

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 1963

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

QUESTIONS

SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS IN STATE HIGH SCHOOLS.—Mr. Duggan, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

In view of the editorial in the November issue of the Queensland Teachers' Journal that the percentage of teachers in State high schools who are forced to teach more than seven-lesson periods a day has jumped from 28.4 per centum in 1961 to 47.1 per centum in 1963, will he outline what steps are being taken to overcome the teacher shortage so that the number of periods taken per teacher is brought closer to the standards observed in other States?

Answer:—

"The allocation of periods does not give a complete picture of school organisation. A recent survey showed that in many high schools where the weekly programme of a majority of teachers exceeded thirty-five periods, the class sizes were below those of other schools in which no teacher had a weekly allocation in excess of thirty-five periods. The latest available statistics (1961) showed that the student-teacher ratio in Queensland secondary schools was lower than in other Australian States. The number of secondary school teachers is being increased by the award of additional teacher fellowships and scholarships and the transfer of suitably qualified teachers from primary schools."

ACCIDENTS ON BRISBANE ROAD, EAST IPSWICH.—Mr. Donald, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

In view of the frequent accidents spread over a considerable period of time on Brisbane Road, particularly between No. 36 and No. 42, East Ipswich, will he ask one of his traffic officers to make an inspection of the area with a view to planning some scheme which would reduce, if not eliminate, the accidents in this locality?

Answer:—

"Arrangements have been made for an investigation by an engineer of the Department. If any remedial action is thereby found necessary, instructions will be given for such to be done immediately."

DENTAL CLINIC, TOWNSVILLE.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

In view of his reply to my Question as to the number on the waiting list at the dental clinic, Townsville, wherein he stated that there were 203 adults and children thereon, will he take steps to appoint further staff to deal with this lag?

Answer:—

"The number on the waiting list is approximately the average number of dental patients completed each month at this dental clinic. It is therefore not considered necessary to appoint further staff."

CAIRNS-RAVENSHOE RAIL MOTOR SERVICE.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

Should the three months trial period of the rail motor timetable between Cairns and Ravenshoe prove unsatisfactory, will he consider an alternative timetable from Ravenshoe to connect with the Brisbane Mail?

Answer:—

"The matter of any alteration to the timetable will receive consideration when the results of the present trial are more definitely established."

YOUTH CENTRE FOR INALA.—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Industry,—

In view of the large number of teenage children in the Inala area and the desirability of healthy recreational facilities being made available to them, will he give consideration to using his influence to support my representation to the Police and Citizens' Youth Welfare Club for the establishment of a youth centre by that organization in this area?

Answer:—

"I am only too pleased at all times to give my wholehearted support to worthwhile projects to cater for cultural and recreational needs of young people. The question of the establishment of a Police Club at Inala was considered by the Directors of the Queensland Police Citizens' Youth Welfare Association in October, 1962, but at that time, due to other matters to which the Association was committed, it was not able to consider the establishment of further clubs. I would suggest that the Honourable Member again approach the General Secretary of the Queensland Police Citizens' Youth Welfare Association on the establishment of a Police Club at Inala and if there is any assistance I can give him in that direction, I shall most certainly give it. However, as the Honourable Member will appreciate, it is essential that parents co-operate with and assist such youth organisations to the fullest extent possible. In fact the very essence of the Police and Citizens' Youth Welfare Association is on a basis of co-operation between the citizens of the area and police officers. I understand the experience of the Playground and Recreation Association of Queensland has not been entirely a happy one in the Inala area. This association formed a local committee to establish their activity and

the committee had to be disbanded because of the absence of local interest. The association has had to provide all of its own equipment and facilities and is shortly to construct three new tennis courts. I am also informed that generally the ages of the children who use the facilities of the playground and Recreation Association range from five (5) to seventeen (17) years. Practical evidence of a community spirit by interested parties and bodies in the area would no doubt assist greatly towards an early decision on this matter being made by the Queensland Police Citizens' Youth Welfare Association to render all possible assistance in the establishment of a Youth Club at Inala. A copy of the rules of the association has, I am informed, already been made available to the Honourable Member as a pattern for any person or bodies interested in forming such a club."

PAPERS

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

Report—

Operations of the Sub-Departments of Comptroller-General of Prisons, "Eventide" (Sandgate), "Eventide" (Charters Towers), "Eventide" (Rockhampton), Institution for Inebriates (Marburg), and Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind (South Brisbane) for the year 1962-63.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulations under—

The Stock Acts, 1945 to 1960.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT IN POLICE FORCE

Hon. G. F. R. NICKLIN (Landsborough—Premier) (11.6 a.m.), by leave: My Government has given serious consideration to the statements made by the hon. the member for South Brisbane on Tuesday last during the debate on the Police Estimates.

A very serious view is taken concerning his observations generally and in particular of those concerning the Commissioner and the persons whom he describes as the colleagues of the Commissioner.

An examination of his speech shows, however, that it is difficult to discern where comment and inference end and allegations of fact begin.

I now invite him—

(1) To make specific charges in this regard that call for investigation;

(2) To give the names of credible witnesses prepared to give first-hand evidence in support of the charges; and

(3) To show that the persons charged are identifiable.

If Mr. Bennett makes such specific charges, names credible witnesses who can give first-hand evidence in support of the charges, and shows that the persons charged are identifiable, my Government will take appropriate action.

AGRICULTURAL STANDARDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. J. A. ROW (Hinchinbrook—Minister for Primary Industries): I move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Agricultural Standards Act of 1952, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

JUSTICES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (11.10 a.m.): I move—

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

As the Bill contains only a single provision, I do not propose to add very much to what I said at the introductory stage. The particular point covered in the Bill, of which all hon. members now have a copy, of course, is the provision for pleading guilty by letter to comparatively minor charges. It merely confirms as part of the statutes of Queensland what in practice has worked very conveniently and well and has been accepted as the ordinary course of procedure for many years.

In making statutory provision for this, certain safeguards have also been introduced. The person entering a plea of guilty is safeguarded against, as it were, putting his head into a noose and then finding later that he has involved himself in possible imprisonment or the payment of fees to which he had not given consideration. In order to make the process completely fair and just, as well as convenient for the court and the person concerned, provision has been made to inform a person prior to his trial that previous convictions may be taken into consideration in fixing the sentence and also that the payment of necessary fees may be involved. With the inclusion of these necessary safeguards, I believe that the procedure that was followed prior to the Full Court's decision will possibly be improved.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.14 a.m.): I understand that the Minister and the officials of the appropriate department desire to get this legislation through as quickly as possible to reduce the backlog of

cases that has occurred as a result of the Full Court's declaring invalid a practice under which courts and stipendiary magistrates were accepting pleas of guilty in letter form. As the provisions embodied in the Bill now seek to give statutory authority for a practice that has been operating without question for many years, the Opposition thinks it is desirable to afford the measure the quickest possible passage through the House.

Without limiting the right of any hon. member to take part in the debate on the second reading, I think I may say that I do not regard the Bill as controversial in character. It is merely something that is necessary because of the judgment given by the Full Court. I reiterate what I said at the introductory stage: that although it has caused a little bit of an obstruction in the legal machinery for the time being it is good to know that such an obstruction can occur, because the courts do act as the watchdogs of the liberty of the people and we must see that the rights of citizens are always protected. I feel that no serious injustice has been done to those who, for their own convenience, have pleaded guilty by letter. However, it seems desirable to ratify a practice that has operated unchallenged for so many years.

It is pleasing to note that provision is being made, by powers vested in the Executive Council, for the extension of this principle to other cases if it is felt at some stage that there may be particular types of cases that in some way perhaps limit the freedom of action of individuals or that may have taken away the protection that courts wish to extend to individuals in all matters that come before them. The Executive Council has power to extend the range of operations so as to exempt such people from submitting pleas in writing. If it is thought that that action should be taken, then, of course, it will be taken, and I think it is desirable that that principle should be there although this is an intermediate measure which the Minister brought down because of the urgency factor. I think the provisions are reasonable as it is necessary to expedite the operation of our courts, which are being cluttered by traffic offence cases. For those reasons, I do not propose to take the matter any further.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (11.16 a.m.): I was not present when the Bill was introduced but I have since taken the opportunity of perusing the speeches of the Minister and other hon. members. While I appreciate that the Bill is brought down to overcome a position that arose in the Supreme Court some time ago, particularly in the case of *Linnane v. Hall*, nevertheless there are other features of the Bill which I think should not be allowed to pass without some explanation from the Minister.

I want the Minister to understand that I am not taking any exception to that part of

the measure that seeks to validate the principle of accepting written pleas of guilty in the past, and to enable them to be accepted in future. While I do not want to take away any credit from the judges, I should like to correct the impression that was left here the other day that the judges draw attention to these matters. They do from time to time, but let us give a little credit to the legal men who do the research and raise particular legal points where they are in doubt, and then leave it to the judges to decide them. Apparently there was a long delay in deciding that something should be done about this particular principle. It was delayed until another case, which was the subject of an appeal to the Full Court, arose.

In this case it was again a matter of a written plea of guilty being accepted by the magistrate. It was subsequently challenged by the legal profession no doubt, on behalf of the person who was charged in the first place, one Campbell, a person who apparently has a very lengthy criminal record.

The judges again had to draw attention to the fact that although they had previously dealt with this practice it was apparently still continuing. So it looks as though it was not the first case, that of *Linnane v. Hall*, that was responsible for this particular measure, but that it was not until three judges of the Full Court publicly declared that a fraud had been committed on the courts by the manner in which a case was presented in the lower court that action was taken.

I am certainly not a legal man but I have read with interest the contributions by the hon. member for South Brisbane, who is a legal man, and the hon. member for Windsor, who also is a legal man. I found that there were some differences of opinion between them on various statements that had been made during the course of the debate. Of course, one can expect that between legal men. It is their living to disagree with one another. But in this case I take it to be a fairly serious disagreement. I do not know whether the Minister is going to reply particularly to the statements of the hon. member for Windsor, a member on his own side, drawing attention to what he regarded as certain deficiencies in the outline given by the Minister. No doubt since then he has seen the Bill and studied it. I want to know whether a plea of guilty accepted in the circumstances existing when Campbell was charged before the Police Court will deny the right of any person in the future to take his case on to the Supreme Court or the Full Court, as the case may be, and whether he will be met with the argument that these particular types of written pleas have been validated and authorised by this Parliament. It may be that because certain information was withheld from the prosecuting officer in that case there would still be grounds for a person who was charged to appeal to the Supreme Court or the Full Court. I want to be satisfied on that point. I understand

the Minister to say that later on a Bill containing general amendments is to be brought down.

The next principle is a very important one. I am not likely to agree to a principle that will allow the Governor in Council either to vary or to revoke completely any Order in Council that may have been issued enumerating the types of offences that may be exempted from the provisions of the Act. It is a terrific power to put into the hands of the Executive Council. I can imagine the hue and cry that would have gone up from hon. members presently on the Government side if, in the past, a Labour Government of the day had taken unto itself a power of this nature. The Minister may say that it happened in this year or that year. I am not concerned about that. What I am concerned about is that from time to time, over the years hon. members now on the Government side have emphatically advocated that these particular principles should not be written into the law. If the Bill will allow the Governor in Council to exempt some offences and/or add certain other offences that are not already covered by the particular clause, without this Parliament having any say as to the principle on which it is done, it is a very serious matter. I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition should allow such a proposal simply to drift past without extracting, or seeking to extract, from the Minister some explanation of what is involved in this principle.

The Bill reads—

“Any such Order in Council—

(a) may vary or revoke any previous Order in Council made under this subsection; . . .”

It may vary it or revoke it completely. If it varies it I want some interpretation from the Minister, not so much of the word “revoke” but of the word “vary”. Varied in what way? Will there be additions to the list of exemptions? If it whittles down something already in the Act there may not be cause for such a great sing-song about it.

We are extending power to the Governor in Council to decide these matters from time to time, without the authority of this Parliament, other than laying the particular Order in Council on the table of the House which, in accordance with the Standing Orders, can be debated—the disallowance of such an Order in Council can be debated—but we know from the history of Governments and Parliaments that that is only a matter of machinery and is simply a means of bringing it before Parliament to enable us to have some say in whether the alteration should take place. Admittedly, the matter has finally to come before Parliament by way of Order in Council, but every hon. member on this side knows the fate of any motion for the disallowance of a regulation,

proclamation or Order in Council that has been moved since the present Government has been in office.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. WALSH: That leads me to another thought. I want an explanation from the Minister about this. I have in my hand two documents, one headed “Justices Act 1886-1960, Form 36 (6), Complaint Sworn and Summons.” That is the normal document that is completed when a complaint is made under this particular heading. There is a very large space on the front of the document. When the particulars have been filled in by the complainant, if some precautions are not taken what is to stop some additions being made after the last line is written or typed on the document? I am sure the Minister is aware of this difficulty. In that way the person charged could be implicated on some grounds that he was not even familiar with at the time of the interrogation. I have even heard of instances where things have been erased from a complaint. I am suggesting that something should be laid down in both of these documents, one a complaint, general purposes, made on summons, and the other document that I have referred to. Some action should be taken to ensure that any space that is not filled in on the complaint should be marked by the justice of the peace or other person who is testifying to the signature in such a way that it cannot be used to the disadvantage of the person charged. I make that suggestion because of matters concerning some of these documents that have been brought to my notice.

I do not expect the Minister to amend the Bill now before us, because I realise that its principles have been accepted and we cannot go all over the ground again. However, I am raising the question so that in the future the Minister may give it some consideration and ensure that documents presented in the first place cannot be altered in any way, in any circumstances, after there has been certain interrogation of the person charged. Other than that, I have nothing further to say.

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (11.29 a.m.), in reply: To reply briefly to the hon. member for Bundaberg, I repeat what I said at the introductory stage, that is, that widespread amendment of the Justices Act is at present in train. Unfortunately we have had to anticipate it by introducing this Bill quickly because of the disabilities being created within the courts.

As to the fear expressed by the hon. member for Bundaberg that there might be some alteration to the details of a complaint to which a person has pleaded guilty, I should like to point out that the accused will still have the right of appeal in the event of his believing that a fraud has been committed against him. On the complaint on summons will be outlined the details of what he is

to plead to. If he finds in fact that the complaint sworn to in the court goes beyond those facts, he still will have exactly the same remedy as he has always had.

The hon. member for Bundaberg will find, too, that the provision in the Bill for Orders in Council is merely to extend the range of the particular classes of offences that an accused is precluded from pleading guilty to by letter. It may be found convenient in the light of experience to add to the list. If numbers of people are suffering a disability in their right to plead guilty by letter to a particular type of offence, it seems ordinary common sense to be able to extend the list quickly by means of Orders in Council. Remember that the Orders in Council can be debated and disallowed if flagrantly unjust.

Motion (Dr. Delamothe) agreed to.

COMMITTEE

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gaven, South Coast in the chair)

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—New s. 146A inserted; Proceeding at the hearing on defendant's confession—

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (11.34 a.m.): Clause 4 is referred to later, in Clause 6. It inserts a new section to be known as Section 146A, which reads—

"The Principal Act is amended by inserting after section one hundred and forty-six the following section:—

"(146A.) Proceeding at the hearing on defendant's confession in absentia. (1) Subject to subsection (6) of this section, this section shall apply where a summons has been issued requiring a person to appear before justices, at any court of petty sessions other than a children's court, to answer a complaint other than a complaint of—

(a) an offence which is also triable on indictment;

(b) an offence for which the defendant is liable to be sentenced to be imprisoned for a term exceeding twelve months; or

(c) an offence in respect of which the justices are required by the provisions of some other Act to proceed otherwise than as prescribed by this section."

I shall not read the remainder of the clause as it is this part that I am interested in.

Power is now given to the Governor in Council to issue an Order in Council. Has there ever previously been in the Act power to do these things? If not, what is the reason for giving it at this stage? If such a provision has not been found necessary in the application of the law over all these years, what has now actuated the Government in writing this principle into the legislation?

Hon. P. R. DELAMOTHE (Bowen—Minister for Justice) (11.37 a.m.): I thought that I had made this point clear in my previous answer to the hon. member for Bundaberg. This is a completely new provision in the Justices Act. It has not appeared before, and the point that has been raised refers merely to particular types of offences to which the pleading of guilty by letter is not permitted. That is what that section sets out to do. As I mentioned earlier, it may be necessary in the light of experience to exclude other offences from the list of those to which pleas of guilty by letter may be made. It may be necessary to do that very quickly, just as this amending legislation has had to be introduced speedily. It is fortunate that Parliament was sitting when this contretemps arose. Situations making necessary the quick repair of deficiencies that show up could arise when Parliament was in recess. This amending legislation is being dealt with speedily to protect the ordinary individual from possible injustice.

Mr. Walsh: As long as I get you to admit that the Government favours Government by Order in Council.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—EIGHTH AND NINTH ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1963-64

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

CHIEF OFFICE

Debate resumed from 31 October, (see p. 1173) on Mr. Fletcher's motion—

"That £712,909 be granted for 'Department of Lands—Chief Office'."

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (11.39 a.m.): I should like first of all to congratulate the Minister and the officers of his department on producing such a fine and succinct report. There are not many words in it but those that it does contain are so clear that they convey a very comprehensive meaning to the people who are engaged in the great land industry of this State.

I might add that I fully appreciate the difficulties that confront any body of men in trying to administer the land laws of Queensland, particularly because in many instances personal matters between individuals are involved. However, upon their decisions depend the progress and the economic benefit of the majority of the people of Queensland. In fact, it can be

said truthfully that the whole of Queensland's economy is dependent upon land industries. Although great strides have been made in secondary industry, I think I am correct in saying that it will be very many years before secondary industries will supersede primary industries or take pride of place in the economy of the State; therefore, we must all be appreciative of the efforts of those who endeavour, to the best of their ability, to administer the land laws of Queensland.

Mr. Bennett: Do you think that secondary industries should supersede primary industries?

Mr. EWAN: That interjection is typical of what one expects from the hon. member for South Brisbane. He does not understand. He is a legal man and knows very little about economics. However, he should appreciate that if we are to have the large population in Queensland, and indeed in Australia, that is very necessary, we must foster secondary industries to provide the employment opportunities needed to sustain it.

One of the most important aspects of land administration, as I see it, is the provision of security of tenure. Having considered it from every angle, I do not think that security of tenure can be granted other than by the freeholding of land. Indeed, Labour Socialist governments subscribe to some form or measure of security in that they advocate perpetual lease; but any thinking person must agree with me when I say that there is no real security of tenure without freehold title to land.

Let us consider the history of this very vexed question. Up to the advent of the Labour Socialist Government in 1916, one could freehold land in Queensland. That right was abolished in 1916, because Labour Socialists believe that land belongs to the State, not to the individual. In reply to that contention I say, "Who is the State but the people?" In 1928 the Moore Government was returned to office, and in 1929 it re-introduced the freeholding provisions in our Land Act. Of course, it went out of office in 1933 and a Labour Socialist Government again abolished freeholding of land in Queensland.

Mr. Bennett: You did all right out of them.

Mr. EWAN: One hon. member opposite told me that I had made £2,000,000. I only wish it were true. The hon. member is so jealous of me that I can understand his interjection.

In 1957, when the Country-Liberal Government was returned to power, we re-introduced provision for freeholding up to a living area but not exceeding 5,000 acres. Being cautious, we endeavoured to administer it on a small scale. Then, following the passage of the consolidated

Land Act at the end of last year, we extended that area to 10,000 acres, but again not exceeding a living area, or alternatively perpetual lease. If Labour, by any strange freak of circumstances, is returned to power, it will be obliged to abolish the freeholding provisions introduced by this Government. Hon. members opposite do not deny it, but I want the people of Queensland to know it and remember it at the next election and at each subsequent election.

Mr. Mann: It is written into our policy.

Mr. EWAN: It is written into Labour's policy. The hon. member is not ashamed of it, and I admire him for that. However, I want the people of Queensland to know it. It has been said that freehold tenure of land applies only to people living on the coast, and so on. I suggest that hon. members look at the map that I have here, which was published in the report issued by the Department of Lands last year. It shows freehold land right out between Richmond and Hughenden. There is quite a bit around Winton, Longreach, Isisford, Stonehenge, Charleville and Cunnamulla. However, the great bulk of it is in the coastal areas.

I sincerely trust that this Government, in the exercise of its wisdom in the far-reaching reforms it has undertaken in land administration, will take its courage in both hands and extend the provisions for freeholding throughout the State up to the extent of a living area without any regard to acreage. Is there any reason why people in the areas shown on this map should have the right to alienate land while that right is denied to others in the Outback? In an arid climate with an annual rainfall of under 10 inches the productive capacity of the land is far less than it is in those areas that, because of the benefits of nature, receive a much higher rainfall. I hope, in the exercise of wisdom in its administration, this Government will go so far as to classify the present areas of land held on lease and determine their future, taking into consideration the full potential of those lands and how they can be developed, and also determine what constitutes a fully developed living area. Once having determined that, it should then extend the privilege to landholders of freeholding that portion of their holdings.

Irrespective of whether they had 25 years before the leases expire, those landholders would then know that at the expiration of their leases they would not be losing all the land. It would also make it so much easier for the Department of Lands and its officers, because they could have the land surveyed and opened for selection on the due date and everyone would know just where he stood for a great number of years ahead and, knowing what security he had, could consolidate his assets accordingly. Every landholder would know that at the expiration of his existing lease he would be freeholding

a portion of his land as his livelihood. Consequently, despite the utterances of hon. members opposite, he would set about developing the area to be freeholded to its full productive capacity, which would enable him on the expiration of the existing lease to make a reasonable livelihood out of the land.

I suggest that if that is done it will bring unparalleled progress and development to land industries in Queensland. Let those of us who have travelled in other States compare the development in New South Wales and Victoria with that in Queensland, remembering that development in Queensland was retarded by 40 successive years of Labour and Socialist maladministration. Queensland has an area of approximately 427,000,000 acres, of which there are 28,000,000 acres freehold, or in the process of freeholding, representing 6.6 per cent. of the total area, and 7,000,000 acres of perpetual lease, representing 1.6 per cent. of the total area. Despite Labour's adherence to the principles of perpetual lease, did they give much effect to it during their 40 years in office? Of the whole area of Queensland, 1.6 per cent. is held under perpetual lease title, and 84 per cent. is held as leasehold land. In New South Wales, with its total area of 198,000,000 acres, 74 per cent. of the land is either freehold or perpetual lease; in Victoria, with an area of 56,000,000 acres, 85 per cent. is either freehold or perpetual lease.

Let us go further and consider the stock numbers that are carried in those States. New South Wales, which is less than half the size of Queensland, carries 3,000,000 beef cattle and 68,000,000 sheep; Victoria, a little more than one-eighth the size of Queensland, carries 1,250,000 beef cattle and 26,500,000 sheep; Queensland carries 5,750,000 beef cattle and 22,500,000 sheep. Surely those figures prove that, in comparison with the other States, our methods are wrong. The hon. member for South Brisbane is suggesting that they have far better land down there. That is a fallacy. I could take him into New South Wales and show him some land that is as bad as the worst in Queensland. I could show him how that land, under freehold tenure, has been developed to enable it to carry the equal of the best carrying capacity of any land in Queensland. I refer to the Goulburn area which, in its natural state, is some of the worst country to be found anywhere. But under freehold conditions, see how it has been developed!

Mr. Murray: All the southern tableland is like that.

Mr. Ewan: Of course, our friends opposite would not know anything about that.

Queensland's 427,000,000 acres are held in 47,295,000 holdings of various tenures. Anyone looking at the map and seeing these 47,295 holdings might fondly imagine that on every one of them there is a different

owner. Approximately 354,000,000 acres are subdivided into 10,625 holdings which produce wool, mutton and beef to the extent of £126,000,000 annually. That amount can, and will be, substantially increased if security of tenure is provided to attract the necessary private capital. That is all the incentive that is required to bring Queensland into line with the productive capacities of both New South Wales and Victoria.

I have tried to ascertain, so far without success, how many people hold those 47,000-odd holdings. Let me make the suggestion that, resulting from the maladministration of Labour Governments, hon. members opposite have done the very thing that they set out not to do—the creation of aggregations of holdings. If you travel along the western line you can see what has happened from place to place. Labour Governments opened up starvation areas, and the successful applicants could not make a go of their areas. This enabled others with capital to acquire their holdings, and thus were created the aggregations which hon. members opposite object to. Through their actions they were responsible for the state of affairs that they are deploring. If we can only find out—I think we will with the co-operation of the Minister and the Department of Lands—the number of holdings in Queensland held by a certain number of people, then we can find out the number of aggregations and sheet home how they were brought about.

There is one thing that worries me slightly when I look at the very fine report of the Land Administration Commission. On page 14 it is pointed out that at 30 June, 1963, there were 876 occupation licences issued covering 15,727,076 acres. Of course, that seems a pretty high figure, but when I cast my mind back I remember that during Labour's regime that figure was up to 25,000,000 and 30,000,000 acres. I suppose the present figure can be explained to some extent by the fact that certain land held under occupation licence is waiting for a determination as to its future—whether it is to be subdivided or given back to the Forestry Department and that sort of thing. In any case I believe that the area is too large. I hope that when the Minister replies he will be able to enlighten us as to why this state of affairs exists. We all know that it existed in the years of maladministration by the Labour Government, but I do not want that state of affairs to continue in the very fine administration we are now enjoying.

Time is passing rapidly and, having convinced Opposition members of the necessity of freeholding up to a living area throughout Queensland, I must turn to another matter. I think I have been so successful that I am sure they will be prepared to drop some of their stupid Socialistic ideas about this matter.

I come now to the brigalow development scheme. I notice that the report deals very fully with it. I am somewhat worried about

the conditions of development laid down on page 16 of the report. Condition 1 (a) says that within three years the lessee shall develop the whole of the brigalow and soft-wood scrub on the selection not exceeding 6,000 acres, and condition 2 says that, within two years from the commencement of the term of the lease, the lessee shall provide two permanent watering facilities on the selection and that one watering facility must be provided within 12 months. That is a sound condition because a property is useless without water. Then, within one year he must erect his dip and yards and so on, and within three years he must subdivide, with fencing, as deemed necessary by the Minister to carry on the proposition.

It seems to me that those conditions might be a little rigid, particularly when one realises that when an applicant is successful in a ballot in the Fitzroy brigalow basin he buys the freehold at the purchase price determined by the Crown, with a loan, without interest, repayable by June, 1987—a 24-year period. There is no interest, and he borrows the money and pays it to the Crown for the freehold to enable the title to be issued. Then he is allowed to borrow £24,000 at 5 per cent. interest to carry out improvements, which include 6,000 acres of timber treatment, 20 miles of fencing, two watering facilities, dip and yards. No repayment of principal is necessary for the first three years, but interest has to be paid. I presume that the repayments are thereafter made in equal annual instalments over approximately 20 years. I assume that is the period because the loans have to be repaid by 1987. Most of the improvements are essential, of course, but I do not think the period is long enough to enable economic development to be brought about. Despite interjections from the Opposition benches, our taxation laws provide generous depreciation allowances which can be offset against income, in some cases in the year in which the improvement is effected, and, in other cases, over five years. However, this is the kernel of the nut: we must not forget that they can be treated as losses, but for taxation purposes they can be carried forward for only seven years. If we force development in such a limited period, we defeat the very objects of the provisions introduced by the Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur Fadden during his period as Federal Treasurer, provisions which did more for the development of land industries in Queensland and Australia than any other single action. If we bring a property into full production in the limited period of three years we will have 6,000 acres of timber treated, two watering facilities, yards and dip, and subdivisional fences and they can be carried forward as a loss for only seven years. If a property is a success the holder will be in a very high taxation field and, on my personal experience from 35 years on the land, when the

property reaches full production I do not know how the owner can meet his redemption payments and pay the high taxation levied. If he was allowed to develop half of the property and as his income came in could take notice of his returns in about February of each year to determine how much money he could put back into the property to develop it, he could escape taxation or, in other words, be assisted by taxation to develop the land.

I contend that, if these conditions were extended and lightened somewhat, these fortunate settlers—though some may be unfortunate—would be able to create out of income a safer, sounder, more economical and more enduring estate than they can under existing conditions. Section 14 of the consolidated Land Act enables the Minister to take the very steps I am advocating. Whether he intends to wait till some of these settlers get into difficulties is another matter. The power is already there to vary the conditions and I hope that they will be varied. I know the Minister will treat any case on its merits as it is submitted to him. What I want him to do is not to wait till then but to act now to put these people on a sounder footing, to enable them to create an enduring estate from which they can derive a reasonable income to enjoy reasonable conditions, to hold their areas successfully under freehold tenure, to educate their children, carry on during their own lifetime and then to have the property pass to their children and in time to their children's children. That is true land settlement and that is what we must have in Queensland, as they have in New South Wales and Victoria, if we are to catch up the leeway after 40 years' maladministration by successive Labour Governments.

I want to congratulate the departmental officers, particularly Mr. Muir, on the conduct of the scheme. I understand the 25,000 acres that have been pulled have cost £1 an acre for pulling and burning and 2s. an acre for seeding. I do not think anyone could beat that and I trust that subsequent pullings will be as successful.

Furthermore, it is delightful to me to know that the department is laying in supplies of fencing wire to enable these young men to buy it wholesale. I have always advocated, and still do, the reintroduction of the old Wire and Wire-Netting Advances Act. I know it is possible to get loans through the Agricultural Bank but it is not the same because the borrowers have to pay retail prices for the wire. Under the old rabbit and dog-netting scheme, over half the State was developed. We must reintroduce that scheme. The precedent has been set by the purchase of this wire in bulk. Let us reintroduce the provisions of the old legislation and so help these people inside the dingo barrier fence to take advantage of the generous terms extended to the Fitzroy Basin settlers. Some hon. members opposite

would not appreciate the need for this. The purchase of dog and rabbit netting on the basis Mr. Muir bought it means the saving of £60 a mile, and a settler who wants to eradicate dogs inside the existing barrier fence saves £600 with 10 miles. Hon members can work it out for themselves. Those people are buying in bulk just as the Government did under the old Wire and Wire-Netting Advances Act, when it was supplied to the tenants at cost price plus handling. That is what we must have and that is what I hope will come about, seeing that the precedent has been set by those responsible for the administration of the brigalow scheme.

Mr. Mann: Do you think the scheme is a success?

Mr. EWAN: It is all very well to say that. A very courageous attempt has been made and, when I hear criticism from hon. members opposite about transactions such as the King Ranch lease, it leaves me cold. I know several overseas companies who want to bring their money into Queensland and develop the wallum country.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LICKISS (Mt. Coot-tha) (12.5 p.m.): I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister on the presentation of his Estimates. I wish also to congratulate the officers of the Department of Lands who have so consistently over the years administered the land matters of the State of Queensland. I am left a little cold when I hear criticism of this Department. Having been an officer of that department, I am able to say that, in case hon. members opposite are not aware of it, land administration presents many difficult problems. No two parcels of land are identical and the people dealt with are, in the main, conscientious in their endeavours to improve the State. On occasions, therefore, a great deal of sympathy must be shown by the Minister and his departmental officers in administering the relevant Acts.

