Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 31 AUGUST 1965

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

QUESTIONS

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL ACCOMMODATION.—Mr. Hanlon, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) How many applications in all categories for rental accommodation were lodged with the Housing Commission during the year ended June 30, 1965, and of these how many have been allotted rental accommodation in (*a*) houses and (*b*) flats?

(2) (*a*) How many houses were built for rental in the metropolitan area from July 1, 1964, to June 30, 1965, and (*b*) in which suburbs were they built and in what numbers in the respective suburbs?

(3) How many rental homes became available for re-letting in the Brisbane metropolitan area during the year ended June 30, 1965, and in what numbers in the respective suburbs?

(4) Were all re-let vacancies re-let?

Answers:—

(1) "Applications for State Rental Houses received during the period July 1, 1964, to June 30, 1965—

Points Priority	Metropolitan Area	Country Centres	Total
100 points ..	424	225	649
80 points ..	3	33	36
60 points ..	135	145	280
40 points ..	930	293	1,223
	1,492	696	2,188

In addition, during 1964-1965, 1,508 applications of nil priority—830 metropolitan and 678 country centres—were received. In respect of the metropolitan applications lodged during 1964-1965 offers of 532 houses and 100 flats were made during the year, of which offers 349 houses and 68 flats were accepted and 215 houses and/or flats declined. During that year a further 512 houses and flats were occupied."

(2) "(*a*) Excluding houses for the Armed Forces, 117 houses and 129 flats. (*b*) Acacia Ridge, 103; Inala, 7; Stafford, 4; Lawnton, 1; Manly, 1; Woodridge, 1; Dutton Park flats, 73; Kangaroo Point flats, 35; Holland Park flats, 21."

(3) "635 houses and 34 flats situated at—Acacia Ridge, 42; Camp Hill, 2; Cannon Hill, 1; Carina, 25; Chermside, 16; Coopers Plains, 23; Coorparoo, 1; Ekibin, 2; Enoggera, 6; Grovely, 17; Holland Park, 23; Inala, 371; Indooroopilly, 1; Manly, 2; Mt. Gravatt, 23; Salisbury, 2; Stafford, 32; Wellers Hill, 1; Yeronga, 1; Zillmere, 44; Dutton Park flats, 3; Holland Park flats, 28; Red Hill flats, 3."

(4) "Yes."

CIVIL DEFENCE ORGANISATION.—Mr. Dean, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) What steps have been taken to keep up to date the 139 persons reported as having attended the Macedon Instructors Course up to June, 1963?

(2) How many of them were women?

(3) What Civil Defence publications have been added to the library in Brooks Street during the last three years?

(4) Will he give an estimate as to how long he thinks it will take to establish a properly equipped, trained and efficient organization to cover the whole of Queensland?

(5) When does he propose to bring the Civil Defence Act, 1939-1942, up to date, in particular, to include provisions dealing with fall-out?

(6) When does he propose to increase the number of full-time staff to, say, half the numerical strength which has been functioning full time in the State of New South Wales for over five years?

(7) Would he consider it proper to express appreciation of the persons responsible for the planning and execution of the very good Civil Defence Exhibit at the Royal Show?

Answers:—

(1) "The Courses for Instructors at the Civil Defence School, Macedon, are most comprehensive ones and have been so based and constructed that it has not been necessary up to the present to provide for revision or refresher courses. Students completing their courses are permitted to take away precis of all lectures and other information bearing upon the course

attended. The services of qualified Instructors who have returned to Queensland from the School have been used as Instructors in the provincial centres of—South Coast, Boonah, Gympie, Murgon, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Atherton, Toowoomba, Warwick, Miles. Fifty-one (51) males and eight (8) women who secured Instructors' Certificates at Macedon have attended Instructional Conferences conducted by the Queensland Civil Defence Organisation. The services of these Instructors are being used in rotation in Indoctrination Courses and in Training Courses appropriate to their particular training."

(2) "Up to the present, there has been only one type of Instructional Course at the Civil Defence School, Macedon, for which women may be nominated. This has been the Welfare Course. Out of twenty-four (24) persons from Queensland who attended the Welfare Instructors' Course, sixteen (16) were women."

(3) "More recent additions to the Queensland Civil Defence Library include:—(i) Publications of the Civil Defence Organisation in America which are received through the Smithsonian Institute. (ii) Manuals upon all types of Signal Training and Procedure ordered from England. (iii) Handbooks for training in Rescue, Welfare and Communications issued by the Commonwealth Civil Defence Directorate. (iv) An interim handbook upon Radiological Monitoring produced by the Civil Defence Organisation of New South Wales which is being used by all States pending the printing of such a handbook by the Commonwealth Directorate of Civil Defence."

(4) "It is not possible to give such an estimate. Within Commonwealth policy and the means available, every effort is being made to train or educate persons in Civil Defence not only in Brisbane but in important provincial centres throughout the State."

(5) "The matter of Civil Defence legislation arose for discussion at a Conference of Civil Defence Ministers which I attended in Canberra on August 4. Constitution issues could arise upon this matter particularly in relation to the respective powers of the Commonwealth Government and of State Governments. The Conference was advised that Commonwealth Legal Authorities were examining these aspects."

(6) "The staff of the Civil Defence Organisation in New South Wales is not a suitable criterion for the basing of comparisons with the staffs of Civil Defence Organisations of other States. For one thing, the population of New South Wales is much larger than that of other Australian States. Moreover, the Civil Defence Organisation in that State attends to Rescue and allied work associated with floods and other disasters. In Queensland, this is a service which is undertaken by the Police Department."

(7) "Most certainly, and appreciation is also expressed to the same staff of officers and to ex-students from the Civil Defence School, Macedon, for organising and instructing the first group of Civil Defence Trainees over the past sixteen weeks. Members of this trained and registered Civil Defence Personnel completed their course at the Civil Defence Headquarters a little over a week ago. Expressions of appreciation are likewise extended to those persons who voluntarily attended and successfully completed this course and to those who will be attending future courses. I do appreciate also the interest of the Honourable Member for Sandgate in this important aspect of our community life."

HOURS OF OPERATION OF BILLIARD ROOMS.—Mr. Houghton, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

What are the lawful hours under the Art Union Regulations for the operation of billiard rooms?

Answer:—

"The hours of operation of billiard tables which are subject to "The Art Union Regulation Acts" are not set forth in the regulations. Regulation 56A applies the provisions of Regulation 46 (v) so that billiard tables are only to be provided or conducted on or at such premises or part of such premises and on such days and within such hours on the permitted days, as may be specified in the relevant permit. Thus it is enabled in specifying the hours on each permit to take into account all factors relating to the locality in which the billiard table is to be conducted, and the requirements of the particular Local Authority."

SALE BY GARAGES OF ABANDONED MOTOR VEHICLES.—Mr. Davies for Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

In view of the rapidly increasing numbers of unclaimed motor vehicles abandoned by owners in motor repair shops and garages, with serious financial loss caused to small or large firms alike and individual motor mechanics by high costs of parts and time spent in major repair work on these vehicles, will he consider allowing such firms or mechanics the right to advertise a lien taken out on these vehicles and to sell, conditional upon all reasonable attempts being taken to locate the owners, as existed under the repealed Workmen's and Contractors' Liens Act?

Answer:—

"The matters raised are receiving consideration."

SPECIAL COMMONWEALTH GRANTS FOR QUEENSLAND.—Mr. Lloyd, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) As the Commonwealth has made available special grants to various States, viz., to (*a*) New South Wales £5,138,000 for cattle tick control and research, (*b*) Western Australia £7,367,000 for Northern development and (*c*) to Western Australia £5,000,000 for water supply, has he negotiated with the Commonwealth for special grants to this State for improved water supply, Northern development and special purposes other than those related to Weipa, the brigalow land and beef cattle roads?

(2) In relation to which schemes were these negotiations directed and what was the Commonwealth's decision?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "Approaches to the Commonwealth Government on matters relating to Northern Development may be broadly divided into two categories—(*a*) Requests for investigation; (*b*) Requests for financial assistance. In passing I would point out to the Honourable Member that these investigations are important aids in the feasibility assessment of proposed projects and are undertaken by the Commonwealth at that Government's expense. Proposals placed before the Commonwealth Government outside those referred to by the Honourable Member such as Weipa, Brigalow and Beef Cattle Roads and on which decisions are awaited, are as follows:—(*a*) Requests for investigation: (i) Survey of potential storage sites on the Gilbert River by the Snowy Mountains Authority. (ii) Economic Survey by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Upper Burdekin Basin. (iii) C.S.I.R.O. Lands Surveys. (*b*) Requests for financial assistance: (i) Harbour dredging—Sugar ports of Cairns and Townsville. (ii) Harbour dredging for increased export trade—Gladstone. (iii) Subsidy for mineral exploration."

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL HOUSES IN BELMONT ELECTORATE.—Mr. Newton, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

In view of his press statement in *The Courier-Mail* of July 28, 1965, concerning the rents of the last twenty houses opened in my electorate will he advise (*a*) what project these rental houses are in and (*b*) what year they were built and made available for rental?

Answer:—

"(*a*) Holland Park and Mt. Gravatt. (*b*) Four in 1950; three in 1951; three in 1952; two in 1953; three in 1954; one in 1955; three in 1956 and one in 1957."

INSTALLATION OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS, HOLLAND PARK AND CARINA.—Mr. Newton, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

As traffic lights were approved for (*a*) the intersection of Nursery Road and Logan Road, Holland Park, and (*b*) Creek Road and Old Cleveland Road, Carina, by the Traffic Engineer's Department before it was abolished, will these lights be installed, by whom and when?

Answer:—

"(*a*) Following discussions with the Brisbane City Council, the State Traffic Engineer's Office prepared designs for traffic signal lights to be installed at the intersection of Nursery Road and Logan Road, Holland Park, after channelisation works proposed by Brisbane City Council had been completed. Subsequently it was learned by the Traffic Engineer's Office that the Council proposed to construct only the traffic islands in Nursery Road and to omit the works proposed in Logan Road itself. Consequently, the installation of the traffic signal lights could not proceed. Since the proclamation of the Traffic Acts Amendment Act, any further work at this intersection would now be a matter for the City Council. (*b*) As the section of Old Cleveland Road at the intersection with Creek Road is declared under the Main Roads Acts, the Department of Main Roads will be responsible for the installation of traffic lights and associated works at this intersection. The necessary plans are practically completed but it is not yet possible to indicate when funds can been allocated for the work."

CROWN LEASEHOLDS, GOLD COAST CITY COUNCIL AREA.—Mr. Gaven, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Lands,—

(1) What is the number of Crown leasehold allotments in the area controlled by the Gold Coast City Council?

(2) What is the Crown valuation for rental purposes and how much revenue by way of Crown rent is derived therefrom?

(3) What is the total amount of revenue received by the Crown by way of rent from all Crown lands within the City of the Gold Coast?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) "In my Department statistical information is not recorded in terms of Local Authority areas and because of this the data required by the Honourable Member is not readily available. Furthermore the compilation of that data will take some time. Arrangements have been made for the information to be prepared and I will furnish such information to the Honourable Member as soon as it becomes available."

TUCKSHOPS AT STATE SCHOOLS.—Mr. Walsh for Mr. Coburn, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

What are the new conditions, recently introduced, under which the Education Department will provide at the expense of the Department, or subsidize, tuckshops and their necessary equipment at State Schools?

Answer:—

"(*a*) When a new State Primary School building is being constructed and the enrolment at that school is expected to exceed three hundred (300) pupils, the Department of Works incorporate in the relative plans and specifications provision for the fabric of a lunch room, together with electrical installations and plumbing and drainage connections as now provided for a State High School, and the cost thereof be a total State responsibility. (*b*) When extensive alterations or additions are being made to an existing State Primary School building where the enrolment exceeds three hundred (300) pupils and no lunch room facilities exist, the Department of Works provide, as a total State responsibility, lunch room facilities as in paragraph (*a*) above. (*c*) When the fabric of a lunch room is provided at a State Primary School as a total State responsibility, then the cost of equipment, fixtures, utensils, and fittings shall be the total responsibility of the Parents and Citizens' Association and no Government subsidy shall be paid. (*d*) At State Primary Schools with an enrolment in excess of three hundred (300) pupils where a satisfactory lunch room has already been provided under the existing Subsidy Scheme, costs of improvements and additions to the lunch room shall continue to receive the usual 50 per cent. subsidy under the present scheme. (*e*) At State Primary Schools with an enrolment of less than three hundred (300), the cost of provision of a lunch room with equipment, fixtures, utensils and fittings, continue to receive a 50 per cent. subsidy under the present scheme."

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL ACCOMMODATION, AYR DISTRICT.—Mr. Walsh for Mr. Coburn, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

How many applicants for rental accommodation are registered with the Queensland Housing Commission in the Ayr district in the respective categories of priority and what are the dates on which those in the highest priority category were registered?

Answer:—

"100 points, nil; 80 points, nil; 60 points, 3; 40 points, 15; nil priority, 11. Of the three applications at 60 points, two (2) were lodged in November, 1964, one (1) in July, 1965."

STAFFING OF PASSENGER TRAINS.—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) What method is used to determine the number of conductors necessary to staff passenger trains such as the "Sunlander" and what supervision is provided for day coaches?

(2) Has any investigation been carried out into the desirability of fully-equipped buffet cars on these trains?

(3) When is it proposed to remedy the unsatisfactory platform levels on many stations, particularly on the Northern line?

(4) Is it a fact that ticket officers are issued with only £1 in change at the commencement of each week?

Answers:—

(1) "The Railway Award—State, 1965."

(2) "Yes."

(3) "Progressively."

(4) "No."

POWERHOUSES IN SOUTH-EASTERN QUEENSLAND.—Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

(1) What was the generating capacity of all powerhouses in the South-Eastern Queensland region in 1960?

(2) What additions have been made to date and at which powerhouses?

Answers:—

(1) "441,000 kilowatts."

(2) "Tennyson, 130,000 kilowatts; Bulimba B, 64,000 kilowatts. In addition capacity in the Wide Bay–Burnett Region, which is now interconnected with South-Eastern Queensland, was increased by 5,000 kilowatts."

NORTHERN ELECTRIC AUTHORITY AND REGIONAL BOARDS.—Mr. Walsh for Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

(1) Did the Northern Electric Authority recently announce that the price of electricity supplied to Regional Electricity Boards would be reduced and, if so, will any such reduction be passed on by the Regional Electricity Boards to the consumers? If not, why not?

(2) Upon the establishment of the Northern Electric Authority, what percentage of administration and responsibility was removed from the Regional Electricity Boards in the area?

(3) Was a comparative percentage reduction made in the fees and allowances received by members of those Regional Electricity Boards and, if not, why not?

Answers:—

(1) "Consequent upon a successful first year of operation by the Northern Electric Authority, the prices payable by the Cairns, Townsville and Mackay Regional Electricity Boards to that Authority for the supply of electricity in bulk were reduced as from July 1, 1965, in accordance with a determination made by the State Electricity Commission of Queensland. I am assured that electricity supply consumers will obtain the full benefit of this reduction. In all areas it is assisting in offsetting the rising costs of wages and materials which are outside the control of electric authorities. As a result the Regional Electricity Boards concerned have been able to adopt Budgets for the present financial year without any increase in tariffs, and, in certain areas where tariffs have been relatively higher, some reductions have been effected. In addition, it will be practicable for all Boards to support their programmes of electrical development to a greater extent than would otherwise have been possible."

(2) "The division of responsibility between the Northern Electric Authority and the Cairns, Townsville and Mackay Regional Electricity Boards cannot be expressed in percentages. The Authority took over generation and main transmission from the Boards and the Boards continued to expand their distribution systems and services to consumers. With the rapid growth in demand for electricity in North Queensland and the widespread extension of electricity supply systems, responsibilities in both spheres are growing rather than diminishing, and will continue to grow."

(3) "The fees and allowances of members of the Boards have not been altered, and knowing the valuable work they are performing I can see no good reason why they should have been."

SUPERVISION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN ON ORGANISED BUS TRIPS.—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) As many parents have expressed their concern to me on this matter, will he give consideration to the provision of adequate supervision of children on organised bus trips from high schools and primary schools on sports days, etc., to relieve the concern of these parents for the safe and assured return of the children to their schools?

(2) As the pupils of the Banyo High School who were involved in the recent bus off-loading incident had paid a return fare, was any action taken in relation to the non-fulfilment of the bus proprietor's contract?

Answers:—

(1) "Adequate supervision has always been provided. The provision of supervision cannot always be extended to meet remote possibilities. A repetition of the isolated incident referred to is most unlikely and necessary action will be taken in that direction."

(2) "Appropriate action is being taken in relation to a refund of fares in connection with the incident in question."

WATER-BORNE FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT, BRISBANE RIVER.—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

In view of the potential danger to wharves and other shipping on the Brisbane River created recently by the out-spill of oil on to the river and the presence of two oil refineries on the banks of the river, does he not consider the provision of water-borne fire-fighting equipment urgently necessary?

Answer:—

"I would remind the Honourable Member that water-borne fire-fighting equipment is available in the Port of Brisbane on the Queensland Tug Company's tugs *Fearless* and *Coringa*, each with a capacity of 850 gallons per minute and three small departmental tugs with a combined capacity of 720 gallons per minute. Fires on wharves or on ships tied to wharves are most effectively dealt with by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade land-based equipment where land access to the wharf is available. Land access is available at all Brisbane wharves except the crude oil import wharves of the two oil refineries. It will be necessary for these wharves to become virtually self-contained with fire-fighting equipment and the Amoco Refinery has agreed to do this. Discussions on this subject are continuing with the Ampol Company. The water-borne fire-fighting equipment available in the Port would make a satisfactory contribution towards fire-fighting operations in the Brisbane River or Moreton Bay which could not be reached from land."

EYE DEPARTMENT, NORTH BRISBANE HOSPITAL.—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

As a new eye department at the North Brisbane Hospital has been contemplated for some years, can he give any indication when this department will be established there?

Answer:—

"There is no accommodation available at present in the North Brisbane Hospital for the establishment of an eye department. The provision of suitable accommodation for this purpose is being kept in mind for consideration in connection with future building programmes at that hospital but as the building requirements of some existing departments of the Brisbane Hospital with prior claims must firstly be met I am unable at this juncture to indicate when the eye department can be established there."

HOLLANDS SHIPPING SERVICE TO GULF PORTS.—Mr. Inch, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

Relative to the recent investigation undertaken by the Assistant Under Secretary, Mr. Lee, into complaints by the Burke Shire Council and other interested parties regarding the service provided by Hollands transport to the Gulf area,—

(1) Does the report submitted by Mr. Lee indicate that these complaints are substantially correct?

(2) What measures will be adopted to rectify existing anomalies in the service?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "During his on-the-spot investigation, Mr. Lee found that certain aspects associated with the transport of goods to Gulf centres required improvement. These were taken up by him personally with the contractor in Cairns during his tour of investigation. The principal complaints were in regard to the unsatisfactory type of vessel used on the Normanton to Burketown and Mornington Island run and the absence of notification of despatch and arrival of transported goods. There were also complaints that freight charges on some goods were higher than those which prevailed under the previous contract, and some minor complaints regarding the condition of goods on arrival at their destination. I am advised that Keith Hollands Shipping Company is constructing a steel vessel in Cairns to replace the *Cook* on the service between Normanton, Burketown and Mornington Island. According to present progress, this vessel is scheduled for commissioning before the end of September. It will have a 5½ feet draught fully laden, and will be 67½ feet long. The new vessel is designed to carry 60 tons deadweight and will have 100 cubic tons capacity, i.e., 4,000 cubic feet of space, below deck. The appointment of agents at Burketown and Normanton by the Keith Hollands Shipping Company is considered desirable and this matter was taken up with the Shipping Company. However, my latest advice is that the Company, despite approaches to responsible persons at both Normanton and Burketown, has so far not been able to secure a response from them as to their acceptance or otherwise of an agency at those centres. There has been criticism that some freight rates are higher than those which obtained during the previous contract. Under the present method of transporting goods by road from the Cairns area to Normanton and Burketown, the rates generally are better than previously, as goods in most instances are delivered direct to consignees in those towns and are received in much better condition and without the losses which previously occurred through extra handling and transhipment. An anomaly in freight charges was brought to notice following the investigation, and this has been rectified by the Government by a decision which takes effect from September 1, 1965. This involves the restoration of a concessional rate for one ton lots and over of heavy and bulky items such as cement, flour, potatoes and onions, salt, sugar, and fencing materials. The rates on these ton lots will be reduced by £1 10s. 6d. per ton from Brisbane for single consignments from one consignor to a consignee and £1 15s. per ton for similar consignments from the Cairns area to the shire areas of Carpentaria and Burke and to Mornington Island. It is obvious from Mr. Lee's investigation that there is now a wide acceptance of the new service in the locality as a better service than the old shipping service."

PROCLAMATION OF TOWNSVILLE UNDER CLEAN AIR ACT.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) Will the Director of Air Pollution Control confine his attentions solely to the Brisbane area or is it intended that he will also periodically visit other areas of the State?

(2) If such visits are contemplated, will Townsville be given first priority and will it be necessary to await such a visit before that city can be proclaimed under the Clean Air Act?

Answers:—

(1) "From time to time the Director of Air Pollution Control will visit all parts of the State where secondary industry is situated."

(2) "It is anticipated he will visit Townsville before the end of the year. At a meeting held last week, the Air Pollution Council decided that no other areas should be proclaimed under the Clean Air Act until the Director had visited the area or areas concerned and had submitted his recommendations to the Council."

TRAINING OF PSYCHOLOGISTS.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

In view of the apparent shortage of trained psychologists for work in such places as child guidance centres, is the relevant faculty at the Queensland University designed to train students to be psychologists in the industrial field only and persons desiring to work in the firstmentioned field must seek further training outside the State? If so, can this position be rectified?

Answer:—

"Students in the Department of Psychology in the University of Queensland are not trained in the industrial field only. Specific training is included in the administration and interpretation of mental tests, the techniques of interviewing and guidance and the diagnosis of psychological problems in social and educational adjustment. It is not correct to say that

persons graduating from the University of Queensland must seek further training outside the State before being competent to hold posts in such places as child guidance centres."

OPERATIONS OF T.A.B.—Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) How much money has been invested on gambling through the medium of the T.A.B., in each year since its inception?

(2) What are the estimated costs per week of the administration of the T.A.B., and the agencies?

(3) Are these costs met by deducting a percentage of moneys invested and, if so, what is the amount taken from each unit invested?

(4) What is the total amount of unclaimed dividends and to what Department is this money channelled?

(5) Are any arrangements being made for the paying out to successful punters on the same day as the races are run at (*a*) metropolitan and (*b*) country agencies?

Answers:—

(1) "The amount of money invested with the T.A.B. since its inception each year is as follows:—Year ended June 30, 1963, £4,210,777; 1964, £9,709,364; 1965, £13,905,071."

(2) "The cost per week for the administration of T.A.B. is available from the last Annual Report published to June 30, 1964. This report shows the annual cost as £599,638, which is £11,531 per week."

(3) "These costs are met by a percentage deducted from money invested in accordance with Section 65 of the Racing and Betting Acts. The amount is the same as allowed for the cost of operation of totalisators on racecourses. It is 5¼d. in respect of each 5s. unit for metropolitan meetings and 6d. for provincial meetings. The amount derived by the above deductions met expenses and also provided a margin of £308,697 for a distribution as net profit to 212 racing and trotting clubs throughout Queensland."

(4) "The total amount of unclaimed dividends in respect of the T.A.B. turnover for the year ended June 30, 1964, was £45,468. This amount was paid to the Commissioner of Stamp Duties for credit to the Consolidated Revenue Fund."

(5) "Excluding the Metropolitan area and certain principal cities in Queensland, all dividends are available for payment to successful punters on the same day as the races are run. In the case of the metropolitan area and certain principal cities, dividends are not paid until the following day."

MEDICAL GRADUATES FROM QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY.—Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) What are the numbers of doctors who graduated from the Queensland University in the years 1960 to 1964, respectively?

(2) How many student doctors in their various years are attending the University at present and what is the estimated number expected to graduate successfully?

(3) What is the average number of students who drop the medical course each year?

Answers:—

(1)

	"Total Pass Degree
1960	67
1961	67
1962	103
1963	93
1964	93"

(2)

"——	Brisbane	Townsville	Total
Year I	250	17	267
Year II	224	..	224
Year III	162	..	162
Year IV	124	..	124
Year V	123	..	123
Year VI	150	..	150
Total	1,033	17	1,050

The estimated number expected to graduate under present conditions is 860."

(3) "The average drop out each year during the past six years has been 75. However, this drop out occurs mainly in the first three years of the course; there is little drop out in the clinical years IV, V, and VI."

HOUSING COMMISSION ACCOMMODATION FOR MIGRANTS.—Mr. Bromley, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) In view of the fact that it is over two years since the then Housing Minister, Mr. Hiley, announced that the State Housing Commission would abolish the waiting time for migrants to obtain homes for rental or purchase, why is it that migrants still have to wait from eight to twelve months and more for allocation of Commission accommodation?

(2) Will he detail the present system of points priority for (*a*) rental accommodation and (*b*) home ownership?

(3) How many applications are received weekly for (*a*) State rental accommodation, and (*b*) the home-purchasing scheme, together with their priority rating, and how is the system of priority rating arrived at and points allocated?

Answers:—

(1) "The Honourable Member refers to a previous practice by which families from overseas were required to be in Australia for six months (of which three months had to be in Queensland), and families from other States to be in Queensland for three months, before a rental application would be considered. This special period of disqualification—which had no relation to the family's housing needs—was abolished. Migrants from overseas and other States, if they have a dependable work opportunity, are now subject to the same scale of priority as applicants of local origin."

(2) "(*a*) Rental priority points are allotted on the following scale:—100—Families facing ejectment from present dwellings or homeless, living in tents, huts or similar unsuitable accommodation. 80—Families living in premises condemned by local or State authorities. 60—Families separated owing to lack of accommodation. 40—Families living under overcrowded conditions or sharing houses with other people. Nil—Families adequately housed and not facing ejectment. Three points are added for each child. (*b*) An applicant owning his own land may apply as soon as he obtains title deeds and the application proceeds through the stages of house design, calling and acceptance of tenders and house construction. Persons desiring to select Commission sites and have houses erected to their nominated designs, for purchase, are dealt with on a 'first come, first served' basis and this applies to persons desiring to purchase houses erected under group contracts, having regard to the availability of a suitable house in the locality desired."

(3) "(*a*) See my reply today to the Honourable Member for Baroona. (*b*) Average 22. The priority for a rental application is primarily determined from the information declared by the applicant and from his supporting documents, and by an inspection of his current accommodation, if relative, and by such further enquiries as the Commission considers appropriate."

REPAIRS TO HOSPITAL BRIDGE, MACKAY.—Mr. Graham, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

In view of the serious annoyance that is being caused to the inmates of the Mackay Base Hospital by the noise that is created by motor traffic passing over the loose planking on the Hospital Bridge over the Pioneer River, Mackay, will he have immediate action taken to have the bridge repaired in order to remove the nuisance?

Answer:—

"Arrangements will be made for the Main Roads District Engineer to have an inspection made and to prepare a scheme for tightening the deck planks."

CAMP SITES ON GREEN ISLAND.—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

In view of the Answer of the Minister for Lands to my Question on August 19, 1965, will he agree to the issue of permits and the necessary facilities to be provided to allow camp sites on the eighteen acres of Green Island designated as a National Park?

Answer:—

"Previous permits to camp on Green Island were granted in respect of that part of Green Island held under lease. In view of the tourist development which has taken place it has not been practicable to continue camping within this area. Regarding the small area retained as a National Park it is desired to keep this area in its primitive state for the use and enjoyment of all visitors to Green Island, and it is not available for campers."

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTAL ACCOMMODATION, CAIRNS.—Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

(1) How many applications for rental housing accommodation are presently lodged through the Clerk of the Court at Cairns with the Queensland Housing Commission?

(2) How many rental homes became available for re-letting in the Cairns area during the last fiscal year to June 30, 1965, and to date?

(3) In what numbers are the outstanding applications in the respective categories of priority?

(4) Over the past five years how many houses were erected for rental and in which suburbs of Cairns?

Answers:—

(1) "100 points, 4; 80 points, nil; 60 points, 6; 40 points, 35; nil priority, 47."

(2) "Seven to June 30, 1965; none to July 31, 1965."

(3) "See (1)."

(4) "Twenty-six houses were completed on Commission land at Earlville, Edgehill and West Cairns and all are now home-ownership. In addition 13 houses were completed on applicants' land in various suburbs."

NEW MILLSTREAM BRIDGE, RAVENSHOE.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

In view of the increase in road transport on the highway between coastal towns and Gulf areas and the unsafe condition of the low-level bridge over the Millstream at Ravenshoe, when will work commence to replace this bridge with the proposed new structure?

