintain worth-while improvements. I do not think it is necessary to emphasise the point, but I want to make it quite clear that I think at least this much should be conceded by hon. members opposite. If we concede it, as the hon. member for Barcoo said, to one, we should concede it to all. It is right for a man to have freehold land to avoid the uncertainty that may otherwise arise. The excuse that may be given at this stage that a living area today may be more than a living area at some other time is taken care of in the way I explained earlier.

From time to time we hear it said, particularly in the House, that the land is the heritage of the people, the asset of the Crown. This is completely a Socialistic idea. Why should the land be a Crown asset more

than any other commodity or business or undertaking in a country? I have never been able to work out why just land is considered the asset of the people or of the country. Whether it belongs to the Crown or not, the people get the benefit of it. I am sure the hon. member on my right will agree that the people as a whole get the benefit of the land, whoever has the legal title to it.

Mr. Donald: I cannot follow your logic.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I can never follow the hon. member's. I can never see how it makes any difference. It seems obvious that the people need security to get financial assistance.

Mr. Donald interjected.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have never been able to work out the logic of the assertion that, because the Government owns land, the people as a whole get the real benefit, whether in these circumstances or in any other. The hon. member seems to imply that that is so.

Mr. Hanlon: Let us take, for example, water, which must be regarded as a fundamental necessity. You would not allow some people to corner all the water and withhold it from their neighbours?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Perhaps that could be used as an illustration but I do not think it is analogous. Other unrealistic illustrations could be applied with equal force.

Mr. Donald: All wealth comes from the land.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes.

Mr. Burrows: Whom do you think the Creator intended the land to be used by?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: As many people as are prepared to go on the land and work it. Everybody prepared to do that is entitled to land.

Mr. Burrows: I would sooner be one-eyed than un-Christian in my attitude.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not see anything un-Christian in giving everyone a living area, and making it freehold land on which to make a home to be kept for all time. No doubt there are arguments for and against, but there are always more arguments for this proposition in a fair, Christian, and democratic country.

Mr. Aikens: Did not Christ say, "Sell all thy goods and give it to the poor?"

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: That was used as an illustration under conditions and circumstances different from those of today, and when there were no social services and such things to take care of them. I personally believe very sincerely—and no-one will shake me from this conviction—that the opportunity has been missed to give some consideration to the people who work, under extreme difficulties of drought, floods, and prices, over which they have no control, to produce the things that we all need. We live off the land, and I feel that the people on it are entitled to that consideration. We have not given them right through the consideration that perhaps we should have.

A tremendous impetus would be given to primary production. I know what security of tenure means. I grew up on freehold land, and I know what difference there is between that and other tenures. I appreciate the great problems that men on the land have in various parts of the State. In spite of modern techniques and methods that come to their assistance today, they still have the great problem of meeting the costs that must be incurred. I believe that we, as a Government, should make conditions just and attractive to encourage these people to continue producing, and occupying at least a living area of the land. That is the only real way to get quick and full production and provide contentment and security, and I maintain that primary producers are entitled to this consideration in the interests of progress in our State.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (5.19 p.m.): The hon. member for Barambah became a little confused when he started to question the philosophy that the land belongs to the people, and consequently should not be dissipated to the present generation. Whilst he said that land should be cut up and given to anybody who has the money to buy it, he also said, "Why should land belong to the people in perpetuity?" By a most amazing lapse of memory, he forgot that his Government put through this House quite a number of pieces of legislation providing that anything under the ground belongs to the people in perpetuity. Oil, coal, and minerals under the ground, and timber on the land, belong to the people in perpetuity, and anyone wanting to mine any of those things, or cut any of the timber, has to pay royalties to the Crown. The Crown does not sell the freehold right to those things. Apparently it believes only in giving the land away.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. member for Roma spoke for quite a long while on the Bill, and he reminded me of the stanza of Omar Khayyam which concludes by saying that he came out by the same door wherein he went. We knew no more about the Bill when he finished speaking than we did when he started. We may have learned a little more from the Minister and from the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Warrego.

I remind the House that some time ago the House passed a Bill providing for the freeholding of land up to an area of 5,000 acres. It is amazing that out of all the holders of land up to that allowable limit, so far only 2 per cent. of the lessees have freeholded

their land. I have spoken to many of them and said, "I was not quite happy about the area of land that could be freeholded under that particular Bill, but I supported it and said at the time that that is the largest aggregation of land that I, as a member of Parliament, will agree to freehold. Why haven't you taken advantage of the right given to you under the Act to freehold an area of land up to 5,000 acres?" They have told me quite frankly that it is uneconomic for them to do so. While they are paying rent on their land as leasehold, the rent is an income-tax deduction; but if they buy the land, the instalments they pay for the purchase of the land are not an income tax deduction. Consequently, they find that they are far better off in continuing to lease the land. They can make more money out of not freeholding it than they can out of freeholding it. I assume, therefore, that when this Bill goes through, if the percentages remain constant, only 2 per cent. of the people who are entitled to freehold their land will do so.

Mr. Muller: One per cent. will be nearer to it.

Mr. AIKENS: The former Minister for Public Lands says that it will be nearer one per cent.

Mr. Muller: They cannot afford it. The values are too high.

Mr. AIKENS: That is the point I am making. They find it more economical to continue as lessees than to become owners of the land under freehold tenure. But that does not alter my opinion of this particular part of the Bill. If a division is called on the extra area of land that will be freeholded, I will vote against that particular provision in the Bill because, as I said on a previous occasion, 5,000 acres is as far as I am prepared to go. I am not very happy about that area, but it was in the original Bill and I supported it.

However, I believe that many people who hold an ordinary town allotment on which their home is situated or their business is situated, or an area on which a small farm is situated, have taken advantage of the Act and freeholded their land, and it is to the credit of the Government that they have been given that opportunity. I have never been able to understand the attitude of the Opposition in preventing a worker, a battler, or anybody else, from actually owing the land on which his home stands. I have never been able to understand its attitude in preventing a small business man from owning the land on which his place of business stands, or in preventing a small farmer from owning the land on which his farm stands.

Mr. Walsh: His security is just as good under perpetual lease.

Mr. AIKENS: They do not think so. They have been given the opportunity of freeholding their town allotments—I assume that what went on in Townsville went on in the various towns and cities throughout the State—and I know that there was a veritable flood of applications, mainly from workers seeking to transform their leasehold tenure or perpetual lease tenure into freehold tenure.

Mr. Hanlon: They are frightened of reappraisal.

Mr. AIKENS: I do not know what their reason is, but I believe that there is an inherent belief in people that they should own the land on which their home stands. As I said previously, the 32 perches of land on which my home stands is freehold. Had it been perpetual lease when I bought it, I should still have bought it because I wanted the area, I wanted the particular site, and I wanted a home of that particular size. But I would have taken the first opportunity of converting from leasehold to freehold tenure if the land had not been freehold when I bought it.

I know that the action of this Government in allowing workers, small business men, and small farmers, to convert to freehold has been indeed welcome. There again I believe that there is a limit to which any Government should go. When we talk about freeholding areas of up to 30,000 acres, I am pleased that the hon. member for Warrego advanced exactly the same arguments on this Bill as I advanced on the previous one, that is, that with the development of technological sciences we never know what will be a living area in 10 or 20 years' time. It is quite possible that, with the experiments conducted on the 90-mile desert in South Australia being continued by the C.S.I.R.O. here, and other organisations working on improved pastures to enable land to carry more sheep and more cattle and grow more crops than at the present time, in 10 or 15 years' time 10,000 acres will be more than a living area, and I see no reason why we should tie up that particular land in areas of 30,000, 40,000, and 50,000 acres. It is all very well to arrogate to ourselves what is a living area in 1962, but what right have we to arrogate to ourselves that that will be still only a living area in 1972 or 1980? It might then afford a living for five or six, or even 10, families, and I am opposed to the expansion of the area that can now be freeholded.

I have only a few remarks to make on the brigalow lands. Many of us have seen instances of brigalow scrub that has been cleared and the land put under pasture, sometimes under the plough, and far too often have we seen such land cleared of brigalow scrub and put under pasture and on which today the brigalow is sprouting all over the place; no steps whatever have been taken to keep it clean after it was originally cleared.

I will admit that I have not studied this Bill as intensely as, perhaps, has the hon. member for Roma or some members of the

Labour Party representing country electorates, but I want to know what provision will be made to see that, if this land is granted under freehold tenure, after it is cleared of brigalow, it will be kept clear of it. The Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, if he wants to, need not get off the train, but can ride between Rockhampton and St. Lawrence and see from the train window areas of land that have been cleared of brigalow in the past have now more suckers on them than there are around the pubs. in Queensland.

Mr. Sullivan: If a man elects to freehold and does not keep it clean, what can be done?

Mr. AIKENS: Suppose he does not; suppose he holds leasehold and does not keep it clean, as has happened in many areas. In the Collinsville area after the Harrisia cactus began to grow they did not bother to keep it clean. They just put stock on their clean country and let the Harrisia cactus run wild and it cost this State more than £250,000 to clear that cactus.

Mr. Sullivan interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: It all depends on who owned it. If it was owned by a small freeholder and he knew that he had to keep it clean at all times to make a living, then he would not need an incentive as some people do; but if he freeholded 30,000, 40,000, or 50,000 acres under this Bill, and he found later that due to technological development, soil conservation, pasture improvement, and what-have-you, he could make a comfortable living from 10,000 to 15,000 acres, what incentive would he have to keep the other 35,000 or 40,000 acres cleared?

Mr. Campbell: To make money.

Mr. AIKENS: I am pleased to have that interjection, because it is not so many years ago that I produced a personal letter from an old grazier friend of mine in the Cloncurry district who said he did not intend to mate his ewes, that he was going to reduce his flock from 22,000 sheep to 7,000 because he was not going to work for Chifley. Chifley, of course, was Federal Treasurer at the time. We might have graziers adopting the same attitude with Mr. Holt and saying, "I am not going to run a flock of 15,000 sheep or 15,000 cattle because I am not going to run them for Mr. Holt to take my surplus earnings in income tax." Consequently, the trend today in the grazing industry is to keep herds down to such an extent that a reasonably comfortable living can be made without paying exorbitant amounts to the Taxation Department. If we freehold areas of 50,000 acres, I am prepared to bet that it will not be very long before half the land is scrub infested.

Mr. Harrison: That is not quite right because they can claim improvements as taxation deductions. If they are good business men they will do that.

Mr. AIKENS: I suggest that the hon. member have a quiet talk with some of the big taxation agents. Let him ask them what their big grazier friends have been telling them over the years.

Mr. Harrison: That is years ago.

Mr. AIKENS: It will come again. Always remember that the man who goes on the land does so to make money. He does not go out there just to make a good fellow of himself. If he finds, as my friend in Cloncurry found, that by running a flock of 22,000 sheep he is simply working hard for the Federal Treasury, he will do as my friend did and cut his flock down to 7,000. As a matter of fact, I read his letter in the House. It created a sensation at the time. Of course, many of the letters I read create a sensation. As a matter of fact, the Labour Minister for Public Lands at the time tried to put the screws on him but he was unable to do anything about it. I am not playing politics in this matter; I am merely saying what happened. And it could happen under the present Minister for Public Lands.

If he is going to freehold these huge areas, what will he do to keep them clean? What will he do to keep them in production? Those are the two questions I should like answered by the Minister for Public Lands, or anyone else competent to answer them.

Let me deal with another point that I think the Minister should look into as keenly and quickly as he possibly can. In Townsville—again I suggest that what is going on in Townsville is going on elsewhere—many people are taking advantage of the freeholding provisions of the previous Bill and are seeking to convert their home allotments from perpetual town lease to freehold tenure. But if the land is a perpetual town lease from the Department of Public Lands they have to pay twice, and sometimes two and a half times, as much to convert that perpetual town lease to freehold tenure as if the allotment was owned and controlled by the Queensland Housing Commission. Why is that? If a man with a 32-perch allotment controlled by the Housing Commission is required to pay only £450 to convert his perpetual town lease, why is it that farther up the same street another man who holds a perpetual lease allotment controlled by the Department of Public Lands is required to pay £900, sometimes £1,000, to convert to freehold an exactly similar type of allotment? Why is that? I hope that the Minister for Public Lands and the Government will not adopt the standards set by the Department of Public Lands. I am saying this now in the hope that they will all come down to the standards set by the Housing Commission and allow these people who want to convert from perpetual town lease, whether the land is controlled by the Housing Commission or the Department of Public Lands, to do so at the reasonable price set by the Housing Commission.

I congratulate the Housing Commission on its attitude. As a matter of fact, I know of cases where the Land Court has ruled that an allotment is valued at £800 but the Housing Commission has allowed the owner of the land to convert at £425. But if the land was owned or controlled by the Department of Public Lands the full £800 would have to be paid to convert. Why are there two different prices for two different Government departments? Why cannot they both get down to the same reasonable level set by the Housing Commission and allow the people to convert at that reasonable rate?

Mr. Walsh: If what you say is true I should like to hear the Minister's explanation.

Mr. AIKENS: Of course it is true. As a matter of fact, I have several letters about the matter. As I have told hon. members before, I write a page in a weekly newspaper that is circulated in Townsville. I have letters asking me to write a page about this matter. I am hoping that the Minister will tell me something so that I can include it in my weekly page. It costs one price if you want to convert through the Department of Public Lands but about half that price if you want to convert through the Housing Commission. For goodness sake, do not jack up the Housing Commission prices; drop the prices of the Department of Public Lands to the level of the Housing Commission prices.

This Bill at least does something that is really worth while. It consolidates the various Land Acts. I think the hon. member for Roma said that there was the original Act and 78 amendments. At least this Bill puts it all together so that we know where to look if we want to know any particular facet of land administration. You have not to search here, there, and all over the place.

I would say that the action of the Minister in consolidating his Land Acts could be very well applied by other Ministers to the consolidation of the various Acts under their control. Only the other day the Minister for Labour and Industry—and I will not dilate this point—consolidated the various Traffic Regulations.

Mr. Bennett: They have been amended again since then.

Mr. AIKENS: They were beginning to become a sort of legislative Gordian knot, as were the various Land Act amendments. At least the Minister for Labour and Industry got them together. If he has concertinaed them out again—the hon. member for South Brisbane would know more about that than I would—I think he and every other Minister should tackle the job of consolidating the Acts under their control.