I do not think anyone will disagree with me when I say that the basic aim of land policy should be effective, continuous, and economic land usage, with due regard being paid to the need to improve the productivity of the land. It is equally universally accepted that this can best be achieved if the form of land tenure is such that it provides adequate security to encourage and attract private capital, which is a prerequisite of efficient development.

The term "land tenure" often has a confused meaning in the minds of people, and I have found it rather difficult to obtain a satisfactory explanation when I have discussed this matter with people in varying walks of life.

"Land tenure" has been defined as "all the relations established among men determining their varying rights in the use of land." The greatest interest or estate that can be held in land in Queensland is freehold.

This is considered to convey complete, but not absolute, ownership. Lesser estates or tenures are available and are granted, from the point of view of security of tenure, by the number of rights which a lessee enjoys under the lease, the period of time over which the rights in the lease are held, and any residual rights granted as of right at the expiration of a lease.

This Government is to be congratulated on the progressive implementation of a realistic land policy conducive to economic development. Surely before we could expect economic land development to replace land exploitation we had to create a climate in which those on the land would be prepared to invest their earnings and capital to improve the land of their own free will, knowing that their tenures were secured and that they would benefit fully from those improvements. Much has already been done, and I feel sure that progressively much more will be done by the Government in this respect. I was very pleased indeed to hear my colleague the hon. member for Carnarvon refer to "economic areas" as opposed to the present term "living areas". The Minister knows my views on this subject. I agree with the hon. member for Carnarvon in this respect.

Freedom to develop with due regard to one's obligation in our community is essential. Governments should encourage this development. Bureaucratic controls dimming our path to progress must never be permitted again in our State. It is indeed refreshing, when passing through rural areas, to feel the reaction to the Government's policy. The spirit of partnership is present and Queensland is well on the road to economic development.

Naturally, problems will be encountered in any situation when change is being experienced, and I invite the Minister's attention to the problem being experienced with the valuation and control of timber in connection with the conversion of grazing selections to freehold by way of agricultural farm tenure or perpetual lease selections under the Act.

Timber on grazing selections is the property of the Crown, and on conversion to either freehold or perpetual lease the timber must be paid for by the lessee over a period of five years. On occasions the Department of Forestry opposes conversion on the basis that it is against the public interest to remove from the department's control areas which have either large stands of timber or excellent regenerative potentialities. In some cases the department is committed for a number of years to supply to a particular mill. This intervention by the Department of Forestry could prevent a lessee who is otherwise eligible from obtaining a more secure tenure by conversion to freehold or perpetual lease selection. The lessee in fact might not wish to purchase the timber in any case. Indeed, there have been instances in which the fact that part of the conversion condition is the purchase of the valuable timber has not been

met with approbation. More often than not graziers are not interested in forest management.

I would recommend that provision be made by a simple amendment to the Act to make it optional whether timber is reserved to the Crown or becomes the property of the lessee on conversion. On the one hand, if the Department of Forestry could establish to the satisfaction of the Land Court that the timber should be reserved to the Crown, the exclusion of the timber from the title or lease instrument could be endorsed legally; on the other hand, where a lessee could indicate that he did not wish to purchase the timber, a similar endorsement could be made. I suggest that this action should be effected by amendment to the Act and endorsement made on the deed of grant or lease instrument where applicable. Subsequent negotiation might be possible to remove the reservation by endorsement at an appropriate time or upon application and negotiation through the Land Court. I would not favour a restricted title by way of permanent reservation to the Crown of timber rights unless this could not be avoided. In commending this suggestion to the Minister, I do so in the belief that this provision would be in the interests of the public because the Department of Forestry appears to be the best conservator of timbers.

Whilst I am dealing with the matter of grazing selections, I draw the Minister's attention to the position of grazing selections that may have a period of lease up to 30 years and which could, if under 10,000 acres, be converted to freehold under Section 139 of the Act. Could provision be made to extend these leases capable of being freeholded if the lessee is not keen on freehold at this stage but requires a longer lease to gain better security of tenure and/or does not wish to purchase the timber?

I should now like to comment very briefly on the question of land valuations. As you know, Mr. Gaven, it does affect the Department of Lands as well as the Department of the Valuer-General and is constantly in the minds of the citizens of Queensland. I believe that the time is fast approaching when the valuation of land for specific purposes will have to be examined critically. A great deal of confusion now occurs because we can have two valuing authorities dealing with the same parcel of land and, therefore, two valuations. I refer to valuations made by the officers of the Department of Lands and by officers of the Department of the Valuer-General. I fully realise the difficulties involved, but a problem does exist. I have always been of the opinion that there should be only one valuing authority—the Department of the Valuer-General.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I rule that there is nothing dealing with the Department of the Valuer-General under these Estimates. It comes under the Department of Local Government.

Mr. LICKISS: With respect, valuations are an integral part of the Land Act, and the definitions within the Act state how valuations shall be made.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I rule it out of order. I rule that it is a matter for debate under the Estimates for the Department of Local Government.

Mr. LICKISS: Well, in connection with valuations applicable under the Land Act, may I say—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! That is a valuation done by the Crown, not by the Department of the Valuer-General, for the purpose of determining rental for leasehold land. I cannot allow the hon. member to debate it.

Mr. LICKISS: With due respect, I think I should pursue this point even if you do rule me out of order. I suggest to you that valuation is an integral part of the Land Act and goes further than the mere assessment of rental. It goes to the valuation of improvements on land and is a vital section of the Land Act.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is in order speaking on improvements.

Mr. LICKISS: With due respect, I suggest that I am in order in dealings with valuations of unimproved land, because that is a vital part of the Land Act.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I say that the hon. member is out of order and that is the end of it. I will not allow him to deal with the Valuer-General's Department under the Land Act.

Mr. LICKISS: Dealing with the Land Administration Commission, I should say that no group of men has done more in the interests of Queensland than has the Land Administration Commission in this State.

I refer also at this stage to the attack by the hon. member for Warrego in regard to Section 205 of the Act. I think I would be within the scope of this debate if I referred to that attack. The Minister saw fit to grant a lease under Section 205 of the Act to make provision for rendering land fit for manufacturing, industrial, residential or business purposes. The hon. member for Warrego suggested that it was outside the scope of the definition to make land available for grazing purposes in that the purposes stipulated were to render it fit for manufacturing, industrial, residential or business purposes.

Mr. Davies: Is that the section the Minister referred to the other night?

Mr. LICKISS: This is Section 205.

Mr. Davies: The Minister explained his attitude on that.

Mr. LICKISS: I draw attention also to Section 198 of the Act. Section 198 (1) (b) has exactly similar wording to Section 205 in that it refers to land being made available for manufacturing, industrial, residential or business purposes. Section 198 is a carry-over from Section 179 of the Land Act of 1910, which contained reference to the same purposes without any specific reference being made to "grazing purposes"; but if we look at the purposes for which Section 179 was used under Labour's administration we will find that hundreds and hundreds of special leases were issued under it for grazing purposes, so I fail to see that the hon. member for Warrego has room for complaint.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the Minister administers a portfolio which is probably more difficult than most other portfolios. I believe that both the former Minister for Lands, the hon. member for Fassifern, and the present Minister for Lands are men with a sympathetic feeling towards the man on the land, and that is a very important requisite for a Minister for Lands in this State. Land development is not easy. We are developing new areas that had never been developed under Labour's administration. There are great difficulties to be faced in some of this development. Scientific advances will make it necessary to recast our policy in connection with areas and land tenures as time goes on. Areas that once were used for open-range grazing will now come into the category of areas capable of more intensive improvement and development, and consequently further adjustments will have to be made in the tenures now applicable.

I again congratulate the Minister and his officers on the job that they have done and are doing in the interests of Queensland.

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (12.20 p.m.): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the Estimates of the Minister for Lands. I suppose that no Minister has applied himself more assiduously to his task of administration than has Mr. Fletcher. During his term of office we have seen a considerable number of changes. From the point of view of the person who derives his livelihood from the land I suppose that none has been more acceptable than the extension of the free-holding provisions. In this Chamber, as in many other places, I have said that I have always believed that in the development of our land security of tenure is most essential. As we believe it, there is no greater security than freehold tenure.

A considerable amount has been said inside and outside the Chamber about the development of the brigalow lands in the Fitzroy Basin. I commend the Minister for the courageous manner in which he, his departmental officers and members of the Government generally, have tackled this problem. For many generations this vast tract of country lay almost idle because of

the land tenures that existed over the years of successive Labour Governments. The incentive was not there for landholders to develop their country when their tenure was insecure, as they knew full well that if they did, a considerable portion of the better country would be taken from them on the expiration of their leases.

I commend the departmental officers for being generous in the surveys of this area. It has been argued from the other side of the Chamber—and outside, too—that the areas are too liberal. I do not agree. After all, this country is being opened up with the prime purpose of developing our beef industry. If the country is being thrown open in areas suitable for running 800 head of grown cattle, we have to realise that in the initial stages until the properties are brought into production, owing to one of our greatest enemies in Queensland—seasonal conditions—settlers will find it difficult to run 800 head of cattle successfully.

In the development of this brigalow country I make specific mention of Mr. Neville Cook, who was well known to me when he was at Dalby. He is held in very high regard by landholders in that area. I commend him for the manner in which he and his subordinate officers are assisting in every way possible those people who have been fortunate enough to draw one of these blocks.

There were aspects of the proposal with which I did not agree, particularly the condition that to be eligible to participate in a ballot a man had to be landless for three years. For the life of me I could not see the sense of that. Of course, I suppose arguments could be advanced both for and against it. However, I understand that that condition has been waived to some extent. As long as a man is landless, has the necessary now-how and passes the committee of review, he is eligible to participate in a ballot. I think that, through my efforts, I have been able to assist a young settler to put his case. I refer to young Doug. Staines of Jandowae, whose family I have known for a considerable time. Because of family economic circumstances he was forced to sell a property at Taroom but his only desire was to get back on the land. He had the necessary cash—and perhaps a little more—to qualify for participation in these ballots but there was a stumbling block because he had not been landless for three years. Thank God, the departmental officers, The Minister and the committee of review, in their wisdom saw fit to change their thinking somewhat. After all, if a man's one desire is to be on the land, why should he be put off for three years just because he has not been landless for three years? I commend the department for changing the conditions.

The decision to appoint a committee to vet applicants for these blocks was very wise. The chairman of the committee is Mr. Sallows, who has spent a lifetime in the department and knows it workings intimately.

The other members are Mr. Anderson, from the Darling Downs, and Mr. McCamley, from the Central Queensland area. All the members of the committee are practical men with experience in this type of country. They are very fair, honest men, beyond reproach, who have spent much of their lifetime in public affairs. I believe they are very acceptable to the applicants who have to appear before them so that a decision can be made on whether they are fit and proper persons to participate in the development of this land. Any unsuccessful applicant who has spoken to me has not been critical of the members of the committee because he knows they are practical men put there to do a job.

I believe that some of the conditions for clearing of the brigalow scrub—6,000 acres in three years—are too severe. I am not now being critical of the Government. That is my personal opinion, and, as a member of the Government, I think I have a right and a responsibility to put my views forward. I consider that clearing 6,000 acres of brigalow scrub in the first three years is a little too hasty. People who have had experience with brigalow country know that it is difficult to handle because so many things can go wrong. If 6,000 acres can be successfully developed in the first three years under satisfactory conditions, and if it is well grassed and through wise stocking the grass can keep ahead of the suckers which inevitably grow, everything in the garden is rosy. However, when we attack this problem we must remember that things can go wrong. If I was developing part of that country I should be a little more cautious for the reasons I have outlined. I took the Minister to one property out from Chinchilla where a young man and his wife are developing a block. They have developed about 500 acres a year, possibly because the finance available to them was not as liberal as in the coastal brigalow development scheme. This young man told me he chose to develop 500 acres a year because, if he got into trouble and had re-growth due to seasonal conditions, or had a bad strike with his grass, he had only 500 acres to worry about. He said if he developed 2,000 acres a year and ran into trouble he would have 2,000 acres to worry about. One can well understand his concern. I am not for a moment condemning what is being done. Machinery is available and the methods today are very different from what they were. However, in dealing with this type of country we must be aware of its problems and develop it accordingly.

My experience in brigalow has been in the Jandowae and Chinchilla areas back through to Kaimkillenbun, north of Dalby, and the Jimbour Plain black-soil country. After the clearing of the brigalow scrub and the prickly-pear, that proved to be some of the finest dairying and fattening country in Queensland. We found also that approximately 20 years was the lifetime of Rhodes grass, which is the principal grass for this soil. It can be argued that the lifetime of

Rhodes grass can be extended with better husbandry but when a farmer or grazier takes on an area of country and grasses it to graze 800 head of cattle—what is considered to be a living unit—it is not his fault if he overstocks in dry periods. If he runs into two or three successive bad years, it automatically becomes overstocked, and one thing Rhodes grass will not stand is continual overstocking. After 20 or 25 years it cuts out in these areas.

The areas to which I refer are small and have been used as dairy farms, but, with such arable country and with the development of our grain markets, quite a number of people who derive their livelihood from dairying are now making a very good living at grain-growing.

If I were developing one of these larger blocks, I should feel inclined to use modern machinery to get rid of the timber and get the land grassed to go into quick production. It must not be forgotten, though, that in developing the beef industry we have to bear in mind the development of markets. It is no good doing the one without developing the other to keep in step. Some may say that I am old fashioned. Perhaps it pays at times. I would like to set aside at least 1,000 acres and have it ringbarked. Those of us who have had experience know that the moment you ringbark brigalow scrub you get the natural grasses and the salt bush. I showed the Minister an area north of Chinchilla where a farmer had done exactly this. He had ringbarked 800 acres. There was salt bush throughout the area, up 3 feet high, and you could not find a poor beast anywhere. It is wonderful cattle feed. In the winter months when the weather becomes very cold, particularly for breeding cattle heavy in calf, it would be a wonderful asset to have on your property some of this dead brigalow country, which is protected from frost by the dead scrub, with wonderful coverage of feed, where your stock could winter well.

Mr. Murray: Would you suggest that the absence of any legume causes deterioration of the Rhodes grass over a long period?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is so. What we should try to do—and it is our responsibility—is to develop a legume for this black-soil brigalow country. At the present time there is not a known one.

Mr. Murray: Is the C.S.I.R.O. working on it?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Yes, it is at the present time, but I think we should do more. I have a note here about it and I intend to speak on it if time permits. We know we can grow lucerne and that kind of thing; but it is rather expensive to grow it to the extent we would want to, once the Rhodes grass cuts out in the grazing areas. When the Rhodes grass has gone and there is left this 1,000 acres of brigalow country, which in

effect is still virgin country, it can be burnt and grassed so that there will be 1,000 acres of Rhodes grass for the next 20 years. That is something to which the Department of Lands could give consideration. I am not saying that my methods are necessarily any better than those adopted by the department, but my experience leads me to believe that that would be a wise way to develop an area of that size.

Because of the freehold tenure under which this country is being opened, living areas today of 8,000, 10,000, or in some cases 6,000 acres, no doubt will become in the years ahead, through development, three or perhaps four living areas. That is why I am so much in agreement with the opening of this country on a freehold basis. After all, a man who goes on the land and rears a family at least can subdivide the country for the benefit of his sons for all that they have done over the years without much reward. A young country fellow growing up will know that his father will be able to cut it up and say, "There is a couple of thousand acres down the end for you when you get married." I think that that is the best way to develop our country.

I was told only yesterday that lecturers are telling economics students that the economy of this country depends on industrial development. This is something that really concerns me. I understand that this is being taught to university students in economics classes. I think we all agree that it is a wonderful thing to have development in secondary industries, but the wealth of Queensland flows from primary production. This teaching that the strength of our economy lies in the development of secondary industries, ahead of primary industries, is something that I cannot understand.

Mr. Tucker: Wouldn't that come about by the big noise that you made about oil?

Mr. SULLIVAN: Not necessarily. The hon. member should not endeavour to sidetrack me. I think he has been listening fairly attentively whilst I have been speaking. I am sure, too, that I would not be permitted to discuss oil in this debate.

Although our land policy may be criticised from time to time, I have heard men such as the president of the United Graziers' Association, Mr. Peter Bell, and Mr. Roberts, president of the South-Eastern Graziers' Association, say on several occasions, "Whilst everything may not be as we would like it, we are a darned sight better off than we were a few years ago." It is good to hear that said. I am sure that those men would be the first to admit that the Department of Lands, under the administration of the Minister and Mr. Muir, is making a determined effort to make the lot of the man on the land a better one.

After all, it is a difficult life. I know that many city people believe that because someone owns 1,000, or 20,000, acres of

land he is wealthy and has no problems. As one who was reared on the land, let me assure them that that is not the case.

I have spoken of the development of the land, and I think that often we lose sight of our responsibility to the land that we have already developed. Whilst I know that this will bring in the Department of Local Government and possibly the Department of Primary Industries and the soil conservationist, I think it is wise for me to bring to the notice of the Minister and his departmental officers the responsibility that we have to conserve our rich and arable lands, particularly on the Darling Downs. In every major flood on the Darling Downs more than 5,000 acres of arable land is permanently lost to agriculture. That figure is staggering, and we, as a Government, have a very great responsibility to take cognisance of it. I suggest that a co-ordinated board of some description be formed at the highest level between the Department of Lands, the Department of Local Government, the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply to ensure that our lands are preserved. The Pittsworth Shire Council, of which the Minister for Lands was chairman prior to his entering Parliament, is doing a considerable amount of work at present, and I know that the Wambo Shire Council is, too. But it is no good one shire council, which is perhaps not at the head of the watershed, doing something about it; there must be an overall co-ordinated plan. In my opinion, the time is ripe for action to be taken to conserve lands that are developed already. I have discussed this matter with councillors of the Wambo Shire Council and they are very interested in it. As a matter of fact, they have prepared a submission and given it to me to put before the Minister in charge of conservation. The problem is a real worry to them.

There is only one other matter that I wish to mention. Only an hour ago I received a telephone call from a man in Dalby drawing my attention to it. Apparently he is a member of a committee associated with the Christian Brothers college at Dalby which is endeavouring to develop 10 acres as a playing area, with a view to developing an agricultural course at the college in later years. I was surprised to hear that the Department of Lands has imposed a condition that £2,000 worth of development be done on that 10 acres of land in the next two years. This particular committee and the Christian Brothers have expended about £100,000 in building a new college at Dalby, and what they have in mind is exactly what the hon. member for Clayfield mentioned by way of interjection. As you know, Mr. Hodges, many of the boys who attend this school come from farms, and one of the things that the committee has in mind in establishing an agricultural course later is the development of a legume that will be suitable for use in

black-soil areas. I hope, therefore, that the Minister will consider being perhaps a little more lenient. The 10 acres are now being developed into playing fields. The committee wants to put cricket pitches and football posts on the area but does not want to be compelled to build a grandstand or any improvements of that nature. I am sure that when I have an opportunity of talking to the Minister and Mr. Muir we will see eye to eye on the fact that the conditions are rather severe.

(Time expired.)

Mr. PILBEAM (Rockhampton South) (12.44 p.m.): I propose to make a brief contribution to this debate because I think I should be lacking in gratitude if I did not seize this opportunity to thank the Minister and the Department of Lands for the excellent co-operation that has been achieved during the past 12 months between them and the Rockhampton City Council and other local authorities in Central Queensland. I wish to place on record my thanks to the Minister and the officers under his control for that co-operation.

We have had commendable co-operation in the eradication of pests within Rockhampton's city boundaries, particularly *Harrisia cactus*. The officers of the department at present are seeking to assist the city by laying out an alternative stock route from the resting paddocks at Lake's Creek to the meatworks in order to take the cattle, which traverse that route almost every day, away from the bitumen main road and to put them on a route that will not affect adversely either the cattle or the stock route itself. I believe that shortly we will see a worth-while stock route established there. As I say, we are getting very good co-operation from the officers of the Department of Lands in Rockhampton.

Another matter that has given gratification to the people of Rockhampton is the Minister's action in granting us a special lease in connection with the road up Mt. Archer. Without such a lease, that road could not possibly have been constructed.

There has been a great deal of opposition to the construction of that road even though the entire cost was met by Commonwealth grants and, more recently, a grant from the State Government. The matter that swung public opinion in favour of the construction of the road was a wonderful lease granted by the Minister, who gave us authority to freehold an area approximating 250 acres for the sum of £1,000 in 10 years within which time we have to finish the construction of the road. I can assure the Minister that we are taking advantage of that lease; the road is about two-thirds constructed at present. We will be up to the top of Mt. Archer by Christmas, and we hope to have the whole project completed to the final bitumen sealing by this time next year. That means we still have plenty of time in the balance of the 10 years of the lease to fulfil

the other requirement, which is that we subdivide and offer to the public a minimum of 50 allotments. Once again I assure the Minister that we will have those 50 allotments available, and more. The whole project constitutes a wonderful development that has lifted Rockhampton in the eyes of the locals and in the eyes of people from outside the city, too. Once again I wish to thank the Minister for making that project possible.

There is, however, one project over which the people of Rockhampton are not very satisfied. It relates to the subdivision within the city of Rockhampton of land under the Minister's control. We have formerly received applications for permission to subdivide land in an area which was considerably below flood level. Naturally, the Rockhampton City Council in its role of protector of the people's interests, refused the applications. However, we were somewhat mortified to find white pegs placed in position on land in the same area under the control of the Department of Lands. It appears to me that unless we can get more of the co-operation to which I previously referred, and for which the people of Rockhampton are extremely grateful, we might have the spectacle of the Department of Lands subdividing and selling land in an area in which the ordinary citizens of Rockhampton have been refused permission to subdivide. I draw the Minister's attention to that position and I am sure that, with his sense of justice, he will rectify it without any further reminder from me.

We are very gratified to see the development that is taking place outside the city of Rockhampton under the brigalow-lands development scheme. We see in the project the making available of millions of acres of land that has been unproductive for years. We can see the difficulties that will face prospective settlers, but we see also the tremendous benefits that will accrue.

As a secondary benefit one thing that particularly interests us is the construction of roads through the area. People have not been able to travel to any great extent in these areas for many years. Whenever it has rained they have been prevented from moving on the roads. In the No. 1 area, the first to be developed, there are presently being constructed an 18ft.-wide road from Moura to Bauhinia Downs, a road west from Bauhinia Downs towards Rolleston, and a road between Taroom and Bauhinia Downs. These roads will make the life of the people in the area very much happier. Here again I have one small issue to raise with the Minister. I refer to roads which are useful to the area but which do not come within the definition contained in the Brigalow Lands Development Act. To give an example I refer to the road between Bauhinia Downs and Duaringa. Whenever possible that road has been used extensively to send cattle to the meatworks at Rockhampton and by people travelling to Rockhampton to conduct

business. In accordance with the provisions of the Act the bitumen road is being constructed to 12 miles north of Bauhinia Downs towards Duaringa. There it stops. I understand that that is where the land that comes within the definition of the Act cuts out. The bitumen road is taken 12 miles north of Bauhinia Downs towards Duaringa, but the rest of it is becoming untrafficable. That seems to be an anomaly that will have to be overcome in some way. It is very gratifying to see the construction of these roads placed under the control of the Department of Main Roads and officers of the department are fully alive to their responsibilities. Under that Act roads are constructed mainly up to top-gravel class. The Department of Main Roads has seen the necessity to complete the job with bitumen, and out of its own funds it is bitumen-sealing these roads. It is a very good idea because nothing but bitumen is any good in this modern age. In my book, and the books of the people who live out there, gravel roads do not last long enough. I ask that the Minister, in conjunction with the Department of Main Roads, have a look at the whole position of the necessary roads in this area. Similar situations could arise when areas 2 and 3 are developed.

During the course of the debate I have been interested to hear remarks from the other side of the Chamber criticising the Government on the treatment meted out to King Ranch in the leasing of land south-west of Tully. In the course of our investigation into the development of the cotton industry we found that a somewhat similar situation arose at Narrabri in Northern New South Wales, under the Labour Government of that State. I give full credit to the New South Wales Government in this instance. A very large dam—the Keepit Dam—has been constructed at a cost of £15,000,000. For a long time there was no real use for the water but now the Government can see the necessity to develop the cotton industry by irrigation, as we can see it here when we endeavour to get large-scale water-conservation schemes. They have sought to get farmers to take up irrigated lots to which water is made available from this dam. An American firm has taken up 7,534 acres at Narrabri with water rights.

As criticism was levelled at this Government by hon. members opposite on the King Ranch proposal, let me read a letter on the Narrabri scheme from a New South Wales member of Parliament, Mr. G. R. Crawford, to "The Sydney Morning Herald" as published on Friday, 13 September, 1963—

"It will be recalled that three Americans acting for an American cotton company purchased three soldier settler blocks on Edgeroi Estate.

To circumvent Government policy on water rights which was a maximum of 400 acres per holding, 17 blocks were leased to absentee 'dummy' lessees who then applied for water rights.

"These have now been granted so that this company has 7,534 acres of water rights.

"The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission has stated that a maximum of 45,000 acres of cotton can be grown in the Namoi Valley using water stored in Keepit Dam."

That is the big dam I referred to previously.

The letter continues—

"Simple arithmetic will show that this company has one-sixth of the water available from Keepit Dam which cost the taxpayers of this State £15,000,000.

"Therefore, the Government has spent £2½ million for a water supply for this company.

"This American company has sufficient water for at least 25 cotton farms."

Further on, the letter continues—

"Now we find that three blocks are being worked as one unit by an absentee company . . ."

I suggest to Opposition members that if they want to strike a parallel with the King Ranch proposition they should compare it with this one. If the A.L.P. Government of New South Wales is to be supported in its attitude of helping an American company to develop the cotton industry, I think we should be equally fair and support the Queensland Government in its efforts to help an American company develop the beef industry.

Mr. Byrne: Why give them preferential treatment?

Mr. PILBEAM: Why did these people in New South Wales get preferential treatment from a Labour Government? The fact is that 17 dummies were recognised so that they would get water rights. I suggest that if the New South Wales Labour Government is to be classed as progressive—and I say it is and that it is doing the right thing because the Americans have the know-how for cotton production—

Mr. Byrne: In what way have they got the know-how?

Mr. PILBEAM: Because they produce an overwhelming percentage of the world's cotton. They know more about growing cotton than does any other country. The Labour Government of New South Wales recognises that, if the hon. member does not. I think the hon. member belongs to the same party; I think he has an Australian affiliation. If the A.L.P. Government of New South Wales regards that as a progressive move, why cannot the hon. member recognise that the move we are making with King Ranch is similarly progressive? As a matter of fact, the New South Wales case is a worse example, if the hon. member cares to examine it.

In conclusion, I revert to my original theme and thank the Minister and the members of his department for their co-operation on several problems confronting Rockhampton and Central Queensland generally. I suggest to the Minister once again that, to make his record 100 per cent. pure, he should investigate the plans for subdividing the land in Rockhampton that I have referred to. If we were allowed to make the decision we should definitely not give permission for subdivision. I also ask the Minister to ensure that all the projected roads for Central Queensland are built, not just sections of them.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (2.15 p.m.): Mr. Gaven, if you wanted a more shocking indictment of the present Country-Liberal Government than that which has been levelled at it by the hon. member for Gregory, I suggest it would be almost impossible to find anything like it in the annals of Australian land administration.

The hon. member for Gregory, dealing with the West, spoke of what he termed the snide operation of a large company and said that it was recognised as such by everybody in the Central West. As to what he meant by "snide operation" I suggest we are entitled to our own interpretation. It must be remembered that the hon. member for Gregory is a member of the Government. He said this, too—

"Overnight we see this shocking indictment of my own Government, of trafficking in lands . . ."

Just exactly what does that mean?

In extenuation of what he had said he went on to speak of the power of the cheque book. What does that mean? It means that if you are possessed of great wealth, then obviously you can do all sorts of things that in ordinary circumstances you could not do.

The hon. member for Gregory also suggested that the Government should take away the lands of the companies out west to which he referred and he added that the Government of New South Wales should be advised of their activities. What greater condemnation could you have than that? Here a Government member from the West charges the Government with snide operations and so on and tells us in addition that the New South Wales Government should be advised of the operation.

Could anyone want any greater confirmation of the preferential treatment that this Government is prepared to give to the moneyed classes as against the individual settlers, who are worth a dozen times more than all the companies put together? What we want is settlement. If preferential treatment is given to big companies, where will we get settlement? I agree with the hon. member for Gregory that it is a shocking state of affairs, and, no matter how the

Minister might try to play it down, those statements appear in "Hansard" and cannot be denied.

I am prepared to quote the statement of another hon. member who volunteered the information that, if the same terms and conditions were offered to his company as were offered to the King Ranch company, it would have been rushed. Why were not tenders called in the first place for the hand-out to the King Ranch people? You can understand that, once the good deal that the King Ranch people got became known, dozens of other people wanted a similar privilege; but the Minister, in wisdom, I say, refused.

I am talking about preferential treatment. Take the case of the Carruchan sawmill. After sacking 100 employees, the mill closed. Over three years it did not harvest a stick of timber, except for a small quantity, and it had a quota of 3,000,000 super feet, yet it was allowed to retain its licence. What does it mean? It means a great loss in employment and a great loss of revenue to the State. But why give this preferential treatment? If a licence is not used, why continue to give preferential treatment to a big company like Hancock & Gore Ltd., of which Brown & Broad Ltd. is only a subsidiary? An adjoining mill owner who desired—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is straying a little from the subject of land administration.

Mr. BYRNE: This particular matter deals with the land.

Mr. Ewan: It deals with forestry.

Mr. BYRNE: I am talking about preferential treatment. If preferential treatment is given to King Ranch and the company in the West that was mentioned by the hon. member for Gregory, I think I am entitled to speak on the subject of preferential treatment. It is given to big companies but not to individuals.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (2.21 p.m.): Although I have listened to the debate with great attention and heard speeches from those on the Government side who claim to be land experts, I have heard nothing that causes me to hesitate in entering the debate.

Mr. Ewan: You wouldn't understand it.

Mr. DAVIES: The speech of the hon. member for Gregory has already been dealt with by the hon. member for Mourilyan in the few minutes that he had at his disposal. Statements made by the hon. member for Gregory must certainly disturb hon. members and cause them to consider it necessary to hold an open inquiry into land matters in this State.

As the hon. member for Roma used to be associated with the land, one would expect to learn much from a speech by him, but instead all that we heard were ravings against Socialism in this State. Whilst I believe that he is a capable man, he has unfortunately developed that style of speaking and we hear from him little but protests against Labour administration of land affairs.