Answer:—

"Plans for the new bridge over the Millstream at Ravenshoe are well advanced and it is proposed that construction will be put in hand as soon as possible after the plans and estimates have been approved."

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Burdekin River Authority for the year 1964-65.

Registrar of Co-operative Societies for the year 1964-65.

Literature Board of Review for the year 1964-65.

Queensland Tourist Bureau for the year 1964-65.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Order in Council under The Companies Act Amendment Act of 1964.

Regulations under—

The Local Government Superannuation Act of 1964.

The Apprenticeship Act of 1964.

Statute under The University of Queensland Acts, 1901 to 1960.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

FIRE PROTECTION IN METROPOLITAN AREA

Hon. J. D. HERBERT (Sherwood—Minister for Labour and Industry) (11.32 a.m.), by leave: Statements have appeared in the Press attributed to Mr. George Healy, the chief officer of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, to the effect that the public in this city are not provided with maximum fire protection.

Further, Mr. Healy is reported as having said that most units in Brisbane have to work at fires with only half the men they should have. Mr. Healy is alleged to have also attacked the method of financing the activities of various fire brigade boards, which he said often resulted in fire stations being gravely understaffed.

These reports appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 27 and 28 August, 1965, and were referred to in a "Courier-Mail" leading article yesterday. As hon. members will appreciate such statements, if correct, coming from such a responsible and experienced fire officer as Mr. Healy, would warrant close examination and investigation.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board thereupon convened a special meeting on the afternoon of 27 August, the same day as the report appeared in the Press, to discuss the contents of this statement, and I have now been informed, through the Chairman of the Queensland State Fire Services Council, that the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board has informed him that at no time has Mr. Healy complained that the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was understaffed or ill-equipped. On the contrary, on a number of occasions Mr. Healy has stated that the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was, in fact, the most efficient brigade in Australia.

In regard to the alleged statement of Mr. Healy that, and I quote—"most units in Brisbane have to work at fires with only half the men they should have"—I feel I must inform hon. members that it is known that, of the capital cities on the mainland, Brisbane has the greatest number of fire-fighting personnel per 10,000 head of population.

The following figures will speak for themselves:—

Capital	Officers	Firemen	Total Fire Fighters	Population of City	Number of Fire Fighters per 10,000 of Population
Brisbane	98	350	448	663,000	6·8
Sydney	345	1,150	1,495	2,300,000	6·4
Melbourne	243	818	1,001	2,061,000	5·1
Adelaide	70	200	270	608,000	4·4
Perth	77	176	253	457,000	5·5

To bring up the strength of the other capitals (ex. Brisbane) to the Brisbane ratio of fire coverage, they would need (approx.) additional fire-fighting personnel—

	men
Sydney	92
Melbourne	348
Adelaide	144
Perth	59

I have received advice that the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, at its meeting yesterday afternoon, discussed this alleged statement with Mr. Healy, and I have now received advice that Mr. Healy, in a written report to the Board, stated that he was astounded and dismayed to read in "The Courier-Mail" of Friday and Saturday last what purported to be an account of remarks made by him to the Conference of Fire Protection held in Melbourne last week. Mr. Healy further states that he has consulted his legal advisers and, as a result, a certain communication has been sent to the Editor-in-Chief of "The Courier-Mail".

Furthermore, Mr. Healy adds that he did not in any way criticise the metropolitan or any other fire brigade, and he did not even suggest that the Brisbane station was undermanned.

In view of the correspondence addressed by Mr. Healy's legal representative to "The Courier-Mail", the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board has informed me that it offers no comment at this stage.

I feel I must also inform hon. members in regard to the exact position concerning fire brigade funds referred to in "The Courier-Mail" in its leading article yesterday, when, amongst other things, it stated:—

> "The Brigade cannot be allowed to operate inadequately on insufficient funds. Brisbane, with many closely-built suburbs containing houses of timber construction, cannot afford to take risks."

Inquiries made by me reveal that never at any time have representations been made to the Government by any fire brigade board that it cannot operate efficiently on account of insufficient funds.

Naturally, all fire brigade boards, like all other Government departments and semi-Government departments, are always seeking the maximum funds which they can obtain with a view to further improving and developing their operations. However, the amount is governed by the moneys which can be made available for fire brigade purposes by the Government from the total funds available to it, having regard to the overall commitments of the Government. This contribution was fixed by the previous Labour Government at one-seventh, whilst one-seventh is contributed by local authorities and five-sevenths by fire insurance companies.

The system of contributions from Government, local authorities and fire insurance companies has operated since 1921 in Queensland, and is consistent with the method of financing fire brigades in all other Australian States and in New Zealand. Whilst the amount cannot be disclosed at this stage, the Government contribution for fire brigade purposes this year will include an increase over last year which, on a percentage basis, will be more than the general increase which has been approved for Government departments generally.

FORM OF QUESTION

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) having given notice of a question——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The last portion of the hon. member's question—in fact, the whole of it—appears to be very much out of order because of the extraneous matter contained in it.

Mr. BENNETT: I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that my Country Party friends would like to know the answer to it.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Resumption of Debate—Fourth and Fifth Allotted Days

Debate resumed from 26 August (see p. 171) on Mr. Newbery's motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (11.54 a.m.): In speaking to the motion before the House I should like first to comment on what was said this morning by the Minister for Labour and Industry concerning a reported statement by Mr. Healy, Chief Officer of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. It seems to me that the Minister, in common with many insurance companies which have predominant representation on the board, has been thrown very much on the defensive in this vital matter. He endeavoured to show that in Brisbane, the capital city of Queensland, there are proportionately more firemen protecting the interests of the public against fire than is the case in the other capital cities of Australia. He forgot—perhaps conveniently—to mention that in Brisbane, with its large geographical area, it is essential that there should be comparatively more staff than is required in the other capital cities.

A very important point that appears to have been missed by the Government in adopting the defensive role that it is playing at present is the very grave lack of adequate fire protection in many buildings in Queensland, particularly public institutions and hospitals. I have drawn attention to this matter in the House over the past four years, but the warnings that I have given have been ignored by the Government. After receiving advice from a qualified fire engineer from overseas following his investigation of public institutions and charitable organisations, I found it necessary to warn the Minister for Health, who was then in control of fire-fighting services, of the very great danger that existed in many of the convalescent homes for aged people that were operating under the Commonwealth scheme. That warning was ignored. I also gave warning at that time that many hospitals in Queensland had inadequate protection from fire. However, many of them are no better off today in that respect.

I read Mr. Healy's reported statement, and it seemed to me that his reference was not so much to understaffing as to the fact that officers within the fire brigade service were not being promoted because insufficient finance was available to enable them to be paid at a higher rate. I go further and say that the training of many fire brigade officers is inadequate, and that there is a need for a clearly defined system of training to enable fire officers in Queensland to become qualified as fire engineers and understand completely the fire protection measures that are taken in charitable institutions in overseas countries, measures which are obviously not taken in this State.

I congratulate the hon. member for Cairns on the excellence of his maiden speech in this House. I am sure he will become a strong advocate for the development of the riches of the northern areas of the State and ensure that the people living in that area receive the representation they deserve. He will make many more contributions of a similarly high standard to debates in this House.

I compliment the hon. member for Mirani upon his victory in the recent by-election, and I commend him for the compliment he paid to the Labour candidate who opposed him, Mr. Matt O'Neill. It was a very fine gesture on his part. Mr. Matt O'Neill has been connected with the sugar industry and its associated organisations for many years. He has given wonderful service to the people of Queensland and to the sugar industry, and I believe that the tribute paid to him by the hon. member for Mirani was richly deserved. Not only has Mr. O'Neill taken a keen interest in the sugar industry; he has also been a very active member of the Australian Labour Party over a very long period. In my opinion, the increase in the number of votes cast for the Australian Labour Party in the Mirani by-election can be attributed to Mr. O'Neill's ability and the esteem in which he is held in the electorate.

One of the features of the Mirani campaign was the great activity on the part of the Liberal Party. It is quite obvious that the advocates of the sophistry of free enterprise who comprise the Young Liberals section of the party, who represent overseas capital and are now dominating the thinking of the Liberal Party, are determined to spread their influence through every town and city in the State until eventually they destroy Country Party influence in Queensland.

The Country Party in Queensland was not formed as an anti-Labour party set up to continuously attack the Australian Labour Party. In fact, when the Country Party organisation was initially formed in Queensland there was a report in the South that because of good Labour Government in Queensland it was unnecessary to form a State Country Party in this State. But it eventually became necessary for the primary producers to organise themselves not against the Labour Party, but against the big merchants in the State who were exploiting their labour and industry. They became not an anti-Labour organisation but an anti-merchant organisation formed to protect themselves against the machinations of these people.

The hon. member for Clayfield is continually attacking the land tenure system in this State. He is one of the bright disciples of the "new look" in the Liberal Party which is endeavouring to brainwash primary producers in an endeavour to infiltrate as far as possible into the provincial towns and cities of Queensland and, by spreading this sophistry of the freedom of private enterprise, to combat some of the semi-Socialist legislation that has been introduced in this Parliament over a number of years and has reacted to the great advantage of primary producers in Queensland. These attacks are being pursued insidiously regardless of any arrangement that may have been arrived at between the State Treasurer (Mr. Hiley), the hon. member for Toowong (Sir Alan Munro) and the Premier in regard to three-cornered contests when preferential voting was introduced in this State. The State Treasurer and the hon. member for Toowong attended the Liberal Party Conference on the South Coast and were lambasted by Senator Sherrington, who is President of the State Liberal Party, and others who have organised themselves in an effort to spread the influence of the Liberal Party despite the arrangement that was made several years ago.

The picture is being made very clear at the present time. It is evident that these people do not intend to follow the lead of the stronger Country Party in this State but are attempting to take over the whole of the organisation of that party. They will not be content until Country Party influence is completely destroyed and they have taken over the Country Party's role in the provincial towns and cities in Queensland.

I feel that not only the primary producers but every person in Queensland at the present time should take grave warning against this sophistry of free enterprise ever becoming the controlling factor in Queensland since it would mean the destruction of all primary producers' boards in this State. There is an article in "The Courier-Mail" of 25 June of this year reporting the Liberal Party Conference on the South Coast. Under the heading, "Caution on Commodity Boards is Urged", it reads—

> "Surfers' Paradise—The Liberal Party annual convention last night urged the State Government to consider carefully all aspects of any proposal to create a commodity marketing board.
>
> "Mr. Lickiss, M.L.A., Mt. Coot-tha, said that Queensland, because of former socialistic government, had a press-button attitude to the creation of commodity marketing boards.
>
> "Mr. R. V. Jubb (Clayfield) . . ."

one of the friends of the hon. member for Clayfield, no doubt—

> "said Queensland had six times as many marketing boards as any other State.
>
> "The Boards did not hesitate to ask the Government for onerous and heavy control to exercise their authority.
>
> " 'Where does this party stand in regard to these boards?', he said.
>
> " 'They pay no tax. Do we want non-taxpaying boards to succeed at the expense of private enterprise?' "

In other words, all that the primary producers themselves, and Labour Governments, have done in past years will be thrown overboard

if the Liberal Party is ever in a position to implement the decision of its conference on the South Coast in June of this year.

Mr. Campbell interjected.

Mr. LLOYD: The hon. member for Aspley would be very much in favour of a continuation of the Egg Marketing Board, but he is a lone voice in the Liberal Party. I doubt very much whether he would have the strength to withstand the challenge from the hon. members for Clayfield, Mt. Coot-tha, Mt. Gravatt and numbers of others—the faceless men on the executive of the State Liberal Party at the present time. Already we have heard that Mr. Porter is to come into this House—assuming he wins the seat of Toowong, which I have no doubt he will do. The faceless men of the Liberal Party are no longer content with the tame-cat attitude of the Treasurer and Sir Alan Munro towards Country Party domination. We know that the Treasurer and the hon. member for Toowong will be retiring at the end of this year. Then we will see the strength of the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Industrial Development. No longer will the Minister for Industrial Development be defeated in Caucus by one vote for the leadership of the party. When Mr. Porter arrives here the Liberal Party headquarters will ensure that the seats of the retiring members are filled by people who will do what the State Liberal Party executive wants done in accordance with its policy.

The hon. member for Clayfield levelled a vicious attack at the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. McEwen, concerning his statements about the Commonwealth and State Governments "selling the farm" and grabbing the wealth of both primary production and industry. That attack was made because the State Liberal Party wants to see the whole of the nation's production developed only by overseas capital. It wants you to sell our assets so that we can continue our industry, but if we do that we will eventually finish up bankrupt. Both the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Prime Minister have emphasised the point that if we "sell the farm" we must eventually finish up with a bankrupt business. We must have Governments that are strong enough to insist that the people of Australia shall retain an equity in this country's resources, and I admire the Deputy Prime Minister for his forthright statements. He should not be subjected to such attacks from a Right-wing conservative Government controlled by people like the hon. members for Clayfield and Mt. Coot-tha when he is trying to protect future generations of Australians against the loss of their heritage.

The hon. member for Mt. Coot-tha and others have launched an attack on the establishment of commodity boards in this State. Their attacks are not confined to these matters. Once the Liberal Party gains control I have no doubt that it intends to allow private enterprise—or its idea of private enterprise—to take over completely. When the present Government was first elected to office in 1957 we saw the so-called ideal of the old story of supply and demand; in other words, the old economic principle of laissez-faire applied. Price control and rent control were against the Government's policy. We have seen all the anomalies that have crept in because of the Government's refusal to intervene in any way in the prices being charged to the consumer for the various commodities he needs and the prices being returned to the producer. On one hand the producer is losing because of the Government's failure to intervene with price control or the supervision of prices, and on the other hand hardships are being created for the consumer.

The Commonwealth Government's recent action in increasing the price of spirituous liquors by about 1½d. a nip resulted in prices being increased by the brewery industry, or someone connected with it by approximately 4d. a nip. Where can we find a worse instance than that? This is one case where some form of intervention by Governments is necessary to ensure that the people are not exploited. The practice has spread to many other fields. The one I have mentioned is very topical today, but in the past there have been many other instances which have been even more blatant.

I believe that a former Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr. Morris, was one of the followers of the State Liberal Party executive line. There is no doubt that the infamous 1961 industrial legislation for which he was responsible, and the present attitude of the Government to it, have had a bad effect on industrial harmony in Queensland. That legislation deleted from the industrial law of Queensland the acceptance by industrial tribunals that their judgments should be based on equity and good conscience, and the substantial merits of the case. That concept was excised from the legislation when the previous Act was repealed. The new legislation included in its interpretation the idea that judgments in all industrial cases should be based on the prosperity of the economy—whether it was the Queensland economy or the national economy. I repeat that under the previous legislation every determination by the Industrial Commission or the Industrial Court was based on equity and good conscience, and the substantial merits of the case. That was part of the preamble to the legislation that was repealed by this Government. It was a very important preamble because it enabled industrial tribunals in Queensland to adjudicate in good conscience on the substantial merits of any case put before them for determination.

The powers of the Industrial Commission and the Industrial Court were drastically ringbarked by the 1961 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. As a result, there has been an upsurge of continuous industrial unrest, as industrial tribunals are unable to mediate, conciliate, and adjudicate to the satisfaction of all parties. We find now that

all parties, employers and employees, have completely lost confidence in the industrial tribunals established under the Act. Not more than a week ago an employers' association viciously attacked the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commissioners for being "tame cats" when pressure is applied by the trade unions. On the other hand there is criticism of industrial tribunals by trade unions which have to take whatever action they can to ensure that their just demands are met. A complete inquiry is needed into the industrial law of Queensland, but the Government is refusing to conduct one. In April of this year the Premier promised that he would call an inquiry immediately to investigate the anomalies in the 1961 legislation, but nothing has yet been done. In answer to a question by me several days ago, the Minister for Labour and Industry said that the Government's policy would be made known at a time suitable to it.

These are matters of the utmost importance. We are told that we are living in a developing State, yet much of the development that is taking place is caused purely and simply by the handing over of the State's assets to overseas companies for overseas investors to exploit, to reap the profits of the future, without any equity being given to the people of Queensland—to the ordinary people, the backbone of the community. The average wage-earner on an income of £18 to £20 a week is facing continual price increases. Rents have increased so drastically following the lifting of controls that it is necessary for the average Brisbane family to pay up to £8 a week for a reasonable home. These matters are of grave importance to the people of Queensland and will no doubt be considered by them at the next State election.

The effect of this Government's policies is that much of the work which normally would be assisted by way of non-repayable grants or direct Commonwealth loans repayable over a period has been financed by the State Government itself. When introducing the first Appropriation Bill the Treasurer said that much of the work being carried out in this development has had a very definite impact on the State Budget. Our reaction on this side of the House to the expenditure of £1,500,000 or £2,000,000 a year of State loan funds on the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa railway line was to warn the Treasurer that there would be an impact unless the Government was able to secure greater financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government.

There is ample provision for this State to receive much greater assistance than it has for the much-needed £4,500,000 development of harbour facilities in North Queensland, housing at Gladstone, or housing necessitated by the development of the Moura-Kianga coalfields. The people who are developing these projects will reap the greatest profits from exporting the raw or partly-processed material from Queensland. They are the people who will make the profits. Yet because of the limited funds which this Government is accepting for housing purposes in Queensland, it has to build these homes at tremendous cost to itself. The position has been reached at present where thousands of residents of this State are unable to secure homes because none are being built for them. They cannot obtain advances under the housing scheme owing to the adverse budgetary position in this State because the demands for necessary developmental projects have to be met by the Queensland Government instead of, as has been the case in other States, particularly Western Australia, by direct non-repayable grant, or a 50 per cent. Commonwealth loan, repayable over a period of fifteen years. At present certain State activities have been hampered. The Government has not the finance to undertake the necessary programme of works to give to the people the essential services that people in other States enjoy.

There is great need for an acceleration in Government expenditure on education, which today is one of the most important features of social service and industry in this country. Every State realises that there is a shortage of skilled labour. Technicians and technologists are not available for immediate absorption into industry to allow industry to expand as it should if Queensland is to become competitive with other countries.

We often hear accusations levelled at trade unions and workers that they do not do sufficient work, but when the conditions and high costs of production operating in the United States of America are compared with those operating in this country, it is quite apparent that all that is wrong lies in management, not in labour itself. We will never have the technicians and skilled tradesmen until management is geared to enable improved methods of production to be put into effect in this country, and until the education system is geared to enable students to be readily absorbed into the industrial development which must come to Australia within the next few years if we are to survive as a nation. Queensland in particular has slipped far behind many of the other States in this respect. In the last few years 350 secondary and primary schools in Queensland have been closed.

One small feature of the expenditure on education in Queensland, of which the Minister for Education has attempted to make much propaganda, is the transportation of school children. In this matter, Queensland can be compared with Western Australia. Both of these States are similar geographically, and each is sparsely populated. In Queensland, 11s. 8d. a head of population was spent in 1962-63 on transporting children to schools, and the present figure would not be very different from that. In Western Australia the comparable amount is 28s. 5d., or approximately 17s. a head more than is spent in Queensland. That is quite a considerable increase.

School transport services are of great importance in country areas in which children have to travel great distances to attend secondary or technical schools. In many provincial towns in Queensland children must leave home at about 6 o'clock each morning and do not return till about 7 o'clock in the evening. No man working for his living would accept conditions that extended his day to 12 or 13 hours. Today's children provide the future leaders of the community, and they are entitled to the best possible treatment. If the present situation is allowed to continue, the standard of education of young people in country areas will gradually deteriorate, and the State cannot afford to allow that to happen. One of the first essentials in this State is an increase in the amount spent on transporting children to school.

Over the years there has grown in Queensland a combined State-school and private-school system of education. One of the greatest necessities for Queensland in the next few years will be, I believe, to provide a lead for the gradual reaching of uniformity in education systems throughout Australia. I believe that such a move will have to spread from Queensland and become Australia-wide. The Prime Minister has denied during the past 12 months that such standardisation is necessary; from a national point of view, I believe that it is. There must be, in the first place, uniformity here, with standardisation of syllabuses, textbooks, teaching, and all facilities available to children attending both State and private schools.

In 1913 a Labour Government instituted what was then called a student's allowance to assist children to receive adequate education. At that time the allowance was £12 a year for students living at home and £30 a year for those living away from home. That practice has been followed in Queensland for a long time. This matter must be given much more than mere political consideration because it involves basically the future of Australia.

Mr. Walsh: You will have to get Fred Chamberlain's approval.

Mr. LLOYD: I do not think that for anything that I am going to say the approval of Mr. Chamberlain, or anybody else in the South, will have to be obtained. What I am stressing is the very great necessity for uniformity in the education system. To achieve this, all schools in Queensland must be brought under the supervision—not the control—of the State education authorities. Doing this will cost a lot of money. The standard of teaching in Queensland schools must be standardised, and we must be sure that the teachers who undertake the task of teaching children technical subjects or ordinary secondary subjects through to the tertiary level are qualified to undertake it. It is the duty and responsibility of the Government to ensure that qualified men, whether from other States or overseas, are offered salaries sufficiently high to entice them to Queensland to undertake this very important work. If this is to be done, a large sum of money will have to be provided.

As I said earlier, in 1913 a student allowance of £12 a year was paid to parents whose children were living at home, and those whose children were living away from home were paid £30 a year. I have no doubt that at that time those allowances covered adequately any cost that may have been involved in sending a child to school. But the cost of textbooks and the cost of education generally must not be allowed to debar the Government from meeting the needs of the community. We must not have one section of our children receiving a sub-standard form of education while another section receives education from highly qualified teachers. The stage will be reached where many of our children are receiving their education in classes of 56 to 60, which will not give them the higher standard of education that is needed if Australia is to progress.

Let us look at school enrolments. In 1964, 259,560 students were enrolled in State schools in Queensland and 81,023 in private schools. I do not think we can dodge the fact—it seems to be inevitable—that if the Government accepted the responsibility of absorbing those 81,000 students into our education system by means of the construction of schools, the training of teachers to staff them, and the provision of all the materials required, it would cost it much more than the £24,000,000 spent on education during the last financial year. We must face this fact, and we must search for some means of bringing about uniformity within our educational establishments.

In my opinion, the first step that should be taken is to increase the student allowances for children attending school, thus lessening the burden on parents. Let me make a comparison. In 1913 the allowance was £12 a year for a student living at home and £30 a year for a student living away from home. The basic wage was first fixed in Queensland in 1921, and it was then £4 5s. a week. The present basic wage in Queensland is £15 9s. a week. If we accept a standard of £12 a week in 1913 for the student's allowance, then the allowance should now be in the vicinity of £50 a year for a child living at home instead of the £16 a year paid by the Government.

On this very important question I have prepared figures that give some indication of the attitude of former Labour Governments to this question, and I think they should be included in "Hansard". In 1928 the student allowance was reduced from £12 to £4 per annum, but textbooks were provided free. In 1929-32 there was a break in Labour Governments, with the Moore Government in office, and in the recovery period up till 1943 the Scholarship allowance was increased to £5. In 1948 it was increased to £7.

It is quite obvious that from 1943 onwards Labour Governments increased student allowances, and this is in marked contrast to the attitude of the present Government. From 1943 to 1948 the basic wage increased from £4 18s. a week to £5 17s. a week, an increase of 19 per cent., and the Scholarship allowance was increased by the Labour Government from £5 to £7, an increase of 40 per cent. From 1948 to 1950 the basic wage increased from £5 17s. to £6 19s., an increase of 18 per cent., but in 1950 the Labour Government increased the Scholarship allowance from £7 to £10 a year, an increase of 44 per cent. From 1950 to 1954 the basic wage rose from £6 19s. to £11 5s., an increase of 61 per cent., and in 1954 there was a further increase in the Scholarship allowance, from £10 to £16 a year, equivalent to 60 per cent., almost equal to the percentage increase in the basic wage. It will be seen that for the period from 1943 to 1954, when the student allowance was last increased by the Labour Government, the percentage increase in the allowance was in excess of the percentage increase in the basic wage for the same period.

Now let us consider the period of office of this Government, from 1957 to 1965. The Scholarship allowance for students living at home in 1965 still stands at £16 a year. The excuse for this, given by the Minister for Education, has been that with the abolition of the Scholarship examination an extra year's grade has been transferred to the secondary schools, and that, with no Scholarship examination, all children graduating from primary school to any secondary school will receive the student allowance. I do not consider that a sufficiently good excuse for the Government's refusal to increase the student allowance beyond what it was in 1954 in order to bring its value in 1965 to what it should be when one considers the decreased value of money.

The Scholarship examination was abolished for very definite reasons approved by the Australian Labour Party. When it was abolished in 1961, we on this side of the House urged the Government to make sure that the student allowance would be transferable to all children attending secondary school and that was done because it was too hot politically to be refused. But at the present time the Government should increase the student allowance by an amount sufficient to bring its value from what it was in 1954 to what it should be in 1965. In other words, instead of paying £16 a year to every child attending a secondary school the Government should be paying at least £31 a year, the level at which it should be if it was increased in accordance with the basic wage increases over that period.

(Time expired.)

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (12.31 p.m.): I wish to associate myself and my constituents with the motion so ably moved by the hon. member for Mirani. After listening to the hon. member, I feel sure that the great majority of hon. members reached the same conclusion as I did, namely, that he proved himself to be well versed in the problems of his electorate and those of the State generally, and that he will be a valuable acquisition to this Chamber in its deliberations.

The motion of loyalty was seconded by our friend the hon. member for Ithaca who, I understand, is retiring at the end of this Parliament. During the time he has been in this House it can be truthfully said that he has endeared himself to every hon. member. Because of his practical approach, his tremendous industrial ability, which he has illustrated throughout his lifetime, and his Christian approach to all problems, this Parliament is much better for his tenure of office. We sincerely hope that he will be blessed with a very long, contented and happy retirement.

On behalf of my constituents, I say "Thank you" to His Excellency the Administrator for the fine, lucid speech that we listened to with great enjoyment at the opening of Parliament. It made us appreciative of the fact that we should have a man of such tremendous ability to step into the shoes of His Excellency the Governor during his absence as Administrator of the Commonwealth. A shadow is cast over us when we realise that Sir Henry Abel Smith and Lady May will be retiring in a few months and returning to the Old Country. During the time he has held his high and important office Sir Henry Abel Smith has served the Queen and the State of Queensland, indeed, Australia, in an excellent manner, and on his return to his homeland he will be a great ambassador for this State.

I wish to place on record my personal thanks to the Premier and the Cabinet for making possible the recent tour of South-east Asia by a Parliamentary delegation. I am sure all members of that delegation will join with me in expressing appreciation. I believe that in its travels it did a tremendous amount of good for Queensland and Australia. I think all members of the delegation will agree when I express the opinion that as Australians we stand ace high with most people in South-east Asia. They hold us in the greatest respect. We are a part of South-east Asia, and therefore our future lies along the same path as theirs. In future they will be of tremendous assistance to Australia from an economic, defence and cultural point of view. It would be wise for such trips to be repeated in the future. We came back far better equipped to deal with the important problems associated with trade and economy in the southern hemisphere than we were previously.

In the limited time at my disposal I intended to touch on probably one of the most important factors associated with the economy of Queensland and Australia.

Mr. Tucker: Drought.

Mr. EWAN: Yes, drought. Possibly the hon. member would not fully understand the economic significance of drought. I feel it is my duty to endeavour to educate some of those people who have no concept of what drought means to the economy of Queensland and its people. I want to record some figures in "Hansard" to show the people of the State that drought is nothing new. We have had droughts ever since Queensland has been Queensland, and we will have more of them in the future. It behoves a responsible Government and a responsible section of the community to take whatever remedial action is possible to endeavour to alleviate the effects of drought on the economy of the State and the nation.

Let us turn back to 1895, when there were 6,822,000 cattle and 19,857,000 sheep in Queensland. Following the historic 1902 drought we lost 3,858,000 cattle and 9,518,000 sheep. In 1910 we had a total of 5,132,000 cattle and 20,332,000 sheep. The next drought was in 1915 and, as a small boy, I have a very vivid recollection of it, having played a part in helping to save stock. In that drought we lost 351,000 cattle and 4,382,000 sheep. In 1921 Queensland had a total of 7,047,000 cattle and 18,402,000 sheep. Between 1921 and 1926 there was a succession of bad years which culminated in the breaking of the drought in 1927. During that period we lost 1,919,000 cattle and 1,760,000 sheep. In 1934 we had 6,053,000 cattle and 21,574,000 sheep. In the drought commonly known as the 1935-36 drought we lost 103,000 cattle and 3,514,000 sheep.