I am not happy about the way in which ballots have been conducted and the exclusion of certain people from them. We can pick up a paper from time to time and read where a piece of land has been thrown open in the West or somewhere or other, and out of 150 applicants some applicant wins it. He may come from New South Wales, Victoria, Timbuctoo, Boggabilla, or "Galahgambone". He may be a publican, a policeman, a ring-keeper of a two-up school, or anything at all, anything except a grazier or a man who knows something about the land. Yet I have met grazing families who have been eager for years to put their sons on the land, sons who have been eminently suitable to go on the land as graziers. It is quite possible that they have not had the money that the Minister demands they should have, but I do not know why it is that grazing families who have sons coming on, raised on the land, and steeped in the tradition of the land, cannot get an opportunity to go on the land that from time to time is thrown open by the Department of Public Lands.

I say that now and again we read in the Press that someone has won a block. At least we can say he has a reasonable chance of making a do of it. I would say, judging from the layman's point of view, it is becoming one of the biggest jokes in the State. It always has been. I am not blaming the Minister for it. The type of man who can draw these blocks has always been a joke.

The graziers get a living from the land and add to the wealth of the State. If these men are held out of the ballot in favour of men who are unsuitable but can produce £12,000 in cash, or meet the financial requirements of the Act, we should do something about it. I am not happy about it.

There are not many graziers in the Townsville South electorate. I did have a small number in the old Mundingburra electorate. Nevertheless, many men who know something of grazing have come to see me about their problems. I know it has been a sore point with the northern graziers for many years. This Government has not resolved the problem at all. Their sons, as I have said, are steeped in the tradition of the land and want to get on the land. For some reason or other a financial barrier, or some other barrier, has been placed between them and their desire to get on the land. I think we should do something about it. I am not happy about it, and if, as I said, the Minister can give us a lucid reason for it, and give us some hope that men who know something about the land and who want to get on the land will not be debarred by some technicality from doing so, I will be very happy to hear him.

There is another matter that I think should be dealt with in this debate. When the Department of Public Lands owns a large area in a city or town and decides to cut it up and sell it for building allotments, it makes no provision whatever for roads, drainage, or sewerage, or even for access to the land. At any rate, that was so in the past when I was on the Townsville City Council.

Mr. Fletcher: That is all changed.

Mr. AIKENS: I should like to hear how it has been changed, because for many years it was a shocking scandal. Years ago when I was on the Townsville City Council, the Government of the day decided to throw open a large portion of the then Orphanage Reserve for closer settlement. The hon. member for Townsville North will know the locality. The Mayor lives on one of the allotments. Austin Donnelly bought another. A very fine row of homes went up along Warburton Street, in North Ward, Townsville, one of our select suburbs, in the electorate of the hon. member for Townsville North. Between Warburton Street and the allotments—and of course, after they built their homes, between Warburton Street and their homes—was a huge open drain known as the "Warburton Street River". The Department of Public Lands said, "We are not going to do anything about providing access to this land. The council will have to provide it." It would have cost the council scores of thousands of pounds to do so and the outcome was that every person, including the present Mayor of Townsville, who bought an allotment on what was originally the Orphanage Reserve, had to build his own fairly substantial bridge to get from Warburton Street to his home. Only a year or two ago, the present council decided to fill in the drain.

I understand some land has been cut up in the Rowe's Bay area. If this Government provides money for roads, drainage, channelling, and water, it is to be complimented for it, but I should like the Minister to make a statement on it. I have not been able to keep completely abreast of developments, but it has always been a very sore point with me that, if any other subdivider throws open an area of land for building allotments, he must provide the money for constructing roads, channelling, and various other civic amenities, whereas when the Department of Public Lands throws open the land for building allotments for sale to the people it provides nothing. If this Government has altered that policy and now provides something towards the cost of roads, channelling, and so on, it is to be complimented for it, but I should like to hear the Minister make some definite statement on it.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (5.43 p.m.): At the outset, for the benefit of every hon. member who has heard the Minister's statement, and for the benefit of the Minister himself, I should like to correct an impression that exists. I would not like to be dogmatic by any means and say that the Minister was wrong but there is a very grave doubt at least. By interjection he said that payments in the purchase of freehold land were not deductible for income-tax purposes. As every hon. member who has made an intelligent study of the Act and its workings will know, the purchaser has the option, and no primary producer would refuse to take the opportunity to buy the land in 30 equal annual instalments without interest. Everywhere in the Act those instalments are referred to as rent. The Minister said that those instalments were not deductible from the income-tax point of view.

Mr. Fletcher: That is my information.

Mr. BURROWS: The position is that it is not a contract. I am quite definite, from memory, that it was not a deduction under the old State income tax laws, but they have been superseded by the Commonwealth law. After the Minister made the statement I, to the best of my ability, which I will admit is not very great, looked the matter up in Butterworth's Income Tax Laws and Practice, which is the Bible of any tax agent, and I was very doubtful from what I read there. I have been in touch with a couple of authorities who know much more about it than I do, and they expressed grave doubt. For the benefit of the people affected, I ask the Minister if he, with the greater opportunities that he has, will obtain a ruling on it.

Mr. Fletcher: I think I have it from the Taxation Department. They consider it an instalment, not rent.

Mr. BURROWS: I do not want to debate that point with the Minister, but I should like to ask him this: if a man defaults in his payments and abandons the property, does his department demand the balance of the payments? Suppose that he paid 10 years' rent, bearing in mind that rent was a deduction and everywhere in this Bill it is referred to as "rent" and not "instalment". When I say "everywhere", I mean in quite a number of places. It is a doubtful legal point and, as a tax agent, I would not hesitate to claim it and put on the department the onus of proving that it is not a deduction. I am fairly sure that it would be very hard to prove that it was not allowable. However, that is only my humble and very poor opinion. It is a matter worth investigating, as I would not like to see small men failing to claim what they are entitled to. The big fellows can look after themselves.

The most objectionable feature of the Bill is that it confirms, and even extends, the freeholding principle introduced by this Government. The idea of a committee of review, which will screen all applicants, is repulsive to any decent and honourable citizen. The areas, particularly in the brigalow country, are ridiculously large and out of all proportion. The Government has shown a complete lack of responsibility in adopting such a large maximum area.

To develop my argument on the matter of freeholding, the hon. member for Barambah pleaded for more security of tenure for these people. He claimed that freehold land would be developed to a greater extent than leasehold. Everyone who has had anything to do with land knows that if a grazier is given a piece of freehold land and a piece of leasehold land, he will want to ringbark every tree on the leasehold land and keep those on the freehold land.

Mr. Fletcher: Why? Can you give me a reason?

Mr. BURROWS: For the simple reason that he thinks that the trees on his freehold land might have some value. Because he has no title to the trees on the leasehold portion, he wants to destroy them to improve the grazing properties of the land.

Mr. Fletcher: Very few trees are of any value for grazing.

Mr. BURROWS: I wish the Minister was Minister for Forestry. Every hon. member knows of cases in which action has been taken to restrain people from destroying what I thought was, in many cases, useless timber. I am glad the Minister said that. It would be much easier for me to make submissions on behalf of my electors—I am sure that other hon. members would find it easier, too—if the present Minister for Agriculture and Forestry had the same outlook.

I adopted a philosophy or belief on freeholding very early in my life, and I was guided mainly by the works of Henry George. I looked them up when the Bill was introduced, and these are some of the points he made. He said—

> "The equal right of all men to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air—it is a right proclaimed by the fact of their existence. For we cannot claim that some men have a right to be in this world and others no right."

A Government Member: Karl Marx.

Mr. BURROWS: No, Henry George, an intellectual and philosopher, unlike hon. members opposite. He went on to say—

> "Man is a land animal. A land animal cannot live without land.
>
> "All that man produces comes from the land. All productive labour in the final analysis consists in working up the land into such forms as fits them for the satisfaction of human wants and desires.
>
> "Man's very body is drawn from the land. Children of the soil, we come from the land and to the land we must return.
>
> "Take away from man all that belongs to the land and what have you but a disembodied spirit. Therefore he who holds the land on which and from which another man must live is that man's master and the man is his slave.
>
> "The man who holds the land on which I must live can command me to life or to death just as absolutely as though I were his chattel.
>
> "Talk about abolishing slavery! We have not abolished it, only one rude form of it.
>
> "There is a deeper and more insidious form, a more cursed form, yet before us to abolish in this industrial slavery that makes a man a virtual slave whilst haunting and mocking him in the name of freedom."

The Government is guilty of every charge that is mentioned there. I repeat, "The man who holds the land on which I must live can command me to life or to death. . . ." I ask hon. members representing rural electorates to consider for a moment the case of the share-farmer. Does not the landlord possess his very soul? He can push him off at any time. If we go to the electorate of the hon. member for Barcoo or electorates on the Darling Downs, or to any other rural electorate in Queensland, we will see share-farmers. Hon. members opposite talk about giving a man a title to his land. A share-farmer has no contractual right to stay there for more than a month.

Mr. Sullivan: If he does his job properly, he will.

Mr. BURROWS: And if the Crown tenant does his job he is there for ever. He is not subject to a minute's notice, as the Minister knows. The Minister knows, too, that many share-farmers are persecuted like slaves. They own more machinery and have a greater equity in wasting assets than the landholder, but he sits there and takes his tribute and demands his pound of flesh. The Government says that the man who works the land should have a title to it. There are clauses in the Bill forbidding a man to take stock on agistment, but there is nothing in it to protect a man who works on the land and to ensure that he gets a fair return for what he puts into the land. He has been forgotten completely, but the Government is obsessed with the idea that there must be a landed gentry, an aristocracy in the land. This board of review has been appointed to screen them. What chance would my son have of getting a block with a board of review appointed by the Country Party?

Mr. Camm: What rot!

Mr. BURROWS: No chance whatever. If I "ratted" on the Labour Party and joined the Country Party he would be given a block of land as a reward for his father's treachery. I am not beating about the bush. When this legislation comes into operation, the highest qualification for getting a block of land in Queensland will be to be the illegitimate son of some titled gentry, and I make no apology for saying that. This Government have betrayed their trust. In adopting these tactics of discrimination, they have sunk as low as any Government could.

Mr. Harrison: You would like to serve on that board?

Mr. BURROWS: I should like to serve on that board, all right. I should like to see the hon. members responsible for producing it get what they deserve.

A Government Member: What about Foley?

Mr. BURROWS: Never mind about Foley. The man hon. members opposite idolised is dead now. And so is poor old Tom Foley's wife, as a result of those inquiries. However, I am not here to defend Tom Foley. If hon. members opposite want to bring up all these dirty little matters, what about the man to whom they gave a knighthood? They didn't quibble about his dying the richest public servant in Australia.

Mr. Camm: Who was that?

Mr. BURROWS: The man hon. members opposite said was the best authority on land in Australia; the man who cringed to this Government, found out what they wanted, and reported favourably on what he knew they wanted him to report favourably on. He was given a title and died the richest public servant in Australia. He spent his life in the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. Camm: Who appointed him?

Mr. BURROWS: Never mind who appointed him. I know who exalted him. If hon. members want to know what happened, I have here a book dealing with what happened in New South Wales. It is by Frank Clune and is titled "Scandals of Sydney Town". We are heading fast for the scandals of Brisbane Town.

It was very appropriate to read the short story on history by Blaikie in the supplement to last Sunday's "Sunday Mail". I was wondering how much of it was pointed. It dealt with the case of Glass and land scandals in Victoria. It was very appropriate and a little bit more than co-incidental that it should appear in a weekly newspaper a few days before we discussed this Bill, which could easily lead to similar scandals occurring here. Let hon. members go into it and study our land laws intelligently.

The Minister interjected at one stage that there were 1,500 applicants in for a block on Nive Downs. Did he realise that even though there were 1,500 applicants, 1,499 of them were disappointed?

Mr. Sullivan: They could not all get it.

Mr. BURROWS: I am not talking about that aspect. I would sooner have 2,000 acres of brigalow land in the area that the Government calls the brigalow belt, which I know——

Mr. Sullivan: I do not think you do.

Mr. BURROWS: I knew it long before the hon. member ever saw it. Let him take land in Chinchilla as an example. If a living area in that district was regarded as 10,000 acres, Chinchilla would be only a whistling station that the train passes through. I remind him that the area of the brigalow land that it is proposed to develop in the Fitzroy Basin will be closer to the coast than is Chinchilla. Many people do not realise that this land is reasonably close to the railway line. It is the only large area of arable land not already closely settled or alienated from the Crown. The Government is recreant to its trust when it so generously hands out such big slices of land.

By the Minister's interjections, he seemed to have a set against "Country Life" newspaper. That newspaper has never been on side with the Labour Party and it certainly has never done the Labour Party any good. Apparently it is finding it difficult to reconcile the Government's policy with its political conscience. For that reason it has been attacking the Government. However, in the words of the Minister that newspaper is expendable and the Government is prepared to sacrifice the support hon. members opposite were very glad to accept from "Country Life" when in Opposition. Only last Sunday one of the settlers in the Burnett area wrote in and pointed out that he was one of the original settlers when the Labour Government settled the Burnett area. Anybody familiar with the area would know that the Mulgeldie scrub was a very extensive area that was excluded from the leases, the settlers paying rental only on the land not growing brigalow. At that time 200 acres was considered sufficient and 2,000 people settled in the area. I defy the hon. members for Burnett and Mackenzie to say that the Upper Burnett closer-settlement scheme was a failure.

Mr. Hewitt: I have said in this House that it was not.

Mr. BURROWS: Yet the hon. member comes along and talks about the case of a man on 160 acres. I quoted the case of a man who made a success of his block. He had sons who bought other property. The Minister said that this man did not have 160 acres. Augie Bulow had a block on the Mulgeldie Plateau where it was impossible to get water by sinking a bore. Any water that was found was salty. In 1946, when the dams went dry, the Army was carting water 7 or 8 miles from Three Moon Creek right up to the Mulgeldie Plateau for domestic purposes and to provide water for the dairy herds and pigs. I do not want others to go through what those men went through. But there is a vast disparity between 200 acres and 10,000 acres. I should like to see some happy medium.