Having listened to the speech by the one-time representative of the North, the hon. member for Clayfield, one can appreciate why he was rejected at the last Federal election and sought refuge in the safe State Liberal seat of Clayfield.

Throughout his speech the hon. member for Gregory condemned the Government's administration, and his remarks brought to mind the references by a former Minister, Mr. Muller, to the pressure groups that were constantly coming to George Street endeavouring to influence him in his administration of the Department of Lands. He quickly faded out of Cabinet and, whilst we are not questioning in any way the integrity of the present Minister, the land administration of the State certainly needs inquiring into. The hon. member for Gregory referred to trafficking in land and the power of the cheque book. If those phrases had been used by members on the Government side when the present Government parties were in opposition, they would have been demanding a royal commission into land matters.

I shall endeavour to state for the record a few historical facts related to land development. In the first place, I refer to the Report on Progressive Land Settlement in Queensland by the Land Settlement Advisory Commission. The Commissioner was William Labatt Payne, Barrister-at-law, and the report was presented to Parliament by command in 1959. I believe that land development is so important that members representing industrial and other types of electorates should make it their business to become familiar with it. I believe that hon. members in general on the Opposition side do take a keen interest in it and are aware of the problems confronting the State.

The failure of the Government to grapple with those problems and give contentment and satisfaction to landholders generally is evidenced by the numerous protests that one reads in farmers' journals at the Government's not measuring up to what is required of country representatives.

In the beginning of the report we find this statement by Mr. Payne—

"The right use of our National heritage—the land—is the most important single function of Government. That is the simple truth. We either develop and populate our country or eventually we must lose it.

"The settlement of land, its development, its increased production, its more intensive use, and its increasing capacity to maintain population constitute the measure of our progress as a Nation.

"We must strive, of course, to have balanced production from industries as well as from the land, but land development comes first."

Our first important land legislation was passed by Parliament in 1869, and in 1884, 1902, 1910, 1924, and 1927, as Mr. Payne said, the rails were laid on which administration has since proceeded, with some variations introduced in 1952. We believe that in this State we have a land set-up of which we can be proud, because we have set an example to land administrators in all parts of the world.

The hon. member for Clayfield gave facts and figures that he claimed related to rainfall in Queensland, but it is interesting to note that Australia is the world's driest continent. If only the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply were linked with the Department of Lands, we could debate the question at very great length because of the failure of the Commonwealth Government and the State Government to develop water-storage schemes for the whole country. Since 1949 in the Commonwealth sphere and since 1957 in the State sphere, we find that it has not been regarded as a national problem, and if Labour is returned to power in the Commonwealth Parliament there will certainly be a different approach.

Only 8½ per cent. of the total area of Australia receives 40 inches of rain or more each year, as compared with 30 per cent. of Africa, 64 per cent. of South America, and 20 per cent. of North America. In this 8½ per cent., Arnhem Land and Cape York Peninsula are both areas which cannot be regarded as good agricultural land. Only about 6 per cent. of Queensland, excluding Cape York Peninsula, has an annual rainfall of 40 inches or more, and 48 per cent. has a rainfall of 20 inches or more. About 52 per cent. has a rainfall of less than 20 inches annually, and of this area a little more than half has 15 inches or less. Queensland has an area of 429,120,000 acres, and over 92 per cent. of its lands are still directly administered by the Department of Lands. We know that as a result of sound land administration, which is vital to Queensland's life, there has been great progress, and there was great progress under Labour Governments, as I will endeavour to show.

Land administration should always have high priority in Queensland's affairs, and the Labour Party always regarded that as so. In both its agricultural policy and its land policy generally, the Labour Party led the way in Australia and gave to the man on the land legislation that set the standard for similar legislation passed by other State Parliaments and by the Commonwealth Parliament. To quote Mr. Payne's report again—

"The land (excluding minerals) provides 82 per cent. of our overseas exports and,

in addition, nearly all the requirements to feed and clothe our people. It is the broad base on which the whole of our national economy rests."

The Labour Party, as I said, has agreed with that and legislation that it has introduced over the years proves this. In Queensland, land has been the subject of more legislation than anything else. Constant adjustments have been made to meet new circumstances arising from time to time, and the recent consolidation of the Land Act was simply a repetition of what took place in 1910, when the land laws were consolidated.

At different times in our history we must profit by experience, and therefore there is a need for not only the consolidation of Acts but further amendments. That has been shown clearly by the land history of this State. Every now and then in a bigger way it is apparently necessary for us to consider all the various aspects of land legislation afresh. In 1869 the first land legislation was passed; in 1884 there was the closer grazing settlement legislation; in 1902 the land laws were liberalised; in 1910 the land laws were consolidated into a single Act; in 1924 there was the prickly-pear legislation, from which the hon. member for Roma benefited so much; in 1927 there were many novel reforms and in 1952 there were some variations.

All the new Land Acts had as their objectives the use of land in a way that is calculated to serve the whole of the people. I want to emphasise that that thought pervades the whole of this report, namely, that land administration must be so guided and so calculated as to serve the whole of the people. It must be aimed at the prevention of monopolies in land and at the making of land available in areas suitable for the requirements of the applicant and for advancing the State. That means the requirements of the applicant on better terms than those provided in the brigalow areas and in areas such as that given to King Ranch, and according to the pleas put forward by the hon. member for Mourilyan over the years.

The opening of these areas of land would provide young people who are clamouring to get on the land with an opportunity to get there without having to obtain many thousands of pounds. Instead of that, we find large tracts of land being thrown open to companies such as King Ranch, land which, according to the hon. member for Clayfield—who stated it and later repeated it—is some of the best in Australia. When he rose to speak he evaded the issue. We know he rose deliberately to assist the Government and we know he deliberately refrained from mentioning his previous statement. So we can only take it that he still believes that this land is of greater value than one would expect judging from the price charged by the Government for the King Ranch area.

Mr. Byrne: He was an agent for Hooker.

Mr. DAVIES: It must be evident that he was an agent for some land interest in this State.

Mr. Sullivan: Can you substantiate that?

Mr. DAVIES: From the evidence, it is quite apparent. The hon. member made that statement and, when he later rose to speak, he would neither deny nor confirm it. There seems to be something strange when we find the hon. member approaching the problem in the way he did.

All new Land Acts, as I have stated and emphasised, have the aims I have just mentioned, and in addition—and this is most important—to ensure a steady flow of land back to the Crown to meet progressive needs for new land settlement. How can we observe that if we do as the hon. member for Roma advocated? This is the first time I have heard him come right out into the open on this question and advocate the freeholding of land throughout the West. As a matter of fact, I do not believe that the people in these great western areas want the overall freeholding of land. Land-minded men in Queensland regard the opportunity of acquiring land from the State, or at least entering a ballot for it, as almost a birthright. How are they going to do that if men like the hon. member for Roma have their way and hand it to overseas companies and other big concerns? Land-minded men in Queensland might question the extent of a living area. As a layman, it makes me smile to hear arguments about what represents a living area. Any man with common sense knows that a living area must vary in size in the various areas in the State. Some land has more waterways than others; some have different types of soil and different rainfall, so that living areas must vary throughout the State.

I say the whole scheme of land legislation has been permeated with the principles I have outlined. The same pattern has been woven through it. There has never been any deviation from the dominant purpose under Labour Governments in this State, but it has been emphasised in this report by Mr. Payne as follows—

"There should be no privileged classes using the public estate. The capacities of all should be utilised in the way best calculated to help Queensland forward. The predominant aim in all land questions should be what will give the most benefit, not necessarily to the individual, but to the community as a whole."

I should like the hon. member for Roma to listen to this. He has talked about the benefits accruing to the man who is not on the land. We realise and appreciate that the man on the land works hard and long and takes risks, and so on, but there should be a greater acknowledgment of the benefits that accrue to him. Here is one, shown in this report—

"Big men pay the maximum rate of taxation on their incomes, namely 13s. 4d. in the £1. As explained in the

previous paragraph, costs of development (other than structural improvements) are deductible from gross income before net taxable income is arrived at. This means that the community subsidises land development to the extent of 13s. 4d. in the £1. But when the development has been done, it belongs solely to the lessee and increases the asset value of his property. In effect, the enterprising grazier gets a profit, saves himself taxation, increases the asset value of his property, and has his development work handsomely subsidised by the community."

The report further states—

"If a small grazier has 5,000 acres of virgin scrub country and, over some years, spends £5 per acre on it in clearing, water, grassing, ploughing, and the erection of marsupial-proof fencing, etc., he will be granted a deduction of the £25,000 spent in improving the land.

"The value of this deduction in terms of income tax saved would depend on the annual income and the rate of tax. Suppose, for example, that the taxable income is such that the tax averages 10s. in the £1. In that case there would be a saving of £12,500, and the net cost to the grazier of improving the land would thus be £12,500. If the land were then sold he would receive the developed value of the property; and no part of his profit would be taxable."

I leave that thought with the hon. member for Roma, and it is a perfectly sound one.

Later, the report states—

"The ideal society would be one in which every individual would make, either in a big or humble way, some contribution to the lasting benefit of family life and to his or her fellow citizens."

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: You talk about the land-owner! What about the coalminer who goes down into the mine? Doesn't he make even a greater contribution—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair. In any event there is nothing about coal-mining in the Estimates under discussion.

Mr. DAVIES: Whether it is the coalminer, the carpenter or any other honest worker, he gives just as valuable service to the State as any dairyman, grazier or other man who gives good service on the land.

Continuing with the report—

"But whether this ideal be achieved or not, it is essential that the lands of Queensland—the heritage of us all—be used in such a way as to best benefit the whole of the people."

If any further proof were needed of the merit of the Labour Government's closer settlement policy, the report states—

"Sound closer settlement, of course, should be the constant aim of land administration. And what does sound closer settlement imply? It implies the division of the land in economically sound areas amongst its people so that it may be worked prudently and intensively and developed to the utmost; used for the greatest production of which it is capable; and cared for, protected, and preserved so that it may remain a storehouse of wealth for future generations.

"The State is wedded to a policy of leasehold tenure of large areas for the protection and benefit of future generations.

"These provisions of the law to protect the interests of Crown tenants whose leases are expiring are not paralleled elsewhere in the world."

That was under a Labour Government. Those points are overlooked by people who endeavour to misrepresent the Labour Government.

Mr. Payne went on to say—

"There are so many important factors to be weighed in subdivisions—all the features and characteristics of the country; its carrying capacity, present and potential; the situation of water and other improvements; the costs of development; the use to which the country has been and can be put; its agricultural potential; and so on.

"A Crown tenant should never be given any ground for thinking that he is being penalised because he has improved his holding better than his neighbour. One of the guiding lights of Crown land administration should be to treat good tenants well, to err on the side of generosity . . ."

That was undoubtedly done during the Labour Government's administration.

In the early days we had the squatters, but when their herds increased the holdings became too small and they were pushed farther out. In an attempt to give a sound form of land administration, early Australian Governments and the British Secretaries of State for Colonies desired to provide for all the future land settlement needs of the new continent. Those were the days referred to as the good old Tory days of administering the State. They held views—and thank goodness they did—for the development of the State that were not in keeping with the outlook of the hon. member for Roma. The interest of the many rather than of the few was always their laudatory aim. They early determined to prevent anything in the nature of land monopoly in Australia, but the squatters demanded three things: (a) compensation for improvements; (b) security of tenure; and (c) a pre-emptive right on the expiration of their leases. In 1869 pastoral leases were for merely 21 years; in 1902, in remote districts, the period was extended to 42

years. In 1910 the maximum term for new pastoral leases was fixed at 30 years, and in 1937 it was increased to 40 years for pastoral development leases for country that was difficult to develop. This is the main point: in 1859 Parliament early decided against the wholesale alienation of the public estate although the purchase of freeholds by some early pastoralists was permitted. Had extensive freeholding or interminable leases been allowed, the land would have had to be later repurchased at a higher cost when the demand for closer settlement arose. As Queensland progressed, the expenditure of public funds on the building of harbours, roads, public works and railways, and the enterprise of its citizens in the general development of the State, created much higher land values. If the lands had to be repurchased for new settlement, the State, in effect, would have had to pay private persons land values which it had mostly created itself. All this was prevented by a policy of terminable leasehold over grazing land, and only agricultural farms were allowed to be freeholded.

For further evidence of what has happened in Victoria and New South Wales I quote what was said by Mr. Haigh, Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply—

“However, I cannot agree with Sir William that we will achieve great progress in development simply by conversion from leasehold to freehold and support my contention by the following:—

“In Victoria and New South Wales where freehold tenures are in the majority, both States have found it necessary in achieving the intensity of land use and settlement which is serving them so well, to resume for subdivision large areas of freehold lands. From 1905 to 1959 New South Wales has acquired 7,112,623 acres at a cost of £34,718,000 for this purpose.”

Here is one example under a Tory Government—

“In a recent inspection of Victorian closer settlement an example was seen of 20,000 acres resumed from a 45,000 acre freehold property to create thirty to forty new farms, following which the balance of the 25,000 unresumed has been further developed by the owner to carry the same number of stock as the original 45,000 acres.”

That illustrates that freehold lands are often lacking intensive development.

My purpose in rising was to refute the argument advanced by the hon. members for Roma and Clayfield about Labour's administration and their assertion that we left land settlement in a mess. It has been recognised over the years that we set a standard of land administration in the State by progressively passing a set of land laws in

keeping with the desire of our forefathers who, in 1859, though not Labour followers, said that it was not in the interests of the State to allow these lands to become alienated. So I wish to add my protest at the state of affairs claimed by the hon. member for Gregory to exist in this Government whereby there is trafficking in land and the power of the cheque book is ruling land administration in the State.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (2.46 p.m.): The question of land tenure is, of course, always a controversial one, but I just want to deal with a couple of instances that I think should have the attention of hon. members.

Last Saturday afternoon it was my honour and my privilege to be present at the opening of the garden settlement for the aged at Pallarenda, which was officially opened by the Premier. I mention that to draw the attention of the Committee to the difference in attitude between that adopted by this Government to worthy organisations such as the Methodist Church, which established that garden settlement at Pallarenda, and the consideration that it gives to blatant bids by people like Ansetts and other people. It is not so very long since we debated in the Chamber, and actually passed by force of the Government's majority, a Bill giving Reg Ansett control of Hayman Island either under freehold tenure or under perpetual lease tenure, and it was stoutly defended by the Minister for Lands and every other Minister. They said it was necessary to encourage Mr. Ansett, who was doing so much to build up the tourist industry of North Queensland and that, in effect, Mr. Ansett would not go on with the development of Hayman Island unless he got freehold and perpetual-lease tenure of that land.

I want to draw the attention of the Committee and, if possible, of the people, to the fact that worth-while organisations, much more worthy than Reg Ansett, organisations that do not operate purely and simply for personal profit as he does, and organisations that do not use their position in the community as an instrument to tyrannise other people, do not receive the same sympathetic consideration from this Government in land tenure as did Reg Ansett, because all that the people who built that wonderful garden settlement for the aged at Pallarenda could get was a special lease for a specific term and under cast-iron conditions.

I remember writing to the Minister for Lands and asking him to grant these people either perpetual lease or freehold of this land and he pooh-poohed the idea. “Non-sense”, he said, “to grant an organisation such as that freehold tenure or perpetual lease tenure.” So the people responsible for that very fine home, which will cost when completed £100,000 and which was paid very fulsome compliments, and very well-deserved compliments, by the Premier on Saturday

when he opened it, have only a very tenuous tenure of the land on which the home is built. Any moment the Minister can walk in, and, if the terms of the special lease are not being complied with right to the letter, either this Government or any future Government can revoke the special lease and goodness knows what will happen to the garden settlement at Pallarenda.

Mr. Coburn: He would have a Methodist revolution on his hands.

Mr. AIKENS: He might have, and he would deserve it. However, I am not going to introduce sectarianism into the debate. It would be hard to imagine less incentive being given by any Government to a worthwhile organisation working in the interests of the people. We heard the Premier eulogising this effort. As a matter of fact, I think he read some of my speeches before he officially opened the home at Pallarenda on Saturday and he referred in glowing terms to the senior citizens of the State. He said how it behoves everyone to do what he can to make the evening of their lives as easy and pleasant as possible. I agree wholeheartedly with everything that he said because he was merely repeating things that I have said here from time to time. The Leader of the Government said, "Let it behove everybody to do what he can to assist these organisations that are making it possible for senior citizens to spend the evening of their lives in peace and comfort."

He went on to pay a glowing tribute to the people of Townsville and North Queensland who, by their efforts and subscriptions of money, made such a wonderful home possible. At the same time, however, his Government was not, and is not, prepared to give that association the sympathetic consideration with regard to land tenure that it is prepared to give Reg. Ansett and similar people. Any one wanting to use Crown land, which is the people's land and their heritage, for the putrid purpose of making profits can be assured that if he goes to this Government, or to this Minister, he will be able to get freehold tenure, perpetual lease, or anything that he wants.

Mr. Dewar: That is not right.

Mr. AIKENS: It is right. It cannot be denied that what I am saying is true. Do not forget that I will not be like the hon. member for South Brisbane. I will not squib. If a public inquiry is held, I will not "dingo". Let the Government call me to order and ask me to substantiate what I am saying, and I will.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I am calling the hon. member to order now, and I ask him to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. AIKENS: The facts are as I have stated them, and I am prepared to prove it. The Minister has the correspondence, and the bound copies of "Hansard" in front

of you, Mr. Gaven, will show clearly that from time to time representations were made by me and, I understand, others on behalf of the Methodist organisation in Townsville, who built this fine garden settlement for the aged, to get some decent form of tenure of the land. We were told at the time that the only tenure they could get was a paltry special lease, and that was suspended over their heads like the sword of Damocles.

All I ask is for the Government to give this excellent organisation the same treatment and consideration as was given to Reg. Ansett. We know that the garden settlement for the aged and those running it cannot give members of the Government free plane trips and free holidays at Hayman Island, with champagne, caviare, boiled chicken, and dames in bikinis. We know that the Methodists are not likely to provide those things for prominent members of the Government. I am not suggesting of course, that that is why this Government gave to the people at Hayman Island the concession that has been so often denied to those running the Methodist home at Pallarenda.

It may have been only a coincidence, but after a prominent Minister of the Crown enjoyed a fortnight's free holiday at Hayman Island, having been flown there in an Ansett-A.N.A. plane, guzzling champagne and gorging on boiled chickens and caviare and cavorting up and down the silvery sands in the moonlight with blondes and brunettes dressed in the scantiest of swimming costumes with everything free, freehold and perpetual-lease tenure was given to Hayman Island by the introduction of a special Bill.

The Minister for Labour and Industry can laugh. He also sees some humour in the charges made against the Commissioner of Police by the hon. member for South Brisbane, but I do not.

Recently I wrote a letter to the Minister for Lands. He wrote a most courteous reply. It was quite the most courteous knockback that I have ever received from a Minister, and I have received some peculiar ones in my time. There is a chap named Flynn who lives in Sussex Street, Hyde Park. He put up to me a particularly good proposition, which I passed to the Minister for Lands. I refer now to Crown land that is being cut up in provincial cities, and probably round Brisbane, for building blocks on which to erect homes for workers. The fact of the matter is that in Townsville, at any rate, when the Department of Lands cuts up land at Rowe's Bay on the side of Castle Hill, what is known as Gilbert Crescent, and at other places round Townsville, the worker is not in the race in acquiring a block on which to build his house. Sometimes it is sold on the basis of perpetual lease—perpetual lease for this, but not for aged people's homes—and people buy it knowing that they have to pay only 3 per cent. of the price that they bid a year. They bid up £2,000 a block, and

the result is that the worker, already faced with at least £1 a week in rates to the Townsville City Council, cannot afford an additional £1 a week rent for the land on which to build his house. In walk the speculators, the wealthy people of Townsville—some of our aldermen and business big shots. They can afford to bid up to £2,000 for a 32-perch allotment at Rowe's Bay or in North Ward.

I do not want to embarrass you, Mr. Gaven, but I do not know of any other hon. member in this Chamber who would be more conversant with land speculating rackets—from the outside—than you are. You know very well that a person who bids £2,000 for an allotment pays £60 in rent the first year and £60 the second year, or a total indebtedness of a paltry £120. In the interim, he has built a house on the land, and, because of the house hunger among the people, he sells the house for whatever it cost him to build it—say £3,000—plus £500 "cop" for himself and sells the land for £2,000. Having paid only two years' rent—£120—for the allotment, he then tacks the full price of £2,000 on to the price of the house and sells it to the first unfortunate sucker who comes along for £5,500 or £6,000. It is no good the Minister for Lands shaking his head, because we know that these things are going on. As a matter of fact, the dogs are barking them, as was said in the Chamber recently. The dogs are barking that the land is being sold—

Mr. Fletcher: I was doing it in sorrow, not in disagreement.

Mr. AIKENS: Well, the Minister should be doing it in sorrow—sorrow that he has failed so miserably and lamentably as the Minister for Lands to ensure that the workers get a fair go in obtaining a piece of land on which to build their houses and put a roof over their heads and the heads of their children.

Flynn put up a particularly good proposal. I assume that the Minister paid him the compliment of actually reading it himself—something that Ministers rarely do. Letters that are sent to them usually go to the Under Secretary, or to a clerk in the office who prepares a reply and puts it on the Minister's table, and the Minister then more or less blindly scratches his signature on it and we receive that as a ministerial reply. I really believe that the time is long overdue when, in cutting up land for building sites, the Crown should set a price on the land. It should say, "We are not going to sell the land by auction at inflated values and let the speculators and racketeers walk in and buy up the allotments as they have been doing." That has been going on not only under this Government but also under the Government that was its predecessor in office. It always intrigues me—it has ever since I have been in this Chamber—that when the Labour Government was working this racket in the sale of perpetual lease by

public auction, time and time again the Minister for Lands stood up in his place as a member of the Opposition and supported me in my strictures on the Labour Party for doing what he himself is now doing as Minister. In other words, he is doing now exactly what his predecessors did when they occupied the portfolio that he more or less honourably occupies. When, say, 120 allotments are being thrown open for building purposes—I understand that it is planned to open another group in the Rowe's Bay area or the North Ward area or the Belgian Gardens area of Townsville—the Government should give the workers a chance to acquire at least one-quarter or one-third of those allotments at a reasonable price. The Minister can lay down whatever conditions he wishes—I am sure we will support him—to ensure that an ordinary working man who has no other income gets a piece of land on which to build his house, live in it, and keep a roof over the heads of his wife and family, instead of all the land being obtained by speculating racketeers and go-getters.

I did not know that the debate was about to collapse and that I would have to say, as did Henry V at Harfleur, "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more." Otherwise I would have brought the correspondence on this matter from my room. But I think the Minister's memory is retentive enough for him to remember that he wrote me a very nice letter and said that he had studied the statements made by Mr. Flynn, that he found considerable merit in them, and that he would examine them and see if they could be put into effect.

Later on he wrote me very nicely in the placid and suave way that we all know the Minister adopts. It is very nice to get a letter from the Minister for Lands, because he is not brusque and brutal like some of the other Ministers. However, he said that unfortunately it was not possible to adopt the submissions of Mr. Flynn, and, to use the vernacular of the gutter, the old racket would still go on. In other words, the Government is more concerned with pampering go-getters and speculators and racketeers than with allowing the worker or the reputable decent citizen to buy a piece of land on which to erect his home. That fact cannot be denied. If the Minister cares to bring the correspondence from his office and read it, let him bring up his first reply and his second reply, which said there was considerable merit in the suggestion that a certain proportion of these allotments should be given to genuine home-builders, workers who can only afford to pay a reasonable price for a piece of land on which to build a home. Later on, of course, the Treasury boys and the departmental officers got at him and said, "If you are going to sell these allotments at a reasonable price we will lose many thousands of pounds a year in revenue." When you talk to any member of the Government about losing revenue he goes into an epileptic fit

or something and by the time he gets out of it your representations have gone by the board.

I say that if the Minister for Lands and his Government are genuine they should do two things: first, give to worth-while organisations such as the Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Church, or any other organisation that wants to build homes for the aged, land on exactly the same tenure as it was given to Ansett at Hayman Island, because I say their need is much greater and much more pressing than his. Of course, Government members will not get the free holidays and the bikini-clad brunettes and so on, but they will be doing the right thing. Secondly, when opening land for sale as building allotments, whether it is to be sold under either freehold tenure or perpetual lease tenure, so that speculators will not move in and the workers be frozen out, they should set aside a proportion of those allotments at reasonable prices and so arrange that they can be bought by the workers.

In other words, I ask the Minister for Lands—if he will knock off talking to “fluoride Percy”—to do as Minister for Lands what he so often and so vehemently advocated when he was an Opposition member of Parliament. That is all I ask him to do. If he looks up the pages of “Hansard” he will remember that when I attacked the Labour administration for doing the same thing as he is doing he stood up in his oleaginous, inimitable manner, supported me vehemently and branded the Government of the day as racketeers, grafters, corruptionists, and so on, who placed their heel upon the faces of the poor and twisted it around. I do not know what words he used but he went to town on the Labour Government and now, as Minister for Lands, he is doing the same thing as was done by the Labour Government.

Mr. Fletcher: You are exaggerating.

Mr. Aikens: Perish the ignoble thought that I should exaggerate even slightly. If the Minister wishes to get copies of “Hansard” he can read what he actually said. I know that he is honest enough not to deny what he honestly said if he reads it in “Hansard”. I know that after they have read some of their previous speeches in “Hansard” most hon. members claim that there has been a misprint or something else. But I know the Minister is too honest to do that. However, if he feels that he cannot save his conscience and, if he feels that he is at fault as a Minister, I hope that in the closing stages of this debate he will stand up and announce to a startled Committee, but nevertheless a Committee that would be very pleased to learn it, that he is going to give the workers a fair go in the acquisition of building allotments.

Mr. Lickiss (Mt. Coot-tha) (3.5 p.m.): I rise again to speak on the Estimates of the Department of Lands. The time is fast

approaching when the matter of the valuation of land for specific purposes in the State of Queensland will have to be critically examined. A great deal of confusion occurs at the present moment when we can have two valuations and two valuing authorities dealing with the same parcel of land. I refer particularly to valuations made by officers of the Department of Lands in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act, and by officers of another department. I fully realise the difficulties involved, nevertheless a problem does exist.

I have always been of the opinion that there should be one valuing authority only, and to me it is immaterial what name is attached to that authority. I do strongly recommend, however, that such an authority, which would be the valuing authority for all purposes, including those sections of the Land Act where applicable, should be placed under the control of a Minister who is not directly concerned with the administration of the Department of Lands, or any other department that uses the results obtained by the services of the valuing authority. I suggest that consideration might be given to placing this newly-constituted valuing authority under either the Premier or the Minister for Justice, and that the authority should be obliged to value, among other things, for the purposes of the Department of Lands.

The determination of consistent valuations for specific purposes under the Land Act, and any other Act, is of vital importance to the function of government. On a more appropriate occasion I trust that time will be made available to discuss this issue more fully. However, I do think earnest and urgent consideration should be given to the problems that have consistently faced us for many years in this respect.

For the information of the Committee, the following processes of valuation are required to be performed by officers of the Department of Lands—

- (1) The determination of unimproved capital value for conversion to freehold—Section 192 of the Land Act applies;
- (2) Determination of rentals—Sections 242 and 243 of the Land Act apply;
- (3) Determination of the value of improvements and improved capital value of land—Section 244 of the Land Act applies.

Mr. Adair (Cook) (3.9 p.m.): While I was at home over the week-end I had several requests from potential farmers in the Mossman area to make representations to the Minister about the throwing open of Crown land in that area. With the additional cane assignments to be granted there are many of these workers who want to go farming on cane land but they cannot afford the price that is being asked. The prices being asked for land that looks like getting a cane assignment are ridiculous. They cannot buy it for less than £100 to £120 an acre. It then

has to be cleared, bulldozed, ploughed and cultivated. At the present time there are large areas of Crown land in the Mossman area that could be thrown open, but these people cannot afford to buy freehold land. If they were given the opportunity to go onto that land at this stage they could clear it in time to plant next year's sugar crop. Of course, they would first need to have cane assignments granted to them. I can give the Minister details of one piece of land. I am referring to a camping reserve of 183 acres. R. 44 is its number, and it contains two living areas for cane farmers. It is now overgrown with trees, but if it were thrown open I am sure it would be taken up immediately and would be growing cane for the next season. In the Port Douglas area there is a town reserve four miles distant from the town. There is no chance in the world of Port Douglas ever extending four miles along the main Cook Highway. It is ti-tree country, but all the farmers for at least five miles along the road have developed that country into excellent cane-growing land. The ordinary person who knows cane farming would not regard it as good cane-growing country, but it grows good crops of Pindar and the Q varieties. If it could be opened as cane lands those who cannot afford to buy cane land could ballot for it and thus become farmers in the area. Time is short and it will not be long before applications are called for assignments. This land could be opened to provide an opportunity for many men to get it under cane. It will never be used for anything else; it is useless at present. I ask the Minister to investigate the possibilities of this land to see if he can throw it open at an early date and give those who are not as fortunate as others an opportunity to develop it.

I have travelled over the Cape York Peninsula on many occasions. Some graziers in the area have 1,000 or 2,000 square miles of country with very little of it fenced. I have been told on several occasions that the areas are too large and that there should be closer settlement. The graziers owning the big blocks admit that it is impossible to look after 1,000 or 2,000 square miles of country. I should like the Minister to have officers of his department investigate this part of the State and determine what is a living area for graziers in the Cape York Peninsular.

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Lands) (3.13 p.m.): In reply to the hon. member for Cook, I should say that my department has already investigated the possibility and desirability of opening further Crown land, or lands presently held as reserves of one kind and another, to be used in conjunction with the expansion of the sugar industry, which, without doubt, will take place. We have already done something about it, and, if the hon. member has particular areas in mind that he thinks we could

profitably direct our attention to, we will be very happy to have further information from him.

As to the fulminations of the hon. member for Townsville South, who unfortunately has flown the coop, while they are green in my memory I should like to refer to one or two things that he said or implied. As to the Housing Commission's getting land at Pallarenda, that is quite a possibility. If the Commission wants land there and can make good its claim to it we will be happy to put it on the list, so to speak, or to make arrangements beforehand. There is no need to worry about that.

What the hon. member said about some of the other matters was largely misleading, to put it mildly. He accused me more or less of doing things that years ago I claimed the Labour Government of the day was doing, and doing unjustly and to the detriment of the community in general. He has a very convenient memory in this and I think it betrayed him on what he alleged I said.