I come now to what is probably the daddy of them all in my lifetime, with the possible exception of the existing drought. I refer to the drought that extended from 1942 to 1946. In 1942 we had 6,466,000 cattle and 25,650,000 sheep, which was an all-time record number of sheep depastured in Queensland. By the beginning of 1947, when the drought broke, we had lost 521,000 cattle and 9,566,000 sheep. More sheep were lost then than in the 1902 drought. We come then to 1950, when we had 6,734,000 cattle and 17,478,000 sheep. When the drought broke at the end of 1951 we had sustained a loss of 300,000 cattle and 1,315,000 sheep.

In 1964 we entered the present drought, which I am now discussing particularly. We then had a total of 7,402,000 cattle—an all-time official record for Queensland—and 24,337,000 sheep. What the position will be when this drought breaks is open to conjecture; we cannot express an opinion until we are given the figures. We do know that there has been some alleviation of the drought, particularly on the Darling Downs and in the coastal areas. However, we do know from history and from figures I have quoted, that in the six major droughts between 1902 and 1951 we lost a total of 7,052,000 cattle and 30,055,000 sheep. To those losses we must add a shortage of lambs and calves, and reduced wool and meat production.

Let me give hon. members some indication of our acceptance of our responsibility in the taking of remedial action in this drought. A deputation waited on the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. J. McEwen, on 12 August, I think it was. A report of the deputation reads—

> "The deputation pointed out that increasing investment in the rural industries, which was dictated by the rapid growth of the Australian economy, would be matched by an increasing level of risk. Whereas the 1946-47 drought was estimated to have cost the nation some £300 million in loss of exports, the present drought, and those which could be anticipated in the future, would involve an even heavier loss."

That gives to the uninitiated some indication of the economic effects a drought has on the overall well-being of the population of the Commonwealth.

The report continues—

> "The deputation told Mr. McEwen that it will press for an early statement from the Commonwealth Government on the provision of Commonwealth funds to meet the emergency state measures designed to alleviate hardship and to avoid stock losses in the present drought situation."

And later—

> "The deputation noted that the drought had shown an urgent need to increase the rate of rural investment in farm fodder and water storages, bores, watering points and irrigation on properties. It urged Mr. McEwen to give close consideration and support to the Committee's proposal that a double deduction of income taxation be granted for those purposes.
>
> "The deputation also expressed concern at the evident inability of the Commonwealth Development Bank to satisfy the needs of primary producers by providing long-term, low-interest credit for conservation works."

That is what the deputation said to the Deputy Prime Minister. I support those remarks in their entirety.

I commend the Premier for making representations to the Federal Government only a couple of days ago for grants to alleviate the intolerable position facing many people in the drought areas of Queensland, remembering that this State Government has already spent a considerable amount in its endeavours to alleviate the incidence of drought.

As reasonable people, it is not much good talking about droughts unless we can suggest a method to ameliorate or mitigate their effects. No hard-and-fast rules can be laid down because there are so many different districts that call for varying methods owing to the diversity of conditions existing in those districts. We have the brigalow area, the

mulga area, the Mitchell grass area, the coastal area, and the Darling Downs area, all needing different and diversified methods of drought mitigation. So it is no use endeavouring to lay down any hard-and-fast rules for formulating a scheme for the amelioration or mitigation of future droughts.

In considering any scheme, the economics of the preservation methods of livestock must be fully considered before any action can be taken. Is anyone more capable of considering the economics of the proposition than the man who is running the property—the stock-owner himself? We can assist—I shall indicate later in my speech what I think can be done to assist—but, after all, the economics of the proposition must be determined by the individual himself in the free exercise of his judgment based on the experience he has gained over the years he has been in a particular district and on a particular property.

He is faced with deciding what steps he will take to preserve his livestock. Some men will consider their livestock as their stock in trade, just the same as the storekeeper or the merchant, while others, probably more sentimental and not so realistic and because of that very sentimentality and love of livestock, will go to no end of trouble, and even bankrupt themselves in the process, to try to prevent the intolerable and horrible sight of stock dying day after day from malnutrition brought about by drought.

Despite all efforts, and all the action that may be taken over the years on drought mitigation by the provision of watering facilities which in the grazier's opinion, and the opinion of many experts, may be considered as permanent, if a drought continues for long enough it will defeat the best management possible in Queensland—and anywhere else, for that matter.

Mr. Bennett: How did you fare in the drought?

Mr. EWAN: I lost many stock.

Mr. Davies: You didn't make preparations.

Mr. EWAN: I made preparations. Advice will always be given by people who have no experience whatever but who do not hesitate to rush in where angels fear to tread. A grazier must decide what he is going to do to try to save his stock. If he leaves it till too late it does not matter, because the stock will die and he will only bankrupt himself trying to save them. Having made his decision, he has to carry it through whether it breaks him or not.

There are some in the pastoral industry, particularly in the arid western areas, who feel that it has been proved time and time again that it does not pay to feed stock artificially. In the mulga areas, mulga can be knocked down to save stock provided the drought does not continue for too long. Today literally thousands of acres of native timbers in the West are dying. The hon. member for Warrego will bear out that statement, as there is plenty of timber dying round his home town of Charleville. I was there a month ago and I saw it with my own eyes. The mulga is so dry that it contains little nourishment, and some other form of supplementary fodder has to be provided if stock are to be saved.

One of the most urgent necessities is the provision of permanent water facilities. It is said that tanks or dams provide permanent water, but that is not my experience. If a drought continues long enough, tanks will dry out. I have seen a 102,000-cubic-yard excavation, 57 feet deep, dry out in 2½ years. That leaves only underground water supplies to rely on, and the great sheep and cattle areas, particularly the sheep areas, are blessed with artesian water supply. At present oil companies are searching for oil and natural gas virtually all over the State. Recently I had the honour of taking the new Minister for Mines and Main Roads, Hon. R. E. Camm, to look at drilling operations in the Roma district. He expressed surprise that more experimental bores or wells had not been used for the provision of permanent water facilities. He was so impressed with this possibility that, in his wisdom, he saw fit to make a Press statement which I am about to place on record in "Hansard" but which was so mutilated when published in "The Courier-Mail" that it was of little worth. In my area the statement was published in its entirety in the country Press. I think it should be quoted here, and it is my intention to do so now. It reads:—

> "The Hon. R. E. Camm, Minister for Mines, stated today that he was surprised that more graziers were apparently not taking full advantage of the possible utilisation of proven water supplies in many abandoned oil wells in various parts of the State, particularly as the present drought conditions have pinpointed the necessity of permanent watering facilities.
>
> "For many years past oil prospecting companies have, said Mr. Camm, shown their willingness to co-operate with landholders and Local Authorities in converting abandoned wells to water producers. The landholder is obliged to provide the necessary casing, as required by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, which is run and set by the companies at nominal cost, so long as such casing is on hand before the drilling rig has been dismantled for removal.
>
> "Most prospecting companies employ contract drilling plants and huge costs are involved necessitating a minimum of delay in the removal of plants to the next drilling site.
>
> "The Minister also pointed out that before an oil well can be abandoned the Petroleum Acts require that certain strata must be cemented off as a safety precaution against contamination, but such cement plugs can be drilled out should it be

desired, at some later date, to re-open the well for water or other purposes. However, this procedure naturally increases the overall costs involved.

"In this connection, Mr. Camm cited the town of Roma, where numerous abandoned oil wells had been re-opened and now provided all the water required for town reticulation purposes. The Murilla Shire Council has also made arrangements to do likewise as a supplementary supply for the town of Miles. Longreach and Dalby are other instances where abandoned oil wells have been converted to water wells for Town Water Supply.

"He also indicated that if the re-opening of a well was too costly for an individual landholder, if a group could be served from the well, he would recommend the 'group' to approach the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission with a concrete proposal.

"The Minister explained that all information regarding water flows encountered in both oil drilling and seismic shotholes is made available by his Department to the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, and this information may be obtained from the Commission or the Department of Mines, by graziers, or other interested parties.

"Mr. Camm concluded by saying:—'Since legislation to facilitate these operations was enacted in 1962, some 280 wells have been abandoned but only 43 have been converted to water wells. These are scattered from Burketown in the north-west of the State to Cecil Plains in the south-east. In addition several water wells drilled by petroleum prospectors for exploration purposes have been handed over free of charge to graziers.' "

I commend the Minister for making that Press release. Probably the majority of the 43 wells to which he referred would be in the area that I represent, and I know that several wells have been converted to water wells to provide a permanent supply. If one is not fortunate enough to have an abandoned well that can be re-opened to provide a water supply on one's property, the only alternative is to drill for permanent water or put down, or endeavour to put down, tanks large enough to give one a reasonable degree of permanence of supply. That costs a great deal of money, and each new drought seems to indicate that what was previously thought to be a permanent water is not in fact permanent. Consequently, it is necessary to lay by as much water on our properties as we possibly can for drought mitigation purposes.

I believe that greater use could be made of the provisions of the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act, which is well known to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for drought mitigation purposes in the future.

[*Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.*]

Mr. EWAN: I reiterate that one of the most important drought mitigation measures is the provision of permanent water facilities, and I again appeal to the landholders of Queensland to make much more use of the provisions of the farm water supplies assistance scheme, of which this Government can be very proud.

In addition, I should be failing in my duty if I neglected to mention another matter which I consider to be particularly important. A large percentage of stock losses in times of drought is caused by bogging, which illustrates the necessity for the supply of equipment at dams and waterholes, particularly those of a boggy nature, or where there are steep banks. By "equipment", I mean the provision of pumping facilities and a windmill or engine, or alternatively the construction of dams on the turkey's nest principle. These matters come within the provisions of the farm water supplies assistance scheme, and it would be of great benefit not only to landholders, but to the State generally, if more advantage was taken of this scheme.

We must not lose sight of the fact that, no matter how good a water supply is, unless natural feed is available water will not keep stock alive. Consequently, it is essential that steps be taken to provide some form of nutriment for stock. As I said previously, different districts require different methods. Taking as an example scrub areas, particularly mulga country, in which great numbers of sheep and cattle are depastured in Queensland——

Mr. Sherrington: That is your country.

Mr. EWAN: Yes, it is my country, and I am very proud that it is. I have worked in it, sometimes up and sometimes down, for 40 years, and I came out on top.

With Mulga country, or any other scrub country, a certain amount of management is needed, particularly when one can be quite certain that droughts will recur. No matter what we do, droughts will recur; consequently, operating a long-range plan, it is necessary that management should be prepared to conserve fodder, be it grass or scrub, around permanent water. In a good season use should be made of country that has no permanent water, and country with permanent water should be reserved for drought purposes and drought purposes alone. This applies particularly to mulga or other scrub country.

I think we must set about some form of preservation of our natural scrub. There are many ways of increasing natural scrub, not the least important of which is the ring-barking of unwanted timbers in mulga country. Particularly in some areas, mulga will rejuvenate itself provided other unwanted timber in the area is ring-barked. The conserving of natural scrub for feeding purposes also necessitates lighter stocking. I do not for a minute say that landholders are responsible for much of the loss occasioned by

drought in this State because of overstocking. That is not so. If there is overstocking it is brought about by the necessity to overstock on small or insufficient areas or by the erroneous belief on the part of inexperienced landholders that they have to carry a certain number of stock to pay their way. The truth is that if they stock judiciously they will get a greater return per head because the stock is of better quality. In the final analysis they will benefit because, for instance, one sheep will produce as much as two. The same remarks apply to cattle.

It is far more judicious to stock lightly. That has been proved time after time in the arid areas. Of course, lots of factors have to be taken into consideration. From time to time we hear these charges about landholders overstocking. Without equivocation I challenge the critics to say that these landholders are carrying more stock than the basis on which their rents are determined. If they carried the number of stock on which their rents are determined in many instances they would be overstocking, but in most cases that I know of, with judicious stocking, they are well under the basis on which the rent is determined. I abhor the levelling of such ill-founded criticism at landholders who are doing the very best they can for themselves, their families and the State of Queensland.

I turn now to methods of fodder conservation—the storage of fodder in good seasons, particularly in areas where crops can be grown. Of course, there are many areas in Queensland where crops cannot be grown. In those areas the only method of conserving fodder is to buy it from the more favoured areas and store it in sheds. In 1951, following my experience in the 1942-46 drought when it was estimated that allowing for export losses, Australia suffered to the extent of £300,000,000, I espoused a proposal in this House which was published in "Hansard" in April of that year. Looking back at what I said then, I realise that it applies even more today than it did on that occasion.

I recently attended a meeting of experienced landholders. So impressed was I by what was said that I tape-recorded the whole of the discussions. That tape is available for anyone who is interested. It was pointed out that there are two methods of storing fodder. First, there is the one that I espoused in 1951, and which I claim applies more particularly today, that is, the utilisation of Wheat Board grain storage sheds which, in many instances, have been replaced in the wheat-growing areas by silos. Many of those big sheds are not being utilised today. If some arrangement could be made with the Wheat Board for farmers or graziers to store fodder at a small rental in these sheds, where it would be looked after by the officers of the Wheat Board who take care of the wheat in the storage silos, so that the fodder would be available when required, it would save the landholders a considerable amount of capital expenditure in the provision of sheds.

I know that this plan has some drawbacks but at the same time many people on the land cannot afford to build suitable storage sheds on their properties. If these Wheat Board sheds were available, landholders could be encouraged—as they are being encouraged by taxation concessions—to buy fodder in good seasons and store it for use in times of drought.

The second method of storing fodder is for a landholder to build sheds on his own property, and then buy and store fodder such as lucerne. Of course, it is necessary to put up proper rat-baffled sheds or there will be no grain left. Even if one feeds with lucerne and hay, it is necessary that it should have a certain amount of grain in it.

A great deal of money is needed to build suitable sheds. At this meeting of landholders to which I have just referred, there was firstly a proposition that the Government investigate the possibility of utilising Wheat Board storage sheds that are being replaced by silos along existing railway lines for the storage of fodder in good seasons for use in a time of drought. That proposal appeals to me greatly. The second one, which I have dealt with briefly, was whether, where it is necessary to build suitable storage sheds on properties, the Government would consider extending provisions comparable to those contained in the farm water supplies assistance scheme, particularly in relation to finance.

Mr. Sherrington: The answer is "No."

Mr. EWAN: No, it is not. I do not think it has ever been put to the Government. The hon. member comes in where angels fear to tread.

A third suggestion made to implement the two I have mentioned was that, in approved cases where fodder is purchased in good years for storage for drought purposes, the Government should consider allowing an owner using his own truck, of any tonnage, to transport fodder for storage purposes free of transport tax. The State Transport Act enables anyone with a 4-ton truck to transport fodder, without tax, for his own purposes.

Assuming that these measures are looked upon favourably by the Commonwealth Government, let us consider the taxation concessions approved by a Country Party Government, piloted through by Sir Arthur Fadden when he was Federal Treasurer, for the purchase of fodder, whether it is stored in Wheat Board sheds or in the farmer's own sheds on his property. In the year in which fodder is purchased farmers may claim the amount expended as an allowable tax deduction. That can be done over the years, and if fodder is stored for a number of years the taxation allowance can be claimed. In this way continuity of employment as well

as production would be ensured on the farms situated in the fodder-producing areas so that they would continue to produce fodder in good years for storage for stock in bad years.

It has been said of this plan that when this fodder is used it is taxable. That is not right. I have been informed by the Taxation Department that provided the fodder is used for the farmer's own stock it is not taxable. Therefore, it is a completely allowable deduction.

There is one matter which I think was referred to by the hon. member for Carnarvon. I may be corrected if I am wrong there. He said there was one difficulty which could be cleaned up in relation to the storage of large quantities of fodder. Referring to probate and succession duties, he said that if a farmer put aside 10,000 or 12,000 tons of fodder, or even 5,000 or 3,000 tons, and he died, it would be regarded as part of his estate and would be valued. That is a deterrent to the storage of fodder. Although it was stored for the preservation of the farmer's assets and the national asset, it would be subject to probate and succession duties. I believe that appropriate action could be taken by the Commonwealth Government to exempt stored fodder from death duties provided it is used by the beneficiaries for the preservation of livestock on the property. That would provide a great impetus to the storage of fodder. The Commonwealth Government has created an incentive by giving us a completely allowable taxation deduction for all fodder or concentrate used for the preservation of livestock. I can see no reason for not looking sympathetically at my request for exemption from death duties.

I notice that the Minister for Local Government and Conservation is in the Chamber. He has recently returned from St. George.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much conversation in the Chamber. I ask hon. members to please keep quiet.

Mr. EWAN: The Minister described the St. George irrigation scheme as an oasis in the desert. I agree with him. It was filled recently by the heavy rains in the catchment area. The Minister quoted certain figures on fat lamb production and the like. But I look upon the scheme as a basis for growing fodder for drought mitigation purposes and for sale to people who wish to store it in those areas. That leads me to the belief that it is necessary to establish such oases or irrigation areas or schemes in strategic areas.

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

Mr. Sherrington interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members will please not interrupt when there is a question before the House. That applies particularly to the hon. member for Salisbury.

Mr. EWAN: I thank the hon. member for Cooroora for his courtesy in moving an extension of time, and I thank the House for agreeing to it. Hon. members can rest assured that I shall not abuse the privilege. I am pleased that the hon. member for Cooroora is appreciating my speech. I regret that it appears to hurt the finer feelings of hon. members of the Opposition who, when they were the Government for many years, did nothing about what I am endeavouring to espouse now, even though I advocated it during their regime.

I suggest the establishment of irrigation schemes in strategic areas throughout the State adjacent to the areas in which fodder is required for the preservation of this great livestock asset on which Queensland's prosperity is, and has been, dependent for many years. In that connection, as the Minister pointed out, St. George is doing a splendid job.

The hon. member for Warwick told us all about the Leslie Dam and what could be expected there, and the hon. member for Barcoo put forward the case for the Nogoa dam. I understand certain investigations would lead one to believe that there is a possibility of the construction of the Nogoa dam and the intense growing in that area of fodder that could be stored for drought mitigation purposes. In that connection the Minister for Conservation has seen fit to have officers of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority investigate the great Baroondah site north of Hornet Bank, near Taroom. In my opinion, that dam would be a far greater asset to this State than the famous Nathan Gorge dam, which was espoused by members of the Opposition for many years. As was the case with many of the schemes they put forward, they simply suggested it and nothing more was done.

The construction of the Baroondah dam will preserve all the beautiful country along the Dawson River near Taroom, right up to Hornet Bank and down to the Nathan Gorge dam site, country that would be inundated if the Nathan Gorge dam was built; it would be lost to mankind forever. Provided the Baroondah dam is built, that land can be irrigated and will produce all the fodder necessary for the preservation of livestock at a strategic point, which will reduce the cost of transportation to places as far out as Charleville, Quilpie, Cunnamulla, and Thargomindah. That is why I espouse the setting-up of irrigation schemes at strategic points throughout the State, and not the provision of schemes to grow unprofitable crops on land not capable of producing the fodder necessary for the preservation of our greatest asset. I therefore commend the building of the Baroondah dam, subject to its being shown, as I think it will be, to be capable of implementation by the investigation now taking place. Because of its national importance, I believe that it should be dealt with on a Commonwealth basis.

That brings me to the question of finance. How is it to be financed? We could approach the Commonwealth Government for grants, as we have been doing.

Mr. Bennett: They won't listen to you.

Mr. EWAN: They have listened to us in the matter of beef-cattle roads, which the hon. member's Government could not get, and I am sure that they will listen to us sympathetically in this matter just as they did in relation to the brigalow land development scheme and many other schemes, despite what the hon. member for South Brisbane may say. All he does is deal with matters such as are indicated by the question that he asked in the House this morning.

Let me now deal with the possibilities of obtaining finance for these schemes. Hon. members know very well, as I do, that during the last eight or 10 years there has been a transfer of the responsibility for providing finance. At one time the trading banks provided 90 per cent. of the finance needed in primary industry. Today, particularly in relation to stocking with sheep and cattle, that responsibility has gradually been transferred to stock agents. The trading banks will provide loans on the security of properties and improvements on them, but in many instances they are not willing to accept the hazardous mortgages entailed in the purchase of livestock, because there could be a drought and in 12 or 18 months' time the stock would no longer be alive.

That transfer has taken place and, because of the vicissitudes of drought experienced during the last 18 months to two years, stock agents are seriously over-committed. Every drought ends some time, and at the termination of this one there will have been great losses of stock and a real necessity for money for restocking purposes. Where is it to come from? The stock agents are over-committed, and the trading banks have shown a disinclination to finance the purchase of livestock.

Mr. Houston: Why should that be so?

Mr. EWAN: I think it is obvious.

Mr. Houston: No, it is not.

Mr. EWAN: The hon. member is an intelligent person, and he should see why that is so. I suggest, and recommend, that the Commonwealth Government be approached to provide——

Mr. Houston: Why did you vote against nationalisation?

Mr. EWAN: I am not a Communist, or a neo-Communist, and I do not want to be. I seriously suggest that a recommendation be made to the Commonwealth Government to provide suitable credit facilities to stock agents and/or trading banks, and even other suitable institutions, for specific drought rehabilitation purposes at the end of the present drought, such assistance to be solely for restocking purposes. We know very well that the Premier has made certain representations to the Commonwealth Government. We know very well, too, that the Government has spent much money in an endeavour to lessen the effects of drought. I believe that the Premier's representations will prove successful. I understand that he has asked for £1,500,000 or thereabouts to help mitigate the ravages of drought. For rehabilitation purposes, a great deal more money than that will be required if there is to be a speedy return to adequate production in the stock industry. I suggest, therefore, that representations should be made to try to have credit facilities made available through the Reserve Bank to those institutions for the specific purpose of drought rehabilitation by means of the purchase of stock.

On behalf of the industry, I say "Thank you" to the Government——

Mr. Bennett: For what?

Mr. Davies: For nothing!

Mr. EWAN: For many things, if hon. members opposite will only listen. In accordance with the practice instituted many years ago, even before a Labour Government came into office in Queensland, the Government has provided concessional railway freight rates for the transport of starving livestock and fodder. It has gone further and provided exemption from the road transport tax for the transport of fodder by road. I ask hon. members opposite not to forget that many stock-owners and other people handling fodder, particularly lucerne, prefer to transport it by road instead of by rail because in the extra handling by rail a certain amount of leafage is lost and the protein content is reduced.

At the meeting to which I referred a moment ago, it was even suggested that the State Government be requested to consider granting a subsidy to stock-owners in cases of extreme need in drought areas covering the purchase of wheat, molasses, concentrates and other approved fodder used for the preservation of sheep and cattle, until such time as the position is relieved by suitable falls of rain in the affected areas. We appreciate, particularly in the closely settled areas, the Government grant of £50,000 for the free distribution of fodder; but it must be appreciated that that can do much good only in the closely settled areas in which there are comparatively few head of stock. It could not be applied on a practical basis out in the bigger areas of the West.

The Government saw fit to abolish the road transport tax on the transport of fodder. It has been alleged—I have no knowledge of this myself—by responsible people in my electorate that the road transport tax concessions are not being handed on to owners of starving stock but are being retained by transport operators. That is the allegation; I do not know whether it is correct, but those who have made it are responsible people.

I ask that the Government investigate the matter immediately and institute a scheme to ensure that such concessions are passed on and assist the people that they were originally intended to assist—the landholders. It may be said that this would be extremely difficult to do; in my opinion, it would be extremely simple. All that would be necessary would be for the transport operator, when he sent in his monthly return to the State Transport Commission, to have a covering letter from the landholder saying that the operator had made adjustments relative to the payment of the tax. If he did not have that letter from the landholder, the transport operator should—and rightly so—pay the tax. As I said, I do not know whether the allegation is correct, but it has been made to me by responsible people and I ask that it be investigated.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Maryborough will have an opportunity later to make a speech.

Mr. EWAN: The Minister for Transport, in reply to a question directed to him by the hon. member for Mackenzie last Thursday, made a statement in relation to the inability of the Queensland railways, in certain circumstances, to transport starving stock because of the shortage of trucks, although extraordinary efforts have been made to provide transport, even to transporting stock in open wagons. I am aware of many instances in which the railways could not provide trucks to transport starving stock to more favoured areas where there has been relief, and we sincerely ask that where, in approved cases, starving stock are removed by road because of the inability of the railways to handle them, that stock be exempted from road transport tax. It may be said that there are legal difficulties associated with it. There are also legal difficulties associated with the lifting of the tax on the transport of fodder, but I think those difficulties can be overcome. Of course, there is sure to be the red herring trailed that it would be too cumbersome and difficult to differentiate between stock being transported for sale and stock being transported from drought-stricken properties.

To obtain a railway concession the landholder has to declare that the stock are drought-stricken and the local stock inspector must endorse the application. In these cases, it would be much easier. All that would be necessary would be for the station master or the district superintendent of railways to state that the railways could not provide the trucks to shift the stock, and endorse the application. If the railways, which are giving a 50 per cent. concession, cannot shift the stock, why cannot we give a similar concession to these people, who are doing everything possible to save their stock. I ask that the Minister have another look at this matter in the hope that he may be able to arrive at a scheme that will enable him to grant this desirable concession.

I wish to congratulate this Government on its efforts to establish the great beef roads scheme in Queensland, assisted by the Commonwealth Government—despite the outcries from the Opposition benches a few minutes ago against the Commonwealth Government. This is one of the greatest developmental schemes for the inland areas of Queensland that have ever been undertaken and it will assist greatly in the preservation of livestock because these roads are designed to bring the stock in from remote areas. All these roads lead to railheads and I hope there will be a further expansion when the present scheme is completed.

Droughts do not affect only the stock-owner. Let us consider my own position in Roma, which I think is typical of other areas in this State. Originally, of course, Roma was a wool-growing district; today it depastures approximately 4,500,000 sheep and 430,000 head of cattle. In the Bungil Shire alone, over 35,000 head of cattle have been sold by auction in the last 12 months and over 20,000 head have been sold privately. The meatworks has killed 65,000 head in the last 12 months. This gives an estimated gross turnover of all cattle sold in an area within a radius of 60 miles from Roma of approximately £2,500,000.

It is a matter of interest to know that for the financial year 1959-60 the Roma meatworks killed 29,840 head of cattle, compared with a kill for this financial year of, as I have said, over 65,000 head. That gives us some idea of how the industry is growing. Unfortunately, because of the incidence of drought, the meatworks will have to close its doors at the end of this week. There are no more cattle to kill; we cannot get cattle. The Roma meatworks employed over 300 men but now it is down to 150 before it closes its doors on Saturday. It had a pay-roll of over £7,500 a week. Many of the men will go to Wallangarra. The meatworks management is doing everything it can to find jobs for them elsewhere, but they will be uprooted from their homes in Roma to go to other places.

Mr. Houston interjected.

Mr. EWAN: Of a pay-roll of £7,500 a week it is reasonable to assume that approximately £6,000 will go through the business houses of Roma—the stores, the cafes, the hotels, the drapers and all the rest of them. So, because of the incidence of drought, spending power in Roma will be affected to the extent of at least £6,000 a week. In answer to the hon. member for Bulimba, let me say that it does seriously affect those people but every effort is being made to keep them in full employment. However, they are not losing their capital; they are not losing their stock-in-trade; they are not selling out. Their profits are suspended but in the case of the landholder his assets are disappearing because of mortality in his stock. That is my answer to the hon. member for

Bulimba. Unfortunately, even if the drought breaks now, there will not be considerable numbers of stock available for slaughter at the Roma meatworks before early 1966. The management informed me that even if the drought breaks in the next couple of months it will be most unlikely that the works will be opened before February 1966.

There we have the effect of the drought on all sections of the community. Hon. members heard what I said about the deputation to the Deputy Prime Minister following the 1942-46 drought, when Australia's export income was adversely affected to the extent of £300,000,000. Anything that this Government and the people of Queensland can do in the amelioration of these conditions is well worth while. I leave the position of the drought in the hands of those who are responsible for the administration of the affairs of this Government and of the people of this State.

I turn now to another very important matter—the gas-well area of Roma. At the present time we have 47 gas wells within 30 miles of Roma all ready for full production. There are also six potential oil wells—three flowing and three pumpers. The gas wells have been fully tested, as suggested by Dr. Hetherington in his report, and certificates have been issued to the company which show that the present reserves of natural gas in these 47 wells amount to 124,000 million cubic feet. The present Brisbane consumption of coal gas is approximately 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 cubic feet a day. The proven reserves, even with the considerably increased consumption which would be hoped for if a pipeline came to Brisbane, are expected to last for at least 60 years without further discoveries of natural gas resources. The Associated Group is ready and willing to lay down a suitable pipeline as long as reasonable gas consumption in Brisbane can be ensured. It negotiated with the two gas companies in Brisbane, which I understand were on the verge of signing an agreement, the terms of which were virtually decided upon. However, the oil cartels—as they did in relation to the Moonie oilfield and the utilisation of Moonie oil—did everything to prevent the signing of the agreement. I refer to the nefarious document which has been sent out; every member of this House received a copy of it. It states——

Mr. Davies: Which company signed it?