In a previous debate on freeholding, I pointed out that if we allow companies to hold land it would be possible for some foreign nation that is far from friendly to come here, register a company, and buy up all the freehold land in Queensland and hold it. A large area of land in Queensland is held by absentees, many of whom live in the Near East. They are a potential danger to Australia, as has been said by Government members. However, the Government is not prepared to say, "We will deny you the right to own land unless you are prepared to live on it, or live in Australia and work it."

Mr. Ewan: Isn't a residential condition imposed?

Mr. BURROWS: No, not with freehold land. Here is a man who is supposed to know everything about land laws. He has said, "Isn't there a residential qualification on freehold land?"

Mr. Ewan: Don't be absurd!

Mr. BURROWS: I am not being absurd.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Would the hon. member please address the Chair?

Mr. BURROWS: I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. I thank you. I know I should be patient with the hon. member. He would not be over there if he had any sense. I understand him. It is my fault.

The protest I wish to make is against these large areas, and the principle of allowing companies to take them over. We know all about 10,000 acres being the limit, but what is wrong with one man having 10? I understand that Alfred Grant, the commission agent on the South Coast, has about 101 different companies. A man can form as many companies as he likes and each company can hold this maximum area. One man can get an aggregation of 100,000 acres. It is there and, like everything else with this Government, it is there for the big man.

In support of that assertion, and without getting away from the point, I will take perpetual leases. Everyone knows that a poor man's way of selecting land is by perpetual lease because he does not have to outlay such a large amount of capital to acquire it. If a man has only a limited amount of cash he is not going to pay it all out purchasing the freehold title of land. He takes a perpetual lease. The Country Party maintains that it represents the country people. To show how dishonest its members are in their claim, let any one of them stand up and say he denies they are imposing an extra 1 per cent. on the rental of perpetual lease selections.

The Labour Government fixed it at 1½ per cent. If anyone selects a block of land under this Act which was introduced by the present Government, he will find that by paying the 1 per cent. more, it is equivalent to an increase of 66 per cent, namely, 2½ per cent. against 1½ per cent.

Mr. Ewan: There were the reappraisal periods.

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member is referring to reappraisals under the Labour Government. I can understand that the hon. member does not know this or he would not be supporting the Bill. If we go into the reappraisals we will find that the present Government has three 10-year reappraisals, whereas the Labour Government had four seven-year reappraisals, but they did not reappraise the first seven years.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. BURROWS: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. He has been exposed to the humbug of a man who is loyal only to the big man. It has been very aptly said, although it is not my remark, that the hon. member for Roma is the type of member who coughs every time a Minister has a cold. I think that is very appropriate, as anyone who knows him and who has had to listen to his inane interjections will admit.

Returning to the point about large areas—it would take 10,000,000 acres to settle 1,000 settlers on 10,000-acre areas. The whole trouble is that we have not enough land in Queensland. The Government wants to create a landed aristocracy of a chosen few, but it will not accept the stigma or the responsibility. A Government that will not accept responsibility should not be allowed to govern. It passes the task onto the committee of review to reject people. We know that the members of the committee of review will definitely be appointed at meetings of the local Country Party branches. It is no good beating about the bush. We know how it will happen. If we are not very careful we will have a repetition in 1963 or 1964 or 1970 of the scandal that occurred in other States earlier in the century.

Mr. Ewan: Have you lost your page?

Mr. BURROWS: Yes, I have lost my page but I have not lost my conscience or my soul. Thank God I am not as weak as hon. members opposite in that respect.

The Minister has claimed credit for recognising the value of timber treatment to outgoing tenants. To a degree that is to be commended but, as a practical man, he will know that much of the timber treatment that is claimed is really only maintenance work. I am not saying that every grazier does it, but many do. Because the grazier does not maintain the timber treatment he gets a better crop of suckers than he ever had timber. You will find the efficient grazier employed continuously throughout the year dealing with suckers. Even the hon. member for Townsville South, unsophisticated as he is in land laws, said he noticed when looking out of the train that a real wilderness had sprung up. That is what happens. They are the ones that squeal. There is a difference between maintenance and capital expenditure, and needy graziers will want recompense for this. It must be remembered that they can already, without any question, claim the full expenditure as an income-tax deduction. That is definite, and as plain as day. The greatest care should be taken in the matter of compensation paid for timber treatment because, after all, it is paid not by the Government but by the succeeding tenant. He is the man who will have to pay for it.

Mr. Aikens: Is "sucker bashing", as it is called, a deduction for income-tax purposes?

Mr. BURROWS: Yes, 100 per cent. in the year in which it is spent. Depreciation does not have to be taken off.

Mr. Aikens: Why don't more graziers do it?

Mr. BURROWS: Because they are too lousy to do it, if I may use that word. From my experience, I do not know a more inefficient industry in Queensland than grazing. I think hon. members will agree with me on that. Graziers squeal and think that they are God's chosen few. There are more pressure groups among them than any other section of the community, and, if they have the intestinal courage to resist them, hon. members on the Government side will find that they might do a lot better politically than they are now.

Mr. Wharton: You are doing pretty well.

Mr. BURROWS: How am I doing pretty well? The hon. member is trying to tack something on me. He is being very childish. I have a block of land that two previous men forfeited and walked off. I selected it. It would not keep me. There is no way in the world in which I can ever expect to get much out of it, but I have a couple of children interested in the land, and I deliberately bought that piece of land to keep them from roaming the streets and going to the T.A.B. shops round the city. I shall be much happier if my boys are out scrub-bashing on that place rather than hanging round the Government-controlled betting shops, or in the hotels on Sunday afternoons. Anything that I have on that place I worked for. If the hon. member wants to attack me and insult me by calling me a grazier, let him. I do not want to be called that, because it was the graziers that scabbed in the meat strike up north.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I appealed to the hon. member quite recently to address the Chair, and I ask him not to be side-tracked by interjections. He will continue his speech on the measure before the House.

Mr. BURROWS: I appreciate your assistance very much, Mr. Speaker. I admit that I was side-tracked by interjections from hon. members. Whatever I have, I got honestly. It is not very much, but it satisfies me and, if it gives hon. members any satisfaction to believe that I have something to which I was not entitled, I do not begrudge them that belief because I am sure that no matter what belief they might have—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member cease mumbling and continue with his speech on the motion before the House?

Mr. BURROWS: I should like to repeat that the main principle of the Bill to which I am opposed is the one dealing with freeholding. On that subject I quoted philosophers and other men who have expressed their opinions. In the early days, when the present Government first introduced freeholding, one of the best speeches that I have heard in the 16 years that I have been in this House came from the former member for East Toowoomba, the late Mr. Les. Wood. He opposed the Bill that was introduced on that occasion, and I suggest that hon. members read his speech. In it he quoted the words of one man who was very strongly opposed to the freeholding of land—no less an authority than Sir Winston Churchill. Only the other day my attention was drawn to a remark by the present Pope when dealing with matters of this sort. He said, "People without land are entitled to a land without people." Those words are very true.

If the Government has its way, as I pointed out earlier, only a select few will be entitled to land. They will be the sons of gentlemen or have some particular brand on them. It will be God help a man who might have a political stigma or who has not been a loyal supporter of their party, or a man who has not been prepared to breach an award or do something undesirable to his fellow workers, if ever he has to submit his name to this non-elected board of review. Its members do not have to submit themselves to the electors. They are responsible only to the Minister.

Mr. Nicklin: Those words are very unworthy of you.

Mr. BURROWS: I remind the Premier that this damnable Bill is very unworthy of him. One of the greatest disappointments of my life is to see the Premier supporting it.

Mr. Nicklin: It is the best Bill that has been brought down for a long time.

Mr. BURROWS: I had a much better opinion of the hon. gentleman when he was Leader of the Opposition than I have of him as Premier. I thank God that the responsibility for alienating this land and being so generous with the people's property, of which it is the trustee, lies on the conscience of his Government, not on the conscience of the party of which I am proud to be a member.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (7.37 p.m.): A good deal has been said about the importance of this legislation, and, having regard to the implications of the many Acts dealing with land and the many primary industries and products of the land that are involved, I do not think there is any disagreement about its importance. After all, primary industries and their products play an important part in the economy of Queensland and Australia.

Having regard to the many Press statements that have been made over a long period, I thought that many revolutionary principles would be contained in the Bill. Statements have been made from time to time about uprisings in various parts of the State, particularly in the grazing areas, over the very important changes that were likely to

be made when the Land Acts were consolidated. I followed the Minister's introductory speech very closely, but I was not particularly impressed with the carefully prepared outline that he gave. I suspected that somewhere along the line there would be important principles that were not revealed to the House. From what I might call a casual scrutiny of the Bill, I am satisfied that my suspicions in this respect have been fully justified.

In his second-reading speech the Minister seemed to be thrown on the defensive by an article that appeared in "Country Life". Instead of following the practice adopted by Ministers in different governments over the years of giving a more elaborate outline of the principles of the Bill to assist hon. members, particularly members of the Opposition, the Minister took a great deal of time in replying to this special article that was apparently prepared for publication and circulation by "Country Life".

Mr. Fletcher: That is not true, you know.

Mr. WALSH: I think the Minister, if he reads his proof in the morning, will be convinced that what I am saying is perfectly true.

Mr. Fletcher: You obviously did not make a note of it.

Mr. WALSH: I took sufficient note of the Minister's remarks this morning to feel that he was somewhat ruffled at the type of propaganda that was contained in the article. I suppose it is their right to criticise this Government, just as they have criticised previous Governments. If, occasionally, there is somebody with the money to provide the necessary public relations officers to write from the individual point of view through the "Country Life," it is no different from what the Minister himself would have been doing when he was over here in Opposition.

As part of the Minister's speech this morning, he emphasised that the definition of a "living area" as contained in the Bill was, in effect, lifted from the 1927 Act. It is perfectly true that the principles of the definition of "living area" as contained in the 1927 Act are now incorporated in the definitions as against a section of the Land Act itself. True again, there was more verbiage in the section of the 1927 Act. I have not made a careful scrutiny of that section in the 1927 Act to see if any of the main principles have been dropped. I realise that, in the consolidation of the measure, it has to be approached from two points of view, namely, that the officers of the department have to submit the matter to be contained in the Act as consolidated to the Parliamentary Draftsman, and it is then for the Parliamentary Draftsman to develop the different sections and principles into legal language that will be readily understood.

In that respect I should say that a good deal of thought has been given to the preparation and presentation of these principles. I am not altogether misled by the fact that the Bill as presented contains so many sections that are referred to in the margin as being relevant to the 1910 Act. As I will show later on, the Minister, in emphasing this definition of a living area, reminded the House that it was incorporated in 1927, which was at a time when the late President of the Land Court was Chairman of the provisional Land Administration Board, when, no doubt, he recommended that provision to the Labour Government of the day. But the important thing is not so much the definition as it is contained in the Act, but the interpretation and the administration of that section. That is the matter that will need a good deal of attention in the future.

The Minister went on to say that the various factors that have to be taken into consideration—distance from transport, communications, income, and so on—were all very relevant in defining what was a living area. How true! Who could foresee the position in the depression years when the price of wool went down to as low as 9d. a lb.? How many more acres of land would the grazier want and how many more sheep would he need on his property to give him an income that could be regarded as a living income? There are things altogether outside the control of the Government and the department that could influence the prosperity or otherwise of any one of the individual selectors who may be allotted a living area in terms of the definition contained in the Bill.

Mr. Aikens: According to 1962 standards.

Mr. WALSH: True. Even now the grazing industry is running into some trouble. I do not know whether the Government is aware of it.

Naturally, there are some controversial clauses in the Bill. The clauses relating to freeholding will always be contentious from the point of view of Labour policy and as far as I am individually concerned. I say now that irrespective of what the A.L.P. position will be when the motion is put for the second reading of the Bill, I propose to call "Divide" because of that one principle in the Bill. Irrespective of anything else that I may oppose or argue on, whenever that principle arises I want my name recorded in the division lists as being opposed to the freeholding of Crown lands.

Mr. Muller: Why do you take such a dislike to it?

Mr. WALSH: If ever I had any doubt in my mind why I should be against it, the hon. member for Fassifern provided a reason here very recently when he stated from the floor of the Chamber that perpetual lease was just as good a security as freehold tenure.

Mr. Muller: It is, too.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member confirms it. Now that I have his confirmation he will agree with me again, as he has said in a

previous speech and by interjection tonight, that this method of freeholding is too costly for the land-seeker.

Mr. Muller: He is not obliged to take it.

Mr. WALSH: I realise that. There is no compulsion. When we have people from the floor of the House trying to convince the community at large that the freeholding system has so many advantages over perpetual lease, it is clearly understood from their remarks that either they are interested in the speculative side or they do not understand it.

Mr. Muller: That is absurd.

Mr. WALSH: Give two people £10,000 each and put them on two different tenures—one on freehold and one on perpetual lease.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. WALSH: There was a time when the banks would not recognise it. Let the hon. member look at what happened in the Biloela area. It is a thriving centre today but I remember an occasion when, as Minister for Public Lands, I had to disillusion the banks on the security of perpetual lease tenure.

Mr. Muller: Good land at very cheap rental.

Mr. WALSH: Of course it is. Where could you get capital at 2½ per cent? That is what it amounts to.

Another matter I wish to refer to is the new provision on selective balloting. I may be a bit hard in my remarks but these are my thoughts on the matter. I say quite definitely that the new system opens up the way for irregular, or even corrupt, practices. If somebody wants to come in on the words of the royal commission of 1956, he can do so, but do not blame me if I start to throw the bricks.

Mr. Aikens: Will you tell us what opportunities exist for corruption in this measure?

Mr. WALSH: It should be perfectly obvious to the hon. member for Townsville South.

Mr. Aikens: I will be very happy to hear it.

Mr. WALSH: Provision is being made for a committee comprising a member of the Land Administration Commission in the first place, or an officer of the department, and two other persons. It is not even obliged to interview the applicants and can reject them even though the members have never seen them. Since this provision provides that a committee will be appointed from time to time, irrespective of whether there is a Minister or administration that feels so inclined to do it, no-one can tell me that the weaknesses of the human element do not come into it in some cases where these personnel are hand-picked.