In any case, we do not any longer sell building allotments under the leasehold system. I freely admit that, under that system, some sad things have happened. People bid up to a very high price for the land and, after building a house on it, sell to someone who does not know, although he should, that it is perpetual lease. Perhaps it is purchased at a high valuation and the buyer has to bear the burden of a very heavy yearly rental. I think you, Mr. Gaven, know this as sympathetically as anybody in the Committee.

But since 1958 we have not been doing that. The main reason for the change in the system to freehold is to guard against just this sort of misunderstanding. If you buy an allotment under freehold tenure you know exactly where you are. The sort of snide practices the hon. member for Townsville South referred to as having been condoned by me cannot occur under a freeholding system. People pay their money and take their property and when it is sold, with or without a house on it, it cannot then be the subject of an unfortunate discovery by the new tenant that it is indeed not freehold land but something that costs him £3 a week, or more in some cases on the South Coast.

The suggestion that we sell on what amounts to a ballot system with a fixed price has something to commend it and I have quite honestly looked at that and appreciated that it might be a good idea if we could get round some of the practical difficulties; but it is hard to keep land from assuming its real value. Once the land is sold, and it is marketable, its real value will soon be established by the mere business of buying and selling. It sounds like a good idea to put up a row of blocks of land and say, "These are £200 each and all the bidders who go to £200 are in a ballot and the lucky men get the block";

but immediately they get the block, the man behind the auction sale that stopped at £200 immediately comes round with an offer. He says, "I will give you the difference between what you got by being the lucky drawer of the block and what I really think the value of the block is." You cannot stop it. In the long run, the only way to get round it is to sell the blocks as freehold land. That has not very many of the drawbacks, if any, of the old system, and I do not think there is much more that we can do.

The charge that the old men's home at Townsville did not get the same sort of preferential treatment as Reg Ansett got on Hayman Island is just pure bunk. Hayman Island was not given as freehold tenure, nor can it ever be freeholded. It is a special lease type of tenure, which cannot be converted to freehold, and indeed it must be used in perpetuity for the purpose for which the lease was given, that is to say, the specific purpose of a tourist resort. There can be no suggestion that that transaction is something we should be ashamed of. The land cannot be converted into cash as building allotments or used for some other purpose than the one for which it was given, and there is no real honest-to-goodness way that that can be compared with what has been done for the Methodist old men's home at Pallarenda. They have a special lease. They received a special non-competitive lease, and that was given because under the present law there was no way in which we could give a non-competitive freehold title, although we may have desired to do so. As soon as the improvements are completed, they will be able to apply for freehold tenure because there is now under the new Land Act the possibility of freeholding this type of special lease if the conditions of the lease have been carried out. Indeed, that is what will happen. There was really no substance in what was said by the hon. member, from first to last. Perhaps that does not very much surprise the Committee.

Before moving the appropriate motion, I think it only fair to comment briefly on the speeches made in the debate on my Estimates. The hon. member for Carnarvon was the first speaker after I completed my few remarks on Thursday evening. He is a man with a background of practical experience on the land, and when he says things in the honesty of his heart I have a great deal of respect for his opinions. I would, however, like to point out to him that his idea of an economic unit is one that the Government has always had in mind. We call it a living area, but there is a strong element of his economic unit in our conception of a living area. We had much discussion on it before we settled on a standard that we call a living-area standard, and we considered also whether it pays to put a man on a block on which he alone will have to do all the work as he could not afford to employ labour or acquire heavy machinery. All those points

were taken into consideration. We took into account the economic aspects of the sizes of the blocks that we were opening, at the same time giving reasonable weight to our desire to have the maximum number of men in Queensland on their own blocks.

I feel strongly with him that nothing better could happen to this State than to have the maximum number of men owning the blocks on which they live and work. They have the priceless ingredient of self-interest. You can decry that as much as you like, but it is a priceless factor in pushing men into doing the most they can for themselves and their families. As I have said before, I think that a man on his own freehold block is a better citizen than any other. He has a better chance of doing the things necessary to success, and the land has a better chance of ending up well tended, and well cared for under proper husbandry than if the person working it is merely an employee. That is the background to what I might call my land religion.

Mr. Mann: It is a very weak religion.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is a very strong religion, and a particularly virile and healthy one. I do not think there is anything better for the future of this country than to have the maximum number of men on their own blocks in economic units. That is by far the better for the sake of this country, economically, socially, and, if you like, politically. I think that that is where our strength will arise and, lacking it, where our weakness will show.

The hon. member spoke of freehold as a trust. That I liked, as that is my feeling. It is a trust for a lifetime, to hand to one's children and their children, which merely means the next generation and the next.

He also spoke of the need for additional areas in sub-standard blocks. This is a very difficult subject because many areas in Queensland are sub-standard. There is nothing that we can do about that whilst maintaining any sort of continuity of constructive work in the Department of Lands. Everything would have to go into curing the ills of a past generation or generations. I will not throw the gage across the Chamber and say that it was all Labour's fault. I expect that some of it was done before Labour's time in office. I have been a critic—I still am a critic—of what Labour did in the old days, but I do not think it becomes any of us to blame the other fellow for everything that occurs. It is far better to be constructive about curing what is there, and if we can cure any of this sub-standard-block difficulty or inequality, we are doing it.

Mr. Mann interjected.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member's interjection is not relevant to my present argument. We are doing what we can, and we have a special responsibility to anyone who has drawn a block under either

the present Government or the last Government. Since the assumption is that when one enters a ballot one is balloting for a living-area block, we have a special sort of responsibility to men who have drawn blocks which prove to be sub-standard, and we do our very best to provide an additional area if it can be provided. If we find areas that are in the hands of men who have been there all their lives or for a long period, they get the next priority, but we cannot go round and cure all the ills of people who have bought sub-standard blocks for very little money, because there are thousands of them. We are sympathetically doing what we can in a situation where the ideal is not possible, or at least I do not think it is possible.

I liked particularly his idea on land tax. It is something that we should be open and above board about. I have never been in favour of the abolition of land tax, because I do not like huge aggregations of land and I think land tax is one of the best and most effective weapons against big aggregations of freehold land. I think it follows that if one is a freeholder, and a fair freeholder, one also believes in land tax. There is a stage at which land tax can be a good leveller, something which can be used fairly in the interests of the whole community to guard against large aggregations of freehold land.

The hon. member for Tablelands had several things to say with which I agreed. I thought he approached the Estimates for the Department of Lands and land policy generally pretty fairly. He urged us to lean to the little man. Well, that is just about what we do.

Mr. Mann: You did that with King Ranch—51,000 acres!

Mr. FLETCHER: We have to take reasonable account of economics. After all, we have been over that question in the last few minutes. We cannot make little men too little, otherwise they will be too poor to afford to bring up and educate their children as they are entitled to be brought up and educated. With due regard for that, we do lean to the little men. Every day of the week I am reproached by men who are not little men, and their angle of reproach is, "You are giving far too much to the little man, and you are not really catering to the men who matter", as they think. I have to withstand that sort of criticism every day of the week. Because we lean to the small man, we received from the Federal Government money to expend in the brigalow belt. It was obvious that it was difficult for little men—little men financially—to finance the undertaking in the brigalow belt, and it was designed to assist men who did not have a great deal of money. I know some hon. members will say, "He must have £12,000. Why call him a little man?" However, we must be realistic about this, and in fact £12,000 is only a small amount when it comes to bringing an

economic part of the brigalow belt into production. Everything is relative, I know, and somebody with £1,000 or £500 will say, "I am really a little man. Can't you help me?" Reluctantly I have to say, in respect of the brigalow belt, "No, we cannot, because we cannot do this sort of thing without money." I put up, I hope, an eloquent plea, certainly a very heartfelt plea, for the money to be used for this purpose because of my conviction that it was necessary to help the little man. Otherwise he would not have been able to sustain the financial effort over the first few years when production is low and costs are high.

The break-up of large companies which he urged is just what we are doing when we get the chance and where it is practicable. There are cases in Queensland where it would not be practicable, where it would not be a kind thing to do, to ask an individual to take the risk in the circumstances of the dry climate in very large areas with the large amounts of money that have to be expended on fencing, watering and other things that go to make a place economic. There are places where it is more appropriate to leave the company in possession; but where we possibly can get the area safely into the hands of individuals we are doing it. We cannot take the land even from companies until their leases expire; but as soon as that happens and as soon as the land meets the conditions under which it is possible to put individuals on it, that is what we do.

Mr. Wallis-Smith interjected.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member said that I had compared the wallum country with the King Ranch lease, and deprecated any suggestion that they are comparable. They are not comparable acre for acre. Although the hon. member for Clayfield told us that part of King Ranch is wallum country, what I tried to convey was not that these were comparable in quality acre for acre, but that they were comparable only in that they were problem country. There were areas in them from which there never had been any impressive development and, in the wallum country, no development at all. They were areas in respect of which we were prone to be very grateful to anyone who would say, "I will risk a little, or a lot, of my capital in trying to learn some of the lessons we obviously have to learn before it is safe." Some of the King Ranch country, I will admit, is better than wallum country, but those areas—

Mr. Wallis-Smith: In the areas between Bundaberg and Maryborough there is no good country at all.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is right. That is what I just said. I am not comparing them acre for acre as to value. I am comparing them because each has a problem in economic production, and I still say that. Surely that is clear enough.

Mr. Murray: What they do not understand is that there are different types of wallum country. This is wallum country but it is a higher-class wallum country.

Mr. FLETCHER: They are comparable because they have problems, not because acre equals acre. That is ridiculous.

There was some suggestion that the King Ranch lease must be a pretty good place because of the standard of the roads. I am not sure whether it was said by interjection. Those roads are fairly valuable roads; they were put in by the Department of Forestry for the purpose of getting out quite valuable stands of timber from some of the area. They were put in mainly to harvest areas of the King Ranch lease where there is valuable timber in large quantities, and even more valuable areas behind King Ranch. It has to be brought out; the logical and cheap way to do it is to put a reasonable road through it. So far as the King Ranch people are concerned, if the road is there it is a good idea.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: It was quite a coincidence.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not at all a coincidence. After all, areas within the King Ranch lease had to be logged before they could be pulled. It was the logical and proper sequence that the roads should go through there. It was the logical and proper sequence that they should tap the areas beyond King Ranch.

Mr. Davies: Have you made an estimate of the millable timber on King Ranch?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am sure the hon. member does not want me to get that information unless he is very interested on behalf of someone. If so, I could get a rough estimate for him but I have not got it in my head.

The hon. member for Clayfield said that he was impressed by the brigalow development. I was very pleased to hear that, because he is a practical man. I understand he went up to have a look at it with some of his confreres in this Chamber.

Mr. Davies: He was not very pleased with much of it.

Mr. FLETCHER: As I understood him, he was very pleased with development up there. I should be very disappointed in what I assume to be the practical capacity of those hon. members if they were not pleased. I have been up there and I think we have done an impressive job in an area which admittedly lends itself to a pretty impressive job. It is an area that can be visited by all hon. members with profit. I am not reflecting on hon. members opposite when I say that if they are fair in their assessment they will come back with as glowing an account of what is happening up there as those of the hon. member for Clayfield and the others who went with him.

I am indebted to him for pointing out to hon. members opposite that the wallum country there is of a different quality from that in other areas. Certainly a lot of the King Ranch country is wallum country, but admittedly it is a lot better wallum than that around Maryborough, which in my book is really very poor.

By interjection someone referred to the two blocks we had opened up at Tully, and the fact that one of them had withered on the vine because the man who drew it had not sufficient money to go ahead with its development. The people up there with money who could have backed him were not sufficiently impressed, by either the block or the man, or perhaps a combination of both, to give him financial support. Finally he just had to get off his block, and it was drawn by someone else who, I hope, has a little more financial backing and who, I confidently expect, if he is a practical man, will do quite well. I had very little to do with the opening of those blocks because it was my predecessor, Mr. Muller, who approved of it. It was not a decision of mine, although I approved of the decision. I am as sorry as anybody that the first attempt to get these two blocks settled by individual farmers had a rather unfortunate circumstance attaching to it in one instance because the man was not financially equipped to do the job properly.

The hon. member for Salisbury was worried about the Carole Park State School resumption. The resumption of that land was effected in order to implement a Cabinet decision whereby the area of the existing Carole Park State School was to be included in Development Lease No. 4 issued to Industrial Estates (Q'land) Pty. Ltd., and the school transferred to the resumed land. We had to take the school out of there and find another area of land to put it on. The Crown value of the two parcels of resumed land was £1,300 each and offers of these amounts were made to each claimant in respect of the land to which the school was to be transferred. Mr. Hornery claimed £3,510 as compensation for the resumption of one area, and at a conference with him the Crown offer was increased to £1,600, having regard to the instability of values in the locality and the possibility of an increase in land values following the leasing of the adjacent land as an industrial park. This offer was accepted by Mr. Hornery and settlement was effected on 3 October, 1963.

Mr. Keown claimed £5,000-odd, plus costs, as compensation for the resumption of the other area. At a conference on 23 September he claimed that this resumption was not a normal one as there was already in the locality a State school adequate for local needs. That is more or less what the hon. member for Salisbury said here the other night. In view of the settlement effected in Hornery's case, the Crown's offer was advanced to £1,600, and a further £150 was offered because Mr. Keown considered that

a corner block should be a little more valuable. That made it £1,750. As this amount is not acceptable to him the matter will go to the Land Court. I have no doubt that the Land Court will make its decision, which both the Crown and the owner of the land will have to accept. I am prepared to accept what comes out of the Land Court hearing. If it is more than the amount offered we will have to accept it, but I do not think the hon. member for Salisbury can sustain his claim that we are getting that land too cheaply, because comparable blocks of land have been sold for a little less. I think the basis of our offer is reasonably generous, considering the price of comparable land. However, we are prepared to take the Land Court's valuation.

The hon. member for Roma re-stated his freeholding principles, which he has probably stated previously and with which I entirely agree. Indeed, one of the mainstays of our land policy is our belief in freeholding. I have previously said sufficient about my belief in freeholding; I do not think there is any need to re-state my views. The hon. member said he favoured freeholding any living area. I am not completely out of sympathy with that statement. My sensitivity in freeholding large areas is that in the areas where land is coming into a higher category of production year after year we should go very cautiously. We should venture very cautiously into the 20-inch rainfall belt where, in the last few years, there has been a dramatic improvement in the capacity of the land to produce. I consider that we should not be carrying out our responsibility if we rushed into the freeholding of living areas in that belt. Who can say what 10,000 or 20,000 acres of land between here and the 20-inch isohyet will be able to carry in 20 years? In the last 20 years dramatic things have happened and we can reasonably expect them again. For that reason I think we should go slowly in freeholding living areas anywhere. I have a real sympathy for the man on poor quality land who desires to freehold—as most people do—but cannot because he has more than 10,000 acres, when his land will never change very much in productivity. I have in mind areas such as the trap-rock country out towards Goondiwindi and in the Granite Belt area where occupants have a little more than 10,000 acres and are precluded from freeholding. I lean sympathetically towards those lands and I confess that I am hoping to do something about them in the near future. However, I reiterate my note of caution with respect to the more valuable land which, over the next 40 or 50 years, can be expected to become highly productive and capable of sustaining very closely settled areas.

The hon. member for Roma wondered about the very large area listed under occupation licences. Indeed, it amounts to many millions of acres. In a breakdown it is found that there are 4,000,000 acres in hand for closer settlement, and there are

3,240,000 acres of expired leases awaiting decision. That accounts for over 8,000,000 acres. In addition, there is much waste land in Queensland in certain districts, particularly in the Far North and the North-west. There are very large occupation licences held as occupation licences of timber reserves. I do not think we will ever get them much smaller under occupation licences. It is just a holding licence for land that is in transit from one leasehold tenure to another, or waste land, or timber land. The hon. member can be assured that there is nothing to worry about.

He was also worried about the conditions imposed for improving the brigalow land and he thought they were a bit stiff. Perhaps they will be difficult to fulfil but I do not think any Crown lessee has had reason to worry about the stern and rigid attitude of the Department of Lands. There has been a history over the years, not only in our own time, of a great deal of practical and sympathetic concern for the man who cannot meet to the letter the conditions laid down. That does not mean it is not a good thing to lay down fairly onerous conditions. With regard to the brigalow it is absolutely necessary because the only way we negotiated the loan of this money that is the basis of our brigalow development was as "crash" development in production. It had to be quick and complete. Development had to be within a few years. There was no way we would ever have been given the money on the basis of dribbling it into a situation whereby a gradual improvement would accrue. That would not have met the conditions under which we were given the money.

One of the greatest things ever done for the development of Queensland was the granting of the income-tax concessions engineered by our old friend, Sir Arthur Fadden. I do not think there is very much to worry about in the way they will fall on these men because they will have expended their money in the first few years and they will, much more rapidly than the ordinary lessee, assume a position of full production and full income from the block, and they will be able to write off those early expenditures out of income in the first seven years, or, as it turns out, if they have not spent all their money in the first three years, it will actually carry on till the tenth or the eleventh year of their occupation.

The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha, Mr. Lickiss, had something to say about timber, and timber as it related to applications for conversion to freehold. He suggested that perhaps the burden of buying the timber could be taken from the freeholder by reserving it to the Crown. I do not think this is practicable. After all, once land is freeholded the owners have certain rights and to reserve to the Crown the timber that is grown on the land years after the area was freeholded would probably cause friction. The only way the timber could be reserved to the Crown would be by putting

a condition on the freehold, that is, conditional freehold, permitting the Crown to grow timber on it. I do not think that would be a good idea. It would not be freehold in our acceptance of the term although, to a certain extent, it would be freehold in the sense in which the term is used in New South Wales. I think any permanent reservation of the timber to the Crown under a freeholding system would be awkward to administer.

The hon. member suggested also that those selectors who do not particularly want to freehold but who are eligible to freehold should be given an extended lease. I am not quite sure that I follow the purpose of that. If they are qualified to freehold, they will automatically get an extension of their lease when the term expires. That goes without saying. Otherwise they would not qualify to freehold, since freehold is limited to a living area.

The business of valuations is a difficult one and I am quite willing to admit that I am not very happy about having two valuing authorities. Indeed, who could be, when two Government-instituted valuing authorities come up with two different values? It just shows that you have to be wrong somewhere if there is a complete and wide variation between the two valuing authorities. It should be pointed out, though, that the valuations of the Department of Lands are not made exactly on the same basis as those of the Valuer-General. The Department of Lands has to take into account developmental conditions of leases, and it has to vary conditions of leases to make quite sure that the areas concerned are brought into production as quickly as possible. To do this, valuations have to be adjusted to conform to the conditions applied to landholders who may have to comply with rather onerous conditions of, for example, timber treatment or timber clearing.

I admit that I am not completely happy with the system of valuations, and we are still hoping to find some practical way out of a difficulty that is a worry all over the civilised world. In no place that I know is there acknowledged to be complete satisfaction with the system of valuing land and properties generally.

The hon. member for Condamine is another practical man of the land whose opinions I respect. He approves of the brigalow scheme and does so in the main because it is a generous scheme and a freehold scheme. He said that it was generous in the sense that it allows a man who has brought up a family on the land to subdivide it at the end of his working lifetime for the benefit of some of his sons who probably put most of the work and effort into it. That is a good idea, but one subject to infinite variation. Some men do not have sons and some have many. Generally

speaking, I think that what we are doing is practical and that we are giving lands that strictly are not limited to bare living areas. I think that we are doing the best that we can in the circumstances at the moment.

The hon. member pointed out that the requirement of clearing in three years seemed to him a bit stiff, but I say that at no time has the Department of Lands ever had to defend itself against the charge of being over-harsh, unpractical, or ungenerous to men who were doing quite a good job.

I liked his concern with the responsibility that he says we have to keep the soil intact from the ravages of water and wind. Anyone who has a respect for his land should make some expenditure each year on the preservation of the land so that those who come after will not have to make a living on eroded, sub-standard, and washed-away land.

He made some reference to the lease of a piece of land to the Christian Brothers at Dalby, I think he said. It seems that they have a special lease, and endeavoured to convert the area to freehold. This type of land can be converted to freehold, but before it is the Land Administration Commission has to certify that the land has been reasonably well improved having regard to its unimproved value. The land is worth something less than £2,000, so that when it has been converted to freehold it will be necessary for the Brothers to accept and carry out improvement conditions. I have no doubt that they are quite prepared to do that. In the alternative, they can carry on under a special lease.

If they do not want to put £2,000 worth of improvements on this particular part of the land but have effected improvements to the value of £20,000, £30,000 or £40,000 on another part, they would then have to see me and satisfy me that over the whole area they have done the sort of job that we require before they could obtain the lease in question. This again is another subject on which I do not think that the Department of Lands will ever have to defend itself against charges of being hard, unsympathetic, or unpractical.

Mr. Mann: Have they a special lease?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, a special lease.

Mr. Mann: They can convert it to perpetual lease?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, or freehold, as long as they meet the improvement conditions, which they have not done at the moment. They can carry on under special lease conditions; but if they want the conditions varied and their requests are reasonable, they can tell me the circumstances. I have no doubt that the matter will be straightened out to the satisfaction of myself, my department, and the Brothers concerned.

The hon. member for Rockhampton South was quite complimentary. He thought we had done a very good job in regard to the stock route to the meatworks, and I am happy to hear that the arrangement that I made with him personally a year or two ago about a road to Mt. Archer and the right to sell certain allotments at the top of Mt. Archer—a very unapproachable-looking place, I must admit—is working out very well.

I should like to reassure him on the question of subdivision of land in Rockhampton. He mentioned that certain land in Rockhampton had not been approved for subdivision by the Rockhampton City Council because it was too low and that later the Department of Lands proposed to obtain land of that type for a similar subdivision. Because of what we heard from the Rockhampton City Council, the area has been withdrawn from sale, and if we find upon investigation that it is not a suitable area of land, it will not be opened.

The hon. member mentioned the need to subscribe to some of the roads outside the brigalow development area. All I can say to him is that in the Fitzroy Basin scheme, but outside the actual area, the road to Injune will be subsidised to the tune of £30,000. I know that this is not the only road that serves the brigalow area, but it is at least an earnest of our good faith and our intention to help in every practical way where the need is urgent.

Mr. Pilbeam: Would you consider the special one to which I referred—Bauhinia Downs to Duaringa?

Mr. FLETCHER: I will consider that. I do not know how successful I will be in getting something for an area that has not done too badly already.

Mr. Pilbeam: I wish you luck.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member for Mourilyan fulminated against big companies. I think I covered what he said fairly comprehensively in my reply to him in regard to the lease to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd.

Today the hon. member spoke of a stud lease to the Falkiner interests out west. I said something about that recently, and hon. members who were in the Chamber will remember that there was a charge made, or information laid, that the stud lease obligations of F. S. Falkiner & Sons were being jeopardised by the running of 1,000 head of stock on the area. I explained that that was not unreasonable; that in a good year, when there is plenty of grass, it is not unreasonable to run stock—in this case, bullocks—on the grass. They supplement and assist the running of sheep in heavily-grassed areas because they make tracks and knock the grass down.

Mr. Murray: It is recommended practice in some circumstances.

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. I took the trouble to send a telegram of inquiry as to just what was happening up there so that allegations here that might possibly not be in line with the facts could be contraverted. It would seem that this was necessary, because the 1,000 head of bullocks turned out to be 500 head and the information that I gave hon. members recently about these people's having completely complied with their conditions as to the number of rams that they would sell has been confirmed. The conditions require them to sell 1,000 rams a year up to a certain quality. Up to date they have sold 2,971, which in anyone's language is a very handsome fulfilment of their obligations. It is obvious, therefore, that the carrying of those 500 bullocks must have enhanced the carrying capacity of the property.

I have covered most of the comments. I should like to thank those members of the Chamber who have been courteous and appreciative. I think I can go out of this debate with a feeling that no sustainable charge has been laid against me or my department. As a matter of fact, I think I can go with a feeling of not having done too badly at all because, even on what has been said by hon. members opposite, it has not been a bad year and the fact that no sustainable charges were made I think is a feather in our cap.

I have a strong feeling that the Department of Lands in Queensland is as healthy, as honest, as virile, and as effective as it has ever been in the history of Queensland and I have a very heartened feeling in the organisation I have behind me, the respect I have for all of them, and the quality of men with whom I have to confer when decisions are being made. I feel that I am very fortunate to be Minister for Lands at this particular time.

Vote (Chief Office) agreed to.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

	£
District Offices	272,167
Survey Office	464,502
Rural Fires Board	20,570
Trust and Special Funds—	
Barrier Fences Fund	91,600
Fitzroy Brigalow Land Development Fund	1,500,000
Hamilton Lands Development Fund	100,000
Land Act Improvements Fund	450,000
Lands Department Special Standing Fund	200,000
Stock Routes and Pests Destruction Fund	535,052
Loan Fund Account—	
Land Development	173,500

DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND HOUSING
CHIEF OFFICE

Hon. J. BJELKE-PETERSEN (Barambah—
Minister for Works and Housing) (4 p.m.):
I move—

“That £295,337 be granted for ‘Department of Works and Housing—Chief Office.’”

It will be noted that the total amount appropriated under “Chief Office” is £3,393 in excess of that of £291,944 appropriated for the financial year 1962-63 and £18,257 in excess of that expended in the past year. This increase is occasioned mainly by the fact that additional provision has been necessary to meet increased expenditure on salaries due to an increase in the number of officers employed by the department, and also to meet annual increments. It is desired to point out that, although the increase in the appropriation now requested compared with last year's expenditure is only £18,257, no provision is required this financial year for the expenses of a Royal visit, on which a sum of £16,621 was expended last year. Taking this factor into consideration, we find that the actual increase in appropriation over that expended under the same headings last financial year is £34,878.

The increase in the contingencies provision is due mainly to the fact that provision has been made to meet half the cost—the other half being provided from loan funds—of the replacement of two accounting machines. These machines are now requiring constant repair and maintenance and, in fact, need replacement. However, the replacement or otherwise of these machines would be influenced by the decision of the Government on the introduction of electronic data processing, which is presently being investigated.

In moving this motion it is appropriate that I should review, even though perhaps briefly, the work of this department in the last financial year.

I inform hon. members that for the past year expenditure on buildings surpassed that of 1961-62 by £1,359,039, reaching a record total of £9,603,460. Of this amount expenditure on educational establishments totalled £5,360,880, or once again more than 50 per cent. of the total building expenditure. This is indeed indicative of the very heavy programme of building construction which has been undertaken by the Department of Works year after year. In this Government's first year of office in 1957-58 expenditure on buildings totalled £4,168,752, so that expenditure in this direction has more than doubled.

Expenditure on State public buildings during our six years in office, from 1 July 1957 to 30 June 1963, totalled £41,490,378 as against £16,972,403 during the last six years of office of the Labour Government. This represents an increase in expenditure over

the period of 150 per cent. Hon. members opposite no doubt will say that there should be some increase with the passing of time and the extension of development that has taken place. That is quite so, but on the other hand I maintain that as a Government we have applied ourselves in a very outstanding manner to this very important aspect of the progress and development of our State generally.

It must be realised that just ten years ago, in 1952-53, expenditure by a Labour Government on State public buildings was only £1,998,599, as against £9,603,460 in 1962-63. That is approximately five times greater.

Mr. Lloyd: Is this the total expenditure?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, the £41,490,000.

The tremendous expansion that has taken place in the building programme of the Department of Works can readily be seen. In comparing these figures, it is quite obvious that my Government has accepted, and successfully shouldered, an enormous increase in responsibility.

The Department of Works is the Government's constructional authority and is possibly the largest single work force in the Commonwealth. Its functions, among other things, include responsibility for the design and construction of new Government buildings, additions and improvements to existing buildings and the supply of school and office furniture. A not so colourful, but equally important, function is the maintenance of an ever-increasing capital investment in existing buildings.

The policy adopted in former years of using a well-considered balance of contract and departmental labour has again been followed in carrying out the building programme of the department.

In order to meet the unprecedented growth in primary and secondary-school requirements, the emphasis in building construction has been on the provision of adequate classroom accommodation at both primary and high schools. I am sure that hon. members recognise and appreciate that fact.

Queensland, unquestionably, I believe—and I think hon. members opposite must agree—has had its best deal ever in education in the last six years. Our aim is to provide buildings and facilities so that any child, anywhere in the State, will have the opportunity for secondary education. I say with pride that one of the greatest achievements in the life of this Government has been the tremendous advance made in educational facilities in Queensland—particularly in secondary education.

Mr. Lloyd: It does not compare with the other States.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I should like to give a comparison with the days of Labour administration, but I am sure the hon. member would not like that.

Mr. Lloyd: We had prepared for it.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Labour Government may have prepared for it, but there is no evidence of any such preparation in my electorate. Later in the debate I will give the amounts spent on educational facilities by the Labour Government, and what has been spent by this Government.

For the third year in succession expenditure on high school exceeded that on primary schools and it is expected that this general trend will continue in the next few years. However, it must be pointed out that concentration on the provision of secondary-school accommodation is not being made at the expense of primary-school accommodation.

Mr. Lloyd: Would you repeat that?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The concentration on the provision of secondary-school accommodation has not been done at the expense of primary schools.

Mr. Lloyd: How could it? You are taking one grade away from primary schools and transferring it to secondary schools, so you could not have any accommodation problems.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Expansion and development is taking place and many new primary schools have been erected in various centres in the State and there are other centres where new primary-school accommodation is being made available. At this stage I have not the exact figures so I will not elaborate on that point.

Abolition of the Scholarship examination and the introduction of a five-year secondary-school course in 1964 will be a tremendous step forward in Queensland education.

Mr. Houston: Are you prepared for it?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes. This will mean the provision of secondary education for all and a large increase in school enrolments. New schools and extensions to existing buildings to be built by the Department of Works will, in the main, ensure adequate accommodation to meet requirements at the beginning of the next school year in 1964. Satisfactory alternative arrangements will be made, in liaison with the Department of Education, where it is not possible physically to provide new accommodation for the beginning of the 1964 school year. Almost every suburb of Brisbane, is, or will be, graced with an attractive high school, whilst high schools and secondary departments have been, or will be, provided in most country centres where required.

Enrolments in our State secondary schools, which were approximately 15,000 in 1957, are expected to rise from 40,000 students this year to 66,000 in 1964 and to 69,000 in 1965. Fourteen new high schools and a record number of secondary departments will be provided for the next school year to cope with this increase.

Whilst it has been necessary to give priority to meet the demands of both secondary and primary schools accommodation, the requirements of other departments, particularly in relation to public and administrative buildings generally, and to government hospitals and institutions, have not been overlooked. Within the limit only of finance available, the needs of other departments have been met.

The present Government has sincerely tackled the problem of accommodation for public servants in country appointments and a steady increase in the housing of families of such officers is being maintained. I am sure hon. members opposite will agree with me that that is something that is very urgently required, and they should commend us for our attitude.