Mr. EWAN: All the companies are concerned—Amoco, Ampol, Mobil, Shell, Phillips, Commonwealth Industrial Gases and Porta-Gas. It is a scurrilous document. These people have interviewed members of this House. I want to be interviewed by them; I want to tell them what I know to be a fact. Do hon. members realise that they are using Ampol—the Queensland industry—to implement these nefarious designs on a Queensland industry? In the last few weeks the price of fuel oil has been reduced very considerably, and I understand on reliable authority that, by further negotiation with the oil companies, an even greater reduction in the price of fuel oil can be gained. Why is this so? I make this statement in full consciousness of its implications, and as a responsible member of this House. In my opinion it was done primarily to prevent utilisation of natural gas—124,000 million cubic feet of natural gas—found over many years at great expense, with subsidies from the Commonwealth Government. If this gas is not used, what is the use of prospecting further in Australia for oil?

I ask that a full investigation be made with the object of rendering every possible assistance in bringing about the utilisation of our great natural gas and oil reserves.

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (2.58 p.m.): I am very pleased to take part in this debate. With other hon. members, I wish to extend, on behalf of the people of my electorate and on my own behalf, our good wishes to Sir Henry Abel Smith and Lady May in their contemplated retirement. They have been a great asset to Queensland. They saw fit to tour extensively throughout the State and carried out their duties in a manner which did credit to themselves and to our system of democratic government under the Royal family. I should also like to extend to Sir Alan Mansfield our appreciation of the way in which he has carried out his duties as Administrator during the absence of Sir Henry and his lady overseas, and while Sir Henry has been acting as Administrator of the Commonwealth. I am sure that all hon. members agree that Sir Alan Mansfield has shown very clearly that a Queenslander can do the job, and do it very well.

I wish to spend some time on a matter which I believe is of major importance to many people in this State. A few days ago the Minister answered a question that I directed to him on a notice which appeared in the Education Office Gazette and which I consider should be referred to. I am speaking on behalf of those school parents and citizens' associations that are affected by the order from the Department of Education. I will first read the relevant part of the Education Office Gazette of 9 August, 1965, No. 8, on page 254—

"Sale of Goods at Canteens and Tuckshops

"Items of stationery other than those specially manufactured for a school and bearing its crest should not be sold by school canteens and tuckshops or on school premises. The notices which appeared in the Education Office Gazette for July, 1964, and page 8.1 (iv) of the Handbook of Administrative Procedures in Secondary Schools are to be amended accordingly."

The notice in the 1964 Gazette reads—

"Principals and head teachers are advised that at a conference with shopkeepers'

representatives it was agreed that school canteens and tuckshops should not sell the following items: confectionery, pencils, rubbers, rulers, drawing sets and articles of clothing (excepting school ties and hat bands and sports wear manufactured for a particular school). A small stock of pencils, &c., may be held to meet emergency needs.

"Items of stationery may be sold in open competition with local stores.

"It is emphasized that pupils should be allowed complete freedom of choice between the school canteen or tuckshop and the local store without any discouragement, interference or unreasonable restriction."

I emphasise the words, "Items of stationery may be sold in open competition with local stores."

The 1965 Gazette continues—

"Principals and Head Teachers are to ensure that pupils are not instructed to purchase a particular brand of exercise book or note book.

"Page 8.1 (iv) (including the note) of the Handbook of Administrative Procedures in Secondary Schools should be deleted and replaced by the following:—

'School canteens should not sell the following items:—

Confectionery, pencils, rubbers, rulers, drawing sets, stationery (exercises, notebooks, &c.) other than those specially manufactured for a school and bearing its crest and articles of clothing (excepting school ties, hatbands and sports wear, manufactured for a particular school).

'It is emphasised that students should be allowed complete freedom of choice between the school canteen and the local store without any discouragement, interference or unreasonable restriction'."

The difference between those two Education Office Gazettes is that the word "stationery" has been added.

I asked the Minister why the sale of those items was banned at tuckshops. In his answer he referred to the 1964 ban and then said—

"Since that time there have been complaints from shopkeepers' associations and individual shopkeepers which, on investigation, showed that there were schools where the instructions were not being fully observed. Sometimes the emergency stocks of certain items were excessive, sometimes ordinary exercise books and notebooks were being sold in large quantities, and there were occasions when a particular brand of exercise book was specified by a school. It was decided that only items of stationery which have been specially manufactured for a school and bear its crest should be sold on school premises."

I can think of only two reasons the Minister would support such a move by the Department of Education. The first is not to offend either the shopkeepers' association or the wholesale groups. In reply to a question in 1964, the Minister said that the ban on the sale of confectionery resulted from an objection by the shopkeepers' association that many small shops were being affected by the sale of sweets at schools. The present ban follows an objection by the shopkeepers' association to the large amount of stationery that is being sold at schools. That may be so. But why would the Department of Education worry about a specific brand? If it is a specific brand of book that is worrying the department, it must be because a wholesale group is objecting. I believe that that is so.

The second reason the Government would support the department in this matter would be an attempt to cut down on the subsidies paid to parents and citizens' associations.

Let us look at how these items that are banned affect schools. I was present in 1964 at an interview with senior members of the Department of Education. I do not intend, unless pressed, to name those gentlemen because I believe that what they did was done in the normal course of their duties and that they should therefore not be criticised for it. I can, however, assure hon. members that I, with other representatives of the Combined Secondary Schools Parents and Citizens' Association, was present at that interview with senior officers of the department, and we objected, as a body, to the ban placed on the sale of confectionery at tuckshops. We were assured by the department that the ban was imposed not because of pressure from the shopkeepers' association but to protect the children's teeth.

To prove that this was so, principals were notified by the department that tuckshops would be allowed to stock sweets provided they were glucose-based, because it was felt that they would be less harmful to teeth. Tuckshops were also allowed to stock cough lollies and other medicated items. This is borne out by the actions of the various wholesale establishments that supply school canteens. Their travellers would approach the ladies in charge and tell them the items that were approved and available.

I claim that the present move is a backward step because it interferes with the smooth running of schools. When parents send their children to a school, they do so in the full knowledge that textbooks, exercise books, and other items are required by them. In some schools where these articles are not sold it has been found that children buy the articles required at shops away from the school and often arrive with purchases that are either inferior or unsuitable.

If the shopkeepers were primarily concerned with competition between their stores and tuckshops, I think it rather strange that a ban should be placed on the sale of specific articles. If competition is all that they desire, I think that the shops themselves should stock the various food items sold by tuckshops. In actual fact, very few shops

that have been established since the erection of high schools in various centres, particularly in the metropolitan area, want to stock food. Shop-owners realise that food is a commodity that can be wasted. The women who conduct canteens find it very difficult to purchase just enough food to supply the children each day. Women who have had years of experience with tuckshops have told me that one day they will order a certain quantity of pies, salad rolls, salads, hot dogs, cakes, and other items and just about sell them all, and the next day the weather may change and they will completely sell out one commodity and have large quantities of others left over. I made a check on the amount of food left over at one school in a week. One day there were 6½ dozen bread rolls over; the very next day, which was warmer, there were no bread rolls over; on another day that was rather warm, there were five dozen pies over. That shows the variation in the demand for food.

Some foodstuffs can be held over from day to day; but no canteen should be encouraged to hold perishable foodstuffs from one day to the next, and I am sure the women who run them would not do that. Because of the wastage that occurs, it is impossible for them to balance their budgets on food alone. That would be particularly so in schools at which the women's committee has endeavoured to keep prices within a limit that will ensure not only that students are given a service but also that they are not charged excessive amounts for food. Let me give hon. members an example of the prices charged at one school tuckshop. Pies and pasties are sold at 1s. each; bread rolls filled with meat, cheese, lettuce and tomato are sold for 10d. each; a full salad, with meat, cheese and four salad vegetables on the plate is sold for 1s. 6d. No matter where one goes in Brisbane, one will not find food sold cheaper than it is sold to students at school tuckshops. As I said earlier, it is possible to maintain those low prices only while the school tuckshops can balance their budgets.

I think it is true to say that the women who give up their time to work in tuckshops do so for two reasons. Firstly, they want to see that the children are well looked after; secondly, they want to try to improve in some way the conditions generally at the school. In high schools in the Brisbane area, it is quite common for only 10 per cent. of mothers to take an active interest in the school tuckshop. Of course, any profit they make does not go to the mothers who work in the tuckshop; it goes to provide amenities for the school. But I am sure that if they do not show a profit, they will very quickly decide that they are not there merely to feed the children of the other 90 per cent. of mothers who do not make any contribution. There may be many and varied reasons why that 90 per cent. do not play their part, but that is no reason why the other 10 per cent. should be put in that position. As the tuckshops operate on a non-profit basis and the margin between buying prices and selling prices is so keen, it is necessary for schools to sell some lines on which a profit can be made. I know dentists say that lollies are bad for children's teeth, and probably that is true. But if it is bad for the children to eat lollies that they buy at a tuckshop, I am sure that it must be equally bad for them to eat lollies that they buy at local shops. If a child has money available to buy lollies, he or she will spend it for that purpose. If lollies were available at tuckshops, possibly children would buy lollies instead of food. To my knowledge, they do not do that. They buy food and treat the lollies purely and simply as a little something extra.

I urge the Department of Education, through the Minister, to review the whole situation. I ask it not to be stampeded by any association into bringing in rules and regulations that cannot reasonably be carried out and that will create hostility within parents and citizens' associations. That is neither desirable nor warranted. I suggest to the shopkeepers' association that its fight should not be with the canteens and tuckshops at schools but with the chain stores, the large monopolies, all southern-based, that cut to ribbons the prices of various articles that we usually consider small shopkeepers should handle.

As I said earlier, the small shopkeepers will not handle various food lines. I do not particularly blame them, but why attack the school tuckshops?

The latest copy of the Education Office Gazette raises a number of other problems. The original 1964 issue banned the sale of pencils. I made a check at some of the local shops in my area and I found that they did not stock a range of pencils from 4B to 4H. Some of them did not know the difference between 4B pencils and 4H pencils. If a teacher requires a particular grade of pencil for drawing purposes that is the grade that is required, not a substitute. Anyone who knows anything of this subject knows that there are various grades and types of pencils.

Rubbers are also banned. I suggest that any hon. member who is interested should go to a local shop and see the quality of rubbers that are stocked. Better still, go to the chain stores and see the rubbers they sell. I think it is against the interests of the child to ban these items.

Drawing sets are other items that are banned. Again, there are various types of drawing set on the market, particularly in the chain stores. The set-squares are made of tin; the compasses are so frail and weak that they are useless after being used two or three times.

This publication lays it down that a teacher cannot recommend to a child a particular brand of article. Therefore, when a child is told to get a drawing set, the parents, probably at Christmas-time, go to the shop and buy rubbish that costs 15s. or £1. The

child brings it to school and the teacher says, "Don't bring that stuff in here; you cannot do efficient work with that." I know this happens. At one high school in which I took an interest I found the parents and citizens' association engaged in selling stationery at the school, primarily for the purpose of assisting the child and the school, not for profit-raising purposes. It was undertaken purely and simply because we were sick and tired of hearing parents complain about buying a particular item requested by the school only to find it was not acceptable.

Rulers also are banned. Again, there are a number of varieties of ruler, some so inaccurate in their measurements that they are really only intended for sale to visitors to the State as examples of the various types of timber produced here.

Paint brushes are banned. Those who know anything about the art courses at secondary schools will realise the variety and type of paint brush that is required by these students. The types are as numerous as the students in the class and the same can be said of the types of paint. I checked at a local store and asked if they stocked particular colours of paint. I was asked, "Who is going to stock all the varieties of paint a teacher might require?" There are, for instance, many different shades of red and many variations in colour of all the other primary colours. A small shopkeeper would not—indeed, he could not—stock the variety of items listed. Chain stores would be the only ones that could possibly stock them. If a child is told by a teacher to buy a paint of a certain colour, according to the notice the teacher cannot specify a particular brand, which is absolutely ridiculous. Very often the child buys what he thinks is right only to be told when he takes it to school that it is wrong.

The ladies who conduct the parents and citizens' association canteen or tuckshop keep in close touch with the principal and the teachers. When it is decided that certain items are required for the students the principal or a teacher tells the lady in charge of the tuckshop and she orders what is required. When she is ordering she is not bound to buy a particular brand, but she does the best she can to ensure that she gets quality for money spent. I know many instances where suppliers have been changed in an endeavour to get better quality for the children. The parents and citizens' association protects the parents of the children against possible exploitation and the supply of rubbish.

The notice says that parents and citizens' associations can sell items that are crested. I think this idea was an attempt to soften up some of the wholesalers who have complained. The whole thing is completely ridiculous. Unless purchases are being made in large quantities for the school, to have an item crested puts too much extra expense on it. Many items that are sold in large quantities for schools cannot be crested. Pads or journals could be crested by a manufacturer but I do not think any school would be willing to pay the extra cost of getting art blocks or similar small-quantity items crested.

This permission to allow a school to sell crested books is, in effect, making the position even more ridiculous. Towards the end of the year, or in the early part of the year, it is customary in quite a few schools, particularly the larger ones in Brisbane, for the parents and citizens' association to come to an arrangement with some of the big suppliers to sell books on behalf of a particular wholesaler or retail house. For its efforts the association receives 10 per cent. of the gross sales and the unsold books go back to the supplier. This practice has worked particularly well over the years. Some schools prefer one particular retail house while other schools prefer another.

Up to now the position has been that when a child is enrolled the parent is given a list of what is required in the way of textbooks, reference books, pads, rubbers, rulers, typing paper, paint—the whole lot. The parents are not saddled with a constant 10s. this week and £1 next week. In the past they went to the school canteen and bought the lot. They knew they were not being fleeced because the prices were kept to an absolute minimum, and they knew the children were getting the right books. I have heard of children buying a book by its name and then being told it was the wrong edition; that it was one that was used the year before but had been changed by the variations which occur. The parents and citizens' association, by its co-operation with the principal, knows exactly which books are required.

It is silly if tuckshops are allowed to sell textbooks but not pads, typing paper and other materials required at school. Such regulations bring about bad feeling between the ladies of the parents and citizens' association and the Department of Education. We do not want this to happen and it has not occurred previously in the schools. Over the years that I have been connected with these associations I have found a great measure of co-operation between the parents and the department, but this type of regulation will destroy it. I hope that the Minister is taking stock of what I have to say, and what other hon. members will say on this subject.

In reply to my question the Minister said that officers of the department had made an investigation and had found that the shopkeepers' complaints were factual. I do not know who was spoken to, but to my knowledge the investigators did not speak to anyone who worked for the parents and citizens' association. To my knowledge they did not visit any of the tuckshops to establish the true position. They may have visited some local shopkeeper who had a personal complaint. Before an order of such magnitude was issued I think the department should

have discussed the matter with the parents and citizens' associations, but it did not. I know that there is no ban on soft drinks at present, but I wonder if that will be the next item to be placed on the list.

The department has taken this action mainly to get "on side" with the storekeepers' association and some of the wholesalers, even though it realises that the parents and citizens' association, through the 10 per cent. margin of profit on stationery and other commodities, earns quite a few pounds in profit. At one school an amount of £12 10s. was sought as a subsidy for the installation of power points in the tuckshop for an extra pie-warmer and another drink unit. The tuckshop had been extended and it was found that because of the increased number in attendance it was impossible to supply the increased quantities of hot food demanded by the pupils. The department wrote to the association saying that the £12 10s. was refused because the department had no money following the drought and the Mt. Isa strike. That is in black and white. There is no guesswork about it. I heard the Minister who was acting for the Minister for Education say that the department provided electrical installations in tuckshops and canteens, but that is one case where the department refused to provide them. The association had to find the sum of £25 in order to ensure that hot food was available to the children.

At the same school, in rainy weather the children were getting wet while lining up to be served. There has to be some orderly manner in which the children are served. Owing to the position of the tuckshop, they were getting wet. We requested an awning. The department agreed, but the association had to find over £300 to help finance it. Unless the association can find the money, these amenities cannot be provided.

There are two major items in the Gazette to which I object, and I ask the Minister to review them. Firstly, the parents and children are denied the opportunity to buy the correct article as required by the school. The fact that the item is available at the tuckshop does not mean that the child has to buy it there; it simply means that if the child wants it, it is there. The parent could go somewhere else to buy it. But let us ensure that the right article is available, whether it is a pencil, a pen, a rubber, a textbook, or a particular pad.

It is a school tuckshop, and every penny profit goes back into the school in the form of another amenity. At every meeting of the association we find that the principal will say, "We could do with another tape recorder", or "We could do with another projector", or some other amenity, or, "Our school grounds require improvement." One principal told the association the other day that he would like three new basketball courts—they cost only £600 each—and the association told him that it would like to provide them. Most of the high schools would like an assembly hall. The associations realise that and would like to lend a hand. But how can the associations get that kind of money? People suggest fetes. Those who work for these associations give up one day a fortnight. Many of them have children at primary schools and have not the time to organise fetes as well. It is common to find the same men and women working for the school and for many other charitable organisations in their areas. Credit should be given to them for that, but they should not be overloaded with one fete after another.

This ban does no good for the school, for education, or for the parents. It might be helping one or two shopkeepers, but I even doubt that. If parents want to go to a shop for these supplies, they go to town where they can put them on a monthly account or get them on time payment. I have no fight with that; that is their privilege. I would like to see them with enough money to be able to pay cash for what they want. I ask the Minister to investigate this matter and do what he can to ensure that the public is not fleeced.

There is one other matter that I should like to mention briefly. It concerns industrial affairs, and may perhaps be a little irrelevant to the plea that I have so far been making. During the strike at Mt. Isa, union advocates were at times required to go to Mt. Isa to attend compulsory conferences. When they claimed air fares to and from Mt. Isa and accommodation for a day or two there, those expenses were refused by the Industrial Commission and they were granted rail fares only. I think the day has arrived when union officials—and anyone else, for that matter—who have to travel to distant parts of the State should not be expected to go by train, which requires days of travel. In these days of modern means of transport, let us get union representatives, employers' representatives, and all others to such places by the most up-to-date and common-sense means of travel, and let them be reimbursed accordingly. Rail travel was good in its time, but it should not now have to be used by people who are in a hurry. I am speaking now on behalf of union secretaries and organisers who are called to compulsory conferences. They are just as busy as anyone else, and they feel that they cannot spare three or four days unnecessarily away from their offices. They should be permitted to go by air—the most modern method available.

Mr. PILBEAM (Rockhampton South) (3.37 p.m.): I join with other speakers in the Address-in-Reply debate in expressing my loyalty, and the loyalty of those whom I represent, to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I express also on their behalf the appreciation that I feel is due to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, Sir Alan Mansfield, for the exemplary manner in which he has acted as Her Majesty's representative in this State.

I express very real regret on behalf of all the people of my city at the retirement of Sir Henry Abel Smith and his gracious lady, Lady May. I cannot imagine anyone taking a greater interest in the affairs of office than Sir Henry has done. Unfortunately, I cannot hope that anyone else could hold that office who is able to evince so much interest in all parts of the State. I am particularly grateful to him for his interest in the depressed part of Central Queensland. He has gone out of his way to prove his friendship for the people whom I represent, and I should like to place on record my appreciation of that interest and to invite Sir Henry and Lady May to visit the city of Rockhampton as often as they can during their retirement.

Central Queensland has indeed gone forward in recent years. Despite a very ruinous drought extending over the last 10 years, it is still taking forward steps, and the future of this part of the State is indeed fraught with great interest. Many people do not realise the full extent of the drought now being experienced. Hon. members will appreciate the severity of the drought if they realise that for the first time in 80 years the water provided by the lagoon at the back of the city of Rockhampton has cut out, and the botanical gardens, for which water from that source has been drawn for almost a century, have for the first time been placed on the town water supply. This is the tenth year in which we have not had a monsoonal season; this is the tenth year in which the Fitzroy River has remained inside its banks. We have not had a flood in Rockhampton for 10 years; usually we have a flood about every second year.

We have gone through a very trying time with the shortage of water. Despite this, the wonderful Fitzroy River is still flowing. I have been told that in this year or that year the river would stop flowing. I have never seen it stop flowing, and I have had a great deal of experience of it. On a recent inspection of the upper reaches of the river, quite a strong flow was found above Yaamba, and a very large water storage was found at Henderson's weir and up at The Gap. That supply is being very carefully treasured by the engineers, and they are bringing the water down through a series of small dams and ensuring that, although there is no wastage, the level is maintained at Yaamba, from which the city draws its water supply.

Development is still going forward behind Rockhampton. The brigalow scheme is proving a success, although it is undergoing a stern test at present as a result of the drought. The railway line from Moura to Gladstone is progressing, and it will be a wonderful developmental agent in Central Queensland. We are certainly not parochial about it in Rockhampton, and I think it will do wonderful things for all parts of Central Queensland. Gladstone is showing signs of explosive development—nobody will deny that—and a very steady rate of progress is being maintained in Rockhampton. Almost every day some new industry is brought onto the Rockhampton scene. Probably the most progressive and modern meatworks in Australia has been completed at Nerimbera by T. A. Field Pty. Ltd., and it is a delight to look at its modern construction and see the efficient way in which it is being operated already. Two mutton abattoirs are also in the process of entering the Rockhampton picture. The agreement to utilise 20 per cent. of the capacity of the C.Q.M.E. Company's works and T. A. Field's works has been completed and is now in the hands of the Government for ratification. I was a little dubious about the agreement during the first negotiations, but I think now that it will be a very good thing for the beef industry. Already there is evidence that many people will endeavour to use some portion of that 20 per cent. Some of them have given an indication that they will construct boning and freezing units in Rockhampton and use portion of the 20 per cent. until such time as they require a greater usage, when they are free to proceed with the second stage of their operations and put in a killing floor. I make this prediction: that within the next five years there will be four to six meatworks operating in Rockhampton. I place that on record without any fear of being proved incorrect.

Other industries are being established in Rockhampton. I came down to Brisbane with the principals of the flour mill that is sure to be operating in Rockhampton by Christmas-time. In fact, the Queensland Co-operative Milling Association Limited is putting in a very modern mill and hopes to have it operating by November. We know that the wheat in the area will be of good millable quality and that the mill will be successful.

The construction of the second stage of the cement works is proceeding apace and it will be in operation before the end of next year. That will be a very good thing for the city, not only from the point of view of building construction but also in the way of general employment. Many other similar enterprises, such as C.I.G., A.R.C. Engineering, Central Queensland Fabrications, Arthur Petfield's Packet Plant, and Provincial Traders are setting up in the city and the prospect in Rockhampton is one of continued industrial development, although I make no claim that it will be of an explosive nature. Continued steady development helps a city to develop as it should. Explosive development places very heavy strain on a municipality because it has to provide extensive service schemes. In such circumstances one will see a number of houses thrown up for letting purposes and that is never a good thing; nothing replaces home-ownership. When it comes to a question of private ownership, one has only to look at the new suburbs springing up in Rockhampton where the standard of housing is remarkably good. Because of steady growth and the absence of mushroom

development, we have been able to plan for our city's requirements. There are some subdivisional areas in Rockhampton into which sewerage is going side by side with the construction of houses. That would have been impossible if there had been explosive development, because it could not be planned and these things could not be done.

In my city steady industrial development is being accompanied by the full implementation of sewerage schemes, water provision schemes, bitumen road schemes and kerbing and channelling schemes. The city is not being left behind its industrial development as I have seen evidenced in other cities where progress has been suddenly accelerated.

To make this industrial development possible and to ensure its continuation I stressed the point in my speech on Appropriation Bill No. 1—and I am afraid I must stress it again—that two-thirds of the cost of water schemes for large industrial developments is placed on the shoulders of the local authority. The Government provides one-third of the cost by way of subsidy and the local authority provides the other two-thirds.

In Gladstone, for instance, the local authority is faced with the task of raising £1,000,000 this year to make sure that its large water scheme goes on, and in Rockhampton in the next three years we have to raise £3,000,000. As I said the week before last, and as I repeat now, it is no good having these plans approved and obtaining permission to borrow money if the finance institutions will not lend the money. It would be a real tragedy if Gladstone could not raise its £1,000,000 and a very real tragedy if the continuation of industrial development in Rockhampton, as I have outlined it, could not be ensured because we could not raise the £3,000,000.

I say again that some means or other must be achieved by which these amounts can be made available and these great water schemes for industrial development outside Brisbane can be continued by making sure that the local authorities can secure the money necessary for them.

I mentioned in my last speech too, that it is necessary to provide ample and cheap power to ensure that this great industrial development that is evincing itself in Central Queensland continues. In this regard, it was very gratifying to me to be at Callide last Saturday week and to see the commissioning of the great Calcap power station. I was pleased to see the interest shown by so many members on this side of the House. A very strong representation of parliamentary members was present on that occasion. I was pleased to hear the Premier say that this great power station would lead to the further development of industry and the full processing of bauxite at Gladstone. I was pleased to hear so many extending congratulations on the achieving of this wonderful milestone in the industrial development of Central Queensland. I join with the speakers on that occasion who gave thanks and congratulations to the Government and the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board, and I certainly congratulate John Holland & Co. Pty. Ltd. on the completion of that large construction task in record time.

I wonder if fellow members realise how close Central Queensland came to losing that major power station, without which the industrial development of Gladstone would certainly not be taking place now, and without which no proposal could have been put to Comalco. I remind them that on 11 February, 1961, we were so sure that we had lost the power station that interested parties throughout Central Queensland got together to launch a major protest against what we were told would occur, that is, that the finding of the Merz and McLellan report would be ignored and a large power station would be constructed on the Ipswich field. I was reliably informed that a Minister of the Crown had said that that would take place. For that reason the Mayor of Gladstone, Alderman O'Malley, who was also the chairman of the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board, and Mr. Hansen from Biloela, who organised a protest committee there, asked me to convene a large public meeting in Rockhampton.

The meeting that was convened at the back of the town hall on 11 February had to be seen to be believed. Every section of the community was represented. There was an attendance of well over 7,000 people. I have never seen a public meeting like it. Of course, we had no disentients. It was entirely non-political. We had politicians from both sides of the House. The hon. member for Rockhampton North was with us. Even the Bishop of Rockhampton was there, and he made a very strong statement about what was thought at the time to be the intention of the Government. I am very pleased to be able to say that our fears on that occasion were allayed by the Minister, who announced very shortly after that meeting that two power stations would be constructed, one at Ipswich and the other on the Callide field. From that great power station at Calcap will stem all this development. Central Queensland could not possibly develop industrially without it. It is a very significant milestone in industrial progress in that area.

Let me speak about water in the local government scene. It would have been a real tragedy had we been prevented by lack of funds from proceeding with our plan to put a barrage across the Fitzroy River. We could show the history of our endeavours under this heading. We had been trying for years to get permission to construct this barrage. We knew that because of the shortage of water the Yaamba scheme would be insufficient by 1970, yet we feared we were to be denied the possibility of constructing this barrage because of a report furnished by Professor Gibson some 30 years ago. It was only because of the courage and enterprise of the engineers in the local government field and the persistence of the Rockhampton City Council that at last we were given the green light to build the

barrage across the river. We will only harness one per cent. of the runoff in the river yet it will give us an average of 36,000,000 gallons daily which will be sufficient to satisfy more than three times the city's present requirements. Local government engineers have assessed the city's anticipated requirements by the year 2000, and the barrage is estimated to give us three times the amount of water the city of Rockhampton will need by then. Is not that worth while?

Mr. Walsh: What is the cost of the barrage?

Mr. PILBEAM: The cost is estimated at £3,000,000, of which the Government has indicated it will provide £1,000,000 in subsidy. That leaves us £2,000,000 to meet. It has been assessed, on the present growth of the city, that by its completion in three years' time we will have 15,000 tenements, which will meet the £2,000,000 cost.

Mr. Walsh: Do you mean that the tenements or the ratepayers will meet the £2,000,000?

Mr. PILBEAM: The ratepayers have to meet the £2,000,000.

I repeat that it will give us three times the requirements of the city by the year 2000 and we will have about 15,000 people to share in the cost, plus a very large bulk usage by commercial and industrial establishments in the city. It has been worked out that it will cost a householder—we intend to make it a single-rate project—£6 a year, and that diminishes over the 40-year term of the loan on which the barrage is to be built.

How could any sane citizen object to a scheme like that? The plan has been put to the people of Rockhampton. They have been told that it will cost them £6 a year and they are more than keen to go on with the project. We will have an industrial surplus of 30,000,000 gallons a day and we will be in a position to provide industry with unfiltered water at only a fraction of the cost at which other centres in Queensland can provide it. Who could cavil at a scheme like that?

Then, still speaking about water, we are extremely gratified with the investigations being carried out by the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply. At a symposium in Rockhampton on the water resources of Central Queensland we were very pleased to hear Mr. Haigh, the head of the department, give particulars of major schemes that have been investigated on the Fitzroy River showing that the total run-off of this river was 5,700,000 acre-feet of water. When we realise that an acre-foot of water contains almost one-third of 1,000,000 gallons, we can appreciate the amount of water that can be put to use from the Fitzroy and its tributaries.