It is all right for the Minister to talk about my suspicious mind. I am saying that this opens the gate for these things. I hope in my lifetime that I will never witness any of the things I envisage, but at the same time, whatever prompted the Government to place what is in effect the administration of these affairs into the hands of outside people, is beyond me. I can only conclude that it is as a result of some pressure that has been exercised by influences, political or otherwise. I regard this as one of the great weaknesses in this measure. Over the years a balloting system has existed in this State. We have settled thousands of people on the land without having to resort to this type of thing. Why then does the Minister have to introduce it now when millions of acres have been settled already in Western Queensland? There was no such system when perpetual leases were balloted for on the coastline. We have all the settlement that has taken place. It has been very progressive settlement and has brought a state of prosperity to Queensland. I think this is not only a compliment to the Land Administration Commission itself, but also to the Government party of the day.

The Government has the hide to talk about the civil liberties and rights of the individual, and here it is specifically limiting those rights. I know a good deal about land settlement and land development. I have witnessed, even in the area of the hon. member for Whitsunday, people coming up from Brisbane, where they have lived all their lives, turning out to be most successful settlers in that rugged country up the O'Connell River and Cameron's Pocket, and elsewhere. You do not have to be a farmer's son or grazier's son to be a successful land settler. In this way a good deal of damage will be done to the bona fide land-seekers. Over the years it has been seen that a school teacher, a policeman, or a somebody else has been successful in a ballot.

Mr. Ewan: How did you subscribe to the policy of group settlement in your Government days?

Mr. WALSH: It does not matter what I subscribed to in those days. I am discussing this matter. If the hon. member thinks I have to justify everything that has happened in the past, he is wasting his time. However, I regard the clause as dangerous and I do not see that it is justified. If the Government is going to live up to the arguments advanced on the Bill of Rights and the principles contained in it, every person in the State should have the right to ballot for the land, subject to compliance with the requirements of the law, particularly on the score of finance, which is so important.

It was pointed out earlier by an Australian Labour Party member, I think the hon. member for Warrego, that the State would end up with a select landed few. Any hon. members opposite who had to work their way up the ladder must realise that in their day not one could have produced the £12,000.

Mr. Aikens: They could produce it now.

Mr. WALSH: Maybe, thanks to a good Labour land policy over the years. That is one thing on which the hon. member for Roma will agree with me. Probably they have come from different parts of Australia. The hon. member for Mackenzie will tell us a lot when he gets up. Let me tell the House how men like Heywood and Letchford would have got on, men who went up to the Theodore area from the hungry mallee country and who proved very successful farmers in that area. Although they went the distance, coming from hungry country, and were able to select the land under a Labour Government, never in their time would they have been able to produce the finance required under the Bill. I take my hat off to those people because they showed the way to many Queenslanders, too. That goes for other parts of the State as well as Theodore.

For the information of hon. members, let me give an analysis of the Bill. There are something like 385 clauses and 224 of them are related in some way to sections of the 1910 Act and subsequent amendments. In other words, the original Act and all the amendments to it since 1910 are contained in those 224 clauses.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. WALSH: I have done these calculations myself, not the hon. member for Roma. I emphasise to the House that, while the officers of the department and the Parliamentary Draftsman would be doing their job in arranging the clauses in the relevant parts and divisions of the new measure, there are also incorporated in those clauses new principles that were not contained in the 1910 Act or any of the subsequent amendments up to 1962. So I do not have to accept every note in the margin against a clause identifying it with section so-and-so of the 1910 Act.

In one particular instance that I want to emphasise tonight, I have found an entirely new principle incorporated in a clause of the Bill, one that will be shown as not being identified with the 1910 Act. The Minister has also incorporated, I might say, for the benefit of the hon. member for Roma, a number of clauses that previously gave powers to the Minister or the Department of Public Lands by way of regulation. There are not many of them.

I have seen that the Government has gone to a lot of trouble to incorporate in the Bill most of the principles contained in the Acts introduced by the former Minister for Public Lands, the hon. member for Fassifern. He will no doubt claim that the most important features of this Bill are the sections that have been taken from the Acts of 1957, 1958, and 1959. About ten sections of the 1957 Act have been included in this Bill, 17 of the 1958 Act, and 34 of the 1959 Act.

Mr. Muller: Quite an achievement.

Mr. WALSH: I suppose that the hon. member for Fassifern feels proud of that, but I assure hon. members that I am not very proud of those features of the Bill. There is a section from the 1927 Act, another from 1929, and another from 1934.

What I particularly want to refer to tonight, which I think should open up some criticism in this House, is that part of the Bill extending the provisions of the Judges' Pension Act to the President of the Land Court.

Mr. Aikens: It is a monstrous thing.

Mr. WALSH: It is the thin end of the wedge. Over a period of years attempts have been made under previous Governments to have inserted in the Land Act the word "judge" instead of "President of the Land Court." In other words, the former President, now deceased, made many approaches to previous Ministers to have that amendment made, so that the President of the Land Court would be on the same rating, as it were, as a member of the Supreme Court Bench. Probably the same approaches have been made to this Government, and probably they have, up to date, been resisted. The pensions applicable to judges of the Supreme Court are in future to be applicable to the President of the Land Court. This is an important departure from any principle contained in previous Land Acts. Although the Minister had much to say about the important variations listed on the pink sheet of explanatory notes attached to the Bill, he failed to draw the attention of the House to that principle. As he failed to do that, I am entitled to suspect that there are other damaging features in the Bill that I have not yet found.

In going through a Bill with 385 clauses, one realises the work that the Parliamentary Draftsman has to do in making comparisons and cross-references with existing legislation. It is a tremendous task, and it is beyond the capacity of any hon. member here, unless he has considerable time at his disposal, to make what might be regarded as a completely intelligent analysis of a measure such as this when he finds, tucked away here and there, important principles such as this that have been written into the Bill and not mentioned to the House. I cannot see any justification for it, and much as I dislike saying this to the Premier—I do not know whether it is a form of blackmail, or what it is—when one realises that this measure discriminates between the President and the other members of the Land Court, that in itself is not good.

I know the history of the constitution of the office of the President of the Land Court and I have previously referred to it on the floor of the House. The President was not called upon to perform any special duties or any duties different from those performed by ordinary members of the Court. The conditions that were imposed when the late Mr. Pease brought down an amendment were

in the nature of a cover-up to enable the then then President of the Land Court to continue drawing a salary in excess of the salary laid down for members of the Court at the time. When one realises that this payment of pension benefits extends to the widow on the death of the President of the Court——

Mr. Aikens: And is non-contributory.

Mr. WALSH: Well, all I have said so far is that it provides for the extension of the Judges' Pension Act of 1957. That is enough for me to say at this stage. Other hon. members can bite on it from now on.

I do not know why this should have been done for the President of the Land Court. I do not know the gentleman. He might be quite a decent man, and I should not like to say anything against him personally when I do not know him. However, I am entitled to make observations about him in his official capacity, and if I am able to judge his judicial capacity on the basis of his comments reported in the Press, then I say that I do not think he is fully qualified to hold the position.

Mr. Ewan: Oh!

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for Roma might say "Oh!", but how can we accept the position when a person occupying such a high position goes out into the community and says, "It is better to value low than to value too high."?

Mr. Ewan: Isn't it?

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for Roma says, "Isn't it?" The only thing required of the valuers is to value the land that they are called upon to value in accordance with the principles laid down in the Land Act or other Acts; nothing more. All I can say at this stage is that the comment of the President of the Land Court is in effect an invitation to these officials to either break or undermine the existing law.

Mr. Ewan: Oh, no.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for Roma might say "Oh, no," but what is his interpretation of a statement such as that?

Mr. Ewan: I know precisely what he means, and so do you.

Mr. WALSH: I do not know what he means. All I know is what is reported in the Press. If the hon. member for Roma is in the confidence of the President of the Land Court, I assure him that I am not. If I read it in that way, I am entitled to make the comment that I have made. On the other hand, if the President of the Land Court has been misreported, I take back what I have said. But I have seen no suggestion that the Press reporter's notes were incorrect.

I have noticed another matter that the hon. member has not noted. For some strange reason—to me, anyhow—what I might call the more controversial matters in land valuations appear to be allocated to the President of the Court. I do not know why. I hope there is not to be any attempt on the part of the President to put other members of the Court into the race, as it were, or the laneway, by saying, in effect, "This is my decision, and you cannot depart from these principles." As a matter of fact, I understand that some valuers have been told that in the Court itself. It is in effect saying, "The hide of the valuer to come back to the Land Court with a valuation based differently from the determination of the Court!"

That is entirely wrong. Valuers are appointed to their jobs to carry out valuations strictly in accordance with principles laid down. I have known some of these people. Some of them came from the department. I remember particularly one officer named Cook, whom I would rate as one of their very best valuers. I will not say that I know him personally, but I have some knowledge of his work. When I realise that these men have given their lives to a study of these matters, I think it is a dangerous practice for any member of the Court, in effect, to tell them that they have to line up and value land on a certain basis. What a valuer has to do is value land and then, if he thinks he is right, it is for the President or any other member of the Court to show him where he is wrong. If ultimately the Court, as in cases of many appeal decisions, can point out to the satisfaction of the parties that the valuer is wrong in not taking into consideration certain factors or in taking other factors into consideration that he should not have considered, that is fair enough.

There is one further point I wish to raise before my time expires. I want to know whether the leave principles that have been incorporated in this measure as being applicable to Supreme Court judges will apply also to members of the Land Court. If that is so I want to know whether—and I hope the Minister will give this information in his reply—the Land Court is going to embark upon a vacation somewhere in the first or second week in December, with its members on leave until February, as is the case with Supreme Court judges.

Mr. Aikens: And are they going to have the protection in debate in this House that Supreme Court judges have?

Mr. WALSH: They have not got it so far, and there is no reason why they should. After all, the judiciary is provided for in our Constitution and we respect the principle that, as judges, they should not be subject to criticism in this House except by way of substantive motion. Otherwise, we might criticise a decision in the court over which a judge might preside. I think it is accepted by all parties, and has been over a long period, that a judge should be free of criticism. But if we extend that protection

to members of the Land Court we might as well extend it to land commissioners too, because after all they have certain judicial powers that they have to carry out sitting as Commissioner's Courts. I hope the hon. member for Townsville South does not put ideas into the minds of Government members that this protection should be extended to members of the Land Court. I am not unmindful of the fact that the President of the Land Court came into the Court almost as an unknown quantity. Nobody can say that I am criticising him personally because I do not know the man.

Mr. Bennett: A junior barrister, too.

Mr. WALSH: That does not matter. I know many very good junior barristers. Some of them may be far better than some of the senior barristers. I am not holding it against him that he is a junior barrister. He may not have practised very extensively. Why the Government could not follow the practice that has been adopted over the years and appoint somebody from within the department with a full and thorough knowledge of the administration of the Land Act, I do not know. Does it suggest that there is nobody in the department competent to take these jobs on? Not a great deal of legal matter has to be determined within the Land Court because, as I interjected this afternoon, in cases where matters of law are involved the Land Appeal Court, which must be presided over by a judge of the Supreme Court, determines them. I know that a couple of judges already have their backs up and have refused to sit on the Land Appeal Court because their decisions on points of law have been rejected by the two what I may call "lay" members of the court.

Mr. Bennett: The President of the Land Court had a good knowledge of electoral boundaries.

Mr. WALSH: If the hon. member for South Brisbane wants to introduce those matters, that is up to him. I always consider myself fully qualified to express my thoughts without the need to call on the hon. member for South Brisbane for assistance. I am not making any suggestion against the honesty or integrity of the President of the Land Court, nor do I question his judicial capacity in any way if it is properly exercised.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HEWITT (Mackenzie) (8.18 p.m.): I am fully conscious of the work and time that Mr. Smith, Mr. Sutherst, Mr. Mathews and the members of the land committee, together with the Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation, have put into the preparation of the Bill. By this legislation we have genuinely endeavoured to do something that I believe will be in the interests of Queensland and its development.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. HEWITT: I will tell hon. members opposite about the Labour Party policy very shortly. The Minister has said that he is open to suggestions. I am sure that we are all desirous of doing a good job so that we can carry on the very good work that has been done in land matters since the Government took over the reins of office.

The speech of the hon. member for Port Curtis was outstanding in many ways. He said that 2,000 acres of brigalow country was a good living area within the new brigalow-development area. How different is that from the days when his own Government held the reins. Not so very many years ago, in the 1950's, his Government opened up 56,000 acres in one block on which there would have been 25,000 to 30,000 acres of scrub. I am talking facts because I know the block and I know the person who drew it.

Hon. members opposite make all these statements about different areas and their development. I have always been ready to concede that the Burnett area was one of the better closer-settlement schemes. In fact, it was a very good scheme. If the Labour Government had continued along the way it was moving in those days in the settlement of the Burnett perhaps we may have seen more good schemes. Unfortunately, it got away from that idea and embarked upon many sub-standard schemes in various parts of the State. What is more, it did not take into consideration the market, the nature of the soil, or the availability of water, and all those things which play a very big part in closer land settlement. They were the things that were available in the Burnett area, but are not available in other parts of the State.

We are said to have no interest in helping the small men. That remark came from the hon. member for Port Curtis. He said that we are on the side of the big companies. In my first speech on absentee land-owners——

Mr. Bromley: Are you in favour of that?

Mr. HEWITT: I claimed that Labour Governments had done nothing about some absentee owners in my electorate. When an inspection was made of seven blocks it was found that the prescribed conditions were not carried out. Two blocks had been forfeited. Yet hon. members opposite come here and say, "We are in favour of it."

The same remarks apply to Croydon, which is 135 miles from Rockhampton and consists of 364 square miles of country owned by a Labour Government. What did they do? They sold it with a brand new lease, with no resumption rights during the first 15 years of the term of the lease. It was sold for £155,000 at auction on 25 March, 1954, and it realised, if anything, little more than the value of the stock and improvements on the property. Hon. members opposite should be the last people to come here and talk about what they have done for land settlement in Queensland. Let

us pay a little tribute to the Minister and the Government, which is genuinely interested.

Furthermore, an hon. member opposite referred to land that joins the brigalow belt in which I have a personal interest. I am not quoting from a coward's castle. I will say this outside this House because it is an absolute fact. There are two blocks. One is Grazing Homestead No. 9408 and the other is Grazing Homestead No. 9409. My people own one and my brother owns the other. I will mention the carrying capacity in a moment. A new land lease was granted for those blocks on 1 July, 1960. It was granted by the previous Minister for Public Lands, whom hon. members opposite praise. Hon. members opposite have little to complain about. Grazing Homestead No. 9408 has a carrying capacity of 1 to 18 and a potential of 1,085 head of cattle. The new brigalow blocks are to carry 800 to 1,000 head of cattle. That is an estimate of the Department of Public Lands. It must also be borne in mind that an appeal was taken to the Land Court, which reduced the rating per acre. The Leader of the Opposition admitted that he has the greatest admiration for them.