The standard residences at present provided within the special public service housing fund allocation are far and away superior to the old catch-as-catch-can rental accommodation, which proved unsuitable. Having determined a policy for the housing of public servants, this Government has done something definite about it.

In the last six years a total of 158 residences has been provided and in the period since 1 July, 1961, when the present special housing provision was implemented, 74 have been constructed. In the last financial year 55 residences were erected and tenders accepted for a further 28.

Mr. Newton: Have you a breakdown as to which departments they went to?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have not the figures here. I can give the hon. member perhaps some of those afterwards. I know there have been quite a number for stipendiary magistrates in various places. Those figures do not apply to the provision of buildings for school teachers.

Mr. Davies: Does that number of 158 include all the residences?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: No. Some others are here and some other contracts have been let.

Improved facilities have been included in this housing provision. A reasonable number of power points is now installed along with zoned provision of electric, gas and slow-combustion stoves in place of the old wood stoves which were part of the public service residence problem for all too long.

Tasteful painting schemes, both externally and internally, with the use of pastel shades, bring the government residence into line with private-ownership housing. I should

like to pay tribute to my old friend, Sir James Heading. When he took over this important portfolio he introduced a system of getting away from the drab one-colour schemes that were part and parcel of the Department of Works and schools for all too long.

The maintenance and repair of existing buildings continues to receive the closest attention and is limited only by the availability of revenue funds for the purpose.

It must be noted that a high percentage of government buildings is of timber-frame construction and attracts greater maintenance costs. Buildings constructed in the first decade of the post-war period now require regular attention to maintain them in good condition. Particularly in tropical and subtropical areas does this involve a systematic repair and repainting of public buildings.

Because of this, the maintenance and repair of government buildings continues to be an important feature of the department's activities and involves heavy expenditure each year. In this regard, expenditure for the last financial year totalled £1,017,569 as against £1,002,358 in the preceding year. In the latter part of the financial year extra funds were made available to the department to assist in the alleviation of unemployment within the State. These extra funds enabled certain maintenance work, which had previously been deferred, to be carried out.

Mr. Newton: That would include maintenance work done at prisons?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: It would. It was maintenance work generally.

Mr. Newton: Carried out by the Department of Works.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: A study of the wide variety and extent of projects completed by the department or under construction, compared with work undertaken 10 and 25 years ago, will indicate the remarkable growth in the importance of the department's work in the prosecution of the Public Service and government generally throughout the State.

It will be of interest to hon. members to learn that at 30 June, 1957, just prior to the present Government's attaining office, the number of men employed in the department's work force was 1,742, whereas in the six years since we took over the reigns of government the number employed at 30 June, 1963, in all trades had almost doubled to 3,315.

Mr. Lloyd: Why shouldn't it? Take it year by year. You got £7,000,000 from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: This is a progressive Government, and we have a progressive way of setting about erecting new buildings and improving those already built. Much of the attention required was urgent.

One of the best means of judging the amount of development that has occurred is to look at our own electorates and those adjoining them. There have been tremendous increases in not only the number of men employed but also the work accomplished.

The number of departmental projects carried out by contract has also doubled, thus providing additional scope for the employment of labour throughout the State. Contracts to the value of over £2,000,000 are let at the moment, and they are providing additional employment.

I do not propose to go with great detail into the work of the department in the past year but to outline briefly some of the things that have been accomplished and refer to some of the more important work to be undertaken in 1963-64. I am sure that hon. members appreciate the work of this department and what has been done generally.

From the figures quoted earlier, it will be noted that of the total expenditure on buildings in 1962-63 of £9,603,460, the amount expended on education establishments was £5,360,880. New schools commenced or authorised in the previous financial year were completed at Aspley East, Musgrave Hill (Southport), and Gympie South. New school buildings at Bauple, Birdsville, Boobybyan, Cheepie, Dingo, Dinmore, Dulacca, and Harlin were also completed. New schools are in the course of erection at Serviceton South and Mt. Gravatt South. A total of 126 primary classrooms was provided in this period.

First sections of new high schools were completed, or are under construction, at Coorparoo, Newmarket, Sunnybank, Hendra, Toowong, Aspley, Beaudesert, Beenleigh, South Coast District (Miami), Gayndah, Caloundra, and Home Hill.

Secondary departments were completed, or are in the course of erection, on new sites at Kilcoy, Inglewood, Babinda, and Mundubbera, and on the existing site of the Yarraman State primary school.

Extensive additions were undertaken at a number of existing high schools in the metropolitan area and in country districts. The total number of classrooms provided for high school and vocational training purposes was 233.

A new plumbing workshop was completed at Warwick Technical College. A new electrical-trades workshop at Cairns and a workshop for woodworking trades at Bundaberg are nearing completion. A contract has been accepted for, and work has commenced on, the construction of a new workshop at Mt. Isa for the electrical and fitting trades. I am sure it must give the hon. member for Bulimba pleasure to know that we, as a Government, are sufficiently wide awake to push ahead with these important projects.

It has been necessary to provide residences for head teachers at a number of country

school, and more residences are being erected each year. Seventeen such residences for State primary teachers were completed or under construction during the last financial year. This is another avenue in which the Government has taken the initiative and come to the fore—building residences for country school teachers.

Mr. Lloyd: You carried on our policy there.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I am afraid that the hon. member is a little off the track.

To the limit of finance available for the purpose, the department provided additional sewerage and septic installations at educational establishments throughout the State. Seventy-one installations were completed or under construction during the year. Of necessity, priorities in the work must be established, and, with the Education Department's concurrence, a class of school priority is backed by my department's own requirement that provision can be made at present only where there exists a permanent water supply and where there is a satisfactory means of disposal of effluent from a septic tank.

During the year the department undertook its largest programme ever of ground-improvement works at primary and high schools. In accordance with the policy adopted by the Government to provide sports ovals at high schools as a total State responsibility, contracts were accepted for the construction of ovals at 21 high schools and the Kelvin Grove Teachers' College.

With the introduction in 1964 of the Department of Education's new scheme for secondary education, spending on school building construction to meet accommodation requirements in 1964 has been stepped up. A sum of £4,900,000, or again more than half of this year's Loan Fund allocation, will be spent on education buildings.

In readiness for the 1964 school year 14 new high schools will be established, at Clontarf Beach, Goondiwindi, Hervey Bay (Pialba), Kepnoch (Bundaberg), Mackay North, Maroochydore, Monto, Oakey, Roma, Ross River (Townsville), Sarina, Strathpine, Tully, and Wynnum North.

Mr. Tucker: I think you are being optimistic.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The hon. member says we are optimistic. We are always optimistic, and we always have a progressive outlook. I think he will find that the requirements will be met.

A Government Member: He would not know very much.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: He ought to know the things that are going on up there.

He may not know the capability of the department for carrying the projects through to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Tucker: I certainly hope you are right.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I hope so, too.

Extensive additions are to be constructed at a number of existing high schools. It is also planned to establish secondary departments at a number of additional schools, including Baralaba, Calen, Cecil Plains, Clifton, Dirranbandi, Goomeri, Hughenden, Injune, Mt. Larcom, Richmond, Rosewood, Taroom, and Wondai.

In the field of technical education, it is proposed to plan a new workshops block at the South Brisbane Technical College. It is also proposed to provide workshops accommodation for plumbers and the fitting and welding trades at the Rockhampton Technical College, and for the woodworking and engineering trades at the Toowoomba Technical College.

Mr. Houston: What are you going to do at South Brisbane?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have already mentioned the technical college.

Major remodelling and extensions are planned for the South Brisbane school for the deaf and blind. A new domestic science building and an additional classroom block are to be erected at the Kelvin Grove Teachers' College.

In connection with hospitals and public buildings, although the Government has had, and will continue for some time to have, unavoidable accommodation commitments to meet educational requirements, nevertheless as much attention as finance permits will be given to meeting the urgent needs of other client departments.

A new court house at Blackall, new Government buildings and improvements to the court house at Mareeba, and additions to court houses at Cloncurry and Longreach have been completed. New court houses are in process of erection at Maroochydore, Mitchell, Laidley and Gatton. Approval has also been given to the erection of new court houses at Nambour and Caloundra, and work on these projects has commenced.

New police stations have been completed at Ayr, Home Hill and Coolangatta. The first section of a new police station at Rockhampton was completed during the year and construction of the second section is proceeding, as the hon. member for Rockhampton South knows. A new cell block at Mackay, and new police stations at Stanthorpe and Meandarra are under construction.

The remodelling of Mineral House was completed, and this building is now occupied by the Department of Mines. The space vacated by that department in the Treasury Building has been reallocated to departments already housed in that building.

The remodelling of the Administration Building, which was completed during the past year—hon. members will know that that is the former Taxation Building at the corner of George and Elizabeth Streets—allowed a major reallocation of Public Service accommodation. Space was made available for sections of the Department of Health, the Department of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, the Agricultural Bank and the Registrar of Friendly Societies. Remodelling of the Administration Building annexe (formerly Morcom House) is nearing completion and will provide accommodation for the Departments of Machinery and Scaffolding, Weights and Measures, and Native Affairs.

Following the vacating of Bayard's Building in South Brisbane by the Agricultural Bank and the engineering branch of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works, alterations and renovations to accommodation sections of the Department of Education are being undertaken.

Additions and alterations to an existing ward at the Ipswich Special Hospital, to provide accommodation for 60 male children, have been completed. The erection of a new T.B. ward and the construction of a recreation shed at the Toowoomba Special Hospital were also completed. At the Westbrook Farm Home for Boys new showers and change rooms were provided and the erection of a new manual training building has been completed.

The erection of the first section of a neuro-psychiatric hospital at Chermide comprising four single-storey wards is nearing completion. Work is also proceeding on the erection of a clinical and administrative block and on the installation of sewer mains, pumping stations, &c.

The erection of the first section of a new inebriates' home at Wacol, which will replace the existing home at Marburg, has commenced. The pavilion-type buildings were designed on the basis of latest overseas trends and will be well lit and ventilated and informally grouped among landscaped gardens. Hon. members will see that a lot of improvement work has been carried out. I am listing only some of the works.

The construction of a new maternity hospital at Kingaroy is in hand. I should like to express to Dr. Noble my appreciation on behalf of the people in my electorate for having this fine hospital erected in the electorate.

Mr. Duggan: Is that in the electorate of the Minister for Works?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Yes, the present Minister for Works.

Equally appreciated, by the hon. member for Maryborough, will be the construction now in hand of a new maternity block at the Maryborough hospital. New maternal and child welfare centres at Cloncurry and Ayr, and alterations and additions to the

Toowoomba Maternal and Child Welfare Home were completed. Extensive works are being undertaken in connection with the establishment of a medium security prison at Wacol. A block containing kitchen, dining room, and recreation and administration buildings is under consideration. Other works recently commenced at this prison include the erection of a workshops, bakery, and stores building.

There has been a very marked improvement in the general presentation of Government buildings, and an increase in the service rendered by the Department of Works to its client departments. In the Greater Brisbane area the development of watching and cleaning services has noticeably improved general office accommodation. The general high standard of Government building throughout the State brings great credit to the department for its design, planning and construction, whether by the department's own labour force or by private contract under departmental supervision.

The system of general inspection by district office staffs continues to bring about the most satisfactory control of maintenance of State Government buildings, with ample provision to meet any special circumstances or urgent requirements.

In conclusion, I point out that it is considered that sufficient loan funds will be available this financial year for the Department of Works to provide the priority accommodation requirements of the Department of Education for the 1964 school year and to meet the higher priority needs of other Government departments.

Mr. Newton: Aren't you going to deal with housing?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I shall be pleased to hear what the hon. member may say about that matter.

At this early stage of my ministerial control of this important department, it would seem that a valuable contribution to the development of this great State is being made by a loyal and efficient staff in a wide variety of occupations. I should like to record my appreciation of earlier contacts with the department's officers, and I look forward with a great deal of interest to a successful term of office as Minister in charge.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (4.39 p.m.): I should like to join with the Minister in complimenting the officers of the Department of Works and many of the officers of the Queensland Housing Commission. I think all hon. members on this side would agree that we have always found them most co-operative in many respects. Of course, as in any organisation, you will always find the one or two who are not. From Mr. Longland and Mr. Downes of the Department of Works, and a number of officers in the Queensland Housing Commission, we can honestly say we have received the utmost co-operation.

It is rather trying at times to have to listen to many Ministers introducing their departmental Estimates, as they continually make wearisome comparisons between what was spent six or seven years ago and what is being spent at the present time, even though to a great extent the Government is responsible for the inflation that has brought about increases in the price of goods and in wages, and in everything else, to the extent of 20 per cent.

Mr. Campbell: That is a bit wearying.

Mr. LLOYD: I do not think the hon. member for Aspley really understands these matters.

On numerous occasions we have had to listen to Ministers and other Government members state how many schools had to be built, but the Minister supplied the answer when he said that in 1957 17,000 children were attending secondary schools in Queensland, and that in 1964 it is expected that 64,000 children will be attending secondary schools. That is the natural result of the bulge in the birthrate in 1946-47 which we, as the then Government, anticipated. The plan being put into operation now is simply the natural result of the Labour Government's policy of providing the necessary educational facilities. The Minister said that the Government has provided so much for buildings and education, but when we compare that amount with the spending in other States we find that there has been greater acceleration and progress in those States. The Government has concentrated only on buildings for academic education in Queensland and has sacrificed technical education, which is essential. When one goes to any of the State high schools in Queensland one finds a concentration on buildings to allow teachers to instruct children in academic fields. The Minister referred to 14 new high schools and the very fine facilities provided, but facilities have not been provided for technical training, which is so badly needed. Technical graduates are desperately needed. I am afraid that in a few years we will be terribly short of technical men.

As a result of the Federal election in December 1961 £7,500,000 came to Queensland in non-repayable unemployment relief grants and there was a carry-over of much of this money at the end of the last financial year. The Department of Works was madly spending it and ordering material for the construction of 14 new high schools. Much of the material was purchased before the end of June and many of the orders were conditional upon their being supplied before 30 June, 1963. Much of this money that is coming forward was underspent on many public works buildings that were required and should have been supplied by the Government during the period in February, 1963, when 30,000 people were unemployed.

It is all very well for the Minister to state that the number of people employed by the Department of Works on day labour has

doubled since 1957. We certainly had an argument in 1957 about the dismissal of many men by the Gair administration. There was no excuse for that because there was ample finance in reserve at the time to allow these men to be retained in employment by the department. We have no brief for the Gair administration, but we do not believe this Government has gone far enough in employing day labour. It carried over large sums in the last two years from the £7,500,000 so that it could embark on a mad spending spree towards the end of the year, but it did not consider the unemployment problem.

I had occasion to approach the Minister about a contract that was let. I have no brief for the particular contractor. The argument I presented was that although the contract was called at the beginning of July the contractor was not allowed to go ahead with the project until early in the current year—almost six months later. After tenders were called, the contractor was not allowed to proceed with his work because there was an allocation of only £4,000 for the job. That is wrong when there is unemployment in the State. If the money is available, tenders should not be called until the work can be gone ahead with. If a contract is entered into today, in six months' time costs may have soared to such a degree as to be beyond the reach of the contractor. Other considerations, such as the availability of sub-contractors, have to be taken into account.

I thought it rather droll that the Minister should be talking about these matters at the same time as the Minister for Health announced the proposed construction by prisoners of a new gaol building at a cost of some £400,000.

Mr. Aikens: There won't be any need for a new gaol soon; the Parole Board will let them all out—murderers, sexoes, the whole lot of them.

Mr. LLOYD: I am not talking about the Department of Health. I am making a plea for day-labour work for the Department of Works. I am complaining about the proposal to have a £400,000 project built by prisoners at a time when we are trying to overcome the many economic problems caused by the Commonwealth Government's credit squeeze in 1961. At a time like this the Queensland Government announces that a major building project will be built by convict labour, in other words, slave labour.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Tooth): Order! Can the hon. member link his remarks with the Estimates before the Committee?

Mr. LLOYD: Most certainly I can. The Minister said that the organisation of day labour in Queensland had increased in the past six or seven years. We hope it has; but if the Department of Works undertook all major building projects in Queensland

there would be no worry about unemployment. With the £400,000 project undertaken either by day labour or by contract by the Department of Works, we could solve some of the unemployment in Queensland. We read with interest what Sir Ian Potter had to say the other day. We do not know how long this slight lift in the building industry will continue. Queensland is a State highly susceptible to horror Budgets, Little Horror Budgets, or credit squeezes. Since 1952 that has been our experience.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is extending the debate a little too far and I ask him to return to the Estimates of this department. They cover a wide enough field on many subjects.

Mr. LLOYD: The point I am trying to make is that the building industry in Queensland is very susceptible to any restriction of credit and I am concerned with the Department of Works in this regard. In Queensland, more than in any other State of Australia, the building industry is responsible for our prosperity or lack of prosperity, our unemployment or our level of employment. As a primary-producing State Queensland must maintain a high level of prosperity in the building industry, which concerns the Department of Works in the construction of public buildings and houses. The Government is proposing to hand over to convict labour, or slave labour, a project worth £400,000 instead of having its own Department of Works undertake it. If the Government is going to entrust such a major building project, which should rightly be undertaken by the Department of Works, to people who have committed misdemeanours against society, I think we are entitled to resent this regression to conditions of 100 years ago. If the department wished to do something about this matter, it could at least start on smaller maintenance work. We do not intend to adopt a mean attitude, but I consider, as I think will every hon. member who is a reasonable man, that a major project should be undertaken not by prisoners but by the Department of Works, thus providing by contract or day labour additional employment throughout the State. People in gaol should not be placed in the position of taking jobs from other men.

If it were a matter of maintenance or training, I would say that the Department of Works should provide tradesmen to train in the gaol men who could be rehabilitated in later life. But to have prisoners undertake the construction of a major project is, I think, completely wrong.

The Minister has not introduced any matter relating to the Queensland Housing Commission. I intend to say a little on this subject. Prior to this Government's election in 1957, it went to the people of Queensland on a policy of providing homes for tenants of State rental houses on deposits of £25. That was part of the Government's policy but, like all its other policies, such as the

new State for the North and the Bill of Rights, the one concerning deposits of £25 was a complete myth and was never carried out.

The former Minister for Housing said from time to time that the £25 deposit scheme was put into effect. The position was that tenants of State rental houses were given the opportunity to purchase their homes on deposits of £25, provided that they paid an extra £1 a week over and above the ordinary weekly rental until the necessary deposit was paid. That was cheating. If the Government wanted to honour its promise to allow every tenant of a State rental house to purchase his home on a deposit of £25, the houses should have been given to them on deposits of £25 only.

All the money that has gone in to the construction of State rental houses in Queensland has come from loans made to the State by the Commonwealth Government, repayable over 53 years with interest ranging from 3 per cent. to 4½ per cent. Whilst the Queensland Housing Commission is refusing to sell homes on a straight-out deposit of £25, it is making a colossal profit on the sale of the houses to the tenants of them. I intend to show how those profits have been arrived at and how they are never disclosed in the Commission's balance sheet and profit and loss account. Page 66 of the Auditor-General's report for the financial year 1962-63 discloses that there has been a gross profit on the sale of properties in the last financial year of £222,549, and, with reserves, a net profit of £133,494.

That does not indicate the full extent of the profit made by the Housing Commission on the sale of houses. At 30 June 1963 an amount of £21,300,000 was outstanding on behalf of the 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. The full indebtedness of the State of Queensland to the Commonwealth Government on loan liability is £41,400,000. In other words, 50 per cent. of the total loan liability to the Commonwealth Government is attributable to the 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, which was an agreement negotiated between the late Ben Chifley and Ned Hanlon on the basis of a 3 per cent. loan repayable over 53 years. One cannot find in the Auditor-General's report, or in the balance sheet or profit and loss account of the Queensland Housing Commission, that the Government of Queensland is now selling those houses at a rate of interest up to 4½ per cent. That has been balanced out recently, I believe. At one time it was 3½ per cent., later 4½ per cent., and now it is 4½ per cent. The very fact that the money is repayable by the Queensland Government at 3 per cent. and that the people who are buying these houses are being charged almost 5 per cent. on it indicates that the element of profit is not on the sale of land, which might have cost the Housing Commission £120 to develop in 1948 and which is now being charged for

at the valuation, not on the appreciated value of the house, which might have cost £1,250 to build in 1946-47 and is now being sold for £3,000, but on the interest rate. The Government is making an invisible profit on this—a profit that is not clearly indicated in any balance sheet.

In 1957 the Government indicated that it would sell houses on a £25 deposit and at a reasonable cost to the tenants. I have here one particular case. On 20 September I wrote to the former Minister in charge of housing, Mr. Hiley, and quoted the case of householder No. 5528—I should like the Minister to take a note of this—protesting about the purchase price. The protest related to the actual valuation. The replacement value of the house was £3,238, and the house was built, I believe, about eight or nine years ago. The reply from the Housing Commission indicated that the present replacement cost of a house of that type was £3,238. Taking into account depreciation and unexpended maintenance amounting to £467, the price was reduced to £2,875. However, the valuation of the land was £550, which brought the purchase price up to £3,425. I think it is a rather interesting case, and the item of unexpended maintenance is of importance when one considers what I am going to say now.

As I said, the Government said in 1957 that it was going to sell houses on a low deposit and at a reasonable valuation and that tenants who had been in them for some years would be given justice. The person in house No. 5528—I will not mention his name—was entitled to a War Service housing loan and made application to the War Service Homes Division to purchase the House. That division gave its valuation of the house as £3,190, and its advance will be made on that valuation. The Housing Commission's valuation was almost £3,900, but depreciation and unexpended maintenance reduced it to £3,425, but the War Service Homes Division will make a loan based on a valuation of only £3,190. Not only that, these are the requisitions—the Housing Commission talks about unexpended maintenance!—placed on the house by the War Service Homes Division—

1. Valley tiles in roof;
2. Bird-proofing;
3. Vermin-proofing;
4. Angle iron attached to bearers;
5. Bones base well to laundry;
6. Cold-water line;
7. Timbers of dwelling treated for white ants.

Those seven items should have been taken into account in the unexpended maintenance.

Mr. Houghton: Was that home built by day labour?

Mr. LLOYD: No, it was built on contract to normal specifications. This tenant has

been in the house for some years, and would have reached the deposit required by the Government.

In 1957 the Government said that it would give a fair go in purchase price. In relation to this house, why should the Government promise to sell on £25 deposit and at the same time value the house at several hundred pounds more than the valuation placed on it by the War Service Homes Division, namely, £3,190, and, in addition, leave the house in such a condition that £30 or £40 or more would have to be expended in meeting the seven requisitions placed on it by the War Service Homes Division before approval can be given to the loan? Approval has not yet been given, and will not be given, until those seven requisitions are carried out. I suppose the tenant will have to wait another six or nine months, by which time the replacement cost of the house might be another couple of hundred pounds.

That illustrates the Government's lack of consideration for these people. I do not think it is right that valuations placed on these homes for sale purposes should be £300 higher than those placed on them by highly trained organisations such as War Service Homes Division. I believe it is essential that the Government should fulfil the promise that it made to the people some years ago.

Another matter that has been raised recently refers to the purchasing by the Queensland Housing Commission of certain already developed and subdivided land. I asked the Minister a question on this matter several days ago and was very happy to hear the Treasurer state, in the course of debate the other day, that he was in full agreement with the Brisbane City Council and Alderman Clem Jones in insisting that certain developmental conditions should be imposed on subdividers within the local authority area. I think that is essential and the experience of the Queensland Housing Commission in relation to an area of 28 acres of land at Stafford fully justifies whatever the council has done in this regard.

Subdividers have continually gone through estates bulldozing trees into gullies and topping them off with soil to a depth of 20 or 30 feet. When people buy these allotments they have to go down 20 or 30 feet to get a foundation. The Queensland Housing Commission is having its experience at present on that 28 acres of land at Stafford, where foundations have had to be sunk up to 20 or 30 feet through trees that have been pushed into gullies to fill them up.

(Time expired.)

Mr. NEWTON (Belmont) (5.5 p.m.): No doubt the reshuffle of the Cabinet has placed a heavy responsibility on the hon. member for Barambah, who has now been elevated to the office of Minister for Works and Housing. It is a portfolio that will be watched with a great deal of interest during the Government's present term. Irrespective of

what Government members may say about what this Government has done since it assumed office, there is still a great deal to be done by the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission. The Department of Works is responsible for a large part of the school-building programme, and although it is claimed that a great deal has been done that department will have even greater responsibilities during the next three years, and the years ahead of that, whoever may be the Government. The same can be said about the Queensland Housing Commission. The numbers of young people sitting for the Junior and Senior examinations—the citizens of tomorrow—are startling. About 30,000 in the 16-year-old group are sitting for the Junior examination and about 10,000 for the Senior. Those figures clearly indicate the responsibility that will be placed on any Government in the future, irrespective of its political complexion.

Like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition I should like to place on record my appreciation of the officers of the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission for their co-operation and assistance in the many problems I have had to raise with them. At the same time, as a member of the Committee I reserve my right to criticise certain aspects of administration which have not given me the success I should like to have achieved in certain problems that have arisen.

In introducing his Estimates the Minister spoke first about the increased appropriation resulting from the increase in the number of personnel. It is true that from time to time there is an increase in the staff of a particular department but, as I have pointed out before, when you analyse the figures sometimes the increase is mainly on the administration side, with very little increase in the number of outside employees. As we analyse the Minister's figures showing an increase in the number of employees in the Department of Works since the Government assumed office, we find that it is true that in certain years there was an increase. But it is also true that since I have been here I have had to ask questions about retrenchments in the Department of Works. As the figures are analysed between 1957 and 1963 we find that in different years the numbers are up and down. That applied, too, when we were occupying the Treasury benches. I emphasise that the Government should seriously consider the number of apprentices it has employed in the Department of Works, and more so in the Housing Commission, since taking office. While the Department of Works may have carried out its responsibilities to a degree, the Housing Commission has done very little. If we are to get for tomorrow the tradesmen who will be so urgently required, the Government must play its role through the various departments that can employ apprentices.

Mr. Richter: You will admit that the Department of Works has done a pretty good job.

Mr. NEWTON: In reply to the Minister, I should say that the Department of Works has done a better job than the Housing Commission.

Mr. Richter: It has done a good job.

Mr. NEWTON: But not nearly as much as the Labour Party did in office. The numbers employed by the Labour Government were colossal.

The Minister stressed the work done by the Government in providing primary and secondary schools. I appreciate the couple of new schools in my electorate. They were provided only after a lot of battling and groaning and moaning by me in this Chamber.

Mr. Richter: That didn't help you.

Mr. NEWTON: It must have done something. However, two further primary schools are required in my electorate. I have approached the Minister about them and have been told they will be considered in the 1964-65 Estimates. I am very concerned about them. I think that the Minister in charge of the debate will probably be concerned when he has been longer in his portfolio and knows more about the problem.

The change in the education syllabus will have a tremendous effect on the Department of Works. The Government knew full well that it intended to change the syllabus but it has not been able to provide the necessary high schools to cope with the number of students expected in the 1964 school year. If members of the Government should say that is not true, I refer them to an article that appeared under the new Minister's name referring to the letting of a contract for 40 portable classrooms to be used in the coming school year. I question the advisability of this sort of thing. After all, we must remember that the Ministers in charge of these departments say that since the Government took over in 1957 they have caught up with the whole of the backlog in the State. That is not so. If it were true this article would not appear in the Press about providing 40 portable classrooms to overcome the shortage that the Government definitely knew would occur. If the shortage was overcome we should not be confronted with temporary accommodation at schools.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: You recognise that there is a special problem in the change-over.

Mr. NEWTON: I recognise that, up to a point. However, the Government has been in office for six years and, knowing full well its responsibility, it should have been further advanced. On a number of occasions Ministers have tried to mislead hon. members in the Chamber by saying that the lag has been overcome and that these matters are provided for.

Mr. Richter: I do not think anyone has ever said that.

Mr. NEWTON: I am certainly not deaf, and on numerous occasions I have interjected in debates because I am fully conversant with the particular industry and I know what I am talking about.

Let us have a look at the other side of the matter. The problem of providing primary and secondary schools and technical colleges will become a great headache to the Minister and his officers. I agree that the education syllabus must be changed and I have said so before—I have never raised any objection—but, while providing secondary-school accommodation for those pupils who will be caught up in the new syllabus, the department will also be faced with the problem of providing additional technical-college accommodation throughout the State to meet the change in the syllabus of technical education. One cannot be changed without the other, so the problem will be very difficult, and it is one that must be faced.

I have only one high school in my electorate and it has taken me some time to get any improvements made to it. It has been interesting to hear the Minister speaking about the provision by his Government of better amenities for the staff where buildings have had to be renovated or remodelled, and I am quite in accord with that. However, the Cavendish Road High School has 70 teachers and I cannot get the administration block completed. A figure was approved by the Government, then slashed in half. The administration section, which would have given the teachers the necessary amenities, was completely curtailed, and up to the present the sum originally set aside for it has not been restored. I contend that amenities should be provided for all public servants on a fair basis whether they be teachers, policemen, judges or anybody else; everybody should be treated alike.

I can speak along similar lines about fencing. It was interesting to hear the Minister say that the money has been flowing easily. It has not been flowing easily in my electorate. In some cases it may be, but much remains to be done if we are to overcome the problems confronting the schools in my electorate today.

Mention was made of what this Government was able to do immediately it assumed office in 1957. In this State we are quite used to having a credit squeeze applied by the Commonwealth Government every four years. We had one in 1956 before this Government took office, and it had a serious effect on Queensland, just as the squeeze in 1961 did. The Government cannot claim that overnight it changed the picture from a gloomy one to a rosy one, because it did not. In 1956 no extra or special grants were forthcoming from this Government's colleagues in the Federal Parliament to overcome Queensland's problems. We had to overcome them ourselves by using reserve funds.

I want to place on record once again appreciation of the very good job done by the day-labour forces in this State, both in the Department of Works and in the Queensland Housing Commission. When you look at the many buildings that have been remodelled and renovated by the men of this department, you can see, right from the top down, that great care and attention has been paid to every detail of the work carried out. It has been done in a tradesmanlike way and to the advantage of the State. One has only to go to the veranda outside this building and see the marvellous matching plaster work being done to realise how skilled these men are with their hands.

Like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am very concerned about what is going to happen on this £400,000 job at Wacol to be carried out by prisoners. I know quite well, as no doubt do Ministers now sitting on the front bench, that much of the work done in gaols, on both new buildings and maintenance, has been carried out by employees of the Department of Works. This has created off-season employment for seasonal workers. As I have stated before, I have always felt that that is the way in which money allocated to the Department of Works should be used. When seasonal work has finished, these projects create employment for many semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and quite a lot of labouring work is required on large projects.