It is gratifying to the people of Rockhampton to know that this Government has already presented a case to the Commonwealth Government for the conservation of the water in the Nogoa River, and that other sites for future storages are being investigated. To give hon. members some further idea of the immense quantities of water waiting to be put to use, on the Fitzroy, at The Gap, above Yaamba, a wall 150 high would back water up the river for some 140 miles. It appears that a storage of at least 3,500,000 acre-feet, and perhaps more than twice this volume, may be feasible here. Those are not my words. They are the words of Mr. Haigh. This makes people realise what a wonderful gift the Fitzroy has for the people of Central Queensland. It makes us realise, too, and appreciate to the full, the efforts of this Government in harnessing that immense reserve. It is no good harnessing water if there is no use for it. But in one regard there is every justification for putting in these large conservation dams, namely, the development of the cotton industry.

The other day the Minister made reference to several dams in Queensland and said that cotton could be grown in areas surrounding those dams. We feel that this is not quite the answer to it. We feel that, rather than take the cotton to the dams established somewhere else, it would be better to provide the dams in the areas where cotton can be successfully grown, namely, the Dawson and Callide Valleys. It has been abundantly proved that cotton can be an economic crop, but it must be irrigated. This has been proved not only in Australia, but throughout the world. We have the means to provide all the water we need for an industry which would be just as important to the Australian economy as sugar. We must have these large water-conserving dams. We must have water for cotton. We can grow the best cotton in Australia with irrigation, but we must have the water.

Mr. Walsh: And mechanical picking.

Mr. PILBEAM: That has been in operation for many years, and there is no problem there. Water is a different proposition. Time is running short. Cotton is being grown successfully under irrigation in the Namoi River area in New South Wales and the Ord River area in Western Australia. We know that Queensland cotton is better under irrigation than any other cotton because we have a greater yield per acre than New South Wales and Western Australia. It is not a particularly heavy user of water, but to grow it successfully water must be available at the right time. We make no excuse for Rockhampton pushing to the best of its endeavours to have these large water conservation schemes made available so that this wonderful industry can be developed as it should be.

Mr. Walsh It was tried in the Burdekin area where plenty of water was available but it was not a success.

Mr. PILBEAM: That is a different proposition. I am not representing the Burdekin. It has been proved abundantly that the Callide and Dawson Valleys can grow it successfully.

In order to give some indication of the value to Australia that would accrue with the development of this wonderful crop, I point out that Australian spinners require 120,000 bales of raw cotton a year, and in addition Australia imports the equivalent of another 140,000 bales of raw cotton every year in the form of cotton piece-goods. This means that Australia uses approximately £25,000,000 sterling worth of cotton a year. Until this year the total production of cotton in Australia has varied from 3,000 bales to 12,000 bales a year, and of course there is a large increase now following the development of the industry in those areas that I have mentioned. There is no doubt in my mind that the agricultural valleys of the Dawson and the Callide Rivers can grow cotton successfully. The answer to it is water. We will be quite happy to get the water to enable this industry to grow and prosper.

I have already said that we in Rockhampton are very conscious of the necessity to construct a barrage across the Fitzroy River to provide us with industrial water and to prevent a serious shortage of city water. To add something in the tourist field, the road up to Mt. Archer has given us an opportunity to get a share in the profitable tourist industry, and I can assure the House that everyone in Rockhampton is proud of that road and the Fitzroy River barrage.

There are a few exceptions, and I am going to quote a letter written by one of those exceptions that appeared in "The Morning Bulletin". His name is Mr. K. J. Charles.

Mr. Hewitt: Will he be a Labour candidate?

Mr. PILBEAM: He will be the Labour candidate against me at the next election.

He writes—

> "As a ratepayer I am interested in details that have been published concerning the proposed barrage to augment the Rockhampton city water supply. It would appear that the estimated cost will be slightly over £3,000,000, of which possibly one-third may be in the form of subsidy from the State Government. This will leave something better than £2,000,000 to be paid back by the ratepayers. With interest and redemption it is not hard to see that this will involve an annual sum not far short of 10 per cent. or £200,000 per annum."

I shall deal with that when I finish reading the letter.

He goes on to say—

> "If we divide this amongst the 13,000 odd rateable properties, we get the sum of approximately £15 each. This varies quite considerably from the estimated £6 per household, as reported in 'The Morning Bulletin' on 4 August, 1965."

I shall deal with that part of the letter now. All it shows is that this person is trying to knock something without which no development at all would be possible in Rockhampton. Without it, there would not be even enough water for household requirements.

He says—

> "With interest and redemption it is not hard to see that this will involve an annual sum not far short of 10 per cent."

How could anybody make such an incorrect and stupid statement as that? If 10 per cent. of the capital was paid for 40 years, does anyone mean to say that that would be a reasonable proposition? If Mr. Charles knew anything at all about public accounts he would know that the amount required to pay back £1,000 over a term of 40 years at the current rate of interest which is £5 15s. per cent., is £64. In other words, the repayment rate is 6·4 per cent. In spite of that, this financial genius states that it will require 10 per cent.

Mr. Walsh: Harold Holt might have worked that out.

Mr. PILBEAM: Yes, he might have.

Mr. Charles says—

> "If we divide this amongst the 13,000 odd rateable properties, we get the sum of approximately £15 each."

At present there are 13,800. Instead he applies that calculation to the figure of two or three years ago. Even at the present rate of progress there will be 15,000 ratepayers to share the repayments when the barrage is completed.

Another thing to which Mr. Charles has not given attention, and of which he is completely ignorant, is the bulk use of water by commercial and industrial users. Anyone who works out repayments at £64 a £1,000 and divides the amount among 15,000 people will, after making due allowance for the bulk use of water, find that I am just about correct at £6. That is the amount that I have quoted to the people of Rockhampton, and it will be found to be quite correct.

He then states—

> "This supposes that the work will cost no more than the estimate, but if this project follows the course of previous municipal works, the final cost could be anything up to double the estimate, as was the case with the mountain road."

A double knocker! People who give information to the public should ensure that it is correct. If they want to be knockers, they should not go outside the truth to knock a project. The fact remains that on this mountain road extensive earthwork was required. When one adds the cost of providing a gravel pavement and bitumen-seal,

it will be found that our estimate was not far out. The cost was certainly not twice as much as the estimate. Tenders were called for earthworks, and one of £150,000 was received. By day labour the work was done cheaper than it would have been done by private tender. I do not know whether Mr. Charles, by saying that this cost too much, is indicating that he is against the use of day labour. We have used it in Rockhampton. We have been able to get work done economically with it, and we are completely satisfied with it.

I make no secret of the fact that I thoroughly support, on the basis that I have indicated to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the people of Rockhampton, the construction of a barrage across the river. I am more than pleased with the results that have been achieved with the beautiful tourist road to Mt. Archer, and I cannot see how anybody who seeks to tell the citizens that he wishes to promote the welfare of the people can assist his case by knocking the progress of Rockhampton.

We are happy with the progress that is being made in Central Queensland. We are very happy to find that the problem of unemployment has been largely overcome in a centre such as Rockhampton in which there has been so much seasonal unemployment. Whereas previously we had up to 1,100 unemployed at the end of the year, we now have only 290, and the position will become even better when the industries to which I have referred today come into full operation.

Of course, many things remain to be done. We need more bitumen highways, particularly those that run parallel to the railway lines in Central Queensland. We are too far into the road age now to envisage that a railway line alone is sufficient communication between centres. It is like a one-legged man trying to compete with a two-legged man. We know now that bitumen roads are not against the interests of the railways; in fact, a bitumen road running parallel to a railway line is complementary to it and assists it. In Central Queensland, we see the necessity to complete the bitumen sealing of the road between Rockhampton and Longreach and the roads to the Dawson and Callide Valleys.

Mr. Thackeray: How far has it gone now?

Mr. PILBEAM: The western road is gravel only for about 150 miles, and almost 30 miles of the road to Biloela has not been bituminised. The hon. member for Mackenzie can tell the House how much has been done on the road to Theodore, which has been very much neglected in the past.

There have been railway lines to these centres for many years, and it is very necessary for the full development of the State that these important railway lines should have accompanying bitumen roads. This is not a gravel-road age. We are very many years into the bitumen-road age, and gravel roads are entirely uneconomic.

Mr. INCH (Burke) (4.13 p.m.): Following the practice of this Assembly, I reaffirm my loyalty and that of my constituents to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and extend my congratulations to the Administrator, Sir Alan Mansfield, upon the splendid manner in which he has carried out his administrative duties in the absence from this State of Sir Henry Abel Smith.

My congratulations to Sir Alan Mansfield are offered in all sincerity; but I seriously doubt that he will take comfort from them, because I am sure he is well aware that as long as the present coalition parties remain in office he will continue to be handicapped seriously by the ill-conceived actions and advice of the Government, which, as is evident from past events, has a complete disregard for the industrial and economic welfare of the many thousands of workers and their families in this State. Any uneasiness that he may feel in this regard is well-founded, for substantially these are the same Ministers and members of the Government who, in 1961, calmly acquiesced in the introduction of industrial legislation that resulted in a gross miscarriage of wage justice to thousands of workers and created a great industrial upheaval in the mining industry. Already, from August, 1964, up to April of this year, their unreasoning folly has cost Queensland and the Commonwealth of Australia, industry and worker alike, an economic loss of many millions of pounds.

It is high time that a Government of this calibre was discharged from office and replaced by an Australian Labour Party Government, so that the legislation enacted will serve all sections of the community and not be directed towards the suppression of the worker or the filching of his hard-won right to share proportionately in any excess of profits that may be gained by the industry in which he is engaged.

The legislating of that industrial Act and its sorry aftermath of industrial unrest, economic loss, tragedy, hatred and unemployment has earned Australia-wide contempt for this Government. Any Government which, by its actions, shows its readiness and willingness to subjugate itself to demands of monopoly interests and big business no matter what the eventual outcome or cost may be, richly deserves the contempt of people from all walks of life.

Not only does this Government display its bias to the workers, it also discriminates against those whom it regards as its own supporters, such as small farmers and primary producers. By no stretch of the imagination can it be said that these people are receiving a fair share of the price which the consumer is called upon to pay for the commodities produced by them. The lifting of price control has reacted to the detriment of the small farmer, the producer, and the consumer

alike. Costs to the consumer go unchecked and continue their regular upward spiral, but the return to the producer is most disproportionate in comparison with these consumer costs. Until such time as some form of price control is reinstituted, both producer and consumer will continue to suffer at the hands of greedy, unscrupulous, racketeering profiteers who are holding both producer and consumer to ransom and whose actions are apparently condoned by this Government. It not only continues to turn a blind eye to their activities and a deaf ear to the repeated requests of members on this side of the House that positive action be taken to prevent or curb this unbridled profiteering and the unparalleled discrepancy between producer return and consumer cost by the reintroduction of price control, but it also declines to heed the plaints of workers and housewife organisations and other responsible bodies which constitute the major and important sections of communal life throughout the State.

Not being satisfied with its actions in this regard, the Government added further to the financial burden of the wage and salary earner—also those in the low-income bracket—through the decontrol of rents at a time when housing was at a premium. For that matter, it is still in short supply. The Government gave the green light to rapacious landlords to demand exorbitant rentals on homes that in many instances are substandard and in other cases little better than hovels.

This is the unhappy state of affairs created by the Government and it will continue to exist for years to come, despite the belated efforts of the Government to rectify its mistake by the construction of Housing Commission homes for purchase or rental. Although it may endeavour to make amends in this direction, many people will continue to remain at the mercy of these unscrupulous landlords for a long time to come as the demand for this type of housing at moderate rentals far exceeds the supply. Until such time as the Government steps up its home construction programme and overcomes the lag, these unfortunate people, through the excessive rentals charged by landlords, will continue to pay the piper for the Government's mistake in lifting rent controls.

Even if there is a stepping up in the construction of these homes, will the Government change its present policy in relation to their allocation to ensure that the demands for homes by wage, salary and low-income groups are satisfied before those of private enterprise and other interests who, by their financial position and the other resources available to them, are well able to provide whatever accommodation they may require for their own personnel?

I have always been under the impression that originally these homes were being constructed in an endeavour to satisfy the housing needs of the people by enabling the worker to purchase his own home on a low deposit and at reasonable weekly repayments over an extensive period, or to obtain a home for rental at a reasonable weekly rate. Either I have been labouring under a misapprehension in this respect or possibly there is a different policy in different parts of the State. At any rate, the allocation of homes at Mt. Isa leads me to believe that this could be so because, of the 100 homes now under construction in that centre, 62 have been allocated to private enterprise on a guaranteed rental basis.

Mr. Walsh: What do you mean by private enterprise? The mine?

Mr. INCH: I am referring to the mine, to Thiess Bros. and to other organisations that are interested in obtaining these homes only on a guaranteed rental basis. The ordinary worker applicant at Mt. Isa has no chance of getting a home for rental. He has to enter into an agreement for the purchase of a home and pay a deposit of several hundred pounds or more, according to the value of the home, before he is allowed to go into it. I understand that there are 40 applicants waiting for rental accommodation at Mt. Isa, but there is no likelihood of their being allowed to rent a home. I should like to know the reason for this discrimination in favour of private enterprise as against the ordinary wage or salary earner. As for the other 38 homes that will be available for purchase out of the 100 under construction there is, or was, a waiting list of 90-odd applicants. This number may have been reduced through some applicants leaving the area during the recent industrial dispute, but it is doubtful if the number has dropped to the extent that the 38 homes to be available for purchase will be sufficient to meet their demands.

If it is the policy of the Housing Commission that in Mt. Isa the homes are for purchase and not for rental, why is it that applicants who miss out on one of these homes will be left to twiddle their thumbs, so to speak, while homes are being allocated on a rental basis to private enterprise—50 of them to one company alone? I am sure these people will be most anxious to hear the reason for this.

While on the subject of Housing Commission homes, I wish to discuss the obnoxious broadcast system for the disposal of waste water from these residences and the adamant refusal of the Commission to alter its system in areas such as Mt. Isa, where almost the whole of the terrain is rock and shale right from the surface, with the result that the absorption rate is very low. Indeed, it could be said to be negligible. This system for the disposal of waste water may operate with some success in other parts of the State where there is a good depth of topsoil to absorb the water, but it is a complete failure in Mt. Isa and the resultant mess of stagnant water which contains particles of rotting food, constitutes a grave menace to the health of our community.

I first raised this subject in 1963 during the Supply debate. After describing the appalling, unhygienic conditions created by this system of waste water disposal in the yards of the Housing Commission homes in the Townview area I had hoped—quite foolishly as it now turns out—that a better and more hygienic system of disposal would be incorporated in future plans for the construction of further Housing Commission homes in Mt. Isa.

During their recent visit to Mt. Isa the Minister for Works and the State Housing Commissioner, Mr. Campbell, had the opportunity to see for themselves the putrid results of this system of drainage, yet I am informed that they refuse to alter or amend the plans relating to this system and resolutely ignore the repeated requests of the Mt. Isa Shire Council to have this unsightly and unhealthy method of waste water distribution abolished. In its efforts to have this drastic situation remedied the council has been forced to make written representations to the Premier and has forwarded a copy of the letter to me with the request that I assist with this problem. I now bring before the House the contents of the letter, dated 19 August. Addressed to the Premier, it reads as follows—

"Dear Sir,

re: Housing Commission Homes, Mount Isa. Waste Water Disposal.

"Following unsuccessful approaches to the Queensland Housing Commision, it was resolved at the General Meeting of the Council on 29th July last, that representations be made to you with a view to having the drainage at the above-mentioned dwellings brought to the required standard of the Local Authority.

"Any dwellings being constructed or re-constructed in the town of Mount Isa, unless the site is unsuitable, are required by the Council to instal a septic system, and to provide for the disposal of septic tank effluent and waste water by sub-surface soakage trench. However, where Housing Commission homes are being constructed for rental, the Commission will not provide for the disposal of waste water by sub-surface soakage, but provides as an alternative, for the collection of waste water in a concrete box, and for its disposal onto the surface of the ground through a hose which may be shifted at will by the occupants of the home. Where the home is being constructed for a purchaser, disposal by sub-surface soakage is provided, if requested by the owner.

"The objection of the Commission to the provision of sub-surface disposal in the case of homes for rental, appears to be that it has been the experience of the Commission that occupants of rented homes generally exercise less care in the operation and maintenance of this type of disposal system, thus contributing to, or causing its failure, and involving the Commission in the expense of clearing or renewing the disposal system.

"This problem would not, of course, be unique to the Commission or to Mount Isa, and there are many privately-owned homes in Mount Isa which are rented, and in which provision is made for the disposal of septic tank effluent and waste water by sub-surface soakage.

"The failure of this type of disposal system inevitably results in a condition which is a nuisance and prejudicial to health, and in the case of a rented home, and where the condition does not result from defective construction, the remedy lies in action under The Health Acts, Section 79 (1), on the person by whose act, default, or sufferance the nuisance arises or continues, i.e., the occupier. A parallel is provided in the Standard Sewerage By-Laws, By-Law 48, which requires that the occupier shall maintain the house drain and fittings and fixtures free from obstruction other than obstructions caused by defective materials, breakages, or tree roots, and in a clean and sanitary condition at all times.

"The Council is prepared to exercise its responsibility in the case of any default of an occupier of a Commission home, as it does in the case of an occupier of a privately-owned home which is rented, provided the Commission is prepared to grant it jurisdiction in the matter.

"The Council is only too well aware of the short-comings of the older type of building construction, sanitation, and drainage in Mount Isa, and is endeavouring to overcome them, and provide a healthier, more attractive, congenial town, with a higher standard of accommodation, by the demolition of sub-standard dwellings, raising the standards of building and environmental sanitation, and the extensions of water reticulation and sewerage services as quickly as economics will permit.

"The Council would therefore be most appreciative of any action you may take with the object of securing drainage at all Commission homes in Mount Isa to the required standard of the Local Authority.

"Copies of this letter are being forwarded to the Hon. A. J. Inch, M.L.A., The Queensland Commissioner for Housing, and the Director-General of Health and Medical Services.

Yours faithfully,

J. V. Regan,

Shire Clerk."

I doubt if any local authority in Queensland —and bear in mind that these authorities are under the control of the Minister and the Local Government Department—would grant approval to a private householder to install such a system, which in my opinion

would be contrary to all health regulations. Yet here we have the Housing Commission ignoring these conditions and virtually telling the local authority to go to hell. It is high time the Commission was hauled down off its high horse and told that it must also fall into line in the observation of the health laws of this State. If a Government department cannot set an example of health and hygiene, how can it be expected that others should do so? I make a sincere appeal to the Premier to assist in every way by acceding to the representations made by the town council and myself. I can assure him that such action would be appreciated.

I am concerned at the existing state of affairs in these Housing Commission areas at Mt. Isa because I am well aware of the attendant danger of epidemic disease, such as gastro enteritis and other allied complaints. If an outbreak should occur we will be placed in a very precarious position in providing accommodation and medical attention at the local hospital.

For quite some time now accommodation for patients at the Mt. Isa Hospital has been taxed well beyond its original capacity of 83 beds. This is evidenced by the fact that there is a daily average of 97 in-patients, which in turn indicates that on most days there would be approximately 100 patients receiving attention. This does not include the maternity section. On several occasions there have been as many as 108 patients in the general wards, and it is not an uncommon sight to see beds crammed into aisles and every other bit of available space in an effort to cope with the ever-growing intake of patients.

This intolerable congestion must be prevented. It cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely, for conditions such as this are not in the best interests of the patients and only add further to the strain already imposed on a harassed and overworked medical and nursing staff. It is imperative that the necessary approval for finance for extensions to the hospital be granted immediately plans are to hand so that there will be no further undue delays or impediments to hamper the hospital board in its efforts to overcome this most undesirable situation that now exists. I trust that the planning of these extensions is not simply based on the immediate needs of the hospital, but will also include future requirements of this fast-developing area with its rapidly expanding population.

Every assistance must also be given by the Department of Health to this hospital board in its endeavour to obtain additional medical staff. The three doctors at the hospital are working under heavy pressure. They are operating till all hours of the night and working anything up to 85 hours a week in an endeavour to give the necessary surgical and medical attention to those under their care. They are doing a magnificent job, but they can go only so far and for a limited time. No matter how devoted they may be to their task, sooner or later they will reach the end of their physical endurance and this will lead either to their resigning or to a breakdown in their health if they continue to work under the prevailing conditions.

The very least that can be done to assist them in the performance of their splendid work and to afford them some time for relaxation would be to appoint a relieving doctor, and I urge the Minister to make every effort to bring about this desired appointment.

Whilst I refer in the main to the requirements of the Mt. Isa hospital, I am also conscious of the need for improvement in those hospitals situated in the distant areas of my electorate such as the one at Burketown. This hospital, like many others constructed in remote areas of the State years ago, is a cottage-style hospital staffed by a matron only. There are no nurses to assist her in the care of the patients. Amenities are few, and equipment and facilities are reduced to the bare minimum and are mostly outmoded. At present the only method of obtaining hot water for hospital needs is to heat the water on a wood-burning stove, and the matron cannot be expected to get up at all hours of the night to tend such a stove to ensure a supply of hot water in case an emergency arises. That position could be overcome by the installation of a Porta-Gas hot-water system or a solar-type system similar to the one in operation at the Camooweal hospital, which is another remote hospital in my electorate.

Unlike the Burketown hospital, which is old and constantly in need of repair, the Camooweal hospital was completely rebuilt following a disastrous fire some years ago. Although it is 117 miles from Mt. Isa, it has the advantage of being connected to that centre by a bitumen highway and has its own ambulance to transport urgent medical cases or accident victims to the base hospital at Mt. Isa. The Burketown hospital has no transport facilities of its own and no bitumen roads for over 200 miles to connect it with Mt. Isa, which is approximately 350 miles away.

Although Dr. Croucher, the Flying Doctor, pays regular clinical visits to the hospital, there are times when urgent medical or accident cases are received. The matron then has to rely completely on medical advice imparted to her by radio from the Flying Doctor base and her nursing ability and skill till the Flying Doctor is able to attend and transport the patient to a base hospital. The Royal Flying Doctor Service, and these women who are prepared to give up the bright lights and amenities of city life to bring care and comfort to the people of the Outback, are performing a service the like of which is unsurpassed anywhere in the world, and I am sure that I express the thought and prayer of every man, woman and child in these far-flung areas when I

say, "Thank God for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the devotion of the women who staff the outback hospitals."

It is not sufficient merely to offer a prayer in thanks for the work performed by these women. Appreciation of their efforts could be expressed in a more tangible way by making their lives more comfortable and their task much easier by the provision of better amenities and improved hospital facilities and equipment. I mentioned earlier that the Burketown hospital is very old and constantly in need of repair. One gains the impression when looking at it that over the years it has been repaired spasmodically and added to in a piecemeal fashion. The result is that it is still old and decrepit and lacking in any symmetrical design.

I am led to believe that £5,000 has been allocated for the renewal of rafters and other general repairs to a ward at the rear of the main hospital section. If this is so, then, in my opinion, it is pouring good money down the drain, because the building is very old and any repairs effected would, in a sense, be merely propping it up. A more sensible proposal for the Department of Health to adopt would be to add a few thousand pounds more to the amount already allocated and use it to finance the construction of an extension to the main section of the hospital and bring it all into line, instead of having a hotch-potch of buildings in various stages of disrepair scattered all over the place. These buildings should be scrapped and replaced by the extensions that I advocate. By doing this, and by replacing the vintage facilities and equipment with those of a more modern design and standard, the matron's task would be simplified and her working conditions and surroundings would be more congenial. I trust that the Minister will heed the proposals that I have put forward for these improvements and take the necessary steps to implement them at the earliest possible date.

While speaking on matters affecting Burketown and residents in the surrounding district, there is a further matter that I wish to raise. It affects several small graziers on properties between Almora and Burketown, a distance of 50 miles. The Gregory Downs-Burketown road traverses these properties, on which there are 10 gates, and these gates have now to be replaced by grids, ostensibly at the expense of these small property-owners.

At one time the road was classed as a main road connecting Burketown with Mt. Isa. It has now been reclassified as a secondary road, but there is reason to believe that, at some time in the future, it could be converted to a beef road running from Burketown to connect with the proposed beef road from Lawn Hills via Thorntonia to Mt. Isa, and it could well be that the Government is endeavouring to use a cheapskate means of road improvement by forcing these small graziers to install grids at their own expense on the road running through their properties—a road which, at the whim of the Government, could again be reclassified either as a beef road or as a main road.

Several years ago I raised a similar grievance in this House when it was intended to force another small grazing family on the Planet Downs holding to install grids at their own expense. Incidentally, the road that passes through Planet Downs is the same Gregory Downs-Burketown road to which I have just referred. I protested to the then Minister for Main Roads, the late Mr. Evans, against this intention and pointed out that the Main Roads Department had approved the installation of grids on the Gregory Downs-Nardoo Road at no expense to the property owners. I am pleased to believe that Mr. Evans took heed of my protest, for, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the grids were installed at no cost to Planet Downs, and I now direct a similar protest to the present Minister for Main Roads and request that the same consideration be extended to the people on properties between Almora and Burketown. Failing this, loan moneys should be made available to the Burke Shire Council to install the grids, but I still contend that the cost of the work should be borne by the Government and I protest strongly against any proposal or intention to saddle these people with such charges.

A further request that I make to the Minister is for the department to make finance available to enable the Burke Shire Council to carry out the reconstruction of a lengthy section of the road from Burketown to Doomadgee Mission, to enable mission supplies to be brought in speedily and without mishap and provide a more reasonable means of entry to and egress from the mission. For many miles the road leading out from Burketown to the mission is in good to fair condition; but it gradually deteriorates into potholes and corrugations, and finally dwindles into what can only be described as a morass of bull dust. It extends for miles, and at most times it is virtually impossible for a standard motor vehicle to travel through it without bogging down or sustaining some structural damage or mechanical trouble. The only vehicles that can traverse this long section with any degree of safety are of the four-wheel-drive variety, or big, powerful trucks. It is vital to the needs of the mission to have this road brought up to a reasonable state of trafficability because, although the mission is self-supporting in some respects, it still requires large and regular supplies of basic foodstuffs and building materials.

Mr. Davies: They are doing a very good job up there.

Mr. INCH: My word, they are!

Goods have to be transported from Burketown over this road. Some indication of their requirements is indicated by the fact that each year after the monsoon wet season 100 tons of supplies are brought in to

replenish their dwindled stocks, and it must also be realised that large quantities would have to be brought in prior to the wet season to tide them over a period when most forms of transport are immobilised.

The Superintendent, Mr. Hockey, and his wife, together with a trained and willing staff, are performing a splendid service in educating the children and providing new home units for the native residents, and also in the medical care and attention to the aged and sick. They cheerfully accept the responsibility of running this large establishment, and work untiringly to overcome its many problems. But the road, for obvious reasons, is one problem with which they are unable to cope. The Government has the means at its disposal to assist them in this regard, and on their behalf I make this plea for the necessary finance to be made available for the reconstruction of this section of the Burketown-Doomadgee Road.

Mr. Davies: For 200 yards in places there is no road at all.

Mr. INCH: That is so; you are in and out through the trees; you go everywhere. In fact, it is hard to find a road at times.

Although this road presents its difficulty in the transport of supplies and materials, a very great bugbear which the mission residents and those of the Burketown district have had to suffer for many months is the service provided by the Keith Hollands rail, road and sea service to the Gulf areas. Deliveries by sea are still infrequent and the tonnage carried by the present vessel is totally inadequate to meet the requirements of the area. Cargo is landed in a waterlogged and damaged condition, and in some instances it is unusable, and therefore unsaleable. Whereas the former shipping service carried insurance for loss or damage to cargo and the consignee was thereby indemnified for any loss or damage sustained, the present contractor still refuses to carry insurance, and any loss has to be borne by the consignee. If complaints are made regarding damaged goods, they are met with the stock reply, "They were insufficiently packed; we therefore accept no liability."

At the invitation and expense of the Burke Shire Council I flew from Mt. Isa to Doomadgee Mission and Burketown to investigate complaints regarding this service and to see for myself the damage to some goods and the waterlogged state of others which had been delivered by sea some days prior to my arrival. In my opinion there was just cause for these complaints and for the anger which this company had aroused in the people. That anger was directed not only against the transport service but also against the Government, which had assured them of a service equal to, if not better than, that which they had received in the past. Following my visit to the area I obtained an interview with the Premier regarding the service, and I feel that as a result of this interview and the genuine concern of the Premier at the existing state of affairs an official investigation of the whole position has now been carried out by Mr. Lee, Assistant Under Secretary to the Treasury.