Grazing Homestead No. 9409 has exactly the same carrying capacity, fully developed, of 1,085 head of cattle. These people have had these blocks for 30 years or more. Surely they are entitled to the same consideration as the person drawing a brigalow block with a carrying capacity of from 800 to 1,000 head of cattle. In a snide way hon. members opposite made reference to these blocks. I have no excuses to make. I am quite honest about these things and will stand up to any examination in that regard.

Furthermore, we had complaints about the way the brigalow-lands meeting at Theodore was conducted. I was very pleased to be associated with it. I asked the Minister for Public Lands and Mr. Muir, Chief Land Commissioner, for such a meeting to give the people the full facts so that they would know what was going on within the area that it was proposed to develop. No-one was debarred from attending that meeting. Even the town hairdresser was welcome to come along and hear what was said. Many Labour supporters attended. It was an excellent meeting and it really hurt the Labour boys. Since then a meeting has been held at Emerald. The hon. member for Barcoo accepted an invitation to attend. It was a very good meeting, too, according to all reports.

No favouritism has been shown. Instead of knocking these schemes, let hon. members opposite get behind them and help develop Queensland. That is what we are seeking to do in the Bill—something for the good of all.

The hon. member for Bundaberg attempted to forecast what I would say. I am fully conscious of the good job that was done in the Theodore area by the late Chris. Letchford and also by Keith Heywood. But their properties are not on the irrigation settlement at Theodore. Theirs are fairly large areas of dry country—some of our best dry land—and they made a success of it. I am proud to be associated with them. When the Food and Agriculture Committee went through the brigalow belt, whom should I go to but John Letchford, son of the late Chris. Letchford. He is a young man who is desirous of doing a good job for Queensland. He was Queensland's top junior farmer and he has a very sound knowledge. So I took along a man with know-how and gave him the opportunity of passing on to the committee what he knew about the brigalow lands.

We have heard much about the new method of balloting. It must be remembered that the applicant has first to comply with certain conditions, and the selection committee is tied by those conditions. It is a lot of nonsense to come in here, as one with eight or nine years' experience as manager of one of our larger wool-broking and pastoral branches in one of the most prosperous cattle centres in Queensland, to hear so much said about land ballots, and that we are going to do what hon. members opposite did. In reply to certain references I was compelled to ask what happened in the Auburn ballot when the two Hamilton boys were thrown out. One of the Hamilton boys has drawn a block under this Government and has made an excellent tenant of the Crown. The hon. member for Bundaberg was fair enough to say it could happen in his time, and it did. I suppose it has happened in our time, but we are trying to find a way of overcoming these anomalies and doing something for the betterment of the people.

Mr. Burrows: Could you have a better type of tenant than Bob Ellwood?

Mr. HEWITT: I know Bob Ellwood. As far as I know, he is an excellent chap.

Mr. Burrows: He would be a very experienced man.

Mr. HEWITT: No more competent than the two Hamilton boys, whom Labour threw out. In each case there was perhaps an error, or the information was not fully given. All I can say is that we are trying to overcome this business of eliminating people. It is easy to criticise.

Mr. Graham: You want to eliminate them before they even start, the way you are going.

Mr. HEWITT: That is what hon. members opposite did, and they did not give a right of appeal, either. They condemn committees. Let us look at the committee set up by this Government to deal with Harrisia cactus and

see what a good job it has done. What did hon. members opposite do about Harrisia cactus? They did nothing. If this Government had not been so wide awake, that pest would now have covered a much greater area of Queensland than it has. Today we are getting it under control. If it had been left longer without any action, its control would have cost much more than it is costing now.

There was also the committee set up to examine stud leases. This has been highly commended by the Stud Breeders' Association. There are two committees that have worked very well, and I feel sure that this selective committee will eliminate some of the anomalies that existed under the previous Government, and those few instances in which no doubt we have fallen down. We are trying to deal with the problem, and we are open to suggestions if any hon. member has any to make.

Another aspect with which I wish to deal relates to additional areas. I referred earlier to sub-standard areas that have developed in Queensland. I am pleased to say that, so far as I know, in my electorate, no sub-standard areas have been designed by this Government. Certainly it has not always been that way. It is my belief that, in case of original settlers, we should do everything possible to correct these anomalies if the country is available. If additional areas are granted to original settlers, I feel that something in the interests of Queensland is being done, because sub-standard areas are being replaced by areas on which a reasonable living can be made.

I believe that new settlement must take second priority, followed by settlers who have been in the area for a number of years and who purchased blocks many years ago and find that they have sub-standard areas. If the country is available, I feel that they should be given some consideration.

The hon. member for Carnarvon endeavoured to analyse the Bill in a way in which we should all try to do. He spoke of freeholding. We have gone along steadily in this direction, because we realise that it has problems. If the brigalow area had been freeholded in large tracts years ago, a dangerous problem would have been facing us today. That has to be borne in mind when considering areas that may be converted to freehold tenure. I have always believed that security of tenure stimulates production and makes it easier for the person on the land to get finance.

Like the previous Minister for Public Lands, I also believe that perpetual lease is a very sound tenure. When we look back and examine all aspects of land settlement in Queensland and see the small amount that was made available by previous Labour Governments under perpetual lease tenure, we soon realise that they are not very sincere in their references to that type of lease. We are now endeavouring to do something that hon. members opposite did not do, that is, consolidate the Lands Acts of Queensland.

I heard the hon. member for Warrego say, "Give the boy a chance." I may be only a boy in years, but I say to him that I have probably had more experience than he has in land matters. I am the son of a man who came back from World War 1 badly wounded but he did not let that worry him. He drew a block of 7,000 acres and made his way on the land, and, what is more, he educated a family of six children. I probably suffered most in the field of education because I was educated during the depression years. But I have never forgotten what land settlement and the problems associated with it really mean.

Mr. Dufficy: My parents were here long before yours.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HEWITT: The hon. member made a speech at 3.30 and did not return to the Chamber till 6 o'clock. It is about time somebody had something to say about that.

Mr. Dufficy interjected.

Mr. HEWITT: I am always prepared to be fair in my criticism, but when the hon. member makes comments such as he made today and the one he made a short time ago, I will have something to say.

Mr. Dufficy: If you can't cop it, it is just too bad. Don't be nasty. I was not nasty. If you can't take it, I can.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HEWITT: I would say that probably I have proved my worth under much tougher conditions than these. Therefore I make no apology to the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. Dufficy: You haven't got to apologise to me. I don't care whether you apologise or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Warrego will be apologising to me if he does not keep quiet. I have called for order several times, but he has completely ignored my call.

Mr. Dufficy: I apologise. I did not hear you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HEWITT: I think enough has been said about that, but if the hon. member for Warrego wants to use dog-and-goanna rules, for my part he can have them any time he likes.

Mr. Dufficy: It is O.K. with me, too, anywhere.

Mr. HEWITT: I am not worried about that. Furthermore, as I said earlier, I do not absent myself from the Chamber unless I have to. In fact, I could be absent at the moment.

Mr. Bennett: What have you to say about the Land Bill?

Mr. Duffiey: Are you objecting to my being absent from the Chamber?

Mr. HEWITT: If I was absent for a month, I was absent for good reason.

Mr. Duffiey: I will forgive you for being away for a month.

Mr. HEWITT: Thank you.

Mr. Duffiey: Because we did not even miss you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HEWITT: Let us have a look at some of the things that have been said about the Bill. Four hon. members opposite have spoken, but they have made only about four points.

Mr. Tucker: You have not made one point yet.

Mr. HEWITT: I have told hon. members opposite one or two things on what they did about land matters, yet they come here and criticise the Government.

Mr. Graham: We have every right to do it.

Mr. Duffiey: That is our privilege as an Opposition.

Mr. HEWITT: They have no regard for what was done in the past.

Mr. Bromley: We will see next year whether our criticism is warranted.

Mr. HEWITT: We will leave it to the people.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I warn hon. members on my left—the hon. member for Norman and the hon. member for Warrego —that if there is any continuation of this heckling I will classify their conduct as grossly disorderly and send them from the Chamber.

Dr. Noble: What about the hon. member for South Brisbane?

Mr. Bennett: Didn't you get the right Cabinet rank?

Mr. SPEAKER: My remarks apply also to the hon. member for South Brisbane.

Mr. HEWITT: I have plenty of interjections from the other side; apparently I have been reasonably effective. When I mentioned what happened at Croydon or some other place they were very silent, but when we got away from that to matters on which we perhaps erred in balloting or something else, just as they did, they all became very vocal.

Mr. Bromley: We were trying to help you, because you were running out of material.

Mr. HEWITT: All I can say is that I commend the Minister on the Bill.

Mr. Burrows: Didn't you tell him it was your baby, not his?

Mr. HEWITT: We get back again to the Theodore meeting. Let me once again reply to the hon. member for Port Curtis on the Theodore meeting. We had no trouble whatever and the people there were satisfied. There were many satisfield people within areas 1 and 2. That is what is apparently hurting hon. members opposite now.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (8.41 p.m.): It is not my intention to protest in any way against your chiding hon. members on this side, Mr. Speaker, but in reply to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat I point out that the Standing Orders do not require him to answer any interjection.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Kedron is not making the rules in this House. The rules are written and they distinctly state that members shall be heard in silence, or without interruption. It was on that point that I warned hon. members on my left.

Mr. LLOYD: I was not protesting, nor am I endeavouring to make rules for the House. I was quoting a rule of the House to the hon. member who just resumed his seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I quoted a rule to the hon. member for Kedron and I ask him to continue on the measure before the House or resume his seat.

Mr. LLOYD: I most certainly will, Mr. Speaker. At the same time, I believe we are entitled on our own initiative at all times to examine a Bill that is before the House. There may be times on which we disagree with you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am getting a little tired of hon. members arguing with the Chair, and the hon. member for Kedron is not setting a very good example. I ask him to continue with the measure before the House or I shall ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. LLOYD: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I intend to do that.

The measure before the House is one with which we cannot agree in its entirety. There are one or two features of the legislation which, as we pointed out when the Bill was introduced by the Minister, we wished to investigate and for that reason we allowed it to go through the introductory stage. It is our contention that the Land Bill, being in the form that it is, possibly requiring simplification, called for a complete investigation of all previous Acts so that they could be consolidated into one measure. Having seen the Bill and heard the Minister's speech on this occasion, we cannot possibly agree that this House should pass it through the second-reading stage. There are some very obnoxious clauses in it that preclude our supporting it as it stands. It would be preferable from the point of view of the

State and its people to retain the present legislation until further consideration can be given to the amendments proposed by the Minister.

I cannot see anything in the Bill but complete surrender by the Minister on the question of freeholding and the handing over of some entitlement to private industry, overseas capital, and people engaged in land matters on a large scale, which portends their eventual taking over of primary production in Queensland.

The Minister recently implied in a Press statement—the occasion was the Liberal Party conference—that land-tenure laws in Queensland needed complete revision, that there was insufficient security of tenure in land development, and that that was retarding the State's development. The Minister had pressure applied to him from the South. The Federal Treasurer, Mr. Holt, and other Federal Ministers applied pressure for the amendment of the State's land laws so as to enable people from the South to take up large areas of land here and develop them. When the Minister was addressing the Country Party Conference he said, "Many of our Liberal Party friends appear to be on the side of Big Business," but he said he would not stand idly by and allow that to happen. However, the bargaining powers of the Commonwealth Government are great. Possibly the bargaining powers of the Liberal Party Executive are also strong.

The Minister now introduces legislation under which it is proposed to allow the freeholding of land up to 10,000 acres. The hon. member for Warrego gave the history of the matter. He pointed out that in 1957-58 the freeholding of land was allowed with areas of up to 3,500 acres, that it subsequently was increased to 5,000 acres, and that it now will be 10,000 acres. If it is to be a living area, why not be consistent and make it a living area in any primary industry at all in Queensland, if that is what the Minister wants? We are completely opposed to the freeholding of any of the types of land that are producing the great wealth of the country. The freeholding of land has been opposed for many generations by many Governments—not only Labour Governments.

Mr. Ewan: Do you believe in perpetual lease?

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member has made his speech. He is interjecting on a matter that I consider to be completely irrelevant to the speech I am making.

Leasehold land tenure has been supported not only by Labour Governments, but also by anti-Labour Governments. One very good reason for leasehold tenure is that it prevents absentee landlordism. The holding of large aggregations of land by companies results in failure to develop the land. The companies hold on to it for taxation purposes, and for other reasons. Those companies do not help to populate the country. They do not create prosperous towns such as are created by the leasehold tenure of land in the grazing and pastoral industries. Because a number of Labour men got together in South-western Queensland, we have seen towns like Dirranbandi and Longreach develop into prosperous communities.

The Minister said that it would not be possible to aggregate the land that will be freeholded. I do not see how it is possible to prevent eventual aggregation of land once it becomes freehold. As has been pointed out from this side, there is the dangerous possibility of land aggregation.

When we examine the nation's export wealth we find that in 1961-62 the value of wool exported from Australia was £372,800,000, wheat £142,400,000, beef and veal £59,000,000 and sugar £33,000,000, making an immense figure of export wealth. All of that export wealth is owned and distributed by the people of Australia. To the greatest possible extent the export wealth of the sugar industry is owned by the people who are growing that primary product. They are living within the area and are spending the money received from their work.

If we place that land in the hands of a few companies we have the dangerous trend towards absentee ownership and loss of profit in the industry. No wonder big overseas or southern companies would like to take possession of the tremendous wealth that exists within primary production in Queensland, particularly in wool and meat. The wealth that reposes within these industries must form a very lucrative investment on the part of the large companies. A dangerous principle is being introduced in the freeholding of areas of 10,000 acres. The hon. member for Roma indicated that in the future the Government will extend the principle to all living areas in the State.

Mr. Ewan: I said I hoped it would.

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member indicated that it would. The method of freeholding much of this land poses a strange problem. The Minister indicated that the land could be freeholded over a period of 30 years by the payment of 30 annual instalments. Take, for instance, land that is valued at £30,000. It would mean that at the end of 30 years, at payments of £1,000 per annum, as long as the lessee-owner complied with the conditions that applied to the lease granted to him, he would be entitled to freehold the land.