I protest strongly against allowing this work to be done by prisoners. I think it is not a question of cheap labour but a question of forced labour. I know quite well that if there are any building workers in gaol they will protest strongly at being forced to do this work, knowing that they have mates outside who are looking for jobs. On behalf of the building trades group of unions and their members, I protest strongly at the way in which we learn from recent articles in the Press that this work is to be done by such labour.

Mr. Murray: Do you agree that some seasonal wage rates are loaded because of the seasonal nature of the work, and that at the end of a season you would expect many of them not to be looking for work?

Mr. NEWTON: I am not speaking on Estimates dealing with seasonal workers in the sugar and meat industries. I am concentrating at present on the Estimates of the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission. I do not intend to be sidetracked by the hon. member for Clayfield, who is endeavouring to take up some of my time.

I now wish to make a few comments on the Queensland Housing Commission, which comes under the Minister's jurisdiction. People are facing at the moment the possibility of eviction by the Commission when there has been a death in the family or the one holding the tenancy of the house is leaving and endeavours are made to

transfer the home. I have raised this matter before, and I feel that it is shocking that these things are allowed to happen from time to time. I was hoping to be able to see the Minister privately before the beginning of the debate, because I have in my possession particulars of a few cases that I am not quite happy about.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: I was there waiting for you, actually.

Mr. NEWTON: I am sorry. I was engaged on other business in my electorate and I just could not make it before the debate began.

I wish to draw one or two matters to the Minister's attention. Much has been said by the Government since it took over the Treasury benches about converting land from leasehold to freehold tenure. A number of business people in my electorate who have leases from the Housing Commission in the shopping centres in various projects have raised with me the question why the land they have leased cannot be converted from leasehold to freehold tenure, as the Government has indicated can be done elsewhere. They point out to me that the rentals on these sites are about £78 a year plus rates of about £30 a year, and in some instances—it is quite a good idea—a person who has opened a business has built two or three shops on adjoining sites. These people feel that their burden could be lightened. The Act says quite clearly that the rent on the particular sites has to be reviewed every 15 years, and if we consider when the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement came into force, we see that that time is getting very close for a number of rentals to be reviewed. They are concerned about these two points: firstly, why it is not possible to convert from leasehold to freehold; secondly, what the rents will be when they are reviewed after the 15-year period has elapsed.

I also bring to the Minister's attention the shoddy painting work that is being done for the Queensland Housing Commission by a number of painting contractors. I agree with the Commissioner's latest policy of giving houses three coats of paint. However, if the foundation work—that is, the sanding down and the application of the first coat of paint—is not carried out as it should be, then applying two further coats is just a waste of time and money. Recently I asked a question in the House about the way in which a painting contractor had done this work at Holland Park, and I received a reply from the Minister indicating that he had been granted a further contract to paint Housing Commission houses. In my opinion, this sort of thing has been going on for too long. There are three reasons for it. Firstly, the Commissioner is not studying sufficiently carefully the tenders that are submitted. They are too low, and contractors are tendering a price that does not enable them to carry out the

work and, when the inspectors are not about, are getting away with cheap and shoddy work wherever they can. I found out that one inspector is expected to look after 30 contracts on different projects on the southern side of the metropolitan area. How can he watch 30 contractors? These things are happening every day, and I think something should be done about them.

(Time expired.)

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (5.29 p.m.): I wish first to congratulate the Minister on the presentation of his Estimates. When we refer to the Minister in this instance, we must also keep in mind other Ministers who controlled various sections of the department before the Cabinet was re-shuffled. I should like to mention particularly Mr. Richter and Mr. Hiley and compliment them on the job that they did prior to the re-shuffle in the sections under their control. Dealing with staff, I should like to mention particularly the Housing Commission staff. I single them out because they happen to be the ones with whom I have been most involved up to date. I know the other gentlemen are doing a particularly good job in other sections of the Minister's various activities, but I will deal with those whom I know.

Mr. Hiley, prior to handing over the Housing portfolio, went into the matter of housing with Mr. Galvin and me, and as a consequence Mr. Galvin instructed one of his officers, Mr. Reynolds, to go right through my electorate and make a survey. That was an extremely good idea and I am very pleased to see that Mr. Peterson has followed that out on an even more extensive scale.

I assure all hon. members that this is a very good scheme. It allows the Housing Commission officials to get out into some of the far-flung electorates and see the need existing in some of those areas. They are progressive towns that are trying to grow. They want to grow.

Mr. Davies: It looks as if they should pay more attention to the painting of houses.

Mr. McKECHNIE: There has been a suggestion that we refer to our own electorates and I will do that for the moment. When these officers went to my electorate they went through each town, particularly the towns of Stanthorpe and Goondiwindi, and investigated their needs. Those are two progressive towns that are in need of housing.

When talking about getting out into the country electorates, I recall the activities of the Housing Commission since it first commenced operations in, I understand, about 1944. I would not swear that that is the correct date but I understand that it is about the time the Housing Commission first started activities. Since that date and until 30 June last, the Commission had built 20,382 homes in the metropolitan area compared with 7,542 in the country.

Brisbane is quite capable of looking after itself, as can be seen here. It is well represented, and we want to decentralise. We want houses built in the country. Brisbane is big enough for its own good and for Queensland's good. We want to decentralise our industries. We want to go out into the country and provide housing in these progressive towns that are capable of growing and want to grow. That is where we want these houses built. The need is there and the desire of the people is there, and if we encourage the building of Housing Commission homes in these towns, which are beautiful towns in which to live, we will be doing a good job for Queensland and for Brisbane, too. If we can build bigger cities in the country areas we will attract industry there. I realise that we must have industry in Brisbane but I think it is much more desirable to get it out into the country. The building of more Housing Commission homes in the country will assist in this direction. It can be clearly seen that the country has not been fairly treated, with 20,000-odd homes in this city as against 7,000-odd in the country.

Mr. Davies: The Queen Street Government.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Since 1944?

Hon. members can see the weight of the argument that we need these houses in the country, and the Minister is well aware of it. I appreciate the action, firstly of Mr. Hiley and then of Mr. Peterson and Mr. Galvin in sending Mr. Reynolds out into the country areas to make a survey. When one gets out into these areas one realises just how much the country needs Housing Commission homes. In my electorate alone there is need for hundreds of these homes. We can fill them and most of them would be for purchase. It is the policy of this Government to build these houses essentially for purchase, to engender home-ownership and the pride in one's home that is so necessary in a community like ours.

Again I will refer to my own electorate and speak about schools. In the current year a high school has just been completed at Inglewood. A big high school is well under way at Goondiwindi. The manual training section is completed, and will be opened next year. A large high school was finished last year in Texas. Stanthorpe had a very fine one completed in recent years. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that this Government is neglecting manual training. Only a few weeks ago I had a good look through the new high school at Inglewood and found that it was very well equipped with lathes, portable saws and vices, and facilities for tin work. It is a very good set-up. I had a look at the manual-training portion completed at Inglewood, where the lathe set-up is something to be proud of. I refute the hon. member's statement that we are not giving consideration to technical requirements at these high

schools. Not only are they buildings to be proud of, but the technical side is well catered for.

Again on the subject of housing, as the hon. member for Kedron said, it is possible to pay an initial deposit of £25 on a Housing Commission house. The tenant has to live in the rental house for one year. He can pay a deposit of £25 and an additional £1 a week until he has paid the full deposit, which may be £150 or £200, depending on the value of the house. He then can enter into an ownership agreement and become the owner of the house. It is a good scheme. I think the best scheme of the lot is that if a man owns his own block of land he can go to the local Clerk of Petty Sessions and make application to build a home. He can get a book of plans of quite modern homes for 3s. 6d.

Mr. Donald: That has not happened recently.

Mr. McKECHNIE: It is not happening enough at the moment. I am asking for more and more of it. It is a good scheme. Such a person can pay a deposit of 10 per cent. of the total cost of the proposed house. The advantage is that the value of the block can be taken as almost the full deposit. It means that a person who has held a block for some years can enter into an ownership agreement perhaps without the payment of any additional deposit other than the block itself. One of the great advantages of this arrangement is that the owner, as long as he is under 40 years of age, can get free life insurance up to £2,250.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. McKECHNIE: The more it is extended the better. I am not taking anything away from hon. members opposite. My Government is going ahead. We want to cater for the country areas, which the previous Government did not do. My whole approach is that we want decentralisation. We want to see it effected. This scheme is good. We are taking it into the country. We are going to build up our country areas under this scheme. All the various aspects of it are good and its use is being extended through this form of insurance. It is a security for the holder of the house. It is bringing people in who previously could not own homes.

In the country we have some problems in these progressive towns that need houses. Some years ago when conditions were rather difficult quite a few people built garages on their blocks and lived in these sub-standard dwellings—garages with the bare necessities of life, which, technically are below local-authority requirements. These people will be given an opportunity to build homes on their blocks. In the near future, there will be a drive by local authorities to get rid of other sub-standard homes in the form of very old, dilapidated houses that are not worth sewerage. As hon. members

are well aware, in the last few years water supply and sewerage schemes have been provided in many small country towns and they are responsible for their becoming much better places to live in. However, it is not economic to sewer very old, dilapidated homes which served their purpose while houses were scarce. We want the people to demolish these sub-standard dwellings and build new homes. The Housing Commission is doing a good job by sending officers into the country to investigate the problem and inquire into the building of new homes.

Mr. Davies: They could have had a Housing Commission home years ago.

Mr. McKECHNIE: In my home town people have been crying for houses for 20 years—ever since the war. The towns of Goondiwindi and Stanthorpe are among the best in Queensland, with town water supplies and sewerage. Personally I prefer to live there than in the city. They offer many advantages, but during the Labour Government's term of office the people could not get homes when they were crying for them.

Mr. Donald: Simply because private contractors would not go there to build them.

Mr. McKECHNIE: At that time the Minister for Housing was not quite so concerned as we are with building homes. The Government intends to go ahead and provide facilities for houses in these areas.

I do not intend to speak at length. I merely wish to point out that the Government is doing a wonderful job in providing schools. We need houses in the country and the Government is pursuing a policy that will give country areas good schools and decentralisation, and the Housing Commission will provide homes which are sorely needed.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.43 p.m.): I rise to make my contribution to the debate. First, I am sure hon. members will agree that many of the previous speaker's remarks were in appreciation of the action of Labour Governments in years gone by. One would think he was implying that previous Governments had done nothing, whereas, as he progressed, he made it abundantly clear that Labour Governments introduced legislation of advantage to the people and did many things in their interests.

Mr. McKechnie: But not in the country.

Mr. HOUSTON: In the country as well. It is apparent that the hon. member has not moved around the country to any extent. He is just a small-town boy who has remained in his own little town. I assure him that if he moves around the country in other parts of Queensland he will find evidence that for many years progressive building has been carried out. In fact,

statistics show that it is only since this Government came to power that people have moved away from country areas.

A Government Member: Because you would not build them any homes.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is not correct. I know you would not let me develop an argument on unemployment and lack of development, Mr. Tooth, but I assure the hon. member that we built homes throughout the State. Any Government that builds homes for the people where they are needed is certainly doing the right thing. I ask hon. members opposite not to get the idea that until 1957 nothing happened anywhere.

Mr. Houghton: How many homes did you build at Redcliffe under the Housing Commission up to that time?

Mr. HOUSTON: I can remember that in 1960, when the hon. member was campaigning as an Independent, he told us this Government had done nothing for Redcliffe—nothing during three years of Tory Government. I cannot answer the full question because Redcliffe is not within my electorate or within the compass of my usual movements, but I do know that in 1960 he quite openly said that the Government had done nothing for Redcliffe over the previous three years. So I can answer that part of his question and I hope he is satisfied.

Mr. Houghton: You would not even give a permit to build a house in Redcliffe.

Mr. HOUSTON: I do not think the hon. member should say any more on the subject.

The fact is that, as money became available under previous Governments, so houses and schools and public buildings were built. The Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission are two departments in particular that, irrespective of the Government in power, have to do certain things owing to public demand. I do not think this Government is different from any other in that respect. Its works are restricted to the amount of money available. So in discussing these Estimates we have to consider whether the money that is available is being spent wisely, bearing in mind that, even if another £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 became available, it could be used to advantage.

I shall deal first with education and that building of schools—high schools, technical colleges and so on. Over the past two or three years in particular, there has been a tendency to glamorise secondary education to the detriment of primary education. This year we have seen a further advance of glamorisation. Now that the new syllab. for secondary education is under way, it is apparent that the Government intends to glamorise secondary education even more. I hope it brings about an improvement in conditions, in buildings, and in equipment. I hope, too, that technical education will be similarly benefited. Often in the Chamber I have asked for more to be done for the various branches

of technical education throughout the State. But I do not want this advance to go on to the detriment of the primary schools, because it is in the primary schools that the foundation is laid for the youth and for the scholars of later years. We do not want the primary schools to be devoid of top-rate teachers and short of buildings and other amenities and facilities.

Already there are marked differences in the treatment of primary and secondary schools. For a start, irrespective of the size of the primary school, no janitor is provided whereas at secondary schools janitors are provided.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Tooth): Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Estimates under discussion. The subject he is now raising comes under education.

Mr. HOUSTON: In the improvement of grounds by the cutting of grass and the cleaning up of the area the primary schools again suffer by comparison. There the work is done mainly by the kiddies, those supposedly naughty in the eyes of the teachers, while some is done by outside labour employed by the school committee or by members of the committee themselves, particularly in late January and after the August vacation. They have to come in and cut the grass and, in some schools, to my knowledge, they have to cut down saplings so that the kiddies can play, whereas at the secondary schools full-time groundsmen are employed. I believe it is just as necessary to have good grounds at primary schools as at secondary schools. I urge the Minister to allow the Department of Works to employ a gang of men to move from school to school doing this type of work. I asked a question in the House on this matter some time ago.

Mr. Harrison: They make the sensible provision now of sharing a groundsman between the high school and the primary school.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is the first time that I have heard of a groundsman of a secondary school being seconded to a primary school. If the Minister will confirm that interjection, I shall be very pleased to hear it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Tooth): I am afraid the Minister will not be able to do it. I do not think that groundsmen come under this Vote. I ask the hon. member to return to the Estimates before the Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON: You may be right so far as wages are concerned, Mr. Tooth, and I am sure the Minister has got the message. The point is that someone has to pay for the work being done on the grounds. Surely we are not going to assume that, because the Department of Education has to provide the wages, the condition of school grounds is not the responsibility of the Department of Works?

Mr. Camm: When you were in power the clearing of grounds was a job for the school committee.

Mr. HOUSTON: That is rubbish. The provision of good primary-school grounds is, I believe, the responsibility of the Department of Works, and much more attention should be paid to it.

In our new secondary schools thousands of pounds have been spent on the building of school ovals. I have no quarrel with that, but how ridiculous it is when primary schools nearby ask for some assistance in the clearing of their grounds to make them fit for playing and are told, "No, we cannot do anything for primary schools. We cannot provide playing ovals there." But if they say, "Will you come and do some work on our assembly areas?" using some name like that, they are told, "We might come along and give a bit of advice, but no money."

Mr. Camm: They have subsidised them.

Mr. HOUSTON: Of course, but expenditure on ovals for secondary schools amounts to thousands of pounds.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! That subject also comes under the Department of Education.

Mr. HOUSTON: The Department of Works do provide ovals in school grounds, whether they go by the name of playing fields or assembly fields. Again I say that I have no quarrel with the provision of ovals at secondary schools, but I believe that the department has an equal responsibility to make the grounds of primary schools just as suitable for sport and similar activities.

Mr. Camm: They have to start somewhere and they are starting in high schools.

Mr. HOUSTON: I know that the hon. member for Whitsunday would have liked to be a Minister. He did not get the previous appointment, so will he please allow the Minister to carry the debate? I should be quite happy to hear him speak later.

I now wish to spend a few moments on the high schools in my area, particularly the Balmoral High School. When it was built toilets were provided for approximately 200 boys and girls. Another block was built to accommodate an additional 100 children, and extra toilets were provided. Since that time another five, if not six, blocks of classrooms—not classrooms only—to accommodate up to 1,200 have been added, but not one additional toilet facility has been provided in the design of these buildings.

I mentioned this through various channels to the Department of Works and an officer came out to the school. He was very co-operative and, I believe, a good officer, but I want to know when some action is to be taken. I am well aware that the officer would have submitted his report, and I have

no reason to doubt that when he saw the conditions and the position was explained to him—

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen: When was that?

Mr. HOUSTON: Months ago. I am not blaming the Minister, because I can assure him that he was not Minister for Works and Housing at that time. I do not want him to think that I have raised the matter merely to have a go at him. I am very concerned that this school should have available the required toilet facilities, particularly for next year. It is unfortunately true that, because of lack of foresight in the planning and development of many of our high schools, buildings are becoming very scattered. If the extremities of the school at Balmoral get much farther apart we will have to get the head-master or another master a licence to drive a motor-scooter from one building to another. One now has to go virtually from one end of the school to the other to find toilet facilities. I suggest that a separate toilet block be built adjacent to the playing fields. If this were done, children in the new section of the school would be able to use it and other children using the ovals, the tennis courts, the rifle range, the basketball courts, and the other amenities that have been provided by the school committee under the various subsidy schemes, would also be in close proximity to it.

I would oppose any suggestion that the toilets should be built in the existing buildings. One of the big weaknesses that I see in the modern architectural design of high schools is that the buildings do not lend themselves to the provision of areas that are under shelter in rainy or hot weather. It is a pity that more shelter and shade is not provided in new designs. Another weakness is that apparently each architect who has the job of designing a particular block for a school puts his own ideas into effect. I know that such ideas are sometimes an improvement, but we finish up with a school that loses uniformity of design and appearance, which I think is undesirable, and we can follow its construction through stage by stage. I do not say that we should not include a modern idea in an old school; but a school six years old should not have a new architectural design for each year of its existence. I suggest to the Minister, therefore, that when additions are made to schools in future, if possible the design of the new block should conform as far as possible to that of the old block. Naturally, inside the rooms it may be possible to alter the position of a blackboard to improve the lighting, or something of that sort, but I think it is advisable to preserve uniformity.

Another problem that we face at Balmoral—it is worsening rapidly—is in providing tuck-shop facilities for the children next year. Tuck shops have now become part and parcel of schools, and it is recognised that they are in the interests of the schools and the children who attend them. But when

one has to feed 1,200 or 1,300 children not in two or three hours but in 15 minutes, it is obvious that one must have counter space. No matter how many women are working at the tuck shop, they will not be able to serve the children quickly unless the counter space is adequate. In some instances children are missing out in the line-up now. I do not know what the position is at other schools, but I am asking that the tuck-shop facilities at Balmoral be investigated and the necessary action taken. Naturally, I am very conscious and appreciative of the wonderful work that the women are doing there.

The next matter I wish to deal with is the necessity to have at our high schools a common assembly point. By this I mean a central hall incorporated as part of the high-school building. In primary schools the Labour Government when in office realised the need for a large area where children could be assembled to take part in various school activities and, as a result, until 1957, many schools buildings had movable partitions between the various classrooms. I know of my own knowledge quite a number of instances where four classrooms could be thrown open into one large area and, over the years, it was found that it allowed many projects to be carried on in the schools so that at least whole sections could participate and see what was being performed.

Under the new syllabus that has been introduced for secondary schools I notice that quite a large amount of time could be spent to advantage in community projects such as the staging of dramas or plays and suchlike to emphasise and explain various parts of the work.

I believe also that it may be an advantage at times to have more than one class assembled in order to hear broadcast programmes, particularly on science and similar subjects. In our present school set-up there is need for such assembly areas. It is not competent to have these classrooms thrown open in secondary schools due to the change over of teachers and for other reasons, and I quite agree that each class should have its own room. That brings me to this subject of assembly halls.

In New South Wales they build these halls first and the whole of the modern school is built around the assembly hall, which becomes the heart of the school. I suggest to the Minister that, even with the lack of finance—and I agree that that is still a problem, as it was in 1956 and 1957 and has been over the years—the department should find ways and means to get on with this part of the work. I suggest that although it may not be necessary to build the whole of the assembly hall for a start, it should be possible to build the stage area and perhaps a dressing-room behind it and later on the whole of the structures could be built to provide the accommodation

that will be required. Provision could be made by means of folding walls or something like that.

At present, apparently due to lack of finance, the department cannot do it; also because of lack of finance parents' and citizens' associations and various school committees cannot do it, but surely there must be some way for these bodies to combine and enable the young people at schools to enjoy the advantage of these assembly halls. One way in which I suggest the Government might meet the position is by guaranteeing loans which the committees could raise. We know that the Government at times guarantees industries to enable them to progress. From inquiries I have made of people associated with banking I understand that the banks cannot lend money on such projects because once the building is constructed it becomes part of the school and the school committee has no legal right to it. But if a committee is prepared to raise the necessary finance to build an assembly hall, surely the Government should give it some assistance and consideration. No-one wants to see the new syllabus "go" more than the Opposition. To make it "go" we must make sure that all the necessary facilities are there so that it can "go" as intended.

Today swimming pool projects cost many thousands of pounds. In many secondary schools such projects are no longer required because the children have the use of pools at nearby primary schools. This means that secondary-school committees can raise the necessary finance for other projects. As I am reminded, naturally a change in the Federal Government would be a tremendous help in this direction.

We are concerned about the attitude of the Department of Works to school improvements. The Balmoral school committee wanted to construct a basket-ball court. Unfortunately when we asked the department what specifications to use we were told to go to an outside consultant. To me that is a waste of public money. Surely the engineers in the Department of Works can say to a school committee, "These are the plans and specifications we require for a court on our property." Instead of that we were told to make inquiries from a private consultant. The principle is wrong. The money that school committees are handling is public money. From my knowledge of the people serving on such committees I know that they do not like wasting one penny of it. They strive to get full value for all the money received from the parents. I trust that these matters will receive the careful consideration of the Minister.

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (7.23 p.m.): Having spoken earlier in the day on the Estimates of the Department of Lands, perhaps I should apologise for speaking again so soon.

Mr. Houston: Don't apologise; we like your voice.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I quite like the hon. member's voice when he keeps to that quiet tone that he finished in, but sometimes when he gets critical it is not so pleasant.

I rise now for the reason that it will not be possible for me to be here on Thursday because of commitments in my electorate during the day and a school speech night in the evening, and I did not want to let the opportunity pass without speaking on the Estimates of the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission.

The time is opportune for me to congratulate the Minister on his elevation to Cabinet rank. I feel that the Premier's choice has been received very well throughout the State, including his own members on the Government side and hon. members on the Opposition side. The hon. member for Barambah will get up and go! Without being provocative, let me say that in the years gone by we have not had quite so much get up and go on occasions in the department that is now under his administration. Having known Mr. Bjeike-Petersen for some years, and having represented an electorate adjacent to his, and having actually taken over what was part of his electorate prior to the redistribution, I know of the great esteem in which he is held by the people whom he has represented so sincerely for so many years. A man who has been here 12 to 14 years and given such very good service deserves the elevation that has come his way. Any praise that he may get is justly deserved.

Mr. Mann: You'll get on.

Mr. SULLIVAN: In answer to the hon. member for Brisbane, may I say that if I did not think the Minister deserved it I should be the first to tell him. Anything I say, I say in all sincerity.

I am sure that the Minister realises the responsibilities of his appointment. He is very fortunate in having, as his Under Secretary, Mr. David Longland, who is a very devoted and dedicated public servant. When I was a very new member of Parliament I had the privilege of going on a tour of the North, the North-west and the Central West with Mr. Longland when Mr. Richter held this portfolio.

Mr. Marsden: He was a good Minister, too.

Mr. SULLIVAN: He was an excellent Minister.

Mr. Longland gave us a very close insight into the work of the department. The activities of the Department of Works have been criticised inside and outside this Chamber by people who are perhaps not aware of the work entailed. As a member of Parliament I can say nothing but good about the works carried out in my area. I have received excellent co-operation from Mr. Longland and

other departmental officers, firstly with the late Mr. Roberts, secondly with Mr. Richter, and now with the present Minister. I think I should be remiss if I did not say a word of praise for Mr. Richter's private secretary, Mr. Doug. Garner. He is most helpful and courteous and I am sure all hon. members would agree that he has been helpful to Government and Opposition members alike. I have only had the opportunity of speaking to the present Minister's private secretary on the telephone, but I am sure that he, too, will prove to be a very helpful public servant.

Prior to the dinner adjournment the hon. member for Bulimba was somewhat critical of what is being done by the Department of Works, and I wrote down a word that he used no fewer than four or five times. He said that this Government was "glamorising" what it is doing in secondary education. Then he said that, having glamorised our advances in secondary education over the last couple of years, it seems we will glamorise what is to be done in technical education. Let us be a little down to earth and honest. We have not tried to glamorise what we have done in secondary education along with public works. I must tie it in with public works, Mr. Gaven, otherwise you will draw my attention to it. The children of Queensland get the benefit from these things; they are the ones to judge, and they are not critical of what the Government is doing. The Department of Works, together with the Department of Education, has done a magnificent job in providing secondary-education facilities, particularly in country areas.

I represent an area that may be regarded as a fairly close-in area. My colleague from Gregory will tell the same story about what is being done for the far-flung areas and I am sure the hon. member for Flinders will do likewise. The same pattern is to be found all over the State. Perhaps in the views of members from the remote areas I represent a suburban electorate. We did not have these things done under Labour. In my electorate the Department of Works recently completed the construction of a £90,000 secondary school at Chinchilla. Approval has been given for the spending of another £10,000 on the manual training block. A magnificent oval has been prepared and all we are waiting for is some rain to get the grass under way. All that work has been long overdue.

Hon. members opposite must surely agree that we cannot be accused of glamorising when we are doing only what is required and what is long overdue.

Tomorrow night I will attend the first speech night of the Bell school. There the Department of Works has just completed a £40,000 programme of building a secondary-school top. The pattern is the same throughout the State. One has only to drive around the metropolitan area to see what is happening. I am sure that any parents or children who read in the paper tomorrow that the hon. member for Bulimba accused

this Government of glamorising its advances in secondary and technical education will not think very worthily of him.

We representatives of country people express our appreciation to the Minister and the officers of his department. I am glad that the Minister for Local Government and Conservation has come into the Chamber while I am on my feet because it gives me an opportunity to thank him for what he did for me while he administered the Department of Works.

Along with our policy of extending the supply of electricity to rural areas, we have electricity connected to police residences, school houses and the like. Seeing the Minister for Conservation, Mr. Richter, brings to my mind the case of a policeman at Bell. He appealed to me to help him have the old wood stove left in the house after the new electric stove was installed. There was plenty of room in the kitchen for both. Any hon. members who have been to Bell in the winter time will know that it is a very cold spot right at the foot of the Bunya Mountains. Every once in a while we have snow on the Bunya Mountains. This policeman had three young kiddies. He said that if the wood stove were taken out the house would be like an iceberg. Mr. Richter, along with his departmental officers, approved of leaving the old wood stove there to help the policeman and his wife keep the children warm in the winter months.

Mr. Mann: A very humane action.

Mr. SULLIVAN: A very humane action indeed. I thank the hon. member for Brisbane for the words. These public servants who move about from place to place in the course of their duties never have a permanent home and they appreciate these little acts of kindness.

Mr. Davies: We showed them little acts of kindness, too.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Perhaps the hon. member's Government did; but it appears from the attitude of those people that they are getting very much more of this type of thing now. It all goes to show that the Department of Works is doing a very fine job.

To deal briefly with the other department coming under the Minister's administration, namely, the Queensland Housing Commission, I listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. member for Carnarvon in which he outlined in some detail what the Commission is doing, particularly in country areas. I should like to repeat some of the things that he said, because it is only in recent times that people in country areas have begun to realise what is available to them through the Commission.

The Minister announced the other day the intention to send officers of the Housing Commission to country areas to tell people interested in building homes through the Commission what was available to them.

That is an excellent idea and I commend the Minister for it. I have found in my area and other areas that there are many people who are not aware of the housing facilities available. A certain resident of Chinchilla tried, for political reasons, to embarrass me once by saying that I was not getting Housing Commission homes built in Chinchilla.

Mr. Mann: We are fair-minded.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Some hon. members opposite are, but this fellow was not. He was trying to make a political issue of it. When I checked up, I found that no applications had been made for Housing Commission homes. I made it my business to get a few people to lodge applications. I telephoned Mr. Galvin about the matter, and within a fortnight approval had been given for the construction of three Housing Commission homes at Chinchilla. The same thing applied at Jandowae, and is has continued.

With Housing Commission officers going out and speaking to young people who are about to be married, I expect that many more applications will be made. As outlined by the Minister and the hon. member for Carnarvon, it is most essential that this be done because in small country towns, as in Brisbane and provincial cities, there are many sub-standard homes in which young people, and some not so young, are required to live. Unfortunately there are landlords who persist in charging exorbitant rentals but will do nothing to effect any improvements to their properties. What we are doing through the Housing Commission will bring about a better standard of living for these people.

To obtain a Housing Commission home, a young fellow thinking of getting married needs only 10 per cent. of its cost. With our wage structure today, I think that any young man considering marriage who has not that amount of money in the bank, plus a few hundred pounds in addition, has been a little irresponsible. I am not being really critical of these young people because if I were a young fellow I probably would do the same myself, but today they must have motor-cars. In my day, we had to have a good horse.

The natural thing for young men is to get married. I think that they must face up to their responsibilities, and I believe that from the time he receives his first pay envelope a young man should set aside a certain amount, be it 5, 10, or 20 per cent., for banking, knowing that some day he will at least be able to play his part and put down a deposit on a Housing Commission home and, over the years, gradually pay it off till he owns it. The girls, too, could perhaps help in this way.

Mr. Marsden: Do you know that in the last 12 months they have resumed houses in Ipswich for the Air Force and ordinary citizens cannot buy them?

Mr. SULLIVAN: That may be. However, if a young man faces up to his responsibilities he knows that if he dies suddenly and leaves a widow and children, they will at least have a home in which to live. It is very important, as I think all hon. members, irrespective of their political viewpoint, will agree, that parents should endeavour to stress upon their sons and daughters the need to save money and what is available to them through the Queensland Housing Commission.

Mr. Bennett: Tell us how to save 20 per cent. of the basic wage.

Mr. SULLIVAN: The hon. member has something on his plate to tell us about. He should confine his remarks to that.

I commend the Minister for sending his officers out into country towns to make the young people there aware of what is available to them. Young people in my home town of Jandowae were not conversant with what was available to them through the Housing Commission. I had a yarn with the clerk of petty sessions and he and I together have created quite a deal of interest in the Housing Commission. In Jandowae—if I offend somebody there, it is unfortunate—as has happened in many other country towns where there are sub-standard houses, young people have been sharing a house with in-laws, or young married couples have been living in a divided house and been charged exorbitant rents. I, for one, will be pleased when the Housing Commission catches up the backlog and people will no longer have to live in sub-standard dwellings.