It would appear at this stage that one result of Mr. Lee's investigation will be the application of a subsidy on freight rates charged on 1-ton lots of certain goods, and this subsidy is to be passed on to the buyers. No doubt this will assist in reducing freights to some extent, but in what way will it reduce the damage to goods in transit? How will it offset the loss to consignees when this company refuses to carry insurance and accepts no liability for loss or damage to goods?

For the sake of those people who have suffered so long at the hands of this transport company I sincerely hope that the investigation carried out by Mr. Lee will result in an improvement in this service to the point where, at the very least, it will be comparable in every way with that provided by the former shipping company. Although the Treasurer has indicated that it is obvious from Mr. Lee's investigation that there is a wide acceptance of this new service—there would have to be in any case because there is no other service of any size operating in the area—it still remains to be seen whether this service will better the old one in the long run. Despite the fact that this company is constructing a vessel of 100 cubic tons capacity to service the area, the former shipping company's vessel brought anything up to 360 tons up-river to Burketown. When the wet season comes, what happens with goods that are being transported by motor truck at the present time? Once the trucks get off the bitumen beef road that runs from Normanton to Julia Creek they are faced with 113 miles of black-soil plains and the Leichhardt River, which is approximately 300 yards wide. That is where they will run into trouble.

One final matter that I want to draw attention to is the high rail freights on goods consigned to areas west of Townsville, charges which contribute in no small measure to the high cost of living of the residents in these areas. These residents are at a decided disadvantage compared with people living in coastal areas. The coastal towns benefit through lower freight rates brought about, I understand, by the competition between the railways and the shipping companies for the carriage of goods and other cargo. But this benefit is not passed on to the people in the West, for immediately these goods and materials are consigned from Townsville to the western areas they attract the full freight rates applicable to whatever category they are in. It would seem as though the western people are being forced to subsidise the reduction in freight charges to coastal areas. If the Railway Department can afford to transport goods from Brisbane to Townsville at a certain freight rate, and also continue to give concessional rates amounting to many thousands of pounds to Mount Isa Mines Ltd. each year, I see no reason why similar

concessional rates should not apply to consumer goods and other materials consigned to the Far West, and thereby assist in some measure to reduce the high cost of living which burdens the residents in western centres.

It could be said that freight reductions do apply through a special contract rate which wholesale distributors must apply for, but, unfortunately for the people in the Far West, many of the wholesalers are not attempting to apply for this contract rate, and therefore full freight rates are charged on goods consigned to the storekeepers.

I realise that the Railway Department cannot force these wholesalers to apply for the contract rate, but it could grant this concession direct to the western storekeepers who are willing to regulate their buying to meet the weight requirements necessary to obtain the contract rate. As this would be a means of reducing to some extent the cost of living in these areas, I urge the Minister for Transport to accept this proposal.

(Time expired.)

Mr. BEARDMORE (Balonne) (4.53 p.m.): I congratulate the Administrator, Sir Alan Mansfield, on the excellent and logical speech delivered by him on the occasion of the opening of this Thirty-seventh Parliament on 17 August last. I join with other hon. members in regretting the departure of Sir Henry Abel Smith and his good wife, Lady May, from our State, where Sir Henry has done a wonderful job as Governor, carrying out his duties with distinction and credit to himself.

I associate myself and my constituents with the message of loyalty to Her Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. The newly elected member for Mirani excelled himself in his contribution. I think hon. members will agree that Mr. Newbery has justified his election to this Parliament. He has shown himself to be a worthy successor to the late Hon. E. Evans, the previous member for Mirani, who was a forceful and realistic debater and fighter for what he considered to be right. I was proud to consider the late Hon. E. Evans as one of my good friends.

The seconder of the motion, the hon. member for Ithaca, has decided not to continue in Parliament after this session. He will be missed in this Chamber, if only because of his kindly nature. I wish him every happiness in his retirement. I doubt that his retirement will mean that he will have lost interest in his fellow-man.

Today the hon. member for Roma gave us a lot of information about stock losses in previous droughts. He said that it was too early to know the losses in the present drought, but they will eventually be known.

Mr. Aikens: What about the grazier who died the other day leaving £193,000?

Mr. BEARDMORE: The hon. member would not know what his overdraft was for a start.

I think I am competent to talk about the effects of the present catastrophic drought because the Balonne local authority depastures almost one-tenth of the sheep in Queensland. If we add to that the other four local authorities which comprise my electorate, namely, Waggamba, Tara, Warroo and Booringa, I think it is safe to say that the Balonne electorate would probably depasture more sheep than any other electorate. The Gregory electorate may contain a larger number of sheep, but I doubt it.

Again, the incidence of drought could hardly be worse in any other part of Queensland. In fact, large areas of South-west Queensland have been badly affected by drought off and on—and mostly on—for the past six years, without any relief in sight. This is a very serious matter for Queensland. The economy of the State, depending as it does, more or less, on what the land will produce, must feel the bad effects of drought.

Primary production includes beef, sugar, grain, dairy products, small crops, fodder and other products, but I am mainly concerned now with the wool-producing areas of the State. In the past year, wool values have barely covered the normal cost of production. When we add to this the additional heavy cost of fighting a drought, with fodder almost unprocurable in the State, at an unparalleled high cost, we may readily realise the serious position in which the industry finds itself.

As the hon. member for Gregory said recently in this Chamber, much of the burden caused by the drought is carried by wool brokers who in ordinary times provide the sinews of war for carrying on the requirements of the man on the land and make advances of money on the basis of ordinary requirements. But gradually, as drought costs increase and losses become more and more serious, wool brokers and banks reach the stage where money advanced exceeds the value of securities available, so the position gets out of hand. We should not forget that banks and wool-broking houses are not in business for fun, so unfortunately these institutions come to the stage where it does not pay to make further advances to carry clients any further. However, this is where personalities come into the picture. A family may have been clients of a bank or wool firm for a couple of generations. In fact, they become part of the stock-in-trade of a wool firm in particular, and the association between the lender and the borrower develops a friendly atmosphere and a feeling of mutual trust. It would be a pity if this were altered in any way.

I was not in the Chamber when the hon. member for Roma referred to the advisability of having the Reserve Bank make advances

for the rehabilitation of the grazing industry. As the matter is so serious it is worth repeating, so I do not propose to discard my notes. It is a fair thing to expect the position of the lender—in this case the wool firms—to get to the stage where its own borrowing from its bank becomes exhausted. This actually happens. Because of the drain on their available funds the wool firms are unable to provide the necessary finance, or at least can do so only on a modified scale, and the only place where money can come from in such an emergency is the Reserve Bank. I ask, "What else is the Reserve Bank for? Could the reserve of money held by that bank be put to any better use than bolstering the economy of the country by making money available through suitable channels such as the Commonwealth Development Bank?" This is an institution which today is doing a splendid job, as is also the Agricultural Bank, in advancing credits to clients who are unable to borrow from other sources. That is what the Commonwealth Development Bank was established for. Because of the emergency that has arisen, fresh money will have to be found. It should be made possible for the Commonwealth Bank or the Commonwealth Development Bank to make advances without disturbing existing mortgages by accepting a second mortgage as security against money advanced. Long terms for repayment with deferred interest could help landholders to rehabilitate themselves. This method of rehabilitation of the grazing industry when the season breaks was favoured by Sir William Gunn recently when addressing a public meeting at Hannaford.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that the Commonwealth Development Bank may not be able to physically handle the volume of applications for finance which must arise when the drought breaks and maybe wool-brokers would be prepared to accept long-term, low-interest-rate loans themselves to be apportioned out among their clients to assist their rehabilitation. After all, what better source would there be than the brokers through which to handle such advances? These people are well versed and experienced in catering for primary producers' requirements and have organisations which could do such a job expeditiously and efficiently.

It is either this method of rehabilitating the industry and the economy of this State, which has suffered and is still suffering the effects of the most crippling drought in the memory of white man, or finding themselves battling for years to get out of debt, if they ever do. I know of cases where stock numbers have been reduced to 10 or 15 per cent. of the original numbers and with the stock losses went costly feeding expenses which can never be recovered. In many cases the landholders, through no fault of their own, are "out cold" and after a lifetime of pioneering they have reached the limit of their resources, and bankruptcy or the pension is the best they can look forward to.

Mr. Bromley interjected.

Mr. BEARDMORE: It would do some of you chaps some good if you suffered the same experiences.

The drought is still with us in the vast grazing areas of the State, although fortunately the wheat-growing areas of the Darling Downs and the coastal belt have had timely rains and the position there looks reasonably secure.

I appeal to the Premier, the Treasurer, and the Government to make the strongest submissions to the Commonwealth Government to have this avenue of relief made available without delay, so that Queensland's economy will not suffer. Every man, woman, and child will suffer unless a fresh supply of money is made available for its rehabilitation.

As I understand it, the Reserve Bank was established for the purpose of protecting the economy of the nation by making money available on an emergency basis. What more deserving or rewarding investment could be considered than to protect the economy and the rehabilitation of the grazing industry of this great State by releasing some of the Reserve Bank's frozen funds for this purpose?

In the main, the bulk of advances to graziers is handled by wool-brokers and the major trading banks in Australia, and in this connection figures are interesting. The latest figures available, in March last, showed that the major trading banks advanced £113,500,000 in what they classify as mainly sheep grazing. In the same period pastoral finance companies advanced a little over £134,000,000. Banks, of course, cover a wider range of industry and commerce.

Advances by pastoral houses in Queensland make interesting reading. In July, 1964, the advances amounted to £26,000,000 and this had increased to £28,800,000 by December, 1964. By June this year—the figures are not yet available—this could have increased to well in excess of £29,000,000. These figures can only be confirmed at a later date.

Not only have stock been lost because of the drought but wool returns also have suffered. A drought-affected clip is low in yield and of substandard quality, and in fact many clips from the North-west at the last wool sales grossed from £51 to £58 a bale. From this, freight, shearing costs, and selling costs are deducted, thus reducing the net return considerably. There is not much left to the grower.

I am concerned because I feel that a lot of people are not aware of the hardship and, indeed, tragedy that stalks a great part of Queensland's pastoral areas today. It is bad enough losing stock and becoming financially involved because of the drought. In addition,

many good people have lost their lives both directly and indirectly because of the drought, some by tragic accidents, in one case whilst carting water to stock. In another case, worry, contributed to by an overriding fear of the eventual consequences that the drought might bring, caused the loss of a life. Many cases are not heard about. I fear that these matters just go over people's heads unless they are placed in a position in which these tragedies are brought to their notice. Again, can we fully realise the state of mind of these good people, who are valuable assets of the country and who are being faced with the prospect of the loss of their life's work? That is a human angle that is too easily lost sight of by those not directly concerned.

We hear a lot about fodder conservation from those who are always prepared to give cheap advice, no doubt with the best of intentions, but it is not so easy for the man on the land to conserve fodder in the 20-inch rainfall area. It is easier said than done because, although fodder can be grown in the 20-inch rainfall black-soil areas, rain has to fall at the right time to benefit the growing of crops for grain or fodder, and a 40 or 50 points fall, which is of benefit in wheat-growing areas, could be of no assistance whatever in purely grazing areas. I know of farmers south of Meandarra and even west of Glenmorgan who last year had good crops, but it is very doubtful if the crops that they will grow this year will yield the seed. That can happen at any time. Too much depends on suitable rains at the right time. That problem will always remain while it is necessary to depend on the elements.

There is a distinct difference between farming in the regular rainfall areas and in the more chancy 20-inch areas. It is usually possible, of course, to grow oats for fodder in most places except in times of drought. There are other factors, of course, such as locality and the enonomic aspect. Only yesterday one of the largest stock operators in the south-western district of Queensland told me that drought-relief fodder in the past eight months had cost him £46,000, and it still goes on. Some rain fell over 3,500 acres of planted oats a month ago, just enough to bring it out of the ground. Today it is burning off and, apart from the heart-break associated with it, the seed and the labour will be wasted and the use of the land has been lost also for some months past.

There is another matter that concerns me and should, I think, concern all reasonable-thinking people. I refer to the help that could, and should, be forthcoming from the department controlling road transport. It has been said that valuable rail concessions have been made available as drought relief. I agree that this is so, but in my thinking road transport concessions would be much more valuable. For the purpose of saving the lives of stock, allowing unrestricted road movement of, firstly, stock and, secondly, fodder while drought conditions last would undoubtedly help to reduce stock losses. When the need to transport drought-stricken stock arises, it cannot wait. If the railways are overworked, road transport should be allowed to assist to the limit of its capacity. To boil it down, which is the more important —to reduce devastating stock losses as a matter of national importance, or have the railways make a profit? I think there is only one answer, and I hope the Minister will give my suggestion some serious consideration.

The more liberal allowance now available on rail transport should also be extended to road transport as a measure of drought relief.

Geographically, railways, with their long lines of communication, cannot give the quick service in times of emergency that can be given by the valuable direct and much speedier method of road transport, because the time saved in transporting drought-stricken stock is very vital.

I hope that what I have said today will at least be regarded as a genuine attempt to tell the true story of what is happening in one of our very important industries, an industry which in fact contributes greatly to the economy of the State.

Mr. DUFFICY (Warrego) (5.11 p.m.): I agree wholeheartedly that the drought in Western Queensland is very serious, and I agree with the attack made on the Government by the hon. member for Balonne and the hon. member for Gregory because of its failure to do anything practical about the situation in the West. I may have something more to say about that later.

I have been in this Parliament for quite a number of years, but never have I seen such an atmosphere of distrust and disunity in the ranks of a Government. The Country Party and the Liberal Party are a very unhappy coalition, and let me say here that this is not only my opinion. The hon. member for Gregory referred to the corner group that surrounds the hon. member for Clayfield, and his remarks were very pertinent to the problem that now faces the Government. In passing, let me say that that corner group is not only viciously opposed to certain Ministers and members of the Country Party; it is also very viciously opposed to certain members of its own party. It seems to me that two of the fundamental problems may be these: firstly, the question of three-cornered contests; secondly, the fight that is now taking place within the Liberal Party itself. Perhaps the question of three-cornered contests is not really fundamental to the difference between the Liberal Party and the Country Party. I think it probably goes slightly deeper than that.

Mr. Sullivan: Are you supporting the hon. member for Townsville North as leader of the A.L.P.?

Mr. DUFFICY: The hon. member will have an opportunity later on to express his opinion about the Liberal Party and I hope

that he will tell us the truth, as the hon. member for Gregory did. In the meantime, I ask him not to interrupt me.

As I said, three-cornered contests probably are not the real reason for the difference between the Liberal Party and the Country Party today. It probably goes a little deeper than that, because there is a fundamental difference in the policies of the two parties and it is now bursting to the surface and, in my opinion, will wreck this marriage of convenience.

When the hon. member for Gregory displayed his disgust and frustration with the activities of the Government, I could well understand his approach because I represent a western electorate adjoining his and I can appreciate his difficulty in making representations to a Cabinet comprised of men who have absolutely no practical knowledge of the problems that face Western Queenslanders. Let us have a look at the Ministry. The Premier and six of his Ministers come from within a radius of 100 miles of Brisbane; three other Ministers represent areas within a radius of approximately 200 miles of Brisbane, and the remaining three are from North Queensland.

It is true, and it has been said on many occasions, that the economy of Queensland, and of Australia generally, rides on the sheep's back. At least it can be truthfully said that the wool industry, if not the greatest, is at least one of the greatest rural industries we have. It is certainly our greatest export earner.

It is also a fact that this important rural industry has not one single voice in the Cabinet of this State at the present time. It seems rather remarkable that we had to wait for a Government of which the senior partner is, temporarily at least, the Country Party, for this state of affairs to occur. It certainly never occurred under past Labour Governments, because this important rural industry—the wool industry—then had a voice in Cabinet. At the present time it has absolutely no voice, as I have just pointed out. I can well appreciate the frustration of the hon. member for Gregory, therefore, in trying to get across to these people who have no practical knowledge the difficulties that face his electors and mine. I might revert to this subject later.

The Minister for Health has just entered the Chamber so I will take the opportunity now of placing a couple of matters before him, not in the way of carping criticism but to try to point out something of which even he may not be aware. I tell the Minister quite definitely that the people in Western Queensland today, not only in my electorate but in the West generally, are not enjoying the medical facilities they enjoyed under a Labour Government. I will tell him why. The most valuable thing any person possesses is his own life. It is valuable to every man, whether he is a millionaire, a pensioner, or is destitute. Every person is entitled to a choice of medical officer and hospital facilities if his life is in danger, or if he believes his life is in danger. Under a Labour Government, if a person in the West, irrespective of his financial position, was satisfied that the best medical attention available in the West was not good enough, he was entitled to be transported free to Brisbane where he had the opportunity to avail himself of the best hospital facilities and medical attention obtainable in Queensland. He had that right if he expressed a wish to visit Brisbane. Today, unless his medical officer decides that it is desirable that he come to Brisbane, he cannot get a free pass on the railways from Western Queensland.

Mr. R. Jones: Or North Queensland.

Mr. DUFFICY: I am speaking about Western Queensland because that is the area I know. If a medical superintendent is of the opinion that a person can get adequate service in the local hospital by the local doctor the patient has no opportunity to secure another opinion or obtain the best medical service that is available in the State. That is entirely wrong. I am well aware of the argument that the Minister could advance in favour of the present policy. Probably he would say, "After all, we have honorary surgeons who regularly visit western hospitals. They are competent to perform any operations that may be necessary. We have reasonably well equipped hospitals in Western Queensland. Therefore, there is no necessity for people to be given free rail transport to Brisbane to seek further medical attention."

Up to a point that argument could be sound. I have no desire to cast any reflections on the ability of medical men in Western Queensland or the hospital facilities available there, particularly when one considers the restrictions that must inevitably be imposed on those facilities in a small western hospital.

Mr. Ewan: Dr. Ariotti at Charleville is a pretty good fellow.

Mr. DUFFICY: I am not condemning him at all. All I am saying is that I do not know of any surgeon, even on Wickham Terrace, who is a specialist in all fields of surgery. There is not one. I can cite the experience of a friend of mine who was advised by his physician to have an operation. He consulted a well-known and highly qualified surgeon on the Terrace who advised him to go to another man who was a specialist in that particular field of surgery. No matter how competent the men in the West may be, they are not specialists in all phases of surgery. Consequently, I maintain that irrespective of a person's financial position he should be entitled to a choice of surgeons and the best medical attention available in the State. The only cost to the Government in providing that facility would be a book entry in the Railway Department. I know, because I have been a member of both the Government and the Opposition for a number of years. When we were in office I know that dozens of people travelled from the West to Brisbane

for specialist attention. I was able to get passes for them to visit Brisbane for that purpose.

I venture to say that very few people have travelled on railway requisitions from the West in the last few years to receive medical attention. If any have travelled in the last 12 months or so from my electorate it has been without my knowledge. For that reason I say that the medical facilities available to the under-privileged people in the West are not as beneficial under the present Government as they were in the past under Labour Governments.

If the Minister argues with me and says that we have efficient surgeons in the West, I point out to him that it is not just a question of the actual operation which may be necessary. There is also the matter of diagnosis. I can give particulars of one case that I know of personally. It did not happen in my electorate, but it occurred in Western Queensland many years ago. It concerned a woman who was advised by the local doctor to have one of her breasts removed. That is not a minor operation. Fortunately, her husband was in a position to afford a visit to Brisbane so that she might get a second opinion. She did so, and consulted a specialist on Wickham Terrace who, in ten minutes in his surgery, cured her complaint. That happened more than 15 years ago and she has had no trouble since. It is sufficient to say that even if there are competent surgeons these people are entitled to get a second opinion irrespective of their financial position.

I am not putting this to the Minister in any way as carping criticism but as something which he may consider in his department. I think he will agree with me that the most valuable thing for anyone—no matter what is his financial position—is his health and his life. If any person in Western Queensland feels he should have a second medical opinion, or the best medical and hospital facilities available in the State, he should be given a pass to enable him to travel to Brisbane to get it. If the Minister wants further instances to support my argument—I have mentioned a couple—I shall be happy to discuss the matter with him more fully personally. I am grateful that he is in the chamber and has given me the hearing he has.

The frustration of the hon. member for Gregory was completely understandable to me, but might I say that the road tax that at present applies to western areas is a complete mystery to me. I cannot understand it, and I do not think the hon. member for Gregory can understand it very well either. I am sorry that the Minister for Transport is not in the Chamber because there are a couple of points I should like to put to him. The hon. members for Roma and Balonne, and others from the West, realise that a state of drought exists over the whole of that area, and they would also appreciate, even if the Minister for Transport does not, that it is necessary to transport stock from various centres in the West because of the drought.

As far as I can understand, if a property is east of the 146th meridian and stock from that property is to be transported to some area west of the 146th meridian the road tax of 1½d. per ton mile applies. But, on the other hand, if both properties are situated west of the 146th meridian the road tax does not apply. I should like the Minister to explain how the effects of the drought stop at the 146th meridian. He has not been able to so far. I have also been in contact with the Department of Transport and they have not been able to explain it to me either.

Only today I received a letter which demonstrates exactly what I mean. The relevant portion of it reads—

> "I confirm my telephone conversation with you on today's date.
>
> "I request that you put before the Deputy Commissioner the following facts:—
>
> > "I wish to move cattle from 'Lou Lou Park,' 90 miles north of Jericho and slightly east by only a few miles of the 146th Parallel to 'Burrandilla', Charleville, which is west of the 146th Parallel, on Wednesday 1st September, 1965.
> >
> > "The reason the cattle are being shifted is that the drought conditions prevailing in that area forced a sale. The availability of mulga and water on 'Burrandilla' allowed the opportunity to purchase."

The transport of these cattle is a direct result of the drought. The fact remains that the full 1½d. a ton mile must be paid. On the other hand, if Lou Lou Park was situated 10 or even 2 miles west of the 146th meridian, the stock would have been transported free of road tax.

I should like somebody to explain just how all of that makes common sense, because to me it does not. All in the West know that the effects of drought do not cease at the 146th meridian, or at any other given point. If cattle are to be transported from point A to point B as a drought-relief measure, why stop at the 146th meridian? Somebody may be able to advise me on that matter. Frankly, I cannot see the logic of it. That is one reason why people such as the hon. member for Gregory are so frustrated and disgusted when dealing with people who, as I pointed out previously, have no practical knowledge of conditions in the West.

I think most people who know the West will agree that the population there has increased very little over the years. As a matter of fact, in many centres it has decreased. One of the reasons for that is the lack of housing and the substandard housing that exists in western areas. Very few houses have been built in my electorate in recent years, and I think that situation applies to the West generally. It may be

true to say that there is a lack of accommodation in many other centres, but it is also true to say that quite a considerable number of houses are being built in some centres for particular reasons.

On Saturday, 28th August last, the following report appeared in "The Courier-Mail"—

> "The State Housing Commission was engaged in home building projects to meet development in some of the State's fastest-growing centres.
>
> "A Commission spokesman said this yesterday.
>
> "Big projects were under way at Mt. Isa, Gladstone, Moura, and Biloela, he said.
>
> "More than 150 were in various stages of construction at Gladstone, 91 at Biloela, and more than 50 at Moura."

I think that the actual facts are these: because at Gladstone a large and very wealthy company is engaged in establishing an industrial undertaking, the Government has seen fit to build 150 houses there. Because Thiess Bros. signed a very lucrative contract with Japanese interests for the sale of coal, the Government has decided to construct 91 houses at Biloela.

As I mentioned previously, the most important rural activity in this State is the wool industry. I do not think that anybody, including myself, would suggest that the Government should build accommodation for employees on pastoral properties or build shearers' quarters; but evidently it is all right for the Government to build 150 houses in Gladstone because a large industrial undertaking is to be established there and 91 houses in Biloela because a certain company requires an influx of labour there. If we are realistic about the matter, I think we must admit that the points system mentioned by the Minister for Works and Housing this morning, in his reply to a question, as applying to people who are entitled to Housing Commission houses does not really apply. It is not a question of your need; it is not a question of the points that you have which might entitle you to a house; it is a question of who employs you. Nobody can convince me that if 150 houses are built in Gladstone and 91 at Biloela, the cost involved does not prevent houses from being built in centres in Western Queensland and other areas where the need of individuals is possibly greater than it is in Gladstone.

I think it is rather a sound principle that if wealthy companies establish industries requiring an influx of labour, they should accept some responsibility for the housing of their employees instead of the Government's accepting all the responsibility. In my electorate, and in the West generally, the employer is required to accept this responsibility, and, I believe, rightly so. It is no wonder that not only members on this side of the House but also members on the Government side who represent western constituencies have expressed hostility to the approach of this suburban-and-seaside Government to western problems, and I can only support the criticism that they have expressed.

The hon. member for Gregory also mentioned the establishment of a pastoral college, and I think all hon. members agree with that in principle. However, he complained that it was to be established 40 miles from Longreach. I do not intend to deal with this matter at any great length, because I believe that my colleague the hon. member for Barcoo, who knows far more about educational matters than I do, may have something to say about it; but I think that the establishment of a college 40 miles from any township puts the ordinary worker at a very distinct disadvantage. A station hand or a shearer whose family resides in Longreach would have to bear the cost of board if his son attended a college situated 40 miles from the centre in which he lives. I seriously doubt that the college should be established in the Longreach district, because I do not think that is the most suitable location. Let me say, in passing, that although a good deal of money is being spent on wool promotion and on the establishment of a pastoral college, one matter has apparently not exercised the minds of either the Government or the woolgrowers. It is the question of how they are going to get their sheep shorn in the next few years.

One could travel the length and breadth of Western Queensland and would see very few learners employed in shearing sheds. The amenities and facilities supplied in the industry are not attracting any men at the present time. I have had a long experience in the shearing industry, going back over many years, and one could travel around the shearing sheds in Western Queensland today and would find that the average age of the shearer and the pastoral worker generally is well over 50 years. Despite the wool promotion scheme, the pastoral colleges and the reserve price about which I spoke previously and about which I should like more time to speak now, one of the greatest difficulties confronting this industry will be in getting sufficient labour in the near future to shear the sheep.

I should also like to point out that, unlike other industries such as the sugar industry and the wheat industry in which mechanical harvesters are used, at the present time automation has not played any great part in the shearing industry. It depends almost wholly and solely on the manpower that is available. I repeat that, in the near future, unless some attention is given to this matter, there will not be sufficient men available to shear the sheep.

Mr. O'DONNELL (Barcoo) (5.48 p.m.): I waited a short time to give a Liberal member the opportunity of taking part in this debate

but they all seem to have been listening to the racing commentator at Sandown Park racecourse, which is supposed to be a course where the late starters finish on. I am afraid if they are going to finish on they had better hurry and make up their minds to speak because, as the Premier said, the institution of the double sitting days will limit the time available in this debate. It is a rather disgraceful performance that so far we have had so many speakers from the Opposition and the Country Party but only two from the Liberal Party.

I intend to direct my opening comments to the subject of education. I have listened very intently to the previous speakers, and where I think hon. members have dealt adequately with points, I shall eliminate reference to those aspects of Government. But nobody seems to have touched on the matter of education, so I want to make some important remarks which I think will contribute a constructive thought on this very important subject.

I am afraid that the Government, particularly now that we have had such an explosion in the education field, with many more young people going on to higher education, is inclined to sit back. The Government tries to explain away its lack of initiative by pointing to the drought and the Mt. Isa industrial dispute. Education can never be allowed to lie dormant. The Government has done nothing constructive to resolve the problem of parents whose children are unable to attend a high school. Many children in small country centres do not have the opportunity to proceed beyond Grade VIII. Those who are not fortunate enough to have wealthy parents who can afford to send them to boarding school or to live in a hostel in a town where secondary-school facilities are available are denied education beyond the primary stage. This applies to the children of people who work outside towns—fettlers, station employees and so forth. Of course, the same old excuse has been offered, that correspondence schooling is available. That is a very good system as long as the parents are sufficiently well educated to help the children, or a station owner is in a position to employ a good governess or tutor of some kind. But that seldom occurs. These people are being given no consideration at all.

A few moments ago I heard the hon. member for Condamine interjecting about school transport services. That is the point I am trying to make. I am speaking on behalf of children who cannot avail themselves of school transport services—children at places like Muttaburra and Jericho. I can see no solution to the problem unless the Government is prepared to subsidise the parents of these children at least to the extent that it subsidises the parents of children who have a school transport service available to them. Do not forget that school transport services were supplied in Labour's day without the application of any means test. Such a subsidy would assist parents to send their children to a boarding school or to a hostel in a town where there are the necessary secondary-school facilities. We believe in decentralisation. The Country Party believes in decentralisation and so does the Labour Party. But, of course, the Liberal Party does not believe in anything.

Mr. Sullivan: Don't you like the Liberal Party?

Mr. O'DONNELL: No, I do not.