The Minister said that repayments would not be deductible for income-tax purposes. A 30-year lease is granted to these people, which enables them to pay the land off in 30 years. They have to comply with certain conditions. Therefore, it is a condition of agreement. Every one of those 30 payments of £1,000 will be deductible for taxation purposes. It is a very important and positive contribution. (Government laughter.)

Mr. Duffey: Hon. members opposite need not laugh. I have legal opinions on this point.

Mr. Ewan: I hope you are right.

Mr. Duffey: I think I might be.

Mr. LLOYD: In any case, Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that it is the intention of the Government not only to allow the possibility of these people having that amount deductible for taxation purposes, but to give them a present as well. It is also allowing the pegging of rentals as at a period 30 years ago.

If we were to assess the area of land that was leased 30 years ago and compare its then valuation with its present valuation, there would now be an appreciation in value of some 500 per cent. So the condition of the lease which is granted to the applicant is in fact pegging the rentals as at today, whereas there could be a 500 per cent. appreciation of the value of that property during the next 30 years. A pegged rental of the property is being established, and the people of Queensland are being robbed of their just due in the payment of rental. If it were on an ordinary leasehold basis it would be subject to revaluation on a five-year period, or whenever the lease came up for renewal. Whenever that reassessment is made of the valuation there is the advantage of the additional rent. But the agreement that is proposed will be establishing a valuation for rental purposes as a present, regardless of all the improvements that might be carried out over the period of 30 years. I have already indicated that if we take the past 30 years as a guide, we know there will be an appreciation in the value of that land of some 500 per cent.

In any case, those are side issues. Our main opposition is to the principle of freeholding the land. The other leg of our opposition is to the introduction of the selecting committee and the elimination of the group type of ballot. The Minister said the committee to be set up will comprise one officer of the department and two others who may be appointed by the Minister. Apparently the Minister has very wide powers. His appointments do not appear to be subject to the approval of the Governor in Council. In any case, it is not his duty to appoint one committee to consider the eligibility of applicants to take part in any ballot. He will establish separate committees, whether within an industry or in different localities or in different industries. At any one time, with a number of ballots operating in the State, there could be any number of selecting committees operating in any one industry or in any one locality in the State. It sets a very dangerous precedent and it indicates very clearly the continuance of the Government's policy of refusing to accept responsibility for administering the affairs of the State. In the case of unemployment it has handed responsibility over to a number of committees spread along the entire coastline of the State. It passed on the responsibility to Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis to report on the railways of the State. The Government is afraid to accept its obligations to govern and administer the affairs of the State as elected representatives of the people responsible to Parliament. Previously the body responsible for considering the eligibility for ballots was answerable to Parliament. We had the opportunity of reading the reports and of expressing disagreement with decisions. But this committee is to have all-embracing powers. Its members will have the opportunity to interview candidates before selection and even to interview their wives. Goodness knows what that will tell them. Will the interviewing of the wife be to decide whether she is suitable to go on the land with her husband, or to decide whether the man should have married someone else? In any case, apparently that is one of the powers of the committee.

Mr. Sullivan: You would not know anything about that.

Mr. LLOYD: Perhaps I do not. Perhaps the hon. member for Condamine was responsible for the insertion of that provision.

Mr. Sullivan: I might be able to tell you something about it later.

Mr. LLOYD: However, it is only a side issue of our criticism.

The Minister said there is a right of appeal from the decision of the committee, but apparently it is purely a right of appeal from Caesar unto Caesar. It allows for a review by the committee of a decision it has already made.

The establishment of the committee can lead to corruption. We do not say that it is the intention or the wish of the Government to allow corrupt practices to be introduced into land matters in this State, but the fact is these committees can be established, one within an industry, another within any locality or district, and that the personnel will be changing from time to time. It is not a matter of forming one committee comprised of men responsible to Parliament or having to report to Parliament, or of giving a right of appeal to unsuccessful applicants. We have no guarantee that all appointees to the committees will be men who are not corrupt. The way is open. Instead of selections being made by the administrators of the Government, by members of the Public Service, trained and responsible to the Government and to Parliament, they will be made only partly by people with training and experience who have adapted themselves to the conditions of their employment. It should be left to people experienced in the land laws of the State, without allowing other persons answerable to nobody to come in from outside and be members of the selective committee. The principle is wrong, and could lead eventually to a form of corruption that I think would be most undesirable for both the State and the Government.

For those reasons, we believe that we are justified in opposing the legislation as it exists at present. We think that it should go back to the Government for further attention. If our request to defer consideration of this legislation is not met, we must oppose it and accept the fact that, as far as is possible, the present legislation allows the land laws of Queensland to be administered safely and wisely. We can see great disadvantage in extending freehold titles to areas of 10,000 acres. That provision can only make for land aggregation, and we are also utterly opposed to the formation of a selective committee and the usurping of the powers of the Government and the people responsible to the Government and Parliament.

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (9.2 p.m.): I did not intend to speak on this Bill but, having heard the previous speeches, I now feel that I should take part in the debate.

Officers of the Department of Public Lands recently travelled to my area and claimed that no country there is suitable for cattle-fattening purposes. I have heard discussed tonight that a living area in the brigalow country is 10,000 acres.

Mr. Fletcher: No. That is the maximum living area.

Mr. ADAIR: What is called a living area in the brigalow country?

Mr. Fletcher: Who can tell? It depends on the country. It may be 5,000 acres.

Mr. ADAIR: I know what a living area is in my electorate on the coastal fattening lands. The Government is spending £1,750,000 in the development of the brigalow area, and that area has been chosen in preference to the cattle-fattening country in the North. I claim that on 10,000 acres of coastal fattening country in my area, with the guinea grass on that land, 25 settlers could easily be settled.

Mr. Fletcher: But that area cannot be freeholded. Only a living area can be freeholded. That is the limit.

Mr. ADAIR: I am merely making a comparison with the country up there. That is the position in the Daintree, Tribulation, and Bloomfield areas. In the Daintree area, two to three beasts an acre are being fattened. In the Bailey's Creek and Tribulation areas, which are being cleared now for cattle-fattening, I am confident that two to three beasts an acre can be fattened.

Mr. Fletcher: What would a living area be?

Mr. ADAIR: I estimate it at 500 acres.

Mr. Fletcher: Then that is all that could be freeholded, if we decided to trust your figure.

Mr. ADAIR: I am certain that my figure would be right. Ten thousand acres of coastal cattle-fattening land in that area would settle 25 graziers. I have been trying to have opened up all the country from the Daintree River into Borgamba and China Camp. I claim that the building of a road would not cost much. The first sugar-mill in Queensland was in the Bloomfield area. There are thousands of acres of good land there that could be opened up, yet the brigalow areas are being given preference. Members of the committee went up there with full knowledge of the requirements for cattle-fattening, but they condemned the area.

Mr. Fletcher: I do not think that they condemned it. They thought that the brigalow area was a more fruitful place at this particular stage of our development.

Mr. ADAIR: I will give the Minister an instance of what can be done. Twelve months ago I was at Helenvale, on the bank of the Annan River. I was staying at the hotel, and looking from the hotel veranda one could see where Norm Watkins had cleared 90 acres of timber on the bank of the river. He had 90 beasts there, and I was there when the buyer came and bought them. I should point out that the stock that were brought onto the property were not prize stock. They came from Cape York Peninsula, and anybody who has ever been in that area knows the type of cattle they have there. Watkins sold his steers for £43 a head and spayed cows for £35 a head. He took 90 beasts off 90 acres and immediately restocked it with 90 or 100 beasts and fattened them on the same block of land. That shows what can be done in that area, and there are thousands of acres of similar land on the Annan River, the McIvor River, and the Daintree River. I have been prompted to take part in this debate by my knowledge of what can be done in cattle-fattening on the coastal lands of the Far North. I do not think that the brigalow land will compare with the land there.

Mr. Fletcher: Not acre for acre, but there is much more of it.

Mr. ADAIR: We have all the rainfall that is needed, and there is no need to dam the rivers. In the Daintree River area the rainfall is from 80 to 100 inches a year.

Mr. Sullivan: What would it cost an acre to get it grassed?

Mr. ADAIR: Jack Brennan, who has land in the Bailey's Creek area, has a T.D. 25. He pushes the scrub over, walks the bulldozer over the top of it, then burns it, and he claims he can clear the land for about £20 an acre.

Mr. Sullivan: No suckering?

Mr. ADAIR: No. He simply plants it with grass, and he has a crop of guinea grass there that a man cannot look over. That is the difference between the brigalow country and the fattening country in the coastal belt.

I know that the ballots for this land that has been thrown open will be conducted in a much better way than the ballots for tobacco blocks in the Mareeba-Dimbulah area. I know that, no matter what ballots are held for land, there will always be anomalies. People wishing to take part in ballots for tobacco blocks have to show that they have three years' experience of tobacco farming using irrigation. That is most essential, and a committee investigates the qualifications of persons who wish to take part in the ballot and recommends who should be allowed to take part. There have been anomalies there. As I pointed out in a letter to the Minister, I was informed by growers in the area that a person who had been in Australia for only two years was allowed to take part in a ballot and drew a block of land. He worked for one year in the tobacco industry and was declared eligible to take part in a ballot, and the block he drew was worth from £15,000 to £20,000. Others who have been in the area for years, sons of farmers, have been rejected.

Mr. Fletcher: Why were the sons of farmers rejected?

Mr. ADAIR: They must have certain qualifications in finance and in other matters. They were rejected on the score of finance.

There was another case in the Mareeba area of one gentleman putting in for a block, which he drew. When he looked at it he did not want it and simply forfeited it. When the next ballot came up he entered it and drew another block.

Mr. Fletcher: I do not think that principle is right.

Mr. ADAIR: I do not think so, either. If a man draws a block, looks at it and knocks it back, he should not have a chance to enter another ballot. I do not think it is right. I simply rose to draw the Minister's attention to that matter.

I am confident that our coastal cattle-fattening land is superior to any other cattle-fattening land in the State and I should like to see it opened.

Mr. Muller: If all you say is right, we are wasting our time.

Mr. ADAIR: The hon. member can go and see it for himself.

Mr. Walsh: What about the grazier in Georgetown who bought a lot of perpetual lease land to use as fattening country?

Mr. ADAIR: Many of these graziers in the Peninsula are buying cattle-fattening land on the coast, bringing their cattle down, and fattening them in the coastal belt.

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (9.12 p.m.): In entering this debate I do not propose to speak at length, but there are two or three points that have been raised by the Opposition on which I wish to speak. I congratulate the Minister, the consolidation committee, and the parliamentary committee on the magnificent job they have done in consolidating the Land Acts. It has been, as we all realise, a mammoth job and no doubt those committees have spent many hours in working out this consolidation.

I am not a member of the Minister's parliamentary land committee, but on quite a number of occasions I have been co-opted and have been very pleased to take part in this mammoth job.

I consider that members on the Government side, during the debate, have dealt at very great length with the principles of this Bill and I am confident that the Minister, in his summing up, will answer any accusations that have been levelled at the Government that this is a bad Bill, or any other type of Bill it has been called during the course of the debate.

The hon. member for Kedron, in his customary manner, "ducked" into this Chamber and launched an attack on certain aspects of the Bill and, by interjection, I intimated that I might be able to explain a particular point to him. I felt that he would at least wait and find out what my explanation might be, but I see, as is customary, he has "ducked" off again.

It appears that the Opposition are very critical of, and very adverse to, this selective committee to select applicants for participation in land ballots. I do not think that is anything new because I can remember during the time of the Labour Government, under its soldier-settlement scheme, I went before a similar committee. At that time the land opened for settlement was mixed farming and dairy land, and the committee included a wheat-farmer and dairymen. The Minister has gone further, I commend him for it. For his selection committee he will choose men from the locality where the land is being thrown open for ballot. For the benefit of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Barcoo I point out that a cross-section of the countless hundreds of people interested in participating in land ballots have told me that this is something for which they have waited for many years. This is the correct way that men should be chosen to participate in the ballot.

The hon. member for Kedron brought up the point of the applicant's wife being interviewed. I do not say this in any spiteful way, but perhaps the hon. member for Kedron does not realise the important part that the wife of the land-settler plays in whether he is successful or falls by the wayside. That is possibly the reason why the Minister has chosen to have this condition included. Those who have lived on the land know, and possibly many who have not lived on the land can appreciate, that the wife can play a very important part. Many reasons can be given why a woman may not be fitted

to be the wife of a settler in the early stages of land development. Indeed, if she is not the right type of person she can be a handicap.

Mr. Diplock: Do you think the committee can decide that?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I do. I think that the practical men who live on the land in the area would be pretty wise men; they would go very close to picking the right type. There would be times when they would be wrong, but nine times out of ten they would be right.

Mr. Diplock: What about a wife from the city? Would they class her out?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Not necessarily. They would have to consider her character. I have seen dozens of girls from the city who have made wonderful farmers' wives. They would have to sum up her character, her will to work, and, more important, her willingness to live under isolated conditions.

Mr. Burrows: Do you think men from the city would be good selectors?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That has been proved over the years. There again I consider that the committee would be able to sum up whether or not a man would be a good settler.

Mr. Walsh: How could they if they did not necessarily meet him in the first place?

Mr. SULLIVAN: They will see him when he is taken before the committee. I only brought that matter in, thinking that the hon. member for Kedron would pay me the courtesy of remaining in the Chamber.

When the hon. member for Mackenzie was speaking, the hon. member for Mackay interjected that the Labour Party was just as anxious as the present Government to develop Queensland. That may be so much lip-service. During that Government's term of office over a lengthy period it did not demonstrate that to my way of thinking.

In the course of the debate we have heard considerable reference to the development of the brigalow area of the Fitzroy basin. I very well remember the soldier-settlement scheme that was in operation after the war, because at that time I was very active in the western district branch of the R.S.S.A.-I.L.A. in endeavouring to get further development under that scheme. We could not convince the Government of the day that it should come under the Commonwealth scheme. As a result, of the money that was available at that time Queensland's share was £450,000 as against £91,000,000 which was allocated to the other five States. Can the hon. member for Mackay justify saying that the Labour Party was just as anxious to develop Queensland as is the present Country Party-Liberal Government? I think we should be very proud of the fact that we have been able to attract the interest of the Federal Government, which has promised and indicated that money will be made available for the development of this land for 12 months. We have no proof of the statement that the Labour Party was anxious to have Queensland developed.