As I said, I regret that I was not here when the Minister introduced his Estimates, but my responsibilities made it necessary for me to be at one of the Government departments.

Mr. Bennett: Where were you? Down at the National?

Mr. SULLIVAN: I shall treat that interjection with the contempt that it deserves and the hon. member who made it with the contempt that he deserves.

Having taken advantage of the opportunity to speak in this debate, I assure the Minister that at all times he has my close support in what he is doing in my electorate to promote the building of Housing Commission houses and in the grand job that he and the Minister for Education are doing in the extension of schools.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (7.43 p.m.): I have always had a very great admiration for the day-labour force of the Department of Works, and I was interested this afternoon to hear the new Minister state that it was possibly the greatest work-force of its type in the Commonwealth. Time and time again, particularly in the building of schools, the day-labour force has proved that it is able to compete more than favourably with

contract work and has shown a very high degree of efficiency in the construction of public buildings. Irrespective of what Government may have been in office, the value of the day-labour force has been proved down through the years. Men who know the standard of workmanship required and the type of construction needed have done a great deal to bring the force up to a high pitch of efficiency. As I say, it has been very easy for them to compete more than favourably with contract work.

One thing that I do find in moving around various jobs in my electorate is that much could be done to increase the amount of work carried out during the Christmas period, in school holidays. In many instances during this time there is a normal holiday break in sawmills, particularly in the metropolitan area, and it would seem to me that there should be more stockpiling by the department of essential sizes of timber to overcome a problem that arises on many occasions, namely, that during the shut-down of mills over the Christmas period there develop shortages of certain sizes of timber and because the department had not stockpiled enough of them there are delays in the jobs. I suggest to the Minister that he could well examine the possibility of stockpiling various essential sizes of timber at strategic points so that these delays may be obviated in the future.

I want particularly this evening to say something about the clearing of school grounds. I refer to the clearing of the site for a new construction. Possibly the electorate that I represent would have seen, over a period, the start of more schools than most electorates. That is not because the Government is doing anything more in my electorate than in others, but simply because of the pressure of the number of young children in the Inala area reaching school age and requiring the provision of more and more school accommodation. It is a continuing problem.

In relation to the clearing of the grounds, I have found that while a certain amount of work is done to put them in a reasonable state, frequently many large gum trees are left in the grounds. I do not think they are of any great value in providing shade for the children and most of the trees that are left behind are old trees of varying heights up to 60 or 70 feet.

Mr. Richter: You had many of them taken out, didn't you?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That is so, but it was only after I twisted the former Minister's arm a bit that I got them out.

As I was saying, many of those old gum trees are of such a nature that the branches die and become a danger to the children. As the former Minister said, I was able to get some of those trees taken out, but I felt I should bring the matter to the present Minister's notice. It would be far better if

the grounds were denuded of trees in the first instance, enabling the head master to carry out a tree-planting programme, with suitable types of trees placed in the most advantageous position for the children. With the very many types of quick-growing trees available, in a matter of a few short years most of the school grounds could be made very worthy of the buildings that are placed in them. In the clearing of future school sites the Minister might consider that any trees of no practical value for shade should be got rid of immediately. It is very much to be regretted that the observance of such days as Arbor Day has been more or less omitted from the curriculum, as previously it gave an encouragement to the children to beautify the grounds along the lines I have suggested.

Although the Minister said that he might tell us something about it later on in his opening remarks he made absolutely no reference to the functioning of the Queensland Housing Commission. It is too important a phase of Government activity not to be mentioned. I was eagerly awaiting the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission, as I thought that perhaps the new Minister might bring a fresh approach to many of the problems of housing. Already the new Minister would know that I am one of his best customers.

I was interested to hear the hon. member for Condamine say that there are still many young people living with their in-laws, and that he was looking forward to the day when the Queensland Housing Commission overcomes the housing lag in this State. I assure the hon. member that that serious position still exists today in spite of the fact that the Government has claimed repeatedly that it has overcome the housing lag. It is significant that when a person applies for State rental accommodation he is usually met with the reply that his chances of getting a State rental home are determined by the priority system.

Mr. Hughes: Cheaper rent is the incentive.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I am glad the hon. member came in on that one because I will explode that myth in a minute. As the Housing Commission is still operating the priority system it means that any person who has a priority of less than 80 points has little chance of obtaining rental accommodation within a reasonable period, which indicates that there is still much to be done about housing in this State.

As usual, the hon. member for Kurilpa had to stick his head out. I hope within the next few moments to lop it off completely. I am not going to accept it as a fact, as this Government repeatedly claims, that Housing Commission rents are the cheapest in Queensland. To the extent that it is true, how has this been brought about? It is merely because of the amendment to

the Landlord and Tenant Act which allowed private rents to increase enormously. It is now claimed that Housing Commission rents are the cheapest rents in Queensland, but that is so merely because the rent structure in Queensland got out of hand following the amendment to the Landlord and Tenant Act.

Let us examine the rent structure. Under the Chifley formula it was accepted that rent should be based on one-fifth of the income. The last report of the Queensland Housing Commission discloses that the average weekly rent was £3 6s. 8d. for 1945 Agreement homes—it varied from £1 18s. to £4 18s.—and the average for other houses and flats was £4 9s., varying between £2 2s. and £6 5s. On the Chifley formula people paying £6 5s. a week should receive £30 a week in wages. This Government firstly makes the claim that it has the cheapest rent, but that is only because rents have got completely out of hand. While it may be claimed that Housing Commission rents are cheaper than those paid to private landlords, the fact is that the rent structure of Housing Commission homes has gone far beyond the intention under the Chifley legislation.

Mr. Campbell: How do they compare with Sydney rents?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: The hon. member can compare them with anything—he can compare them with the man in the moon—but he is certainly not distracting me by his silly interjections.

Under the Chifley Agreement, which ran for 10 years and was the finest legislation ever enacted to meet the housing requirements of the ordinary person in the community, the rent was calculated on a formula so that any person who was unemployed, or sick, or had suffered some other adversity, could apply for a rental rebate based on the amount he was receiving in Social Service payments. His rent was assessed so that when he resumed his normal occupation he was not faced with a heavy burden of back rent. That is why I say it was the finest legislation ever introduced to protect people on low wages. Since the advent of the Menzies Government, which, thank God, we will not have to suffer much longer, the rental rebate system has disappeared. One of the worst things in times of artificial boom and slump, when unemployment becomes rife, is that people in the new agreement homes pay rent up to £6 5s. a week, and are faced with the prospect, if unemployed for any length of time, of being evicted by the Commission. Then, on resuming employment they have a large burden to shoulder in back rental. Possibly the worst feature is to be found in a suburb with old and new Housing Agreement homes; a person in a new Housing Agreement home cannot understand why someone with an old Housing Agreement home can obtain a rebate whereas he cannot. Rental rebates

are very important because with booms and slumps there is unemployment and the people affected by those booms and slumps should be given the protection of rental rebates. In future negotiations between this Government and the Federal Government on housing there must be some concerted effort to return to this rental rebate system.

One matter that I raised without success with the previous Minister has been regarded by some as a minor problem. It deals with Housing Commission rental cards. I have said before that anybody who could read a Housing Commission rental card could tell you what was on a pakapu ticket. I suggest to the Minister that tenants have got into difficulties because the cards are not indicative enough of the state of the rent at any given time. I suggested that a rental card setting out the 52 weeks and commencing at the start of the year might be issued and that all books be recalled for audit so that at the start of the year the actual state of the rent could be entered on the top of the card. It would then be easy for the tenant to assess just how his rent was at any time in the following 12 months. I ask the Minister to give consideration to that suggestion.

The hon. member for Belmont spoke of cases where two people lived in a home and one unfortunately passed on. The Commission's approach is that the widow or widower is continually asked to find alternative accommodation. I recognise that possibly it is not in the best interests of housing in the State for one person to be occupying a home but I cannot agree with asking these people to find alternative accommodation. In most cases the survivor is an age pensioner. So I suggest that, in the construction of Housing Commission estates in the future, some thought be given to providing small cottages, possibly with one bedroom, to house people in these circumstances. Many of them have said to me that, having seen their loved one pass on, they do not want to face the prospect of entering a home; they prefer a place of their own.

Another important matter that I want to bring to the attention of the Minister concerns the Inala Civic Centre. It is true that Inala is developing and that a large area has been set aside for a civic centre. Quite frankly, although there is to be considerable expansion in housing, I feel that the area set aside for the civic centre could be too large. Already approximately one-third is being used and most types of business have opened there. I think that it could present a problem because there are already chain stores, shoe stores, barber shops, and so on. It will be difficult to fill the civic centre completely with shops, and new ones opening would merely be duplications of those already there.

Now could well be the time when the Minister for Works could negotiate with the Minister for Health on the establishment of an enlarged dental clinic in the area. As the centre piece of the civic centre, such a clinic would not only provide a very good service in dental care, but would also be part of a very worthy project.

I am also worried about the action of the previous Minister concerning homes in this area. Because he expected sewerage to be available, when the homes in the area known as south of Rosella Street were built they were not provided with grease traps or sullage pits. The previous Minister said that, as the installation of sewerage was expected, the department would more or less take a risk with public health. Waste water was to be drained on to the open ground. If sewerage had been provided within a matter of weeks it may have been sound economically, but those houses have now been built for 12 months and still no sewerage has been provided.

(Time expired.)

Mr. CAMPBELL (Aspley) (8.9 p.m.): I join other hon. members in extending my congratulations to the Minister on his elevation to the Ministry and his appointment to the portfolio that he now holds. He brings to this office a quiet dignity and a well-acknowledged ability, and I feel quite sure that members on both sides will be more than satisfied with his administration.

Before dealing with matters concerning my electorate, I wish to make some comments on the observations of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with reference to the repeated claims by members of the Government of improved administration since we took office. Perhaps our repeating that success story becomes somewhat tedious; nevertheless I suppose it is safe to say that it is discomfiting to the Opposition to find that we have been so successful.

Mr. Newton: Where?

Mr. CAMPBELL: Successful in every way. There is plenty of evidence on all hands of the success that the Government has achieved. One has only to look at Government buildings.

Mr. Thackeray: Talk about your percentage in the last election. Be fair.

Mr. CAMPBELL: That could be very revealing, too.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Rockhampton North to be very careful or I shall deal with him very quickly. I warn him to be careful.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I was simply pointing to the good state of repair of public buildings now and comparing it with their state of repair some years ago. To illustrate my point, hospitals, schools, police stations, and so on, all bear testimony to the effective way in which we are administering the

public estate, and we repeat this in order to rebut claims by hon. members opposite. I will not dwell on that subject. One hon. member opposite said that these developments would have flowed as a natural consequence, irrespective of what Government was in power.

Mr. Thackeray: That is true, too.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. member for Rockhampton North—

Mr. Thackeray interjected.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I shall ignore the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton North.

Mr. Thackeray: You wouldn't know.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CAMPBELL: To use my own electorate as a yardstick in endeavouring to make a comparison, in the last few years the Government has installed sewerage in the three State Schools in the Aspley electorate, and I know that all concerned are very appreciative of this action. As I have pointed out previously, the complete failure to provide for future school sites in the Aspley electorate made it necessary to acquire five new sites in the last few years, and in addition the department has procured extra playing fields for existing schools.

Mr. Thackeray: What about the increase in population? Tell us all about that.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Rockhampton North to contain himself. I warn him for the last time. If he continues to interrupt I shall be forced to deal with him under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The Minister referred to the new buildings at the Chermiside Hospital to cater for neuro-psychiatric patients. This is an indication of the manner in which the Government's progressive policy makes possible a new deal for people such as these. I am not at liberty to discuss that matter under these Estimates, but I do wish to say that the buildings are of a very pleasing design and, being of the pavilion type, will blend well with the landscape when the whole programme is completed.

The people of Aspley are very grateful for the provision of the high school, which after one year's occupation will treble its enrolment. That is not peculiar to Aspley, of course; similar increases have taken place elsewhere. Nevertheless, the parents in the area are really appreciative, and they gave voice to their appreciation on Friday night last when the school had its first speech night. I also want to congratulate the department on the provision of the very fine play ing fields associated with this school. Over £5,000 has been spent in the conversion of a rather unattractive block of land into a first-class sports ground. The very good season that we have experienced has been a boon to the playing ground and it is

expected that full use can be made of it at the beginning of the next school year. This provision tends to foster in the minds of students a feeling of pride in their school, which is to be commended.

I want now, to raise a matter to which the hon. member for Bulimba referred when he contrasted the development of high-school grounds with that of primary-school grounds. We at Aspley are experiencing a problem in connection with the grounds of the new Aspley East State School. The opening of this school was quite timely because of the tremendous expansion of the area, and again it is greatly appreciated by the residents in the vicinity; but the condition of the school grounds presents a problem for the school committee. This being a new school, consequently, the committee was also new, and it had to start from scratch at the beginning of the year. In the short period it has been operating, it has made remarkable progress in the provision of amenities for the school but it has not the resources at its command to improve the school grounds in the same manner as an established school committee might do.

Mr. Lloyd: Do you think that they should be brought to the same condition as high-school grounds?

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. member can draw his own conclusions from my remarks. We hope that in the fullness of time it will be possible for the very good policy that operates in the case of high-school grounds to operate also in the case of primary-school grounds.

Mr. Lloyd: Do you know it was the policy of the Labour Government that primary-school grounds be brought into playable condition?

Mr. CAMPBELL: There is one school-ground with which I think the hon. member is familiar—

Mr. Lloyd: I did not mention any school ground. I said that the Labour Government's policy was to bring primary-school grounds into playable condition before handing the school over.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. member mentions the policy adopted by his Government in connection with primary-school grounds; I have referred him to one instance with which he is very familiar because it formed part of the electorate he represented before the redistribution. I refer to the school grounds at the Stafford Heights school. Here again we have a very pressing problem. The hon. member for Kedron said that it was the policy of his Government to make the grounds playable before the schools were occupied. In the first place—the hon. member for Salisbury made reference to the state of grounds before buildings were commenced—the unfortunate aspect of the Stafford Heights school grounds is that

all the good topsoil was bulldozed off to level the site for the construction of the school. As a result of that treatment, the school grounds were left with very little grass and the only large area suitable for playing was traversed by a quite deep gully. Yet the hon. member for Kedron says that it was the policy of his Government to bring the condition of school grounds to a playable state before they were occupied. He said that for four years nothing has been done.

Mr. Lloyd: I had it for two years; you have had it for four.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. member forgets that he said it was the policy of his Government to put school grounds into playable condition before a school was occupied. Something has been done to the Stafford Heights school grounds in an endeavour to resolve the problem. A tremendous amount of filling has already been placed in the gully, but this has not been sufficient to provide a level playing field. I am very hopeful that as a result of representations I made to the former Minister, and no doubt the representations I will be making before long to the present Minister, something can be done to assist this school committee. The hon. member for Kedron would know that that committee is not as affluent as some others in the area. Consequently it has not the resources of a committee like the Aspley committee to spend money on school-ground improvements which would qualify for departmental subsidy. I appreciate the problem; I realise it is a matter of finance. I also realise that if it became general policy hundreds and hundreds of primary schools throughout the State would qualify. Obviously that is the reason it is not done. I submit that there are cases with special merit and to which special consideration should be given. I hope something can be done about the grounds at both Stafford Heights and Aspley East schools. It was very pleasing that an additional three acres were recently acquired for playground purposes at the Aspley East school. But the land is very swampy and a tremendous amount of money will have to be spent on it to place it in usable condition. It is with the plea that something can be done to assist these school committees that I conclude.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (8.24 p.m.): I should like to pay a tribute to the officers of the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission in my area in the city of Townsville. Mr. Eric Gilbert, District Supervisor of Works, has always been helpful and courteous whenever I have had occasion to see him about any problem in my area. I can say the same about all his staff in the Department of Works. Whenever I have had occasion to ring the department I have always received the same type of courtesy. I think these things should be mentioned in a debate of this nature.

I believe that more help could be given on the architectural side of the department in Townsville. I am fully aware that there is a shortage of architects in Queensland, and obviously it is difficult for the department to send up there any more officers qualified in the architectural field. But we have a big area in Townsville and the department should endeavour to do something about it. Tony McNamara, who is in charge of the architectural office in Townsville, is a very cheerful man. Nothing is too much trouble to him. He has a tremendous pressure of work, from Bowen in the south, to the north of Townsville and out to the west, but he is still very cheerful and in spite of the pressure is always able to handle it. I do not know how he does it because he is short of staff. Nevertheless, by some sort of magic, he generally gets the plans out on time.

Mr. Davies: They won't give him extra staff.

Mr. TUCKER: We have asked for extra staff on several occasions, but there is a shortage of architects and possibly a shortage of draftsmen. I hope that he can be provided with additional staff, although, as my colleague has interjected, we in the North, are always unfortunate with staffing. That is the fault of this Queen Street Government, which always keeps the staff down here. The blame can be laid squarely at the feet of the Government, although possibly not so much at the feet of the new Minister because he is barely in the saddle and has not had time to look into the problems of his department. I am passing these thoughts on to him in the hope that he will take cognisance of the fact that we need additional staff.

Mr. Murray: Are not all the States faced with a shortage of this type of professional man?

Mr. TUCKER: I will not answer the hon. member for Clayfield at the moment; I will continue with my speech.

The Queensland Housing Commission branch in Townsville is ably headed by Mr. Arthur Dawson. He and the other district officers are very courteous and do everything possible to meet the demands placed before them. They do not have an easy job in Townsville because we still have a housing problem and many people requiring homes are allotted priorities. I am sure all hon. members understand that, with the housing position as it is, of necessity these officers must be pestered by people wanting homes. When I say they are pestered, I do not say it in a derogatory way because the people who approach the Housing Commission really need homes and something must be done for them. Arthur Dawson and his staff are always very co-operative and work in with the people to the best of their ability. It is not their fault if they have to carry out the policy of the Government and impose priorities; they do the

job to the best of their ability. In Townsville, Arthur Dawson is known affectionately as "Smokey" Dawson. I suppose everyone of that surname usually gets that nickname. However, he does a good job for the Housing Commission and is an excellent public relations officer. In his leisure hours he is very public-spirited and carries out a lot of community work. He has done a lot of good for the Housing Commission.

This evening the Minister said that an effort had been made to keep a balance between contract and day labour. So far as the A.L.P. and I are concerned, there should not be any balance kept between contract and day-labour work. I know my colleagues are of that opinion. As far as we are concerned day labour should get the lot and contracts should be dropped by the wayside; it is not a question of keeping a balance between the two. The hon. member for Aspley interjects and says the figures do not show that. I am about to quote some facts from independent people. Day labour has always proved its worth both in the speed of getting things done and in economy.

Alderman George Roberts of the Townsville City Council could not by any stretch of the imagination be called a Labour supporter or be said to make statements purely to back up our ideas. He is the chairman of the works committee in that council. Not so long ago he proudly stated that the council had saved many thousands of pounds by switching to day labour. I am sorry that I have not the newspaper clipping with me but I assure the Committee it can be found in the columns of "The Townsville Daily Bulletin". He pointed out that the council had often called tenders for various works, had regarded them as being too high, had eventually taken on the work itself under day labour and saved itself many thousands of pounds in each case. That cannot be said to be a remark made out of prejudice. I believe that in most cases the Townsville City Council would favour the present Government. It is a perfect example by an independent person of what can be done with a good day-labour force, and in Townsville we have a good day-labour force. I believe it could be strengthened a good deal if we did away with a lot of our contract work and handed it over to day labour.

Another must for day labour is continuity of employment. It causes industrial unrest among workers when men have to be put off when a job is finished. I mean by that 300 or 400 men of a labour force are brought together and at the end of the job 200 or 300 have to be put off because there is no work for them to move on to immediately. It is no good saying that does not happen. I have often gone with union representatives to see Mr. Gilbert about it. Admittedly, when a new project begins, the men are re-employed but that does not do them much good if they have to sit around a month or so between jobs.

Mr. Hughes: What do you suggest we should do about the situation when all work is carried out by the day-labour force and there is no work? What economic measures do you suggest should be taken? Would you carry them all on the pay-roll without working and have no retrenchments?

Mr. TUCKER: I think the barrowman should wait till he has the opportunity to stand up and make his own speech in a little while. What I am talking about at present is the need for continuity of employment. There should be planning so that when one job is nearing completion another is started. Take the laying of foundations, for instance. Sometimes the carpenters cannot go on to a job for that reason. The foundations could be well in when the carpenters are ready to move in. I have often spoken with Mr. Gilbert on this subject. He is a very loyal man. Often I feel he takes kicks that should properly come back down here to the South. I sometimes think Eric Gilbert takes the kicks for some of the lack of planning down here and the consequent lack of continuity. I pass that on not harshly but as something on behalf of the men in Townsville, and I speak for them. We do not want these stops and starts, just as we saw in the credit squeeze with Menzies' boom-and-bust sort of system. They would get that continuity of employment which would do much for the labour force in Townsville. I appeal to the Minister and his planning staff to see if that can be achieved. What we want is an easy flow of work to avoid trouble for the men in the North, with some being put off one moment and taken on again the next.

Sometimes in Townsville there are also irritating little hold-ups. Certain vital materials from the South do not arrive, and the labour force is up against a brick wall for the moment and cannot continue. Their feelings of frustration can be understood when they are unable to get on with the job. A little more careful thought and planning will eliminate these hold-ups. It should not happen with the frequency with which it does happen in Townsville, and union members have brought these things to my notice to see if something can be done about them.

There were some interjections a while ago about contractors. I want to show, by a question that I asked on 3 September, how work and planning can be mucked about by contractors. My question concerned the sewerage work being done at Stuart gaol, which provides a perfect example of what can happen when a number of people have their fingers in the pie. I refer to the Stuart gaol because in Townsville this matter is shared by the hon. member for Townsville South and me.

Mr. Murray: Buddies, eh?

Mr. TUCKER: I would not say that, but we realise that both electorates have something to do with public buildings in that area, hence my speaking on this subject.

I asked this question on 3 September—

"(1) When it is anticipated that H.M. Prison, Stuart, will be completely seweraged and to what point have the present works progressed?"

"(2) What was the date of commencement of the project and how many contracts have already been let with regard to this work?"

"(3) What was the original estimated cost of the scheme and what is the approximate actual cost to date?"

Stuart prison is not a very large place and only a few houses, occupied by warders, surround it. The question elicited the information that there are now eight contractors involved in the work, which commenced in August, 1961, and is expected to be completed in July, 1964. In other words, three years will be taken on a project of which the estimated cost was £48,550. The actual cost to date is £46,605. There is a job estimated to cost £48,000, or twice the estimated cost of the toilet block at the Belgian Gardens State School, which I think was about £24,000. Eight contractors are involved and the work is estimated to spread over three years. Already the actual cost to date is £46,605. There are still 10 months to go to the expected date of completion, so I imagine that the estimated cost will be far exceeded. If anyone wants to make a further check, it will be found in "Hansard" for the date that I have mentioned.

I do not think that that indicates that contractors are in fact as efficient as has been claimed, and it appears at the moment that the actual cost will exceed the estimate.

I wish to refer also to contract painting for the Department of Works and the Queensland Housing Commission. Both departments appear to accept tenders for contract painting that are far too low. Because of this, one can expect a shoddy job. Not many months ago I was called to a Housing Commission house in Townsville. The man was certainly hopping mad at the time. He had left home in the morning and when he returned in the evening he found all his furniture in the middle of the room, the refrigerator pulled out, and so on, and the whole of the inside of his house had been undercoated by two men in the time that he was away. He brought me out to see, firstly, the way in which the furniture had been left and, secondly, the way in which the undercoat had been applied. I do not claim to be an expert on painting, but it was obvious to me that the undercoating was very poorly done. It looked as if the men had gone round the house with a sponge filled with paint and just hoped for the best. That was one perfect but terrible example. All hon. members know that if the undercoat is not applied properly the rest of the job will be shoddy. I think that contract was let to an Italian firm. I remember that because one or two of the men who were interviewed could not even speak English.

Mr. Hughes: That would be done under the supervision of the Commission's architects.

Mr. TUCKER: They are so busy in the North that they do not have time to go round and inspect everything. They are given far more jobs than they can cope with.

I attended a meeting at the Currajong State School one Sunday recently and I watched a painter, apparently under contract, painting the school. Fine dust often collects under the eaves on a school; it is very dusty in Townsville and I could see the dust there. The man did not do anything about it. He simply moved up under the eaves and very blithely and happily splashed his paint on over the dust. I and others at the meeting watched and were absolutely appalled that this man was prepared to paint over dust under the eaves. Some people might think it was funny, but everyone at the meeting realised that good public money was being passed out to the contractor. The Government may be penny-wise at the beginning by accepting low tenders for contracts, but it will be pound-foolish in the long run because of the shoddy work that is done. If contractors are prepared to put on undercoats in such a shoddy fashion and paint straight over dust and dirt instead of getting rid of it first, the whole job must fail in a very few years. As I said, I believe that the trouble is, firstly, that low tenders are accepted from people who set themselves up as painters and, secondly, that the men who should supervise them have so many jobs to do that they are not in the race. Often the contractors paint right through the week-end, going for their lives and slapping the paint on. The finished job looks all right, but if we were there to watch the undercoat go on we would be appalled by what we saw.

When the Minister spoke of the new Ross River High School I interjected and said that I thought he might be optimistic. I hope that the high school will be ready for the opening of the school year late in January next. I want to say that all the parents in Townsville are watching this project and are very apprehensive as to whether or not it will be ready for the beginning of the school year.

Mr. Murray interjected.

Mr. TUCKER: It has been held back by the fact that the contractors initially did not get on with the job of filling the grounds. We badly need this high school because with the new syllabus there will be a great influx of children. It is not going to aid the Townsville High School one bit at present because it will take the present 7th graders and the Townsville High School will have the intake of 8th graders. We will still have the crowding at the Townsville High School as at present. I sincerely trust that the job will be hastened so that we can eventually relieve the present overcrowding at the Townsville High School. I ask the Minister to give it

No. 1 priority so that we can get the extensions to that high school completed and shift the Townsville High School holus-bolus, giving the children some air and playing space and allowing the present Townsville High School to be used as a technical high school. I ask him also if he will look at the ambulance buildings and the old school of arts, which are close to the technical high school, with a view to buying those buildings and using them as part of the new technical high school.

I understand the ambulance building is for sale, and the old school of arts has been vacated by T.R.E.B. These buildings would be a valuable adjunct to the new technical college, which is now known as Townsville High School, and would put the whole technical college under almost one roof. I believe it would be a very good idea. I do not know what the cost would be, but if it could be done it would have the effect of centralising all sections of the technical high school which are at present scattered, one being on the north side of Townsville and one on the south side. I understand that the Department of Works was looking into the matter with the object of acquiring some land for this purpose, so I put that suggestion to the Minister.

Extra accommodation and toilet blocks are being built at the Currajong State School, but I have been told in the last few days that instead of installing the septic system as was intended the present plan is to await the extension of the sewerage mains to the school. I understand that that may take 18 months. I ask the Minister through you, Mr. Gaven, whether or not that is a fact. We have been pushing for this facility for many years and I do not want to see it held up for another 18 months. That information may not be correct, but I do think it would be a very bad thing if this accommodation and the septic system were scrapped and the project held back for another two years. I believe the Townsville City Council would take that time to get the mains to the school and ready for connection. I ask the Minister whether that rumour is correct; I hope it is not.

The second point with which I want to deal is the Garbutt State school. I made representations about the toilets at this school, they are very inadequate for the children now attending it.

(Time expired)

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (8.49 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Estimates before the Committee. Before proceeding to do so I preface my remarks by extending congratulations to the hon. member for Barambah on his appointment to the Ministry. In doing so, I feel that I can rightly say that he personally enjoys the respect of members on both sides of the Chamber. I believe, as most other members do, that he has a sincerity of purpose and will bring an

appreciable amount of tolerance, understanding, common sense and ability to the position he now occupies. I know that he has made an outstanding success of his life as a member of the community and am confident that he will make a notable success of carrying out his ministerial portfolio.

In particular I should like to speak on certain aspects of the Department of Works and put before the Minister for his consideration some things that I think can be done and that I believe will be of benefit to the State. In debate such as this, one must adopt a common-sense attitude. Perhaps we may find faults; there may be some anomalies we want to draw attention to; at times there may be criticisms. In any event it gives us the opportunity to canvass the various requirements of the department. We can refer to some of its failings, as, rightly or wrongly, we see them. We can put suggestions forward in a spirit of constructive criticism. I hope that the Minister will accept what I say in that light. I put my suggestions forward for his consideration believing that if they are given effect to they will be of benefit to the State. Firstly, I believe that to a great extent a monopoly appears to be enjoyed by certain architects in carrying out the work of the Government. I know that Government architects carry out quite an amount of work, but it is also my understanding that certain architectural firms in the city carry out a tremendous amount of work for the Government. They appear to me to have a monopoly. I do not know that that is a good thing.

Mr. Bennett: Monopolies are never good.

Mr. HUGHES: I agree. I feel that it merits searching consideration, and as I go along I will enumerate certain points. Where such a monopoly exists I feel that a certain amount of apathy and dilatoriness could operate within the minds of those concerned because they have such a tremendous amount of work to do. In that way they lose the personal touch and influence, and incentive is lost. When there is such a tremendous amount of architectural work to be carried out it does not seem to be a good thing that this work should be given to only a few architects. By continuing to allow these big firms to monopolise the work we tend to keep keen young architects out. We are not giving architects in the city what is known in Australia as a "break". If they get a particular job of prestige or note, it often is the making of them because they have an opportunity to display their talents. If we are to have this monopoly in the field of Government architectural drawing and supervision, where are the many young architects in this city and State to get an opportunity to display their talents? For that matter, in addition to the keen young fellows, many of the older established architects do not get an opportunity. They seem to be simply brushed aside.

I have not spoken on this matter in the Chamber previously, but I have mentioned it to various people in government and public service. In my opinion it is well worthy of mention at this stage. A new Minister can take a completely new and impartial look at the situation. I should like to mention an instance. One could generalise all evening. In naming a particular firm I do not want it to be thought that I have an axe to grind. Indeed, I do not know any members of the firm or anyone employed by them, but I wish to cite an instance rather than generalise. I will mention the name of a firm that has carried out a tremendous volume of architectural work for the Government. It is Conrad & Gargett. This firm has carried out work on job after job. It is so well established that it would hardly need this continuity of work to keep it in business.

Mr. Bennett: As a matter of fact, they have too much work and very often they cannot attend to some Government work.

Mr. HUGHES: I will not make any charges along the lines that they have so much work that they cannot attend to it.