We have this problem facing us. We want to keep people in the country; we want to keep families in the country; we want to build up all the rural centres. One of the biggest problems facing people in country areas today is the adequate education of their children. We have gone a long way. We have seen high-school expansion throughout the countryside and we have school transport services. We are all deeply interested in education but there still is an unresolved problem. It is up to the Government of the day to face up to that problem and to substitute something better than the iniquitous correspondence system. It should subsidize people in country areas so that their children, too, can take advantage of what every child is entitled to—a sound education in the best environment.

I put that forward as the very strong belief extending throughout the western areas of the State. It does not apply to the closely settled areas because they have virtually a complete cover. But when one moves out into the western areas, be it in the South-west, the Central-west or the North-west, one finds that the problem is rampant. If the whole matter was investigated I do not think there would be any financial difficulty in providing these children with their birthright. What could be better than to do this for the people who are actually pioneering certain parts of the State, and who are prepared to live in isolated and sometimes very uncongenial places? They live there perhaps to make a start in life. If this were done they would know full well that the Government appreciated what they are doing and that, as a consequence, their children would be looked after. They would then be happy to stay there. However, they are now saying, "What about our children? We will have to get out of here after a few years." That causes a problem. We have a shifting population in the very areas where we need the pioneering spirit.

This is an important factor in our small western communities, and I make a plea on their behalf. I realise their difficulties. In the desire to build high schools and secondary departments we may be too inclined to pass over the needs of the primary schools. I know that we cannot have everything but I feel despondent at times when a new approved primary school is held in abeyance because the Government says, "We are giving preference to high schools." High schools are important, but in some instances,

perhaps, the money is being spent unnecessarily as there is already a secondary department at the school. Yet the Government says, "We will build a separate high school." That is ideal and I greatly appreciate it, but at the same time I am told, as are other hon. members, that because a high school is being built a new primary school cannot be provided. I do not like that part of it because it is just as important for primary-school children to be well catered for and to have all the modern facilities in their classrooms as it is important for high-school students. I do not wish to deny anyone the proper facilities but we must not gloss over the needs of the primary schools. After all, it is in the primary schools that the solid basis for education is laid. We must keep that in mind for, if it is not well laid at the primary school, the high school will not be a success.

The building of new high schools is quite controversial. I have received requests for separate high schools in my electorate. The first one came from Emerald and I now have a second one from Barcaldine. Their provision is important to the people in those centres. They say, "We should like a high school with its own principal and staff, set up as a separate entity, rather than have our children and the primary-school children together.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.*]

Mr. O'DONNELL: From time to time we have had rather fixed opinions about the state of development of a secondary department before a high school is granted. At one time the figure quoted as the required number before an application would be granted was 150 students. Then there was another expression of opinion—I do not know whether it was to suit a particular occasion—which increased the number to 200. Consequently, nobody has ever been able to fix a definite point at which a centre had the right to convert a secondary department to a separate high school.

With the expansion of high-school education we have had many successful centres, and there have been centres that have not been so successful. I state quite definitely that while the Minister for Education has given approval for a separate high school at Longreach, he will be hesitant in approving the applications from both centres I have mentioned. I can prove this, because no town in Queensland has been a worse supporter of State high school secondary education than Longreach. I note from the answer to a question I put to the Minister for Education that the enrolment in the Longreach secondary department was 150 students, at Barcaldine 146 students, and at Emerald 144 students.

Mr. Rae: But we still lead.

Mr. O'DONNELL: What a lead it is! That is a very apposite interjection. According to the 1961 census, the population of Longreach, including the town and the near district, is 4,097. The population of Emerald is 2,128. The difference in the high-school enrolment, with a difference of almost 2,000 in population, is exactly six. The same applies to Barcaldine. With a population of 2,063, it has a high-school attendance of 146. Another figure quoted to me is 152.

In comparison with Longreach, both Emerald and Barcaldine are giving far greater support to secondary education, and I think it is time that the Longreach decision ceased to be the yardstick in the department. When secondary education was first brought to Longreach, naturally it received the full support of the Minister as it is represented by a Country Party member. As the Minister for Health would say, "Spoils to the victors".

An examination of enrolment figures shows that this so-called progressive town of Longreach, with a population of over 4,000, has exactly two students in the Senior class and three in the sub-Senior class. At Barcaldine there are nine in each of those classes, and at Emerald seven and eight respectively. That shows the difference to be even greater than the population figures indicate.

At one time it was possible to advance an argument for a Senior top when there were 10 students. Because of the failure of the Longreach Senior class, the number was increased to 15. I am not jealous——

Mr. Rae: Not much!

Mr. O'DONNELL: I am not jealous of its being established at Longreach—indeed, I am glad the people there have it—but I do want other towns to be treated in the same way. Whereas, as I mentioned before, the number of students had to be 10 before a Senior top would be established, the number has now been increased to 15 because of the failure that I referred to at Longreach. If a separate high school is provided at Longreach, Barcaldine and Emerald have strong claims as well. As a matter of fact, their cases are stronger than that of Longreach because their interest in secondary education is far greater, as shown by population comparisons.

The hon. member for Warrego said I would say something about the proposed pastoral college. I have read the speech of the hon. member for Gregory and I do not find much fault at all in it. However, I think he missed an important point. The college is to be situated 40 miles from Longreach. The financial aspect has to be considered, and, if the department is honest, the college should be in Longreach and incorporated in the new high school.

Mr. Rae: They couldn't run the two together.

Mr. O'DONNELL: They could be run together. If they are not, the pastoral college will be taking some students away from the high school in the centre of Longreach. If this pastoral college is to be given to the Longreach district, it should go with

the high school as an entity so that students could proceed with their formal education and those who so desired could tackle the pastoral activities.

I am not too happy about its being in Longreach for the simple reason that there it will have a limited approach. There are areas in Central Queensland where such a college could conduct not only pastoral activities but agricultural activities on a far wider scale than could be undertaken in the area presently proposed for it. I am not "plugging" for my electorate, neverthless if the college was made an institution for Central Queensland rather than a gift to the Gregory electorate it would be far better situated in the Emerald area because there are there prospects of unparalleled development. There are sheep and cattle raising, the possibility of irrigation and irrigated pastures, and, of course, all the grain crops growing there today. There could be a really good set-up for Central Queensland. That is why I am critical of the proposed location of the college. If it is to go to the electorate of the hon. member for Gregory, let it be incorporated in the high school. There will then be no reason to criticise the financial aspect of its establishment. It is supposed to cost £200,000. That sum would establish a high school at Emerald, a high school at Barcaldine, and probably a high school at Longreach.

One can understand that people outside the Gregory electorate do not look too kindly on what is happening relative to secondary education in that electorate. The electors of Barcoo think they are entitled to at least two separate high schools, and if the Minister for Education is to be generous there should be at least some stretching of departmental imagination to provide Senior tops at Clermont and Blackall, too.

That is why the hon. member for Warrego said I would have some ideas on this question. I have, and I agree with the hon. member for Gregory that this agricultural college is being established in the wrong place. Having in mind the benefit of the State as a whole and of Central Queensland in particular, I think it should have been established much farther east so that it could have covered all the aspects of agricultural and pastoral development. In my opinion, it is not sufficient in itself as a pastoral college.

I have dealt very quickly with the worries that I have in the field of education. The most important one is that which I mentioned first—the position of children who are not able to have the benefits of being educated at a school, those who are compelled to do a secondary course by correspondence. Until the Government agrees to subsidise them by the same amount as it is subsidising children using school transport services, I am afraid that people in the remote parts of the State will be very critical of their treatment.

Another small point about which I am concerned in the programme of the Department of Education—it is a comparatively new practice—is this: if a State school requires an Australian flag, the head teacher has to go through the very humiliating procedure of applying to the Federal member to obtain it. As hon. members know, the Australian flag is usually flown all day at all our schools, and I should say that the old system, under which Australian flags were obtained from the school stores section, was adequate. No-one then had to go through what I regard as the humiliating procedure of writing to a Federal member of Parliament to obtain an Australian flag for a State school. I really think that the Minister for Education should do something about that.

I shall now leave the field of education completely and deal with a matter that is very serious indeed for some people on the land—the call-up for national service of their 20-year-old sons. I have taken this matter up with the Minister for Lands, who has been sympathetic. In one instance that I know of, a young fellow has drawn a block of 36,000 acres in my area. If you imagined, Mr. Speaker, that his financial obligation would be in excess of £20,000, you would be right. He has passed his medical examination, but he has applied for a deferment of call-up and also for exemption. He has to go before a magistrate, and he may have to seek legal advice to assist him with his case. How is that boy going to fulfil his obligations to the Commonwealth Bank, to the Lands Department, to the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply, and to the stock firm that is financing him? He is put into the position that he has absolutely no say in the matter unless he can convince a magistrate. He is only one person in my electorate. Throughout the length and breadth of Queensland one would probably find quite a few in the same position. There are people in other callings in similar positions and one must not forget that this is a strange kind of ballot. It simply picks a certain day for a certain age group and says to those in that age group born on that day, "You must carry the brunt of national service." I do not think that is just. If it was more equitable in regard to age groups there would probably be a far better response. I put this case up because that boy was told by the recruiting officer, "You will get a boundary rider for the money we pay you." It is an important problem.

The other day a member of the Country Party approached me. I tell the House that to show that there is nothing political in this. He said, "My first son has gone in for national service. I am happy about that; I am a returned soldier. But my second lad may be called up next year and, if he is, I go out of business." That man is a share-farmer and he relies on those boys to help him in his occupation. If he does not do too well they are prepared to carry the brunt of it, but he is in the position

that his second son could be called up for national service at the same time as his first son is in training.

People on the land have also said, "We do not mind our boys being called up for national service but we object to the possibility that they could be conscripted for overseas service."

Those are three important problems facing people on the land and they are the cases that have been put to me. There has been a wholesale rejection of the request by the Minister for Lands for favourable treatment for boys who have their own blocks. The attitude is, "It is just too bad." I suppose people in other forms of employment are similarly affected—battlers in enterprises, just as this boy is. He was lucky enough to draw a block which would perhaps have given him his first step towards success, but at this stage he is faced with the possibility of having the whole of his plans coldly set aside by the Commonwealth Government because there may not be an exemption. Deferment will not solve the problem.

I wanted to mention this matter here tonight because there does not seem to be much understanding about it. I know very well that if the various Ministers in this Parliament who have anything to do with experimental stations dealing with land matters were to be honest they would admit that it is almost impossible to get good farm hands or station workers. They are simply not available and, as a consequence, the man on the land has to rely on his own efforts and those of his family. That is why I put the case. If there were plenty of workers available the position would resolve itself, but there are not.

The hon. member for Rockhampton South referred this afternoon to the Capricorn Highway. He did not go into the matter in great detail but he did point out its importance. We have witnessed a complete change in Government policy on this important matter. When I walked into the Chamber on an occasion when the late Hon. E. Evans had a Main Roads Bill before Parliament the hon. gentleman said to me, "Surely you are not speaking on this?" I said, "Why not?" He said, "You have been the most generously treated member in the House as far as roads are concerned." I am afraid that under the new management that could not be said today. There is no prospect of the link between west of Emerald and Barcaldine being completed in the foreseeable future. I might go along with the story about the shortage of money except for what one sees if one takes a trip between Toowoomba and Roma along the railway track. The Condamine Highway already connects Toowoomba and Roma but the Main Roads Department is now constructing another one along the railway track and is going "great guns" with it. Although Central Queensland has this problem it is just "scrubbed".

Mr. Ewan: Don't you try to rubbish my efforts.

Mr. O'DONNELL: I am not trying to rubbish the hon. member's efforts, but to rubbish this idea of the spoils to the victors. And that comes into it! The construction of a bitumen road all the way to Barcaldine from Rockhampton is a long way off. It is proposed to construct 17 more miles to Anakie by 1969. The point I wish to make is that the people of Central Queensland are receiving a very raw deal. Also, the people of Rockhampton are getting a very raw deal as a result. The statement is made that it is a light-traffic road. The way it is it will always be a light-traffic road because people will avoid it. They will not go to Rockhampton or Yeppoon but travel to Brisbane on the inland road. Until we have that road completed there will be many discontented people in Central Queensland.

In the limited time at my disposal I should like to set some facts straight. The hon. member for Mackenzie asked a question on 25 August relating to the reduction in tax on the road transport of stock. I am afraid that the hon. member was about three weeks too late. I had already put this case to the Minister for Transport early in August. He was very fair about it. He submitted the matter to Cabinet. This is where I shall put the hon. member for Gregory right. It was not the Minister for Transport who "rolled" it. Cabinet is dominated by Country Party members, so what does the hon. member for Gregory think of that? The point is that Cabinet is not dominated by the Liberals. I repeat that it is not altogether fair to allocate the blame completely to the Minister for Transport. He could have "scrubbed" me and refused to take it to Cabinet. He told me he would, but the Country Party controls Cabinet, as yet.

The remission of road tax on stock is important, as the hon. member for Mackenzie pointed out. It is unfair that people who have to travel stock should be penalised by having to pay road tax when they are forced onto the road. In the circumstances, Cabinet could have done much better than it did. It showed a complete lack of sympathy. It is important to realise that in the remission of road tax the Department of Transport hopes to recoup from the Treasurer, who in turn hopes to get it from the Federal Government. That might be a forlorn hope, but the books of the Department of Transport will probably look all right. There was deep feeling involved in this matter. However, it did stimulate some action in the form of better transport, even though the Railway Department had to resort to open trucks. This important matter did not receive the strong support I expected from Cabinet. When the Minister for Transport said, "I will put it to Cabinet," I said to myself, "There is a chance." However, I am afraid that it was the Country Party section

of Cabinet which let me down, and, of course, let down the graziers of the Central West.

I must mention briefly the Nogoa Gap project, and emphasise that it is important that it should go ahead. We know very well how we can profit from the development of the cotton industry. However, there there are other desirable activities such as irrigated pastures, and the production of fodder, which is all important to counter the ravages of our too-frequent droughts.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LEE (Yeronga) (7.44 p.m.): I rise to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply now being debated. I congratulate the Administrator, Sir Alan Mansfield, on the excellent and logical address delivered by him on the occasion of the opening of the Thirty-seventh Parliament. I also wish to associate myself and my constituents with the message of loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I congratulate the mover of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, the Honourable Tom Newbery——

An Opposition Member: Whom are you kidding?

Mr. LEE: It will not be long before he is there.

There are two matters of concern to my electorate on which I should like to speak.

I am happy—in fact, very happy—with the measures that have been taken to eliminate the Tennyson powerhouse soot nuisance which has plagued the people of Yeronga and adjacent areas for many years. I have been informed by the Commissioner for Electricity Supply that action is being taken to eliminate this problem, that equipment costing up to £200,000 has been ordered by the Southern Electric Authority, and that the boilers will be fitted progressively between September this year and March next year.

I have kept the people of Yeronga and adjacent areas informed of the progress which has been made in this matter over the past 12 months, and I want to say "Thank you" to them for their forbearance on this problem during the winter. As we all know, the westerlies have been with us again this year, but with the assurances given by me the people have suffered in silence.

I am assured that the soot emission from all the Tennyson powerhouse chimney stacks will not be any more than two per cent., whereas now it is openly admitted that some boilers are giving out a 100 per cent. emission. Therefore, next winter, for the first time since the construction of the powerhouse, the Yeronga electors will enjoy living conditions which they should have been enjoying over the years. I am pleased that my continuous representations will yield, I believe, such a satisfactory result.

The other matter is the traffic problems of the district, which are always associated with the death trap at the railway underpass at the junction of Fairfield, Ipswich, and Sherwood Roads. We saw during the recent heavy rains photographs in the daily newspapers of vehicles stranded in up to 4 feet of water, causing traffic chaos for miles on both Fairfield and Ipswich Roads. Plans have been approved for the elimination of this hazard, and I express the hope that they will not be pigeon-holed because of the Wilbur Smith Report and its programmes, which might be carried out.

I was assured by the then Minister for Main Roads, the late Hon. E. Evans, that this job would be given first priority, and that after the design work was finished tenders would be called this month. I appeal to the Treasurer to allocate sufficient funds to proceed with this most urgently needed work and not to pigeon-hole the programme, as has happened in the past. The four-lane highway on the western side of this overpass, for which the design work has been completed by the Main Roads Department, should proceed in conjunction with the overpass so that the chaotic traffic conditions will be eliminated in this rapidly developing industrial area.

I have nothing against the Wilbur Smith Report and I am very happy to know that the Government is prepared to act on it without any dilly-dallying. I believe that the longer we delay action on our traffic problems the worse they will get and the more expensive the solution will become. One does not employ experts to give advice and then ignore their advice.

I should now like to bring to the notice of the House some of the anomalies that exist in the civil engineering contracting industry. I should like to make it very clear at the outset that I am not connected financially or otherwise with this industry. In my electorate the established contractors are employing up to 4,000 persons who are dependent on them to maintain their livelihood. I therefore speak for both the employee and the employer. As hon. members know, I have a close knowledge of the problems connected with the civil engineering contracting industry. I am very concerned at factors that are bringing a certain amount of instability to it. The Government is in the position of having to accept almost always the lowest tender for a job, and this is not always satisfactory. I believe that there must be some grading of contractors into certain categories according to their financial position, the equipment that they have available, and the work force that they can command. This works successfully in other States.

Contractors must be graded on the basis of their proven ability to do jobs in categories of work worth up to say, £15,000 at one end and progressively rising to those who can cope with the very large contracts coming forward from time to time. It is happening that large jobs are being let to those with no past experience, without the financial capacity, and without labour to perform the contracts.

Mr. Bennett: You want to keep it a closed field?

Mr. LEE: If the hon. member for South Brisbane would listen, he would understand a little more about the position.

The grading system would give protection to the Government and to the contractors themselves. The system would not mean that a small man is always limited to the smaller jobs. After he has successfully completed one or two jobs he would be allowed to advance to the next bracket. For the protection of this type of contractor, the larger man should be allowed to tender only in his own bracket and the one below him. For instance, a contractor grouped in the £500,000 to £1,000,000 bracket would be able to contract in the £250,000 to £500,000 bracket also, and the man in the bracket over £1,000,000 would be limited to this bracket and the lower £500,000 to £1,000,000 bracket.

I can recall that seven years ago the Government considered introducing this system, but it was to be done on the basis of a balance sheet inspection. I am strongly opposed to this because many of the contractors are private companies and their balance sheets should not be available for inspection.

Mr. Bennett: Why not?

Mr. LEE: If the hon. member will listen, he will hear. Does he make his available?

Mr. Bennett: Yes.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Gaven): Order! There is far too much noise in the House. I ask hon. members to allow the hon. member for Yeronga to make his speech in an orderly manner. I hope I do not have to give any further warning.

Mr. LEE: A private company is penalised in that after paying company tax it is forced to distribute dividends, and so will pay more tax in the long run. If these companies choose to pay more tax, they are entitled to have their accounts and balance sheet kept private. A public company is in a different position, and its balance sheet is required to be open to public inspection at all times. I know it will be said that balance sheets submitted would be kept in the strictest confidence, but, unfortunately, it does not always work out that way.

I am sure that a system of bonding or bank guarantee of a contractor would be most advantageous to the Government, and here, perhaps, the State Government Insurance Office or the Commonwealth Bank, which has such a large control over insurance and banking in the State, could assist the industry and the Government.

All contractors should be made to list the plant that they control directly and also state which items would be available for a certain job. This would prevent a few of them, who are mainly the inexperienced contractors, over-tendering beyond the capacity of their plant. In their tenders they should also be made to prove that they have the skilled personnel available to complete a job.

These conditions should all be part of the tender, and the letting of the contract should be made accordingly and not necessarily to the contractor who lodged the lowest tender. It is well known that a few contractors with no past road-building experience tender for jobs they are incapable of doing and, also through inexperience, tender a price that is much too low. Government officers know that these people should not be given the job; but under the system of accepting the lowest tender, the officers have little option because of the unfavourable publicity that follows if any other course is adopted. When a contractor finds that he has underestimated his costs, often he endeavours to recover by trying to avoid the true meaning of the interpretation of the specifications, and this results in costly litigation and arbitration.

I urge the Government to give serious and urgent consideration to this position. The contracting industry is a very large one, a great employer of labour, one which invests in high-priced capital equipment, and its stability is of great importance to the State and to a free-enterprise economy.

I spoke in the House last year on the need to let more contracts to private enterprise, and again I deplore the situation that has occurred in the 1964-65 financial year. In this period, day labour fell by about 6 per cent., but work let on contract fell by about 40 per cent. The work let on contract included bridge construction, and with this taken out the fall in road construction would have been much greater. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a free-enterprise Government, we should be ashamed to admit that there has been such a basic decline in work allocated by the Government to free enterprise, the support of which is one of the main platforms of this Government. Some six or seven years ago the Government directed that shires must tender for work against contractors. This worked well—only the shires did not ever win any contracts. They were in the position of being in competition and unable to call on the Government for extra money, which they so often do when they find the costs of a job exceed the original allocation. This system has now ceased, for very obvious reasons.

I have said before in this House, and I will say it again, that I am by no means in favour of all work being done by contract. But I do want to see a fair distribution of work—at least on a 50/50 basis. I cannot agree that 73 per cent. of the work should be done by day labour, as is the present position.

This brings me to a point that I wish to bring to the notice of the House, and particularly to the notice of the Minister for Mines and Main Roads. It is that one-third

of the 27 per cent. of the contracts awarded to free enterprise by the Government were in remote areas of the State. In these areas, conditions of work are difficult. Labour is hard to obtain and difficult to hold, and generally, because of these problems, and only because of them, it seems that contractors are invited to tender. Whilst I accept this as part of a contractual hazard, there should be some equity in this business and the easy jobs, close to the centres of population and particularly within a radius of 75 miles of Brisbane, should be available to the contractors who support a multi-million pound, free-enterprise business in this State.

In areas such as those traversed by the roads to the South Coast, the roads to the North Coast, and the Toowoomba and Warwick roads, almost 100 per cent. of the work is being done by day labour. The Gaven Highway was an exception. It was built by private contract. It was done faster and more efficiently than if it had been carried out by day labour. It will stand as a monument to a retiring member of this House as it stands as a monument to free enterprise.

I have been asked by the Civil Engineering Contractors' Association of Queensland why the free-enterprise Government of this State has apparently closed the doors to the private contractor in work close to sources of supply of skilled and unskilled labour, and I cannot supply the answer. They want to know why they are always asked to tender for jobs in the outback areas and do not get any opportunities for a balance in their industry, with contracts closer to the centres of population.

The Main Roads Department is taking the cream of the work—the easy work—and is asking the contractors to cater for the work which the department knows quite well will have problems. Relatively few contractors are inefficient, but I do know that if their work is not up to specification it has to be corrected, and not at the cost of the taxpayer as the inefficiencies of day labour are adjusted. If the contractor is not efficient he goes out of business, which is more than one can say about day labour.

Another problem the contractor has to face is the lack of field experience in some of the supervising engineers provided by both private consulting engineers and the Main Roads Department. I am not decrying the young man who has just completed his university education and who, through lack of experience—not lack of knowledge—wants everything done to the letter of the specification, whatever the circumstances.

Mr. O'Donnell: Are you plugging for your own firm?

Mr. LEE: I have already made it very clear to the hon. member for Barcoo that I am not in any way connected with the contracting industry. I believe in free enterprise.

Mr. Melloy: How many shares have your family got?

Mr. LEE: In answer to you, none.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Gaven): Order! The hon. member will please address his remarks to the Chair. I ask the hon. member for Nudgee to listen to the speech being made by the hon. member for Yeronga. When he rises to his feet he will get the same protection as the hon. member for Yeronga.

Mr. LEE: An experienced engineer knows that few contracts are ever completed this way; there are usually extras. This inexperience creates all sorts of problems, particularly on jobs in the Outback where communication with senior engineers is difficult. I know that a contractor has the right of appeal to the district engineer or the Commissioner of Main Roads but, because of the remoteness of the job, this is not practical. He has the alternative of continuing to work, hoping that the extra of, say, £500 will be approved, or of shutting down the job when the cost of machine time alone could be £500 a day. The practical contractor continues to work, hoping that the extra is eventually approved by the Main Roads Department. Personally, I think it would be a good thing if the young engineer had to do a period of 18 months or two years under supervision so that he could learn the many hazards and pitfalls that cannot be learned from a book, just as a young doctor has to work under supervision before he is able to publicly practise his profession. If he had this period in the field with either a contractor or a good day-labour gang he would learn some of the hazards and pitfalls.

Anyone can look at the "Tender" columns of "The Courier-Mail" on Saturdays and see the enormous sums of public money that are being spent by shires on plant and equipment. They own plant worth millions of pounds, and they are competing with private enterprise on a most unfair basis. They should have some plant for maintenance work, but why should they buy heavy equipment with loan money, and then want the best of the available work to keep their day-labour force in operation under the best possible terms? This is almost the outlook and policy of a socialist Government.

If any one of us stops to think he will realise the hundreds of miles of road that could be built if the hundreds of thousands of pounds spent on shire equipment were allocated to their correct purpose and spent on building roads, not on capital equipment, as the effective working time of this plant is possibly no more than 50 per cent.

This expenditure on capital equipment should be left to the contractor. However, it behoves the Government to see that a continuity of contract work is let each year,

until the reasonable basis of 50 per cent. to contractors and 50 per cent. to day labour is reached. Even the most ambitious contractor gets tired of the one-sided contracts available to him and the one-sided competition he faces, under conditions which the Main Roads Department is not prepared to accept itself.

As I said earlier, the contracting industry in this State is a multi-million pound one. It does not want something for nothing; it wants only the opportunity to operate on level terms, with competition, on an even basis. Here is a sample of the work that is offered by the Main Roads Department by advertisement in one of our newspapers:—

"Tenders invited for—

"Clearing and grubbing, earthworks, gravel paving, drainage and bitumen surfacing (total length 0·29 M) . . . "

That is just over one-quarter of a mile. Then it continues—

" . . . on Mt. Isa–Duchess Road, Mt. Isa Shire, job number 10/7709/M3. Tenders addressed to the Shire Clerk, Mt. Isa must be in his hands by noon Monday, 9 August, 1965."

The cost to a contractor of setting up his base to do any contract for a section of road is high and unless a contractor is on a job in this area his cost of establishment would be 20 times the cost of the quarter-mile of road. Unless the contractor was in the area it would not be worth the time wasted in preparing a price. This is the type of job on which the shire day-labour could be employed, as everybody well knows. Again the department calls tenders for a section, and then weeks later—after the contractor has moved his plant—it will call tenders for another section in the same area. This costs the Government thousands of pounds every year in plant transportation and establishment costs.

As I said last year, I am hoping that the use of the computer to be installed by the Main Roads Department will do away with problems that apparently beset the department in the calling of tenders, particularly when this type of thing happens. I am hopeful that the use of the computer will speed the detailed design of plant and will stop the calling of tenders with the misleading term "Formation." We all know, or some of us might know, that surface formation in a bill of quantities is a metal box 9 to 12 ins. above the natural surface level. But formation is put into levels up to 4 ft. above the existing ground, and there are no quantities for earthworks of this type which should be shown in the bill of quantities. This is unreasonable and unjust. The more frequently that risk and unknown quantities are taken out of a job, the cheaper the price becomes to the principal.

Rock clauses should also be given in the bill of quantities. I know that rock is not easy to define, but I am sure it could be worked out more satisfactorily to be acceptable to both the principal and the contractor, instead of being omitted as at present.

Another unfair item is the deletion of the establishment costs of a job from the bill of quantities. I know that in the past some contractors may have loaded establishment costs and reduced rates for other items on the job and have made claims early in the contract which could be classed as unreasonable. But this does not justify the Main Roads Department taking the easy way out and entirely deleting the establishment costs item. A satisfactory formula could have been worked out, even on the basis of a percentage of the job price.

I understand that a new set of conditions for contractors, known as CA24, is being brought out. Whilst I have not had the opportunity of studying it, I hope that some of the anomalies and sweeping clauses—for example "at the discretion of the engineer"—are eliminated. Whilst I believe the engineer should have some discretion, it should be tempered with the experience of a man who knows what it means. Short of looking into his crystal ball, the contractor cannot know when the discretion of the engineer will become an "indiscretion" and cost him money. The contractor has to pay for the engineer's "indiscretion" and like it as well. He has no redress when it is written into the specification.

Again, the arbitration clause should be tidied up so that it does not become a legal picnic for barristers and Queen's Counsel. If the hon. member for South Brisbane was here he would learn something.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Gaven): Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr. LEE: An experienced engineer should be the arbiter in a matter which he fully understands.

Finally, I know that if the Government and the Main Roads Department did adopt the principles I have outlined, the contracting industry would be stabilised and the Government would save thousands of pounds.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (8.18 p.m.): I should like to associate myself and the people of Nudgee with the expressions of loyalty to Her Majesty and to extend my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the motion.