Criticism has been levelled at freeholding and share-farming. I mention the two because I think I can put before the House the reason why both are desirable, particularly in the development of the brigalow country.

There are members in the Chamber, particularly on the Government side—Country Party members, and the member of Aubigny would know, too—who know what a wonderful opportunity share-farming is for a young fellow with a brave heart to get a start. It has been said that the Opposition are opposed to share farming because they do not want the rural worker to leave that class of work. They want him to remain a rural worker so that he will continue to support their party.

Mr. BURROWS: I rise to a point of order. I wish to deny that statement.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I did not say the hon. member said it. It was said over here. However, a perusal of the voting in most of the country electorates will reveal that the rural worker is not a supporter of the Labour Party. He does not want any part of Socialism. If hon. members opposite do not believe me, I refer them to the statistics of voting at the last elections. If they go through the polling-booth figures they will see that that statement is correct.

To my mind, share-farming gives the rural worker the greatest opportunity of all of establishing himself. It has proved itself over the years. We have the hon. member for Ipswich East saying that the share-farmer has been exploited. I shall give one instance. There is a share-farmer at Jimbour Plains who, in the next couple of weeks, will harvest 600 acres of wheat. Two or three months ago, because he was share-farming and was able to build up a bank account, he qualified for participation in a ballot in the Taroom area. He was successful in drawing a 5,000-acre block. He told me that if he had not taken on share-farming he would not have qualified for the group ballot. Yet hon. members opposite stand up in this House and decry share-farming! Let me go further.

Mr. Burrows: I had a case the other day where a man qualified for the age pension even though he had been share-farming for 15 years.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The hon. member for Aubigny and the Minister will agree that many men on the Downs have been able to make their way because of the opportunity that was given to them by men who could not use their land but were prepared to put a share-farmer in. In some instances the share-farmer has finished up buying the farm.

I will give the House the case of a man who came onto Jimbour Plains less than 20 years ago. He worked for wages. Then he took the place on on shares. He ended up buying the farm and a couple of years ago he bought the adjoining farm when it came up for sale. That is what can be done by landowners giving workers the opportunity to take on part of their land as share-farmers.

The hon. member for Barcoo was critical of share-farmers.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I rise to a point of order. I was not, and I ask for a withdrawal of that remark. I have nothing but the greatest admiration for share-farmers. I admire the work they do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will accept the denial of the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Yes, I do. The hon. member for Barcoo admired the share-farmer but he was opposed to the owners of the land. He said they exploit the share-farmer.

Mr. O'Donnell: Of course they do.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I am upholding the man who gives the share-farmer the opportunity to build up an estate of his own. With this brigalow country in particular being thrown open in what is considered to be a living area in its raw state—and, as the definition explains, it is to be an area which will maintain a man and his wife and his infant children—if the land is thrown open under freehold tenure——

Mr. Donald: The share-farmer could not buy it.

Mr. SULLIVAN: When the hon. member for Ipswich East speaks on coal-mining or some such subject of which I know nothing but which I am keen to learn about, I sit and listen courteously to him. He has admitted on numerous occasions that he knows nothing about land, so I wish he would pay me the same courtesy.

Mr. Donald interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: My grandfather was the first man to ride the black bull through China, but I could not ride the back of a calf. The same thing might apply.

Where land such as this, which is costly to develop, is thrown open to freehold tenure, if we have young men who are keen to participate in share-farming rather than work in industry on wages, men prepared to rough it and prepared to borrow money to get themselves established, we will find that development in this country will come about much more quickly. Moreover, once the selector's land is developed to such an extent that it becomes more than one living area, and the share-farmer and his wife and family have done a good job, the freeholder has been prepared to subdivide to sell to that share-farmer. He knows that, in doing so, he is putting another good settler on the land.

Mr. Donald: You do not believe that, do you?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I do, because I have seen it done. We of the Country Party are not like hon. members opposite who believe that all people associated with the land are dishonest. I have every admiration for them. To my knowledge landholders are a very good type of people.

As I indicated when I rose to speak, I intended to be brief as I know the Minister wishes to sum up. I wanted only to refer to those two points and, having dealt with them, I will now resume my seat and look forward to a very interesting summing up by the Minister.

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Public Lands and Irrigation) (9.30 p.m.), in reply: As was to be expected with such a large Bill before the House, a great many matters have been brought up and discussed or criticised. I am going to be hard put to go through all the points that I have noted and do them justice in the 40 minutes at my disposal.

The Leader of the Opposition spent much time suggesting that there was an undue amount of Liberal influence behind what he called the overthrow of important principles in the Land Act, but he did not tell us what those important principles were, nor could I ascertain what they were from anything in his discourse.

He spoke of what a good thing the Peak Downs scheme was and that, as proof of that, employees of the Queensland-British Food Corporation were very anxious to take up blocks. My reasoning does not lead to the same conclusion. Employees or managers could quite easily have obtained a keen appreciation of the value of the blocks without being overcome with admiration for the Corporation itself. There is no doubt about the quality of land in the area, or of what those who took over the area have done with it. But that did not come about because of anything that the Corporation did. That project merely highlighted the possibilities of the area, without doing a great deal to prove them.

The balloting conditions have been discussed by quite a number of hon. members. The change that we are making in balloting methods has been rather intemperately discussed and criticised. I think that this is something to which I should devote a little time. There is no doubt that balloting has always been a subject on which somebody or other has a grouch. After a ballot someone is always disappointed, and I do not say that many people do not have good reason for their grouching. There is no doubt that mistakes will be made and decisions given that do not take into consideration all the circumstances. In many

cases, the applications do not include all the information that would have given the people entrusted with the responsibility of deciding these things a proper appreciation of all the circumstances.

However, we have not made much change in the method of balloting except, because of some of the dissatisfaction referred to by hon. members opposite, to take the opportunity of getting in a couple of outsiders, practical men from the areas concerned, to help make the decisions that have to be made in respect of suitable applicants. There is no question of the three-man committee having tremendous powers. Its function is to review applications, and the conditions under which they are to be reviewed are imposed by the Minister and have to be published by him. That is something that was not done before.

There is a right of appeal within the committee. Under the previous Act of a Labour Government, there was no appeal. If a man now feels that he has been wrongly excluded, he has a perfect right to go to the committee and be heard in person. He did not have that right before.

A lot of insincere mumbo-jumbo has been spoken about this being something new and sinister. It is new, and it is good thing; it will iron out some the anomalies and injustices that we have heard have been part of the unfortunate system of balloting in force up till now.

Mr. Walsh: I hope you are right, but I think you are an optimist.

Mr. FLETCHER: I would be most surprised if the hon. member who interjected approved of anything I did. One of the real indications that we are doing something effective and good is that the hon. member automatically disapproves of it. The more he disapproves, the better we feel that we have done.

The Bill says that the committee must give reasons for rejecting an applicant and that the rejected applicant has a right to be heard on his objections to those reasons, and everything will now be out in the open. Since I have taken over the administration of the Act, I have changed the procedure and the unsuccessful man is notified. He was never notified under Labour administrations. It was always a secret transaction and he did not know whether or not he was in the ballot unless he went to the Minister and specifically asked for that information. He knew he had put in an application and that he had not won a block, but he did not know whether his name had been in the hat.

Mr. Burrows: If the agent was doing the job, he would advise him.

Mr. FLETCHER: The agent would not know.

Mr. Burrows: How did I know about Bob Ellwood being thrown out?

Mr. FLETCHER: How does the hon. member know many things? Probably he would go to the Minister and he would tell him, but there is no automatic right to be told.

Mr. Burrows: I did not go near the Minister.

Mr. FLETCHER: There are devious ways of finding things out.

A Government Member: Who told you that?

Mr. Burrows: It was in open court.

Mr. FLETCHER: In that case the hon. member found out by legitimate means. Ordinarily, if a person was in a group ballot it was nobody's duty to tell him that his name was in the hat. I know because I had to change the practice, and it has been changed under my administration. A person who is admitted to the ballot is now told that he has been admitted, which is something that was not done before I instituted that new system.

If the Commission member of the three-man committee is dissatisfied with what the other two have done in over-riding him, it is unthinkable that he will not come to the Minister and tell him the reasons for his dissatisfaction. In that case, if he has reasonable doubts about things being on the up-and-up, the Minister can refer it to the Land Court for an open hearing before a man is allocated his block and before the application is finally accepted by the Court, and it has to be accepted by the Land Court.

There are two systems still operating. The open system is used for blocks out in the West, and under that system applications are lodged with the Land Commissioner for the district in which the land is situated. An applicant must be over 18 years of age and not more than 55 years of age, I think it is. No more than two persons can apply for a selection. An unmarried woman over 21 or a married woman who is separated from her husband is competent to apply. Anyone with less than 50 per cent. of a living area of land can apply. The land commissioner conducts the ballot. Applications must be approved by the Court, and the applicant must be able to pay for the improvements and furnish proof of being able to buy the stock required to stock the holding to reasonable capacity.

Under the other system, the selective system, which more or less modifies and changes, at least in name, the old group system, the special terms and conditions are laid down by the Minister and published in the Government Gazette. These may apply to such things as finance, experience, age, health, and matters of that sort. The ordinary disqualifications of the Act apply in regard to land held. The committee of review scrutinises applicants to see if they

comply with the above conditions. The rejected applicants must be advised of the reasons for their rejection and given 14 days to appear before the committee and produce further evidence as to their objections, if they have any. After consideration of further evidence and objections of the applicants, the committee reconducts the ballot to determine the successful applicant, and the application of the successful applicant must be sent to the Land Court for approval. His application is not finally accepted till the Land Court approves of it. I do not think anybody can take exception to that. It is practical, and I think it is good, honest horsesense. I think it will iron out many of the difficulties, many of the disappointments, and many, shall I say, of the injustices that were formerly allowed to go through.

The Leader of the Opposition made some nasty insinuations about prominent members of the Government. I assume he was referring to the hon. member for Mackenzie, whose property, Mr. Duggan says, was excluded from the area to be taken. I am a bit disappointed about that because I am quite sure he himself does not believe it. There was no skulduggery whatever in that operation and the consideration of the area. There is no doubt in the world that everybody was treated justly and equitably.

The hon. gentleman naturally takes exception to freeholding, because that is the land policy of the Opposition. I respect that; it is their policy. We have ours, and I respect any honest policy. He objected to our further extending the area to 10,000 acres and the repayment period to 30 years. The extension to 10,000 acres is not as bad as it sounds, because the limitation on the areas is exactly the same as in respect of those under the old Act where 5,000 acres was the limit. The limit still is a living area. If it was a limit of 4,000 acres when 5,000 was the top limit, it is still 4,000. There is no change in that regard.

He went further and impugned my honour to some extent and said something about my being likely to appoint political stooges to the selective committee. I suppose that is the way politics are played, but that is not my way of doing it, and I do not think he really thought that that would be the case. I have no doubt that there would be some supporters of our party who would be in the type that I would pick if I were given the pick of men who would be practical, knowledgeable, and honest, and of the type I should like to trust for this sort of thing, but that would be the reason they were picked; it would not have anything to do with their politics and I certainly would not be concerned about their political leanings. If the hon. member thinks that we are here designing to make laws to further entrench people of wealth so that they can aggregate more and more land, he has been misreading some of the things I have been saying and some of the articles I have been writing. I am sure he does not really believe that I and my parliamentary party are that type. As I say, I suppose that is the way politics are played.

He referred to freeholding as an invitation to companies to aggregate land. To a certain extent the bar to aggregations has been lifted slightly under the freeholding policy, but we have hundreds of thousands of acres of freehold now, and if one could put his finger on two or three, or even four, aggregations that look like serious matters in our farming community in the hundreds of thousands of acres there now, there would be a great deal more point and substance in this particular prognostication. I think one has to be prepared to show some signs of this happening in a system where 5 per cent. of the lands of Queensland are already freehold. If one cannot do that, I think it detracts a little from the force of the argument.

The hon. member for Kedron produced figures on production and more or less suggested that because certain of his figures were pretty impressive with regard to Queensland, he could draw the moral, as I understood it, that this was a tribute to the land laws in this State, which were primarily leasehold land laws, and he ill-advisedly mentioned sugar individually. The sugar figures are impressive and it is a pretty big industry and does a good job, but sugar is produced on freehold land, not leasehold land. Almost all sugar is produced on freehold land, and as far as I know there is no indication now of any undue aggregation to a dangerous extent in sugar land. He could not have been more unfortunate in picking that instance to support his argument.

Mr. Lloyd: May I point out to you that my argument was not so much along the lines you suggested. It was my suggestion that the aggregation of sugar lands would lead to most of the wealth at present coming into Queensland being taken away from Queensland.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member did not make any point that that was happening. The sugar lands have been freeholded for a long time. Surely, if there was such a serious threat, some of this dreadful aggregation should have started before now.

Mr. Lloyd: You must have permission to transfer the assignments——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind the hon. member for Kedron that I am getting a little tired of the constant interjections from hon. members on my left. I also advise hon. members on my right that the Minister has only 40 minutes, very little of which is left, in which to answer all the points put forward today. It is up to both sides of the House to give him a fair hearing.

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order. I agree with you, Mr. Speaker, but I think that I am entitled to have the Minister rightly interpret my remarks and quote my remarks correctly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member made a remark and in my opinion the Minister answered it. The hon. member for Kedron then kept mumbling after the Minister had replied to him.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am replying to the Leader of the Opposition because he is entitled to that courtesy. He claimed that we were a bit inconsiderate and inconsistent. He said that we had introduced legislation in 1959 that was to cover the land laws, as they were then, for a long time to come, but that now we had started on the consolidation. He forgot that even when the amending Bill was passed in 1959 it was paraded as a prelude to the consolidation of the Land Acts generally. It was being thought of even at that stage.

The hon. gentleman somewhat confused the Fitzroy Basin scheme with the provisions for a brigalow lease. The brigalow lease was in the old Act; it is still in the Bill. It was devised by Sir William Payne to cope with particularly difficult brigalow land that would require an undue amount of developmental capital—something that was very difficult and out of the ordinary. It was devised so that in those circumstances a 40-year lease could be given to a person, or even a company. It was something quite out of the ordinary. It was not designed to cope with the Fitzroy Basin land. That should come within the ambit of the ordinary land laws of the State.