Mr. Mann: They are Liberal supporters.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not know their politics. I do not even know the members of the firm. I merely cite them because their case gives credence to my general submissions. I do not know any of their background or anything about their inability to carry out jobs because they have too much work. The point is that this firm is carrying out many jobs for the Government and getting the fees. It seems that a number of the larger firms are getting this work to the exclusion of many young architects, as well as established architects, who could well be given an opportunity to display their talents. It seems that a number of firms have a monopoly of Government projects. I am not suggesting that is by design, but I think it warrants further consideration. I repeat that I do not know any employee or member of the firm, but I cite their case because I was a member of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board for a number of years as an alderman of the Brisbane City Council, and this firm designed and supervised one fire station and when the next fire station came up for consideration, a number of members of the board, including some members of this Assembly who were on the board at the time, joined with me in stating that we should open it for competition to give an opportunity to young architects to compete for the job.

Mr. Bennett: Do you have anybody in mind?

Mr. HUGHES: I simply say that, when the subject came up, Conrad & Gargett happened to be the firm that did all the work for the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board and it was felt that as they had done the

previous job, which had not been carried out to the satisfaction of the board, we should get other architects.

When the new fire brigade headquarters at Kemp Place were to be built, it was again suggested at the board meetings that we should open the job to competition. The hon. member for South Brisbane has just asked me if I had anyone in mind. I have people in mind; I have all the young architects and the old-established architects other than this small preferred group. The people I have in mind should be given an opportunity. I believe that if they were given an opportunity they would prove themselves and go on to bigger things. The matter was discussed for quite a number of months at the various board meetings. It was thought most desirable that, in the best interests of the brigade, we should open it to competition because for the brigade to function properly and sensibly it must have a properly designed headquarters station. Although the architects do the drawings, they must be guided and advised by the requirements of the Chief Officer and other technical officers who lay down their requirements, and the architects then design the building around them. We sat in solemn conclave on this matter for quite some time, and although we advanced the principle we were defeated. Not only that, the job went to the people who, in the board's previous opinion should not be given more work—it went to Conrad & Gargett.

Mr. Bennett: Who outvoted you?

Mr. HUGHES: It is not a matter of who; it is the numbers as the hon. member well knows. In the book of records, it is not against whom or by how many you win that counts, but that you win. The simple fact is that as I thought there was such an important principle involved I resigned from the Fire Brigades Board. I felt that here was a wonderful key point for Brisbane to have a prestige fire station which would give an adequate opportunity for young architects to display their talents. It would not have cost the fire brigade anything more because competition would open it up. The idea has the approval of architects generally and of the chapter of the institute and it is in the best interests of those who desire the building and of the public generally. It would get way from the stereotyped ideas of one set of architects, and draw on the best brains, ideas and initiative of architects generally. Out of it might come a wonderfully worth-while result, both aesthetically and functionally. It would not cost the organisers any more because the winner of the competition would be awarded the contract.

Mr. Mann: Do you think those who subscribe to that view subscribe to Liberal funds?

Mr. HUGHES: I do not know who subscribes to Liberal funds. All I know is that

I enjoy a good deal of support both financially and from the voting populace of Kurilpa, enabling me to be here without any trouble.

Mr. Duggan: Do you realise that a lot of Brisbane architects are complaining about the entry of architects from Sydney and Melbourne carrying out work for English companies at the present time? They fear their intrusion here.

Mr. HUGHES: I remember the hon. gentleman making a similar statement in a speech, that English companies and investment companies from Sydney and Melbourne are possibly coming to Brisbane and I agree with the principle outlined; but we should not only give the opportunity to our own State's architects in the first instance; we should also, in both building jobs and in public works—the Minister might note this, too—not give the work by contract to a southern firm first but rather give the opportunity locally to established firms to have continuity of their labour force as well as the continued employment of their capital, and in addition hold out the carrot to southern firms to come up here and establish themselves. That is better than giving the contracts away over the border first.

The same remarks apply to architects. It is not so much a matter of looking after your own as of being downright practical. We are putting forward the slogan, "Buy Queensland made". Let us extend that to both design and construction. The State's best interests would be served by competition. It would give us a twofold benefit. It would give a large body of architects the opportunity to share in some of the work being carried out. We have many buildings to be erected, ranging from small schools and police stations up to university buildings. We would have a second benefit in the enthusiasm of architects to give of their best to prove themselves and to bring forward new ideas that could be incorporated in the buildings.

Competition has many virtues and the architects of the institute generally support the principle. I believe the State would benefit and over the years it would save the taxpayers money. It would open up the field by giving an opportunity to all young people and people with ideas and would help break what I understand is an existing monopoly of a few firms.

The Minister said that the day-labour force of the Department of Works at present comprises 3,315, not counting an inside staff of 621. I want to raise a rather controversial note with members of the Opposition on this, and to join issue with the hon. member for Townsville North on the subject of contract versus day labour.

Whilst it is a good thing to have some balance—and I believe that we must retain a day-labour force sufficient to meet urgent and maintenance work—I think that more tenders should be called for a greater amount

of contract work because of the competition provided. I suggest that tenders should be called for much more of the work carried out by the department and that the department itself should be a tenderer, which would make it compete with outside organisations. At the moment, as I see it it has an open cheque and does its work regardless of cost. I feel that what I suggest would be a good means of getting value for our money. After all, as custodian of the State's finances, we must consider that desirable.

Mr. Davies: The State Insurance building would have been completed if it had been done by day labour.

Mr. HUGHES: I can give the hon. member a few examples to contract that. I could continue all night making comparisons. I shall give one that will serve my purpose in a minute.

In contradiction of what has been said by hon. members opposite about reductions in the day-labour force and retrenchments, there are in fact now 3,315 employed compared with 1,742 in 1957. We hear much about apprentices, of whom there are now 419 compared with 291. Whilst it is heartening in some way to see stability in the general work force, I feel that there could well be some form of empire building going on within the Public Service. I feel that the department should police its own costs, and that can be done only by competing in tendering for Government work.

A policy of calling tenders would have beneficial results. If I quote him correctly, the hon. member for Townsville North said that he would be happy if no contract was ever let. That would lead to the extreme position in which an open cheque would be given to the department to use at it wished. Costs would then go haywire. Let us get away from being wedded to any particular socialistic principle. The hon. member for Townsville North suggests the wiping out of all contracts and the giving of an open cheque to the day-labour force regardless of number, efficiency, cost, and all other considerations. Is that being good custodians of the public purse? There must be a policing of costs, and the hon. member for Townsville North must readjust his thinking if he is to help to bring about the most beneficial effect. There are many hidden costs in day labour which I think he has failed to consider.

Mr. Tucker: Do you think the reports are wrong when they say that day labour compares more than favourably with contract work?

Mr. HUGHES: No, I do not say that the reports are wrong. I know where there have been faults both in contract work and in day-labour work—there can be faults on both sides—but if there are faults in contract work it is still up to the department to police the work by correct and adequate supervision. When a contract is let, the department must do something about supervising the work. I do not suggest letting

contracts regardless of supervision; I say that we must have some basis of policing costs. The department would be loaded to the hilt with ever-increasing numbers and would, in cases of economic necessity, have to carry a number of top men on full pay irrespective of whether or not there was any work to do. Eventually the stage would be reached where this became such a tremendous strain on the public purse that it could mean the abolition of free hospitalisation.

Mr. Tucker: What you want is contract work and supervision of it?

Mr. HUGHES: All work should be supervised, including day-labour work.

In the few minutes that I have left I shall give an example of a day-labour job. I refer to the atrocity of a job that was carried out by day labour on the overhead bridge at Dutton Park. Undoubtedly every hon. member had an opportunity of seeing it. I call it the "iron lung" bridge because I am sure it kept 50 men alive for about 18 months.

Mr. Sherrington: There was a delay in the supply of materials for that job.

Mr. HUGHES: It is the same old story. It was an atrocity of a job, and inside and outside this Chamber I have no hesitation in condemning the way in which the work was carried out. That is one job that can be compared with those done by contract, so it is obvious that there are faults on both sides. Let us look at this matter objectively and admit faults when we see them.

I believe that we should give an incentive to the workers in Government departments. When I was an alderman of the Brisbane City Council and a member of the Works Committee, we opened up the field a little. Instead of allowing day labour to carry out all the work for the council, we gradually increased the number of tenders and contracts, with very beneficial results to the council and to the ratepayers. Departments were then obliged to tender for the work in competition with outside organisations. The council's work force increased, but it increased to a more efficient and economic level. The departments did not have an open cheque and were disciplined by having to tender in competition. This provided an incentive for the men and, from the Chief Engineer down to the men shovelling concrete, they seemed to have a desire to show how good they were. To their credit, they did good work. They proved themselves in competition with outside contractors and carried out the work to the benefit of the council and the ratepayers.

Mr. Sherrington: Are you happy about the tenders for the electrical equipment—15 firms all tendering the same figure?

Mr. HUGHES: I am against monopolies. As I see it, that is a monopoly and a restrictive trade practice. However, another Parliament will deal with that matter.

Hon. members opposite spoke about giving credit where it is due, and in this instance I have given it.

The Housing Commission has a day-labour force, and in some instances day labour can carry out work more economically than private enterprise. It may have the boxing, patterns or machinery required to do certain small jobs and so be able to tender more successfully and carry out the work more economically. However, I believe that big jobs should be done by contract.

Again giving credit where credit is due—I think I am being fair and just—the Housing Commissioner paid tribute in his report to the work done by day labour. He said that during 1962-63 1,798 house units were completed, 175 of which were built by day labour, and that the cost of these 175 compared favourably with that of contract timber houses.

However, I ask that the principle enunciated by me be given consideration by the Minister.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (9.14 p.m.): I did not propose to enter into this controversy about the relative merits of day labour and contract work. I thought that that had been efficiently and successfully dealt with by the hon. member for Townsville North, and I did not expect that the hon. member for Kurilpa would dare to buy into the argument further.

I still do not propose to go into great detail about it, but certain references were made by the hon. member for Kurilpa to which I take great exception. In particular, I wish to voice a strong protest about the aspersions that he cast on those workers who worked on the overhead bridge at Dutton Park. It is one of the best bridges in Brisbane and is a credit to those who built it.

Mr. Hughes: What time! What inconvenience! What cost!

Mr. BENNETT: It is in my electorate. I am surprised that the hon. member for Kurilpa referred to it. It was a difficult task and one of the observations that I wish to make is that we so regularly see governmental bodies, who adhere religiously to contract work, giving it to day-labour gangs when it is a tough job. And this was a tough job. That bridge carries a large volume of traffic. Perhaps it is the scene of the greatest congestion on the south side during the morning and evening peaks. It carries a double set of tram rails as well as much of the interstate and inter-city heavy vehicular and semi-trailer traffic, and these men had to contend with this congestion during the whole time of the construction of that bridge. I think they did a magnificent task.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Mr. BENNETT: There are contractors out here now making a terrible mess of some of our roads.

Mr. Hughes: What about the pipeline job?

Mr. BENNETT: That still has to be tested. I am speaking of public works generally. Unfortunately, the Brisbane City Council, on one or two occasions, fell for this clap-trap about American contractors for public works. They introduced them with a machine worth £40,000 which they proposed to sell to the Brisbane City Council after testing it on particular roadwork. They are still on that road and it is like a battlefield in Flanders. The day-labour gang that was on the road, working with the normal equipment, antiquated as it is, was able to get through its section much faster than the Yanks with their machine. They are chewing up the surface, cutting out gas pipes and generally making a mess of things.

I think it is shocking that the reputation of a day-labour gang should have been smeared by the hon. member for Kurilpa. We should feel proud of their effort. They worked on half of that bridge at a time. They had to re-lay the tram tracks on at least three occasions in order not to interfere with the free flow of traffic. They had to contend with traffic going each way alternatively at regular intervals. They also had to contend with fairly busy train traffic underneath the bridge—both steam trains and diesel trains—and they worked under very hard and difficult conditions. I think they should have received danger money in addition to their ordinary pay, as well as incentive payments for the tremendous effort they put in.

Why any hon. member should want to single out one particular example, out of step with public opinion, I do not know. From their efforts these men have improved the free flow of traffic through that area and, as I say, it is probably the best suburban bridge in Brisbane. I admire the men who worked on it and I think we should feel proud of them rather than try to belittle their efforts.

There are some who hold the opinion that it is wise to have a certain amount of, not competition, but contract work, so that we can compare the efforts of the day-labour force with those of contract workers. I wholeheartedly subscribe to the day-labour principle and I cannot see the sagacity of paying a day-labour force as well as administration to supervise the efforts of private contractors. That is what the hon. member for Kurilpa said we should be doing. He admitted there are many weaknesses in the contract system but he says that they can be suitably ironed out by paying our top-line architects, engineers, public works administrators or public servants to correct the mistakes of private contractors without any deduction from the payment under the contract.

Mr. HUGHES: I rise to a point of order. I am being misquoted by the hon. member for South Brisbane. I did not say, "to correct mistakes". I said that we should have inspectors to supervise contract work.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I trust the hon. member for South Brisbane will accept the explanation of the hon. member for Kurilpa.

Mr. BENNETT: I do accept his assurance. In fact, I am assured that he was in a state of complete mental confusion. Having dealt with that I think the argument in favour of day labour so far outweighs that put forward on behalf of private contractors that I should not waste the few minutes at my disposal in pursuing the matter any further. It raised my ire to think that those men should have been "scotched" in the way they were.

It has been pointed out that the Minister is a new Minister. I congratulate him on his appointment. I have a little matter here which I wish to bring to his attention. It is little in comparison with the problems that will beset him as the Minister controlling that aspect of the State's development, but to me and the constituents I represent it is a very pressing problem at the moment. The Minister will have an opportunity to prove that he is all that the hon. member for Kurilpa says of him. Having read in the Press about it recently, and having been assured that there is a split in the Cabinet. I think it is apparent that there is a difference between senior members and junior members. As the new Minister is obviously one of the junior members I feel that I have a fair chance of persuading him successfully that a decision that the senior Ministers made before his entry to the Cabinet was unwise, foolish and short-sighted.

Mr. Ramsden: The only split in the Cabinet was over the type of rat-bait to use on you.

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. member had better be very careful. I would not talk too much about that matter if I were he.

The problem I wish to bring before the Minister's notice concerns the decision that Cabinet made, before his entry to it, to demolish the Brisbane South State school. We are vitally concerned about this retrograde proposal. I am not going to be bought off by the suggested proposal that it will be replaced by a technical training college. It is not that I do not desire to have a new technical training college in that locality. Indeed, I consider that is highly desirable and necessary, and I hope that it will be built there as soon as practicable. But it can be built—if it is intended to be built—without the removal of the existing Brisbane South State school.

Mr. Richter: Don't you know that that building was condemned 30 years ago?

Mr. BENNETT: What does the Minister mean by "condemned"?

Mr. Richter: Condemned by your Government.

Mr. BENNETT: What does he mean by "condemned"? Without casting aspersions on the hon. gentleman who made that interjection about the building being condemned, let me point out that that is a favourite layman's expression, having a complete misunderstanding of what the law says about a condemned building. When the law or an authority refers to a condemned building it does not actually use the word "condemned" at all. Seeing that we are issuing so many challenges in recent times—and there will be a few more issued yet—I challenge the Minister to show me any section of any Act in the legislation that we have in this Chamber that says that a building can be declared to be condemned. What he means is that certain requisitions have been served in connection with the building requiring its rejuvenation or certain repairs and remodelling to be done. It has not been condemned. For instance, Victoria Bridge was condemned before the war, if the hon. gentleman wants to go into that aspect of it. If I tried to tell Government members that Victoria Bridge was condemned before the war and was dangerous they would laugh at me, yet they ripped 9 inches of concrete off the whole of the surface because it was allegedly condemned. The use of the word "condemned" is so much tommyrot. It merely means that certain reports were put in which suggested that improvements should be done and remodelling should be effected. In any case, though the building was condemned 30 years ago, it has been a long time falling down. I readily realise that the school itself is obviously not of modern architecture; I realise, too, that it could well be replaced by a more modern building. However, I do not for one moment think that the building is dangerous; I know it is not. If any Minister is prepared to believe it will collapse any day, he should immediately resign his portfolio because he could be told anything.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Mr. BENNETT: It is adequate for classrooms. It could have a little more ventilation, which could be provided without demolishing the building. The point is that, at the moment, the Government cannot keep pace with the demand for capital outlay in the construction of schools required throughout the length and breadth of the State.

Mr. Windsor: Whose fault is that?

Mr. BENNETT: It is the Government's fault. Goodness me, how long has the Government to be in office before it stops harking back to what happened almost a decade ago? It will turn back to pre-war days to see what happened then. As was pointed out in an earlier debate, we are

living in a jet age which has come about in the last five or six years. The Government should think in terms of modern living and not of the time when children were taken to school in drays and sulkies. In this age six or seven years is a long, long time. As a matter of fact, there has been a terrific change in the Cabinet in that time; time has taken a heavy toll. Surely we can expect a big change in the administration of this State in six or seven years.

The point I am making is that, at present, there is a huge demand for capital for the construction of new schools that are urgently required. I am sufficiently public spirited to agree to wait for the construction of a new school in Brisbane South because we already have a usable school that is being used to good purpose. Let the Government spend the money in other electorates—even in country electorates—where there are no schools, rather than demolish one that is already there. When the Government satisfies the demand for schools throughout the State it can then consider the reconstruction of the Brisbane South State School. It is a poor approach to a problem to say that because a building requires a certain amount of corrective work, or because it requires a certain amount of maintenance work, it should be cut out entirely. That suggestion is causing great distress to the parents in the area.

I am telling the new Minister what we want, and I feel confident that we will get much better courtesy and treatment from him than from the Minister for Education, who refused to see a deputation of parents from that school who have worked so hard over the years to provide amenities in the grounds for the school children and have co-operated with Mr. Bailey, who is an excellent head-master. He has done much to lift the standard culturally and otherwise of the school; he has helped to assimilate New Australians and has looked after aboriginal pupils. Over the last five or six years the parents have worked very hard, but what courtesy did they receive from the Minister? If he was not prepared to change his mind, surely he should have been gentlemanly enough to meet the deputation and say, "We acknowledge your efforts; we know how you have sacrificed; we know that over the years we have had your co-operation, and, as Minister, I have been pleased that you have made my job easier by your co-operation. I will see you even though I may not change my mind." However, the Minister refused to see them; he refused to see a deputation of responsible parents of this community. For the benefit of the hon. member for Kurilpa, to show that I am not pushing my own electoral barrow, the president of the school committee lives in his electorate in Dornoch Terrace. I make that clear so that the Minister cannot think he is meeting some of my friends from the electorate I am proud to represent.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. member's suggestion did not get very far. Why didn't he bring it up in Caucus?

The present enrolment at the school is admittedly not very great, being some 263 children. However, many young parents have bought homes in the vicinity believing that they will be able to educate their children by sending them to that school, not thinking for one moment that one of Brisbane's oldest schools would be demolished within a few weeks of the end of a school year without any prior notice.

To get out of this pocket the Minister glibly says that they can go either to the Dutton Park State School or to the West End State School. That means that young children will have to negotiate heavy traffic hazards to get there.

Mr. Richter: How far would it be to the other schools?

Mr. BENNETT A mile to either one.

Mr. Richter: Out in the country they would have to go 20 miles.

Mr. BENNETT: I am surprised that the Premier-elect shows such a lack of understanding. I know that he is trying to outdo the Minister for Education for the Premier's position but he will have to show much more sagacity and intellectual application if he wants to get there. I am not arguing about the distance. I certainly agree that it would not hurt a school child to walk two or three miles to school, as I had to; but I did not have to walk through the heavy traffic that these children, some of them young toddlers, will have to—heavy vehicles, semitrailers, trams and buses. Annerley Road is regarded as a death trap for adults, let alone for children commencing school. If the Minister says that that is no danger and is nothing to worry about, I am afraid he has no regard for humanity.

Mr. Richter: Would not the same danger be there if the kiddies had to walk half a mile instead of a mile?

Mr. BENNETT: No. The Minister cannot catch on.

Mr. Richter: Of course it would!

Mr. BENNETT: I am terribly sorry for him. He is trying to say that the traffic hazards of walking along Queen Street half a mile would be the same as walking half a mile through Musgrave Park; in other words, it is the distance that counts, not the volume of traffic. I cannot understand his thinking.

Mr. Richter: No, you are not being honest.

Mr. BENNETT: In any case I can cite the names of children who have been knocked down by traffic in Annerley Road and parents are quite worried about their children having to go there. As a matter of fact, all the parents whose children presently attend this

State school certainly will not send them to the Dutton Park State School for fear of their lives. Despite all my efforts to have Annerley Road made safer for pedestrians—and I have been trying now for 18 months to two years and have been told by the Premier that a new traffic layout will be designed—the Government has done nothing.

Mr. Hughes: Although I agree with you on traffic hazards, you must admit that there are pedestrian-actuated lights there now which make the crossing very much safer?

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. member for Kurilpa would agree with me always if he were fair dinkum.

I suppose time will not permit me to press the matter much further but I am hoping that, as the Minister for Education disdains to meet the parents of these school children (why, I do not know; as I say, it is a school with a large percentage of New Australians and aboriginals; it is a school where New Australians have been happily assimilated into the Australian way of life and their parents are people of whom we could well feel proud) the new Minister for Works will not give them the same brush-off. I am not speaking about the Minister for Works, but about the Minister for Education—the senior Minister. I hope the new Minister will bring a new approach to the problem because I intend to present a petition signed by almost every parent of a child who attends that school, requesting that the school remain as it is. I think that the parents should be in a fair position to judge the work of the school and whether or not it is necessary.

There are a few other little problems with which I wish to deal. Whilst the Government has spent what might be termed a tidy sum on our courts and other buildings, I feel that the money has not been spent to great advantage in that we have not the result that there should be for the great outlay made. I think it fair to say that we have a hotch-potch or conglomeration of watchhouse buildings, which get their quota of drunks, and in that hotch-potch there are the chambers of Mr. Justice Hart, the District Courts, the Magistrates Courts and the C.P.S. Office, with wire over the building and the people working inside looking like a bunch of galahs in a cage.

Mr. Smith: Occasionally you get them there.

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. member for Windsor reminds me that he does go there occasionally, and no doubt he feels at home behind the wire.

This hotch-potch cost the Government at least £100,000, and that is no pin money. As I have pointed out on previous occasions, for that sum an edifice could have been built that would have done justice to the Government, Parliament, and the State, and

would have been a pleasure to work in. I realise that the interiors of the buildings are in many instances quite attractive and desirable, even though when jurors are being empanelled spectators have to be put outside because there is not enough room for them and the jurymen. I was embarrassed the other day in court when the judge asked one spectator to move away from the jury, even though the spectator was sitting in the seat provided by the architectural layout approved by this Government.

Then there is the police headquarters, familiarly known as the "Crystal Palace," built for no less a figure than £561,270. It never pays to convert a building in this way for something that is to be permanent and is to last as long as Queensland is Queensland. This building cost over half a million pounds, yet policemen there are getting some nasal trouble caused by dust still drawn in from the Red Comb establishment and no doubt also left there by the Egg Board, which once used the building.

The interior of the "Crystal Palace" is quite attractive, but completely unsuitable for its purpose in that already it is bursting at the seams. It is not large enough and does not properly accommodate the number of policemen required to work there. Detectives investigating suspects have almost to sit in each other's laps, and when using typewriters they sit almost elbow to elbow. The accommodation is completely unsatisfactory and it is a shame that so much money was spent on it instead of on the provision of a building specifically designed and constructed for use as a police headquarters.

(Time expired.)

Mr. RAE (Gregory) (9.39 p.m.): I should like to say to the new Minister that it is good to have him in this portfolio, and in offering my congratulations to him I convey also the congratulations of the people of the entire western area of Queensland. Not only do I convey them to him but most certainly to his department also. There is no denying the fact that if ever a change of face was accorded to an area of Queensland, it has certainly been by the Department of Works.

Nobody really could praise too highly its efforts and the resultant proof of them that we have today, and we must fully recognise the quality of sincerity and interest that the Minister's department has granted to the people in the western areas of Queensland. Although we, as members of this Chamber, are inclined to stress our own point of view on the subject that we have in mind—the fact that this may not be suitable to my way of thinking or that that may not be suitable to the scheme that you envisage—I believe that the Department of Works really deserves a big pat on the back from us all.

Hon. members opposite and hon. members on this side of the Chamber have raised many matters of interest. Far be it from me to say that what the last speaker said

is not correct or that what some other speaker said is not correct; but if some members honestly believe the nonsense that they talk, they cannot give very careful consideration to their statements. The Government has done a job in this particular field.

Mr. Bromley: A bad job.

Mr. RAE: A good job. The hon. member for Norman would not know, because no-one can truthfully deny that the Department of Works has done a wonderful job in Queensland.

Mr. Bromley: I was not referring to the Department of Works. I said the Government had.

Mr. RAE: That just shows the hon. member's retarded mentality. He will get over that.

The main change that it has been the good fortune of the people in the electorate of Gregory to experience came when the Premier came out to visit them shortly after my election. We had occasion to bring to his notice the conditions in which members of the Police Force were housed in Longreach, which was the main concern of the people at that time.

Mr. Sullivan: It was shocking.

Mr. RAE: It certainly was. It had to be seen to be believed.

Mr. Sullivan: There is a magnificent building there now.

Mr. RAE: My word! Having seen it for himself, the Premier realised that something had to be done. Sir James Heading came out with him, and soon afterwards Mr. Longland came out. Before one could bat an eyelid, things were happening. These improvements have not been confined to Longreach. The marked change in the attitude towards the people of the West is shown in the new public buildings to be seen in Winton, Quilpie and Boulia. As a matter of fact, one could go to Barcardine, Blackall or any other town and see in police headquarters, schools, hospitals and other public buildings the helping hand that has been extended to us all along the line.

Every inquiry that I have made of the department has been acknowledged, and I know of not one instance in which I could charge it with a lack of positive interest. It has at all times done precisely what the people living in my electorate require. Today school teachers, officers of various departments of the Public Service who require accommodation and other people requiring homes are all enjoying first-class amenities as a result of the work of the department.

Now let us go back and consider what we had before. I do not wish to go back too far because comparison is rather odious. However, hon. members can believe me when I say that today we have things that I feel certain, had the previous administration still been in office, we would still have been denied. I am quite certain of that because

they had so many years in which to do something that, had they been as sincere and real as they now wish to convey the impression they are, they would have done something. But they did precisely nothing. They have never done anything for the people in the West.

Mr. Davies: What rubbish! For a start, we put electricity out there.

Mr. RAE: Electricity my foot! It was put into one or two towns but we have now really gone ahead with all these facilities.

Mr. Davies: Why don't you be practical?

Mr. RAE: I am practical. The hon. member should be the last to raise these matters. I do not think he knows much of the State other than Brisbane and Maryborough.

When the Opposition had the opportunity as a Government of doing these things they did nothing. I have lived in the West all my life and I know that their whole outlook was, "It will do; it must do; it will have to go along." They did a small repair job here and there, which accounts for the buildings with which we are saddled today and which we are endeavouring to bring up to standard, in most cases involving the erection of completely new buildings. That has resulted from their being allowed to deteriorate over the years with just a little repair here and there. Their whole attitude towards the people of the West was that they had the position well in their grasp and would do just as they wished. And that is precisely what they did.

Mr. Davies: How melodramatic!

Mr. RAE: I am not melodramatic; I am telling a few truths, and the hon. member knows it. Under the present Government the change has been most marked as a result of the positive acceptance of these people's problems, worries and disturbances. These problems that affect the homes of the people who live there are being accepted by my Government and something is being done about them today.

Mr. Sullivan: And the last election indicated the people's appreciation.

Mr. RAE: There is no doubt about that.

The pattern of the thinking of hon. members opposite in the days when they had direction and control of the welfare of the people was evident in the colour scheme of the buildings and the design of the homes. There was absolutely no recognition of climatic conditions and problems such as dust storms. The homes were of shocking design and build, but we had to put up with them. I again venture to say that had this delightful change of Government not occurred we would be still putting up with them. So let us be fair and recognise fully a good job well done.

I heard the hon. member for South Brisbane speaking tonight about how the indication was that everything should be more or less under Government supervision or control—the day-labour set-up, for instance. That was the story he was endeavouring to put over. That is a story that does not conform with the intelligence of the hon. member. He is a pretty shrewd boy. Surely his thinking would not be along the lines that there should be a massive State-controlled work force. It is just too ridiculous for words. You must have a balance. That is why through the Department of Works we are being so successful in our undertakings. Tenders are called. If the tenders do not come within what the officers of the department consider to be a fair and reasonable estimate for the price of a job, they say, "We can do better ourselves." I congratulate those men. We have a work force of ability, prowess and knowledge of their particular game. They do it well. By the same token, so do many of the private contractors. They, too, are very able people. They can do an extremely good job. Great credit is due to them for many buildings and works for which they have been responsible in my area. Let us keep it that way. There is nothing more healthy than good clean competition. I commend the Department of Works for taking this attitude because it is a very sensible one. It surely must result in a better job being done at the right price. When you are handling public money it is important to ensure that this consideration is given to the various projects.

There is one specific request I should like to make for my area. I refer to the doctor's residence at Winton. I can remember having taken this matter up some time ago. The whole matter went backwards and forwards, which does not seem to have been necessary. Upon inquiry, I found that all the departments concerned were very happy to have this building erected, but I could not pinpoint where the hold-up was. Everybody said, "It is O.K., go right ahead with it." Therefore I want to know why the building is not being erected. I should like to have that work done as soon as possible.

Another very important inquiry in my area concerns the need to build a new court house and offices at Boulia. At the moment they are a shocking reminder of bygone administration. It would be very hard for me to describe them and I do not wish to take up the time of the Chamber in going into detail about them as I do not think any good would flow from it. If the Minister assures me he will investigate the matter, that will satisfy me and meet my requirements because the work of the Department of Works in the western areas of Queensland, and the previous Ministers, Mr. Richter and Sir James Heading, have been so well known. All along the line they have shown a fair and planned interest in the whole of Queensland.

Another thought that comes to my mind concerns the outstanding undertaking by the Government in instituting Cabinet visits to various parts of Queensland. That is responsible for more good and more achievements in this State than anything else that has been done. I wish to tie this point up with the debate because, to my way of thinking, it is the answer and the key to the success that we have achieved as a Government. It is one of the main moves that have been made. To think that the people in Quilpie, Longreach, Winton, indeed all the western areas, can see these men for themselves! I honestly believe the lack of that opportunity was one of the greatest handicaps in the thinking of the previous administration. I venture to say that if Labour ever get back in again, though it may be a very long way off, they certainly will never discard the value of Cabinet visits to the more remote areas of the State. I really and sincerely believe that this has been a wonderful step in the right direction. It is a good one, and shows boldness and a desire to meet and please the people. Having met them and heard their problems, Ministers have undertaken to do things for them.

At 9.55 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 15 October, progress was reported.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.