Before proceeding, I should like to pass a few remarks on the extraordinary situation we have experienced in the debate so far. This is the window-dressing session of this Parliament, and the Opposition expected the members of the Government parties to rise in their places and extol the virtues of the Government. To date there have been 11 speakers on the Government side. Nine were members of the Country Party, and only two, one of whom was the retiring hon. member for Ithaca of whom I do not want to speak disparagingly in any way, and the other was the hon. member for Yeronga, who has just completed a prepared speech, were members of the Liberal Party. There

has been nothing from that party to enhance its prospects or to give the impression that it is capable of becoming the dominant party in the coalition Government. I feel that this is the opportunity for hon. members opposite to do the right thing by the Government and tell the people of Queensland what can be expected if they are returned to office next year, which possibility seems to me extremely doubtful. I expected them to get up and defend the performance of the Government during the past three years. However, as I have said, only two members of the Liberal Party have seen fit to speak on behalf of the Government. Whether others are incapable of doing so or whether they have been told not to we can only guess, but we have our own ideas.

Let us not let the Ministers off too lightly, either. They have been conspicuous by their absence during this debate and, if Ministers are not prepared to speak on behalf of the Government, how can back-benchers be expected to do so? I doubt whether they are prepared at any stage of the Government's life to get up and defend their performance.

Mr. Sullivan: Now tell us your story.

Mr. MELLOY: Your Government——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Gaven): Order! I ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair and he will be afforded every protection.

Mr. MELLOY: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Hon. members opposite are so weak, however, that we do not need any protection from them. I thank you for your assurance, in any case.

Let us not let members of the Country Party off too lightly in our criticism. Nine members of that party have so far spoken in this debate but not one has seen fit to defend the Leader of the Country Party in the Federal Parliament following the attack made on him by the hon. member for Clayfield. They have remained silent and have not been prepared to speak up in his defence.

The position is this: although it is the dominant party in the Government, the Country Party is, I am afraid, still a little under the thumb of the Liberal Party, and if its members are not prepared to counteract an attack such as that made by the hon. member for Clayfield, I am very disappointed in them. I shall leave this matter for the time being, as I am quite sure that other members of the Opposition will direct attention to these weaknesses in the so-called strong coalition Government.

I should now like to deal with several matters that I feel are of considerable interest to the community, and also some of particular interest to my electorate of Nudgee. In the first place, I shall refer to some of the conditions that apply at the North Brisbane Hospital. I want to deal in particular with Ward 4D, which is concerned with the Radium Institute, and also Ward 3G, which is also part of the set-up of that institute.

I attended Ward 4D to have some treatment at the Radium Institute, and whilst there I took the opportunity to observe what went on in that ward. Ward 3G is the ward in which patients present themselves for examination and registration, and I saw there the largest crowd of people that I have ever seen at a hospital. As many as 240 patients have been through that ward in a morning, and on this occasion they were crowded out onto the verandas, into the hallways, and into the interviewing office, so that there was barely standing room.

I believe that the trouble is caused by a shortage of medical staff for cancer treatment, and I understand that there is a similar shortage in other Australian States. However, I am very concerned about what is happening in Queensland, and if the Minister for Health takes part in this debate, I should like him to tell us what his department has in mind for that section. I understand that about a month ago he made an announcement that Ward 4D was to be the subject of a certain amount of renovation and reconditioning, but apparently the university is interested in the ward and the suggested renovations have been shelved temporarily.

Ward 4D also houses the biopsy section of the Radium Institute. That is the section in which samples are taken from suspected cancers, and I had occasion to go there to have a spot on my neck attended to. The biopsy section is located in an existing ward, and when I attended there was a very large crowd of patients and some of them were sitting right out in the bed section of Ward 4D. Some of us were sitting about 3 ft. from a curtained-off section of the ward, and while we were waiting a woman was being admitted and put to bed in the ward, in full view of the patients waiting for treatment in the biopsy section.

I went into the surgery to have the specimen taken, and the surgeon had a certain amount of difficulty in removing a section from my neck for testing. He complained to the sister about the bluntness of the scalpel that he was using and she told him that that particular scalpel had been used all morning. I think about 45 patients had been put through in the morning. The sister said that there was a shortage of blades because there had been a delay in the supply from Melbourne.

Having had the section removed, I was then directed out to an assistant in nursing—I think that is what she was—on the verandah. She was instructing a trainee in the method of dressing the wounds where the section had been removed. While she was explaining to the trainee what had happened in my particular case, she drew her attention to the bruising round the wound where the

section had been removed. Apparently the bruising was caused by the blunt scalpel that had been used on my neck.

This is a very serious state of affairs. The sooner the Minister is able to have investigations made into the circumstances in Ward 4D and to have the overcrowding alleviated and proper provision made for the operations that are performed there, the better it will be for the patients and the staff as well. I understand that the Director himself is concerned about the conditions existing in Wards 4D and 3G due to overcrowding and the general set-up where these operations are carried out.

I should now like to say a few words about the housing situation in Queensland. The particular matter I wish to deal with is the maintenance of rental houses. Despite the assurance given by the Minister that there are 35 employees engaged in maintenance work on Commission houses in the northern part of Brisbane, the work to be done has gone well beyond the capacity of these men. There are fences and gates in the Zillmere area that have not been attended to, despite complaints about them, for nine or ten months.

By way of a question this week I have asked the Minister to have a survey made of the maintenance requirements in that area. The tenants are most incensed at the treatment they are receiving in regard to maintenance, particularly as rents have recently been increased and more particularly as the reason given to the tenants for the increase was increased costs of maintenance. In fact, these people have not had any maintenance work done on their houses for months and are not able to get any done, even if they point the deficiencies out to the Housing Commission.

Another matter that needs urgent attention in connection with these houses is the internal painting. Some of the houses have not been repainted internally for over five years. A great proportion of those at Zillmere are fibro houses which were constructed quite a number of years ago by a French firm. They are now in dire need of internal repainting because mould is appearing on the ceilings and walls, but the Housing Commission refuses to do anything about it. In some cases it has suggested that the tenant should do the painting and submit his costs to it, and it will then consider whether it will reimburse him for his expenditure.

I intended to deal further with the condition of the stoves in some of these houses. This matter was also raised with the Minister by the hon. member for Belmont. I was in one of these houses recently and the stove in question had only one hotplate functioning. The griller was not functioning and the family had had no success whatever in inducing the Commission to either repair the stove or to install a new one—in fact, to do anything about it at all.

Mr. Ramsden: Turn it off.

Mr. MELLOY: If the hon. member wants to make a speech, he can speak about his tunnel and get it as low as he can.

The recent rent increases have imposed a tremendous burden on Housing Commission tenants at Zillmere who, in the main, are not very affluent; they are ordinary working people who are scratching for a few bob. They just do not have sufficient finance to meet the increases. In reply to my question about the reason for the rent increases and their relationship to rate increases, the Minister said the information I sought was not readily available and that a dissection of the Housing Commission accounts would have to be made. The information has subsequently been given to me, but my point is that the increase in rates was given to the Housing Commission tenants as the reason for the rent increase. If the increase in rent was based on the increase in rates the Minister must have had the information available, and therefore it would not have been necessary for him to have a dissection made of the Housing Commission accounts. Such a dissection must have been made before the increase in rent if such increase was due to increased rates and maintenance costs.

In reply to a question of the hon. member for Salisbury, the Minister said recently, among other things, that this year 85 applicants for Housing Commission homes with only 40 points priority had been allotted houses. I find that very hard to understand. Every time I have made an approach to the Commission this year on behalf of applicants for rental houses I have been told that the only houses available were being allotted to applicants who were under threat of eviction and had 100 points priority. Somebody is not telling the truth in this matter. Either the Housing Commission is wrong in saying that only those with 100 points priority are allocated houses or the Minister is wrong in telling the hon. member for Salisbury that 85 applicants with only 40 points priority had been allotted houses this year.

Mr. Dewar: Who would you say was not telling the truth?

Mr. MELLOY: The Minister can have two bob each way. Either one is wrong. They cannot both be right. I am not saying who is right or who is wrong, but one of them is wrong.

Recently I read in the Press that a migrant family coming from England, sponsored by a service organisation, had been allotted a Housing Commission rental home. I fail to understand how a family not living in Queensland—not even in Australia—could be allotted a home before even reaching this country, when some of our own people who are living in undesirable circumstances are being rejected by the Commission, even though they might have 80 points priority, and told that no houses are available for them. How can a family that does not live in this country secure priority over a

family that is living here and is in desperate need of a house? The Housing Commission may not always agree that a family's situation is desperate, but I know many cases personally and have been closely associated with their applications, yet they have been rejected. There may be good reasons why a family that has not yet arrived here should be allocated a house, but I fail to see them.

Mr. Dewar: Do you believe in the migration programme?

Mr. MELLOY: Yes. At the same time, although there are tradesmen coming to this country, there are also tradesmen already here who have housing difficulties. I do not see how these migrants can obtain priority over the local tradesmen. If they are coming to this country they must be told the truth about the housing situation. They must be prepared to take their place alongside the local tradesmen and take their chances with them.

Mr. Dewar: They are homeless, are they not?

Mr. MELLOY: No, they are not homeless.

Mr. Dewar: They are not?

Mr. MELLOY: No, they are not.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Gaven): Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to carry on an argument between himself and the Minister. He must address the Chair.

Mr. MELLOY: The Minister provoked me.

Mr. Dewar: When they X-rayed your head, did they find anything in it?

Mr. MELLOY: Do you want me to reply to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I have a very good reply if you will allow me.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the hon. member replies to the Minister through the Chair, he will get all the protection he needs.

Mr. MELLOY: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will not insult you by asking you to pass my reply on.

The allegation that these people are homeless is not correct. When they leave England they know what the situation is. This family was not homeless because the service organisation told them before leaving England that a home would be available here. Generally, these people should take their chance with the people of this country on getting houses.

Another matter I wish to raise relates to the unfortunate ones in this community who are in the drunks' parade every day in the Magistrates Court in Brisbane. Recently I decided to see for myself what happens to them and to see the types who come before the magistrates in these circumstances. Yesterday morning, in about 35 minutes 92 of these people appeared before a magistrate and were convicted and discharged or fined £2 or seven days' imprisonment, or £2 or 14 days' imprisonment. The magistrate dealt with them as if he was shelling peas. When I attended this morning the same thing happened. These people are the responsibility of the community. Some have records of 200 and 300 appearances—even up to 600—before magistrates on charges of drunkenness. Some are arrested two or three times a week. Depending on the magistrate they get a week or a fortnight without the option and are sent to Boggo Road to dry themselves out. Many of them go there, come out after a week or a fortnight, and the first thing they do is make straight to the nearest sly-grog shop. They all know where to go to get a drink before the hotels open, and the same day they again appear before a magistrate. Those who are given the option of paying £2 or serving seven days' imprisonment really do not have any option at all, because they have not the necessary £2. They "do" the seven days in any case.

When they come before the magistrate they use the excuse that they were in gaol for seven days and were really "hogging" for a drink when they got out. They cannot resist the temptation to drink and are hauled before the magistrate on the same day as they are released from gaol.

Mr. Ramsden: Do you advocate a bar in Boggo Road?

Mr. MELLOY: That may be a good thing for some of them.

We must do something for these people. It is of little use sending them to Boggo Road for a drying-out period because there is no treatment there for them. Nothing is done to help them. They serve their time, come out, get on it again, and go up again.

We should set up some form of establishment, either on the mainland or on one of the islands in the Bay. That might not be well received by the relatives of these people who are concerned about their welfare. They would claim that the island was inaccessible and that they could not visit there. These men could be put to some form of work and an attempt could be made to rehabilitate them. It is not much use turning them loose as soon as they serve their sentence, or when they are convicted and discharged, because the police know them and know that they will pick them up again in a couple of days. In some cases the same man has been up on drunkenness charges four days in one week. He has been convicted and let go, and is up again. These people are getting nowhere and apparently society does not want to take the responsibility for them. I do not suppose they can all be rehabilitated, but we should make the effort.

The Government, through the Department of Health or the Department of Justice, should initiate a scheme in an attempt to do something for these people instead of having this process of appearance, drunkenness, appearance, drunkenness going on all the time with no attempt to pull them out of the

gutter. I commend that suggestion to the Minister and ask that he consider the establishment of a rehabilitation centre.

What comes to my mind is what is being done at Palen Creek. The honour system exists there. The men who go there are prepared to serve their sentence and they come out a lot better for having been there. If given a chance—some would reject it of course—the majority of these people would be put on their feet again and taught what it means to work, and they would know that once they get out they could perhaps get a good job and not get back into their old habits.

Another matter with which I wish to deal briefly is the reclamation of the Serpentine area at the mouth of the river. At the front door of Brisbane, approximately 7½ miles from the General Post Office as the crow flies, there is an area crying out for development. We must reclaim it if Brisbane is to develop as might be envisaged in any plan drawn up for that purpose. It is an area that cannot be overlooked, and it is work that cannot be postponed. There are 7,000 acres in the Serpentine area available for reclamation, subdivision, and development as residential and industrial blocks. I understand that the Brisbane City Council is very interested in this proposal and I feel that world-wide tenders might be called for developing this area. The Government should give full support to such a scheme. The cost is expected to be in the vicinity of £7,000,000, which I think will be beyond the capacity of either the Government or the Brisbane City Council at any time in the near future. I do not think, however, that the area can be left for another 20 years before money is found by either the Government or the Brisbane City Council for its development. The calling of tenders overseas seems the only successful way to deal with the problem. It is an area close to rail, shipping, and air facilities. Everything is there for the establishment of an industrial area and, with the development of land at Hamilton for this purpose, it is obvious that expansion is going to be in the direction of the Serpentine Creek area.

The reclamation necessary is the stumbling block. The setting up of canals is envisaged in the residential area, and I think provision could be made for about 40,000 residents in about 3,000 acres of the whole area to be developed. I am not sure what the attitude of the Government is. Nothing has been done about the development of the area, and I think the Government should be very interested in it.

When the stage of actual development is reached, the interests of residents, including those on farming properties there, will have to be considered. They realise that the area must be developed over the next 10 years and they know that they will have to forgo their residential and farming rights. I commend the scheme that the Brisbane City Council proposes and I sincerely hope that, in the interests of the development of this city, the Government will give its full support to any project commenced by either the Brisbane City Council or an overseas organisation.

Mr. CAREY (Albert) (8.53 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to take part in this debate and, on behalf of the people of the electorate of Albert, to reaffirm our loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. I should like, too, to join other hon. members in tendering my thanks to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government for the very fine address he gave when opening this session of Parliament. I also associate myself with other hon. members in congratulating the mover of the motion, the hon. member for Mirani, Mr. Tom Newbery, on his excellent maiden speech in this House, and the seconder, the hon. member for Ithaca, Mr. Bob Windsor, whom we have all come to know as a very good friend. I am sure that Opposition members also share my sorrow that he has decided to retire from active participation in politics.

The hon. member for Nudgee, who has just resumed his seat, said that this session, in his opinion, is a window-dressing session. I think it is a very important session of Parliament, as it gives one an opportunity of saying some nice things even about people who sit on the opposite side of the House.

I congratulate the hon. member for Cairns, Mr. Ray Jones, on his maiden speech. He has been in the House for a considerable time, and it appeared that a number of hon. members had forgotten that the hon. member's speech in this debate was in fact his maiden speech and were tempted to interject, which, of course, is not considered ethical.

I also take the opportunity of congratulating Sir Alan Munro and Mr. Roy Dunlop, the Clerk of the Parliament, on receiving Queen's honours. They have both served the country wisely and well—such honours are given only to those who are justly entitled to them—and I place on record my congratulations to these two very distinguished gentlemen.

All hon. members are very keen to see a big reduction in the death and injury toll on our roads, and I wish to address some remarks on this subject particularly to the Minister for Mines and Main Roads, Mr. Ron Camm. Although the Main Roads Department has done a very good job in erecting signs showing suggested speed limits, and so on, I should like to bring a suggestion before the House that may be completely new. I am sure that each one of us, as a motorist, knows how disconcerting it is, after travelling on a country road or a main highway at 60 miles an hour, to come round a corner and suddenly see a sign on the side of the road indicating that one is entering a built-up area and that the speed limit is 35 miles an hour. I suggest to

the Minister that he have his traffic engineers investigate the possibility of painting a different coloured line on the middle of the road about a quarter of a mile before one reaches a "35 M.P.H." sign. This would enable the motorist to see immediately that he is entering a built-up area.

Mr. Mann: Are you talking about four-lane highways?

Mr. CAREY: No. The four-lane highways are very good.

Mr. Mann: I will have something to say about them, too.

Mr. CAREY: The motorist could then see immediately that he is entering a built-up area. If he is a good driver and is really concentrating on his driving, he is not particularly watching for road signs. He is watching the road to see that there is no obstruction on it, that no children run out, or that no dog jumps onto the road. A green line, or a different coloured line, on the middle of the road would immediately bring to his attention that he was entering a built-up area. As I said, I am sure that many hon. members have found themselves in difficulty when they have suddenly come into a built-up area without realising it was there, and I believe that a line painted in a different colour would assist in overcoming this difficulty. Signs are all right but they do distract the attention of the driver.

Mr. Murray: This is colour painted on the road itself?

Mr. CAREY: Yes, colour painted on the centre of the bitumen road between or alongside the present white lines or the white lines painted out with a different coloured paint so that the motorist will know just what is happening.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. CAREY: It is quite natural for gentlemen on that side of the Chamber to be incapable of understanding what is being said. I am sure they support this idea, even if they cannot understand it. Tomorrow, if they come with me I will take a paint brush and show them how it can be done.

In my humble opinion, signs generally distract the attention of the motorist but I should hate to see them removed. I think they are an essential part of our way of life today. I am told that signs have been dispensed with in some of the American States. I have not been to America to see for myself, but I am told that they have been removed from the main highways in that country. However, this is not America; this is Queensland, in Australia, and it has not the population——

Mr. Mann: This is the best country in the world.

Mr. CAREY: There is no doubt about that. Let us keep it that way.

I compliment the Minister and his department on the traffic signs in use here. Today, all signs in Queensland must comply with the Manual of Traffic Control to ensure uniformity throughout the State, so that the motorist has no concern whatever. He sees the same signs in Brisbane as he would see at Boulia or any other place in Queensland. I am quite certain this Government does not want to fine the motorist. It is not after fines to build up the Treasury; it wants to encourage people to stay within the law and this will be another very helpful way of assisting the motorist to know that he is entering a built-up area and thus save unnecessary traffic breaches.

I wish now, Mr. Speaker, to say something about another type of sign, namely, roadside advertising signs about which there has been quite a lot of discussion in the Press recently. I do not want to see them dispensed with. If they are kept in good order they are a wonderful medium for helping the Queensland manufacturer to sell his wares. They advertise the sale of Queensland petrol, Queensland primary produce, and even services or employment; they advertise hotels and motels and help to bring trade to Queensland which, of course, is what we all want. We must never allow them to be removed until we have reached the stage where the State has so developed in population that they are no longer necessary. I am very firmly convinced that they are, at this juncture anyhow, very necessary since they help in promoting employment in this State. I do not want to hear any hon. members on the Opposition side ever putting up a proposal to the Government for their removal. As the hon. member for Nudgee was sitting down I heard him say that he was a bit "horse" in his throat. I wonder how he would be if he had a "mare" in his hair.

I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister for Main Roads the fact that during the term of office of the late Hon. E. Evans we were working for the completion of the gorge road from Canungra to Nerang and have it fully developed and bitumen-surfaced so that we could get the tourists from the Moonie-St. George area down through Warwick straight to the Gold Coast. I read with interest that a first-class bitumen road is to be built from Toowoomba to Caloundra so that the Downs people could go to the North Coast. I have no fight with this because I believe we must develop, as this Government is developing, the whole of Queensland and not just one small part, particularly while the Country Party has such a strong hold of the Government. This will continue. I am quite prepared to congratulate the hon. member for Cooroora on his great interest in Caloundra, Maroochydore and other places up there, on getting this bitumen road from Toowoomba to Caloundra, but he is already 20 or 30 years behind the Gold Coast. If the Government gave him two bitumen roads and a railway line from Toowoomba to Caloundra he still could

not catch up with the development on the Gold Coast. However, we badly need the gorge road from Canungra to Nerang and Southport fully developed and bitumen-surfaced. It would also give tourists a wonderful opportunity to see the attractions of the hinterland, making a round trip from Southport and then over the gorge road into Canungra, over Tamborine and back down the "do it yourself" road, which will be completed any day now. In reply to interjections, I point out that the people in my area are very energetic. They do many things for themselves. This "do it yourself" road from Tamborine to Oxenford was started by the farmers and when the Government saw what a good job they were doing it put money into the road and developed it to make it almost a first-class road.

Mr. Murray: What would the distance be?

Mr. CAREY: Only 22 miles from Southport to Tamborine, whereas the distance by the recognised road is 49 miles.

I proceed now to what is probably one of the most important parts of my speech. On behalf of the dairy farmers in the south-east corner of Queensland, I make a very strong appeal to the Government to retain the 4d. a gallon drought relief on milk which was introduced a few weeks ago. The first cheques were received on 1 August but it has already been reported in the Press that this relief will probably be discontinued at the end of September. I ask the Minister for Primary Industries, and the Government generally, to realise how important it is to the dairying industry that this 4d. a gallon drought relief should remain in effect until decimal currency comes into operation.

Virtually all speakers in the Address-in-Reply debate, particularly Country Party members, have spoken about drought conditions. I can understand their doing so, but we in our area have also suffered a terrible drought. I am quite aware that some city dwellers believe that once there is a storm, or it is raining, the grass in the country will be growing a foot high and that there is luscious feed for the dairy cows. However, that is not the case. While we have had good rain in my neck of the woods—and I wish to talk about it in preference to someone else's area—we are still very short of grass, and farmers are feeding very heavily to produce the milk supply for the metropolitan area and the Gold Coast. It is costing them fantastic sums of money to produce the milk. They have had a torrid time. Many have lost large numbers of cattle, which still have to be replaced at a very high cost.

I dislike quoting figures because I think they are dry, but this time it is "drought dry". The figures I have here show that production during the seven drought months has been down 16 per cent. There is not a tremendous drop in percentage of production, but when we view it in the light of the cost for this production the picture is entirely different. The farmer who is buying meals, lucerne hay or fodder of any description, has to buy more than twice the quantity he was buying at the start of the drought. It is virtually costing him 100 per cent. extra and he is down 16 per cent. in production. I have been authoritatively informed that the sales of stock meal and stock fodder have increased to double what they were prior to the drought.

Mr. Mann: That is your private-enterprise racketeers.

Mr. CAREY: I am very glad the hon. member for Brisbane made that comment. The concern I referred to for this information is owned entirely by the dairy farmers, so any profit is returned to the farmer. With the extra feeding costs, and the 4d. increase during the month of July, the farmers in my area received £3,000 less in July, 1965, than they did in July, 1964. Although it is costing them twice as much to produce the milk, they are getting a lower return.

Mr. Mann: What is your Government doing about it?

Mr. CAREY: I am asking the Government—and I hope I have the sympathetic ear of the Government—to allow the 4d. to remain. That is exactly what I want it to do.

Mr. Hanlon: The hon. member for Gympie did not think you were so badly off compared with what they get from Nestles.

Mr. CAREY: I admire the hon. member for Gympie for endeavouring to get the best he can for his people, and I am sure he admires me for trying to get the best I can for my people. I know that I am supported in my approach to the Government by at least four hon. members. I know that the hon. members for Murrumba, Logan and South Coast join with me in this appeal to the Government. We must not forget that an independent board made a recommendation to the Government to increase the price of milk by 8d. a gallon, but in its wisdom the Government decided it should be increased by 4d. a gallon. I am sure the Premier will back me, because after returning from his recent trip to Canberra he said, "If you set up a committee to give you advice, the right thing to do is to take that advice." On this occasion the Government could not see its way clear to take the advice of 8d. a gallon. But it gave 4d. a gallon. While this was a great disappointment in the first instance, I am sure that if the Government retains it there will be few complaints from that section of the industry.

Milk is the cheapest drink in any part of the State, and probably in the Commonwealth. Twenty ounces of milk costs 10½d., fruit juice costs 1s. 9d., aerated water costs

1s. 8d., and the "big big" drink costs 3s. 3d. The food value of milk is such that the moral of the story is drink more milk, pay less, and get more out of it.

A family of five—and the hon. member for Brisbane was concerned about this—would pay only 2d. a day or 1s. 2d. a week extra for the average consumption of milk, and that would not be felt by even the lowest-paid family man. The consumption of milk during the period in which the extra 4d. a gallon has been charged has not fallen at all.

The economy of the country would not be affected, but the prosperity of the primary producer would probably be assisted back to where it was prior to the drought. All hon. members will agree with me that if we have prosperous primary producers we have a prosperous State and a prosperous Commonwealth. Let us retain the 4d. a gallon until these people recover from the drought.

I address my next remarks to the Minister for Transport. It is well known that there is no railway between Beenleigh and Southport. This has now laid vacant a lot of fairly valuable land. The land on the eastern side of Scarborough Street where the running yards and goods sheds were has now been cut up into allotments for sale to the public. I have been requesting the Government, through various departments and channels, and I now officially make the request to the Minister for Transport, to hand over the land on the western side of Scarborough Street, which once housed the railway station, to the council or some other authority set up by the Government, for the establishment of a communal passenger transport terminal. Every bus that enters or leaves the city of Southport must pass through that terminal.

No doubt many hon. members have visited the South Coast and Southport, and those who have taken any notice of things will have seen bus passengers standing on the footpath, sometimes in the rain and without any cover at all, waiting for buses. They will also be well aware that it is virtually impossible to arrive at a place to board a bus immediately the bus is due. It is necessary to get there about 10 minutes early to be certain of not being left behind. On many occasions women with children are seen standing and waiting to board buses for Brisbane, Coolangatta or Sydney, with nowhere to sit, no cover over them, and nowhere to care for their children.

Mr. Mann: Your Government couldn't care less.

Mr. CAREY: My Government is very interested in this suggestion of mine.

At the rear of where I suggest this terminal should be sited is another large area of land made vacant by pulling up the railway lines. I should like to see this area turned into a park and gardens so that passengers can be accommodated at the terminal and their children can go to the playground and entertain themselves whilst waiting for a bus.

The Government runs trains to certain areas and it also provides railway stations, such as those at Townsville, Cairns, and Rockhampton. I think it is therefore only fair to ask the Government to provide this land and, if necessary, a bus passenger terminal for the picking up and setting down of passengers travelling between various points.

I should now like to deal with something that has become very controversial in my area. I do not know whether the Minister for Education is contemplating making school holidays uniform throughout the Commonwealth, or the States on the east coast of Australia. If so, I join many residents of the Gold Coast in asking him not to pursue this matter any further. Let us have staggered holidays. If people in New South Wales want their holidays at a certain time, let Queensland people have theirs as they are now, I think a couple of weeks prior to those in New South Wales. The Gold Coast is an area that is growing fast, as everybody knows, and new accommodation is being constantly built. In spite of this, at many week-ends it is impossible to obtain accommodation and visitors can finish up virtually sleeping on the beaches. I ask the Minister for Education not to give any consideration to making holidays uniform throughout the eastern States.

Finally, I should like to ask the Minister for Works and Housing what I have heard other members ask: "Please give us some more Housing Commission houses. Please let us have some Housing Commission rental houses."

Mr. O'Donnell: Let us have some reasonable rents, too.

Mr. CAREY: Correct. A community cannot grow efficiently and effectively unless Housing Commission houses are available to house its workers. As you know, Mr. Speaker, quite a number of building operations are in progress on the South Coast, and the people employed on those projects have to be housed. They cannot afford to pay £6, £7, £8 or £9 a week for a house. It is very difficult for young married people to find a deposit of £400 or £500—I think the hon. member for Gregory also was concerned about this matter—and then find £500, £600 or £700 for furniture.

I honestly believe that the Minister for Works and Housing is as sympathetic in his approach to this problem as are those hon. members who are drawing attention to it. I do not think we have the ability to put forward a plan that will meet with the approval of the Govermnent and be accepted by financial institutions generally; but, knowing the calibre of the Country Party Minister for Works and Housing, and knowing that he desires to do the right thing for the people who live in country areas, I am certain he will endeavour to find some method by which we can build

three houses where today we are building two. It is very important that we have them.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Nudgee said that not one Country Party member in this House had endeavoured to defend the Federal Country Party leader, the Rt. Hon. John McEwen. I say this to hon. members opposite: one never has to defend a strong man; one defends only the weak.

Mr. Mann: Are you defending the Liberals?

Mr. CAREY: Not all members of the Liberal Party are bad.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CAREY: If hon. members opposite will come to order, I will tell them that a couple of prickles on a rose stem do not spoil the development of the bloom or its fragrance, and this Country-Liberal Government will continue to develop and bloom in spite of these prickles.

Debate, on motion of Mr. Mann, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 9.31 p.m.