Mr. Lloyd: What about the 25 per cent. of the land that will be developed——

Mr. FLETCHER: That has nothing to do with the brigalow development lease.

Mr. Dufficy: The company has a right to a lease, which you denied.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is not being introduced in the Bill; it is being transferred from the old Act.

Mr. Dufficy: It is in the Bill.

Mr. FLETCHER: Of course it is. I was just telling the hon. member that it is.

Mr. Dufficy: You denied it.

Mr. FLETCHER: I did not deny it. I said it was not there with regard to the Fitzroy development.

Mr. Dufficy: You said it was not there with regard to any lease. I said it was with regard to the brigalow land.

Mr. FLETCHER: I took it that the hon. member was connecting this particular point he had made with the Fitzroy development.

Mr. Dufficy: I didn't, you did.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member made a great point in quoting from "Country Life". He said very dramatically that in his opinion some of the principles raised by "Country Life" were good ones. When I asked him to name them he said he had run out of time. In the seven minutes he still had left he could not remember one of the points on which he agreed with "Country Life". I think it was a pretty poor show. He accused me of having been influenced by pressure groups of which "Country Life" is generally accepted as being the mouthpiece. Indeed, the hon. member for Barcoo did a very clumsy job. He kept on getting all mixed up and could not say whether he was quoting from "Country Life", "Hansard" or the Koran. He got himself very convincingly into a mess. We are still waiting for instances of these points with which he quite dogmatically agreed on matters that have been objected to in "Country Life". I will be most interested to hear them if ever he remembers what they were. The hon. member for Barcoo has got himself mixed up. He said he did not agree with "Country Life" but he thought it was a good thing to report it to the House. He did not say why he wanted to report it or what morals we were supposed to draw from it. He thought it might confuse us in some way. It sounded like a good story. He spoke of overseas capital and the fact that we were going to let it in, or invite it in. My own thoughts on overseas capital are pretty well known. What about the overseas capital that has always been tied up in pastoral leases under Labour? Was there any great objection, or any great evidence of the desire to root it out because it was overseas capital?

He spoke also of selective ballots and the fact that bias and political considerations were likely to occur. That is not worthy of this type of debate. I think those evils are less likely to occur under our system. Does he think there has been political discrimination in the things that have gone on under me? If he does, I would like him to come to my office to name them, or give some proof, because I do not think he can.

He thinks Country Party supporters will be the men who will serve on this two-man committee. If we were looking for intelligent men in the community, they would be very likely to be Country Party supporters.

He spoke of our overseas balances and the fact that they would probably be attributable to our land standards over here, but he would be much more likely to reach a logical conclusion if he related our overall production or our per-acre earning capacity with that of Victoria, which is largely freehold. He could not get a much more logical conclusion by working this out on the basis of freehold production per acre, with our limited production per acre.

The hon. member for Warrego has always been against freehold. I have never quarrelled with his doing that. I think he is quite entitled to do it. I told him in my introductory speech exactly why I thought we were entitled to go to 10,000 acres, and the reason why at this point of history we should not go beyond 10,000 acres.

I told him all about Sir William Payne's statement. I quoted Sir William Payne's reasons. I thought they were good reasons. While we still retained that living area standard Sir William Payne suggested, we have increased the total area within which we would allow freeholding from 5,000 acres to 10,000 acres. I think I can do no more than to indicate to the hon. member for Warrego that I have a little brochure which includes the whole of my introductory speech. If he likes I will give it to him and I will mark in the margin exactly what I said about it. He will be able to have a good look at it for himself.

He spoke of the need to do something about the discrepancies or the inequalities or injustices in the ballots at Nive Downs. There was nothing wrong with the Nive Downs ballots. He said that no-one could be expected to find £12,000. I interjected that there were 1,500 who could. That figure was not absolutely accurate but I have obtained the figures and I was not very far out. In the first ballot there were 703 applications, of which 348 were admitted. In the second ballot there were 1,500 applicaants, of whom 750 were approved. In the third there were 303 applications. It was an open ballot and I presume most of those were approved because the conditions were not too hard.

Mr. Duffey: How many were rejected?

Mr. FLETCHER: I cannot remember, nor have I the figures.

Mr. Duffey: How many were rejected?

Mr. FLETCHER: I told the hon. member before. I cannot go over and over that. The Nive Downs blocks did not require £12,000, One was £15,500. It was a very big block with a lot of improvements. One was £10,000 and the others were £8,500, £7,000, £7,000, £6,000, and £6,000.

Mr. Duffey: On the average I was not far out with 12,000.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member was pretty close, for him.

Mr. Duffey: I was pretty close for you, too.

Mr. Lloyd: Too close for you.

Mr. Duffey: Too close for you.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not a bit too close for me. At 12,000 the hon. member would be about 4,000 out.

Mr. Duffey: Not on the average.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member referred scathingly to discontent of applicants. Is not that the very reason we have changed the system? We are bringing it out in the open, with no secrecy. If a man is not allowed in, he is given a notice to that effect and can appear before the committee. That is the best way I can think of to overcome it.

The hon. member raised a point about aliens being able to hold land under freehold but not leasehold. I think that was his point. Wasn't that it?

Mr. Duffey: You work it out for yourself. It is Clause 16.

Mr. FLETCHER: In any case, that is not a matter primarily for the Land Act.

Mr. Duffey: It is in the Land Act.

Mr. FLETCHER: We have to preserve the provision of the Aliens Act and make our Act conform with it.

Mr. Duffey: I will deal with that in Committee.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is a point I really have no control of. We have to take it from the Aliens Act.

Mr. Duffey: I am not talking about the Aliens Act. I am talking about the Land Act, and that is not controlled by the Aliens Act.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am afraid the hon. member does not follow.

Mr. Duffey: I do follow, but you don't.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have not time to go into that.

The hon. member for Roma made a couple of very good points. I will not reiterate them. I have already gone over the fact that Victoria's production on freehold country is far better than ours.

As to the change from 60,000 to 45,000 acres, he said he would have liked the provision to remain as it was. I repeat that the 45,000 acres with no limit for poor-quality land is there to break up aggregations in the better-quality areas. It is logical; it is defensible, and it is a very good thing.

He made the further point that a lot of the aggregations we have now are there because blocks were far too small for a living area and they just had to be aggregated. When you start a system like that, heaven knows where you get to.

The hon. member for Carnarvon raised some very good points and I was very interested in what he had to say. But he rather nonplussed me by saying that no invitation to discuss suggested amendments had been given to him. What in the name of heaven is the good of saying, "We will leave it on the table for five weeks," as indeed we did,

if the implication of that is that hon. members are not able to come to me and say, "Look, I don't like this. I think you have made a blue"? What would be the good of waiting till the day we were debating the particular clause in Committee? No Government could possibly hope to take an amendment popped in at the last minute and give it fair consideration. No Minister would be able to say off hand, "My party would not agree to that," or "My party would agree to that." He just would not know. There is only one common-sense thing to do, and that is to bring it to me. If any hon. member has something concrete to offer, he is invited to discuss it with me and try to get something done before we reach the stage of considering the particular clause with which he is concerned.

Mr. Hilton: My grouch was that you said you had amendments and did not give us a clue as to what they were.

Mr. FLETCHER: No, it was not. That was one of them, but the other was the more concrete one. I explained that by interjection. The hon. member does not agree with freeholding. The argument that Victorians come here because they want to get out of freeholding tenure and into leasehold tenure is just plain silly. They come here because there are too many farmers and not enough land in Victoria.

I have said something about the freeholding of areas of 10,000 acres leading to land monopolies. That is the reason why we are proceeding cautiously. I point out that there is still land tax, and that if developments indicate to our successors in this House the wisdom of doing something to deal with a situation that looks like becoming a real menace to our land laws, that will be their responsibility. At this stage, we are doing a good and practical thing to give security that will encourage men to do more for themselves and for the country than they are doing now. At the moment we think that this is good and constructive.

The problem of aggregations has not arisen yet. If it does, we will do something. If we are not here, we hope that even hon. members opposite will do something about it. It does occur to me that those hon. members do not seem to think that they will ever be back on this side of the House. They seem to have "given the game away" and decided that they will be where they are for all time. They should not give up as easily as that.

Land tax has not been abolished. I should say that capital gains have been just as dramatic and evil in their consequences under leasehold tenure as they have ever been under freehold. Crown revenue may be disadvantaged in the long run by freeholding, depending on land tax policy, but that has to be measured against the benefit obtained from the granting of greater security of tenures. We considered that point, and we think that if we do lose some Crown rental, we will gain a lot more indirectly through the impetus given to primary production. I am a freeholder. I am not speaking with my tongue in my cheek. I think I work better as a freeholder than as a leaseholder, and a lot of other people feel that way, too.

I was interested in the hon. member's suggestion on perpetual leases and a new scale of 2½ per cent. and the possibility of increasing it. It was considered at the time by Sir William Payne that we could not run the risk of being charged with repudiating our contracts. It was a matter on which there were differences of opinion, but that was his opinion and we took his advice. Whether we change our view remains to be seen.

Reference was made to timber treatment. The giving of compensation for timber treatment in the last 10 years of a lease is a great advantage, the biggest advantage being to the incoming tenant. There has been much talk about the advantage to the outgoing lessee, but I think that the greater advantage is to the incoming man. Not much return is obtained from timber treatment and ring-barking for a couple of years, but, if the preceding tenant has done it, the incoming man gets the benefit of it at the time of getting a lease. The greatest advantage is to the man who comes in and who has to pay for it.

Mr. Burrows: He does not have to pay for it if it is of no value.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is right. If it has been neglected and the timber has gone back to bad suckers, he does not have to pay for it as he does not get the benefit. I am speaking of the man who maintains his timber treatment and who is paid for it by the incoming tenant. If he has any sense, he is glad to pay for it because he has ready-made the benefits that accrue from the clearing of timber. I do not think it will be difficult to administer. Permits have to be issued for the clearing of timber, and the area must be designated on a map. In addition, there are periodic inspections, and the lessee's own books of accounts would be a very good guide to the timber treatment. There will be no difficulty about that.

The hon. member for Barambah made practical comments on what Opposition members had said. He agreed with the hon. member for Warrego that we should have freeholded areas out in the West. However, I refer him to my introductory speech, in which I covered fully the reasons why we are going so far and no farther.

The hon. member for Townsville South made a very good speech. I do not always agree with him, but he wondered why we freeholded land and did not give the rights to minerals and oil. It is obvious that minerals and oil are ready-made. They can

be taken out and sold as they are. Land is no good until one has done a great deal of work on it; it has to be worked upon.

I respect the hon. member's objections to raising the limit to 10,000 acres, but I welcome his assurance that the freeholding of allotments is a very good thing.

The hon. member was worried about brigalow and asked how we would keep it clear if we sold it. There are two or three safeguards. One is that freehold title will not be given until the land is cleared, and who will neglect to keep clear something that has cost as much as this to clear? That is a salutory provision. If it costs £20 an acre to clear it, a person will keep it clear until he sells it.

The hon. member for Townsville South was not happy about ballots. Many people are not happy about ballots, but I think I have already covered that point fairly fully. He was also worried about the contribution for access by the Crown where land has been cut up. Our policy now is to provide access to the standard of the local authority concerned. Even in the hon. member's own electorate we are spending about £40,000 or £50,000 this year, or we have made provision for that expenditure.

The hon. member for Port Curtis was rather intemperate and irresponsible in his comments. I think he impugned my honesty and the honesty of my officers, and he seemed to let himself go.

Mr. BURROWS: I rise to a point of order. I deny that I impugned the honesty of any member of the Department of Public Lands, and I ask the Minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am very happy to assure the hon. member that I misunderstood him.

Mr. Burrows: I hold them in very high esteem.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member made some rather extraordinary points. He said that if people got freehold land they would keep all the trees on it and not touch any of them. He also said that we were attempting to provide a landed aristocracy of some kind. I have no desire to bring back a system of landed gentry.

The hon. member for Bundaberg made his usual destructive speech. He expected that there would be corruption in the selection committee, and many other things. The hon. member always expects the worst, and he must be very disappointed in what he gets from this administration, which has a very fine record.

Mr. Walsh: I am very disappointed by the extension of the judges' pension scheme under the present Bill.

Mr. FLETCHER: I think the judges are entitled to be treated——

Mr. Walsh: They are not judges.

Mr. FLETCHER: The President is the head of the Court, and they are prominent men. I think that such a high and responsible judicial body should be properly provided with some sort of retiring allowance or pension. All Public Service members of the court have adequate superannuation provisions. The President, coming direct from the Bar, had no such provision and we saw fit to provide it. The President's long-service leave entitlement is not as great as that of the other members. The President of the Land Court is a very fine man and we are lucky to have him.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr. Fletcher's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 32

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Munro
,, Beardmore	,, Nicklin
Dr. Delamothe	Dr. Noble
Mr. Dewar	Mr. Pilbeam
,, Ewan	,, Ramsden
,, Fletcher	,, Richter
,, Gaven	,, Row
,, Gilmore	,, Sullivan
,, Harrison	,, Taylor
,, Herbert	,, Tooth
,, Hewitt	,, Wharton
,, Hiley	,, Windsor
,, Hodges	
,, Hooper	*Tellers:*
,, Houghton	Mr. Smith
,, Hughes	,, Bjelke-Petersen
,, Lonergan	
,, Low	

NOES, 24

Mr. Adair	Mr. Marsden
,, Baxter	,, Melloy
,, Bennett	,, Newton
,, Bromley	,, O'Donnell
,, Davies	,, Sherrington
,, Dean	,, Thackeray
,, Diplock	,, Tucker
,, Donald	,, Walsh
,, Dufficy	
,, Graham	
,, Hilton	*Tellers:*
,, Houston	Mr. Wallace
,, Inch	,, Burrows
,, Lloyd	

PAIRS

Mr. Chalk	Mr. Duggan
,, Anderson	,, Byrne
,, Camm	,, Gunn
,, Knox	,, Hanlon
,, Carey	,, Mann

Resolved in the affirmative.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS; LOANS SINKING FUNDS

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his reports on the public accounts of the State and on the operations of the various sinking funds of the State for the year 1961-1962.

Ordered to be printed.

The House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.